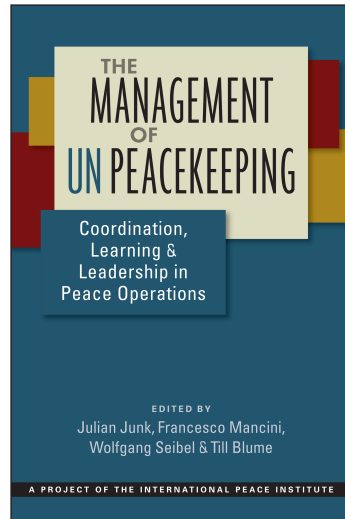


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The Management of
UN Peacekeeping:
Coordination, Learning,
and Leadership
in Peace Operations

edited by
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Wolfgang Seibel, and Till Blume

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Introduction: The Management of UN Peacekeeping

Julian Junk and Francesco Mancini

“THE WORLD IS CHANGING AND UN PEACE OPERATIONS MUST CHANGE with it if they are to remain an indispensable and effective tool in promoting international peace and security.”¹ With these words, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon announced the appointment of a High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO) in October 2014, the latest in a long series of reform efforts in peacekeeping that the UN has been carrying out since 1992, when *An Agenda for Peace* established the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations.²

Since then, things have never gotten easier for peacekeepers.³ Today, UN-mandated peace operations can contain more than 300 individual functions that fall under more than 20 broad categories, including: protection of civilians; disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR); electoral assistance; human rights monitoring; security sector reform; justice reform; and the rule of law.⁴ They incorporate elements of peace enforcement and peacebuilding, often operating in precarious security environments with political instability, little peace to keep, and multiple stakeholders with conflicting interests and positions. They include uniformed personnel (troops, military observers and experts, and police) as well as civilians. They are deeply political institutions, multicultural and temporary in their nature. Their unique managerial challenges are the core theme of this book.

Why Management: Context and Relevance

At least since 2000, with the publication of the so-called Brahimi Report, a landmark document that assessed the shortcomings of the peacekeeping

2 *The Management of UN Peacekeeping*

system at the time and made specific recommendations for change, organization and management issues have been on the UN reform agenda and broadly acknowledged as important elements to strengthen the capacity of peace operations. Still, despite much emphasis on its relevance, management is widely seen as a suboptimal feature of UN peace operations, and of the UN as a whole for that matter.⁵ The report of the above-mentioned HIPPO carried the same disparaging message that, when it comes to systems, structures, resources, and leadership: “UN administrative procedures are failing missions and their mandates. . . . Headquarters is not delivering the leadership, management or support required for the challenges facing UN peace operations today.”⁶

So, why, despite multiple reform efforts and a broad agreement on its importance, does management remain a weak point of peace operations? The answer resides in the very nature of peace operations, which is deeply political. This is not only because the most critical element of success for peace operations is to get the political process that leads to peace and stability right. It is also because political compromises, underpinned by different and often conflicting interests among member states and bureaucratic infighting, define every feature of such missions. The UN Secretariat, which runs peace operations, is no different, being “a political institution, a place where UN member states compete for power and influence of others.”⁷ In such an environment, management is generally considered an afterthought, relying more on personal intuitions and cultural habits than on established or innovative methods and techniques. Training in management skills remains a largely unmet need.⁸ Managerial reforms and institutional changes cannot be pursued without the commitment of member states and the results are always the fruit of political compromises that seldom take into consideration management and organization knowledge and practice.

It is our opinion that the political nature of peace operations leads to at least three principal interrelated limitations in management and organization. First, organizational structures are not primarily dictated by the functions a peace mission has to perform. Organization design is generally by template. “We don’t want designer missions: we do template missions,” the New York headquarters told Ian Martin, a former special representative of the UN Secretary-General, in the course of planning for the UN Mission in Nepal (UNMIN).⁹ The result is that often structures limit, rather than support, the achievement of the mission’s goals. To cite again the 2015 HIPPO report, “The current Headquarters configuration is hampering the effective assessment, design and conduct of UN peace operations and, more generally, the Secretariat’s work in support of international peace and security.”¹⁰ Second, bureaucratic rules and procedures impede rather than facilitate management, even when they are established with good intentions and in reaction to specific shortcomings or crises. Internal processes are cumber-

some and a risk averse organizational culture constrains mission leaders and administrators from making commonsense decisions in pursuit of the mandate. Success is “generally achieved in spite of the system rather than thanks to it,” wrote former under-secretary-general for peacekeeping operations Jean-Marie Guéhenno.¹¹ Third, financial and human resources as well as equipment, often used as leverages in the fight over power and influence among member states, are regularly overstretched, which tests the managerial and organizational capacity of field operations.

