



UNIVERSITY OF
OXFORD

COMPOSING UN OPERATIONS, COMPOSING PEACE

MISSION COMPOSITION AND PEACE OPERATIONS EFFECTIVENESS

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(work with Vincenzo Bove & Chiara Ruffa)

“The Puzzle of Peace”, UNU-Wider, 16 May 2022

TAKE HOME MESSAGE

“We contend that the combination of skills, language, habits, and culture provides unmissable opportunities for the United Nations to project its commitment and to bring and keep peace in war-torn countries”

- ✓ *UN Mission composition matter, the force generation process is crucial.*
- ✓ *It cannot be just a logistical/organizational matter, it is a conflict resolution priority.*
- ✓ *Composing a mission in terms of contributors means composing peace.*

BOVE
RUFFA
RUGGERI

COMPOSING PEACE

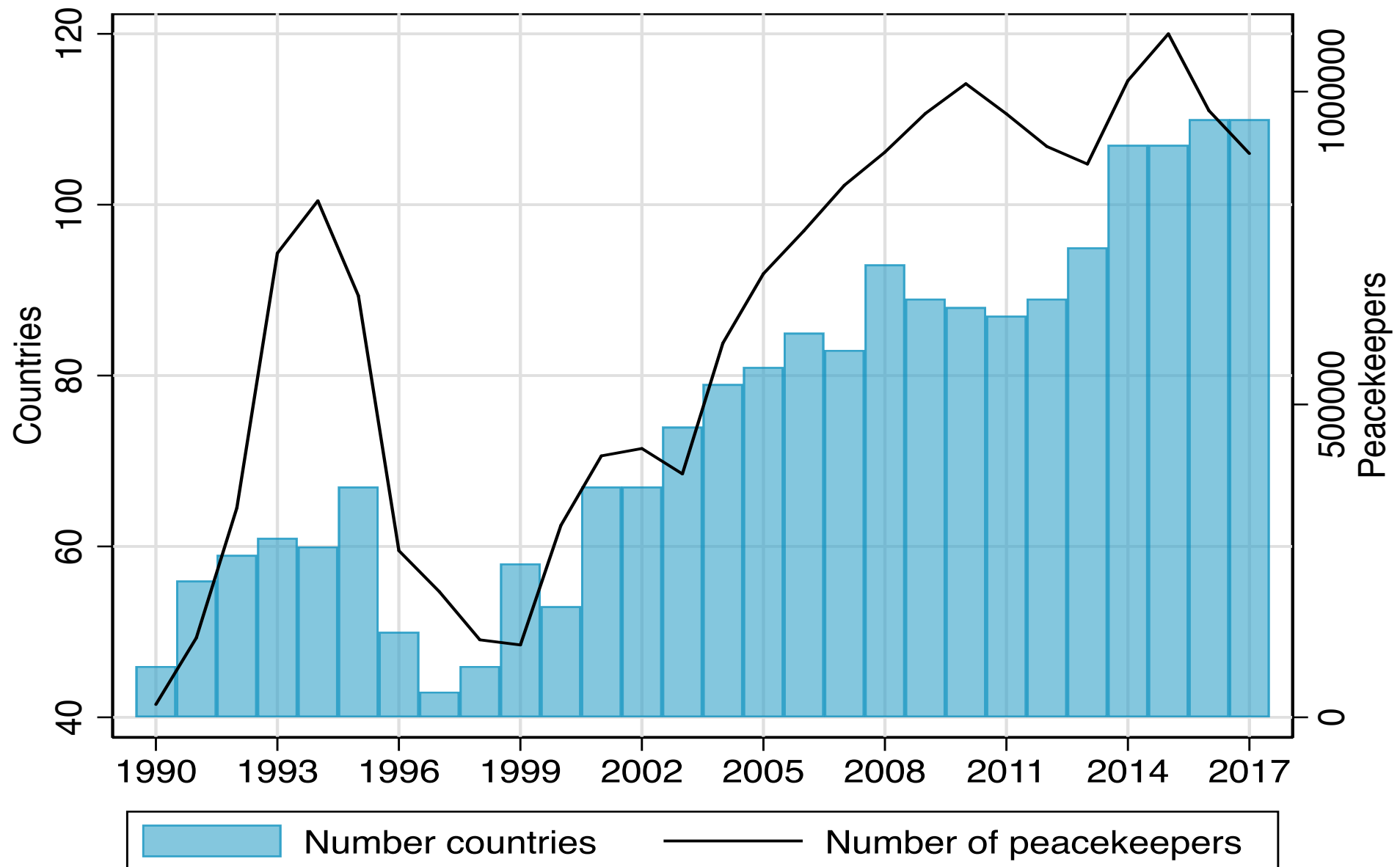
COMPOSING PEACE

mission composition
in UN peacekeeping

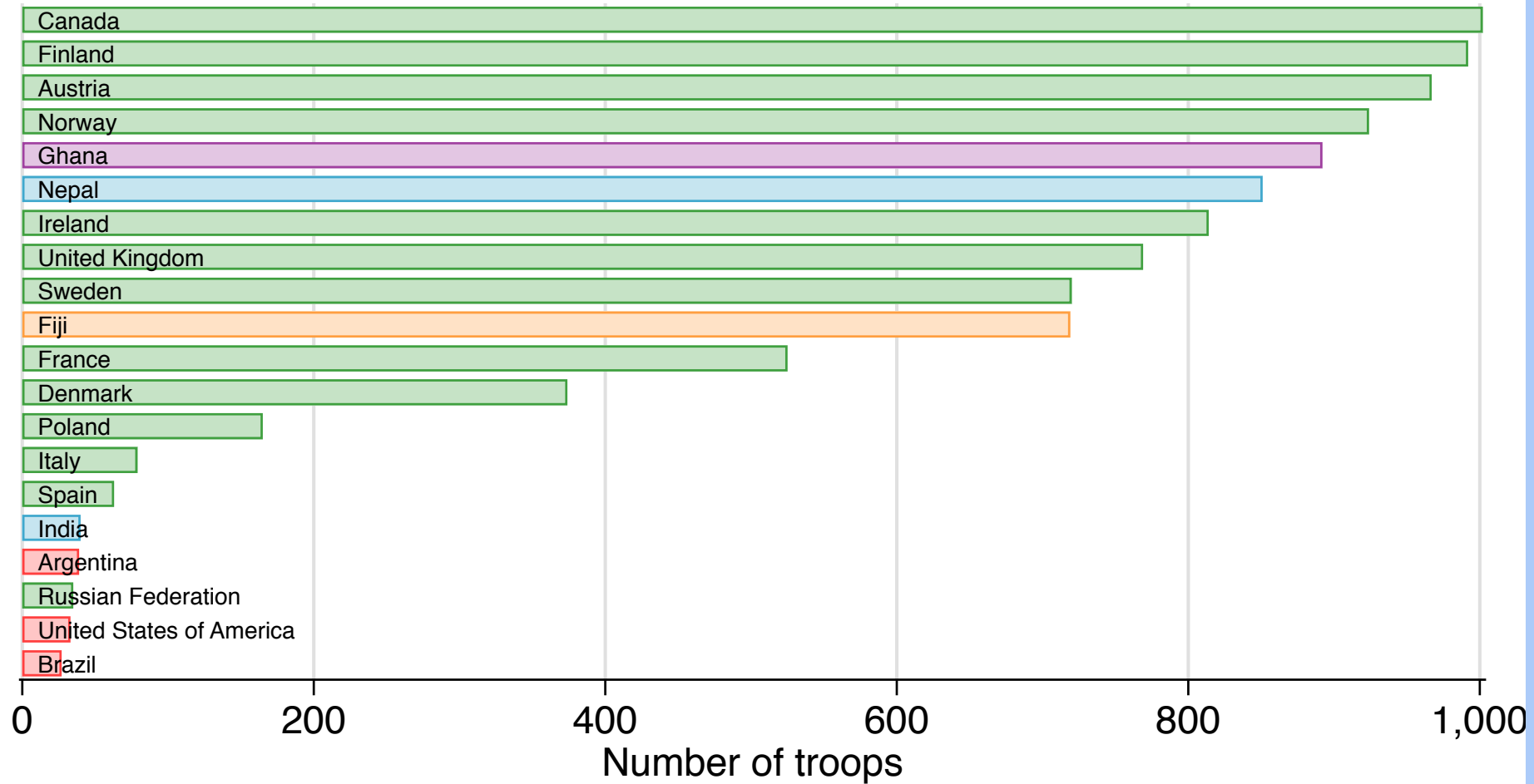
Vincenzo BOVE
Chiara RUFFA
Andrea RUGGERI

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PEACEKEEPING TREND



Top 20 contributors of troops to UN peacekeeping in 1990



Africa



Americas



Asia



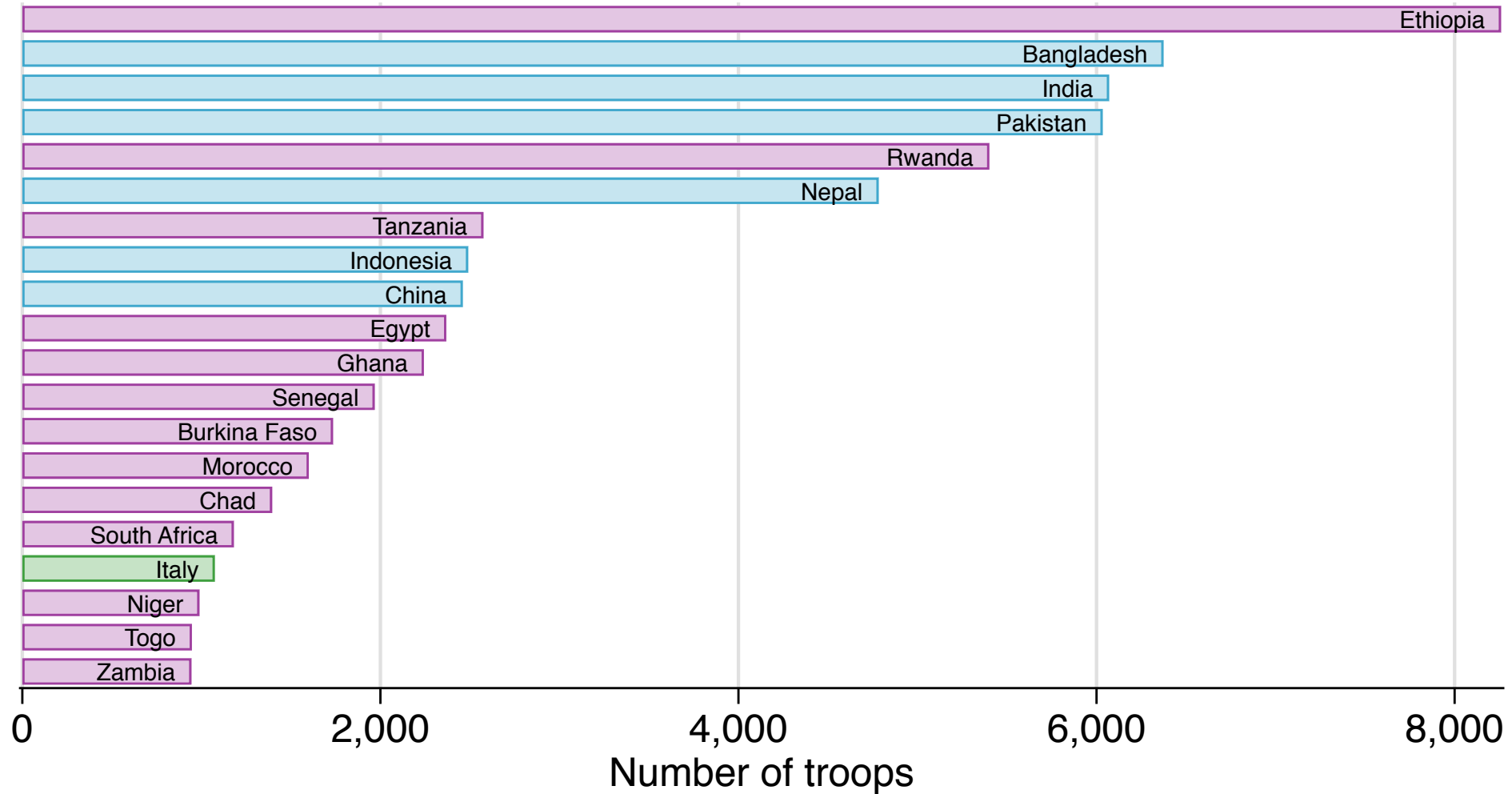
Oceania



Europe&North America

46 Different Nationalities

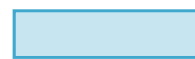
Top 20 contributors of troops to UN peacekeeping in 2017



