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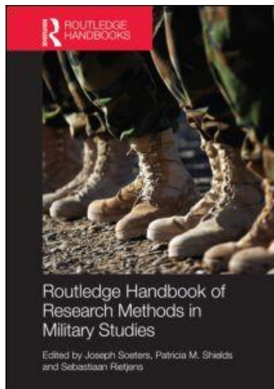

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EVALUATING PEACE OPERATIONS

Challenges and dimensions

Daniel Druckman and Paul F. Diehl

Paul F. Diehl and Daniel Druckman (2010) *Evaluating Peace Operations.* Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienne Publishers [Also Druckman and Diehl (2013)].

Methodological issues for performing evaluations of peace operations include taking into account the role of stakeholders, the time perspective for evaluating outcomes, the importance of establishing baselines, defining evaluation criteria in terms of types of operations, and the importance of the larger conflict environment.

The question asked regarding stakeholders is, "success for whom?" The varied perspectives and interests of actors with stakes in the outcome may collide, with pernicious effects on both the conduct of the operation and the criteria used to define success. As well, the independent and dependent variables may be defined differently for short- and long-term evaluations: reduced conflict at the time of exit may resurface during the year following departure. Assessments also address the question, "compared to what?" Longitudinal and cross-sectional comparisons present different evaluation challenges. Changes that occur over a short period facilitate imputing causation. But the observed changes may be misleading if they miss the larger, and more important, changes that take more time to develop. Imputing causation is also problematic when alternative operations are compared. The operations must be sufficiently similar to ascertain reasons for the same or different outcomes.

With regard to defining evaluation criteria, the type of mission must be considered. For example, mission goals are undoubtedly different for missions that place an emphasis on containing violence versus those that aim to protect human rights. But, even with these contingencies, evaluations would be incomplete if the larger conflict environment were not considered. That environment consists of elements that vary in terms of their malleability. However, taking the environment into account complicates the task of inferring the direction of causation: Effects may be circular, with the operation both influencing and being influenced by the conflict environment.

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These considerations add value to the conduct of evaluation research. More practically, they inform the development of a decisionmaking template used to aid judgments about operation success. The decision process proceeds in a sequence of steps: identifying the primary goals of the mission (step 1), identifying key questions that must be answered to achieve the goals (step 2), constructing measures of progress to answer the questions (step 3), identifying the benefits and limitations of those measures (step 4), and ascertaining the extent to which the goals have been accomplished (step 5).

This sequence was elaborated by Diehl and Druckman (2010) in their attempt to specify the dimensions of traditional peacekeeping, new missions, and post-conflict peace-building goals. They applied this framework to the case of the Bosnian civil war and its aftermath, with the various peace operations following the end of that war and the Dayton Peace Agreement signed in 1995. The evaluation framework was then applied to four other cases presented in Druckman and Diehl (2013): the Cambodia, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, and East Timor peace operations. These applications called attention to both the strengths and limitations of the approach. An evident strength is that it facilitates comparative analysis. Limitations lead to suggesting extensions and making refinements of the evaluative framework.

Introduction

Evaluating the impacts of peace operations is a vexing challenge. The literature on peacekeeping is not well developed with regard to evaluation methodologies. One problem is that most studies focus attention on the factors thought to influence success (the independent variables) rather than on the criteria for assessing those outcomes (the dependent variables). Another problem is the lack of a broad conceptual framework to guide evaluation efforts. An attempt is made in this chapter to fill these lacunae by specifying the dimensions of evaluation and calling attention to issues that any assessment must address.

Peace operations refer to a variety of types of missions including traditional peacekeeping, robust peacekeeping, peace-building, peace observation. (See the taxonomy of peace operations developed by Diehl et al. 1998.) These operations are performed by troops with a mandate from national or international organizations, regional organizations, or multilateral groupings. Traditional military operations are not included under this rubric. We place more emphasis in this chapter on types of missions than on types of sponsoring organizations. This decision is based on the observation that the various missions occur in each type of organization. Moreover, the evaluation focus is directed at dimensions of the operation rather than the organization. We discuss five dimensions to be considered in evaluations.

