CHARLES UNIVERSITY

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

Institute of Political Studies

Department of Security Studies

Master's Thesis

2024   **Hassan Saad**

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The Challenges of UN Peacekeeping in a Complex Environment: A UNIFIL Perspective

Master's Thesis

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Declaration

1. I hereby declare that I have compiled this thesis using the listed literature and resources only.
2. I hereby declare that my thesis has not been used to gain any other academic title.
3. I fully agree to my work being used for study and scientific purposes.

In Prague on 31 July 2024   Hassan Saad

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Abstract

Complexity in global governance has witnessed an increase influenced by several sovereign actors and conflicts within an evolving international order. Despite not being explicitly mentioned in the UN Charter, peacekeeping operations are used as a direct tool by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to preserve peace and maintain security. This thesis employs complexity theory as a contemporary mechanism to explain the intricate dynamics affecting peacekeeping operations, showcasing that traditional linear models are insufficient. Utilizing the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) as a case study, the thesis provides an insight to the complex interactions between local actors and peacekeepers, and the difficulties in maintaining impartiality. Despite more than 45 years for its establishment, UNIFIL was still unable to fulfill its mandate due to significant challenges contributing to this deficiency. A multifaceted methodology was applied to understand the significance of credibility and local legitimacy and how they affect the performance of the mission making trust a critical factor for its success. The findings of this study have identified a cognitive discordance in UNIFIL's mandate interpretation and application of impartiality, and the necessity of adaptive and context-sensitive approach to mitigate the dynamics of a complex setting like Lebanon.

Keywords

Title

The Challenges of UN Peacekeeping in a Complex Environment: A UNIFIL Perspective

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"Peacekeeping is not a job for soldiers, but only soldiers can do it."

Dag Hammarskjöld, the second Secretary-General of the United Nations.

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Abbreviations:

APV Armored Patrol Vehicle

CA Civil Affairs

CIMIC Civil-Military Cooperation

DDR Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration

DPO Department of Peacekeeping Operations

FC Force Commander

IDF Israel Defense Forces

LAF Lebanese Armed Forces

MINUSMA United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali

MONUSCO United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

NATO North Atlantic Treaty Organization

PKO Peacekeeping Operations

PLO Palestine Liberation Organization

QIP Quick Impact Projects

SLA South Lebanese Army

TCC Troop Contributing Countries

UN United Nations

UNIFIL	United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon
UNMISS	United Nations Mission in South Sudan
UNNY	United Nations New York
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNTSO	United Nations Truce Supervision Organization

1. INTRODUCTION:

The dynamics of the international order are ever-changing, owing to the various conflicts and diverse agendas that are being pursued by the involved actors. In the early years of the 20th century, this order was not overly complicated where only a specific number of empires were controlling it. But in recent times, and due to the continuous emergence of highly focused nationalistic forces, the number of sovereign actors has increased substantially, and there are now nearly two hundred nations in the world. The shifting dynamics within the international system, especially after the end of WW2, paved the way for the creation of powerful international organizations with the aim of encouraging global cooperation and preserving security (Meltzer, 1978). The United Nations, formed in 1945, is a first-row actor responsible for sustaining peace and security, and fostering cooperation on the international level which is mentioned in the UN Charter (1945). It does so by using an operational structure of six main bodies with the Security Council having the most power. The Security Council has the capacity to adopt resolutions that are legally binding to all UN members such as mandating a cease-fire and enforcing sanctions on non-complying members. Furthermore, it has the power to deploy military power from member states in order to maintain peace or even enforce it (Morrison et al., 1999).

