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Peacekeeping, State Capacity, and Public Service Provision: How PKOs Bolster Legitimate Governance

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Abstract

Does intervention by PKOs strengthen the capacity of post-conflict states to perform their most basic function—providing public services to their citizens? In this paper, we empirically explore the effectiveness of UNPKO mandates in the provision of public services. Unpacking specific PKO mandates, we argue that PKO effectiveness in public service provision depends on both the mandate type and the host state context. A statistical analysis reveals that mandates related to power sharing and reconciliation effectively improve public services, but this effect is conditional on the host state's capacity to enforce domestic order. This study thus contributes to the literature by both disaggregating the mandated tasks and bringing the state capacity back in.

Introduction

United Nations (UN) Peacekeeping Operations (PKO) have undergone a dramatic transformation since their inception. From an era when Blue Helmets served a limited role of monitoring ceasefires, modern PKO has evolved into a complex,

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multidimensional actor engaged in state-building. This evolution reflects a shift in the international community's understanding of peace, moving from negative peace (i.e., the absence of war) to positive peace (i.e., the presence of just institutions and sustainable development). Contemporary PKO missions are mandated with a broad range of tasks to rebuild post-conflict societies, from disarmament and electoral support to the promotion of human rights and the establishment of the rule of law. (Better World Campaign, 2025).

However, this expansion of mandates raises a fundamental question: does PKO intervention strengthen the capacity of post-conflict states to perform their most basic function—providing public services to their citizens? In this paper, we explore the effectiveness of UNPKO mandates in the provision of public services, using the highly detailed Peacekeeping Mandates (PEMA) dataset (Di Salvatore et al., 2022), which provides fine-grained mandate-level data recorded for every Security Council resolution. This structure allows us to track mandate changes year by year throughout the mission period, enabling us to classify mandates into three categories based on the Protection of Civilians (POC) policy and to observe not only their content but also the intensity and intrusiveness of interventions over time.

This dynamic perspective enables a more nuanced analysis of how mandate design influences governance outcomes, moving beyond a static, binary assessment of PKO presence. By disaggregating PKO mandates, this study quantitatively examines their differential impacts on a critical yet under-researched aspect of state capacity: the quality of public services, as measured using the Fragile States Index (FSI) P2 score. This approach moves beyond the simple question of whether PKO works and engages in a more nuanced discussion of which parts of a PKO mandate affect the specific governance outcomes achieved.

Through a set of statistical analyses, we find that the effectiveness of UNPKO on public service provision is conditional on both the type of PKO mandate and the military capacity of the hosting state. First, among the protection of civilians (POC) activities, only protection through dialogue and engagement significantly affects public service provision. Second, however, such an effect depends on the host state's military capacity—protection through dialogue and engagement improves public services only when the host state's military capacity exceeds a certain level.

Thus, the contribution of this study is to test the validity of the claim that mandates focused on civilian protection—which are essential for peacebuilding—improve the

quality of public services, by empirically distinguishing the types of mandates and identifying the conditions under which PKO mandates are effective.

This paper is structured as follows. The next section reviews the existing literature on PKO effectiveness to situate this study, followed by details of the research methods. Then we present the analysis results and examine the statistical evidence. The final section offers overall conclusions and identifies areas for future research.

The Evolving Role of Peacekeeping Operations

The scholarly debate on PKO effectiveness has long been a significant theme in international relations. Foundational studies, such as Fortna (2004), demonstrated that PKOs are effective in sustaining peace after civil wars. This line of research established a basic understanding of PKO's value, revealing that the mere presence of peacekeepers fosters trust between conflicting parties and reduces the risk of conflict recurrence.

Subsequent research has deepened this analysis, moving from a binary (presence vs. absence) to an examination of the impact of PKO composition. The work of Hultman et al. (2016) is a prime example, showing that the deployment of military troops significantly reduces the risk of conflict recurrence, whereas increases in police officers or civilian staff do not have a similar effect. These studies established the fundamental understanding that security-focused interventions are effective in their primary goal of suppressing violence. This trend has guided researchers' interest toward the more practical question of which elements within a PKO's design contribute most to consolidating peace.

The rise of the human security paradigm provides the theoretical justification for this study's focus on public services as a core measure of PKO success. As championed by Sadako Ogata, human security is defined as freedom not only "from fear" (state security) but also "from want" (individual well-being) (UNDP, 1994). In a post-conflict society, the most critical "want" that citizens face is precisely the lack of functioning healthcare systems, access to safe water, and schools for their children—in short, basic public services. Therefore, PKOs, particularly those with POC mandates, are expected to play a more active role. This role extends beyond simply deterring violence (freedom from fear) and includes assisting in the restoration of the state's capacity to deliver public services (freedom from want).

