

# Blue Helmets From the South: Accounting for the Participation of Weaker States in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations

Andrew Blum

Volume 20, numéro 1, spring 2000

URI : [https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/jcs20\\_01art04](https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/jcs20_01art04)

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Éditeur(s)

The University of New Brunswick

ISSN

1198-8614 (imprimé)

1715-5673 (numérique)

[Découvrir la revue](#)

Citer cet article

Blum, A. (2000). Blue Helmets From the South: Accounting for the Participation of Weaker States in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations. *Journal of Conflict Studies*, 20(1), 53–73.

# ***Blue Helmets From the South: Accounting for the Participation of Weaker States in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations***

*by*

***Andrew Blum***

*When one is confronted with successful collective action, the task is to identify the precise mix of motivations - selfish and normative, rational and irrational - that produced it.*

- Jon Elster[1]

## **INTRODUCTION**

This study investigates what motivates a certain type of state, namely weaker states, to engage in a specific type of collective action, participation in United Nations (UN) peacekeeping operations. Dozens of weaker states have participated in these operations.

The study focuses on the participation of weaker states because it is especially puzzling and because it has received little scholarly attention.[2] It is relatively easy to construct a self-interested motivation for the conflict management actions of powerful states. If any powerful actor is benefiting from a given system, then preserving order and stability becomes self-interested behavior. Moreover, powerful states do have more interests at stake in regional conflicts than weaker states. Edward Luck, for instance, argues that, "non-involvement in regional crises is not an option. America's political, economic and military reach is so great that its citizens, firms, diplomats, soldiers, and capital are present throughout the world." [3] Weaker states do not have the far-flung interests that Luck describes. They also have fewer resources to devote to their own security, making it less likely that they would be willing to devote resources to peacekeeping operations.

In addition, it seems likely that weaker states would be particularly interested in protecting sovereignty. Peacekeeping operations, even if consented to by the state where the operation will take place, are often seen as a threat to sovereignty.[4] And in fact, some weaker states have been explicit in linking peacekeeping to colonialism.[5] Finally, it has been argued that many policy makers within weaker states are frustrated by the Eurocentric focus on political rights, peace-making and stability that peacekeeping operations represent. According to Dorinda Dallmeyer, they see this as treating symptoms without paying attention to causes such as social and economic injustice.[6] Thus, at least at the outset, it is puzzling that weaker states would participate in large numbers in peacekeeping operations. The investigation of this puzzle will be divided into two sections, roughly corresponding to the two types of motivations that Elster mentions. The first section will review various self-interest-based explanations.

The second section will examine norm-based explanations as a potential alternative, or more precisely, as a supplement to interest-based explanations. This section will focus on

what I will term the "peace promotion norm," which is defined by the idea that it is good, although not obligatory, to aid in the resolution of violent conflicts.<sup>[7]</sup>

Two explanations based on this norm will be examined. The first argues that states participate in peacekeeping out of a desire to mitigate violent conflict. The second argues that states participate because following a norm grants them status and legitimacy within the community where the norm is operative. In other words, they have a desire to be perceived as good citizens of the international community. These will be referred to as the "Conflict Mitigation" and the "Good Citizen" arguments respectively.

The "Good Citizen" argument raises important questions regarding the distinction between self-interest and norms, as behavior based on such a motivation can be conceived of as self-interested behavior. This issue arises out of the more general proposition that the normative framework in which states operate structures the nature of their interests.<sup>[8]</sup> Conversely, other scholars have argued that norms can arise out of the self-interested behavior of individual states. The interest-based strands of regime theory are based on this proposition.<sup>[9]</sup> Thus, in practice, norms can create interests and interests can create norms.

The motivations for participation reviewed below are categorized as self-interest-based or norm-based by what their proponents see as the primary motivation for action. For instance, the Good Citizen motivation, although it can be seen as self-interested, arises because of the existence of norms that define what a good citizen does. It is therefore categorized as a normative motivation.

## **DEFINITIONS AND DATA**

### **Peacekeeping**

The term "peacekeeping" is subject to several definitions. In some contexts, it is used to refer to any United Nations "peace support" operation. The more narrow definition that will be used in this study defines peacekeeping as those peace support operations that fall between peace observation and peace enforcement. In the Peacekeeper's Handbook, for instance, peacekeeping is described as:

The prevention, containment, moderation and termination of hostilities between or within states, through the medium of a peaceful third party intervention organized and directed internationally using multinational forces of soldiers, police and civilians to restore and maintain peace.<sup>[10]</sup>

There are three important elements to this definition. First, troops are involved. This distinguishes peacekeeping from peace observation. Second, the intervention is intended to be peaceful. This distinguishes it from peace enforcement operations such as those in Korea and Iraq. Finally, as the definition states, peacekeeping forces should be multinational.

The requirement that operations be multinational raises the question of how a peacekeeping force is recruited. The first important aspect of the recruitment process is that participation is a voluntary act undertaken by the states themselves. When the UN is organizing a peacekeeping operation, states volunteer personnel.[11] The second aspect of the process is the decision by the UN of which national contingents will participate. Certain guidelines or standard operating procedures have developed over time regarding the ideal composition of a peacekeeping force. The most robust principle has been that of "equitable geographic representation." [12] A second less generally-applied principle is that states which, "might be considered as possibly having a special interest in the situation which has called for the operation" should be precluded from participation.[13]

In order to avoid confusion in regard to the argument that follows, it is important to note the tendency to see these recruitment procedures as an explanation for the participation of certain kinds of states in peacekeeping operations. If the forces need to be composed of a geographically diverse, non-interested group of states, this argument runs, then it is natural that weaker states would make up the bulk of peacekeeping forces. Such an argument relies on the assumption of a large pool of willing participants. This study seeks to understand the prior question of why there have been so many willing participants.