Improved evaluations of peace operations have clear policy implications. These include knowing when to exit a mission, to increase or decrease troop levels, to chart progress toward achieving mandated goals, and generally to anticipate critical junctures where changes are likely to occur. Informed decisions along these lines should improve mission effectiveness. But, it is also the case that some features of the conflict environment are difficult to change. These features may be largely beyond the control of a peace operation. The distinction between more or less malleable aspects of the environment is important in evaluating mission success and in the design of operations. It is discussed in a concluding section.

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The evaluation challenge

How to evaluate peace operations is far from the simple matter that is implied in most studies. In those works, scholars and policymakers typically select one or more indicators and then apply them to the case(s) at hand. Implicitly, however, those analysts have already made a series of choices, most often because these decisions represent the paths of least resistance; even when the analyses are explicit about criteria, the chosen standards are those most obvious, and indicators are those more readily available. Yet looking behind those decisions reveals a series of issues that impact the way we view the peace operation and define success. These issues are both conceptual and methodological. Confronting them is a step toward reducing the extent to which path-dependent trajectories are followed and old mistakes repeated.

Evaluation decisions turn on a number of elements. Understanding these elements reveals the complexity of evaluating peace operations. They include a variety of objectives and types of missions and, for each objective, key questions asked, indicators of progress, as well as benefits and limitations of those indicators. This complex rendering of the evaluation task is developed in Diehl and Druckman (2010). The evaluation turns on the particular dimensions and indicators chosen for analysis. An emphasis on the core mission goals of violence abatement, containment and settlement is likely to result in a different conclusion about success than when such goals as democratization and humanitarian assistance are highlighted. These differences may also help to explain the divergent conclusions about success coming from different studies. The evaluation framework developed in a final section is based on the specification of broad goals, development of key questions related to those goals, and measurable indicators that would assist in answering those questions. It is informed by five dimensions of peace operations.

Dimensions of peace operation evaluation

The five dimensions of evaluation decisions are: the stakeholders, time perspectives, baselines, "lumping," and mission types.

Success for whom? Stakeholders in peace operations

When conceptualizing peacekeeping success, the question arises: success for whom? Although rarely addressed directly, there are several sets of stakeholders in peace operations, each of which might generate different standards for success: the international community, states contributing personnel, the main protagonist states or groups, and the local population (Druckman and Stern 1997). These actors often have different goals or assign different priorities to shared goals.

The international community, and by this we mean third-party actors including states, international organizations, and NGOs, have different perspectives on the conflict than those directly involved. This set of actors has a number of goals. One might be a desire to stop the conflict from spreading to new regions or across international borders. Negative externalities that extend beyond fighting affect new populations and states, but also include refugees and attendant economic and political costs. Global society also has a concern with maximizing a number of international norms embedded in organizational charters and international agreements. These include peaceful change and security, human rights protections, and economic wellbeing. As outsiders to the conflict, the international community has goals that extend beyond the reach of the fighting.

Macro level concerns would lead one to concentrate on success standards that refer to how well the peace operation promotes world values. This is not to say that the international

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community is unconcerned with death and dislocation in the conflict area, but rather that its priorities are likely to concern public goods at a higher level of analysis. Thus, indicators of success from the vantage point of the international community could be conflict containment and human rights protection, among others.

Referring to the international community is something of an abstraction. While the different actors that make up this community do share some goals, each has some specific interests in the conduct of a peace mission. Individual states have private interests in the conduct of a peace operation that might or might not comport with other members of the international community. Most obviously, certain states may have a political interest in advantaging one side or another in the outcome of a conflict. Interstate rivalries sometimes intersect in a conflict region, and a peace operation has the potential to affect such competitions depending on the conditions for its deployment and its effect on stability in that area. Success from the perspective of one state could mean failure in the eyes of another.

Peace operations might also influence the flow of resources from the area of conflict to interested external states. Neighboring states to the Congo benefited from the flow of diamonds from the Kasai region. The oil resource dependence of China on Sudan raises another set of interests for resolution of the conflict in the southern part of the latter country and in Darfur. In the first case, actors have an interest in limiting the impact of the peace operation on smuggling; yet such smuggling could be one of the elements fueling the violence. In the latter instance, strong actions against the Sudanese government might undermine Chinese interests and thus mitigation, rather than a total elimination, of violence could be seen as successful for that emerging global power.