Despite never being mentioned in the UN Charter as a method to preserve peace and security, according to Basu (1993), the concept of peacekeeping within the UN context can be defined as deploying multi-national forces under the UN authority to assist in deescalating and resolving conflicts between hostile state actors or violent non-state actors. Based on increasing levels of intricacy, four types can be used to characterize UN peacekeeping operations: (i)

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traditional peacekeeping, (ii) peacebuilding, (iv) observation missions, and (v) peace enforcement (Sandler, 2017). These multinational forces are responsible for implementing a UNSC resolution that could assign to them a military, political, and humanitarian role which demands a diverse structure. Thus, the peacekeeping force usually is formed by soldiers, military observers, military police, and civilian staff. While the UN has the legal right to interfere in cases of war and conflict by drafting binding resolutions and deploying peacekeepers to implement these resolutions, it is still accountable to the three principles of consent, impartiality, and using force only in self-defense which form the "holy trinity" of traditional peacekeeping (Peter, 2015).

The three principles of peacekeeping have been highly regarded since the deployment of the first mission in 1948 which was the United Nations Truce Supervisory Observer (UNTSO) positioned between Israel and its neighboring countries. Yet almost every peacekeeping mission has been doubted for its effectiveness or even efficacy in fulfilling its role within a complex environment (Sandler, 2017). One main factor for this lack of trust is the principle of impartiality which is being challenged regularly. As in any major international organization, the decision-making process within the two main organs of the UN is affected by political influence and predisposition (Gifkins, 2021). Due to the dynamic nature of international relations characterized by tension as a normative behavior of member states, the complex goal of maintaining impartiality became harder to sustain. These principles are designed to limit any unnecessary provocation that could lead to escalation by introducing an additional actor to the conflict characterized by its neutrality towards all the parties involved. This external actor is responsible for implementing a mandate assigned specifically to each mission which regulates its role and

force used in the conflict. However, the crafting of a mission's mandate is affected by the complex dynamics of the UNSC where concessions are usually made between member states (Merrill, Sinatra, Yasmin & Institute of Strategic and International Studies, 2015).

This complex environment that is present within United Nations New York (UNNY) can also be felt at mission headquarters, where a Force Commander (FC) or Head of Mission (HoM) and their international staff are deployed and authorized to implement the mandate. Even at this operational level, the normative behavior of state actors can still be observed through the decision-making process related directly to the way of mandate implementation (Oksamytna, Tansey, Von Billerbeck & Gippert, 2023). Moreover, the complexity extends also to the parties of the conflict who are directly affected by the mandate of the mission. Their consent, which is one of the three principles of peacekeeping, to host the mission and cooperate with it is critical for its success. This is linked directly to how the host sees and interprets the actions of peacekeepers and their way of implementing the mission's mandate in which some actions could be assumed as biased and violates the principle of impartiality.

The previous factors showcase the hard aspects of maintaining impartiality within the different levels of a peacekeeping mission, thus highlighting the complexity of these missions. Even at the lowest operational level, which is composed of multinational battalions formed by the troop contributing countries (TCC), the implementation of the mandate could be influenced not only by the different views of TCC but also by the impulse of the parties of the conflict which leads to increased tension. At this level, certain articles within a mission's mandate and the methods used by peacekeepers to implement it might be susceptible to displeasure or rejection from the concerned parties leading to a disproportionate reaction ranging from a formal

complaint to violent behavior against peacekeepers. In such circumstances, a peacekeeping mission tends to shift its focus from implementing its mandate to maintaining stability and peace by compromising and disregarding certain aspects of the mandate which may be seen as a lack of impartiality especially if one party benefits from it. These dynamics highlight the absence of a direct relationship between input and output in peacekeeping missions when operating in a complex theater. Furthermore, to provide a robust interpretation, this research will utilize the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) as a case study.

UNIFIL was established in 1978 with a mandate that includes both UNSC resolutions 425 and 426. Resolution 1701 was added to the mandate of UNIFIL after the end of the 2006 war which made the mission responsible for securing the borders and confirming the withdrawal of the IDF from Southern Lebanon, ensuring the cessation of fire, assisting the civilian population, assisting the Lebanese Armed forces to maintain its borders, and establishing an area free of arms within its area of operation (UNSC, 2006). After 45 years of its establishment, the peacekeeping mission still couldn't fulfill its mandate due to many rising internal and external challenges, and limitations within the mandate itself. With the continuous renewal of the mission, doubts and uncertainty levels have increased regarding its efficiency and effectiveness, and even labeled the mission as a failure by some actors. To have a better understanding of the reasons behind this controversial deficiency, this study will examine the dynamics that are affecting the mission's outcome. This will include a thorough inspection of the application of the three UN peacekeeping principles by UNIFIL with a focus on impartiality and an assessment of the violations of UNSC resolution 1701. These factors act as independent variables that contribute to the nonlinearity of the outcome of the peacekeeping mission.