### **The Fourteen Operations Examined**

In constructing the data set used for this study, I have relied on the UN's own categorization of its peace support operations with one exception. The UN categorizes its operations into peace enforcement, peacekeeping and peace observation. The exception to this categorization included in the study is the United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission (UNIKOM). This operation began as an observation mission, but eventually included roughly 1,000 troops authorized to "take physical action to prevent violations of the de-militarized zone and the newly demarcated boundary between Iraq and Kuwait." [14] This turned UNIKOM into a de facto peacekeeping operation.

I have chosen to focus on a subset of peacekeeping operations - the 14 UN operations that were active during the period 1991-97.[15] The boundaries of the study have been chosen primarily for practical reasons, as a way of limiting the number of cases, while still examining the most important. Various regional organizations have initiated peacekeeping operations, but the UN has undertaken the majority of peacekeeping activity. Cases active since 1991 are examined because of the important changes that have taken place in the peacekeeping arena since the end of the Cold War. These changes make it unclear if Cold War participation patterns are comparable with post-Cold War participation patterns. Such a question is the subject for another study.

### **Weaker States**

The term "weaker state" refers to what are generally considered developing states plus the post-Soviet states excluding Russia. In other words, all states which would not be considered great- or middle-powers were included. Using this definition, I compiled a list of 70 weaker states that participated in the 14 UN peacekeeping operations. I then

compiled a list of the highest contribution of personnel made by each of these states to each of the operations in which they participated during the period 1991-97.<sup>[16]</sup> The term "contribution," when used below, refers to this maximum contribution.

Weakness in the international system is a multi-faceted phenomenon. As a result, debates over the definition of weaker states and over exactly which states fall into this category could be extended ad infinitum. Such debates have their place, but are not directly relevant to the arguments that will be presented below. I do not believe including or excluding certain "hard cases" from my data set would produce substantive changes in the conclusions reached. One reason for this belief is that the list of weaker states was compiled prior to, and independent of, an examination of their participation or non-participation in UN peacekeeping operations.

### **Self-Interest**

This section will evaluate the importance of three types of self-interest-based motivations. The first type of motivation, which I will refer to as power-centric, is the desire of the state to increase its power and/or security. The second type of motivation is the desire to avoid what has been called the collective action problem. The third type of motivation is the direct financial gain that participation in UN peacekeeping operations can provide.

### **Power, Security and Peacekeeping**

Power and security are frequently considered "essentially-contested" concepts. Consequently, many different types of behavior can qualify as the maximization of one of these goals. For the purposes of this study, the following three reasons for participation will be considered: 1) Participation in an operation designed to mitigate conflict near one's border. The mitigation of such a conflict normally provides security benefits to a state. 2) Participation with the goal of weakening an important state or sub-state rival. 3) Participation with the goal of mitigating a conflict in a state that is an important trading partner.<sup>[17]</sup>

For weaker states, these reasons, in general, require proximity to the conflict. Thus, with the exceptions discussed below, proximity can be used as a rough proxy for power-centric reasons for participation. This proxy is obviously valid for Reason 1.

Reason 2 refers to ending a conflict in order to weaken a rival state, which is a party to the conflict and which is benefiting from the conflict, or would benefit from the conflict's likely outcome if no intervention was to take place. Weaker states do not generally have military rivals outside of their own region. They may have economic rivals, however. Brazil may be competing with Pakistan on the world market, for instance. This is a possible exception to the proximity rule. However, in regard to this study, this exception is of limited importance. With the possible exception of Lebanon and the former Yugoslavia, all of the conflicts examined took place within or among very weak states,

which became even weaker as the conflict progressed. As a result, it is unlikely that they were an economic rival to states outside their region.

The proximity rule is also not universally valid for Reason 3. States may have important trading partners that are not in their region. But as with Reason 2, these exceptions are of limited importance due to the nature of the states where most UN peacekeeping operations take place. Again, few of the states that are parties to these conflicts are important trading partners with other weaker states outside their region.

Thus, a rough measure of the success of power-centric explanations can be obtained by examining the percentage of weaker states from the region of the conflict that participated in the peacekeeping operation.<sup>[18]</sup> For the 14 operations researched, there were a total of 275 instances of participation. Of these, 73, or 26 percent, were by states in the same region as the conflict. By drawing regional boundaries differently, one could get a slightly different number. Thus, power-centric explanations have difficulty accounting for roughly 75 percent of the instances of participation, minus the unknown number of cases that fall into the exceptions discussed above. For the reasons given above, the number of exceptions is probably small.

This does not mean, however, that power-centric explanations can explain 25 percent of the instances of participation. Proximity is a necessary but not a sufficient requirement for power-centric explanations. States may be in the same region as the conflict, but still have no reason for participating in the peacekeeping operation. There is no obvious power-centric explanation, for instance, for the participation of Lithuania in the Croatian operation or the Philippines in the Cambodian operation. A more detailed investigation might be able to show what percentage of the 25 percent could be accounted for through power-centric explanations. Since it has already been shown such explanations fare poorly in accounting for the patterns of participation, such an investigation would be superfluous here.

Finally, it is interesting that on average states outside of the various regions contributed more personnel than those within the regions. In the 73 instances of participation by states within the same region as the conflict, an average of 327 personnel was contributed. In the 202 instances of participation by states outside the region of the conflict, an average of 365 personnel was contributed. These numbers cast doubt on a potential counter-argument. This argument would maintain that it is self-interested states that do the bulk of the work in collective actions such as peacekeeping operations. Other states, which have less of an interest in the situation, may participate, but only with token contributions and only to give the operation a facade of legitimacy by making it appear multilateral. Such an argument is not supported by the data collected here.

### **The Collective Action Problem and Peacekeeping**

A collective action problem exists in any situation where the rational actions of individual actors produce a collectively sub-optimal result. In the international arena, issues that could qualify as collective action problems include pollution reduction, trade

and weapons proliferation, among others. In these situations, cooperation can lead to better outcomes for each individual actor than non-cooperation. However, a state can often obtain an even better outcome if it defects while others cooperate. Obviously, if enough states attempt to obtain this better payoff, cooperation collapses leading to a collectively sub-optimal outcome.