Africa



Americas



Asia



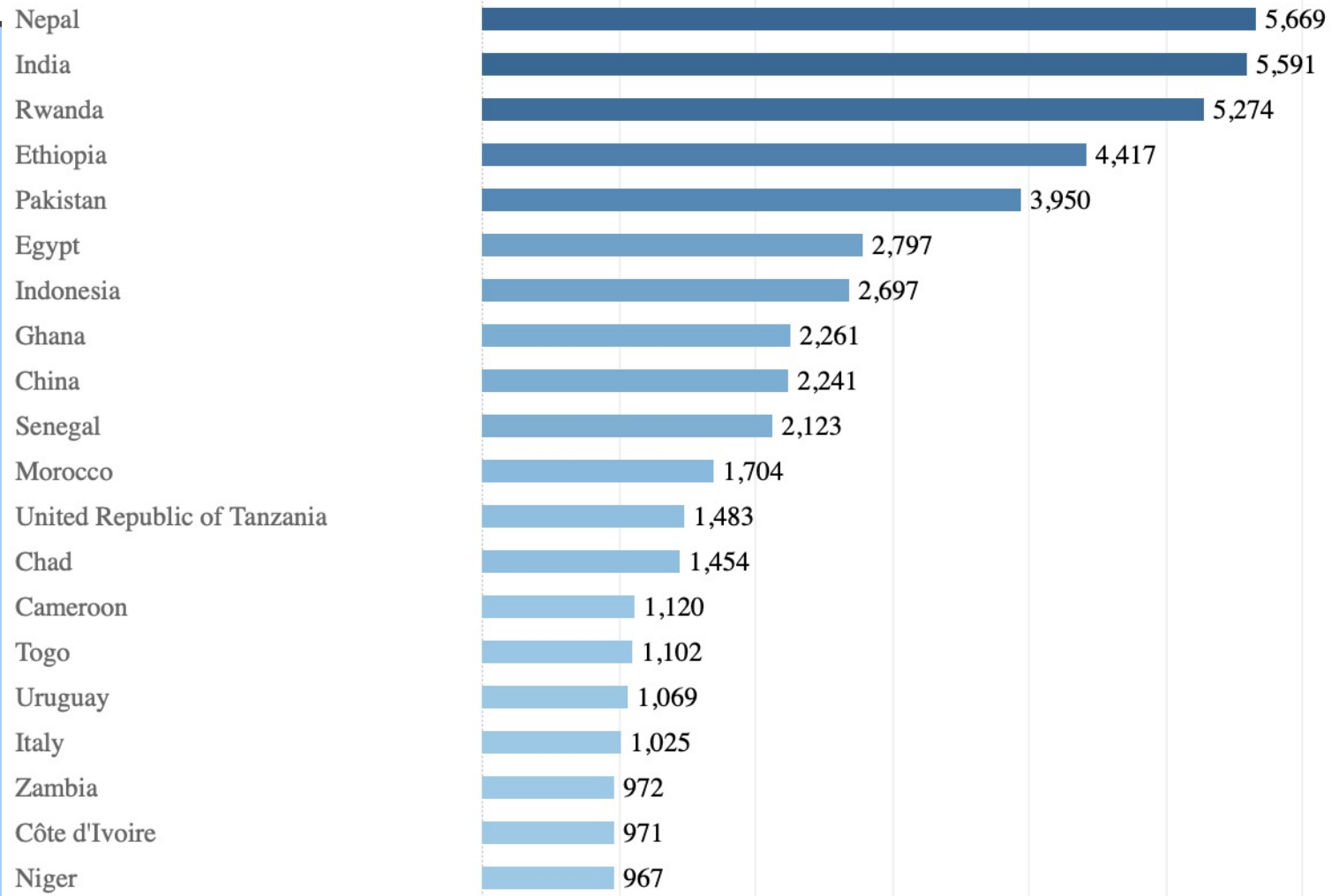
Oceania



Europe & North America

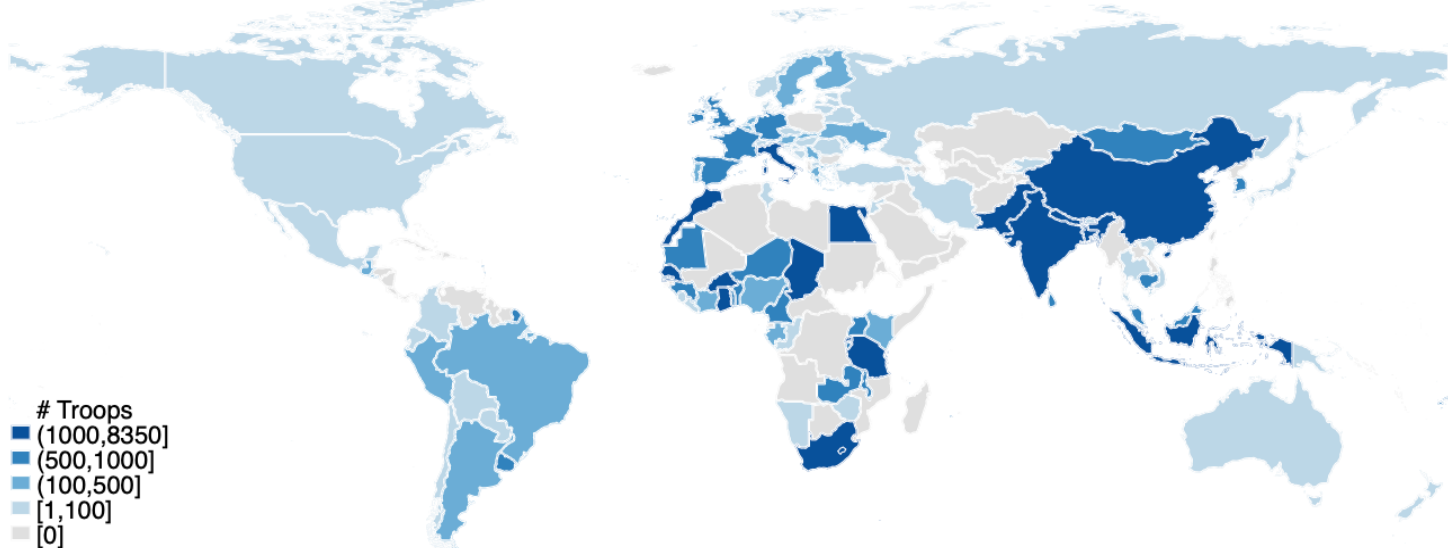
107 Different Nationalities

TOP 20 CONTRIBUTORS (FEB. 2022)

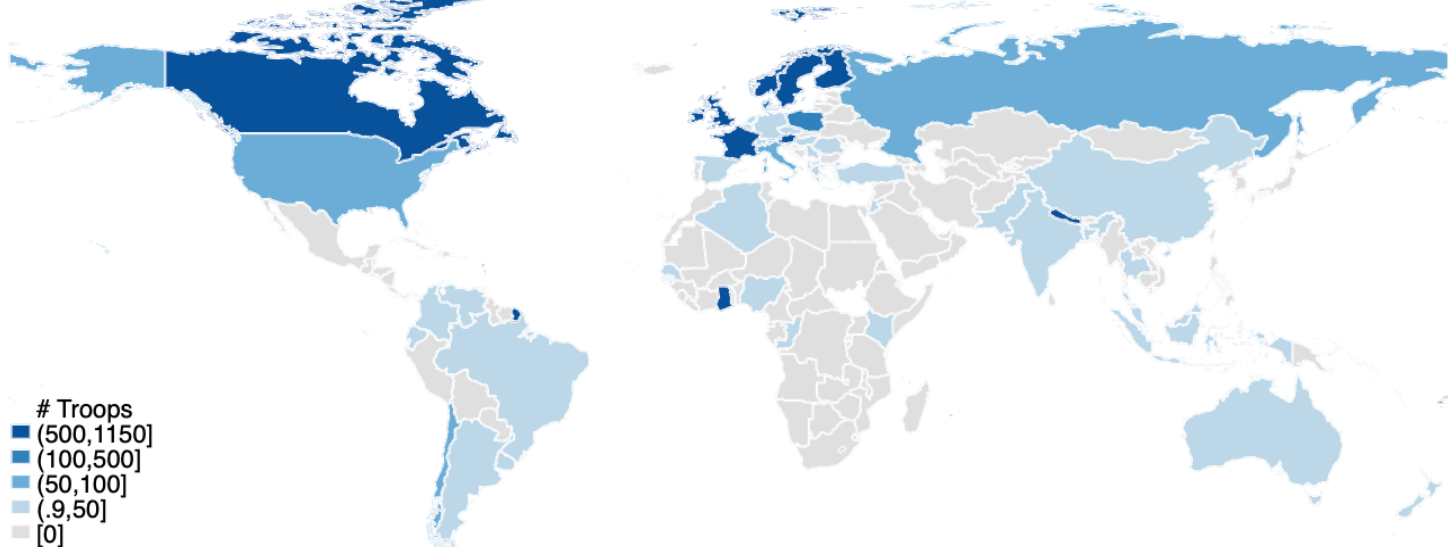


2018
VS
1991

UN Peacekeeping Troop Contributions by country in 2018



UN Peacekeeping Troop Contributions by country in 1991



**FLOWS IN
2010**





Uniformed UN PKO personnel

from 11,000 in 1989 to 70,100 March 2022
(peak 2015 with 107,000)

Countries providing peacekeepers

from 46 in 1990 to 122 as March 2022

Average number countries in a UN African peacekeeping missions:

mid-1990s was 8, in mid-2000s was 21

UN Mission average duration 70 months (1989-2016)

157 Force Commanders, average duration 19 months, 50 nations

97 SRSG, average length 23 months, 50 nations



DOES UN PKO
COMPOSITION
MATTER?

- Do diverse missions work better than homogeneous missions?
 1. Blue Helmets Composition/Diversity
- Do difference within the mission leadership (SGSR & Force Commander) affect mission's mandates reach?
 2. Top Leadership Composition
- Are the differences between mission leadership and Blue Helmets relevant in stopping conflict and protecting civilians?
 3. Top Leadership (FC) & Blue Helmets Diversity
- Do Blue Helmets from faraway work better with locals than peacekeepers coming from closer or more similar countries?
 4. Blue Helmets & Locals Distance/Diversity

COMPOSITION,
DIVERSITY,
MECHANISMS

**Informative
trust**

PKOs are able to gain more information due to building trust because of low levels of social, economic, and cultural diversity.

**Informative
communicability**

PKOs able to hear and understand context due to similarities in norms and culture with locals.

**Resolve
deterrence**

PKO's heterogenous composition signals to local actors the resolve of UN and international community.

**Skilled
persuasion**

Able to affect local preferences due to skill portfolio of peacekeepers and their daily practices.



HOW CAN
TROOP-
CONTRIBUTING
COUNTRIES
HELP ADDRESS
CHALLENGES
ASSOCIATED
WITH
DIVERSITY?

1. More efforts should be expended transforming military organizations into learning institutions, that can adapt more flexibly in cooperation with other military organizations. This should be done by including multinational coordination explicitly and systematically in training templates.
2. We have learned that ‘training is not enough—we also need socialization’. Peacekeepers will need to be socialized into roles where norms are internalized such that diversity may enhance effectiveness.
3. Creating the appropriate incentive structures, state militaries and their leadership could partly address this issue. Even if we consider the prospects of career advancement, there is space to reshape the attractiveness of peacekeeping as military vocation.

APPENDIX

HOW CAN A MISSION MAKE BETTER USE OF DIVERSITY?

1. At the mission level, [systematic knowledge regarding troop strength](#) needs to be shared at both Headquarters and sector levels to ensure synergies and opportunities of coordination are identified.
2. We could envisage how a mission structures might be a site for innovation—to [avoid problems relating to the current 'single country-single Area of Responsibility'](#) approach.
3. High levels of field diversity could be 'created' in each Area of Responsibility, with company or even platoon-size units from different countries working together.
4. Enhancing within-mission learning could lead to additional positive results that subsequently enhance lessons-learned.

