United Nations Peace Initiatives 1946-2015: Introducing a New Data Set

Govinda Clayton (Center for Security Studies, ETH Zürich, Zürich, Switzerland),

Han Dorussen (Government Department, University of Essex, Colchester, UK) and

Tobias Böhmelt (Government Department, Colchester, University of Essex, UK) [1][2]

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Abstract: The United Nations (UN) has developed a complex and interconnected system of committees, representatives, and missions in support of its peace and security mandate. This article introduces the United Nations Peace Initiatives (UNPI) data set, which provides information on 469 UN initiatives aimed at conflict prevention and crisis management, mediation, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding. The data encompass all initiatives mandated by the UN Security Council, the General Assembly, as well as Secretary General between 1946 and 2015. This includes diplomatic, technocratic, political-development, and peacekeeping missions. UNPI data provide an empirical basis to assess the relative contributions of various UN subsidiary bodies to prevent, manage, and suppress the outbreak and recurrence of conflict. This article discusses the underlying rationale of the data collection, the coding rules, and procedures, and shows how UNPI can be combined with conflict data. Initial analyses show the increased use of different types of UN peace initiatives over time. The UN regularly deploys multiple peace initiatives to a dispute, often with significant periods of overlap. Ongoing hostilities and economic development are found to be key determinants of mission choice. In line with the theme of the Special Issue, the UNPI data set underscores the importance of, and provides a tool through which to examine the, interdependencies between various conflict management efforts.

Keywords: United Nations, Peacekeeping, Political Missions, Peacemaking, Prevention, Data Set

Introduction

The United Nations (UN) is the principal organization tasked with maintaining international peace and security. Hence, it is often at the forefront of attempts to prevent the escalation of violence, manage and resolve violent disputes, and prevent the recurrence of war. Over time, the UN has developed a complex and interconnected system of subsidiary bodies, including committees, representatives, and missions in support of its peace and security mandate.

A bourgeoning literature explores the causes and consequences of different UN activities to make, build, and keep peace (Bercovitch and Gartner 2006; Svensson 2009; Clayton 2013; Dorussen and Gizelis 2013; Costalli 2014; Wallensteen and Svensson 2014). In addition, a small, yet significant, body of work increasingly explores the interdependencies among and between interventions such as mediation and peacekeeping (Greig and Diehl 2005; Beardsley, Cunningham, and White 2019). Yet, despite these advancements, we still know little about the possible interdependencies between different UN efforts. Logically, we could expect that the presence (or absence) of one UN initiative, e.g., a sanctions committee, influences the success of another, such as a political-development mission. Moreover, certain initiatives, like peacekeeping, are more likely to follow and explicitly relate to other, earlier efforts, such as a Special Mission of the Secretary General. Existing work largely overlooks such interdependencies, instead treating different UN bodies independently. This approach is theoretically and methodologically problematic, but thus far we simply lacked comprehensive data on the full range of UN peace initiatives necessary to precisely assess the various forms of interdependence.

This article introduces the United Nations Peace Initiatives (UNPI) data set, which contains systematic, human-coded data on all UN initiatives with a peace and security

mandate created between 1946 and 2015. Our operational definition of a UN peace initiative is any subsidiary body or organ, temporary or permanent, created by the UN under a peace and security mandate to address, prevent, manage, or resolve violent conflict. Initiatives include peacekeeping operations, mediators, and good offices that often feature in existing research, but add the wider range of UN entities, including political missions, commissions, investigative bodies, committees, groups, panels, tribunals, representatives, working groups, and missions of the Secretary General.[1]

In providing a comprehensive collection of UN peace initiatives, we offer the research community an opportunity to assess a wider range of UN interventions to make, build, and keep peace as well as the various interdependencies across UN conflict management tools, including the relations between different initiatives, sequencing of initiatives, and agency-specific conflict management trajectories (Owsiak 2014). For interventions into intrastate and interstate conflicts, initiatives are linked to armed conflicts as identified within the Uppsala Armed Conflict Data (Gleditsch et al. 2002; Pettersson, Högbladh, and Öberg 2019), allowing researchers to assess interdependencies across and within multiple disputes. The data further include additional information on the initiating and authorizing UN organs, as well as the stated functions for each initiative, offering yet further opportunities to explore interdependence across initiatives with similar or related functions.

Why New Data on United Nations Peacemaking?

Existing empirical evaluations of UN peacemaking tend to focus on the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations (PKOs) (for overviews, see, de Jonge Oudraat 1996, Gilligan & Stedman 2003; Fortna 2008; Di Salvatore & Ruggeri 2017). This literature has produced fascinating insights into why PKOs are established and under what

circumstances missions can be effective. That said, at least three limitations remain: initiatives that seek to prevent the initial escalation of violence are overlooked, political missions and the broader range of initiatives (beyond mediation and peacekeeping) are not taken into consideration, and possible interactions between conflict management methods within the UN toolbox are rarely modeled.[2]

First, successive UN Secretary Generals have stressed the importance of conflict prevention for the UN (Guterres 2019). However, conflict-management tools such as peacekeeping and mediation are less likely to be adopted prior to the onset of significant violence, as it is often violence that attracts the international community's attention and convinces the parties to incur the costs associated with accepting third-party intervention. Data have previously been unavailable for many of those initiatives that focus on prevention, such as the deployment of a Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG), or are limited in their temporal and geographic coverage (e.g., Öberg, Möller, and Wallensteen 2009). The UNPI data provide information on all UN activities during periods of conflict and peace, therefore capturing activities seeking to prevent the escalation of disputes prior to them reaching conventional thresholds to enter into conflict data sets (e.g., 25 battle-related fatalities for the Uppsala Conflict Data Program). This includes commissions and committees based in UN Headquarters in New York (e.g., a committee concerning Guinea-Bissau), which are normally overlooked in existing research despite being a common UN response. The UNPI data capture preventative political initiatives that intersect with mediation, but also provide information on standing bodies that facilitate dialogue outside periods of official negotiation (e.g., the UN Office in Burundi, Panel of Experts on Yemen, Security Council Committee concerning Cyprus). The UNPI thus facilitates research that speaks to debates regarding the capacity of the UN to undertake effective conflict

prevention (Beardsley, Cunningham, and White 2017; White, Cunningham, and Beardsley 2018).