Many have argued that it is in the self-interest of states to cooperate, in the form of international institutions or regimes, in order to avoid these sub-optimal outcomes.<sup>[19]</sup> These institutions, it is argued, can help overcome the collective action problem by increasing the exchange of information, thereby allowing defectors to be detected;<sup>[20]</sup> by providing linkages between issues, thereby creating sanctions to punish defectors;<sup>[21]</sup> and by routinizing collective action thereby reducing transaction costs and increasing the "shadow of the future."<sup>[22]</sup> The "shadow of the future" refers to the idea that breaking a promise now will reduce a state's ability to gain from cooperation in the future because it will be seen as untrustworthy.

While these arguments may be valid for other issue-areas, they are not well suited to explain the participation of weaker states in UN peacekeeping operations. This is the case not so much because of the patterns of participation, as was the case with the power-centric explanations, but because of the general structure of the issue-area of peacekeeping.

In particular, there are two problems. The first is the basic assumption of common interests. Arguments that begin with the collective action problem require the assumption that cooperation will produce common benefits. Lisa Martin, for instance, begins her study of economic sanctions with the assumption that a state or a group of states has an interest in applying economic sanctions. The study then analyzes how these states can achieve the widespread cooperation that is necessary for sanctions to be effective. The genesis of the desire for sanctions is left largely uninvestigated.<sup>[23]</sup>

In many issue-areas this assumption is unproblematic. On trade issues, for instance, states presumably have an interest in increased efficiencies from free trade and in avoiding the consequences of the beggar-thy-neighbor policies of the 1930s.<sup>[24]</sup> In regard to peacekeeping, however, no such obvious common interest exists. It is not at all obvious why conflict in a distant part of the world is commonly understood to be a sub-optimal outcome among rational utility-maximizers.

Moreover, even if common interests are simply assumed, there is a second problem. Very little cooperation is necessary to mount a peacekeeping operation, at least in materialist terms.<sup>[25]</sup> Consequently, the interests of states are significantly less interdependent in this issue-area than they are in issue-areas where more cooperation is needed, such as pollution reduction or the application of economic sanctions. Such interdependence is necessary for a collective action problem to exist. Without it a lack of cooperation does not lead to sub-optimal outcomes.



Despite the fact that widespread cooperation is not needed, UN peacekeeping operations generally have high numbers of participants, far more than are required for the mission. To cite just two examples, at one point, 377 personnel were being contributed to MINURSO by 29 different states, and the 1,166 personnel in UNPREDEP were contributed by 25 states. Numerous states could have supplied the necessary troops for these operations by themselves, or in conjunction with a few other states.

In sum, in the peacekeeping issue-area, the assumption of common interests is suspect and the interests of states are not highly inter-dependent. As a result, arguments based on the avoidance of collective action problems are ill-suited to explain why weaker states participate in UN peacekeeping operations.

### **Profiting Through Participation**

States and their agents can profit through participation in UN peacekeeping operations in two ways. The first is through official payments to peacekeeping personnel by the UN. The second is through various forms of fraud and black marketeering.

The extent to which UN payments to peacekeeping personnel affect weaker states' decision to participate is difficult to assess. Traditionally, it was thought that, "Troop-contributing countries should not suffer financial loss, or achieve financial gain as a result of their participation."[\[26\]](#) More recently, however, authors have argued that payments to personnel are a factor in encouraging states to participate. In regard to the participation of Egypt, Angela Kane notes that the \$1,000-per-month payment for UN soldiers is "princely in a country where the annual per capita income is \$610."[\[27\]](#) Similarly, Ioan Lewis and James Mayall note that in the Somalian operation, "Supplying troops was . . . a profitable business, especially for Third World countries short of hard currency."[\[28\]](#)

The profits Lewis and Mayall speak of are often slow in coming. The UN has been notoriously bad about reimbursing states for their participation. Kane estimates that at one point Egypt was owed \$4.6 million for troop costs and had claimed another \$103 million for equipment costs.[\[29\]](#) Trevor Findlay argues that, "the UN is usually so slow in paying, and the amount so relatively [stingy] that this cannot be the sole motivation [for participation]."[\[30\]](#)

One method of evaluating this statement is to see if poorer states contribute more personnel. If payments to peacekeeping personnel are an influence on the participation decision, we should expect to see an inverse correlation between a state's level of wealth and the personnel contributed. To see whether this is the case, I calculated the total number of troops contributed to the 14 operations by each of the 61 weaker states on which World Bank data was available. I then looked to see if there was a correlation between total contributions and wealth. Two separate tests were performed. The first defined wealth as GDP per capita; the second defined wealth as GDP. A significant inverse correlation coefficient would support the argument that payments to peacekeeping personnel matter. The results are summarized in Table 1.



**TABLE 1**  
**Correlation Between Level of Wealth and Total Contributions to the  
Fourteen Operations Examined**

	GDT per capita	GDP
Total Contribution of personnel	$r = -0.15^*$	$r = 0.24^*$

Notes:

n=61

\*not significant at the .05 level

GDP per capita and GDP from: World Bank, *World Development Indicators* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 1998). 1996 figures were used.

These results do not support the claim that payments are important in the participation decision. For GDP per capita, a negative correlation does exist, but not a statistically significant one. For GDP, a positive correlation exists, indicating that wealthier states contributed more personnel. This correlation was also not strong enough to allow meaningful conclusions to be drawn.

Of course, these results do not rule out the possibility that in certain cases the payments to peacekeeping were a factor in the participation decision. However, when they are combined with the unreliability of the UN payment system, it does become more difficult to claim that, in general, payments are a strong motivation to participate.