A particularly relevant subset of interested states contains those that assume leading roles in peace operations and/or contribute personnel to the peace operation. Leading states are interested in gaining legitimacy for the actions (especially enforcement) taken in a peace operation, a primary reason why such operations are often channeled through international organizations (Coleman 2007; see also Claude 1966). There is some debate over whether states contribute troops for altruistic, power and status, or pecuniary reasons (Neack 1995), but once deployed, contributors have vested interests in protecting those troops. Success for the contributing state might have little to do with changes in local conditions, but rather with minimizing the number of casualties that occur and the quality of training and experience received. The former is especially critical for states whose foreign policies have attentive domestic audiences, and therefore are sensitive to costs; western democracies with extensive media penetration are thought to be those states most vulnerable to such effects, although those same states are most likely to participate in such operations (Andersson 2000).

Organizations also have specific bureaucratic interests in operations (see Barnett and Finnemore 2004). NGOs compete with each other for funds and resources. They also might regard international governmental organizations as rivals for influence in carrying out tasks such as humanitarian assistance. A peace operation that preserves or enhances the roles of a certain NGO could be considered more successful than one in which its power is diminished, regardless of which arrangement is best for ending the conflict or alleviating the suffering of the local population. International organizations, such as the UN and NATO, have similar bureaucratic interests. They also have reputational concerns in that many organizations in the political and security area (as opposed to the economic and social areas) depend on persuasion and legitimation to be effective. When peace operations denigrate the reputation of an organization, their other missions may suffer.

The interests of the primary protagonists in the conflict involve private goods and almost certainly diverge from one another. If all sides agree to a cease-fire, one might presume a

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common interest in stopping the fighting, but for some this could only be a temporary goal in order to rearm rather than signaling a sincere desire for conflict resolution (Richmond 1998). Furthermore, presumably actors entered into the conflict in order to win. The outcomes are construed in terms of winners and losers or at least partly zero-sum and thus no outcome from a peace operation can leave all parties fully satisfied. Thus, actors will assess peace operation success according to how it affects the distribution of the pie among protagonists. As the number of actors increases, and this can be substantial in a civil or internationalized civil war, the different perspectives on success also swells.

Often left out of calculations are the interests of the local population in the area of conflict (Johansen 1994). It is often presumed that the cessation of violence improves the lives of citizens in the local area, and this is largely correct. Yet there is a wide range of other effects, including those that are unintended, from peace operations that might not be positive (Aoi et al. 2007). For example, peace operations may limit the ability of refugees to return to their homes even as the missions facilitate food and medical care to those displaced populations. Peace operations may also impact the local economy (Ammitzboell 2007) by affecting local markets; this may be positive in providing opportunities for indigenous business or it may distort those markets by creating parallel economic structures. Socially, the presence of peace soldiers might increase the incidence of rape and the spread of AIDS (Kent 2007), although such soldiers could play a role in combating disease as well (Bratt 2002).

As may be obvious from the discussion above, although stakeholders may share some interests (e.g. limiting violence), their interests are not completely coterminous. For example, a contributing state may have as one of its goals limiting casualties to its personnel. Succeeding in that goal, however, may necessitate actions that undermine the international community's goal of protecting the human rights of the threatened population. Evaluating a peace operation according to certain criteria implicitly takes the perspective of one or more actors in the conflict. Thus, there needs to be recognition that success is defined in different ways by the various stakeholders with political and economic interests in the same operation.

Time perspective

Defining success will also vary according to whether one adopts a short- versus long-term perspective (Weiss 1994; Bellamy and Williams 2005). From a short-term perspective, success may be conceptualized as achievement of goals that occur during the course of a peace operation or in some timeframe immediately following the withdrawal of the peacekeeping force. An example of the former is alleviation of starvation and improvement of medical conditions during a humanitarian operation. In this perspective, it is often easiest to tie the actions of the peace operation to the observed outcome. An example of the latter is the absence of violent conflict for several years following the operation (e.g. Enterline and Kang 2002; Heldt and Wallensteen 2006). Although the time frame can vary, the assumption is that peace operations have a substantial influence on ground conditions for some period following the withdrawal of troops. The contention is that the actions of the peacekeepers during deployment laid the groundwork for longer-term effects.