Despite the complexity of the situation in UNIFIL's area of operation, involving local, regional, and international actors, research has often approached it with linear analytical lenses, assuming direct, proportional relationships between causes and effects. However, such a perspective may not adequately capture the unpredictability and disproportionality present in conflict dynamics and peacekeeping operations. Thus, this study aims to examine these gaps by exploring how non-linear variables affect the performance of peacekeeping missions. This suggests that dynamic variables can lead to disproportionate effects on the interpretation of the mandate, the credibility and legitimacy of the mission, and the implementation of impartiality. Trying to address this question, we must identify what factors are responsible for the shortcomings of the mission and how they affect the peacekeeping operation. It is clear that UNIFIL is facing a lot of challenges that are preventing it from fulfilling its mandate. Regardless of the allegedly limited mandate, the shortcoming of the mission is caused by several other factors. That is why, this research sets out to test the nonlinear dynamics in Southern Lebanon and its role in preventing the success of UNIFIL.

1.1 Literature Review:

A general overview and examination of the current literature that discusses peacekeeping is critical to have a better understanding of the different views regarding peacekeeping and UNIFIL which will also highlight the contribution this research makes to the existing literature.

1.1.1 UN Peacekeeping Operations:

Peacekeeping has proven the most effective tool in fostering peace and stability in countries ravaged by conflicts. Current peacekeeping operations are pursued for the maintenance of peace and security, protecting civilians, and promotion of human rights while fostering the restoration of law and order. Peacekeeping differentiates from other techniques of preserving international peace and security. The United Nations highlights the existence of three basic principles that make UN peacekeeping operations outstanding in the maintenance of international peace and security (UN, 2008). These principles include;

1. Consent of the parties. The United Nations Peacekeeping (n.d.) notes that the deployment of UN peacekeeping operations follows the consent of the parties to the conflict. The acceptance of peacekeeping operations gives the UN the freedom to act physically and politically in completing its mandated duty. While the government of the affected country could consent to peacekeeping operations, the acceptance could not be echoed locally which could result in an uprising.

2. Impartiality. The United Nations Peacekeeping notes (n.d.) that United Nations peacekeepers are expected to uphold a degree of impartiality in resolving conflicts. As such, it is imperative for individuals entrusted with peacekeeping to avoid actions that could compromise their impartiality.

3. Non-use of force. While peacekeeping is different from peace enforcement, force could be used at the tactical level with the authorization of the Security Council to defend the mandate or acting in self-defense.

Peacekeeping operations as undertaken by the United Nations undertake a unique angle different from adoptions by other peace initiatives in individual countries. According to Santos and Baccarini (2023), the UN lacks the personnel to fulfill its peacekeeping mandates. As a result, member states referred to as TCC provide and deploy the human factor to foster the maintenance of peace and security in affected countries. Upon its development, Kaya (2015) notes the reference of the UN peacekeeping function as 'traditional' or 'old' peacekeeping during the Cold War due to the inclusion of simple activities such as overseeing cease-fire agreements after the culmination of conflicts. The culmination of the Cold War was characterized by substantial changes in the UN peacekeeping operations to cater to the changes in the world disorder. Kaya (2015) observes the interventionist and assertive nature of peacekeeping operations for the successful resolution of ethnic and religious intrastate conflicts. UN peacekeeping operations are one of the forms of UN peace operations characterized by political missions with no peacekeepers and peacekeeping operations necessitated by the UN Security Council as managed by the UN Secretariat (Campbell 2020). Bejan (2014) adds that completing its responsibility of upholding peace and security, the Security Council acts under additional chapters of the UN Charter. These chapters include Chapter VI provisions labeled "Pacific Settlement of Disputes," and Chapter VII allowing the undertaking of preventive or coercive measures. The new functions come about after the evolution of these operations from traditional peacekeeping missions reinforcing the implementation of peace agreements or ceasefires for the protection of civilians.