In addition to official payments, states and their agents have profited from participation in peacekeeping through a variety of illicit schemes. Since the United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services was established in 1994, it has documented numerous instances of fraud ranging from false billing for travel expenses, to embezzlement of medical supplies, to simple theft of United Nations materials.[\[31\]](#) Independent observers have made similar allegations. S. Maxime alleges in a French magazine article that states have abruptly promoted officers in order to bill the UN for higher salaries, that Ukrainian peacekeepers have set up black markets in Kalashnikovs, ammunition and rations, that Thai peacekeepers in Cambodia have been involved in selling looted art from temples, and that Bulgarian peacekeepers in Cambodia would provide safe passage for prostitutes for a fee.[\[32\]](#)

Clearly, if such allegations are true, it is likely that such schemes have affected the participation decision of certain states. Unfortunately, assessing the overall effect such profiteering has on the decision to participate is simply not possible given the research that now exists.[\[33\]](#) In lieu of such an overall assessment, I will restrict myself to a few comments. First, an explanation based on the desire for illicit profits has difficulty accounting for large contributions of peacekeepers. None of the schemes discussed above require hundreds of men and women. And in fact, the presence of such a large contingent might hinder such schemes by making it more difficult to keep them secret.

Second, there is a danger in this context of arguing backwards from consequences. Because the participation decision is made before the operation starts, the profiting which takes place after the participation decision is made may not have any effect on that decision. This is especially true for what might be called private fraud, such as the "safe passage" scheme of the Bulgarian peacekeepers. Although some governments may view private fraud as a surrogate paycheck, in general, schemes that enrich individual peacekeepers, but not state coffers, are less likely to affect the participation decision.

In general then, the desire for profits, both official and illicit, does have some effect on the decision to participate in UN peacekeeping operations, although this motivation falls short of providing a full explanation for participation. Unfortunately, a more exact assessment cannot be made using the data collected for this article. Such an assessment will require the more fine-grained analysis that only comparative case-study and process-tracing methodologies can provide.

## **Norms**

This section will assess whether norm-based explanations are relevant to understanding the participation of weaker states in UN peacekeeping operations. For the purposes of this study, a norm will be defined as a socially-agreed upon standard of proper behavior for a given actor in a given situation.[\[34\]](#)

In order to assess the two norm-based explanations described in the Introduction, it is first necessary to defend the assertion that a peace promotion norm exists. Thus, this section will be divided into two parts. The first presents an argument in support of the claim that the peace promotion norm exists and is influential. Because the peace promotion norm, if it exists, applies to virtually all states, the argument will examine the actions of all states, not just weaker ones. The second part will assess the "Conflict Mitigation" explanation and the "Good Citizen" explanation for why weaker states participate in UN peacekeeping operations.

## **The Peace Promotion Norm**

The argument that the peace promotion norm exists comes in two stages. The first reviews the various documents in which the peace promotion norm is articulated. The second argues that certain patterns of participation in UN peacekeeping operations become more comprehensible if the norm is assumed to exist.

### *What States Say*

I will first review what states have "said" in favor of the peace promotion norm. What states "say" in support of norms, namely, the act of promulgating certain documents, provides one form of evidence that states are influenced by norms. While states do not always conform to norms, it is difficult to understand why such expressions of support would exist if they never did. Even the desire to manipulate a norm for selfish purposes requires that the norm be influential.[\[35\]](#) Thus, what states have "said" is evidence that

the peace promotion norm is influential. The following is a brief summary of a few of these expressions of support.

The peace promotion norm enjoys a prominent place in the UN Charter. Article 1(1) states that the purpose of the UN is:

To maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace . . . [and the] settlement of international disputes or situations which might lead to a breach of the peace.

Several Articles in Chapters VI and VII, in particular, Articles 33, 41 and 42, detail the actions which the UN may take in order to promote international peace and security up to and including the use of military force. Combined, these articles demonstrate that the parties to the Charter have made a commitment to the promotion of peace and the pacific settlement of disputes.

The language of the Charter is clear in regard to the promotion of inter-state peace. The status of internal conflict vis-à-vis the Charter is less clear. This issue is relevant because the majority of UN peacekeeping operations in the current period take place in internal conflict situations. Internal conflict is an inherently more complex issue than inter-state conflict as it involves friction between the peace promotion norm and the sovereignty norm as expressed in Article 2(7). Thus, it could be argued that because internal conflict is a matter of "essentially domestic jurisdiction,"<sup>[36]</sup> Article 1(1), and therefore the peace promotion norm, does not apply to it.

However, the claim that the peace promotion norm, as it is expressed in the UN Charter, does not apply to internal conflict, is suspect. The Security Council's interpretations of the relevant articles in the Charter demonstrate that internal conflict qualifies as a "threat to the peace." This is important as the meaning of the UN Charter has evolved over time in response to the way it is interpreted, as does the meaning of any legal text. The UN operations in Greece, the Congo, Somalia, Bosnia, Rwanda, Haiti and elsewhere demonstrate that the UN has considered internal conflict a threat to the peace, and that at times, this threat has been given primacy over the sovereignty norm.<sup>[37]</sup> For instance, Michael Glennon concludes in regard to the Haitian operation that, "In Haiti. . . sovereignty lost."<sup>[38]</sup>

Thus, the text of the UN Charter and the way it has been interpreted over time provide a clear expression of the peace promotion norm as well as evidence that the norm does extend to internal conflict.

Support for the peace promotion norm can also be found in the charters of various regional organizations. Similar language appears in many of these organizations' founding documents. For instance, Article 4 of the Charter of the Organization of American States describes two of the purposes of the organization as follows:

a) To strengthen the peace and security of the continent.

b) To prevent causes of difficulties and to ensure the pacific settlement of disputes that may arise among the member states.[39]

The ASEAN Declaration, the Maastricht Treaty on European Union, and the Charter of the Organization of African States contain similar passages.[40] These regional charters are important as they demonstrate that support for the peace promotion norm is both geographically and culturally diverse. Moreover, they show that the elements of the peace promotion norm found in the UN Charter have either spread beyond, or were always held by, a broader range of states than the elite few which were the driving force behind the formation of the UN.

While these various expressions of support are relevant for the reasons discussed above, they remain expressions. Thus, I will now turn to an examination of specific patterns of behavior within the issue-area of peacekeeping.

