

Peacekeeping? An Analysis of the Public Choice Issues in ONUCA and MINUSTAH Reforms

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This paper examines the key differences between the United Nations' peacekeeping missions in Central America (ONUCA) and Haiti (MINUSTAH) to assess the impact of these foreign interventions on the national institutions of the affected countries within the context of peacebuilding policy. I contend that if the UN leads peacebuilding reforms at a constitutional or equivalent level, then the intervened polity should develop liberal democracy, free markets and/or stable peace. For this comparison, I employ a most similar systems design, which uses UN-promoted reforms as an independent variable and the aforementioned outcomes as dependent variables, encompassing all observable elements of peacebuilding. I found that UN-led reforms did not lead to the desired results of peacebuilding. Rather, polities only democratized, liberalized and pacified when the mission supported an agreement that came from within. The continuation of war and the lack of internal national consensus hindered democratization, liberalization and pacification in Haiti, while peace and internal consensus allowed peacebuilding to succeed in Central America. Third party intervention, particularly from the West, promoted violence and peace, respectively.

Keywords: peacekeeping, peacebuilding, United Nations, Central America, ONUCA, Haiti, MINUSTAH, democratization, liberalization, pacification

INTRODUCTION

Since 1945, the United Nations has been responsible for maintaining international security through diplomacy and the use of force. In the latter case, the Security Council, a special body within the UN that identifies and manages threats to peace, has the power to organize peacekeeping missions. The original objective of this civilian and military mechanism was to serve as a third and neutral actor to deter aggression between warring parties (Lamy et al., 2023; United Nations, 2018). As war evolved into an internal affair of authoritarian states rather than an international confrontation between states during the Cold War, the objectives of peacekeeping shifted accordingly. Soon, peacekeepers became concerned with political, economic, and social issues beyond deterring war (Paris, 2012; United Nations, 2016).

Under the concept of peacekeeping, peacebuilding emerged as a governance strategy to foster institutional change in intervened states. Peacekeeping originally strived to impose negative peace, meaning the absence of war. Peacebuilding, however, strived for positive peace, meaning changing the institutions to prevent the rise of conflict itself. This new approach to peacekeeping had three broad goals: democratization, economic liberalization and pacification (Galtung, 1976; Paris, 2012; United Nations, 2016). This is a more ambitious agenda, as it implies transforming national institutions in a manner similar to the reconstruction efforts led by the United States in certain military interventions (Coyne, 2008; Dobbins

et al., 2003; Kavanagh et al., 2019). The UN has pursued many peacebuilding campaigns with mixed results. For instance, the literature often classifies the mission in Central America, ONUCA, as a success, while the interventions in Haiti, MINUSTAH, are considered a failure.

This paper offers an analysis of UN peacekeeping missions that pursue peacebuilding from a constitutional economics perspective. I decided to analyze constitutions, as these documents provide the formal institutions that can yield democratization, economic liberalization, and pacification—the three stated goals of peacebuilding. This particular field in political economy derives from Brennan and Buchanan's *The Reason of Rules: Constitutional Political Economy* (1985), a foundational work in Public Choice that identifies constitutions as a distinct level of rules with a greater impact on institutions. This paper also follows the spirit of my previous work, "The Constitutional Economics of US Reconstruction Efforts Abroad: Political Participation through Political Parties in Germany, Japan, Iraq, and Afghanistan" (2023), where I explore how the United States promoted constitutional reforms to yield liberal democracies in invaded countries.

My research question for this paper is as follows: How do peacebuilding reforms promoted by the United Nations when intervening in a state affect its institutional development? Since a peacekeeping mission that strives to build peace must wield control and influence over the intervened country, it is poised to promote reforms that democratize, liberalize and pacify a polity. The constitution, briefly summarized as the rules to create rules (Brennan and Buchanan, 1985), provides the most effective mechanism for pursuing lasting institutional change. If the constitution provides the formal rules to reach the goals of peacebuilding, then the system should develop these traits in the real world. As such, my hypothesis is that if the UN leads peacebuilding reforms at a constitutional or equivalent level, then the intervened polity should develop liberal democracy, free markets and/or stable peace. In addition to the constitutions themselves, I will also look for equivalent mechanisms, specifically international treaties and peace accords. In the case of smaller nations, these treaties modify national institutions without directly amending the constitution, as they are often classified at the same legal level (Kelsen, 1967).

I will use a common tool in comparative politics, a most similar systems design, to compare the UN peacekeeping missions in Central America and Haiti. I chose these two cases because they offer outcome variation while also having many control variables that allow for a valid comparison (Dickovick et al., 2023). After conducting my research, I found little evidence to support my hypothesis. The successful Central American case, where I observed democratization, liberalization and pacification, did not have the UN peacekeeping mission promoting reforms. Rather, the UN supported domestic agreements upon the request of all concerned parties. In Haiti, where the peacekeeping mission itself pushed for peacebuilding reforms, none of the observable implications of peacebuilding were evident. I found that third-party intervention (Kavanagh et al., 2019) and the continuation of war despite a political agreement (Araujo Quintero, 2023) were explanatory variables, which is consistent with previous literature. Additionally, internal national consensus was necessary for the reforms to work. As such, successful peacebuilding requires domestic agreements that are not opposed internally and do not involve active internal conflict.

This paper contains five sections. First, I present a literature review that explains the origins of peacekeeping and peacebuilding, as well as how democratization, liberalization, and pacification are connected to the latter. Additionally, I summarize the previous literature on the reforms under foreign interventions broadly and the UN peacekeeping missions in Central America and Haiti specifically. Second, I explain the methodology I followed in this paper, specifically the structure of the most similar systems design and the validity of all relevant variables. Third, I enumerate my findings, focusing on a thorough institutional analysis of both cases at a constitutional level and the features of the UN peacekeeping missions in each. Fourth, I discuss the validity of my hypothesis and the variables that are more explanatory for my dependent variable. Fifth, I conclude my paper with a summary of my findings, an enumeration of my limitations, and possible paths for future research in the field of constitutional economics within the context of foreign intervention.

THE UNITED NATIONS, PEACEKEEPING AND PEACEBUILDING

After World War II, the victorious Allies decided to found the United Nations (UN), an international organization designed to ensure peace among states by regulating war and fostering cooperation. Since 1945, this body has expanded to encompass most sovereign states in the world, serving as the primary diplomatic forum for managing international crises. One of the UN's main institutional innovations in global governance is the UN Security Council, a specialized body responsible for addressing the world's threats to peace and broader security issues. The Security Council has special powers to intervene in its member states, including measures such as sanctions, direct military multinational interventions, and a novel approach: peacekeeping (Galtung, 1976; Lamy et al., 2023; United Nations, 2018).