While we fully agree that the greatest challenges for peace operations are political, and not technical, we argue that it is precisely because peace operations face political, bureaucratic, and resource constraints that more organization and management knowledge need to be injected into the UN system. Management—the art of aligning means and ends and thus the capacity to marshal resources, lay out plans, conduct work, and spur effort—is central to the accomplishment of any human purpose.¹² Good structures and management can sometimes make the difference between success and failure. To use again the words of Guéhenno, “The success of [peace operations] is all in the art of implementation.”¹³ In complex environments such as the ones in which peace operations are deployed, effectively organizing and managing scarce resources becomes both more daunting and more essential. In fact, if managed well, environmental complexity can increase the resilience of an organization and enhance its ability to adapt, learn, and thrive in challenging contexts.¹⁴ And since legitimacy also depends on effectiveness, peace operations that deliver can go a long way in regaining some of the ground lost by the UN.

More will be said on the importance of management and organization in the first chapter of this book. At this stage it is important to remember that, notwithstanding the political nature of peace operations, good management practices and solid organizational arrangements can help strengthen peacekeeping on multiple fronts: its efficiency, optimizing the use of scarce resources to achieve the mission’s goals; its effectiveness, enhancing the mission’s capacity to deliver results; and its legitimacy, showing that a mission is able to make a difference in the lives of those who are affected by conflict.

Objectives of the Book

While there is a vast literature in management, public administration, and organizational theory as well as a large stock of evaluations of best and worst practices, little of these bodies of work focus on UN peace operations.¹⁵ Conversely, the large literature on peace operations emphasizes history and trends, politics and strategies, and mandates and performances

rather than managerial and organizational elements.¹⁶ To bring these two worlds—the management and the UN knowledge—into dialogue seems key to improving the understanding of managerial challenges and solutions for peace operations. This book offers a start in establishing this dialogue to facilitate cross-fertilization between the two fields by focusing on three interrelated phenomena of organization and management: coordination (organizing resources among various organizational entities to enable the successful carrying out of plans), learning (managing knowledge for organizational improvement), and leadership (directing resources to achieve the organization's mission). All three areas also correspond to fundamental challenges in peace operations.

While the book does not aim to be a management training manual, it seeks to serve four purposes.¹⁷ First, it aims to advance specific organizational theories for the use of UN peace operations in conflict and postconflict contexts (theory development). Second, it identifies insights from the theoretically led, but essentially empirical, literature on a wide array of organizations, from the private sector to public administration and international organizations, to shed light on the managerial challenges of peace operations (theory application). Third, it seeks to identify specific organizational needs of peace operations that are related to coordination, learning, and leadership (capacity description). Finally, the exchange between organization scholars and peace operation practitioners aims to draw recommendations to strengthen management capacities and operations in keeping and building peace (capacity improvement).

The contributions in this volume seek to utilize the analytical potential of administrative science and organization theory to offer remedies for a range of problems that occur in UN peace operations. In doing so, the authors do not attempt to address the full complexity of peace operations, and indeed political constraints are addressed in the concluding chapter of the volume as main factors that should lead to the so-called second-best choice in management. In fact, many aspects of international relations, national foreign policies, and geopolitics may contribute to the very organizational challenges addressed in the book. For example, lack of coordination may result from the divergent interests of UN member states or from the varying degrees of commitment to the implementation of a mandate. The limits of organizational learning may be due to an unwillingness of UN member states to accept the lessons. The performance of top-level UN officials is as much a matter of leeway and circumstances as it is a matter of personal leadership. Still, these important factors in securing successful peace operations fall outside the remit of this project, whose main objective is to deepen the understanding of the managerial and organizational challenges of peace operations. And as many contributions in this volume indicate, skillful management can help to navigate these complex political waters.

The result is that, while highlighting the value added that organization theory and public administration lenses bring to the enhancement of peace operations, the analysis also sheds light on the limits imposed on effective management by the politicization of international organizations both at headquarters and in the field. This challenges the assumption of organizational ideal types and emphasizes the importance of transformative leadership, creative coping, and second-best solutions.