### **What States Do**

How can we demonstrate that particular forms of behavior in the issue-area of peacekeeping arise as a result of the peace promotion norm? The problem is complex because actions that conform to the requirements of a norm may result from a variety of causes. The difficulties in sorting out these causes is summarized by Ethan Nadelmann:

It is difficult and often impossible to determine whether those who conform to a particular norm do so because they believe the norm is just and should be followed, or because adherence to the norm coincides with their other principal interests, or because they fear the consequences that flow from defying the norm, or simply because conforming to the norm has become a matter of habit or custom.[41]

To conclude with certainty that norms influence behavior, the analyst would have to enter the mind of the relevant policy makers in order to uncover the true motives for the behavior being studied. As this is impossible, how do we proceed?

I believe a pragmatic approach is the best way forward. By making the assumption that the peace promotion norm is influential, we can render the actions of states in the issue-area of peacekeeping more comprehensible. This assumption is supported by the articulations of the peace promotion norm already reviewed. Such support guards against the wholesale invention of norms to "explain," i.e. label, behavior.

In particular, two features of state participation in UN peacekeeping operations make more sense if the peace promotion norm is assumed to exist: first, the diversity of the participating states; and second, the importance of multilateralism within the issue-area.

Roughly 90 states of diverse power capabilities, economic standing, political ideology, national culture and geographic location have participated in UN peacekeeping operations.[42] Interest-based explanations have difficulty accounting for why the

interests of so many different types of states have repeatedly converged in a sufficient manner to create these large and diverse coalitions of participants.

The diversity of participating states becomes easier to understand when the peace promotion norm is utilized. Recall that a norm was defined above as a commonly-held belief regarding proper behavior for a given actor in a given situation. From this definition, the method by which a norm can facilitate collective action is readily apparent. If norms are commonly-held beliefs about proper behavior, then a common understanding that a norm is being violated should also exist. This understanding creates a common desire to stop the violation and/or punish the violator.

Thus, among the group of states that subscribe to the peace promotion norm, the norm provides a coordinating mechanism that creates similar behavior, participation. As interest-based explanations lack such a mechanism, the diversity of participating states becomes more comprehensible when the peace promotion norm is assumed to be influential.

The importance of multilateralism is the second aspect of peacekeeping that is more comprehensible when the peace promotion norm is utilized. While this is related to the diversity issue just discussed, it is not identical. The question raised above regarding diversity was why so many different types of states have participated. The question raised here is why each operation must have a high number of participants.[\[43\]](#)

From a self-interest-based perspective, the requirement that peacekeeping operations be collective is puzzling. It becomes less puzzling from a norm-based perspective. Let us assume that peacekeeping operations take place in response to a contravention of norms against violent conflict, combined with the norm that states should aid in the resolution of conflict. As such, it makes sense that the community would want to defend the norms in question. Article 1(1) of the UN Charter calls for this type of collective response.

This desire to mount a collective response to norm violation would be predicted by those working in research traditions that routinely employ the concept of norms. For instance, social psychologists G.R. Semin and A.S.R. Manstead argue:

In cases of 'fractured social interaction' where some disruption of the natural flow of social interaction has occurred, actors employ culturally provided resources for interpreting, explaining and normalizing the problematic situation [e.g. violent conflict].[\[44\]](#)

Similarly, one of the central points of the sociological literature on deviance is that norms are both socially defined and socially enforced. Stanley Cohen, for instance, opens his book by stating, "This is a book about social control, that is, the organized ways in which society responds to behavior and people it regards as troublesome or undesirable in one way or another."[\[45\]](#)

The multilateralism present in the issue-area of peacekeeping appears to fit the expectations that these authors have regarding what the response to the violation of a norm would look like. As with other forms of social control, a social response is preferred and a unilateral or vigilante response is stigmatized.[46] Thus, instead of being puzzling, as it is from self-interest-based perspectives, from these latter perspectives, multilateralism is the expected response to the violation of a norm. Again, this lends credence to the argument that the peace promotion norm is influential in this issue-area. As Martha Finnemore writes, "Contemporary multilateralism is political and normative, not strategic." [47]

### **Conflict Mitigation" versus "Good Citizen"**

Norms can influence actors in different ways. Perhaps the two most important are: a belief in the justness of the norm; and the status attached to being perceived of as a norm-follower and/or the opprobrium attached to being a norm-breaker.[48] These influences correspond to the Conflict Mitigation and the Good Citizen explanations described above.[49] If we assume that the preceding section was convincing and that the peace promotion norm exists, we can then ask which of these explanations is stronger in regard to the issue-area of peacekeeping.[50] In what should be considered a preliminary attempt to answer this question, the rest of this section will endeavor to identify instances of participation that are predominantly the result of one or the other influence.

One method of detecting the Good Citizen influence is to examine how the participation of weaker states is affected by the participation of powerful states. The desire to appear a norm-follower is normally enhanced when the powerful are watching. In order to ascertain if the Good Citizen is operating in this way, we can look to see if there are states that participate only, or almost only, when powerful states are participating. This would indicate that they are less concerned with the conflict, or its mitigation, and more concerned with who is watching.

Since 1991, the United States has been the most powerful state in the international system. Consequently, I first compared the operations in which the United States participated with those in which it did not. The United States participated in nine of the 14 operations examined in this study.[51] The question becomes whether certain states participated only when the United States participated. I found that of the 33 states that participated in more than two operations, four states (Lithuania, Philippines, Turkey and Venezuela) only participated when the United States was present. There were four other "suspicious" cases (Indonesia, Kenya, Tunisia and the Ukraine). These states participated in more than five operations and participated only once when the United States was not present.

I also looked at operations where more than one "power" participated.[52] The United States, Russia, China and the European Union were considered powers.[53] I considered the European Union to be participating if at least two out of the three major states, France, Germany and the United Kingdom, were participating.

There were eight operations in which two of the four powers participated. Of the 33 states with more than two instances of participation, three states (Bulgaria, Lithuania and Morocco) participated only when two of the four powers were present. All three only had three instances of participation increasing the chance that the overlap is coincidental. In addition, there were six "suspicious" cases (Kenya, Malaysia, Senegal, Tunisia, Turkey and the Ukraine). These states had more than four instances of participation and only one where two of the four powers were not present.