Second, given the significant size and cost of peacekeeping, the bias in current research toward PKOs is understandable, but risks overlooking that the UN employ a broad array of instruments.[3] Whereas PKOs are generally military-led and involve substantial military/police forces, civilians take the lead in other UN initiatives. Notably, as we show below, the number of peacekeeping missions is often similar to, or less than, the number of these alternative initiatives. This suggests a possibly important, but largely neglected role of UN conflict-resolution efforts beyond peacekeeping. Mostly, existing research treats cases without peacekeeping as having seen no UN engagement at all (e.g., Gilligan and Stedman 2003; Fortna 2008; Ruggeri, Dorussen, and Gizelis 2018). As a result, it remains unclear to what extent other UN peacemaking attempts influence violent conflict, as well as how and why the UN decides for a particular policy instrument in a given context. UNPI provides data on the full spectrum of UN peace initiatives, in particular capturing a myriad of political missions that occur during and after conflict, but which are not included in existing conflict-management data. For example, UNPI encompasses various activities undertaken by the UN in post-conflict periods that attempt to prevent war recurrence, including peacebuilding (i.e., political-development) missions such as the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo. This offers researchers with an opportunity to explore questions relating to UN post-conflict peacebuilding activities other than peacekeeping.

The Managing Intrastate Low-level Conflict (MILC) (Melander, Möller, and Öberg 2009) and the Managing Intrastate Conflict (MIC) (Melander and von Uexkull 2011) data sets are notable examples that also code a wide variety of third-party interventions.

There are, however, important differences between the MI(L)C data and UNPI. First of all, MI(L)C only codes interventions during (intrastate) conflict episodes, while UNPI codes all UN peace initiatives irrespective of conflict status encompassing both intra- and interstate wars.[4] While the MI(L)C also includes interventions by states, faith-based groups, and non-governmental organizations, the UNPI exclusively codes UN-based peace initiatives, but it provides additional information for the latter. A final important difference is that the MI(L)C data code events, while UNPI compiles information on bodies and organs which may have undertaken multiple events, e.g., facilitating series of talks between warring factions. UNPI thus provides information what different subsidiary bodies are authorized (or mandated) to do rather than actually implemented activities.

Third, existing research has largely neglected possible interdependencies between different peace initiatives. The nature of a particular conflict is not only likely to define the feasible set of options, but policy instruments and peace initiatives may also be complements or substitutes. When they are complements, the choice for a particular instrument makes it more likely that another tool will be implemented in addition. For example, if the UN plays a large role in mediating a peace agreement, it might also be more likely to deploy a peacekeeping mission. In contrast, other policy instruments, such as sanctions committees and political missions, might instead be primarily substitutes where the choice for a particular instrument in effect excludes another initiative. The limitations of previous work that generally fails to assess the interdependence between conflict-management methods is highlighted throughout this Special Issue. Inferences made when analyzing only a single instrument are likely to provide a biased estimation of its effect and to ignore any combined effects of different tools. There are, however, some important exceptions; for example, studies by Greig &

Diehl (2005), Joshi & Quinn (2015), DeRouen & Chowdhury (2018) and Clayton and Dorussen (2019) all consider the conditional effects of mediation and peacekeeping. Beardsley, Cunningham & White (2019) and Kathman and Benson (2019), moreover, argue for the complementarity of peacekeeping and diplomatic efforts. However, these studies still disregard the broader range of other UN actions as well as the timing of initiatives. Using Security Council resolutions, Beardsley & Schmidt (2012) (see also, White, Cunningham, and Beardsley 2018) examine the specific timing of UN interventions. UNPI also relies on Security Council resolutions as the source for part of its data, but the unit of analysis of the UNPI data set is a mission or committee rather than specific mandates. Finally, based on an innovative analysis of the MILC data, Heldt (2013) examines the sequencing of different peace initiatives in a small number of conflicts and concludes that there is a lack of coordination between the different efforts.

The UNPI data set details start and ending dates of individual initiatives and allows different missions to be linked via geographical location or conflict, thus providing the information needed to examine the interdependencies between various conflict management efforts. This includes initiatives launched prior to, during, and following conflict, allowing researchers to assess sequencing, substitutive, and conditional interdependencies across conflict management tools.

United Nations Peace Initiatives Data

The UNPI data encompass all initiatives that were created or authorized by the UN Security Council, General Assembly, as well as Secretary General, and is based on two primary sources. To identify those initiatives created or mandated by the Security Council, we rely on *the Repertoire of the Practices of the Security Council,* while

initiatives created by the General Assembly (GA) are based on the *GA Yearly Reports.*[5] UNPI currently covers the period from 1946 until 2015, and includes information on 469 UN bodies aimed at conflict prevention and crisis management, mediation, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding.