Structure of the Book

The book begins with a chapter that summarizes the state of the literature in coordination, learning, and leadership, and identifies avenues on how to apply this vast knowledge to UN peace operations. In doing so, Wolfgang Seibel, Julian Junk, Till Blume, and Elisabeth Schöndorf provide an in-depth conceptual rationale for the importance of these three areas of management theory and practice. Following this introductory chapter, the three subsequent sections of this volume dig into each element more thoroughly, with a mix of contributions from the management, public administration, and peace operations fields, which have been collected and revised over the past few years. Each section starts with chapters that provide an overview of the main insights from management and public administration literature followed by chapters that confront those insights with the empirical reality of implementing peace operations.

Part 1: Coordination

Chapters 2 through 7 in this section show that, despite substantive advances in doctrine and guidelines at the UN, coordination remains a persistent challenge in peace operations. Anna Herrhausen introduces the topic by reviewing the literature on organizational forms and coordination. She shows that organization forms—that is, hierarchy, network, and market—and the way in which coordination happens within each form are inextricably interlinked. Herrhausen suggests that network organization is the most appropriate coordination form for peace operations and develops recommendations to strengthen the network character (interoperability and complementarity) and to improve network governance (common culture and access restrictions). Michael Lipson partially challenges this conclusion in his chapter, exploring the limited utility of network theories and transaction costs in explaining interorganizational coordination in peace operations, drawing from the international experience in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Jörg Raab and Joseph Soeters further explore the network character and provide a careful review of the state of the art of network theory. They

highlight that UN peace operations are temporary in nature and, therefore, are characterized by high cognitive, strategic, and institutional uncertainty. Raab and Soeters then focus on the coordination tensions that arise within the different national components of the military and between the military and other actors such as the civilian officers, donor agencies, and non-governmental organizations, with lessons drawn from peace operations in Lebanon and Liberia.

Coordination mechanisms can also be identified in specific activities such as DDR of former combatants, argues Tobias Pietz in his analysis of early lessons learned in the program pilot implementation in Haiti and the Sudan.

When discussing coordination in peace operations, the term *coherence* remains underdefined and its meaning is ambiguous. Asith Bhattacharjee and Cedric de Coning seek to fill this void by offering a better conceptualization in peacekeeping and peacebuilding contexts, respectively. Bhattacharjee draws lessons from his experience in the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) to illustrate the three main dimensions of coherence: (1) between the Security Council's mandate and the peace operation on the ground; (2) within the UN system operating in the country; and (3) between the UN system and the hosting government. On the other hand, de Coning identifies the limits of coherence and challenges the conventional wisdom that more coherence results in more effective peace operations. He makes clear that, beyond a certain point, the marginal benefit of investing in more coherence decreases and eventually produces negative effects.

Part 2: Learning

Learning, both seen as a cognitive process and a means for organizational change, is the focus of Chapters 8 through 11. Ariane Berthoin Antal, Julian Junk, and Peter Schumann provide an overview of the organizational learning theories, which so far have hardly been applied to the realm of international organizations, let alone peace operations. Lessons from the UN peace operation in the Sudan are used to illustrate different patterns of organizational learning: (1) field-based learning practice; (2) standard training, capacity development, and staff diversity; and (3) results-based budgeting as an organizational learning process.

The chapters that follow in the section dig deeper into specific aspects of organizational learning. Thorsten Benner, Stephan Mergenthaler, and Philipp Rotmann lay the conceptual foundations for analyzing learning in international bureaucracies and identify the key stages of a learning process, crucial factors for planning and implementing peace operations. They then investigate the process of organizational learning at the headquarters level of the UN peace operations bureaucracy. Melanie Mai, Rüd-

ger Klimecki, and Sebastian Döring emphasize the role of collective identities in learning processes through a case study on Liberia. Their chapter shows how the multitude and diversity of actors involved undermine the learning dynamics in the mission. They emphasize the importance of a shared identity as a learning enabler and unifying factor in a mission; hence, they connect organizational theories presented in the first section to learning. Organizational learning becomes a means for coordination.

Closing this section, Michael Bauer, Helge Jörgens, and Christoph Knill discuss the relevance of organizational change theory to the study of organizational learning. They transfer insights from organizational reforms of a variety of international organizations, including the World Food Programme and the European Central Bank, to the field of peace operations.