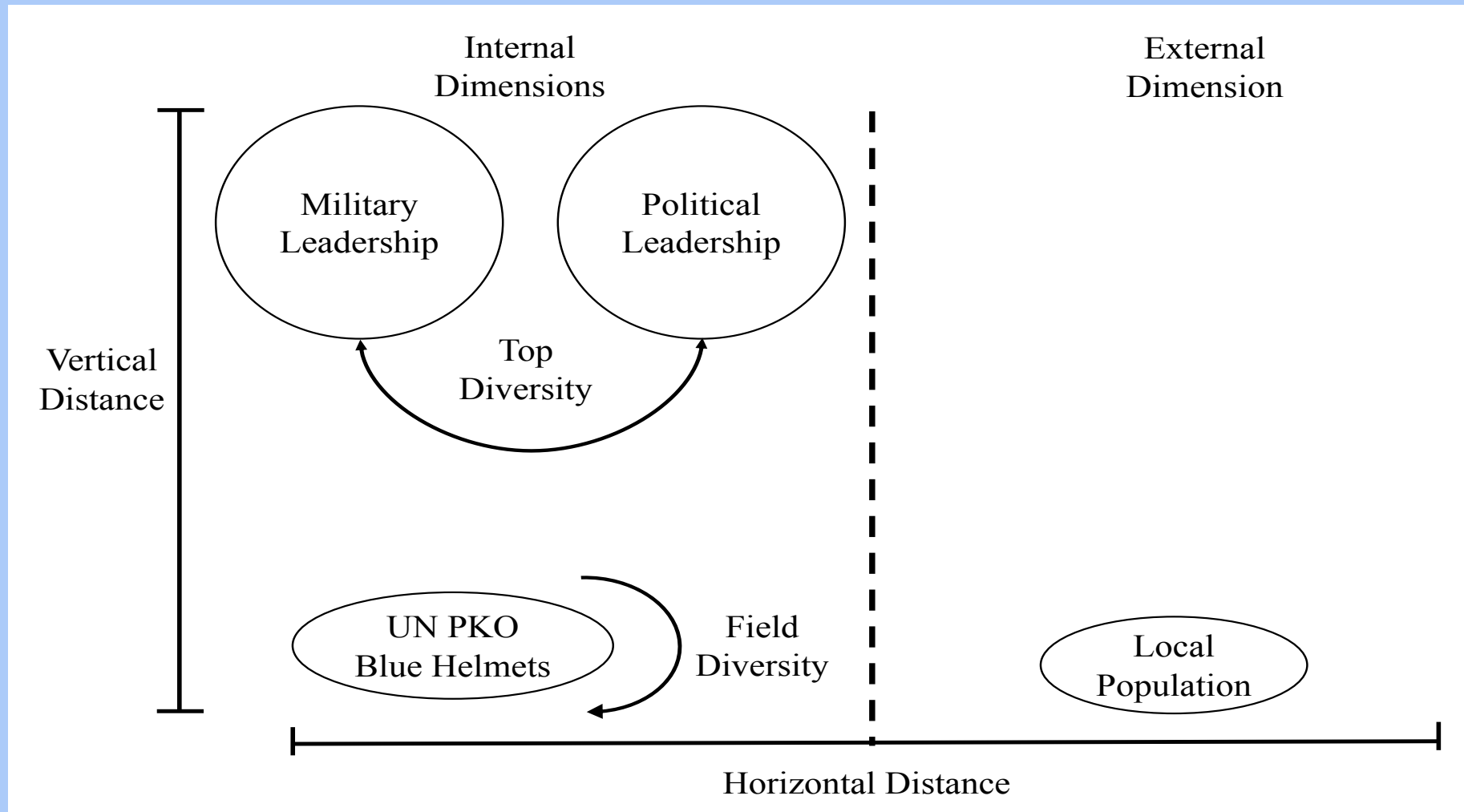
- Mission composition, as components from different national armies, is at best studied by [combining quantitative and qualitative methods](#).
- A [set of controlled case comparisons](#). The cases we selected are: MINUSMA in Mali; UNIFIL in Lebanon and MINUSCA in CAR
- [Cross-missions time series](#) ; unit of analysis mission-month, to study and empirically leverage both variation between missions and also within missions.



RESEARCH DESIGN

Previous mechanisms and our mechanisms

Issue	Previous mechanisms		Assumption	New mechanism	
Asymmetric information	Informative fungibility	Any PKOs are able to minimize uncertainty by sharing information with locals	Information gathering as mere function of presence and size. The presence of a PKO is sufficient to gain access to this information	Informative trust	PKOs are able to gain more information due to building trust because of low levels of social, economic, and cultural diversity.
				Informative communicability	PKOs able to hear and understand context due to similarities in norms and culture with locals.
Commitment problem	Muscular deterrence	PKOs can impose costs of misbehaviour by conflict actors	PKOs' latent capacity to impose costs is related to size and mandate.	Resolve deterrence	PKO's heterogenous composition signals to local actors the resolve of UN and international community.
				Skilled persuasion	Able to affect local preferences due to skill portfolio of peacekeepers and their daily practices.



How Analytical Unpacking

NEW DATA

- dependent variable within the negative piece literature (see Di Salvatore & Ruggeri 2018)
 - One Sided Violence and Battle related Deaths (UCDP Data).
- Explanatory variables: creations of diversity and distances indexes
- However, main challenge proxies for our leadership “explanans”
 - original data gathering on UN FC & SRSG: name, nationality, start/end; experience
 - cultural diversity/distance: geographic, linguistic, religious

CHP2: FIELD DIVERSITY- UN TROOPS

UN TROOPS COMPOSITION

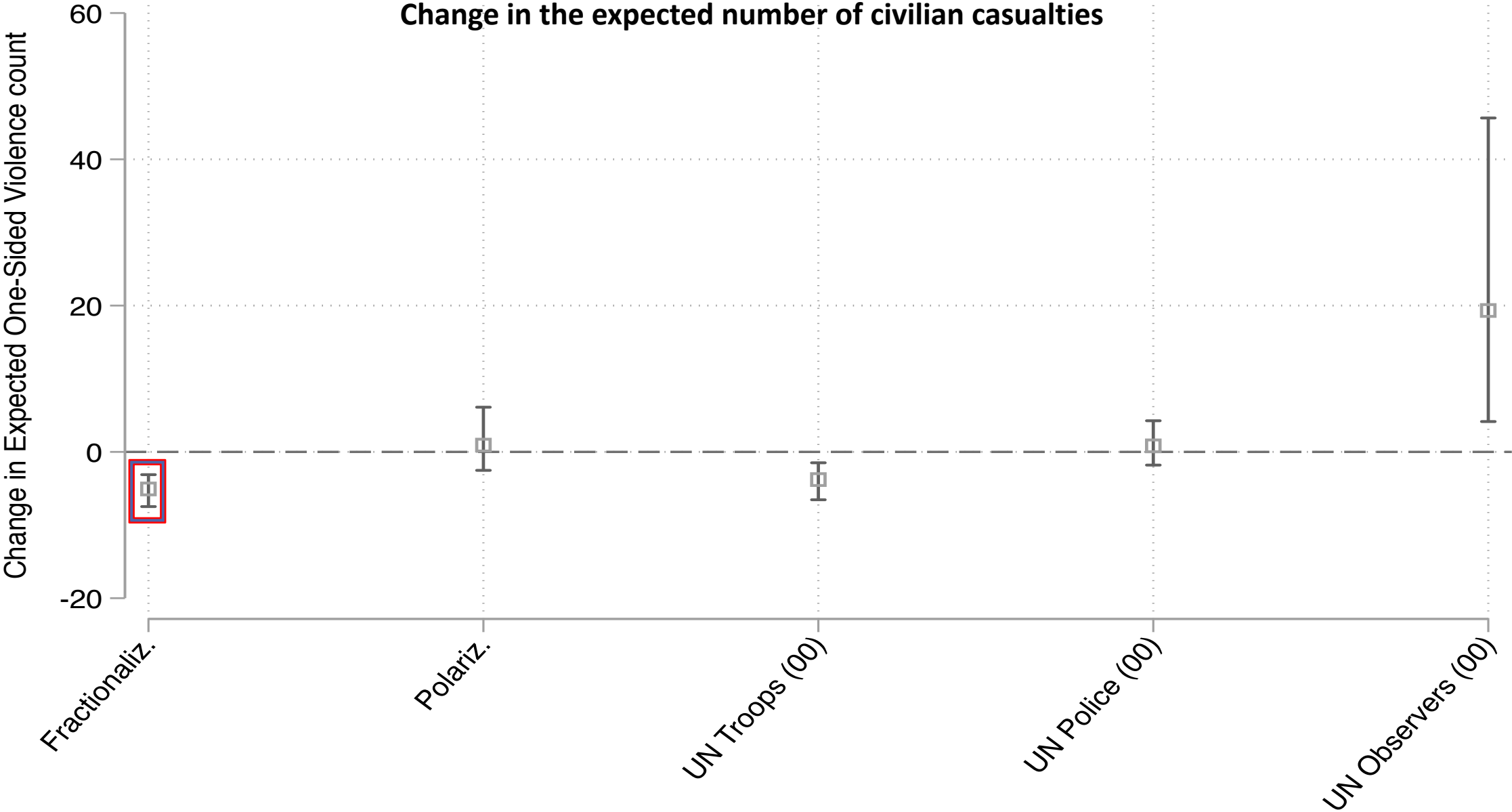


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- HOW studied?
 - Fragmentation /diversity indexes within mission
 - Statistics, Monthly Data on OSV&BrD
- WHAT found?
 - Qualitative evidence suggest that coordination and misunderstandings can limit effectiveness
 - However, mission diversity decreases the level of violence against civilians
 - It holds when geographic and linguistic distances between countries are considered