The *Repertoire of the Practices of the Security Council* provides comprehensive coverage of the Security Council's "interpretation and application of the United Nations Charter" (United Nations 2019b). Its primary purpose is to "provide Member States, including those elected to serve on the Security Council, the United Nations system, academics and others with a source of information regarding the evolving practice of the Security Council" (United Nations 2019b). The UN first published the repertoire in 1954, covering 1946-1951. The current version of the UNPI data includes information from an additional 19 supplements to this initial repertoire, which are updated and released approximately every three years. Each supplement to the repertoire contains information on subsidiary organs, bodies, and enforcement mechanisms of the Security Council. This includes newly launched missions, missions mandated but never initiated, and continuing missions. The UN uses various labels to group different initiatives, including commissions, investigative bodies, sanctions committees, standing and ad-hoc committees, groups, panels, tribunals, peacebuilding offices, political missions, peacekeeping missions, mediators, coordinators, good offices, missions of the Security Council, and missions of the Secretary General.

The *GA Yearly Reports* provide information on all initiatives launched by the General Assembly by summarizing all GA resolutions and decisions each year (United Nations 2019a). This includes various boards, commissions, committees, assemblies, and working groups recommended by the GA, although sometimes the Secretary General ultimately authorizes these initiatives. In identifying initiatives to be included

in UNPI, coders were instructed to ensure that the mandate or the justification of the initiative in the *Repertoire* or *Yearly Reports* refer to the responsibility of the UN to maintain the peace and security. For the *Repertoire*, all initiatives were detailed in Chapter 8 (i.e., consideration of questions under the Council's responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security), whereas the GA Yearly Reports were reviewed in their entirety to identify the initiatives with a peace and security mandate.

We provide the data in three forms with different units of analysis. The first data set uses peace initiative as its unit of analysis. This approach allows for comparisons across the various initiatives directly. In total, we identify 469 initiatives. Second, we noted that the mandates of some initiatives were changed or renewed leading to shifts in their function and purpose. To this end, the data also come in a version that identifies initiatives based on their unique mandate, therefore having in effect the initiative-mandate as the unit of analysis. There are 600 observations for this data set – 66 out of the 469 initiatives witnessed at least one revised/renewed mandate, with some of the missions having more than one such change. For example, the UN Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS) has been renewed six times up to UNPOS VII. Finally, we provide a data set with yearly observations for when a particular initiative is mandated, or with the initiative-year as the unit of analysis. Here, we rely on UN information to determine the start and end date of each initiative and created an observation for each year in which a peace initiative was active. This results in a data set of 3,320 observations. All versions of the data set comprise sixty four variables on initiatives, conflict links, start and end dates, functions, as well as the initiator or resolution texts associated with an intervention. The codebook we provide with the data gives a comprehensive overview.[6]

Locating United Nations Peace Initiatives

The UNPI data are useful to identify where and when the UN deployed different types of missions. The data suggest that political initiatives are commonly linked to peacekeeping missions. Almost all countries that hosted a peacekeeping mission were also the target of at least one other form of UN peace initiatives. However, beyond those countries hosting a peacekeeping mission, seventy further countries have been the focus of a UN peace initiative since 1946.[7] The UN uses various labels to group the different forms of initiatives in its documentation, but the labelling and groupings vary over time, meaning that the same body is often grouped under different categories across different years. In the data set, we provide the name of each initiative, the classification used within either the repertoire for the SC or GA reports, and a link to the original reports. In providing detailed information on each of the initiatives, we offer users the opportunity to group initiatives in the most appropriate form for their research.

To offer a general overview of the different types of initiatives commonly used, we define four broad types of UN initiatives, which we base on the macro categories used by the UN in the budgetary process: (1) diplomatic initiatives (i.e., special and personal envoys, advisers and representatives of the secretary general, mediators and good offices) (United Nations 2017a), (2) technocratic initiatives (i.e., sanctions monitoring teams, groups, committees, panels of experts) (United Nations 2017b), (3) political-development or peacebuilding missions (i.e., regional offices, offices in support of political processes, field missions) (United Nations 2017c), and (4) peacekeeping operations. Diplomatic, technocratic, and development initiatives are generally composed of, and led by, civilians and we thus also refer to them as political missions. Peacekeeping missions predominantly comprise military forces and fall under military leadership, but we recognize that they can have significant civilian and police

components.[8] Figure 1 presents the frequency of these different forms of peace initiatives since 1946 and reveals the profusion of peace initiatives other than peacekeeping.

[Figure 1 about here]

Diplomatic initiatives are individuals, groups, or bodies that aim to assist the belligerent parties in resolving their incompatibility through negotiation or dialogue. The top-left panel of Figure 1 indicates the number of on-going diplomatic initiatives in any given year. Their number has grown rapidly since 2000, and more detailed information in the UNPI data set suggest that this is driven by a steady increase in the number of Special Representatives of the Secretary General (SRSG). In 2015, they were the most common form of UN peace initiative, featuring in thirty five different contexts. Existing data on mediation efforts (e.g., DeRouen, Bercovitch, and Pospieszna 2011) are likely to capture some, but not all, of the UN diplomatic efforts. Mediation data tend to focus on the mediation episode as the unit of observation, thereby excluding efforts that take place before, during, and following actual negotiations. Even when absent from the formal peace process, SRSGs and diplomatic UN missions may still play an indirect role in facilitating and preparing negotiations or mediation. The UNPI data can thus complement prior research in examining the extent to which such efforts shape the peacemaking space.

Technocratic missions are the most common UN peace initiative. They encompass groups, committees, and technical experts who advise or support conflict management. For example, the UN recently formed a Panel of Experts on North Korea in response to the nuclear threat on the Korean peninsula. These bodies are generally home-based, i.e., in the UN Headquarters in New York, and comprise economic and country experts to support UN decision-making by providing information and advice to the Security

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Council. The high frequency of technocratic missions in the 1960s – as shown in the top-right panel of Figure 1 – reflects their role in facilitating decolonization. Nowadays, technocratic missions mainly advise the Security Council, the General Assembly, and the Secretary General on topics relating to sanctions and human right violations.