An alternative to short-term concerns is assessing peace operations from a long-term perspective. This generally means looking at conditions for more than a few years after the operation, perhaps as much as decades. The assumption is that policy interventions influence various behaviors and many of their effects are not manifest for many years to come. An example would be considering how life-expectancy improved a decade or more after a peace-building operation ended; such improvements may not show up for a period of time as new facilities and practices take time to have an impact on the local population.

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Taking a longer-term perspective often leads to a different assessment of an operation's success or failure than short-term evaluations. For example, various peacekeeping efforts in East Timor were almost universally considered a success in the immediate aftermath, only to prompt a reassessment when violence and instability returned in 2006. This is not merely a case of the same indicators changing over time. As with different stakeholders, there may be significant differences in the predictor and outcome variables for short- and long-term success. It is also the case that different standards are appropriate for short- and long-term success. For example, slowing refugee flows is a short-term indicator of success whereas refugee repatriation is a process more appropriate for long-term evaluation.

In making long-term assessments, at least two problems arise. The initial problem is determining how long a window should be considered in assessing outcomes. Given path dependency (what happens in an earlier phase, or phases, of conflict has an impact on the dynamics of subsequent phases) and other effects, peace operations can have consequences that extend for decades. Yet, extraordinarily long time frames make it impossible to assess ongoing and recently concluded operations (Bellamy and Williams 2005). Thus, policymakers do not have the ability to make mid-course adjustments easily in ongoing operations if years must pass before strategies can be evaluated. The "shadow of the recent past," the perceived success or failure of recent peace operations, has an influence on decision makers' willingness to launch new operations as well as the configuration of those operations. Problems in Somalia in the early 1990s are often cited as the rationale for the slow and inadequate international response to the genocide in Rwanda not much later. Thus, policy decisions are based on recent, formative events. Long-term assessments of distant operations do not provide decision makers with clear cues on immediate policy decisions and will be discounted in any case because they occurred under different circumstances – former leaders, administrations, or policy contexts. Whatever its validity, long-term success assessment does not meet policy making needs, at least in terms of how foreign policy is typically made.

Second, the longer the time period that passes between the end of the operation and the assessment, the more difficult it will be to draw causal conclusions about the impact of the operation per se; intervening factors are likely to have as great or greater impact on future conditions (Bingham and Felbinger 2002). For example, regime change or a global economic downturn could influence local conditions more than the legacy of a peace operation a decade before. Indeed, there is a difference of opinion on whether long-term failure should even be used as an indictment of the mission (see Druckman and Stern 1997).

Although short- and long-term time horizons differ in a number of ways, they are also related. In most cases, the failure of peace operations to meet short-term goals all but precludes a need to understand its long-term impact. Of course, one could imagine scenarios of how short-term failure produced long-term success (e.g. continued armed conflict produces a stable victory), but these are unlikely scenarios or even when they occur long-term positive effects cannot be effectively traced back to operational failures. More probable, short-term success has downstream consequences. For example, the successful conduct of elections might contribute either to long-term conflict resolution (e.g. Namibia) or to a renewal of violence between forces winning those elections and the opposition (e.g. Angola).

The research challenge is to decide, prior to collecting data, on the time span for evaluation. It pays to adopt both short- and long-term criteria, or to institute multiple assessments of the dependent variables, for evaluation. The alternative is to accept a myopic view of peace operations that will be abandoned in the long run. Considering only the long term, however, will miss important short-term impacts and not provide the necessary feedback to policy makers in order to make timely and informed decisions.

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Beyond a short- or long-term perspective, further complicating the evaluation task is the issue of temporal dynamics. Missions change through time, often in unexpected ways. Peacekeepers must adjust their strategies to circumstances. This suggests that the mission may be defined and evaluated differently at various points in time.

The above suggests that assessments taken only at one juncture may be misleading and likely different from other fixed-point evaluations. Yet there are other implications as well, especially for inferences about causation. The independent variable(s) is (are) not a static, but rather a moving target. Changing assessments of success could be the result of alterations in approach to a mission. The research challenge is to coordinate definitions of the independent variable – considered to be dynamic – with assessments of success, the dependent variable. For example, what are the impacts of changes in force size, deployment area, and mission goals on progress toward a cease-fire or toward the initiation of peace negotiations? Expanding operational goals may also lead to standards that are not only different, but more difficult to reach. Yet another wrinkle in the evaluation task is the way that mission alterations interact with changes in context, increasing the difficulty of separating causal factors. For example, changes in host country cooperation because of a mission shift might influence decisions about the size and deployment of the peace operation. Those decisions, in turn, are likely to alter the prospects, positive or negative, for conflict reduction or resolution.