Peacekeeping means deploying a military force to deter parties involved in conflict from engaging in further aggression. Given the intergovernmental nature of the UN, original peacekeeping was restricted to conflict between states, serving as a neutral third party to deter escalation and unintended encounters. However, the changing nature of war altered the exclusively international nature of peacekeeping by transforming it into an intervention mechanism in countries ravaged by internal conflict, generally associated with the rise or collapse of an authoritarian regime. The Security Council increased its deployment of peacekeeping forces to manage internal wars, many of which were proxy conflicts between the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War. To date, peacekeeping forces intended to intervene in internal wars have primarily concentrated in Africa, Asia, and Latin America (Paris, 2012; United Nations, 2016, 2018).

As peacekeeping became a common governance strategy for internal wars, soon its mandates and objectives became more ambitious. With the gradual decline of the Cold War, the UN began to discuss peacebuilding as a component of its peacekeeping missions. Peacebuilding means eliminating the root causes of conflict and deterring the long-term rise of violence. Original peacekeeping focused on simply stopping imminent conflict or ensuring ceasefires after violence paused during war. Peacebuilding, however, entails transforming institutions to foster the peaceful resolution of conflict (Lamy et al., 2023; Paris, 2012; United Nations, 2016, 2018). This distinction arises from the conceptual difference when talking about peace. Negative peace refers to the mere absence of war, whereas positive peace implies the prevention of violence through democratization and economic liberalization, in addition to the absence of war (Galtung, 1976). Indeed, the fact that many countries began to democratize and liberalize their economies after the Cold War is one of the key global transformations, known as the Third Wave of Democracy (Huntington, 1993). In this process, already consolidated democracies from the West and democratizing polities in the Global South reinforced each other's institutional processes through pressure and cooperation, a phenomenon generally associated with diffusion theory (Dickovick et al., 2019). Peacebuilding belongs to this global trend in institutional transformation.

The success of peacebuilding as a strategy is still debated, given the existence of both successful and failed peacekeeping missions that strived to build peace (Lamy et al., 2023; Paris, 2012). For instance, the UN peacekeeping operations in Central America are widely regarded as a success because they ended the civil wars in which they intervened. Furthermore, the intervening states made significant strides towards democratization, respect for human rights, and opening their markets to the world as part of their economic development (Araujo Quintero, 2022a; Fernandez, 2006; Government of Canada, 2016). On the other hand, UN interventions in Haiti have results that are deemed as mixed or even negative. For instance, the Caribbean country successfully celebrated elections and oversaw peaceful transitions of power between elected presidents. However, violence emerged with every political crisis and the country still has not developed resilient institutions. Furthermore, the peacekeeping forces themselves were accused of human rights abuses, including sexual exploitation allegations and the mismanagement of an induced cholera outbreak (Araujo Quintero, 2022b; Cabrera Figueroa, 2021; Call, 2021; King et al., 2021).

In the literature, individual analyses of different peacekeeping missions focus on the specificities associated with the deployment of forces. However, most of the information and analysis comes from the UN itself, so the institution only acknowledges the problems without connecting them to the actual outcomes of the mission. Furthermore, the organization classifies all finished missions as complete, but it

does not judge the success or failure of its proposed objectives. Independent academic work does discuss how well each mission fulfills its intended goals, but generally focuses on the negative aspects (Paris, 2012). However, authors tend to focus on specific issues that are highly controversial, rather than conducting a more general analysis (Cabrera Figueroa, 2021; Call, 2021; King et al., 2021). This judgement is also limited, since there are no comparative analyses between missions. This void in the literature prevents policymakers and researchers from knowing which policies are most effective in the context of peacebuilding, thereby hindering opportunities for improving this international public policy.

This paper, particularly its conceptual design and methodology, draws inspiration from an academic paper I wrote while interning at the American Institute for Economic Research (AIER). In that piece, I explored the constitutional economics of the United States' reconstruction as part of its military interventions worldwide (Araujo Quintero, 2023). The concept of reconstruction is similar to peacebuilding in many respects, specifically in its objective to foster both formal and informal institutions that yield democratization and economic liberalization. Perhaps the most important difference is the use of military force: while reconstruction entails a US invasion to overthrow a regime, UN peacebuilding focuses on deescalating a war or crisis as part of the reform process (Coyne, 2008; Dobbins et al., 2003; Kavanagh et al., 2019). However, both concepts are institutionally very similar, which allows me to adopt important concepts from the reconstruction paper. Literature focused on peacebuilding also identifies the building of institutions as the central issue of this approach to peacekeeping (Galtung, 1976; Paris, 2012). Additionally, I will incorporate some variables from my previous methodology and findings to test them in this new paper.

Given the similarities between reconstruction and peacebuilding, I will consider the variables that the literature has identified as crucial to determining the success or failure of reconstruction. In cases of success, elements such as high economic development, sufficient strength in the forces deployed, at least 5 years of intervention, domestic institutions compatible with those fostered from abroad, and societal trust correlate with the success of the mission (Coyne, 2008; Kavanagh et al., 2019). However, missions are generally less successful as their objectives increase in number and distance themselves from military affairs. Hence, reconstruction and peacebuilding also have less chance of success because they are institutionally complex and extend far beyond military objectives (Coyne, 2008; Kavanagh et al., 2019). Furthermore, the notion of institutional stickiness, meaning the lingering of already existing institutions despite efforts to change them, can undermine the transition to a liberal democracy, a free market economy or a peaceful country. If no domestic institutions exist to support these developments, foreign intervention may be less effective in promoting reforms (Boettke, Coyne, and Leeson, 2008; Wenzel, 2014). Finally, the intervention of third parties, meaning foreign powers that oppose the reconstruction or peacebuilding effort, can derail any institutional development (Dobbins et al., 2003). This is particularly relevant when said intervention allows an internal war to continue, as parties ignore a political agreement within the state, while violent competition for it continues informally through an insurgency war (Araujo Quintero, 2023).

This paper wants to contribute to the current literature in two key ways. First, I aim to establish a clear and objective method for determining success or failure in UN peacekeeping operations that involve peacebuilding. I will do this by defining clear variables for the three observable characteristics of peacebuilding and determining viable observations for each. With this action, I intend to conduct an institutional analysis from a constitutional economics perspective, focusing on how polities evolved due to the UN intervention. I chose this particular field within Public Choice, which studies the rules to create rules (Brennan and Buchanan, 1985), because this is the specific area that peacebuilding is designed to address. If a system achieves reforms successfully as part of peacebuilding, then the constitution or an equivalent mechanism, such as an international treaty, according to the legal Kelsen pyramid (Kelsen, 1967), should have the formal institutions to reflect this. By focusing on constitutional institutions, I avoid the more controversial yet non-institutional elements that previous literature has focused on. Secondly, I aim to compare UN peacekeeping missions to one another to provide a more comprehensive picture of the policies that underlie their success. Normally, peacebuilding efforts are studied in isolation, merely focusing on progress within a given system. By comparing the interventions in Central America to those in Haiti, an approach common in comparative politics, I can gain a better understanding of the variables most relevant

to the success or failure of peacebuilding. Given the small number of cases worldwide, this approach is the most effective way to study variation, outcomes, and possible causes in a systematic manner.