Since the late 1990s, PKO mandates have reached a major turning point. Against the backdrop of the tragedies in Rwanda and Bosnia, the Protection of Civilians (POC)

has become a central element of PKO missions (Better World Campaign, 2025). This shift occurred alongside the rise of the "human security" paradigm, which emphasizes the protection of individual lives and dignity, not just state security. This normative shift was also reflected in academic research. Fjelde et al. (2018) showed that PKO deployment at the local level can effectively suppress violence against civilians by rebel groups. Furthermore, Hegre et al. (2019) found that PKOs with more robust mandates significantly reduce conflict. POC mandates often include the authority to use "all necessary means" to protect civilians from physical violence, signifying that PKO activities have become more proactive and interventionist (U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2020). Theoretically, POC mandates aim to establish an "infrastructure for peace" (Mutanda, 2019; Duursma & Smidt, 2023)

The Infrastructure for Peace (I4P) is distinct from physical infrastructure, such as roads. It refers to the mechanisms, institutions, capacities, and networks necessary to prevent, manage, and resolve conflicts non-violently and to embed sustainable peace within a society. More specifically, these 'institutions' and 'networks' refer not only to formal state bodies but also to the vital, community-level architecture of peace. This includes local peace committees, early warning and response networks, forums for dialogue between formerly warring factions, and networks of civil society monitors. Likewise, 'capacities' refer to the crucial human and social capital required for peace, such as the skills of local mediators, the ability of community leaders to manage disputes over resources, and the resilience of local networks to absorb shocks without resorting to violence. This concept is central to this paper's theoretical framework, as it forms the critical link between security and governance. The theory posits that robust Protection of Civilians (POC) mandates, while primarily a security function, serve as the essential catalyst for this infrastructure. By providing a secure environment (freedom from fear), POC missions create the necessary 'public space' for peacebuilding actors—both international (NGOs) and local (civil society)—to operate safely. It is these actors who then build this I4P. In short, this social and political infrastructure (I4P)—not the physical presence of peacekeepers alone—is what constitutes the rebuilt foundation for resilient state institutions. It is this foundation, in turn, that enables the state to restore its core functions and deliver the very public services like health and education, which this study later observes through the FSI P2 score.

By providing a secure environment for local communities, POC is intended to

rebuild trust among conflict parties and create the preconditions for state reconstruction and the restoration of public services. A significant body of research has also accumulated on the impact of PKOs on post-conflict political regimes. Notably, the study by Blair et al. (2023) revealed a strong correlation between PKOs with democracy-promotion mandates and improvements in the host country's democratic quality. This suggests that PKOs can contribute to building better governance regimes through activities such as electoral support, establishing the rule of law, and fostering civil society. However, "democratic quality," such as electoral freedom and political rights, is not necessarily synonymous with the "governance quality" that ordinary citizen experience in their daily lives.

Prioritizing limited state budgets and international aid for political processes like "holding elections" may directly compete with allocating resources for tangible public services, such as "rebuilding hospitals" or "restoring water infrastructure." While a democratically elected government may improve services in the long run, it is the latter that directly addresses the "wants" citizens face daily. Therefore, separate from the findings on democratization, testing PKO effectiveness using the metric of public service quality—an indicator more closely tied to citizens' daily lives—is an essential and distinct academic inquiry.

To date, there has been a lack of systematic research on how PKOs affect the restoration of these basic state functions. This is precisely the gap this paper seeks to fill. PKO research has progressed in separate fields of security (conflict recurrence) and governance (democratization). This study aims to bridge these divided research areas by examining how various types of security and institution-building mandates impact a concrete governance outcome: public services.

Theory and Hypotheses

The conceptual link between security and public service restoration is essential: durable peace is impossible without functional governance. While the military component of a PKO may establish physical security, sustained stability requires the social contract between the state and its citizens to be rebuilt. This reconstruction of the social contract is fundamentally achieved through the delivery of essential services, which legitimizes the state's authority and removes a primary source of local grievance and conflict recurrence. Therefore, the FSI P2 score is not merely a social outcome, but a critical metric of political legitimacy in the post-conflict context. This study empirically

examines the relationship between POC mandates and the quality of public services.

The nature of PKO mandates has evolved from the traditional, limited tasks of the Cold War era to the more multidimensional and enforcement-oriented mandates associated with “transformational PKOs” that emerged in the early 1990s (Hegre et al., 2019). This transformation has led to a significant increase in the number of tasks adopted within a single mission: while missions in the 1990s averaged 5.8 tasks, this figure rose to 20.8 in the 2010s (Di Salvatore et al., 2022). Moreover, the scope of mandates has expanded to include areas such as enhancing state capacity, reconciliation, and economic development—domains that were absent in early PKOs but have become common since the 2000s. In addition, mandates have become increasingly detailed and differentiated over time. These trends indicate that both the number and specificity of tasks have grown alongside the evolution of PKOs. Furthermore, even within a single mission, the range of tasks tends to increase over time, as illustrated by the case of MONUSCO.

