

Foundational state design processes, transitional political processes, and election support intervention effect on access to justice, rights and public services

Evidence shows that UN peacebuilding missions in post-conflict states have a large effect on political rights and civil liberties.

Geographic focus: Global

Effect: Large effect ($g=0.351$)

Confidence in study findings: Low (1 study with 4 effect sizes)

Short summary

UN peacebuilding missions aim to foster democratization in post-civil war states through institutional and behavioral reforms. One study covering 103 countries found that states with missions including democracy promotion had a 68% likelihood of democratization compared to 34% in states without such missions. While the findings indicate a large positive effect, limitations in study design and unclear reporting of mission components reduce confidence in the results.

Long summary

The intervention

The intervention involved UN peacebuilding missions explicitly designed to support democratic transitions. Missions with democracy promotion mandates assisted in strengthening democratic institutions, supporting elections, and fostering civil liberties.

How the intervention is expected to work

Democratization is expected to improve political rights and civil liberties by promoting institutional reforms, guiding post-conflict states toward democratic governance, supporting political processes, and strengthening local institutions. Explicit democracy mandates enhance the likelihood of meaningful political and civil change.

The evidence base

The cell contains 1 study: 1 impact evaluation based on a quasi-experimental design assessing democratization trends from 103 post-civil war countries.

Evidence findings

The study demonstrates that UN peacebuilding missions with democracy promotion components can substantially improve political rights and civil liberties, indicating a large effect. Confidence remains low due to the single-study evidence and non-experimental design. There is 1 impact evaluation in the cell and evidence summaries of the study are provided here:

Steinert & Grimm (2014) examine the effectiveness of United Nations (UN) peacebuilding missions in democratizing war-torn states, with a focus on missions that include democracy promotion components in their mandates. The context involves post-civil war countries where the UN has deployed peacebuilding missions to foster democratic transitions. The research employs a multinomial logistic regression analysis to assess the impact of UN peacebuilding missions on democratization trends in 103 post-civil war countries, of which 31 experienced a UN peacebuilding mission. The study uses Freedom House data to measure democratization, comparing rankings from the first mission year to those five years later. The analysis controls for various factors, including battle deaths, peace agreements, and oil wealth, to account for selection bias in mission deployment. The study finds that democratization is significantly more

likely if a UN peacebuilding mission is deployed, with a 68% probability of increased democracy in host countries compared to 34% in non-host countries. The presence of oil wealth negatively impacts democratization prospects, while a clear victory by one conflict party can lead to regime transitions in both directions. Descriptive statistics suggest that greater mission capacity, such as longer duration and more resources, may enhance democratization outcomes, although this relationship is not statistically significant. The study is rated as low confidence as it is a non-experimental study and lacks clear description of the intervention as it does not provide detailed information on the specific components or implementation of the UN peacebuilding missions, making it difficult to replicate or fully understand the intervention's scope and impact.

Confidence assessment

Overall low confidence as there is only one study in the cell, and limitations in study design and reporting reduce certainty in the findings

Other outcomes in the study:

Community and state governance / Transition of power