METHODOLOGY

For this paper, I will employ a qualitative methodology, given the limited number of cases. A deep study that compares missions is more valuable in this context. I will use a most similar systems design, a typical tool used in comparative politics, to test my hypothesis (Dickovick et al., 2023). By using this tool, I compare cases that are very similar to each other and yet have diverging outcomes. Thus, I aim to explain this variation in outcomes, necessary for proper comparison, by exploring potential independent variables that may impact the dependent variable. In this case, I study the UN peacekeeping missions in Central America, specifically ONUCA and its extensions, as well as in Haiti, including MINUSTAH and its predecessors and successors. Each case contains several interventions, both before and after the main mission. However, since they are too difficult to separate and often overlap institutionally, I will study each as a single process, referring to it by the name of the most significant mission or the intervened polity. I will also consider Central America as a single case, given that the three active civil wars were theaters of a single conflict known as the Central American Crisis (Weeks, 1986). This paper's dependent variables are democratization, pacification and/or economic liberalization. All of these observations correspond to successful peacebuilding, as defined by the UN. Their ideal results are liberal democracy, free markets and stable peace. In the case of democratization, I will examine the development of the liberal democracy index for each of the concerned countries, as well as constitutional reforms aimed at abandoning authoritarianism. For pacification, I will look for peace treaties that aim to halt a civil war and determine whether non-state actors have actually demobilized. Finally, in the case of marketization, I will analyze both economic growth, as measured by total GDP over time as a proxy for economic freedom based on data from the World Bank, as well as any international treaties that foster free trade.

A most similar systems design requires many control variables to demonstrate that two cases are comparable. When comparing ONUCA and MINUSTAH as processes, I was able to control for seven different variables, demonstrating the validity of this comparison. First, the Security Council of the United Nations decided to intervene in both cases, which means it deemed the situations in both Central America and Haiti as threats to world peace. Thus, a peacekeeping force was deployed in both cases with objectives that align with peacebuilding (United Nations, 2003a, 2003b and 2025b). Second, both studied cases happened in the Caribbean basin, a cohesive cultural region located on the coast of this internal sea. Despite language differences, both Central America and Haiti share a common origin in European colonialism and cultural miscegenation. Indeed, colonialism is the third control variable. Central America was under Spanish rule for approximately 300 years, while Haiti was a French colony for roughly 150 years. Both of these colonial powers were similar in that they left a civil law system behind, inspired by the French Revolution. Also, the countries had little experience with self-rule. The fourth variable relates to prevalence of authoritarianism during most of these countries' independent history. Different styles of authoritarianism, from empires to military juntas, dominated politics in both cases until the time of the UN peacekeeping operations. The fifth control variable is precisely the historical era, which is the period after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War. This meant that most of the world's political processes happened under American and Western dominance. The sixth variable relates to this control. Since both cases are located in the Caribbean, they are of geopolitical interest to the US, as the US seeks to ensure the neutrality of the Panama Canal and preserve its sphere of influence (Araujo Quintero, 2022a, 2022b; Kaplan, 2013). Finally, the last control variable is socioeconomic development. In both Central America and Haiti, underdevelopment is a factor that undermines the institutional goals of peacebuilding, such as democratization (UNDP quoted in *Our World in Data*, 2024b). Furthermore, the authoritarian elites in power in these countries are consistent with political elites that uphold extractive institutions, as identified by Acemoglu and Robinson (2012) as barriers to development and prosperity in an open society.

Given the many similarities, there must be something else that explains why ONUCA seems connected to successful peacebuilding, while MINUSTAH does not. In this paper, my independent variable is the

peacebuilding reforms led by the UN peacekeeping mission at a constitutional or equivalent level, like international treaties or peace accords. I chose this variable because, given that the UN has control over the system when intervening, its peacekeeping mission is in a special position from which it can push for reforms. I decided to focus on constitutional economics to analyze institutional development because this level of law determines the existence of all other rules (Brennan and Buchanan, 1985). Peacebuilding's ambitious goals require the constitution of the intervened country to have formal institutions that lead to democratization, economic liberalization and pacification (Galtung, 1976). I consider other legal mechanisms, particularly peace accords and international treaties, to be equivalent to constitutions in the sense that they influence how actors design all other rules or indirectly amend constitutions (Kelsen, 1967). This is particularly relevant in Central American countries and Haiti, considering that they are small states where international law plays a more significant role in governance compared to powerful countries like the United States or European states.

Because I am conducting a most similar systems design, I have to consider other variables that could explain the dependent variable. This paper will explore seven alternative independent variables. The first four variables are the length of the intervention, the military strength of the intervention, institutional stickiness and third-party intervention. Democratization, economic liberalization, and pacification are more likely if the intervention is powerful enough, lasts long enough, aligns with domestic institutions, and is insulated from external interference. All of these variables are relevant in the literature of reconstruction, which is conceptually very similar to peacebuilding (Boettke, Coyne and Leeson, 2008; Coyne, 2008; Dobbins et al., 2003; Kavanagh et al., 2019; Wenzel, 2014). In my paper on the constitutional economics of US reconstruction efforts abroad, third-party intervention emerged as one of the most significant independent variables. In fact, the fifth variable also comes from my previous paper: the continuation of violent conflict despite political agreement. This situation implies that the state does not monopolize violence; therefore, parties in conflict engage in a parallel struggle: political competition for control of the formal institutions, and a war to influence these institutions informally, often through an insurgency. Peacebuilding should fail if war rages on within the system (Araujo Quintero, 2023). The sixth variable, pressure from the United States and Europe, and the seventh, pressure from a regional integration process, are derived from diffusion theory, which posits that states imitate each other's institutions in the international arena. Pressure from Western countries can contribute to institutional reform because these world powers have advocated for democracy and free markets abroad since the 1980s, as the Cold War subsided (Huntington, 1993). Pressure from neighbors that have already democratized and liberalized can influence a state's process if formal regional institutions push for these reforms at a supranational level (Dickovick et al., 2023).

To compute all of these variables, I will use a chart that will summarize my most similar systems design. I will devote more time to describing the dependent and independent variables to thoroughly understand both Central America's and Haiti's processes. I will obtain most of my information from the United Nations' databases for peacekeeping operations, which are in English for Central America and in French and English for Haiti. I will determine whether the UN pushed for peacebuilding reforms in both cases and whether it had an impact on democratization, liberalization, and pacification—the three pillars of peacebuilding. I will also seek evidence for all seven alternative independent variables, drawing on information from my previous research, reconstruction literature, and other academic sources.