In this study, we particularly shed light on the moderating effect of state capacity. Even if UNPKOs are effective, they do not create a state on their own—instead, they work with the host state, playing an assisting role. Therefore, it is conceivable that PKOs are most effective when the host state has at least sufficient capacity to establish domestic order. Since the primary provider of public services is still the state, while PKOs assist in various ways, we expect that the effect of PKO mandates on the quality of public services is mediated by the host state's capacity to implement domestic order.

Hence, we consider the potential moderating effect of state capacity on the relationship between the number of tasks (independent variable) and the quality of administrative services (dependent variable) by including an interaction term. We expect that stronger host-state capacity enhances the ability to implement complex tasks, thereby strengthening the positive effect of the number of tasks on administrative service quality. Specifically, when the host-state capacity is weak, an increase in the number of tasks may have only a limited impact on service quality. In contrast, when the host-state capacity is strong, a larger number of tasks is likely to yield greater improvements in administrative services. Based on this reasoning, we developed two hypotheses.

H1: PKO mandates focused on human rights and civilian protection have a positive impact on the quality of public services.

H2: The effects of PKO mandates focused on human rights and civilian protection are strengthened as host-state capacity is stronger.

The background for this inquiry lies in the mechanism inherent in the Protection of Civilians (POC) mandates. As Fjelde et al. (2018) demonstrate, POC mandates effectively suppress violence by rebel groups at the local level. This study posits that the secure environment created by POC mandates serves as a critical prerequisite for a diverse range of peacebuilding actors—such as UN civilian staff, international NGOs, and domestic civil society—to operate. In contrast to the military component of PKOs, which focuses primarily on preventing conflict recurrence, the support provided by these peacebuilding actors spans a much broader domain, including government reform, governance improvement, and human rights advocacy.

It is theorized that these multifaceted support activities do more than simply maintain an absence of war; they contribute to rebuilding and strengthening the state's capacity to provide basic public services (e.g., healthcare, education, housing, and infrastructure) to its citizens—that is, the very foundation of governance itself. Consequently, as state functions are restored, this framework theorizes that it ultimately leads to an improvement in the quality of public services.

Research Design

To test this study's hypothesis, we conduct a set of quantitative analyses of the quality of public services. This section details the sample, the definitions of these variables, their data sources, and the specification of the analytical models.

Sample

The sample consists of 84 observations (N = 84), and the unit of analysis is mission-year, limited to post-conflict nations that hosted a UNPKO mission during the specified period. Data for South Sudan prior to its independence were imputed using the values for Sudan. Furthermore, the Abyei conflict, which is not included in the FSI, was excluded from the analysis.

Dependent Variable

To measure the substantive quality of public services—which serves as my dependent

variable and captures the broader effects of POC mandates beyond mere violence deterrence—this paper adopts the Public Services index (P2 score) from the Fragile States Index (FSI), published annually by The Fund for Peace (FFP). Specifically, it is composed of a wide range of sub-indicators (The Fund for Peace, n.d.). First, healthcare is analyzed in terms of access to medicine, the number of adequate hospitals and clinics, access to safe drinking water, access to sanitation, and infant mortality rates. Next, education is analyzed from the perspective of enrolment rates and literacy rates (including gender gaps), and housing is analyzed based on access to adequate housing and associated costs. Finally, infrastructure is assessed by access to sufficient and safe roads, airports, railways, and fuel supplies.

The Fragile States Index (FSI) is based on the Conflict Assessment System Tool (CAST), which is a methodology developed by FFP for assessing the vulnerability of states to collapse. It measures this vulnerability in pre-conflict, active conflict, and post-conflict situations. Their analytical process includes content analysis, quantitative data, and qualitative review. First, content analysis is conducted by applying hundreds of Boolean search phrases to a global dataset of 45-50 million articles annually, sourced from over 10,000 English-language media outlets. This process determines the saliency of issues related to each sub-indicator, which is used to apportion provisional scores. Second, these findings are integrated with Quantitative Data from existing statistical datasets provided by international agencies like the UN, World Bank, and WHO, which are normalized and scaled for comparative analysis. Finally, this combined data undergoes a Qualitative Review by a team of social science researchers who independently assess each country based on key year-on-year events. This crucial last step helps mitigate potential "false positives" or "noise" from the media analysis and compensates for the inherent "lag" in long-term structural (quantitative) data. Therefore, while the score itself is simplified into a single number, the process is comprehensive, combining big data (content analysis) and expert evaluation based on the saliency of issues.

By using this dataset, we can overcome several problems that would arise from selecting individual public service indicators from data banks like the OECD. First, it allows for avoiding a significant reduction in sample size due to the exclusion of missing values, which is a common problem when combining individual indicators. When using separate indicators, the survey years and country coverage from different sources often do not align. Second, it prevents the arbitrary selection of indicators.

