

The peacekeeping



This is a critical review of Virginia Fortna's article "Does Peacekeeping Keep Peace? International Intervention and the Duration of Peace after Civil War."

This article was published in the second issue of the forty eighth volume of the Journal International Studies Quarterly in pages 269-292. But before that is done, it is important to begin from the basics. Peacekeeping has been variously defined. For example, some definitions strictly tie peacekeeping to United Nations alone. Other scholars insist that peacekeeping troops should always be lightly armed. The third view is broader and includes third party mediations, actions of international troops and the involvement of the civilians. In 1984, the International Peace Academy, which now is an institute, defined peacekeeping as the act of preventing, moderating, containing and terminating acts of hostility among nations through interventions of third parties by the use of multinational forces (Bellamy, Williams & Griffin, 2009). Mays (2010) adopts the UN component of peacekeeping that includes facilitating implementation of agreements thereof.

There are, however, other views which posit that peacekeeping does not keep peace at all. These views shall be looked at as presented in Fortna's article. This review summarizes the aforementioned paper and later offers a critical analysis. In the summary part, aspects of the subject matter, hypotheses, causal mechanism and empirical evidence shall be outlined. The second part, the critique, shall answer the questions put into two major categories. Such questions include the accuracy and reasonability of the concepts presented, relevance of the measurements, existence of a lurking variable and the effect of such a variable on the research conclusion.

Summary of the Article

Virginia Page Fortna's article was an attempt to investigate the interventions of the international players after civil wars so as to establish whether peace in the affected areas would last longer in the presence or absence of peacekeepers. The author studies this phenomenon by controlling factors that led to sending or not sending of peacekeepers and also those factors that could lead to obviously easy or difficult factors in the maintenance of peace. So as to avoid spurious results, Virginia first of all deals with the question of the places where multinational peacekeepers tend to be sent in most cases. The major issue of investigation is whether actually peacekeeping worked (Fortna, 2004). In answering this question, the author examined three major studies conducted on this subject matter. Surprisingly, the three studies contradicted each other. One of the studies presented evidence to prove that peacekeeping kept peace while another found out the converse: peacekeeping did not keep peace. The third study found out that only some types of peacekeeping worked.

The main hypothesis is that post-civil war peacekeeping contributes to lasting peace while the null hypothesis posits that peacekeeping does not significantly increase spans of peace. In pursuit of the main argument, the author tabulates a two-variable (peacekeeping versus no peacekeeping) dichotomy, and it is discovered that there is no significant effect or change when they are compared to each other. So as to establish whether peacekeeping contributes to durable peace, the author compared different categories of peacekeeping which included traditional peacekeeping, observer missions, multidimensional peacekeeping and peace enforcement.

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When compared with the UN peacekeeping, the writer dubs all other peacekeepers as ad hoc groups. By way of description, observer mission involves unarmed parties who are smaller than the UN. In addition to observers, traditional peacekeeping involve large and armed troops. Their main aim is not, however, to cause harm. In fact, they are not instructed not to use force unless under very few strict circumstances. The major circumstance where force could be used is only during self defense. Likewise, multidimensional peacekeeping is also comprised of relatively large groups, not armed, but manned by civilians. They compliment the traditional peacekeeping initiatives. Their roles are, for instance, to observe elections, train government civil servants like the police, watch over human rights and sometimes, perhaps hardly, administer countries. If the latter happens, it is usually on temporal terms. It seems that these international bodies are aware of the supremacy of nations and States. Chapter six of the UN Charter provides that the above three peacekeepers should only start the process after the parties involved consent. However, consent is not sought in case of enforcement missions. The writer, however, observes that these were never used after the end of the cold war.

When variables change to UN peacekeeping and no UN peacekeeping, there are also no significant variations; it is actually less that the earlier variables. However, when more variables are compared against each other, there emerges significant variation in the total peace, measured in terms of more war or no more war. The other aspects include observer mission, traditional peacekeeping, multidimensional peacekeeping and peace enforcement. Looked against each other, no peacekeeping scores the highest points while

multidimensional peacekeeping, observer mission and traditional peacekeeping score the least in that order from the least. Next to the highest score is peace enforcement, though significantly little score compared to the highest score: no peacekeeping. Peace enforcement scores 12 while no peacekeeping scores 21 (Note that traditional peacekeeping scores 7). The explanation is that peacekeeping ends conflict in a stalemate thus war is likely to resume. The same happens to civil conflicts that end as draws. However, if war ends in military victories of the conflicting sides, it is not likely to resume.