I also looked at the five operations in which three of the four powers participated. Of the 48 states with more than one instance of participation, two (Colombia and Estonia) only participated when three of the four powers were present. Both participated in only two operations, again increasing the chance that the overlap is coincidental. There were only three cases which could be considered "suspicious". Three states (Bulgaria, Lithuania and Venezuela) participated in three operations, two of which had three of the four powers present.

What are we to make of these results? One can assume that the presence of the United States or the presence of more than one power makes an operation appear important in some sense. There is a small group of states that appear to participate only, or almost only, in these important operations. This minority of cases does leave open the possibility that these states are participating because they wish to be viewed as Good Citizens by powerful states.

However, the majority of weaker states participated in both important operations and the "less important" operations where the United States or two powers were not present. This indicates that the presence of powerful states was not the only, or even the dominant, influence in the participation decision. While this conclusion does not directly support the Conflict Mitigation explanation, it does weaken one counter-argument to this explanation, that states participate because of the influence, tacit or explicit, of powerful states. This makes it more likely that the Conflict Mitigation argument is valid.

The next method I used in an attempt to separate the two influences was to look at the extent of symbolic or token participation in UN peacekeeping operations by weaker states. If the Good Citizen influence is dominant, we should expect to see primarily symbolic participation. If the Conflict Mitigation influence is dominant, we should expect larger contributions of personnel.

There is no natural way to define token or symbolic. Consequently, I looked at three different definitions. The results are summarized in Table 2.

**TABLE 2**  
**Token Participation by Weaker States in the**  
**Fourteen Operations Examined**

Definition of Token	Token Instances of Participation
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Less than 200 personnel contributed	177 or 64%
Less than 50 personnel contributed	128 or 46%
Less than 10 personnel contributed	64 or 23%

The exact percentages are not as important as the fact that all three definitions produce mixed results. With each definition there are high numbers of token and non-token participation.

If we look state-by-state, we get a similar mixed picture. Individual states tended to contribute both low and high numbers of personnel to different operations. For instance, of the 28 states which participated in more than three operations, all but three had a spread of at least 500 personnel from their lowest contribution to their highest.

These mixed results suggest that both the Conflict Mitigation and Good Citizen influences are present. The many cases of token participation would not make sense if states were interested in conflict mitigation alone or if being a good citizen required a high contribution of personnel. Conversely, the many cases in which states contributed high numbers of personnel would not make sense if states were only interested in being seen as a good citizen and had no interest in conflict mitigation. Why contribute such high numbers when apparently one can be perceived as a good citizen at much less cost?

As was mentioned above, the Good Citizen and Conflict Mitigation explanations are not mutually exclusive. This makes the two explanations difficult to untangle when looking at the behavior of states. Consequently, I was only able to reach the weak conclusion that states appear interested in being a good citizen and in mitigating conflict, and thus that both explanations are valid. More empirical and conceptual work is necessary in order to reach stronger conclusions regarding the relative importance of the two explanations.

## CONCLUSION

The discipline of International Relations has traditionally concerned itself with understanding the behavior of states. The aim of this study rests squarely within this tradition - to understand why a particular type of state acts in a particular type of way. Through a review of the strengths and weaknesses of interest-based explanations and explanations that include norms, I reached three conclusions. First, although the opportunities UN peacekeeping operations provide for financial gain do have an effect on the participation decision, in general, self-interest-based explanations have difficulty accounting for the extent of weaker state participation in UN peacekeeping operations. Second, states are influenced by the peace promotion norm. Third, the Conflict Mitigation and Good Citizen influences are both relevant factors in the participation decision. While this is a relatively weak conclusion, it nonetheless lays a good foundation for future research on when and why one influence is dominant.

In addition to the need for more research on the importance of payments and illicit profits, there are other reasons for participation which future research should explore. First, and related to the issue of payments, are the general benefits that accrue to a state's military services as the result of participation. These benefits can include access to training, access to the latest military hardware or an increased ability to justify military spending domestically.[54] Second, the role that alliances and membership in regional organizations has on participation should be investigated. Third, research should attempt to discover how important cultural and religious ties are in the participation decision.

Why bother with this research? Why bother making the arguments presented in this article? There are two reasons, one "practical" and one "academic." The practical reason concerns the issue of how to make peacekeeping operations successful. An important determinant of that success is the level of support an operation receives both from other states and from publics within states. As a result, an understanding of why states participate is important to "moral entrepreneurs,"[55] whether they are states, interest groups within states, international organizations or NGOs, who believe in the value of peacekeeping and who wish to strengthen the peace promotion norm. One can assume that a better understanding of the origin of support for peacekeeping operations will make it easier for these moral entrepreneurs to obtain that support and therefore easier to mount successful operations in the future.

Admittedly, this study has taken a glass-is-half-full approach by focusing on why states do participate, while not directly confronting the myriad of cases where states have refused to cooperate. I believe this is valid, however, as an understanding of why states participate at all seems necessary before confronting the question of why more support has not materialized.

The academic reason for asking the question arises from the insight it can provide into the long-standing debate over the root causes of state behavior. Are states atomistic, self-interested entities concerned only with maximizing either absolute or relative gains? Or is there a sense of community among states, expressed in a network of norms and institutions, which states hold in common and which they abide by regardless of their self-interest, traditionally-defined? It is easy to see that this study represents one skirmish in this larger debate. As a result, the argument it provides on behalf of norms has a meaning that goes beyond its narrow focus on peacekeeping. In this larger context, the issue of peacekeeping becomes one case in support of the general position that norms do affect the actions of states.

## **Endnotes**

The author would like to thank Gary Scott, Hayward Alker, Anita Schjolset, the participants at the 1999 "Politics at the Turn of the Century" Conference, San Diego State University, and two anonymous referees for their comments and suggestions.

Research for this article was made possible through the support of the USC Graduate School and the USC School of International Relations.