Because the FSI captures the operational status and saliency of public service issues based on "content saliency" before incorporating quantitative data, we can use results that are more objective than if we had selected individual indicators for health, education, housing, and infrastructure ourselves.

Table 1: Scoring Criteria for the FSI P2 Public Services Indicator

Score	Description — Key Characteristics of the Subject Environment
10	Public services do not exist in rural areas or urban areas
9	Public services do not exist in rural areas and are deteriorating rapidly in urban areas
8	Public services are weak or non-existent in rural areas but are deteriorating in major urban areas
7	Public services are weak or non-existent in rural areas but are adequate in major urban areas
6	Public services are weak or non-existent in rural areas but are adequate in all urban areas
5	Public services are weak in rural areas and adequate in all urban areas
4	Public services are weak in rural areas and more than adequate in all urban areas
3	Public services are adequate in rural areas and more than adequate in all urban areas
2	Public services are good in both rural and urban areas with some areas receiving noticeably less than others
1	Public services are good in both rural and urban areas with some areas receiving less than others
0	Public services are superb equally in both rural and urban areas

Source: Author's own compilation based on The Fund for Peace (2014)

The score ranges from 0 to 10, where 0 signifies the most stable (best services) and 10 signifies the most fragile (worst services), as summarized in Table 1. According to the scoring description provided by The Fund for Peace (see table below), a score of 10 indicates a state where "Public services do not exist in rural areas or urban areas." A score of 9 signifies "Public services don't exist in rural areas and are deteriorating rapidly in urban areas," and a score of 8 signifies "Public services are weak or non-existent in rural areas but are deteriorating in major urban areas."(The Fund for Peace, 2014).

Based on the foregoing, the change in public service provision is measured in two ways. First, we computed the simple first difference as $P2_{t+1} - P2_t$. Second, the growth rate is computed as the relative change from years t to $t+1$ in percentage, defined as $\frac{P2t+1 - P2t}{P2t} \times 100$. The growth rate is used in addition to the difference because the comprehensiveness of PKO mandates may depend on the country's initial level of fragility; missions in highly vulnerable states often receive broader and more intensive mandates. Using growth rates helps mitigate this bias by normalizing changes relative to the starting point, allowing for a more accurate assessment of mandate effectiveness.

Independent Variable

Our first, and main, independent variable is the number of PKO mandates, classified on "tiers" of tasks. We measure this variable based on the Peacekeeping Mandates (PEMA) dataset, constructed by Di Salvatore et al. (2022). This dataset offers several critical advantages for this research objective compared to existing datasets. First, the dataset distinguishes various mandates. PEMA records the mandates given to PKOs by the UN Security Council, classifying them into 41 distinct tasks (Di Salvatore et al.,2022). This allows us to disaggregate the broad categories used in traditional datasets into more specific activities. Second, it tracks mandate evolution. While many datasets only record a PKO's initial mandate, PEMA tracks all extensions, changes, and comprehensive reviews from the bi-annual Security Council resolutions (Di Salvatore et al.,2022) that occur after the mission's launch makes it possible to capture the dynamic changes in mandates throughout the mission's duration. Third, it distinguishes between intensity and modality. For each task, PEMA classifies the PKO's modality of involvement into three types—"monitoring," "assisting," or "securing"—and further distinguishes whether the mandate was "requested" or merely "encouraged" by the Security Council (Di Salvatore et al.,2022). This enables a more precise measurement of the PKO's intervention intensity and intrusiveness.

This dataset is structured as a year-by-mission panel data, where the contents of the variable's cells contain the paragraphs of the resolution approving the Secretary-General's report. If the cell for each mission contains a paragraph referencing the report, this paper treats the mission as having been adopted by the resolution and records it as 1. If the cell is NA, this paper considers the mission not to have been adopted and records it as 0. Therefore, we created a binary variable that is 1 if the mission was adopted by the Security Council and 0 if it was not.

We classified the 41 mandates from the PEMA dataset based on the definition of civilians, three tiers of POC actions, and the approaches they take to address those POC actions. First, the United Nations' policy of Protection of Civilian set the definition of Civilian as "everyone is to be considered a civilian, except persons falling in one of the following categories: members of the armed forces; members of an organized armed group with continuous combat function; and civilians directly participating in hostilities, for such time as they do so". Second, according to the policy, POC mandates are categorized in three tiers "which are mutually accommodating and reinforcing and are implemented simultaneously and strategically in accordance with the mission mandate, mission phase and the circumstances on the ground." (United Nations, 2023).