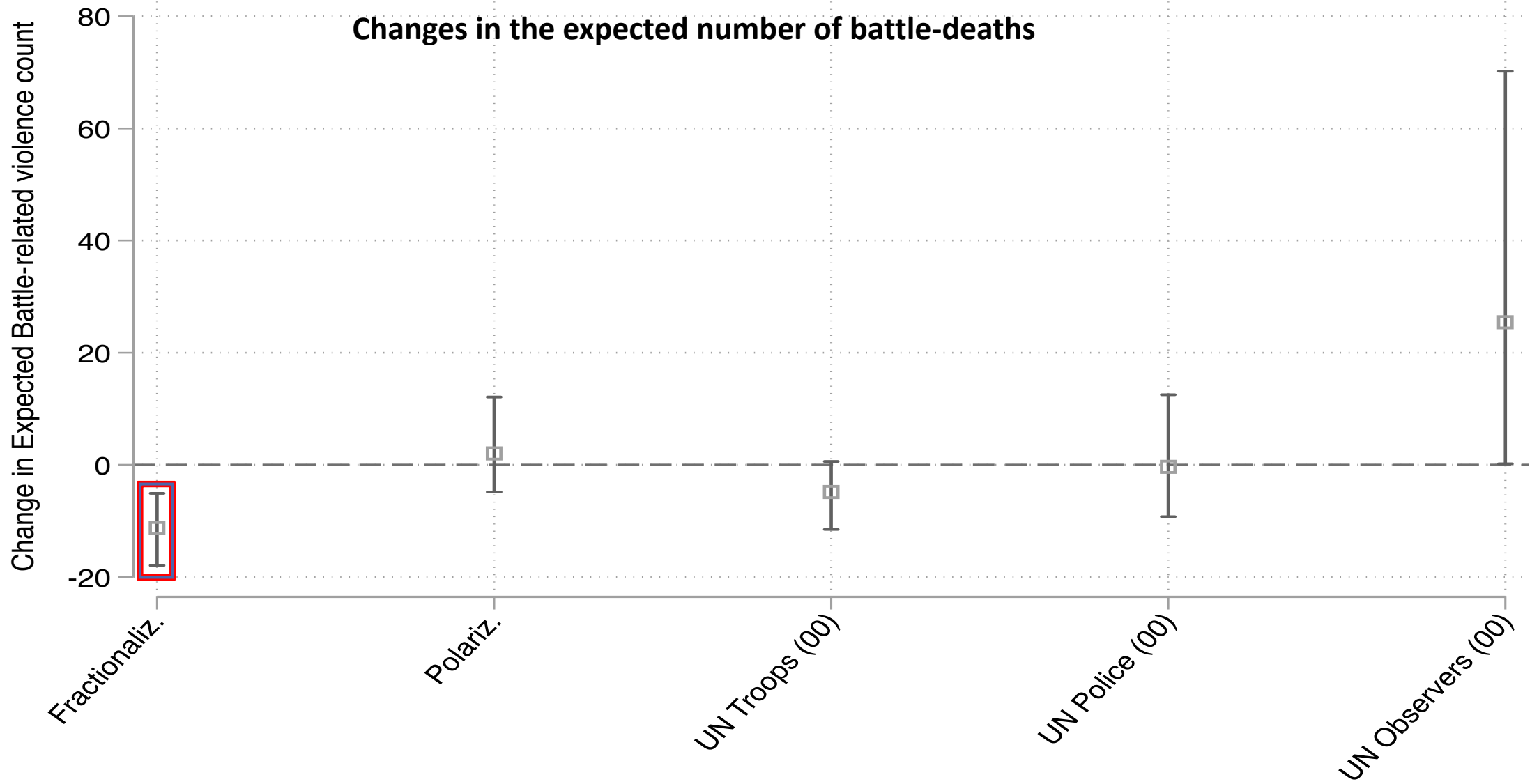


Change in the expected number of civilian casualties



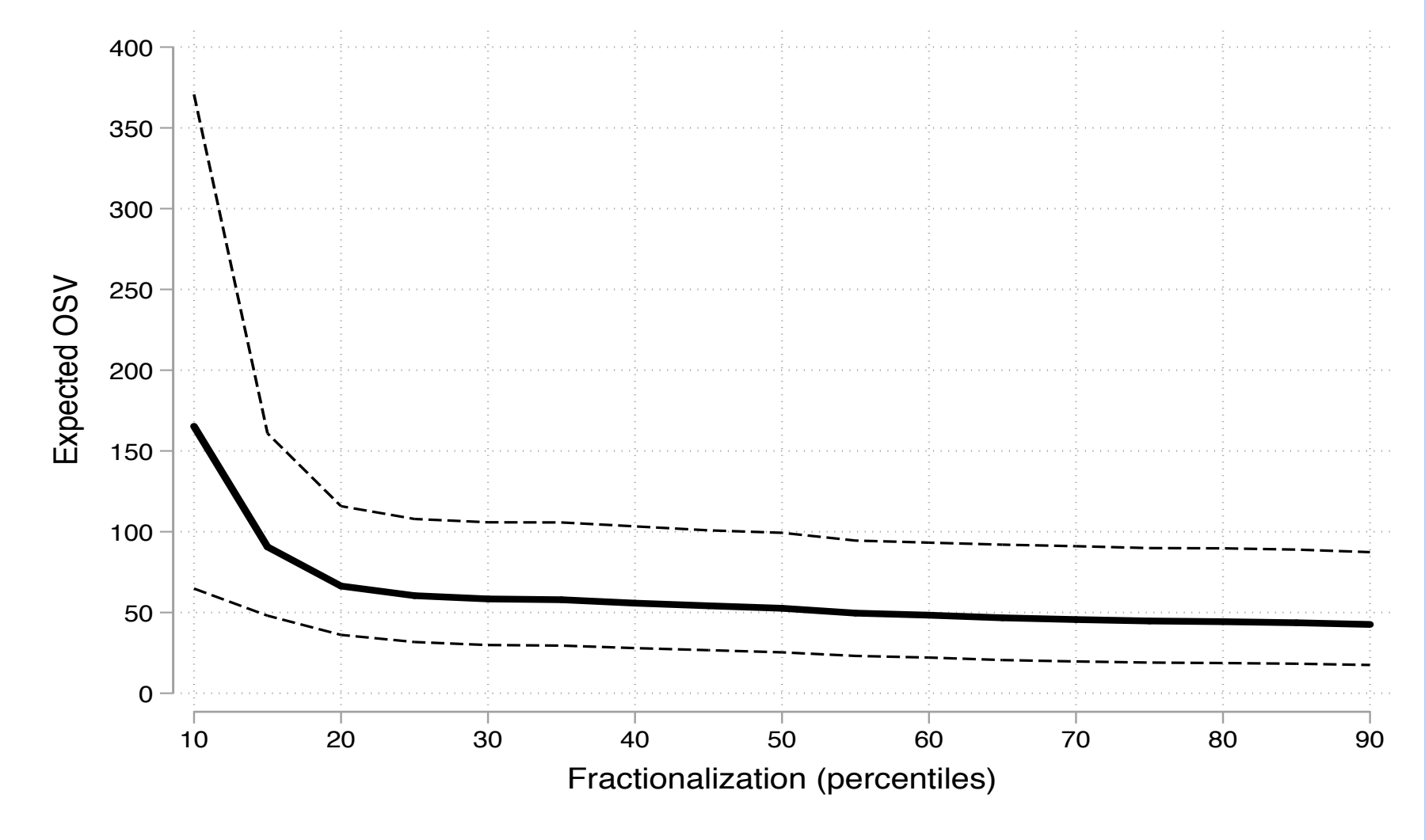
Change in averaged expected values, given one SD increase in each predictor from its mean. Vertical bars are 90% C.I.

Changes in the expected number of battle-deaths



Change in averaged expected values, given one SD increase in each predictor from its mean. Vertical bars are 90% C.I.

DIVERSITY & CIVILIAN VICTIMIZATION



CHP3: TOP DIVERSITY – MISSION LEADERSHIP

UN INTERNAL REVIEW

“The Special Investigation found that a lack of leadership on the part of key senior Mission personnel culminated in a chaotic and ineffective response to the violence.”

Executive Summary of the Independent Special Investigation into the violence which occurred in Juba in 2016 and UNMISS response, page 2

- HOW studied?
 - Distances between SRSG & FC on geography, language and religion
 - Interviews and 3 case studies
 - Statistics, Monthly Data on OSV&BrD
- WHAT found?
 - Top mission diversity decreases the level of violence against civilians and battle deaths

PKO LEADERSHIP

“There is a large academic literature on the value of military leadership that has not yet been translated into a similar literature on leadership in peacekeeping. But clearly strong and effective leaders play an important role in shaping missions and contributing to effectiveness”

Alex Bellamy & Paul Williams (eds., 2013), Providing Peacekeepers

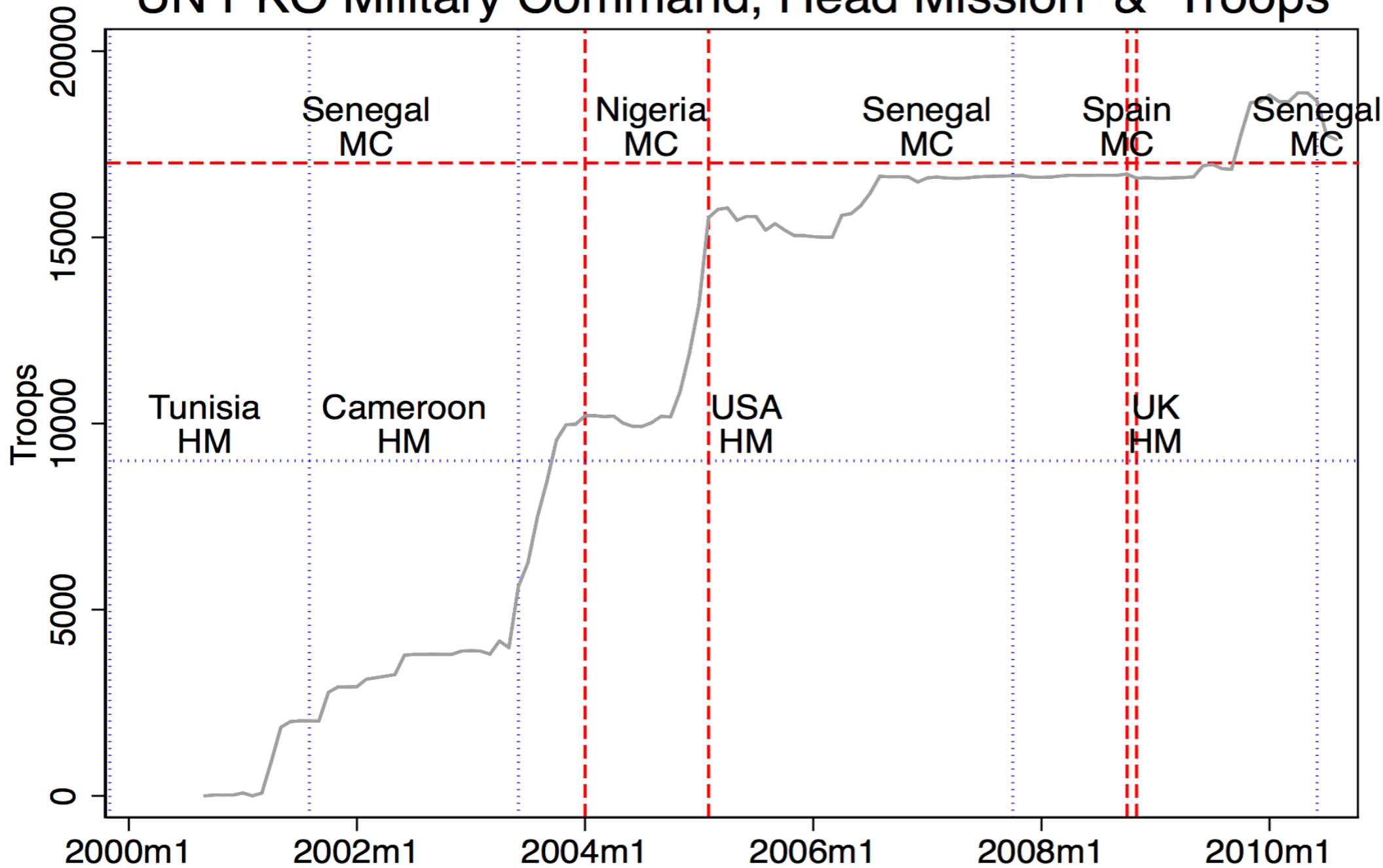
Top mission Military Leadership

→ Force Commander (FC)

Top mission Political Leadership

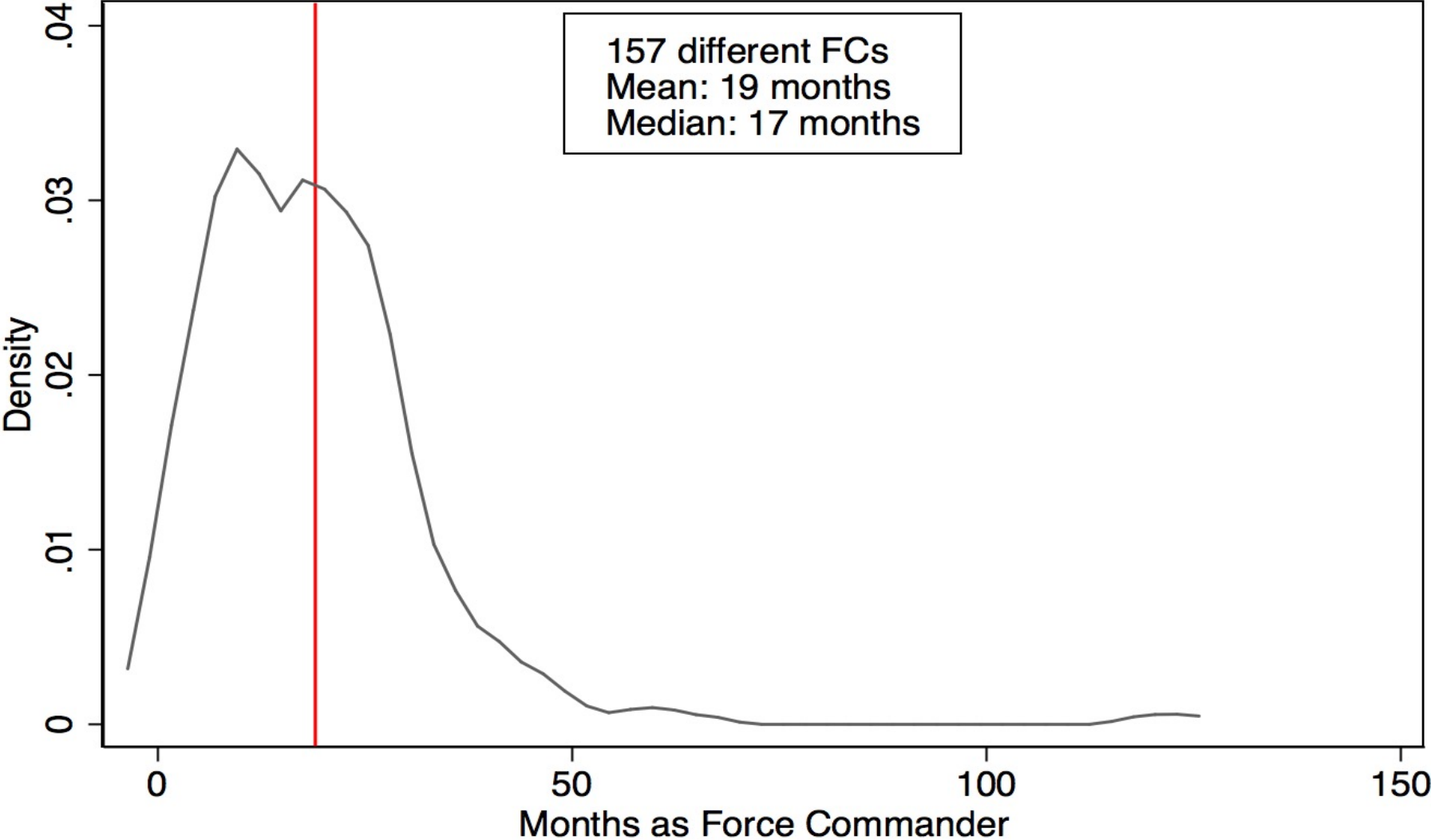
→ Special Representative Secretary General (SRSG)