Baseline for assessment

A third consideration is developing a baseline against which to assess peacekeeping's effects. That is, when one asks whether a peace operation is successful, there is an implicit query – "as compared to what?" – contained therein. Even studies with specific success criteria usually lack a baseline for comparison. There are several different baselines possible, but all have some limitations.

One standard is that peace operations be compared against a situation in which no action was taken by the international community (Druckman and Stern 1997). This is what we refer to as, somewhat derisively, the "better than nothing" yardstick. Others refer to it as utilizing "absence-based criteria" in the sense of a no-treatment control group (Stiles and MacDonald 1992). A more sophisticated version is using a simple time series in which actual outcomes are compared to those projected based on past trends, the latter assuming no peacekeeping intervention (Bingham and Felbinger 2002).

The "better than nothing" standard is misleading from methodological and policymaking perspectives. It is extremely difficult to measure, or make a projection based on, something that did not happen (Menkaus 2003). Furthermore, the standard employed could also be too low in that peace operations automatically get labeled as successful for any improvement in the situation. Decision makers' choices are also rarely between just peacekeeping and inaction (Diehl 1994). Accordingly, some scholars suggest that analysts consider opportunity costs imposed by the choice of peacekeeping (Druckman and Stern 1997). Rather than "better than nothing," this standard asks "better than what alternative?" Problems with this standard, however, are several. It first requires an adequate specification of alternative policies. A complete menu of choices for an international organization might include diplomatic initiatives, sanctions, and collective enforcement through traditional military means. Yet many of these options are not mutually exclusive and thus it is difficult to determine the extent to which the selection of the peace operation option affected other choices on the decisionmaking menu. In addition, the adoption of other options is probabilistic; that is, not all of the other alternatives would have been chosen had a peace operation not been deployed. Thus, assessing specific opportunity costs would have to be weighted by the probability

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of another option, something that is a priori difficult to determine. Assessing opportunity costs also necessitates an accurate counter-factual or scenario-based analysis of what would have happened if other alternatives had been selected (Menkaus 2003).

Another standard is one in which the conditions prior to deployment are compared to those during and following the operation (e.g. Kaysen and Rathjens 1995). The design of this assessment is a relatively simple "before versus after," pretest-posttest, or interrupted time series design (Bingham and Felbinger 2002; Druckman 2006) in which the deployment of the peace operation represents the key dividing line. This standard has the advantage of making comparisons across missions possible or "normalizing" the baseline, as moderate levels of violence during peacekeeping might be considered progress in some contexts (e.g. deployment during full-scale civil war), but backsliding in others (e.g. deployment following a cease-fire). A variation is merely to compare "early after" with "later after," in which the analyst tracks the trends (whether in the positive or negative direction) following deployment (Stiles and MacDonald 1992). This allows the analyst to control for the initial conditions at the time of deployment, a concern noted by Heldt and Wallensteen (2006).

This standard would produce either positive or negative assessments depending on when the operation was deployed. Many operations are sent to the most violent conflicts (Gilligan and Stedman 2003), with various attendant problems of refugees, economic disruptions, and the like. For these operations, the initial baseline is likely to be near the peak of any conflict or at least on the high side of severity.

A third baseline of effectiveness is achieved by comparing effectiveness across peace operations, a cross-sectional rather than longitudinal comparison (Ratner 1995; Bingham and Felbinger 2002 refer to this as "benchmarking"). For example, an operation with fewer shooting incidents than another would be judged as more successful. This may be suitable for some scholarly analyses in that it allows the analysts to assess why some operations are more or less successful than others, presumably by reference to variations in some key independent or predictor variables. Yet this approach generates only relative or comparative assessments. A relatively successful operation might still have significant flaws, which are masked when the baseline is composed largely of failed missions. Recent policy evaluation practice has been to use the "best in class" case as the standard for evaluation (Bingham and Felbinger 2002). This baseline also likely leads to negative evaluations, as all other cases will necessarily fall short by definition, even as the standard accurately reflects appropriate aspiration levels for policymakers.