1. Jon Elster, *The Cement of Society: A Study in Social Order* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 187. Emphasis in original.
2. For instance, a recent RAND report investigates the support for peacekeeping operations of the United States, the permanent members of the Security Council and regional powers, but not that of weaker states. See Bruce R. Pirnie and William E. Simons, *Soldiers for Peace: Critical Operational Issues* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand, 1996), pp. 97-107. Works that do discuss weaker states include Robert C.R. Siekmann, *National Contingents in United Nations Peace-Keeping Forces* (Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Martinus Nijhoff, 1991); Angela Kane, "Other Selected States: Motivations and Factors in National Choices," in Donald C.F. Daniel and Bradd C. Hayes, eds., *Beyond Traditional Peacekeeping* (New York: St. Martin's, 1995), pp. 120-48; Angela Kane, "Other New and Emerging Peacekeepers," in Trevor Findlay, ed., *Challenges for the New Peacekeepers* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 99-120; Alan Bullion, "India and UN Peacekeeping," in Findlay, ed., *Challenges for the New Peacekeepers*, pp. 58-72. Kane and Bullion do not attempt generalizations regarding weaker state participation. Siekmann's work is more concerned with the international legal mechanisms governing participation, as opposed to why states participate.
3. Edward C. Luck, "The Case for Engagement: American Interests in UN Peace Operations," in Daniel and Hayes, eds., *Beyond Traditional Peacekeeping*, p. 75.
4. UNTAC in Cambodia provides a good example. Although consent was obtained from the acting government in Cambodia, Michael Doyle argues that, "UN sensitivity to charges of colonialism may have hindered the UNTAC mission from interpreting the agreements aggressively." Michael Doyle, *UN Peacekeeping in Cambodia: UNTAC's Civil Mandate*, International Peace Academy Occasional Paper (Boulder, CO: Lynn-Rienner, 1995), p. 31.
5. See Dorinda G. Dallmeyer, "National Perspectives on International Intervention: From the Outside Looking In," in Daniel and Hayes, eds., *Beyond Traditional Peacekeeping*, pp. 25- 26.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 27.
7. For a discussion of the voluntary nature of the peace promotion norm, see Siekmann, *National Contingents*, pp. 191-92.
8. For a good, recent argument along these lines, see Ronald Jepperson, et. al., "Norms, Identity and Culture in National Security," in Peter Katzenstein, ed., *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), pp. 52-65.
9. See Peter Mayer, et. al., "Regime Theory: State of the Art and Perspectives," in Volker Rittberger, ed., *Regime Theory and International Relations* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon, 1993), pp. 408-9.

10. International Peace Academy, *Peacekeeper's Handbook* (New York: Pergamon, 1984), p. 22.
11. See Siekmann, *National Contingents*, pp. 45-47; Stephen M. Hill and Shahin P. Malik, *Peacekeeping and the United Nations* (Aldershot: Dartmouth, 1996), pp. 172-73.
12. Siekmann, *National Contingents*, pp. 90-91, 95-96.
13. *Ibid.*, pp. 84-85.
14. Barbara Benton, *Soldiers for Peace: Fifty Years of United Nations Peacekeeping* (New York: Facts on File, 1996), p. 254.
15. The operations examined are: UNFICYP -United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus; UNIFIL -United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon; MINURSO -United Nations Mission for the Referendum in the Western Sahara; UNIKOM -United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission; UNAVEM -United Nations Angola Verification Mission I, II, III; UNTAC -United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia; UNOSOM -United Nations Operation in Somalia I, II; ONUMOZ -United Nations Operation in Mozambique; UNPROFOR -United Nations Protection Force (former Yugoslavia); UNMIH -United Nations Mission in Haiti; UNAMIR -United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda; UNCRO -United Nations Confidence Restoration Operation in Croatia; UNPREDEP -United Nations Preventive Deployment Force (Macedonia); UNTAES -United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium.
16. This data is available from the author upon request. It was compiled using data from the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations and Peacekeeping and International Relations.
17. It will be assumed that the economic benefits that flow from trade increase a state's power and security.
18. The regions are defined as follows: Cyprus -eastern Mediterranean, Eastern Europe; Lebanon -eastern Mediterranean; Western Sahara -northwest Africa; Iraq -eastern Mediterranean and Persian Gulf; Angola -Sub-Saharan Africa excluding West Africa; Cambodia -Southeast Asia; Somalia -Northeast Africa, Horn of Africa; Mozambique - Sub-Saharan Africa excluding West Africa; operations in the former Yugoslavia -eastern Europe, including Turkey and the Ukraine; Rwanda -central Africa, Horn of Africa; Haiti -Caribbean, Central America, northern South America.
19. For examples of works in this tradition, see Robert Axelrod and Robert Keohane, "Achieving Cooperation Under Anarchy: Strategies and Institutions," *World Politics* 38 (1985), pp. 226- 54; Arthur Stein, *Why Nations Cooperate: Circumstance and Choice in International Relations* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990); Lisa Martin, *Coercive Cooperation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992); Duncan Snidal,

"Relative Gains and the Pattern of International Cooperation," in David A. Baldwin, ed., *Neorealism and Neoliberalism: The Contemporary Debate* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993). For the most influential discussion of the collective action problem, see Mancur Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971).

20. Arthur Stein, "Coordination and Collaboration: Regimes in an Anarchic World," *International Organization* 36 (1982), p. 312; Axelrod and Keohane, "Achieving Cooperation Under Anarchy," p. 235; Lisa Martin, "The Rational State Choice of Multilateralism," in John Gerard Ruggie, ed., *Multilateralism Matters* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), p. 96.

21. Robert Keohane, *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Economy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), pp. 91-92, 103-06; Axelrod and Keohane, "Achieving Cooperation Under Anarchy," pp. 239-41.

22. Keohane, *After Hegemony*, pp. 89-90; Axelrod and Keohane, "Achieving Cooperation Under Anarchy," pp. 232-34; Martin, "Rational State" p. 96; James Caporaso, "International Relations Theory and Multilateralism: The Search for Foundations," in John Gerard Ruggie, ed., *Multilateralism Matters* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), pp. 59-63.