Political-development missions are defined as in-country field operations that seek to strengthen or develop the political and governance capabilities of states. These range from relatively small civilian missions (e.g., MICIVIH and MICAH in Haiti), to multidimensional state-building projects such as in Iraq. They can occur alongside peacekeeping operations (e.g., UN Political Office for Somalia) or in the absence peacekeepers (e.g., UN Mission in Nepal). During conflict, they help to prepare and support the political institutions of the state, whereas following conflict they often take on peacebuilding functions. The number of on-going political-development missions is represented in the bottom left hand panel of Figure 1. The frequency of active missions has increased sharply since the end of the Cold War. Interestingly, this largely ignored form of UN interventions has been more common than peacekeeping since the early 2000s.

Finally, the bottom right panel of Figure 1 shows the number of on-going peacekeeping operations. In line with prior research, we observe a low but relatively consistent number of missions throughout the Cold War, which rises sharply after 1989 before leveling out at approximately 15 missions since the mid-2000s.

[Figure 2 about here]

Many of the most interesting open questions relate to the interdependency, complementarity, and sequencing of UN tools. The UNPI data allow for a more systematic analysis of such effects. To provide a visual indication of the extent to which different initiatives occur simultaneously or sequentially, Figure 2 provides a timeline

for different peace initiatives directed at Morocco. Further, Figure 3 summarizes the timelines of interventions in all Sub-Sahara African states. Each segment in these graphs indicates the presence of a particular type of mission for each (country-) year between 1946 and 2015. The graphs show the huge variation in the distribution and simultaneity of different initiatives. As Figure 2 shows early missions to Morocco were of a political-development and technocratic nature. The former type of initiative was eventually stopped, while peacekeeping and diplomatic missions were deployed alongside technocratic missions. It seems unlikely that these different peace initiatives were entirely independent. Rather, decisions to deploy further missions reflect a kind of "learning" from the experience of earlier initiatives. The case of Morocco also illustrates that commonly the UN deploy different types of initiatives simultaneously. In some cases, there has been only one form of mission, e.g., Benin only briefly hosted a political-development mission. Yet Angola, represented in Figure 3 in the top-left quadrant as well, has hosted a series of political-development missions, which have been complemented by peacekeeping and technocratic initiatives.

[Figure 3 about here]

Figures 2 and 3 clearly illustrate that there have been more UN peace initiatives in recent years, but also that in more than half of the cases, the UN has deployed multiple peace initiatives, most often with significant periods of overlap. The UNPI data are therefore perfectly suited to assess possible interactions between different UN interventions and to explore the extent to which certain instruments replace, substitute, or possibly even undermine each other.

Mandating UN Peace Initiatives

In addition to providing information on the initiation and presence of all UN peace initiatives, the UNPI data include variables that capture key properties of each of the UN peace initiatives. For example, whether the UN peace initiatives originate from actions by the Security Council, the Secretary General, the General Assembly, or one of its subsidiaries (e.g., the Human Rights Commission. Table 1 identifies the share of peace initiatives established by the different bodies: the Security Council most commonly initiates peace initiatives (49%), followed by the Secretary General (30%), and the General Assembly (21%).

[Table 1 about here]

While it is possible for the same UN actor to initiate and authorize a peace initiative, in practice this is often divided as shown in Table 1. As expected, the Security Council authorizes the vast majority of initiatives (73%), followed by the General Assembly (22%). The Secretary General only authorized 5% of all initiatives. Particularly initiatives established by the Secretary General ultimately require authorization by the Security Council. Exploring the comparative effectiveness of initiatives as set up by the different UN bodies is thus another possible application of the data. This could, for example, facilitate research that speaks to debates on the relative effectiveness of peacemaking initiatives that are formed outside of the Security Council.

The UN mandates initiatives to perform various functions. Our thematic coding of missions offers a general indication of the purpose underling the mandate of each initiative (e.g., diplomatic, technocratic etc.). However, this broad grouping cannot fully identify the variation in functions assigned within and across initiatives. For this reason, we also code the functions assigned to each political initiative based on summaries of each mission in the *Repertoire of the Practices of the Security Council*

and the *GA Yearly Reports.* The function categories were developed inductively based on functions indicated within the UN documentation. In total, UNPI lists twenty seven functions. Table 2 summarizes the stated functions, as well as the frequency of missions that included a particular function. None of the functions are mutually exclusive, and certain functions regularly overlap; for example, UNPI data code whether an initiative has a monitoring function, but also whether it was tasked with fact finding.

[Table 2 about here]

As shown in Table 2, the most common functions of UN peace initiatives are providing advice to the UNSC and/or GA, implementing resolutions and sanctions, dialogue assistance, governance, and various forms of observation and monitoring. Each of these functions were relevant for between 25-38% of our initiatives. The functions are suitable for factor analysis to group similar initiatives. In addition, they also offer the potential to develop a more goal-focused method of assessment based on the explicitly stated mandate of the peace initiative (see for example, Duursma and Svensson 2019)

Peace Initiatives and Conflict Resolution

Peace initiatives do neither necessarily only occur during periods of conflict nor are they always directly related to a dispute. They are also deployed as an attempt to prevent the first onset of violence or to stabilize 'peace' post-conflict. Questions relating to the effectiveness of peace initiatives however often relate to their ability (or lack thereof) to prevent, manage, or resolve violent conflict. A helpful feature of the UNPI data is that it links UN peace initiatives with one of the most commonly used sources of conflict data, namely the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) (Gleditsch et al. 2002; Pettersson, Högbladh, and Öberg 2019). In total, we find that 320 (68.23%) of

all initial peace initiatives relate to at least one UCDP conflict, with some of them having links to more than one conflict. The missions relating to the most UCDP conflicts are those connected to the breakup of Yugoslavia. Still, 149 (31.77%) of all initial peace initiatives have no clear link to any UCDP conflict. These include cases where possibly pre-emptive actions stopped a conflict arising, along with initiatives focused on other forms of contestation not directly related to a specific conflict, such as Iran's nuclear program, Al-Qaida and anti-terrorism, or the process of decolonization.