The main dependent variable is the duration of peace which is the time when fighting ceases and outbreak of another war. Peacekeeping is both a dependent and independent variable while dummy variables include victory, treaty, cost of war or the size of army. The author suggests use of survival, hazard or duration analysis. This level of analysis employs a Cox proportional hazards model in which war is likely to erupt whenever the hazard ratio is greater than 1. According to the writer, identity conflicts are more likely to cause war than civil conflicts. In addition, where death tolls go too high, feelings of animosity make it hard to keep peace. For sustained and durable peace, the writer argues that war should have ended in a more decisive victory. That is why sometimes peacekeeping has caused war as seen in Rwanda; after the UN intervened, more severe war was fought. Levels of development are also a key factor in attainment of durable peace after conflict. Finally, all data collected strongly supports the main hypothesis and, according to the writer, the null hypothesis cannot be ignored following some evidence on the same.

Critique of the Article

What is the subject matter of the article? How does the writer approach the subject matter? What are the hypotheses in the article? What are the key variables? Among these variables, which ones are dependent and which ones are independent? How are the variables measured? And what is the level of analysis? These are some of the issues this critical review seeks to pursue. The other include whether or not the evidence supports the hypotheses earlier proposed hypotheses.. In other words did the author answer these questions in her article?

In the opinion of this review, the writer excellently tackled these questions in her article. It is now necessary to assess the basic concepts and their usefulness in developing the basic line of argument. Writers also consider the relevance of the variables they use to what is measured. Whether this writer has done that and also presented a third variable is what this section is all about.

Fortna's ideas in this paper are well thought out, researched and analyzed. At the beginning of the write up, it was stated that the paper was to investigate among other things, whether peacekeeping actually kept peace. To answer this mainstream question along others, the writer has gone to great extents in not only illustrating but also demonstrating her point of view. The opinion of this review is that the concepts presented by the author are not only accurate and reasonable but also very descriptive and elaborate. This is illustrated by the way she extrapolated peacekeeping to include UN peacekeeping, multidimensional peacekeeping, enforcement and

observer mission so as to avoid one-sidedness and subjectivity. She has also read about prior studies on the subject matter and thus wrote from a point of information. Indeed, her extrapolation does not mean that she measured variables she did not intend to, but that she was objective enough to offer a wide perspective. She is objective to the extent that calls for a second glimpse into the matter. Instead of suggesting another measurement, it seems to be more reasonable to introduce higher statistical formulae to deal with the results of the measurements used so far.

If not controlled, the correlation between the independent and dependent variable can be spurious. From the onset, the writer insisted on a deliberate move to control factors which could influence the variables. These were mainly the determination of where peacekeepers were to be sent and factors which made peacekeeping either very easy or difficult. If that happened, the results would have been much skewed thus rendering the whole study and the first part of this critique unreliable. It seems that there is no strong pointer towards a third variable which, in the opinion of this critique, would lead to spuriousness. Such a variable is likely to contradict, not change, the conclusion. However, the conclusion draws from the hypotheses which are very succinct and perhaps unchangeable.

The bone of contention in this review is not per se tied to Fortna's article but an honest academic suggestion to view peace not as absence of war or non-peace as presence of war. The challenge posed to Fortna and colleagues, including the reviewer, are whether there are other measures of peace other than absence of war.

Conclusion

The question of peacekeeping presents different position in the academic realm; positions which are perhaps contradictory. This has been observed in the existing literature on the subject. The main question of the article under review was whether peacekeeping keeps peace. This has been pursued to in depth and wide perspectives through an extrapolation so as to include other variables. Although the main hypothesis has been overwhelmingly supported, the mild evidence for the null suggestion also has some significance. The second part was a critical analysis touching on the reasonableness of the concepts, their measurement and the need for a third variable. It has been considered that this was a well researched and elaborate academic work probably authoritative. Beyond the paper, there is a need to rethink the criteria or criterion, used to determine peace: its presence or absence.