23. See Martin, *Coercive Cooperation*. Similarly, Kenneth Abbott and Duncan Snidal, in a recent work on international organizations, provide a sophisticated analysis of how international organizations provide benefits to states. Unfortunately, their article provides fewer answers regarding why successful peace operations, which they discuss, are seen as a benefit by a large number of states. See Kenneth Abbot and Duncan Snidal, "Why States Act Through Formal International Organizations," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 42 (1998), pp. 3-32.

24. This does not mean that all states would benefit equally from trade liberalization, nor does it preclude the possibility that there are other interests that may be stronger than the interest in trade liberalization. It only means that trade liberalization would produce benefits for a certain group of states.

25. More cooperation might be necessary if it is assumed that multilateralism is a normative requirement. However, this type of argument would be different than standard arguments based on the avoidance of the collective action problem. In these arguments, multilateralism is a result of individual choices, not a shaper of those choices.

26. Siekmann, *National Contingents*, p. 168.

27. Kane, "Other Selected States" p. 141.

28. Ioan Lewis and James Mayall, "Somalia," in James Mayall, ed., *The New Interventionism 1991-1994: United Nations Experience in Cambodia, former Yugoslavia and Somalia* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 123.

29. Kane, "Other Selected States" pp. 141, 147.

30. Trevor Findlay, "The New Peacekeepers and the New Peacekeeping," in Trevor Findlay, ed., *Challenges for the New Peacekeepers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 9. Beyond brief mentions such as these, I have been unable to find research that examines the link between payments by the UN and a state's decision to participate in peacekeeping. It is interesting that in the last five years of Peacekeeping and International Relations there is not a single article on reimbursement for participation in peacekeeping operations.

31. See UN Doc. A/54/393, UN Doc. A/54/367, UN Doc. A/53/811. These reports, other reports, and a full listing of all UNIOS reports are available at: <http://www.un.org/Depts/oios/reports0.htm>.

32. Maxime's article was reprinted as, "Blue Helmets, Black Markets," *World Press Review* (October 1993), pp. 17-18.

33. As was the case with research on official payments, I could find no research that examined the link between illicit profits and participation.

34. This definition is consistent with standard sociological definitions. See Jack Gibbs, *Norms, Deviance and Social Control* (New York: Elsevier, 1981), pp. 7-9. Gibbs reviews definitions from 14 different studies. For a useful, recent discussion of norms in the international context, see Jepperson, et. al., "Norms, Identity and Culture," pp. 33-75.

35. Elster, *Cement of Society*, p. 128.

36. Article 2(7), United Nations Charter.

37. For Greece, GA Resolution 109, 21 October 1947; for the Congo, SC Resolution 169, 24 November 1965; for Somalia, SC Resolution 794, 3 December 1992; for Bosnia, SC Resolution 770, 13 August 1992; for Rwanda, SC Resolution 929, 23 June 1994; for Haiti, SC Resolution 940, 31 July 1994.

38. Michael J. Glennon, "Sovereignty and Community After Haiti: Rethinking the Collective Use of Force," *American Journal of International Law* 89 (1995), pp. 70-74.

39. Charter of the Organization of American States, 30 May 1948, OAS Official Record, OEA/Ser. A/2.

40. See ASEAN Declaration, 8 August 1967, 6 I.L.M. 1233 (This is considered to be the founding document of ASEAN); Preamble, Maastricht Treaty on European Union, 7

February 1992, 31 I.L.M. 247; Article III (4), Charter of the Organization of African Unity, 26 May 1963, 2 I.L.M. 766.

41. Ethan Nadelmann, "Global Prohibition Regimes: The Evolution of Norms in International Society," *International Organization* 44 (1990), p. 479.

42. Benton, *Soldiers for Peace*, p. 225.

43. Martha Finnemore, "Constructing Norms of Humanitarian Intervention," in Peter Katzenstein, ed., *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), p. 180.

44. G.R. Semin and A.S.R. Manstead, *The Accountability of Conduct: A Social Psychological Analysis* (New York: Academic, 1983), p. 35. Emphasis added.

45. Stanley Cohen, *Visions of Social Control: Crime Punishment and Classification* (New York: Polity, 1985), p. 1.

46. On the stigmatization of vigilantism, see Allan V. Horowitz, *The Logic of Social Control* (New York: Plenum, 1990), p. 127. On the illegitimacy of unilateral intervention in conflicts or humanitarian disasters, see Siekmann, *National Contingents*, pp. 95-6; Philippe Garigue, "International-sanction and 'Droit d'ingŽrence' in International Humanitarian Law," *International Journal* 48 (1993), p. 668; Finnemore, "Constructing Norms," pp. 180-2.

47. Finnemore, "Constructing Norms," p. 182.

48. See Nadelmann, "Global Prohibition Regimes," p. 480; Elster, *Cement of Society*, pp. 100, 131-32. Elster uses the term moral norms and social norms to distinguish between the two influences. It seems that this conflates the dictate of the norm with the reasons for following it. As Nadelmann points out, the same norm can be followed for a variety of reasons, including the two I discuss.

49. This corresponds to the distinction Findlay draws between participation based on altruism and participation designed to increase a state's prestige. Findlay, "New Peacekeepers," p. 8.

50. It should be noted that the explanations are not mutually exclusive. They can be operating at the same time on the same actor.

51. In order to obtain a better balance between instances of participation and instances of non- participation, I defined participation as the contribution of greater than ten personnel. Although I have not reported on it, I performed a similar analysis to the one that follows defining participation as the contribution of any personnel. I obtained largely similar results. The primary reasons I am using the "greater than ten" definition is that it



allows the inclusion of Russia. Without the "greater than ten" definition Russia participated in nearly every operation, making analysis difficult.

52. I use the term power, instead of powerful state, because one of the powers I am examining is the European Union.

53. Japan would have been included, but it has not participated in enough operations to allow a meaningful analysis.

54. See Findlay, "New Peacekeepers," pp. 9-10.

55. Nadelmann, "Global Prohibition Regimes," p. 482.