RESULTS

Dependent and Independent Variables

Due to a relative lack of academic depth regarding the success of ONUCA and related missions, as well as Haiti's MINUSTAH network of missions, I decided to explore the dependent variable in a systematic way from a constitutional economics perspective. Central American countries that were intervened under ONUCA showed significant progress in terms of democratization, economic liberalization, and pacification—the three observable features of UN peacebuilding. In the case of democratization and pacification, Costa Rica will be excluded, even if included by the UN mandate, because this country is a consolidated

democracy with no internal war since 1948. In political terms, all other intervened Central American states changed their constitutions to end military rule (guerrilla rule in Nicaragua's case) voluntarily: Honduras in 1982, El Salvador in 1983, Guatemala in 1985, and Nicaragua in 1987 (Comparative Constitutions Project, 2016). In terms of the liberal democracy index, all polities transitioned from having scores of less than 0.1 on a scale of 1 in the 1980s to having scores slightly under 0.5 by the second half of the 2000s (V-Dem, quoted in *Our World in Data*, 2024a). Democratization has stagnated since, and different degrees of backsliding have started, a phenomenon correlated with the rise of 21st-century socialism.

Regarding economic liberalization, all five countries signed and became parties to the Protocol of Guatemala of 1993, an international treaty that amended the General Treaty for Central American Economic Integration, the legal basis for the Central American Common Market, which removed most tariffs for international trade (SICA, 2025). According to the World Bank (2023), the national economies of the countries in the region grew significantly, with the economies of El Salvador, Nicaragua, Honduras, Costa Rica, and Guatemala expanding approximately threefold between 1990 and 2023. Finally, in terms of pacification, the Nicaraguan Government signed a peace treaty in 1990, with El Salvador and Guatemala following suit in 1992 and 1996, respectively. War never erupted in Honduras, despite the existence of a communist guerrilla, thanks to the army's early reform towards democratization, being the first country in Central America to change its constitution. After the peace accords ended the three civil wars, which militarily belonged to a single regional war known as the Central American Crisis (Weeks, 1986), all paramilitary forces were demobilized, despite a rise in organized crime starting in the mid-2000s (Fernandez, 2006; United Nations, 2003d).

On the contrary, Haiti did not show any of the three observable traits of peacebuilding. The Caribbean nation never really democratized. Even if a new liberal democratic constitution was passed in 1987 after the collapse of the Duvalier family dictatorship, the Haitian army often suspended this document, frequently removing civilian governments through coups between 1987 and 1994 (Comparative Constitutions Project, 2016). The Liberal Democracy Index shows that Haiti's score increased from under 0.1 to under 0.3, possibly due to peaceful elections and transitions of power; however, it declined back to its original low scores by the mid-2010s (V-Dem quoted in *Our World in Data*, 2024a). In economic terms, Haiti signed the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas, which made it a member of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) common market. However, it never fully implemented the economic measures mandated by this document (CARICOM, 2025). Furthermore, Haiti's economic growth was stagnant, growing by only about one-sixth between 1990 and 2023 (World Bank, 2023). Finally, in terms of pacification, Haiti has never signed a peace treaty with any of the paramilitary groups that have used violence against elected Governments, whether splinters from the national army like FLRN or from gangs linked to political parties. Said gangs, which are actually insurgent groups, continue to operate in the country and have shifting allegiances with political parties that fight over the control of the state. These groups are so powerful that they have taken control of large swaths of national territory in at least two occasions: between 2001 and 2004 and since 2021 (Araujo Quintero, 2022a; Call, 2021; United Nations, 2025b).

Regarding the independent variable, which is whether the UN intervention leads to peacebuilding reforms at the constitutional or equivalent level, including international treaties and peace accords, I found no evidence in Central America. In this case, ONUCA and related missions, including ONUSAL and MINUSAL in El Salvador, ONUVEN in Nicaragua, and MINUGUA in Guatemala, did not promote any constitutional-level reforms that yielded democratization, pacification, or economic liberalization. Rather, the peacekeeping missions supported reforms launched by the national governments. In terms of democratization, all constitutional changes predate the UN intervention. All five national governments requested that the UN peacekeeping forces support the peace treaties as part of the Esquipulas II Agreement, a Central American-led effort to end the civil wars that were part of the Central American Crisis. ONUCA's focus was on demobilization, leaving political and economic reform to national governments. For instance, the Guatemala Protocol, which deepened and expanded economic integration, did not involve the UN. Some follow-up missions, such as ONUVEN, ONUSAL, MINUSAL, and MINUGUA, did help manage elections after the signing of the peace treaties to ensure the peaceful political participation of former guerrilla movements. However, national governments and civilians managed these processes with UN technical

support only. The UN also assisted with supervising other reforms related to judicial independence and the establishment of a national police force, but only through training and technical support. In general, the reforms for peacebuilding originated from within the intervened countries, where the UN supported but did not lead the political, economic and pacification processes (UIA, 2024; United Nations, 2003b, 2003c and 2003e).

In the case of Haiti, the UN peacekeeping mission did pursue constitutional reforms in the intervened system. Since 1990, there have been several interventions in three distinct phases: (1) the interventions against authoritarian military rule encompassed in UNMIH, including missions like ONUVEH, MICIVIH, UNSMIH, UNTMIH, MIPONUH and MICAH, (2) the interventions to preserve democracy from a takeover by paramilitary forces under MINUSTAH and follow-up missions like MINUJUSTH and BINUH and (3) the redeployment of force to contain gang warfare under MSS. Since it is a current event, I will not analyze the third phase in this paper. The first phase, which preceded MINUSTAH, involved numerous missions with diverse mandates, including supervising national elections, restoring the deposed government of Jean-Bertrand Aristide after a military coup, and training the national police to combat emerging gangs with political connections. The second phase, meaning MINUSTAH and all successors except MSS, was the most complex mission, serving as an aid to the interim national government after Aristides resigned from a second term under pressure from the US and France in the face of imminent civil war. It tried to enact several reforms through the ambitious Consensus of Political Transition, also known as Le Pacte, pushing for measures like new elections, reduction of impunity and corruption, security, economic development, decentralization, reinforcing political parties and civil society organizations, a new social contract, reinsertion of paramilitary forces, changes to the military, and creating a civilian police force. The UN peacekeeping authorities led many of these reform endeavors themselves, operating alongside and within Haitian institutions, in addition to deploying a military force in the country. The objective of this reform package was to prevent the collapse of the state. The UN temporarily prevented this between 2004 and 2019 by sidelining paramilitary groups while occupying the country and by allowing some institutional successes, such as free elections and peaceful transitions of power. However, the two times the UN has withdrawn its forces and left only civilian-led missions between 2000-2004 (MICAH) and 2019-2024 (BINUH), violence ensued and authoritarian attempts to take over power returned (International Crisis Group, 2024; United Nations, 1997, 2003a, 2003d, 2017, 2025a, 2025b, 2025c).