The three tiers of POC action are: protection through dialogue and engagement (Tier I), provision of physical protection (Tier II), and establishment of a protective environment (Tier III). "Tier I activities include active, structured and regular dialogue with perpetrators or potential perpetrators of violence against civilians; conflict resolution and mediation between parties to the conflict; advocating with the host government, its security institutions and other relevant actors to intervene to protect civilians; local conflict resolution and social cohesion activities; reconciliation initiatives; strategic communication; investigation; advocacy; reporting on human rights and other protection concerns; and other initiatives that seek to protect civilians through communications, dialogue and direct or indirect engagement" (United Nations, 2023). Therefore, the mandates below are applied to this tier: Ceasefire, National Reconciliation, Local Reconciliation, Regional Reconciliation, Public Information, Peace Process, Power Sharing, Human Rights, Sexual and Gender-based Violence, and Gender.

"Tier II encompasses activities by all mission components to physically protect civilians, whether through armed or unarmed approaches, including protective presence, interpositioning, the threat or use of force, or facilitating safe passage or refuge. While Tier II notably includes activities by uniformed components involving the show or use of force to prevent, deter, pre-empt and respond to threats to civilians, civilian mission components can also act as a protective presence through their regular, visible, direct engagement with civilian populations at risk." (United Nations, 2023). At this tier II, the mandates below are applicable; Offensive Operations, Use of Force, Electoral Security, and Civilian Protection.

"Tier III activities are frequently programmatic in nature and designed with

committed resources for peacebuilding and conflict prevention/resolution objectives. Sometimes presented as separate mandated tasks under country-specific resolutions, activities under Tier III help create a protective environment for civilians, prevent the (re-)emergence of threats of physical violence, support the legitimacy of the host state and its capacity to protect civilians, and support the (re-)establishment of the rule of law and criminal justice chain" (United Nations, 2023). This is the broadest category in which we include Arms Embargo, Demilitarization, Border Control, Resources, Police Reform, Democratization, Electoral Assistance, Legal Reform, State Authority Extension, Corrections Reform, Justice Sector Reform, Children's Rights, Military Reform, Disarmament & Demobilization, Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALWs), and Reintegration.

At this stage, we exclude mandates coded as "humanitarian Relief" since the mandates clearly distinguished from POC mandates regarding the neutrality of mission. Furthermore, within each tier, we differentiated the Unarmed Approaches to Protection (UAP) from armed approaches, because we want to capture the influence of approaches undertaken by civilian and uniformed personnel that do not involve the projection of military power, or the threat or use of force. Table 2 summarizes the classification of mandates.

Table 2: Classification of each mandate

Tier 1		Tier 3	
Unarmed Approaches	Armed Approaches	Unarmed Approaches	Armed Approaches
National Reconciliation	Ceasefire	Police Reform	Arms Embargo
Local Reconciliation		Democratization	Demilitarization
Regional Reconciliation		Electoral Assistance	Border Control
Public Information		Legal Reform	Resources
Peace Process		State Authority Extension	
Power Sharing		Corrections Reform	
		Justice Sector Reform	
		Children's Rights	
		Military Reform	
		Disarmament & Demobilization	
		Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALWs)	
		Reintegration	

Source: Author's own compilation based on United Nations (2023)

Based on the PEMA dataset described above, we constructed three main independent variables. First, the total number of mandates is the number of mandated tasks (e.g., Ceasefire in Tier 1) covered in each year during the mission period. Second, the number of Tier 1 mandates is the number of Tier 1 tasks covered in each year. Lastly, the number of Tier 3 mandates is the number of Tier 3 tasks covered in each year. All three indexes varies across time because mandates are updated annually in most cases.

Our second independent variable is host-state capacity. This variable is measured drawing on the State Capacity Dataset (Hanson & Sigman, 2021). We use the simple index of the number of military personnel per 1,000 population (logged), because a state's military capacity vis-à-vis its population best captures the degree to which the state enforces order. Especially in the context of this study, our goal is to measure to what extent the state establishes domestic order under which public services can be delivered with the assistance of the PKO mission.

Control Variables

To more accurately analyze the relationship between PKO mandates and public service quality, we introduce controls that could confound the association. First, we control for the years of mission experience. Second is the log of GDP per capita, as wealthier countries have more resources to invest in public services. The third control is the log of population, because a large population size can increase the burden on public service infrastructure. Fourth, we control for democratic regime using the V-Dem Polyarchy score, as a country's regime type may influence the state's willingness or capacity to provide public services. Finally, control for the contemporaneous P2 score to account for time dependence—if the level of public services is already high in year t, the subsequent change in year t + 1 is expected to be smaller due to diminishing returns. Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics for the variables used in the analysis.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics

Variable	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
P2 delta	75	0.039	0.28	-0.7	0.7
P2 growth rate	75	0.467	3.434	-7.059	8.333
P2 score (level)	75	8.495	1.241	5.7	10
Total number of mandates	75	5.947	4.582	0	16
Number of Tier 1 mandates	75	0.92	0.926	0	3