In the evolutions that have occurred in the last thirty years, Campbell (2020) highlights that UN peacekeeping operations have become multidimensional. Multidimensional peace operations

rely on nonmilitary personnel in the completion of tasks instrumental for the implementation of peace agreements. Alvarez-Espada et al. (2022) add that a Peacekeeping Operations (PKO) of the UN is also a project with the primary objective being peace through the utilization of material and human resources. From 1948 to the present day, the evolution of peacekeeping operations following the change in operations has warranted the division of peace missions into various groups. Alvarez-Espada et al. (2020) observe that the first-generation missions in line with Chapter VI on conflict settlement involve intervening in conflicting countries. These first missions were geared towards the elimination of hostilities. Second-generation missions are not only about security but also peacekeeping missions. Third-generation missions are in line with Chapter VII of the UN Charter.

Following its initial development, various governments and international organizations continue highlighting different military activities they undertake as peacekeeping. PKOs started earlier than the coining of the name. According to Roehrig (2017), the UN undertook its initial PKO in 1948 during the monitoring of the ceasefire in the Arab-Israeli War. Since that time, the UN has undertaken sixty-nine PKOs with most of them taking place after 1988. More than 120 countries have provided personnel to UN PKOs while providing financial assistance to these missions. Johnson (2015) terms the provision of health services to support mission personnel in operations as a crucial element of the UN peacekeeping operations. The primary objective of medical support is the physical and mental well-being of deployed personnel. By examining UN peacekeeping operations, it creates a pathway to examine the complexity of these operations through a case study of UNILF. One thing that stood out is the unavailability of adequate understanding on the completion of UN peacekeeping missions. Matanock and Lichtenheld

(2022) note suggestions that peacekeeping missions through threats imposed on military personnel. However, other studies point out the utilization of alternative instruments. The article outlines the utilization of two primary instruments in peacekeeping missions; 'soft' peacekeeping instruments involving incentives such as developmental projects. On the other hand, 'hard' peacekeeping is characterized by interveners' reliance on threats or military force. Walter et al. (2021) notify of the public relations challenge that the UN peacekeeping missions have.

Effectiveness has not always been attained in a bid to complete the assigned mandate due to the utilized instrument. Kuhrt (2023) stipulates that conventionally, peacekeeping is a technique for peace preservation. In a quick rejoinder, the article cites the case of peacekeeping in the Rwanda genocide and Yugoslavia characterized by a mandate that did not require the use of force other than in self-defense. The aftermath is that peacekeepers ended up being bystanders in inhuman atrocities. Nevertheless, one cannot undermine the input of individual countries in fostering UN peacekeeping activities.

UN member countries contribute to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPO) to allow the fulfillment of its mandate. Pushkina and Khazanova (2022) observe that since the development of the United Nations, the United States remains the largest donor to the DPO. The calculation of the share payable by each country is done every three years through a complex formula portraying a country's payment capacity to the organization. The assumption of Trump into office was characterized by intensified discussions on the need to reduce the country's contribution to the UN, especially the peacekeeping operations. Pushkina and Khazanova (2022) note that close to no U.S. military personnel are involved in UN peacekeeping operations.