UN PKO Military Command, Head Mission & Troops



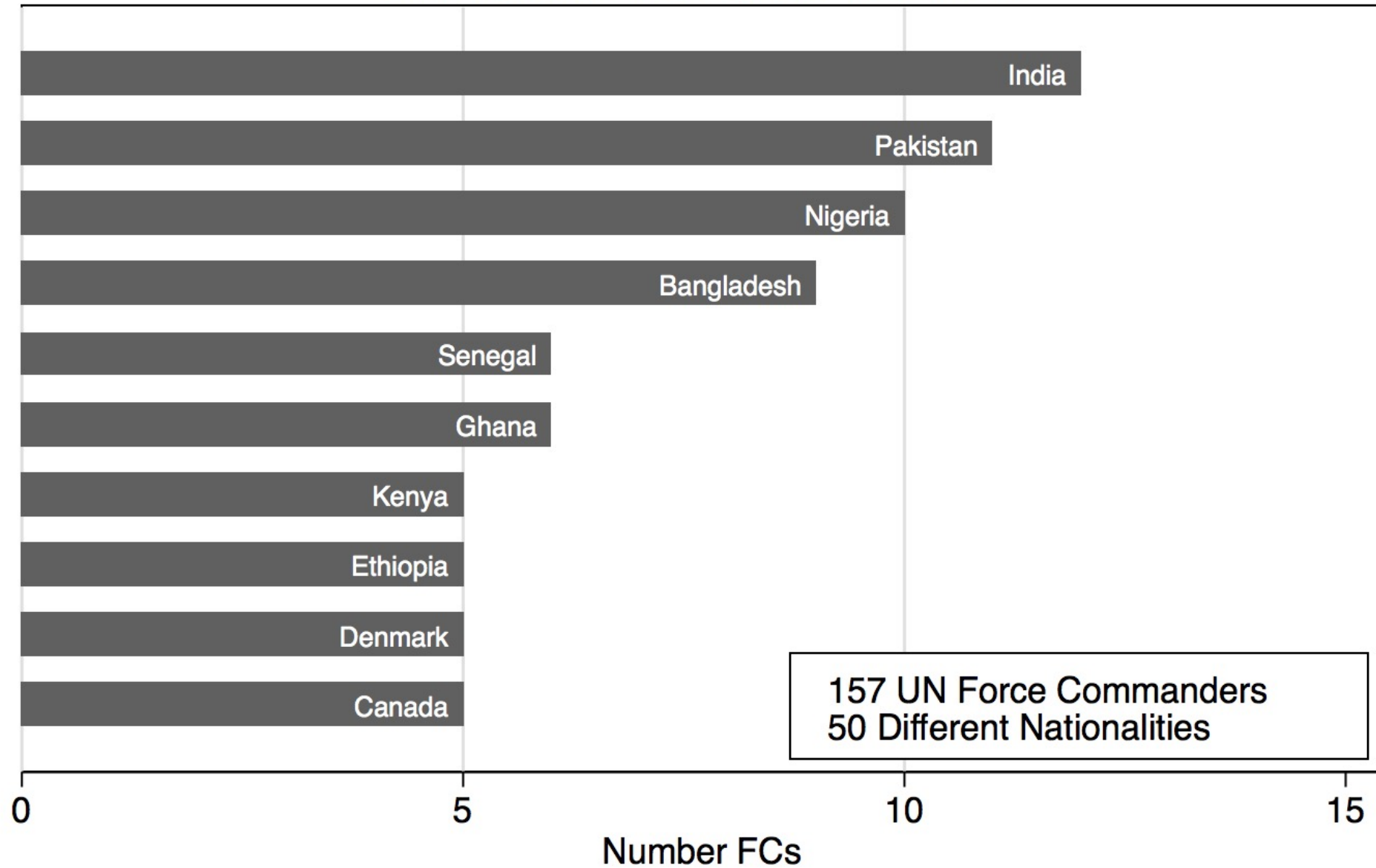
Length of UN Force Commanders

UN missions Africa & Asia 1989-2015



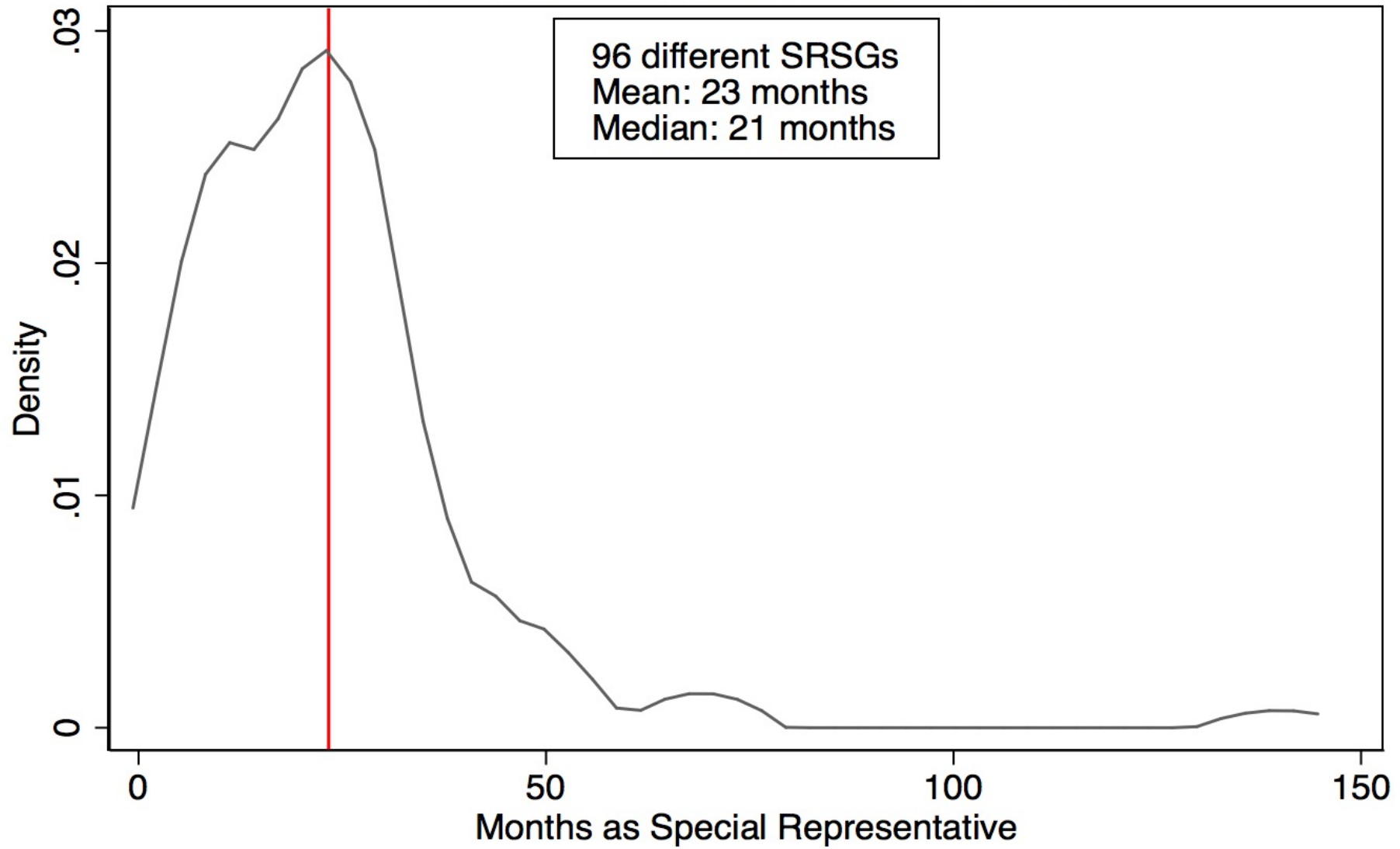
Top 10 Nationalities - UN Force Commanders