Part 3: Leadership

While many contributors in the previous two sections highlight the importance of leadership for successful coordination and learning, Chapters 12 through 15 zoom in on the role of leaders in peace operations. Sabine Boerner analyzes the principal leadership theories, including the trait and skills approach, the style approach, the situational approach, path-goal theory, goal-oriented leadership, leader-member exchange, and transformational leadership. Through these theories and with an emphasis on transformational leadership, Boerner identifies the key leadership traits of a successful mission leader.

Simon Chesterman and Thomas Franck analyze the role of the UN Secretary-General and the tension inherent in that title: whether the leader is more “secretary” or more “general.” After a review of the history of this tension among the different heads of the world body, the authors formulate recommendations on how the Secretary-General’s voice can be their strongest leadership asset. Manuel Fröhlich provides a detailed overview of the legal and political basis of the work of special representatives of the Secretary-General (SRSG), the means of influence they have at their disposal, and the various styles of leadership. His analysis is supported by a comprehensive and original dataset that charts the varieties of tasks and mandates of SRSGs throughout the years and the diversity of their geographical origins as well as their assigned regions. Frederik Trettin, on the other hand, uses role theory to address the question of what roles an SRSG performs and what he or she instead delegates, and how much these choices influence the success of a peace operation. To do this, he compares the tenures of two consecutive SRSGs of the UN Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), namely, Hans Haekkerup and Michael Steiner.

Our conclusion, before summarizing the main findings of the three sections of the book and identifying the linkages and tensions, focuses briefly

on the main constraint that all management-related recommendations for the planning and implementation of peace operations necessarily face—the dominance of politics. We suggest that, given the political nature of peace operations, weaknesses in coordination, learning, and leadership can only be mitigated, but not entirely eliminated, by managerial efforts. At the end we propose three broad statements that, together with the recommendations we summarize in this final chapter, can help inform future efforts to enhance the organization and managerial skills of UN peace operations. First, we stress that the joint analysis of theories of organizational coordination, learning, and leadership, together with practices and case studies of UN peace operations, highlights how these three fundamental areas of management are mutually reinforcing. Second, we advocate for second-best choices in organization and management, dictated by the political nature of peace operations. And finally, we call for the contextualization of organization and management knowledge, rather than the application of textbook models, given the diversity of the contexts and the high variability of the circumstances in which peace missions operate.

Notes

1. Ban Ki-moon, “Secretary-General’s Statement on Appointment of High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations” (New York: UN, October 31, 2014), www.un.org/sg/statements/index.asp?nid=8151.

2. The list of UN reform proposals is long. A good history of peacekeeping reform is available at the UN Peacekeeping website at www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/operations/history.shtml. For a comprehensive review of all reforms proposals since 1997, see Four Nations Initiative on Governance and Management of the United Nations, *Towards a Compact: Proposals for Improved Governance and Management at the UN Secretariat* (Stockholm: Four Nations Initiative, September 2007), pp. 61–69. See also Thant Myint-U and Amy Scott, *The UN Secretariat: A Brief History* (New York: International Peace Academy, 2007), pp. 134–144.

3. For a review of the trends in UN and non-UN mandated peace operations, see Alex J. Bellamy and Paul D. Williams, “Trends in Peace Operations, 1947–2013,” in Joachim Koops, Norrie MacQueen, Thierry Tardy, and Paul Williams, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of United Nations Peacekeeping Operations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 13–42.

4. See Jack Sherman and Benjamin Tortolani, “Implications of Peacebuilding and Statebuilding in United Nations Mandates,” in *Robust Peacekeeping: The Politics of Force* (New York: Center on International Collaboration, 2009), p. 15.

5. See, for example, Independent Inquiry Committee, “The Management of the United Nations Oil-For-Food Program,” September 7, 2005; US Government Accountability Office, “United Nations: Lessons Learned from Oil for Food Program Indicate the Need to Strengthen UN Internal Control and Oversight Activities,” Report to Congressional Committees, April 2006; Washington, DC; UN General Assembly, “Comprehensive Review of Governance and Oversight Within the

United Nations and Its Funds, Programmes, and Specialized Agencies,” Report of the Secretary-General, UN Doc. A/60/883, July 10, 2006.

6. UN, *Report of the High-Level Independent Panel on United Nations Peace Operations: Uniting Our Strengths for Peace—Politics, Partnership, and People*, UN Doc. A/70/95/2015/446 (New York, June 16, 2015), excerpts from paras. 289 and 307.