Number of Tier 3 mandates	75	5.04	3.923	0	15
Military personnel per 1,000 population (log)	75	1.069	0.826	0	4.252
Mission experience years	75	12.693	6.832	1	25
Polyarchy	75	0.392	0.161	0.067	0.662
GDP per capita (log)	75	6.986	0.623	5.865	8.054
Population (log)	75	16.392	1.176	13.82	18.21

Model Specification

To test the hypothesis, we estimate a series of fixed-effects models to capture within-country changes over time. The key advantage of the fixed-effects approach is that it removes all time-invariant country-specific characteristics—such as geography, historical institutions, or structural fragility—that could otherwise bias the estimated relationship between mandate accumulation and public service outcomes. By focusing exclusively on year-to-year variation within each country, the fixed-effects model allows for a more credible assessment of how changes in peacekeeping mandates are associated with changes in the P2 public services score. In addition to the "base" models, we analyze models with interaction terms to test H2 specifically.

Empirical Results

Empirical results suggest that the effect of PKO mandates on the change in public service provision is quite intertwined. Table 4 summarizes the results of the base models. The overall effect of the total number of mandates (Models 1 and 3) is statistically significant, but the signs of the coefficients are positive, indicating that more PKO tasks covered in the mandate worsen public services, while the positive (i.e., detrimental) effect is not substantively large—one standard deviation (4.582) increase in the number of PKO mandates increases the difference in P2 score by 0.442 (about 0.44 standard deviations).

Table 4: Base Models

	P2 score difference (t+1)		P2 score growth rate (t+1)	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Total number of mandates	0.027*		0.320*	
	(0.011)		(0.134)	
Tier 1 mandates		0.013		0.099
		(0.057)		(0.710)

Tier 3 mandates		0.029*		0.349*
		(0.013)		(0.165)
Military personnel	-0.026	-0.015	0.444	0.616
	(0.158)	(0.165)	(1.990)	(2.068)
P2 score (t)	-0.541**	-0.539**	-6.293**	-6.251**
	(0.111)	(0.113)	(1.390)	(1.425)
Mission experience years	-0.107**	-0.108**	-1.439**	-1.457**
	(0.035)	(0.036)	(0.441)	(0.447)
Polyarchy	0.324	0.379	0.436	1.230
	(1.038)	(1.058)	(13.041)	(13.287)
(log) GDP per capita	0.902	0.884	8.527	8.210
	(0.776)	(0.793)	(9.755)	(9.957)
(log) Population	4.230**	4.335*	57.327**	59.005**
	(1.562)	(1.643)	(19.625)	(20.629)
Constant	-67.880**	-69.453**	-901.046**	-926.071**
	(22.992)	(24.156)	(288.899)	(303.354)
Observations	75	75	75	75
R2	0.454	0.454	0.427	0.428
Adjusted R2	0.265	0.252	0.229	0.216
F Statistic	2.403**	2.245**	2.156*	2.020*

Note: **p<0.01, *P<0.05, +p<0.10 Standard errors in parentheses.

Turning to the subtypes of PKO mandates, the number of Tier 1 tasks does not exert a significant effect on changes in public service provision, whereas Tier 3 tasks consistently worsen public service provision (i.e., positive signs). It strikingly implies that, while tasks related to reconciliation at least do not affect public services, more solid peacebuilding measures may exacerbate public service provision.

The results from the full models (Table 5), however, show a very different picture. Specific subtypes of PKO mandates have an improving (i.e., negative) effect on public service provision, but this effect is conditional on the host-state's military strength relative to domestic society. The key subtype of PKO mandates is Tier 1—tasks related to reconciliation. Statistically significant negative coefficients on interaction terms (Models 6 and 8) suggest that, as host-state military strength increases, the number of Tier 1 mandates increasingly improves public services. The significant positive (detrimental) effect of the base term of Tier 1 means that Tier 1 mandates exacerbate public services when the military personnel level is 1 person (i.e., 0 exponentiated) per 1,000 population, the minimum value in the data.

Table 5: Full Models with Interactions Effects

	P2 score difference (t+1)		P2 score growth rate (t+1)	
	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Total number of mandates	0.040+		0.502+	
	(0.023)		(0.292)	
Tier 1 mandates		0.247*		2.695+
		(0.119)		(1.508)
Tier 3 mandates		0.005		0.127
		(0.030)		(0.378)
Military personnel	0.057	0.083	1.621	1.970
	(0.208)	(0.209)	(2.611)	(2.647)
Total number of mandates × Military personnel	-0.015		-0.217	
	(0.025)		(0.310)	
Tier 1 mandates × Military personnel		-0.263*		-2.932+
		(0.118)		(1.493)
Tier 3 mandates × Military personnel		0.023		0.194
		(0.030)		(0.376)
P2 score (t)	-0.521**	-0.558**	-6.014**	-6.387**
	(0.116)	(0.116)	(1.452)	(1.472)
Mission experience years	-0.104**	-0.092*	-1.401**	-1.278**
	(0.036)	(0.035)	(0.446)	(0.449)
Polyarchy	0.438	0.123	2.057	-1.128
	(1.060)	(1.063)	(13.305)	(13.481)
(log) GDP per capita	0.797	0.814	7.045	7.068
	(0.799)	(0.790)	(10.026)	(10.013)
(log) Population	4.113*	3.801*	55.674**	52.841*
	(1.582)	(1.618)	(19.858)	(20.518)
Constant	-65.624**	-60.499*	-869.126**	-821.543**
	(23.405)	(23.925)	(293.802)	(303.308)
Observations	75	75	75	75
R2	0.457	0.502	0.432	0.468
Adjusted R2	0.257	0.292	0.222	0.244
F Statistic	2.277**	2.384**	2.054*	2.083*