UN missions Africa & Asia 1989-2015



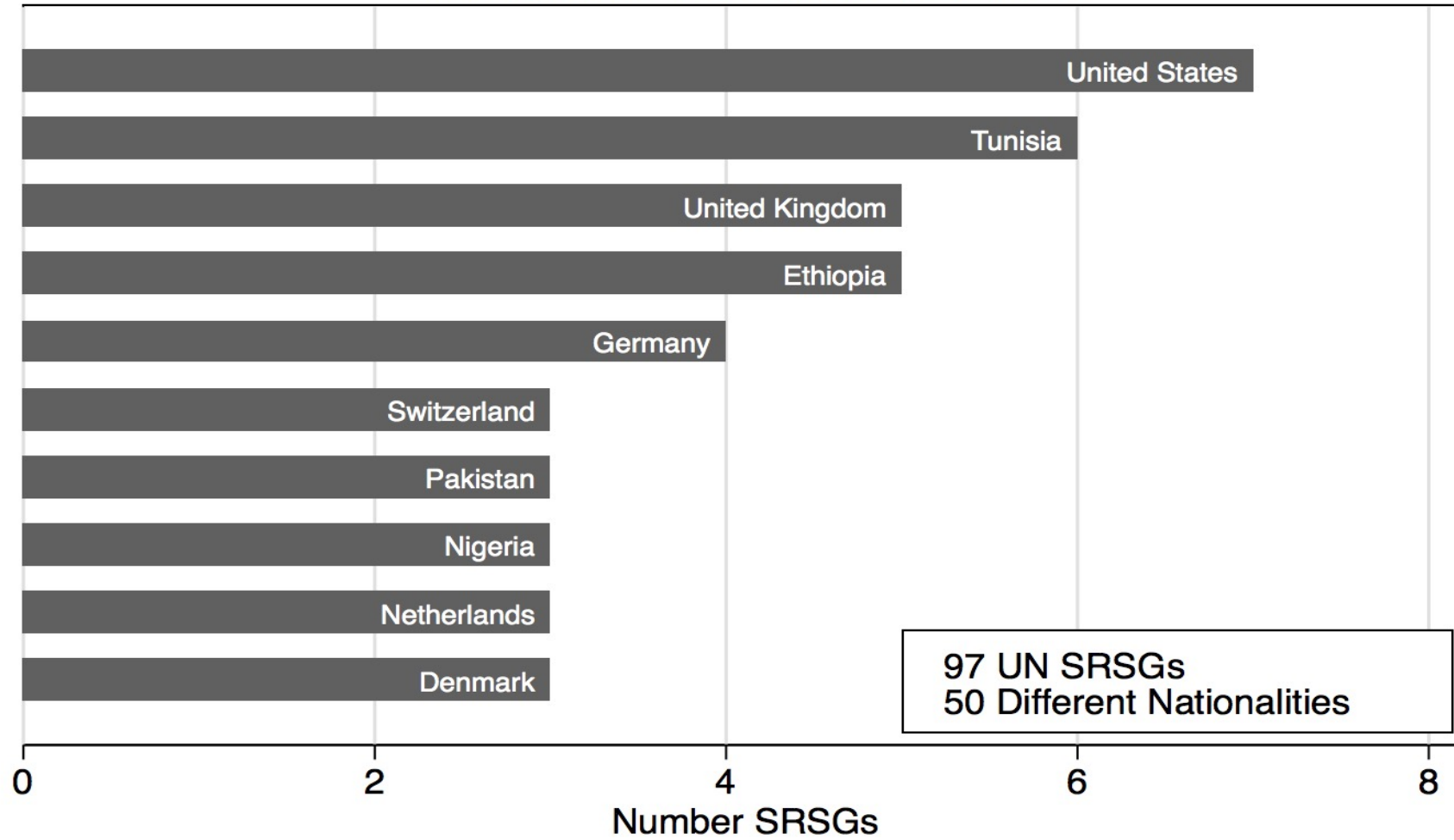
Length of UN SRSG

UN mission Africa & Asia 1989-2015

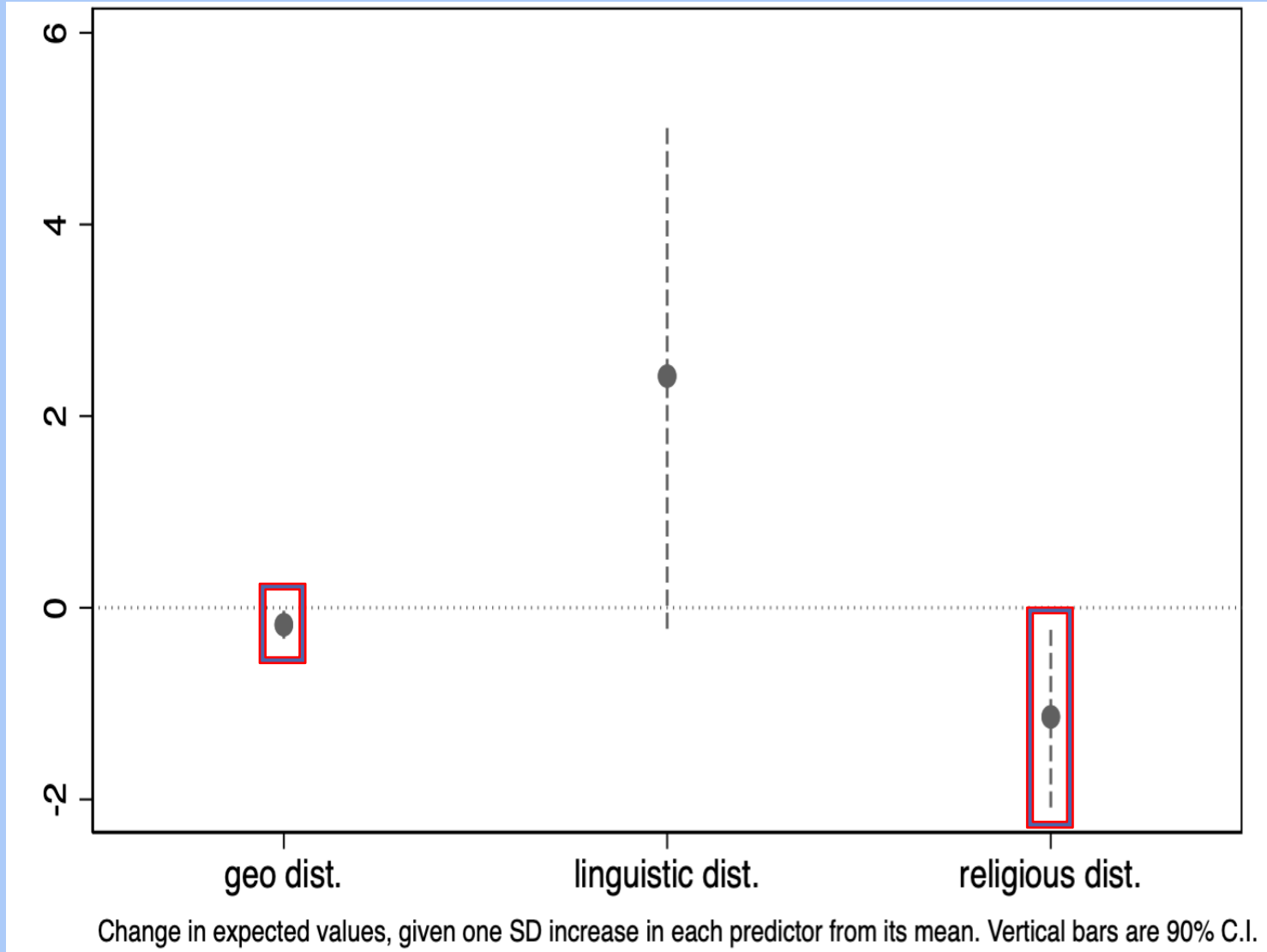


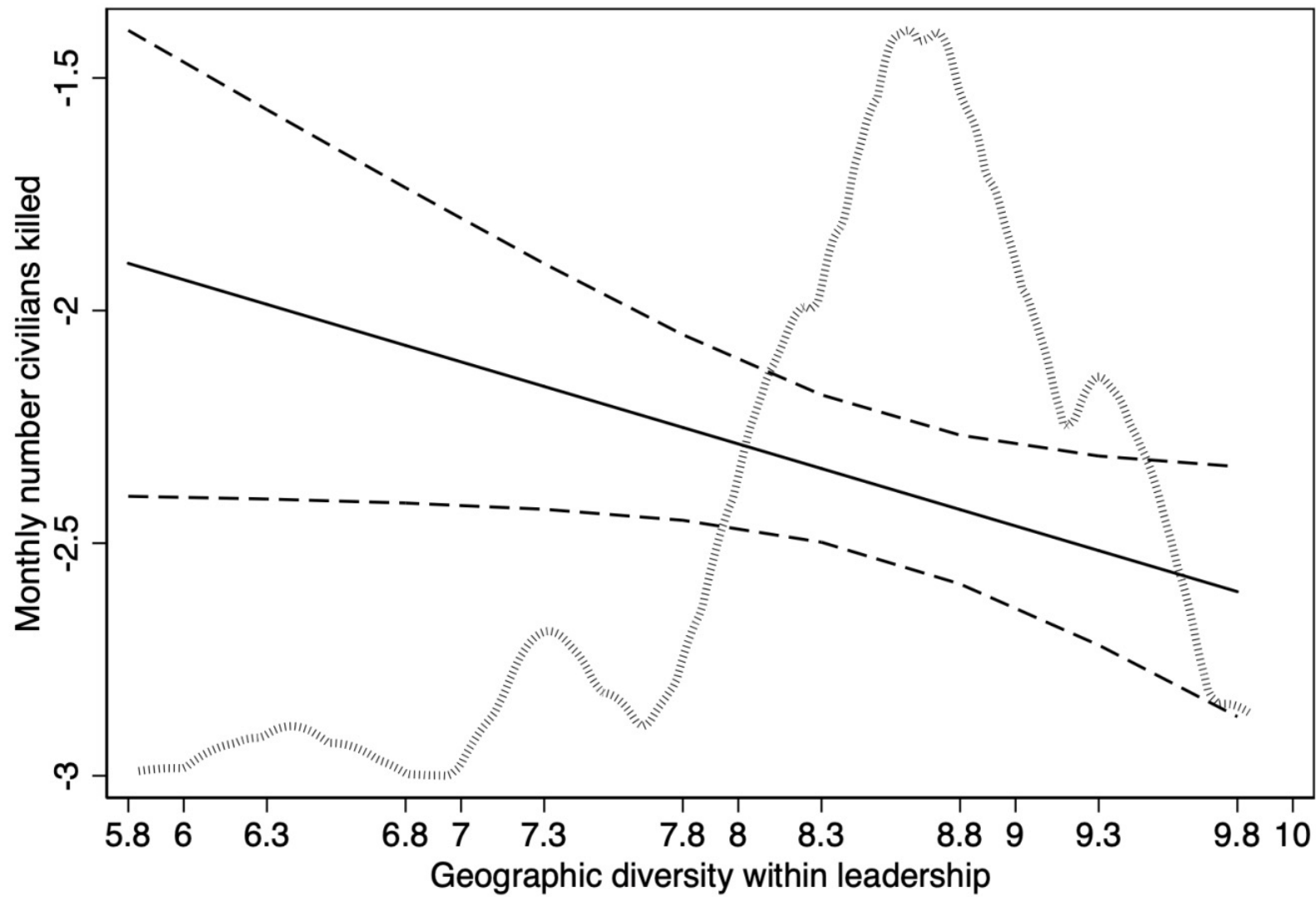
UN SRSGs

UN Missions Africa & Asia 1989-2015



DIVERSITY FC-SRSG

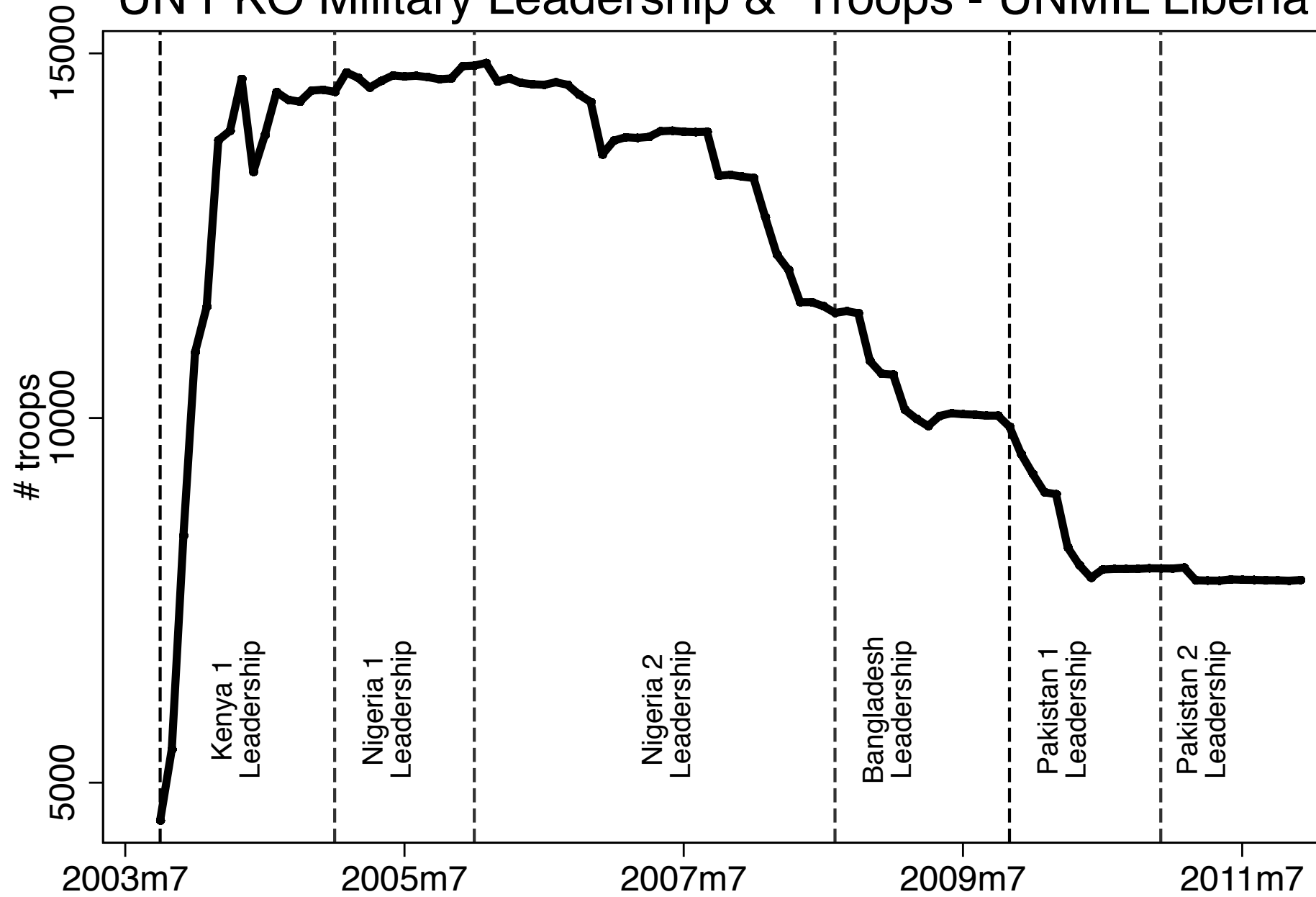


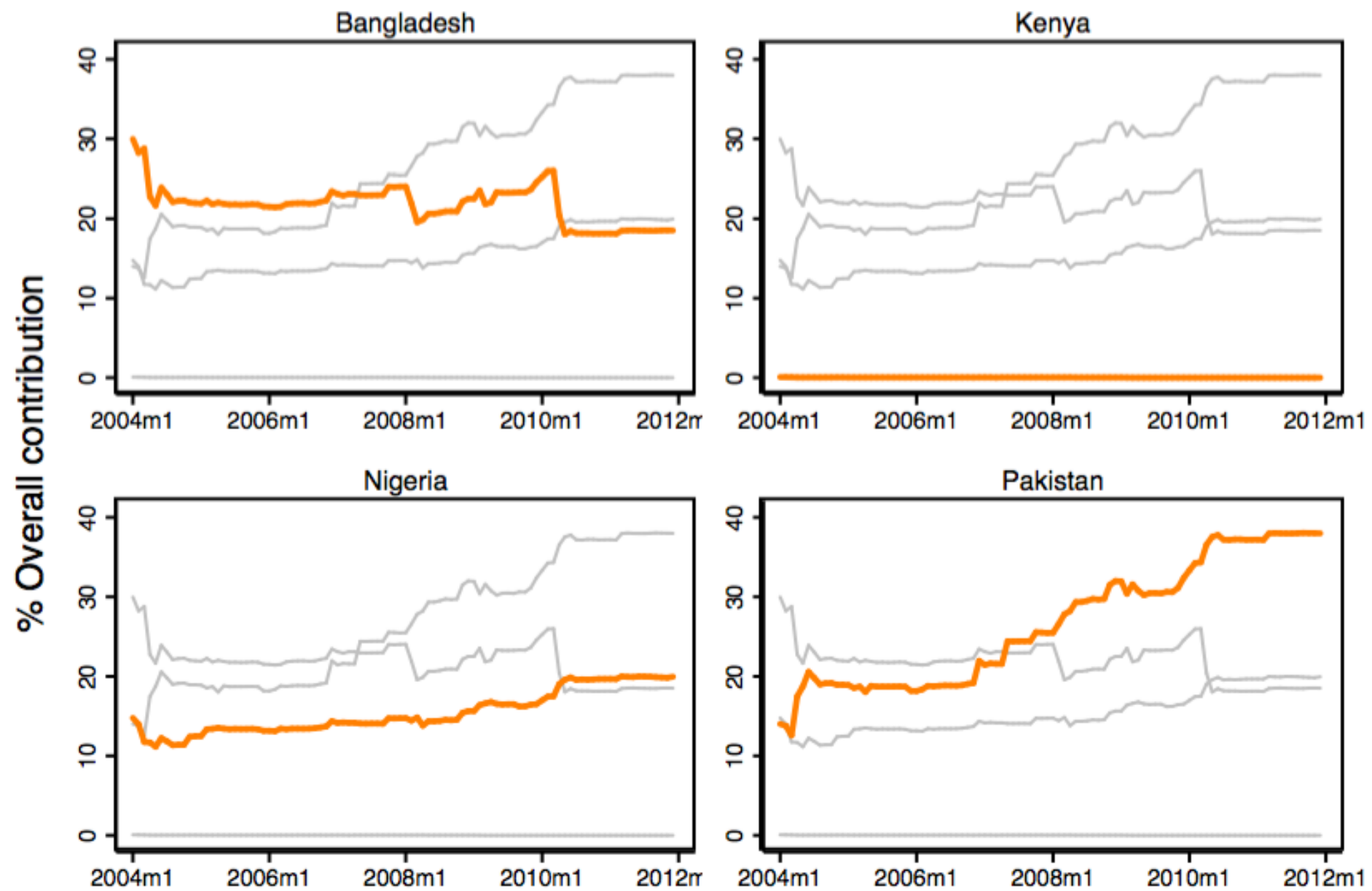


CHP4: DIVERSITY BETWEEN FORCE COMMANDER AND BLUE HELMETS

- HOW studied?
 - Average distances between FC & troops on geography, language and religion.
 - Relative proportion from same national army FC
 - Interviews and 3 case studies
 - Statistics, Monthly Data on OSV&BrD
- WHAT found?