Other Possible Independent Variables

To present the observations for the alternative independent variables, I will follow the same classification used in the methodology chapter: variables found in the literature, my main findings from a previous paper, and variables related to diffusion theory. Regarding the length of the intervention, ONUCA itself lasted for 3 years, with follow-up missions lasting at most an additional 4-year period, specifically in El Salvador. Guatemala had a non-immediate six-month follow-up mission five years after ONUCA. In Haiti, 11 different missions have collectively lasted at least 35 years, still being in effect as of the writing of this paper. Regarding military strength, ONUCA had at most 1,000 agents, while missions in Haiti had an average of 5,000 agents and up to 20,000 forces when the country was invaded in 1994 (United Nations, 2003b and 2025b). In terms of institutional stickiness, authoritarian persistence existed in Haiti only. In Central America, the military forces withdrew from power permanently and the economies integrated and adopted a free market, breaking with its previous political and economic institutions (Araujo Quintero, 2022a; United Nations, 2003b). Haiti's authoritarianism persisted, transitioning from a personal dictatorship to a military dictatorship and, currently, perhaps to a failed state controlled by various violent factions (Araujo Quintero, 2022b; United Nations, 2003a, 2025b). Finally, for third-party interference, I find evidence in both cases. Western intervention, especially from the United States, is omnipresent. However, there is a slight difference. In Central America's case, Soviet and Cuban intervention to support communist proxies, like the Guatemalan URNG and the Salvadorian FMLN, reduced significantly prior to the UN peacekeeping mission, while the US abandoned violent interference in favor of the Contras in Nicaragua to support diplomacy. In Haiti, French and American violent interference against hostile governments increased through the international intervention, while the Dominican interference increased parallel to it.

The neighboring country supported the FLRN, a paramilitary group of anti-Aristide former military officers, some of whom engaged in drug trafficking (United Nations, 2003b and 2025b).

The next variable is the continuation of violent conflict, generally through insurgencies, despite political agreements, which is the main finding of my AIER paper, and it exists in Haiti only. In Central America's case, violent conflict subsided as part of nationally driven peace agreements that the United Nations supervised and enforced. The Central American Crisis, which encompassed the Guatemalan, Salvadorian and Nicaraguan civil wars, ended during the period of UN intervention (United Nations, 2003b, 2003c and 2003e; Weeks, 1986). In Haiti, political instability led to the rise of previously non-existent paramilitary groups, which attempted their first takeover of the country between 2000 and 2004. These groups are generally referred to as gangs, but their capacities and political objectives are more similar to those of insurgent guerrilla movements. Upon the withdrawal of the military element of the UN peacekeeping mission, these gangs reemerged and are currently poised to take over the country, despite a new UN intervention that is significantly smaller (Araujo Quintero, 2022a; Call, 2021; International Crisis Group, 2024; United Nations, 2003a, 2025b).

In the case of variables derived from diffusion theory, American and European pressure to democratize was present in both cases. This is consistent with the foreign policy of Western powers following the Cold War, as they sought to promote democratization globally to foster peace and development (Huntington, 1993). In Central America, European powers, particularly Sweden, supported Latin American powers like Colombia, Venezuela, Panama and Mexico to create the Contadora Group, an informal forum of prodemocracy regimes that wanted to end the Central American Crisis by engaging with all national governments on the isthmus regardless of ideology (SICA, 2025; United Nations, 2003b). In Haiti, the US and France led most diplomatic efforts, which were generally conflictive due to the authoritarian nature of the Haitian regimes involved (United Nations, 2003a and 2025b).

Regarding the second variable, a regional integration process that also promotes peacebuilding institutions, it yields different results. In the case of Central America, the System of Central American Integration (SICA) was a regional effect, rather than a cause, of domestic democratization and pacification. The UN had no role in the treaties signed in the early 1990s, which relaunched a stagnant integration process through the 1991 Tegucigalpa Protocol, aimed at promoting political and democratic interstate cooperation, and the 1993 Guatemala Protocol, designed to strengthen the common market and its free market policies (SICA, 2025). In the case of Haiti, the Community of the Caribbean (CARICOM) had an active role in the UN interventions in Haiti. In fact, this organization, which includes most independent and democratic island states of the Caribbean, requested the intervention of the United Nations and the Organization of American States (OAS). Eventually, the group also welcomed Haiti among its ranks in 2002, although the new member never fully implemented the binding obligations of the Revised Chaguaramas Treaty, which include political cooperation and a common market. Furthermore, the body suspended Haiti temporarily after the 2004 military coup and currently brokers its unstable interim government (CARICOM, 2025; United Nations, 2025b).

Finally, I decided to add an extra variable that I deemed relevant after my research. I referred to this variable as internal national consensus, meaning that all concerned parties within the system accept the UN intervention. This consensus is particularly important in the study of peace processes, which tend to work more effectively when a single paramilitary group negotiates a single peace agreement (Universidad Francisco Marroquín, 2023). In Central America, I observed national consensus regarding the peacekeeping mission. Legally, the national governments requested ONUCA. However, this request included the political support of the guerrilla movements: the URNG in Guatemala, the FMLN in El Salvador, and the Contras in Nicaragua. Furthermore, the national armies of each country did not oppose the UN intervention; instead, they actively engaged with it. As such, the UN faced no political or military opposition when intervening in Central America (United Nations, 2003b).

In Haiti, however, there was no internal national consensus regarding the UN peacekeeping mission. During the first phase, the army actively refused to work with international forces. The Security Council had to coerce the military junta through economic sanctions to allow the multinational force into the country. During the second phase, Le Pacte never included any of the paramilitary groups, particularly the

FLRN as a splinter group from the army or the gangs that took over northern Haiti in 2004. Furthermore, deposed President Aristide's political party, Fanmi Lavalas, never accepted this agreement and rejected Western interference. To this day, the army and many political parties still reject the presence of the UN, despite the increasing levels of violence due to paramilitary gang warfare (United Nations, 2003a and 2025b).