Knowing that a peace initiative relates to a UCDP conflict does not in itself tell us the original purpose of the mission. It is possible that missions are formed in one phase and then simply continue into other periods due to path dependency. To assess the effectiveness of a mission, based on its initial mandate, we might then want to know the context in which the initiative was formed in the first place. To this end, we code whether each political initiative is formed before, during, of after conflict. Figure 4 presents an overview of the timing of each initiative by type using the initiative-year as the unit of analysis.

[Figure 4 about here]

In total, we observe that despite the UN discourse around the importance of prevention, we record only relatively few initiative-years prior to the onset of violence. In absolute and relative terms, the UN is most likely to launch technocratic missions prior to conflict – 23.5% of all technocratic missions-years (N=629, after accounting for missing values on conflict link). At the same time, only about 19% of all diplomatic (N=293), 12% of all peacekeeping (N=607), and 3% all political-development initiative-years (N=481) precede conflict. As expected, most initiative-years are situated during an armed conflict. Relatively speaking, the highest proportion of

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technocratic mission-years are during conflict (62%, N=390), followed by peacekeeping (59%, N=358), political-development (57%, N=273), and diplomatic (41%, N=119) initiative-years. There are, however, notable differences in the prevalence of initiative-years linked to post-conflict periods. About 40% of political-development mission-years (N=194) take place after the end of a conflict, as are 40% of diplomatic initiative-years (N=118), 29% of peacekeeping mission-years (N=178), and 14% of technocratic mission-years (N=91). Taken together, this points to important variation in the timing of different UN initiatives, suggesting an interesting additional element for interdependence for future research to explore.

Application: Determinants of Peace Initiatives

To demonstrate the usefulness of our data, we present a short application on the determinants of peace initiatives. Here, the initiative (rather than initiative-year) is the unit of analysis and we only focus on the onset of new or "first" missions below. That is, follow-up missions or those that are merely renewed are omitted from the analysis due to persistent cross-unit (path) dependencies. The dependent variable is nominally scaled, comprising 288 different missions in 1960-2015 (after accounting for missing values in the explanatory variables), of which fifty eight are peacekeeping operations, fifty six are political-development interventions, forty seven are of a diplomatic nature, and 127 are technocratic missions. In light of this dependent variable, the application is based on multinomial logit regression models. We use peacekeeping operations as the baseline category to identify any systematic differences between peacekeeping operations and different types of political missions.

[Table 3 about here]

We focus on two main explanatory variables for this application. First, as we shown above, initiatives regularly are established during active conflicts. It is plausible to assume that cases will be more complex to solve and more protracted once they have escalated to actual fighting. To this end, we created a dummy variable, *Conflict Link*, which captures in a binary fashion whether a specific mission was linked to a conflict (1) or not (0). Conflict is defined according to Gleditsch et al. (2002). Second, we incorporate a standard covariate in the study of civil war and peacekeeping: GDP per capita. Income is one of the most robust determinants of conflict outbreaks in that wealthier states are less likely to see conflict emerging (e.g., Ward, Greenhill, and Bakke 2010). The data for this variable are taken from the World Bank.

Table 3 summarizes the empirical results of this model. In this short application, we obtain evidence that political missions differ from UN peacekeeping interventions in important aspects. First, a link to an active conflict generally lowers the likelihood to see diplomatic, technocratic, or political-development interventions compared to peacekeeping. The coefficient estimate of *Conflict Link* is consistently negatively signed in Table 3 and significant at conventional levels. Second, wealthier countries are more likely to attract diplomatic missions than peacekeeping operations, which is consistent with the narrative that peacekeepers usually go to the more difficult places. However, underlining the need to unpack the black box of "no-peacekeeping instances," there is no statistically significant difference between political-development and technocratic missions on the one hand and, on the other hand, peacekeeping interventions.

Discussion and Conclusion

UNPI is the first data set to provide a comprehensive survey of UN interventions covering political and peacekeeping missions. The UNPI data cover a global sample from 1946 to 2015, including 469 peace initiatives, over 3,000 mission years, and 111 countries. In comparison to other data on the role of the UN in prevention and peace, it captures the fullest spectrum of UN activities, expanding the focus well beyond peacekeeping. This offers researchers the potential for a number of novel applications. First, the UNPI offer the possibility of assessing previously overlooked UN peace initiatives such as Special Representatives of the Secretary General, Groups of Experts, and Political Missions. Second, the data facilitates assessment of various forms of UN preventive action, both prior to conflict onset, and following the peaceful termination of a dispute. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the UNPI data offers a unique potential to assess various forms of independence, in particular between and across conflict management initiatives.

The UNPI data facilitate research on a number of debates surrounding the determinants and impacts of peacekeeping. In line with the theme of this Special Issue, there has been increasing attention to the need to contextualize the impact of peacekeeping by examining the causes and consequences of UN *interventions* instead (Greig and Diehl 2005; Beardsley, Cunningham, and White 2019). The UNPI data should prove to be useful here, not only because they provide a much more complete survey of the various conflict management tools applied by the UN, but also because UNPI identifies the start and end dates of the interventions and how they are connected to specific conflicts. This information contained in UNPI should also be helpful for research exploring the deployment of PKOs. Fortna (2008) and Ruggeri, Dorussen & Gizelis (2017), among others, argue that peacekeeping 'works' in part because

peacekeepers deploy to so-called hard cases, but their analyses do not consider alternative interventions that may occur prior to or simultaneous with a PKO. The application discussed in the previous section so far supports the notion that PKOs target harder cases, but further research into this is clearly warranted.