Note: **p<0.01*p<0.05 +p<0.10 Standard errors in parentheses.

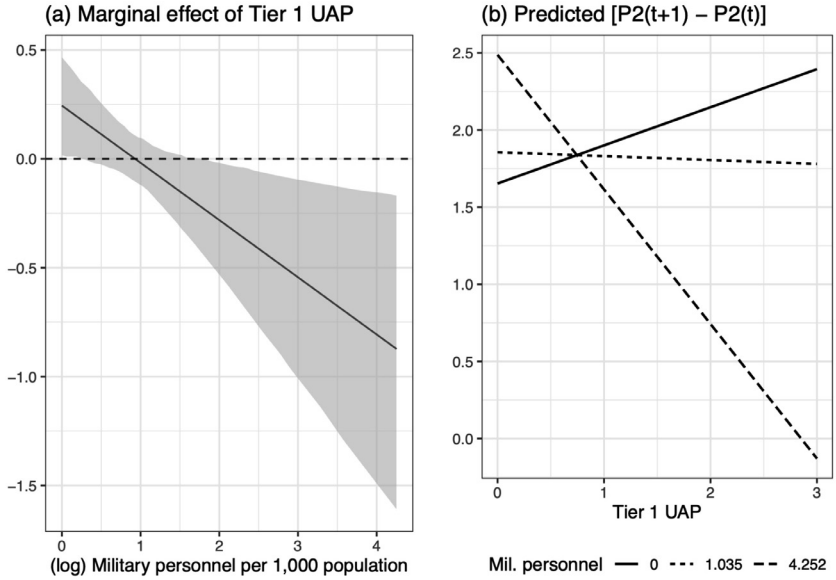


Figure 1: Effects of the Number of Tier 1 Mandates

Figure 1 illustrates the interaction effect from Model 6, with the gray area indicating the 95% confidence interval. Figure 1(a) suggests that although the effect is positive and significant only when the logged military personnel level is 0 (i.e., 1 person if exponentiated), this detrimental effect disappears as the military personnel level exceeds the minimum value. When the military personnel level further exceeds 2, the marginal effect turns negative (i.e., improving).

However, it is to be noted that the "improving" conditional effect of Tier 1 mandates is still compensatory in that it may not always lead to real improvement (i.e., a negative value of $\Delta P2$), although Tier 1 mandates do reduce public service fragility when the level of host-state military is at least not the minimum. Figure 1(b) shows the slopes of Tier 1 mandates for the minimum, mean, and maximum levels of military personnel. The slope for the maximum level of military personnel is negative, indicating that each additional mandate reduces the P2 fragility score by more than 0.5—a substantively large impact. The predicted $\Delta P2$ value per se, however, may not be negative depending on the values of other variables.

Importantly, Tier 3 mandates—establishment of a protective environment—by

PKOs are not significant in any model, not even interactively with the host-state's level of military. It is rather counterintuitive, but suggests that PKO tasks through dialogue and engagement appear to be more effective when the coercive capacity of the host-state is sufficiently strong.

The controls have both expected and unexpected effects. Neither GDP per capita nor democracy shows a significant relationship in any of the models, although the signs are consistently positive. Among the control variables, population exhibits statistically significant positive coefficients, suggesting that a larger population leads to more fragile public services. Previous public service scores show consistently negative effects. It indicates that lower vulnerability in the previous year increases subsequent changes (i.e., improvements slow), implying diminishing returns as expected. Lastly, as expected, mission experience years exert a consistent negative effect, suggesting that longer PKO missions increasingly reduce fragility in public services.

Discussion

The objective of this study is to test the validity of the claim that mandates focused on the Protection of Civilians (POC), which are essential for peacebuilding, may lead to improvements in the quality of public service. The analysis shows that POC-related mandates, although only under certain conditions, exert a negative effect on the growth rate of the P2 score, indicating movement toward improvement. However, Table 4 reveals that both mission experience years and the previous year's P2 score have mitigating effects on vulnerability in the following year. This suggests that improvements in the P2 score depend heavily on the prior year's quality of public administration and the history of PKO missions.