TABLE 1
MOST SIMILAR SYSTEMS DESIGN FOR PEACEBUILDING REFORMS SPONSORED BY
THE UNITED NATIONS DURING PEACEKEEPING MISSIONS

VARIABLE	Central America (ONUCA and related missions)	Haiti (MINUSTAH and related missions)
DEPENDENT VARIABLE: Peace is built through democratization, pacification and/or economic liberalization (Objectives: liberal democracy, free markets and/or stable peace)	YES for all observations + Democratization: 4 out of 4 changed constitution after military's retreat from power; rise in index from below 0.1 to under 0.5. + Liberalization: Guatemala Protocol relaunches common market; 5 out of 5 economies grow roughly thrice since 1990. + Pacification: peace treaties in 3 out of 3 relevant cases; all guerrilla movements (URNG, FMLN, FSLN, and Contras) demobilized.	NO for all observations + Democratization: change in constitution after Duvalier dictatorship but suspended; rise in index below 0.3 and drop back to 0.1. + Liberalization: Revised Chaguaramas treaty for common CARICOM market signed but not implemented, growth of about 1/6 since 1990. + Pacification: no peace treaty, rise and no demobilization of gangs related to political parties and military splinter FLRN.
INDEPENDENT VARIABLE: UN intervention lead peacebuilding reforms at constitutional or equivalent level (international treaties and peace accords)	NO. UN Peacekeeping mission requested to support Esquipulas II peace agreement and derived peace treaties. Constitutions changed prior to deployment of ONUCA. No role in economic treaties.	YES. UN Peacekeeping mission intervened to restore constitution. Then UN drafted and supported Le Pacte, an ambitious reform program rejected by some parties. No role in economic treaty.
CONTROL VARIABLES		
UN Peacekeeping mission approved by Security Council	YES. Approved in 1989 and with main mission active between 1989 and 1992. Extensions in El Salvador until 1995 (ONUSAL) and for half a year in Guatemala in 1997 (MINUGUA) after a five-year pause.	YES. Approved in 1990 and active as off 2025 in three different stages with several missions. No military element between 2000-2004 and 2019-2024, but civilian mission was present.
Cultural Region	YES. Caribbean basin, post-colonial states and miscegenation.	YES. Caribbean basin, post-colonial state and miscegenation.
Colonialism	YES. Part of Spanish Empire for three centuries and presence of civil law due to influence of French Revolution in Spain.	YES. Part of the First French Empire for 150 years and presence of civil law because of the French Revolution's legacy.

Independent Authoritarian History	YES. Dictatorships since the collapse of the Central American Federation in the 1830s until the 1980s with some brief exceptions in the 1940s and 1950s.	YES. Dictatorships of national scope and breakaway states, switching between monarchies and republics. First experience with democracy until the 1980s after Duvalier dictatorship.
Historical Period	End of the Cold War and American/Western Dominance	End of the Cold War and American/Western Dominance
Geopolitics	Region of interest for US to control Caribbean Sea and Panama Canal demonstrated by direct interventions and occupations. Global interest because of position between Pacific and Atlantic Oceans.	Region of interest for US to control Caribbean Sea and Panama Canal demonstrated by direct interventions and occupations.
Socioeconomic Development	LOW. Authoritarian elites with extractive institutions; Middle score in human development index.	LOW. Authoritarian elites with extractive institutions; Low middle score in human development index.
OTHER INDEPENDENT VARIABLE CANDIDATES		
Length of Intervention in Years	3 years in all of Central America. 4-year extension in El Salvador and half a year extension in Guatemala after a 5-year withdrawal.	35 years through different missions with different objectives. Pauses in the use of force between 2000-2004 and 2019-2024.
Strength of Intervention	Around 1000 troops during highest deployment.	Around 5000 troops on average; up to 20,000 during first invasion.
Institutional Stickiness (Authoritarianism and Central Economic Planning)	Permanent institutional shift from military regimes that controlled the economy to liberal democracies with free markets, despite no consolidation and current backsliding. Institutional change came from within through pacts between governments and insurgents.	Authoritarian persistence and state control of economy endures. Shift from Duvalier personal dictatorship to military regimes and then failed state with warring factions. Limited institutional change from within the political system.
<i>Third-party Intervention*</i>	<i>Yes. West v USSR proxy war coming to an end. United States' support for Contras in Nicaragua and military regimes, and Soviet Union's and Cuba's support for communist guerrillas diminish in all cases as Cold War subsides. European states push for diplomatic solutions (Contadora Group as support group in Latin America).</i>	<i>Yes. Western intervention in Haiti against military dictatorship and then against elected socialist strongman and the rise of paramilitary groups. US and France interested in removing both types of regimes because of their support of liberal democracy. Dominican support for FLRN and rise of gangs related to political parties.</i>

<i>Continuation of Violent Conflict despite Political Agreement (Insurgency War)*</i>	<i>No because the guerillas (URNG in Guatemala, FMLN in El Salvador, and Contras in Nicaragua) demobilized as part of agreement where UN was asked to supervise and coordinate transition to political parties. Eventual rise of organized crime with no political goals.</i>	<i>Yes because FLRN and gangs related to political parties never demobilized and no peace agreement was ever attempted. Current gangs are a continuation of this political violence parallel to a weak state, which picked up between 2000-2004 and since 2019.</i>
Pressure from the United States and European Powers	Yes; democratic transition that belongs to the Third Wave	Yes, democratic transition that belongs to the Third Wave
Regional Integration Process that also Pushes for Peacekeeping Institutions	No. Integration process relaunched with the Tegucigalpa and Guatemala Protocols as part of a reform process of regional institutions that date back to partial democratization in the 50s.	Yes. CARICOM tried to mediate in different stages to get UN and OAS support. Organization eventually welcomed Haiti as a member, but Revised Chaguaramas Treaty was never fully implemented.
<i>Internal National Consensus (something that is studied as part of national peace accord processes)</i>	UN mission had support of civilian Government and guerilla movements to have a neutral guarantor to help in demobilization efforts and transitions to more open political participation and competition. National armies collaborated with UN.	Initially army did not cooperate with UN until it was coerced into accepting mission after sanctions and invasion. Fanmi Lavalas boycotted UN-sponsored agreement because mission was petitioned after a coup. FLRN and gangs never supported agreement.

DISCUSSION

Based on the above results, there is little evidence to support my hypothesis: if the UN leads peacebuilding reforms at a constitutional or equivalent level, then the intervened polity should develop liberal democracy, free markets and/or stable peace. Quite to the contrary, the case where the United Nations did not lead domestic reforms was the only case that developed the observable characteristics of peacebuilding in political, economic, and military terms. The case where this international organization had a bigger role also failed to develop these institutions. As such, there appears to be no connection between my proposed independent variable and the dependent variables, perhaps even an inverse relationship where more foreign attempts to implant institutions lead to less successful reforms.

After the systematic analysis of the dependent variables, it is safe to say that the UN peacekeeping missions in Central America were successful, while those in Haiti were not. This is something that previous literature claims, based on specific observations, without providing a general perspective. This paper offers a comprehensive institutional analysis at the constitutional level. In the case of Central America, the UN successfully enforced peace treaties signed by warring parties engaged in civil wars. Furthermore, it helped manage and observe elections, and furthered the respect for human rights to preserve and enforce the liberal democratic constitutions passed before the UN intervention. In other words, the peacekeeping mission, supported by request rather than led, institutionalized reforms at a constitutional level that originated domestically, serving as a trust-building mechanism to deter violent and political conflict. In Haiti's case, the UN tried to protect a similar constitution, but it was only able to do so while militarily occupying the country. It also led to many reforms, which were temporarily successful as long as the UN forces were deployed. The government never signed a peace agreement with paramilitary forces, which turned the UN

peacekeeping force into another belligerent in the country's internal conflict. In other words, the UN mission in Haiti did uphold and transform the constitutional institutions politically and formally, but they were never independent enough to function independently after the UN's withdrawal. Neither peacekeeping mission tried to promote free market reforms, which is technically part of peacebuilding. However, these reforms were formally implemented at a regional level in both cases, although they only took effect in Central America's case.