The UNPI data also provide a good starting point for future research on burden-sharing in interventions. Current research exclusively considers burden-sharing in PKOs (Bove and Elia 2011; Gaibulloev et al. 2015), but PKOs are atypical in the distribution of financial and personnel costs compared to many of the initiatives listed in UNPI. The UNPI data should also contribute to the emerging research agenda into the legacies of PKOs post-exit (Dorussen 2015; Gledhill 2020). Diplomatic, technocratic, and political-development missions not only regularly precede peacekeeping operations, they are also the initiatives via which the UN continues its engagement after the PKOs are formally withdrawn.

Three possible limitations of the UNPI data set are worth mentioning. First, it does not capture the informal activities the UN regularly uses as we know from qualitative accounts. For an initiative to enter the data, it requires that a formal subsidiary organ be created.[9] Second, while UNPI captures the full range of UN peace initiatives, it does not distinguish between the size and significance of different missions at present. Of course, some political missions are relatively small involving a small skeleton team, while other, multidimensional missions have budgets of millions of dollars. Given the difficulties navigating the UN budgetary process, we have thus far not been able to identify the individual budget for each mission. Future research could address this limitation, which might allow for a more accurate assessment of costs and benefits across mission types. Finally, UNPI only includes interventions by the UN. It thus only

offers evidence of interventions by one actor, albeit the largest and arguably most

significant one.

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Figures

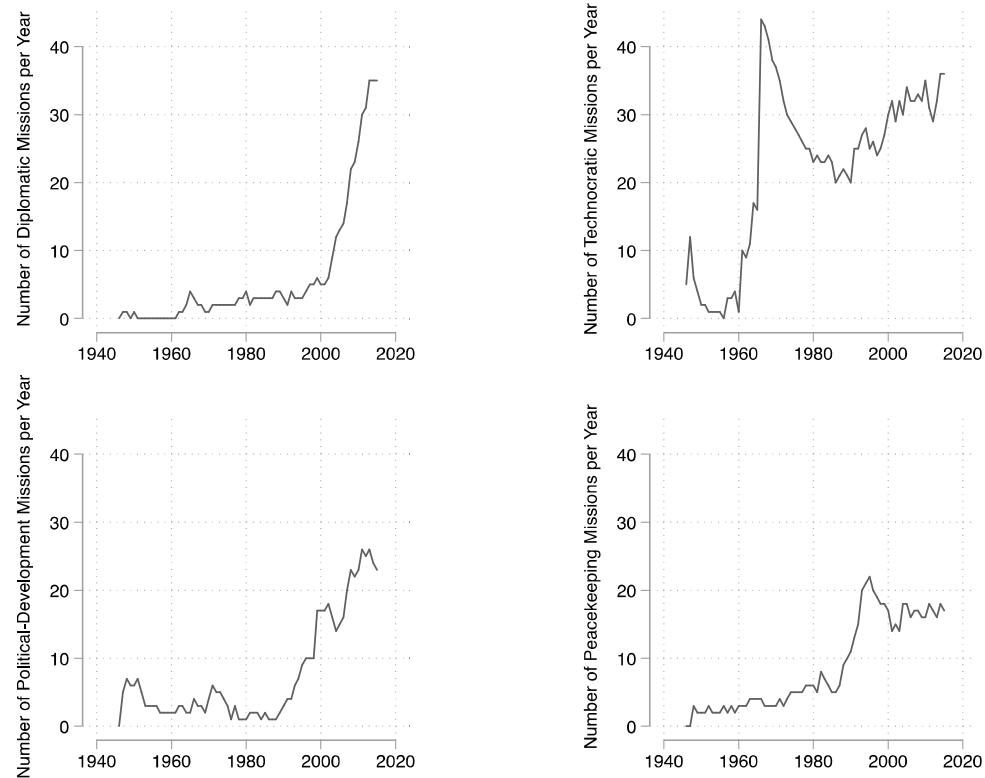**Figure 1: UN Political Initiatives across Time and Type**
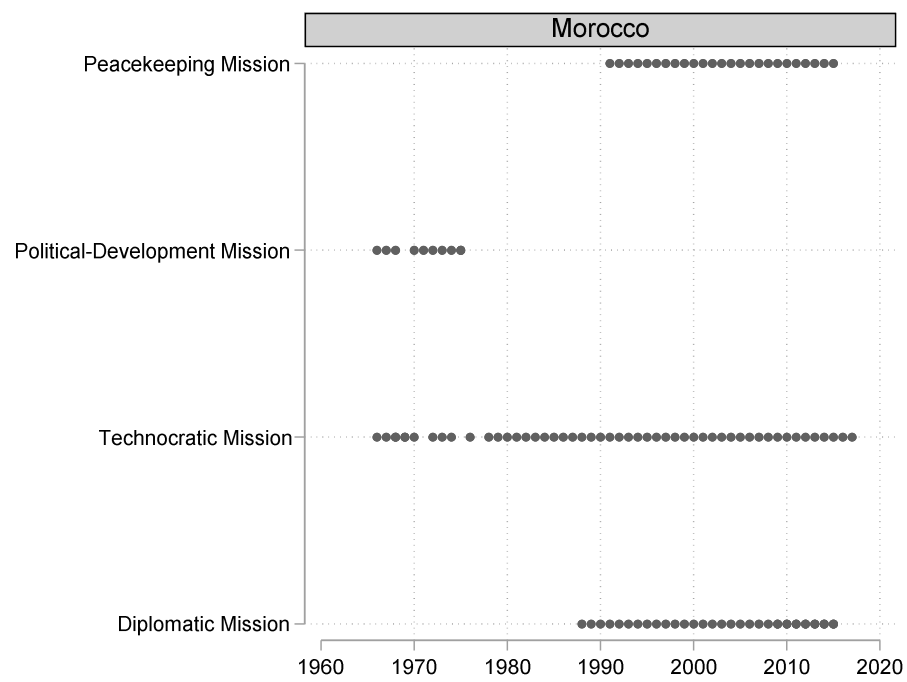
Figure 2: UN Peace Initiatives over Time – Morocco