7. Myint-U and Scott, *The UN Secretariat*, p. x.

8. UN, Integrated Training Service, Policy, Evaluation and Training Division, Department of Peacekeeping Operations, “Report on the Strategic Peacekeeping Training Needs Assessment” (New York: UN, October 2008).

9. Ian Martin, “All Peace Operations Are Political: A Case for Designer Missions and the Next UN Reform,” in *Review of Political Missions 2010* (New York: Center on International Cooperation, 2010), p. 9.

10. UN, *Report of the High-Level Independent Panel on United Nations Peace Operations*, p. 89.

11. Jean-Marie Guéhenno, *The Fog of Peace: A Memoir of International Peacekeeping in the 21st Century* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2015), p. 295.

12. Gary Hamel, *The Future of Management* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2007), p. x.

13. Guéhenno, *The Fog of Peace*, p. 294.

14. See International Peace Institute, *The Management Handbook of UN Field Missions* (New York: International Peace Institute, 2012), p. 1.

15. Notable exceptions include the work of a few of this volume’s contributors, including Thorsten Benner, Till Blume, Julian Junk, Michael Lipson, Francesco Mancini, Philipp Rotmann, and Frederik Trettin, in addition to the work of Michael Barnett and Martha Finnemore, Susanna Campbell, Lise Morjé Howard, and Dirk Salomons. Reports that focus on managerial issues include: Fafo Institute for Applied Social Science, *Command from the Saddle: Managing United Nations Peace-building Missions*, Recommendations Report of the Forum on the Special Representative of the Secretary-General: Shaping the UN’s Role in Peace Implementation, Fafo Report No. 266 (Oslo: Fafo Institute for Applied Social Science, 1999); Espen Barth Eide, Anja Therese Kaspersen, Randolph Kent, and Karin von Hippel, “Report on Integrated Missions: Practical Perspectives and Recommendations,” Independent Study for the Expanded UN Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs Core Group (London: King’s College; Oslo: Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, 2005); A. Sarjoh Bah and Bruce Jones, “Peace Operations Partnerships: Lessons and Issues from Coordination to Hybrid Arrangements” (New York: Center for International Cooperation, May 2008); Caty Clement and Adam C. Smith, eds., *Managing Complexity: Political and Managerial Challenges in United Nations Peace Operations* (New York: International Peace Institute and Geneva Centre for Security Policy, 2009); Fabrizio Hochschild, *In and Above Conflict: A Study on Leadership in the United Nations* (Geneva: Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, July 2010).

16. The literature that focuses on history, strategy, and political aspects of peacekeeping operations is too vast to be summarized here. Good literature reviews can be found in Ian Johnstone, “Peace Operations Literature Review,” Center on International Cooperation Project on Transformations in Multilateral Security Institutions: Implications for the UN, August 2005, www.peacekeepingbestpractices.unlb.org/pbps/library/Peace%20operations%20final%20literature%20review.pdf;

and Virginia Page Fortna and Lise Morjé Howard, "Pitfalls and Prospects in the Peacekeeping Literature," in Graham K. Brown and Arnim Langer, eds., *Elgar Handbook of Civil War and Fragile States* (Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar, 2012), pp. 310–326. Recent additions to the literature include Donald C.F. Daniel, Patricia Taft, and Sharon Wiharta, eds., *Peace Operations: Trends, Progress and Prospects* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2008); Paul Diehl, *Peace Operations* (Cambridge: Polity, 2008); Richard Kareem Al-Qaq, *Managing World Order: United Nations Peace Operations and the Security Agenda* (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 2009); Alex Bellamy, Paul Williams, and Stuart Griffin, *Understanding Peacekeeping* (Cambridge: Polity, 2010); Paul Diehl and Daniel Druckman, *Evaluating Peace Operations* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2010); Adekeye Adebajo, *UN Peacekeeping in Africa: From the Suez Crisis to the Sudan Conflicts* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2011); Norrie MacQueen, *The United Nations, Peace Operations and the Cold War* (New York: Pearson Longman, 2011); Thorsten Benner, Stephan Mergenthaler, and Philipp Rotmann, *The New World of UN Peace Operations: Learning to Build Peace?* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Laura Zanotti, *Governing Disorder: UN Peace Operations, International Security, and Democratization in Post–Cold War Era* (State College: Penn State University Press, 2011); Joachim Koops, Norrie MacQueen, Thierry Tardy, and Paul Williams, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of United Nations Peacekeeping Operations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

17. For this purpose, see International Peace Institute, *The Management Handbook for UN Field Missions*.