It is essential to note that many of the shortcomings in promoting constitutional-level institutional reform in Haiti occurred during the second phase, when the UN peacekeeping forces were tasked with preventing an imminent civil war. The first phase, in which the UN confronted military rule, was more similar institutionally to the missions in Central America. An important difference is that the Haitian army initially refused to collaborate with the international forces, leading to conflict, including sanctions and an invasion of the country until the armed forces decided to abandon the government. Armies in Central America not only voluntarily withdrew from political control, but also did not object to the deployment of UN forces as part of the political agreement between civilian governments and guerrilla movements. In Haiti's first phase, the UN and an interim government reinstated the liberal democratic constitution after years of military suspension. Furthermore, the country celebrated free elections, had its first peaceful transition of power and founded the civilian police forces. However, the rise of gangs with political objectives often linked to political parties, and of splinter groups from the national army, namely FLRN, eventually led to the 2004 coup and the aborted civil war. This new crisis led to the second phase of UN peacekeeping and its enumerated issues.

Given that there appears to be no direct connection between democratization, liberalization, and pacification as part of peacebuilding and the reforms promoted by the UN, something else must drive these institutional transformations at a constitutional level. The findings in the case of alternative independent variables provide a clearer understanding and reflect many of the key findings in previous literature, particularly my paper on the constitutional economics of US reconstruction efforts abroad. Firstly, I find that, despite the duration and strength of peacekeeping in Haiti being significantly longer and larger, the country failed to develop the institutions of peacebuilding without the UN's simultaneous military and political enforcement. This is consistent with previous literature, which finds that sufficient strength and time are necessary but insufficient to yield constitutional-level institutional reforms. Secondly, I find evidence for institutional stickiness in the case of Haiti, where political and economic authoritarianism persisted. It transformed from a personal dictatorship into a military regime and, currently, into a failed state with warring factions. Even if institutions did change in some way, said transformations are still cases of authoritarian persistence (Araujo Quintero, 2022b). Central America, on the other hand, shows profound institutional change. However, the UN peacekeeping mission did not provide these transformations by intervening and forcing change. Rather, the international mission supported domestic agreements oriented toward constitutional and institutional reform, which is also consistent with institutional stickiness. However, what domestic factors explain the radical institutional change observed at a constitutional level in Central America?

In this paper, I find that three factors seem to combine to explain Central America's success and Haiti's failure in terms of institutional reform. Firstly, third-party intervention and the continuation of war despite a political agreement are two explanatory factors, marked in italics in Table 1. This finding is consistent with my previous research, which suggests that informal and violent competition for power often sidelines formal institutional reform at the constitutional level. In the case of third-party intervention, both cases saw strong Western intervention pushing for democratization, particularly from the United States. However, in Central America, American and European efforts, along with those of Latin American allies, coalesced into a single front, with all parties agreeing to promote peace, democracy, and free markets in the region. This was possible due to the withdrawal of the Soviet Union and Cuba from the region, thus ending armed and financial support for communist guerrillas. The United States also decided to stop supporting the anticommunist Contra guerrillas in Nicaragua, instead focusing on European and Latin American peace efforts in the 1990s. In Haiti, there was also a relatively united front internationally in both the first and second phases of UN intervention. Western and Caribbean nations strived to remove the army from power

in the first phase, while they wished to contain an imminent civil war and remove a potentially radical socialist regime under Aristide in the second phase. However, for the second phase, the Dominican Republic, an ally of France and the US in this context, also supported FLRN paramilitary efforts, fueling rising violence against the state before the UN intervention. The main source of war, however, came mainly from local gangs with ties to political parties, which had taken over northern Haiti and marched towards the capital in 2004.

Based on the latter, the case that failed to develop the constitutional institutions of peacebuilding is also the case where there is continued warfare despite a political agreement, specifically the UN-promoted Le Pacte, and interference from a third party that incentivized violence, more precisely the Dominican Republic and its aid to military splinter group FLRN. Even if the neighboring Caribbean country probably acted in tandem with and with the same interests as the United States and France, the promotion of violence only worsened an imminent civil war that the second phase of peacekeeping contained during the next decade and a half. Despite the approval of formal institutions to democratize, pacify, and liberalize the country, violent competition for control of this state kept any of these changes from taking hold and becoming the new and legitimate rules of the game. In these cases, Western support for peace led to successful reform towards peacebuilding in Central America, while indirect and partial Western support for political violence undermined these institutional changes in Haiti, despite active support from the UN.

The third explanatory variable, in addition to continued warfare and third-party interference, is internal national consensus, meaning all concerned parties agreed to the reform program and the United Nations peacekeeping mission's mediation. This variable is marked in bold in Table 1. This consensus is one of the goals in many peace processes around the globe, where national governments seek to negotiate with a single paramilitary group to sign a single peace treaty, rather than one with each active insurgency (Universidad Francisco Marroquín, 2023). In this study, I contend that this consensus encompasses not only governments and paramilitary non-state actors, but also national armies, as state-related yet distinct political actors. Since both cases struggle with military rule, consensus requires the army to respect political agreements and collaborate with the UN. In Central America's case, internal national consensus existed in all concerned countries. The army voluntarily decided to leave power, allowing a civilian government to take over and negotiate peace agreements. The peacekeeping mission served two purposes: supporting peace negotiations by deterring violent conflict, and enforcing the new democratic institutions. However, these new institutions were the direct result of a local political pact between civilian administrations and violent groups that lost foreign support and decided to demobilize. Thus, the agreements were the result of political consensus that the army did not veto through force.

In Haiti, on the other hand, there was never a national consensus on how to run the country or on requesting a UN peacekeeping mission. In both phases, the West invaded the country in all but name to remove governments that threatened liberal democracy: the military regime during the first phase and an increasingly authoritarian socialist regime in the second. In the first phase, the army refused to accept a peacekeeping mission mandated by the Security Council in 1993 after military officers took power in 1991. The UN coerced these leaders into resigning through sanctions and the threat of invasion, leading to the establishment of an interim government that oversaw new elections. In the second phase, Aristide's government was under siege by incoming rebels, organized in gangs linked to political parties, and splinter groups from the army coalesced in the FLRN. The UN increased the strength of its mission at the request of the interim government, but did not have the support of any of the paramilitary groups. In fact, Aristides' own party opposed the so-called Le Pacte, which encompassed all the reforms that the UN and the West sought to promote in Haiti. Without a national consensus, the UN peacekeeping force became embroiled in an active insurgency war and a complex political struggle.