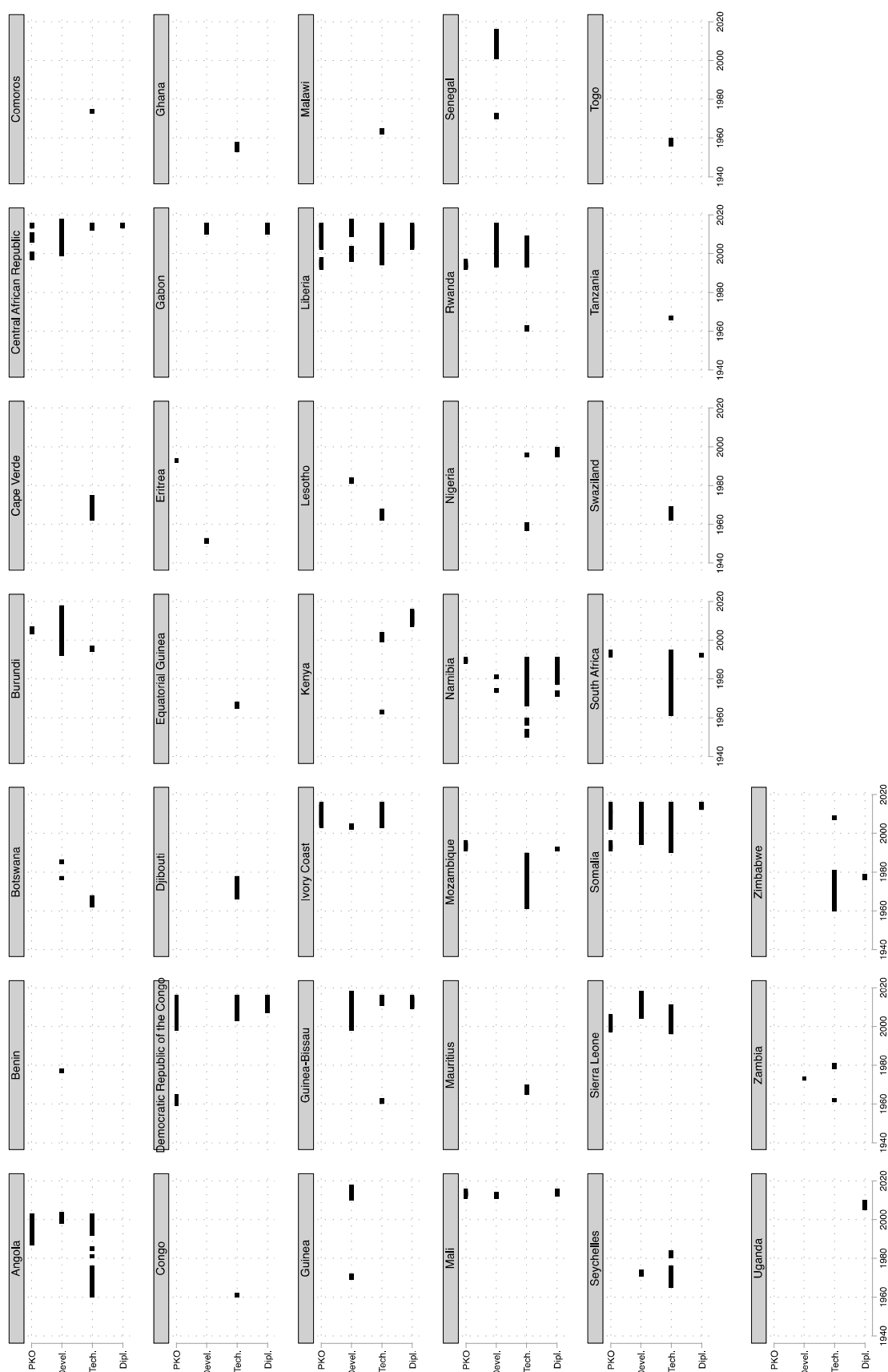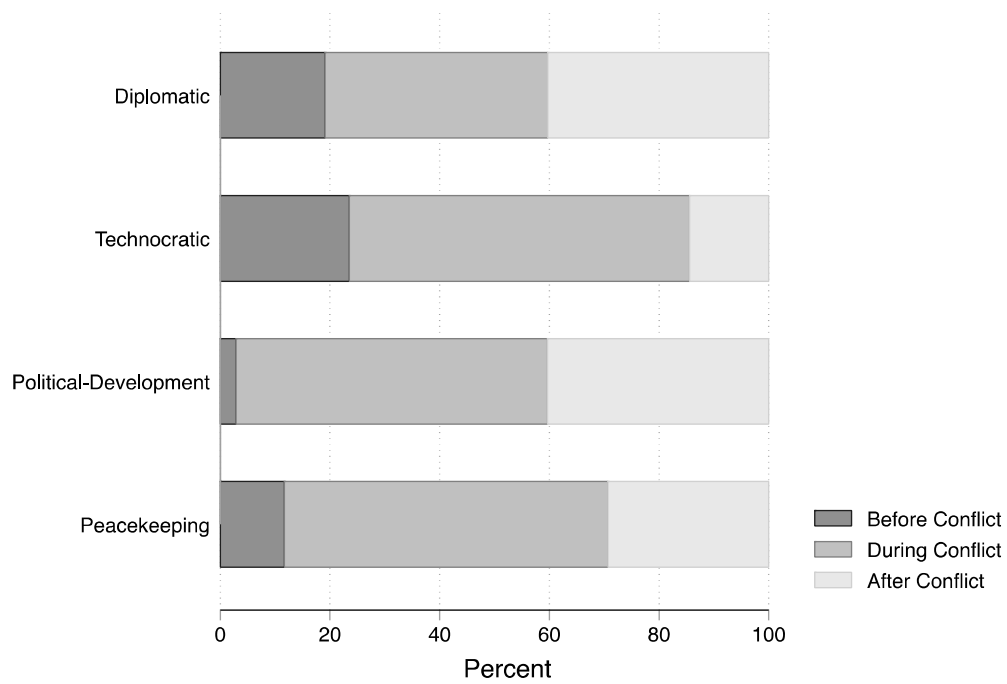**Figure 3: UN Peace Initiatives over Time – Sub-Saharan Africa**