1.1.2 Peacebuilding:

Peacebuilding is different from peacekeeping as it involves determining the root cause of conflict while reducing the possibility of a country relapsing to conflict. The United Nations observes that peacebuilding encompasses efforts to help countries and regions as they transit from war to peace (n.d.). As such, peacekeeping could be an immediate resolution of conflict and war while peacebuilding is a sustainable solution to peace retention. Building lasting peace in warring countries and regions is challenging for global peace and security. Hancock (2023) outlines the vast expansion in international peacebuilding since 1992 when there was the publishing of the UN Secretary General Boutros-Ghali's Agenda for Peace. This expansion comes at a time when peacebuilding projects supported by the international community have failed to attain their objectives and are facing resistance from individuals they aim to help. Hancock (2023) describes this resistance as hybridity in peacebuilding, a concept that would be later discussed. In mitigating this resistance and ensuring success in peacebuilding interventions, Paczyńska (2023) states that there have been efforts to devise interventions that put local players at the forefront of developing peacebuilding efforts. Peacebuilding embraces a different approach from peacekeeping. According to Chigudu (2024), peacebuilding narrows down to capacity building for conflict resolution without violence. However, lots of challenges emerge in ensuring peacebuilding.

Risks and uncertainties emerge in peacebuilding while having a disproportional implication on the population. Brounéus et al. (2024) voice that with war and the legacy of war being gendered, research has portrayed some peacebuilding initiatives as creating risk and insecurity for women. The article outlines the case of Rwanda where women who survived and

witnessed in gacaca courts the reconciliation initiative spearheaded by the Rwandan government, faced threats and harassment during and after giving their testimony. In crisis and conflict, peacebuilding is an imperative initiation to yield reconciliation while involving national and international institutions (Karso et al. 2024).

1.1.3 Hybridity of Peace:

In exploring peacekeeping and determining the complexities of peacekeeping operations, one imperative concept requiring consideration is the hybridity of peace. Weng and Kulich (2015) outline hybridity as the process emanating from the dynamic aspect of human interaction and social development while providing momentum for social development and growth. As a conceptual tool, hybridity has been a subject of discussion in different disciplines. The Australian National University (2018) notes that in conflict resolution, hybridity translates to the consolidation of elements from different world views that seem incompatible and unable to coexist. The hybrid order provides a combination of formal and informal institutions of power. Nadarajah and Rampton (2015) observe the emergence of hybridity in International Relations and peace studies as an imperative response to the crisis of liberal peace. According to the authors, hybrid peace results from an effort to "resolve a problem of difference and alterity specific to the context in which the crisis of liberal peacebuilding manifests, is a problem-solving tool for the encompassment and folding into global liberal order of cultural, political, and social orders perceived as radically different and obstructionist to its expansion" (Nadarajah & Rampton 2015).

The concept of hybridity in peace thrives from the theory of hybridity. According to Dosmurzinov (2023), hybridity is a socio-cultural process of hybridization where particular

structures or practices existing separately are consolidated to yield new structures, systems, and objects. The prominence of hybridity emerges from the discourses of identity, political systems, power relations, and culture (Uesugi et al. 2021). Hybridity narrows down to the multifactor operations that bring on board entities from different sectors for the reinstatement of peace through conflict resolution. Tardy (2014) recognizes the utilization of hybridity in related contexts in peace operations in the last decade. The author outlines hybridity as referring to the UN-African Union joint operation developed in Darfur in 2007-2008. Hybrid peace references the type of peace emerging in post-conflict settings following the consolidation of efforts from local and external actors. The concept of hybrid peace thrives to consolidate the two facets of post-conflict peacebuilding with one perceiving peace as solely contributed by external factors and the other recognizing it as a homegrown process. St-Pierre (2007) stipulates that hybrid peacekeeping missions are missions characterized by the involvement of the UN forces and non-UN forces where there is the sharing of peacekeeping responsibilities under different frameworks. Hybrid operations are exceptionally important in the wake of the growing complexity of UN responsibility in peace and security as portrayed by the increasing strain over the years in the UN's ability to deploy and uphold forces in peacekeeping missions.

1.1.4 Complex UN Peacekeeping Missions:

Numerous complexities characterize the undertaking of UN peacekeeping operations. Several factors influence the complexities experienced in the completion of these missions. Yanchuk et al. (2024) outline the common working language and standards of the military involved in peacekeeping missions as some of the factors influencing the undertaking of these operations. The ability to mitigate these complexities is what influences their nonlinearity, which

denotes the absence of a direct relationship between the undertaking of one peacekeeping mission from another.