Therefore, regarding the first research question—whether PKO intervention strengthens the capacity of conflict-affected countries to perform their most basic functions—we find that PKO intervention contributes to improvement, depending on the host-state military level. The effect is not uniform; rather, it varies depending on the degree to which the host state coercively establishes domestic order.

As for the second research question—which parts of PKO mandates affect public services—the results suggest that Tier 1 mandates are influential, albeit conditional, while Tier 3 mandates are not significant. Since Tier 1 includes mandates related to protection through dialogue and engagement, this category is shown to improve the quality of public service.

Tier 1 mandates primarily contribute by creating the negotiation channels and dialogue platforms necessary for the acceptance of Tier 3 mandates. Tier 3 activities, on the other hand, are often specified in mission-specific resolutions rather than general principles, allowing them to address case-specific needs (United Nations, 2023). Consequently, it is conceivable that Tier 3 mandates do not have an overarching effect on improvements in administrative service quality.

The policy implication derived from these findings is that, because Tier 1 mandates aim to protect civilians through dialogue and engagement, introducing such mandates *alongside the host state's material/military capacity* strengthens the foundation of administrative capacity and thereby improves the quality of public service. Furthermore, the lack of statistical significance for Tier 3 mandates implies that the protection measures provided by PKO missions alone may not be effective in delivering public services. Rather, the host state needs to be bolstered first to improve public service provision.

Conclusion

This study empirically examined the hypothesis that PKO mandates focused on human rights and civilian protection positively impact the quality of public services. Using the PEMA dataset, which offers a more detailed classification of PKO mandates, and the P2 score from the Fragile State Index (FSI), which comprehensively measures administrative service quality, the analysis revealed a limited but notable finding: some POC-related mandates have an improving effect on public service quality depending on the host-state's military capacity.

The scholarly contribution of this study lies in its challenge to the conventional assumption that only military mandates contribute to peacebuilding. It demonstrates that non-coercive, civilian protection mandates—especially measures through dialogue and engagement—can also enhance administrative quality. While previous research has primarily focused on the presence or absence of violence and the duration of peace (i.e., years between conflict termination and recurrence) as dependent variables, this study provides empirical evidence that non-military mandates can improve substantive governance outcomes.

These findings reinforce the importance of civilian protection mandates and suggest that their implementation under strengthened host-state capacity can yield measurable improvements in public service delivery. By presenting concrete numerical evidence,

this study offers a new perspective on how peacekeeping operations can bolster legitimate governance, rather than merely containing violence. Future research could empirically investigate the effects of other types of mandates and their interactions with various host-state conditions, which were not fully explored in this study. Specifically, it will be important to identify in more detail the host-state domestic factors that enable mandates through dialogue and engagement contribute to the realization of positive peace. Such analysis could further illuminate the indirect pathways through which peacekeeping missions foster sustainable governance and institutional resilience in cooperation with the host state.

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Appendix: Detailed Scoring Framework for the FSI P2 (Public Services) Indicator

The detailed scoring breakdown presented below, which outlines the core questions considered for the FSI P2 (Public Services) indicator, serves to clarify the real-world implications and analytical depth of the dependent variable. The comprehensive list of questions under Health, Education, Shelter, and Infrastructure clarifies the real-world implications of the score. By specifying sub-indicators like "Is the sanitation system adequate?" and "Are there an adequate number of medical professionals for the population?", this table underscores that the P2 score directly reflects the state's capacity to meet the most fundamental needs associated with human security and "freedom from want."

Furthermore, this detailed breakdown is essential for the Discussion. Although the P2 score measures tangible service delivery, many of the sub-indicators, such as those related to infrastructure and equal access, are intertwined with the efficiency and impartiality of state governance. By illustrating the complex, ground-level components of public service failure, this table lays the groundwork for analyzing why a broad mandate like "Stability"—which includes activities that both build and potentially destroy infrastructure—might fail to produce a positive outcome on the aggregated P2 score.

Indicator	Sub-Category	Questions to Consider
P2: Public Services	General Provision of Public Services	Is there equal access to public services? What are the general conditions of public services?
	Health	Do people have adequate access to medicines? Are there an adequate number of medical facilities for the population? Are there an adequate number of medical professionals for the population? What is the infant mortality rate – actual and projected? Is there access to an adequate potable water supply? Is the sanitation system adequate?
	Education	What is the level of school enrolment? Is it different by gender? What are the literacy rates? Is it different by gender?
	Shelter2	Do the poor have access to adequate housing? Are housing costs in line with the general economy?
	Infrastructure4	Are roads adequate and safe? Are there adequate airports for sustainable development? Are there adequate railroads for sustainable development? Is there an adequate supply of fuel?

Source: Authors' own compilation based on The Fund for Peace (2014)