Lumping

By "lumping" we refer to the way that interventions, including peace operations, are packaged. Practically all conflict-reducing interventions, and especially peace operations, are combinations of multiple procedures and processes. For example, any peace operation can be characterized in terms of its size, training of peacekeepers, strategy and tactics, time horizons, clarity and change of the mandate, and extent of involvement with civil society, as well as host country and constituent support, among other features. This panoply of factors complicates the task of determining which ones are specifically responsible for which outcomes: What parts of a peace operation have been successful or unsuccessful and what factors are responsible for that success or failure? From a policymaking standpoint this is vital, as lessons learned from success and failure need to be at the micro level so that adaptations and modifications can be made without throwing out an entire strategic or operational framework.

Lumping is somewhat less problematic when the interest resides in evaluating a particular mission. Similar to many school-based interventions, the question asked is whether the whole

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package makes a difference in that particular country (or school). Practitioners and consultants are often interested in the summative issue of whether the complete set of actions, with all its parts, worked. This is what is known as an "impact evaluation," in which the end results or measurable impacts are the object of scrutiny (Bingham and Felbinger 2002). It is more problematic when the object of the evaluation focuses on any of the several facets of the lumped package. Although primarily of interest to theorists and researchers, this question also has practical implications. Knowing which factors were responsible for outcomes contributes in important ways to the design and implementation of future operations (see Druckman 2005).

Types of peacekeeping missions

Different kinds of missions require, at least in part, different criteria for evaluating success. Most missions have as their goal the reduction of violent conflict. Others have more specific aims, such as supervising elections, providing human rights protection, or contributing to the building of new societal institutions. The various missions have been shown to differ on a variety of characteristics, particularly with regard to the role of peacekeepers and the type of conflict management outcome emphasized by the mission (Diehl et al. 1998). For example, some missions assume primary or direct roles for peacekeepers. These include collective enforcement, state/nation building, and protective services. Others place peacekeepers in third-party roles. Examples are the supervision of elections, arms control verification, and observation (information collection and monitoring). Missions also divide between whether they emphasize benefits to the peacekeepers themselves or to both the mission and the host country. The former conflict management outcome is evident in collective or sanctions enforcement, interventions in support of democracy, and protective services. The latter outcome is prevalent in such missions as traditional peacekeeping, observation, and election supervision. Some missions have multiple and mixed roles, namely humanitarian assistance and pacification. Thus, the dimensions of missions influence the way we assess effectiveness.

For this reason, the questions asked about success and the indicators used to diagnose progress are specific to the mission's goal. For example, if the goal is to contain violence, we would ask whether the violence levels have decreased and measure the number of shooting incidents and casualties both for members of the disputing parties and for the peace force. If, however, the goal is to protect human rights, we would ask, at one level, whether atrocities have been reduced or genocidal incidents avoided and, at another level, whether a judicial system is in place and functioning. Progress in achieving the goal of human rights is indicated by both a significant reduction in atrocities on the ground and by an institutional system that insures due process.

Not surprisingly, most analysts advocate using guidelines provided in the operations mandate, the authorizing document (e.g. Security Council resolution) provided by the organization carrying out the mission (e.g. Howard 2008; Bellamy and Williams 2005; Ratner 1995). Mandates often contain specific tasks to be completed or benchmarks that should be reached. In one sense, this is appropriate as a particular mission is only judged according to the tasks with which it was assigned. On the other hand, there are a number of drawbacks associated with using mandates to define success. The mandates given for operations, especially those directed by large membership international organizations, are the products of political deliberation and compromise, and the result is that they are frequently vague. For example, the UN Security Force (UNSF) in West Guinea was charged with maintaining law and order. UNIFIL was asked to "restore international peace and security" and "assist the Government of Lebanon in ensuring the return of its effective authority in the area."