 - Diversity between FC and peacekeepers matters mostly for protecting civilians, whereas it does not seem to be relevant for resolving the conflict between belligerents.
 - The protection of civilians is facilitated when a higher percentage of soldiers come from the FC's own country, whereas a higher weighted linguistic distance between a FC and Blue Helmets might hamper civilian protection.

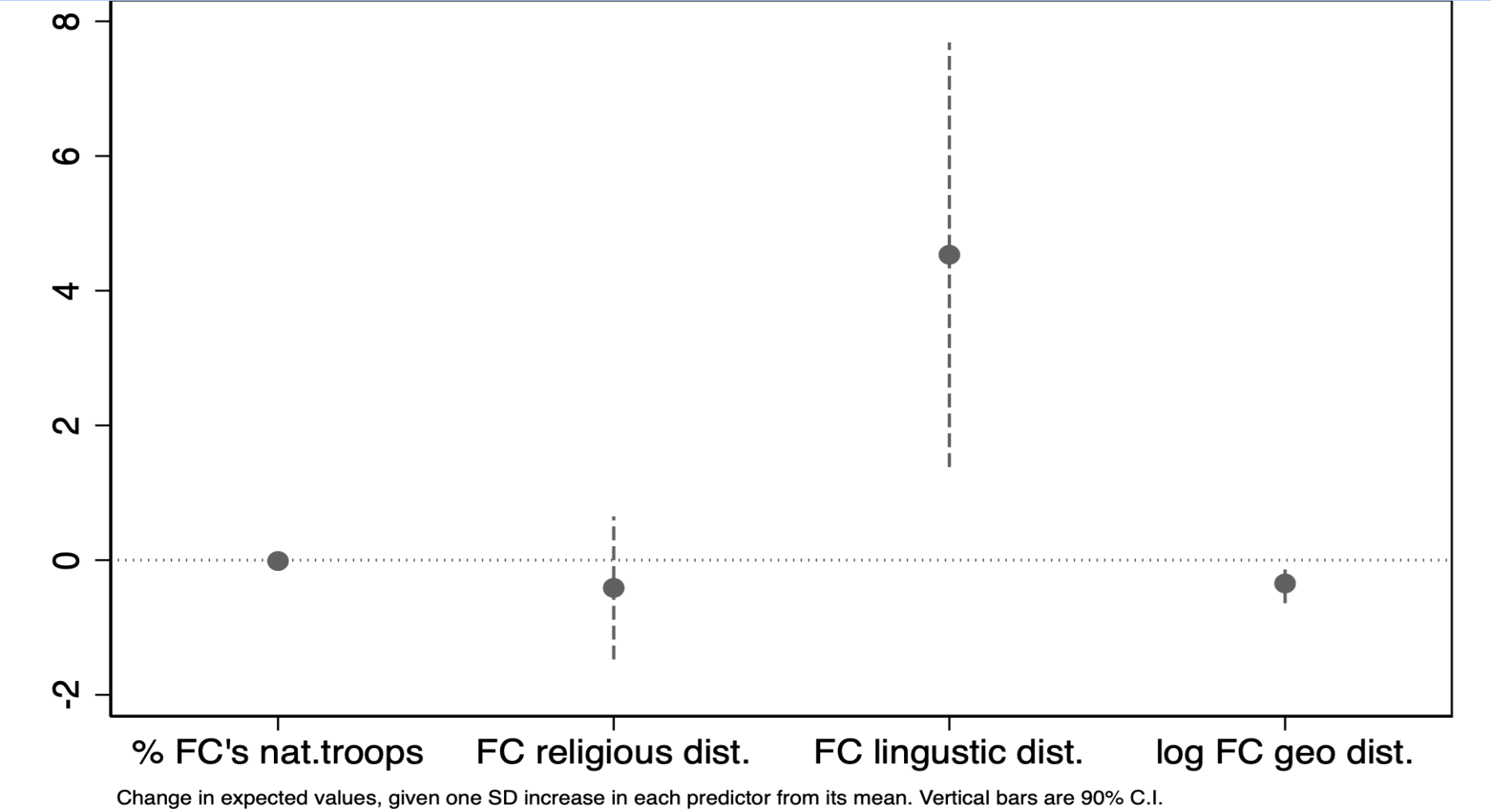
UN PKO Military Leadership & Troops - UNMIL Liberia



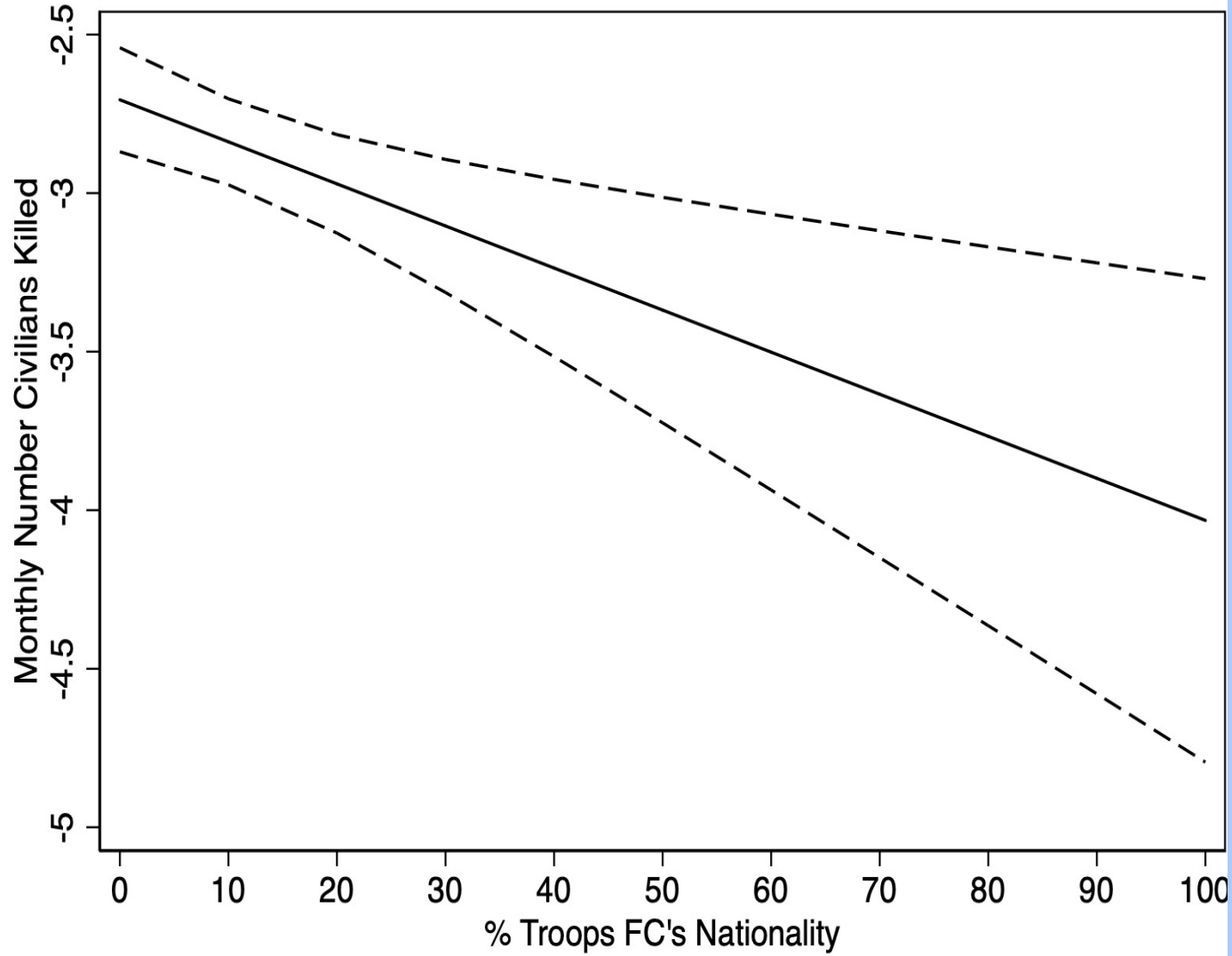


Military leadership and their national contribution - UNMIL

Average marginal effects of Force Commander's distance to troops on one-sided violence



