

**Footprints, motives, perceptions  
and new directions**

***Tracing experiences of troop  
Contributors and contributing  
societies in UN peacekeeping***

Annual Conference of the Working Group  
Historical Peace and Conflict Research/  
(Arbeitskreis Historische Friedens- und  
Konfliktforschung e.V.)

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Funded by the  
German Foundation for Peace Research

 **Universität Trier**

 Arbeitskreis  
Historische Friedens-  
und Konfliktforschung

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## Concept Note

The connection of historical approaches with perspectives from political Science provides a useful framework to analyze the development of UN peacekeeping. This conference focuses on troop contributing countries and their societies in the period of the Cold War and beyond.

The conference is centered around the synchronic and diachronic comparison of different troop contributing countries, their societies, histories, military discourses and self-perceptions. This approach includes views not only from troop contributing but also troop hosting countries and societies.

Based on first studies in this field, the conference identifies a desideratum of research which it wants to address by emphasizing the potential of historical perspective, combining it with existing approaches and findings from political science as well as focusing on the context, conditions and circumstances under which states and societies contribute soldiers and police forces to UN peacekeeping missions.

The central research question, which will be dealt with from comparative, transnational and international perspectives, can be summarized as follows: “Why do states and societies contribute troops to UN peacekeeping missions, how have the underlying arguments, motives and perceptions for troop contribution changed over time and how do the missions influence the contributing states and societies?”

Without in any way limiting the rich diversity of themes and case studies that program participants will bring to the conference, they are encouraged to address some of the following, overarching questions as part of their presentation:

- Which motives from the perspective of individual governments, administrations, militaries or societies can be identified in their decision to contribute to UN peacekeeping?
- To what extent are these motives compatible to the mandate requirements and/or the interests of the permanent members of the Security Council?
- Why have some countries participated regularly in UN peacekeeping while others contributed just sporadic?
- Can we distinguish recurrent “altruistic” and/or “idealistic” motives for troop contribution?
- To what extent is engagement understood as a service for the international community or a commitment to normative aims such as safeguarding human rights or human security?
- To what extent do (neo-)realistic arguments account for troop contribution? Is there a match/mismatch between declared policies, practical implementation and social perception among the different actors involved?
- What influence can be attributed to civil society and/or the media? How is their influence perceived by the government and military?
- What are the stated aims of engagement in UN peacekeeping? Can we observe continuity and/or change in the formulation, normative and operational hierarchy and methods used to achieve these aims over the past decades?
- Which perceptions do host countries have of contributing countries – and vice versa? Is there a feedback loop of mission experience that can be observed?
- What is the importance of the (end of the) Cold War in analyzing troop contributions and perceptions of UN peacekeeping?
- What are the domestic and/or international requirements, conditions and constraints of contributing to UN peacekeeping mission? How can we understand and contextualize developing trends of support or neglect, reform and criticism of UN peacekeeping missions?