Figure 4: The Timing of UN Peace Initiatives

Tables

Table 1: Establishment and Authorization of Peace Initiatives

| Establishment | Authorization | | | |
	General Assembly	Security Council	Secretary General	Total
General Assembly	114 (20.11)	4 (0.71)	2 (0.35)	120 (21.16)
Security Council	1 (0.18)	272 (47.97)	3 (0.53)	276 (48.68)
Secretary General	11 (1.94)	135 (23.81)	24 (4.23)	170 (29.98)
UN conference	1 (0.18)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	1 (0.18)
Total	127 (22.40)	411 (72.49)	29 (5.11)	567 (100.00)

Note: Data from the UNPI initiative-mandate data set, 32 initiatives missing values.

Table 2: Stated Function of UN Peace Initiatives

Function	Frequency
Advice (e.g. offer suggestions to and assist the UN Security Council & GA)	176 (38%)
Implementation (e.g. implementing resolutions, sanctions & legal rulings)	157 (34%)
Dialogue assistance (e.g. Mediation, Good Offices, assist parties to resolve differences…)	122 (27%)
Governance (e.g. provide, support & restore governing institutions)	121 (26%)
Monitoring (e.g. observe, supervise, monitor)	117 (25%)
Fact finding (e.g. commission of inquiry, investigation)	91 (20%)
Decolonization	94 (20%)
Coordinate international activities	58 (13%)
Election support	63 (13%)
Human rights promotion	43 (9%)
Peacekeeping	40 (9%)
Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration	27 (6%)
Security sector reform	25 (5%)
Promote rule of law	23 (5%)

Note: Frequency as percentage of initiatives in onset year. Functions associated with less than 5% of missions are excluded from the table

Table 3: **The Determinants of UN Peace Initiatives**

	Diplomatic	Technocratic	Development
Conflict Link	-2.682**	-4.019***	-2.756**
	(1.095)	(1.022)	(1.085)
GDP per capita (ln)	0.363**	0.010	-0.016
	(0.142)	(0.116)	(0.138)
Constant	-0.322	4.070***	2.600*
	(1.321)	(1.187)	(1.398)
Obs.			288
Log Pseudolikelihood			-338.739
Wald χ^2			38.81
Prob > χ^2			0.000

Table entries are coefficients; standard errors clustered on country in parentheses; peacekeeping mission is baseline category. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

[1] In the UNPI data, initiatives refer to the *institutions* resulting from particular UN decisions rather than the decision itself to establish a committee, mission etc. This somewhat stretches the meaning of an 'initiative', but lacking a clear alternative, initiatives adequately describe the broad set of entities which we have coded. It is commonplace to refer to political *missions* or peacekeeping *missions* or *operations*. Here, we follow this convention when the meaning is unambiguous.

[2] As an alternative that might address some of these points, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) has compiled the Multilateral Peace Operations Database, which comprises information on 120 multilateral peace operations (both UN and non-UN) between 2000 and 2010. There seems to be some overlap between their data and ours, but the SIPRI data set has smaller country-year coverage and is currently not publicly available online.

[3] More detailed data on peacekeeping missions are publicly available (see., Cil et al (2020), and the contributions in Clayton et al. (2017)), but with some variation in the set of peacekeeping missions coded. UNPI includes peacekeeping missions alongside political missions, which facilitates merging with other data on peacekeeping.

[4] More precisely, MILC only codes events during on-going low intensity conflicts as defined by UCDP, while MIC codes for all (UCDP) conflicts in Africa, including three years after their conclusion.

[5] Peace initiatives launched by the UN Secretary General are nearly always authorized by either the General Assembly or the Security Council, and thus feature in either the *Repertoire of the Practices of the Security Council* or the *Yearly Reports*. However, we also conducted a detailed search of the UN website to identify the rare initiatives that are initiated and authorized by the UNSG, separate from the UNSC and UNGA. This led us to add a small number of additional Special Representatives that were missing from the other reports.

[6] A selection of the key variables included: mission identifier, mission name, mission location, country identifier, conflict link, UCDP conflict code (if any), mission start/end date, mission class, four broad types of UN initiatives, establishing/authorizing institution, and function.

[7] Missions based at the UN Headquarters, such as the Peacebuilding Commission and the Special Representative on Violence against Children, are identified as being hosted in the United States of America.

[8] The distinction between political and peacekeeping missions is in line with UN convention. We recognize, however, that peacekeeping missions are also political.

[9] Since they rely on media reports and code events, the UCDP MI(L)C data include more informal and short-lived interventions, but also these data ultimately rely on publicly available information.