EFFECTS ON OSV OVER PERCENTAGE OF TROOPS THAT ARE OF THE FORCE COMMANDER'S NATIONALITY



***CHP5: DIVERSITY BETWEEN BLUE
HELMETS AND LOCALS***



UN TROOPS COMPOSITION & LOCALS

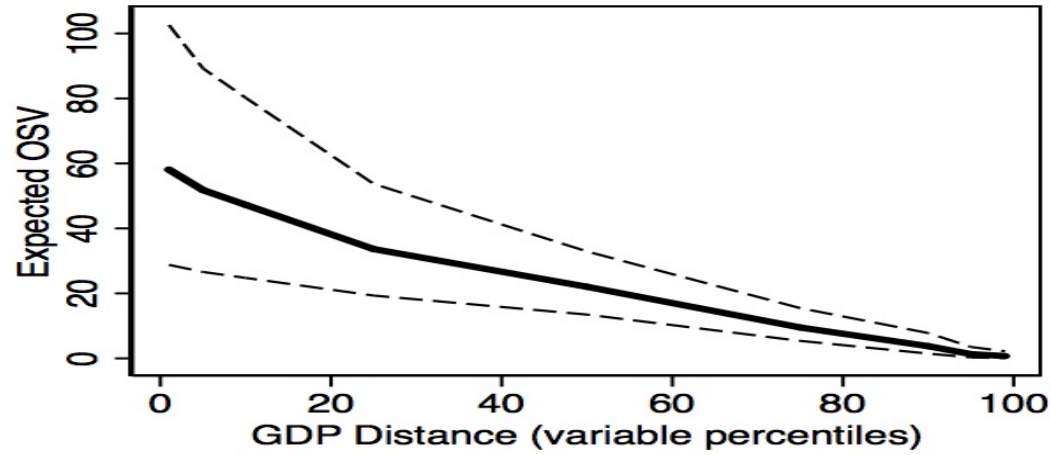
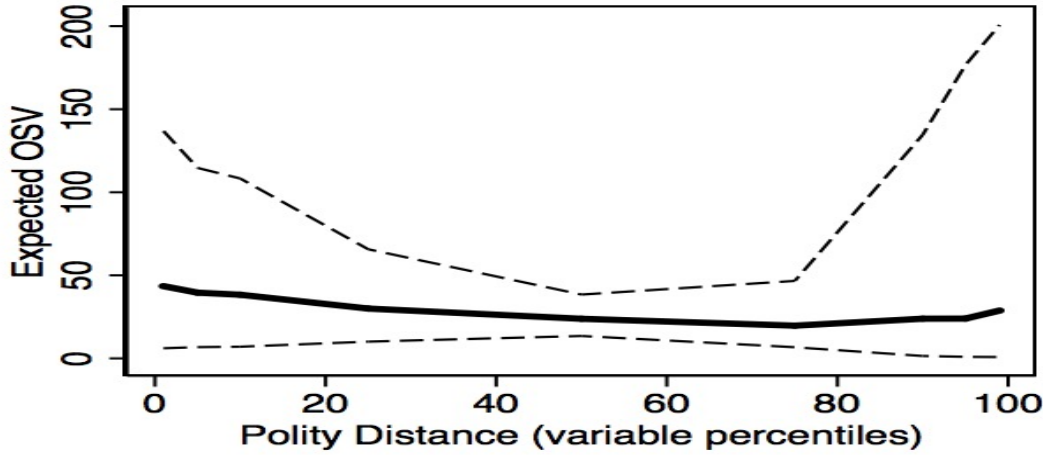
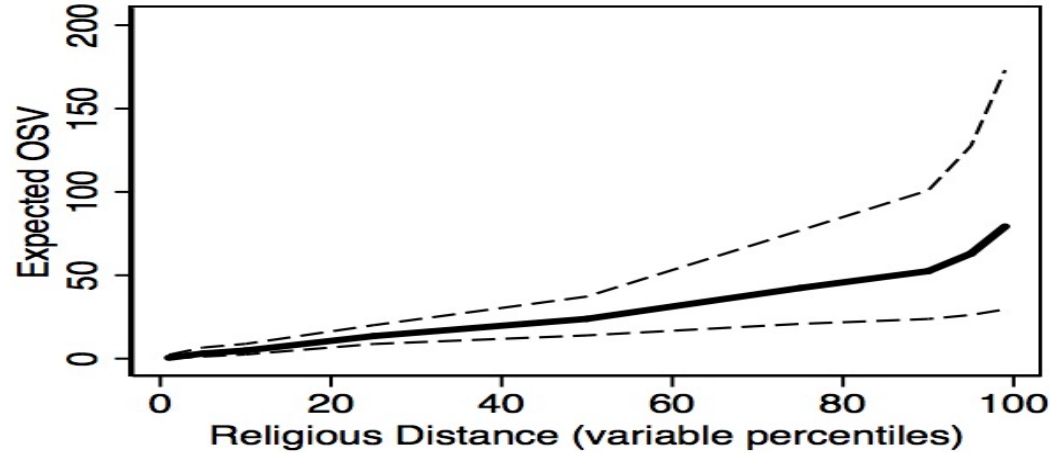
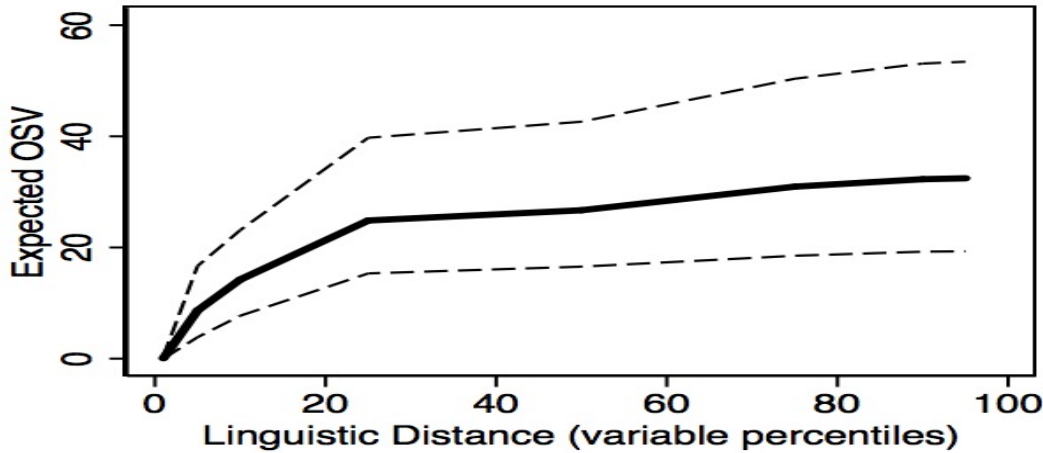
- HOW studied?
 - Created weighted distances taking in account PKO compo vis-a-vis feature locals.
 - Statistics
 - 3 case studies
- WHAT found?
 - Higher geographic and cultural distances correspond to higher levels of violence against civilians and higher battle deaths.
 - Whereas institutional and economic differences have the opposite effect, although the effects are less robust

UN PKO
Blue Helmets

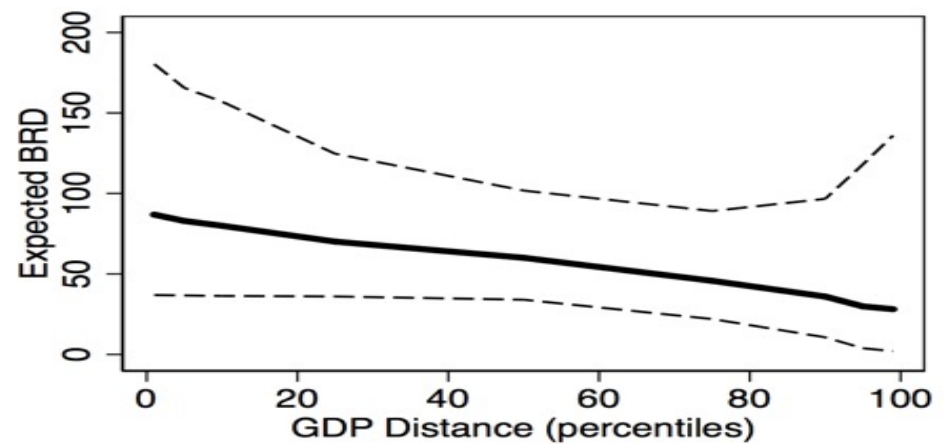
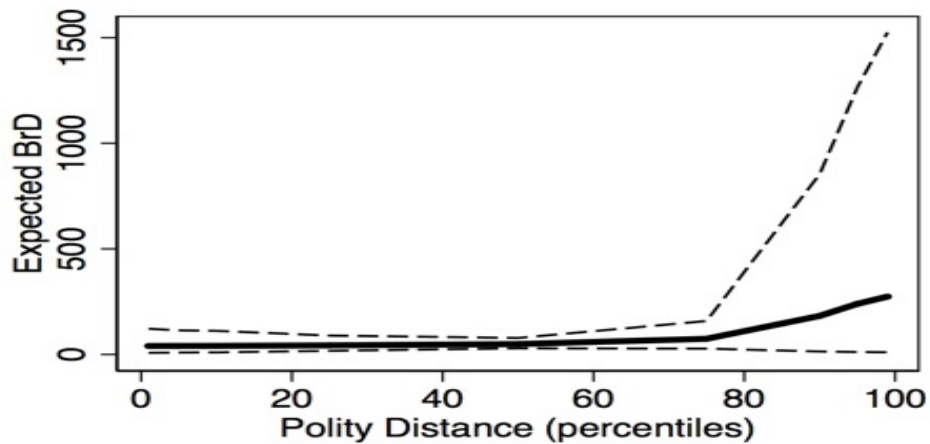
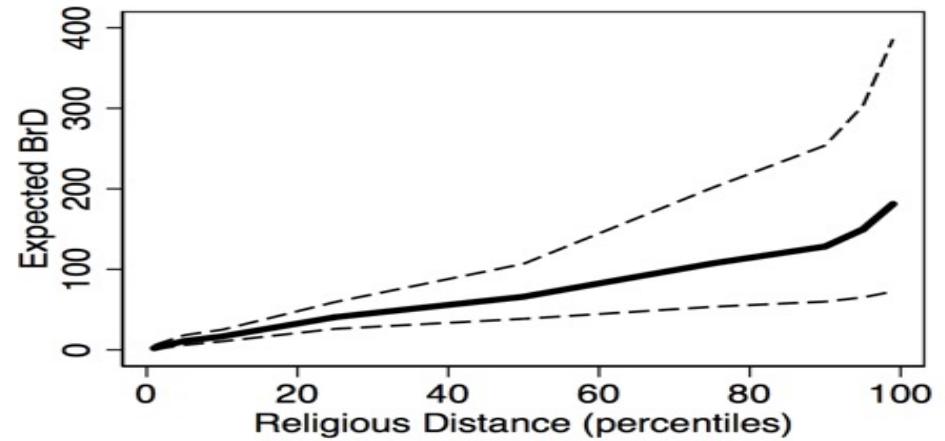
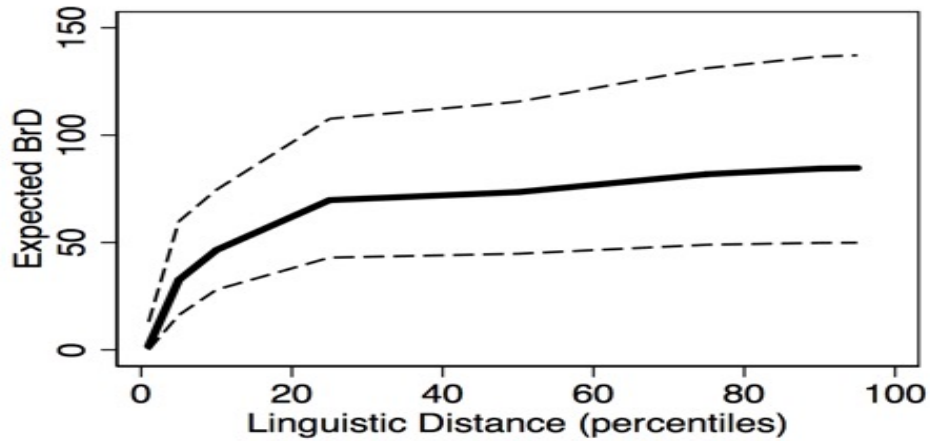
Population

Horizontal Distance

MONTHLY EXPECTED ONE-SIDED VIOLENCE COUNT OVER SEVERAL DISTANCES



MONTHLY EXPECTED BATTLE DETAILS COUNT OVER SEVERAL DISTANCES



UN Mission composition matter, the force generation process is crucial

- Diversity can have both positive and negative effects.
- For instance, when we look at **the relation between peacekeepers and FC**, we find that proximity between them is generally associated with better performances.
- Further, **homogeneity between local populations and peacekeepers**, or low distance between them, is also related to low levels of hostility and casualties.
- A set of policy recommendations: diversity should be managed, and this management must strive to minimize conditions whereby diversity prompts instances of coordination problems and misunderstandings.

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THANKS, GRAZIE