As a final point, I would like to comment on the relevance of the variables derived from diffusion theory. In this paper, Western influence, specifically American and European influence, is significant because, even if it had the same objectives in principle, it played out differently in practice. In Central America, Western powers promoted and supported national reforms, whereas in Haiti, these reforms were imposed on the local elites, both political and military. Both actions were consistent with the West's foreign policy at the time, wishing to support democratization by any means necessary. In the case of integration

processes, the System for Central American Integration (SICA) did not promote any of these constitutional reforms consistent with peacebuilding. On the contrary, the regional organization is a result of democratization and pacification and a tool for liberalization. The member states enshrined their national domestic reforms by relaunching a regional organization to make them internationally binding. In Haiti's case, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) did pressure the Haitian national elites to embrace the constitutional reforms consistent with peacebuilding, aligning themselves with the West in most cases. Even if they accepted Haiti as a member to promote this process, the regional organization could not successfully convince national elites to continue the reform agenda. In fact, Haiti signed the necessary treaties, but never fully implemented them because it could not even control the national territory, engulfed in an insurgency gang war contained by the UN. Again, the lack of internal consensus in Haiti undermined any foreign efforts to promote constitutional institutional reform.

CONCLUSION

In this research paper, I aimed to examine the institutional impact of the United Nations' peacekeeping missions in the Caribbean from a constitutional economics perspective. As the leading international organization in the world, the UN has the capacity to intervene in wars globally with the approval of the Security Council, a process known as peacekeeping. This process evolved from the simple imposition of peace through force to fostering institutional change to build peace. This process, known as peacebuilding within the scope of broader peacekeeping, involves fostering the rise of liberal democracy, economic liberalization, and peace as a means to deter future conflict. In the light of this process, I contended that if the UN leads peacebuilding reforms at a constitutional or equivalent level, then the intervened polity should develop liberal democracy, free markets and/or stable peace. These three variables are the observable implications of peacebuilding. To test my hypothesis, I decided to conduct a most similar systems design comparing two peacekeeping missions in the Caribbean basin: the successful intervention in Central America with ONUCA and its continuations, and the failed intervention in Haiti through MINUSTAH and related missions.

After finishing the most similar systems design, I must recognize that there is no evidence to support my hypothesis. In the successful Central American intervention, by which I mean I found evidence of democratization, liberalization, and pacification, the UN did not lead efforts to promote institutional reform at the constitutional level. Rather, the UN supported and enforced political agreements struck by the national governments of the isthmus in political and military matters, and did not participate in economic reforms that occurred at a regional level. In the failed Haitian intervention, where no democratization, liberalization or pacification happened, the United Nations peacekeeping mission did lead reform efforts, which ultimately failed to yield the institutions of peacebuilding. Thus, UN-led reforms failed to bring about lasting institutional change at the constitutional level.

I have two main findings in this paper related to some alternative independent variables as part of the most similar systems design. Firstly, I confirm the relevance of many variables that previous literature identifies as significant in cases of foreign intervention to promote institutions that yield democratization, liberalization and pacification. A more powerful and longer intervention does not guarantee institutional reform, while reform movements are most successful when they originate from within the system. As in a previous paper I authored, I find that third-party intervention and, most importantly, the continuation of war despite political agreements prevent a polity from adopting the institutions necessary for democratization, economic liberalization, and pacification, even if they exist formally in the constitution. This occurs because there is a parallel and informal struggle for control of the state, which renders any formal reforms ineffective, a situation I observed in Haiti but not in Central America. In both cases, I found third-party intervention coalesced into a single front. However, Western influence and allied support fostered peace in Central America, while it meant using violence in the case of Haiti to remove hostile regimes.

Secondly, I found that the internal national consensus is a relevant variable that determines the institutional impact of UN peacekeeping at a constitutional level. Even if I did not initially consider this variable in my most similar systems design, I consider it explanatory in both cases. By internal national

consensus, I mean that all relevant parties, specifically the government, paramilitary groups and the army, agree to the reforms and the UN intervention. Central American countries displayed internal consensus, where the armies decided to abandon political power and did not reject the peace agreements signed by the civilian governments and the guerrilla groups. On the other hand, Haiti lacked consensus: the army initially rejected the UN peacekeeping mission, and paramilitary groups, as well as some political parties, did not accept the constitutional reform agenda proposed by this mission. The lack of consensus allowed an insurgency war to continue, despite the existence of political agreements, rendering any formal constitutional-level reforms useless in the face of violent competition for power.

This paper contributes to the literature of peacekeeping and peacebuilding in two ways. Firstly, it provides a systematic analysis of institutional reforms in peacekeeping from a constitutional economics perspective. Previous literature classifies the Central American mission as successful and the Haitian mission as partially failed based on specific situations rather than a comprehensive analysis. I decided to explore these missions from a broader and more academic perspective to gain a comprehensive view of their real impact on the institutional evolution of the intervened countries. Secondly, I found that an internal national consensus is essential for any foreign intervention to be effective. If not all parties agree to national reforms, the UN peacekeeping mission becomes a controversial and political topic, rather than assisting in the development of institutions that foster democratization, economic liberalization, and pacification. The relevance of consensus is a concern in domestic peace accord negotiations, but this paper identifies it as a relevant element in international interventions through the UN, and potentially in other cases. Western influence through the UN works best when there is no active war, no international opposition and no national internal disagreement.

I had several limitations when writing this paper. Firstly, the UN databases from which I obtained most of the information for this paper are not comprehensive, as not all missions have dedicated webpages to inform the public of their mandates and actions. As such, I had to refer to several databases for some of the missions I studied in my research, some of which had different names in the French version. Secondly, I had limited time to write this paper due to other academic responsibilities, particularly my current pursuit of a master's degree in economics. Thirdly, my findings are limited in their scope because I only have two cases. Whenever using the most similar systems design, there is an inevitable trade-off between having more cases and having more control variables. Including more cases necessarily implies loosening the control variables, the latter of which is one of the strongest aspects of this paper.

For future research, including the internal national consensus as a variable is recommended, considering that the government of the intervened state often requests UN peacekeeping missions. This variable has potential as an explanatory factor in a hypothetical research study using a most different systems design to compare the UN peacekeeping mission in Central America with other successful interventions by this international organization, particularly those in East Timor in Southeast Asia and Liberia in Western Africa. Given the lack of systematic studies of UN missions from a constitutional economics perspective and from a comparative politics perspective in general, there are numerous possible avenues for future research. This will potentially help policymakers, both at the international and national levels, design policies that promote consensus prior to significant reform processes, particularly those involving international intervention by the UN.

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