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There is much room for debate on the scope and detail of the operation's mission. What does "restore peace and security" mean? If the context is a failed state, such a term may be meaningless, as the status quo *ante* involved no such peace or security. There are also various levels that might be established as to whether this mandate has been met or not. That a more precise mandate could not be specified and approved is evidence that there is disagreement over what the operation was supposed to achieve. The analyst cannot merely impose his or her own interpretation of the meaning of a mandate. This problem alone makes it difficult to assess whether the designs of the mandate have been achieved (Druckman and Stern 1997). We should acknowledge, however, that over time, peace operation mandates have become more detailed and more precise, although there is still room for dispute in interpretation.

Mandates could also be inflexible in the face of changing conflict conditions, and thus what peace-keepers are attempting to do may no longer reflect the standards present in the mandate (Bellamy and Williams 2005). Thus, the Multinational Force in Beirut (MNF) was originally designed to supervise the withdrawal of PLO forces from Beirut, but subsequently became involved in supporting the Lebanese government army and other activities that seemed to belie its neutral mandate. "Mandate clarity" is an indicator of peacekeeping success in the literature (Mackinlay 1990; see also Diehl 1994 on this point), again confounding the inputs or influences with the outcomes.

The conflict environment

A focus in this chapter on overall mission effectiveness highlights dimensions at a macro level of analysis: for example, stakeholders in the international community, mission mandates, relations with the host country, and involvement with civil society and local cultures. These factors are considered to be part of the conflict environment that is confronted by a peace operation, contributing to its effectiveness in the short and long term. It is important to distinguish among factors in the environment that are more or less subject to being influenced by the operation: for example, the difference between internal geography or infrastructure (low malleability) and mobilization potential or skills training (high malleability). This distinction has implications for defining the possibilities and limits of any peace operation. These implications are discussed in this concluding section.

The many features of the conflict environment that may influence or be influenced by a peace operation can be divided into three categories: characteristics of the conflict, local governance, and the local population. Somewhat more malleable conflict characteristics include the ease of crossing borders in the host country, involvement of external actors in the host country's dispute, and the phase of the conflict when deployment occurs. These features are variables more likely to be influenced by the operation than to have an influence on it. Less malleable features include internal geography, the stability of neighbors' regimes, and the intractability of the conflict. These features are more likely to influence the operation than to be influenced by it.

Similarly, some aspects of local governance are more malleable than others: compare service provision and host country support with the condition of the country's infrastructure and its economic health. And, with regard to the local population, mobilization potential and organizational attributes are more malleable than the size and density of the population in the area of deployment and the pattern of cleavages between groups in the host country. The more or less malleable distinction has strategic implications, contributing to the design and implementation of operations. By focusing attention on the more malleable features of the conflict environment, peacekeeping forces may be more efficient and effective.

This distinction can also be incorporated in training programs by increasing the sensitivity of peacekeepers to those aspects of the environment that can be altered. Among the relevant skills

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are gathering and processing information, using the information to perform situation analyses, learning how to manage impressions through tactical posturing, and timing moves when implementing tactical scripts. These skills would help peacekeepers to deal with the challenges of coordinating with the host country regime, working with external actors, mobilizing moderate citizens, and bridging differences among local organizations and in-country NGOs. Design, implementation, and evaluation of training programs that develop these tactical skills are discussed elsewhere. (For example, see Druckman et al. 1997 on the distinction between contact and combat skills; see Druckman and Ebner 2013 on differences between conceptual and tactical learning.) However, whether enhanced tactical skills and performance increase overall mission effectiveness is less clear.

The distinction between more and less malleable aspects of the conflict environment raises issues about the extent to which training contributes to mission effectiveness. Even well-trained and organized forces may not be able to overcome barriers imposed by the conflict environment: for example, the geographical context, a legacy of violence, type of conflict or the phase of conflict during which the mission is deployed. For the policy analyst, this means striking a balance between the different types of factors in performing evaluations, i.e. recognizing the factors over which the operation has little control. For the peacekeeper, this means learning to distinguish among those factors. Another kind of skill – referred to as monitoring situations – is helpful. More generally, learning to recognize opportunities for effective action within a larger environment is likely to contribute in important ways to mission success.

Two types of peacekeeper roles with corresponding skills are suggested: as an agent for change (actor) and as a monitor of changing situations (reactor) (see Diehl and Druckman 2010 and Whalan 2012 for more on this distinction). Both roles form part of the overall evaluation of mission effectiveness.

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