The complexity of UN peacekeeping operations could also be portrayed by the transformation in the execution of the mandates, portraying the non-linearity of the undertaken missions in the different regions. Barelli (2022) observes the substantial change in the nature of peacekeeping operations following the adoption of a more robust approach and aggressive desire to differentiate civilians from aggressors. The notions of 'robust mandates' and 'protection of civilians' began influencing a new generation of peacekeeping operations. This trend reached its peak last year with the establishment of the 'super-robust' operations. The complexity of these changes could be exhibited in the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), and the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) (Barelli 2022). The extent of use of force in these operations is unprecedented compared to post-1999 protection of civilian mandates. The changes in the protection of the civilian mandates portray the absence of a direct relationship among the peacekeeping operations with them taking a different nature depending on the changes in the circumstances.

The complexities of the peacekeeping operations could be associated with the changes that characterize the 21st century. Genser and Garvie (2016) note the dramatic increase in the demand for peacekeeping intervention in the last fifteen years. The article noted that now more than ever, peacekeepers are in charge of the execution of more sophisticated mandates. Peacekeeping missions developed before the mid-1990s narrowed down to ensuring that warring nations observed a ceasefire. Today's mandates are more complex as peacekeepers are

responsible for ensuring civilians' protection, facilitating peace processes, reforming security institutions, vetting and training police officers, and playing an oversight role in the conduct of free and fair elections. The new complexities in the nature of peacekeeping operations may differ from what is yet to come. The non-linearity of these missions emanates from the changes in circumstances which necessitate changes in operations. According to Genser and Garvie (2016), UN peacekeepers are today more responsible for complex and multifaceted mandates than in the past.

The complexities in the UN peacekeeping missions could also be portrayed from the perspective of encountered criticism. According to Sarah (2020), the UN is often criticized for being a cumbersome and ineffective system. These criticisms emanate from the tendency of member states to participate in long discussions and debates alongside the internal discussions and the apparent unproductive ambiguous activities within the secretariat. However, these sentiments fail to recognize that these discussions serve a particular purpose. The non-linearity of these missions means that the discussion ensuing may be different depending on how the changing circumstances necessitate a change in the discourse of held discussions.

UNIFIL is often taken as an example when criticizing the shortcomings of peacekeeping operations. Murphy (2007) argues that the mission in Lebanon is considered failing in fulfilling its mandate, accused of being biased and lacking impartiality, and seen as a powerless force incapable of showing force that will allow it to properly function. These factors provide an insight into the challenges within the mission itself acting as limiting factors for the success of the mission. Schaefer (2009) adds that the achievements of UNIFIL are underestimated in order to glorify the inadequate aspects and that these arguments spread beyond UNIFIL to criticize the

foundations of peacekeeping in general. In addition, Sitkowski (2006) points down to the difficult environment that UNIFIL operates in and its role in limiting the capacities of the force which is overlooked when assessing its performance. The mentioned examples show that many aspects are disregarded when evaluating a peacekeeping mission and provide a better understanding of the diversity of challenges.

William Durch (1995) provides in his book a comparative analysis of different peacekeeping missions. He includes an analysis of UNIFIL where he describes the mission as "impossible" and criticizes it for lacking in implementing effective measures in the conflict between Lebanon and Israel. Yet, despite these problems, UNIFIL is bound by the UN peacekeeping principles which must be taken into consideration. To be clearer UNIFIL doesn't have the authority to use force to safeguard the mandate or to directly oppose the parties of the conflict. Yet, despite all these limitations UNIFIL was able to diffuse multiple tense situations. The mission was able to provide stability in its area of operation and acted as a mediator between the parties of the conflict despite implications in the mission's effectiveness (Elron, 2007). Thus, their presence on the border, even with limited capacities, acts as a de-escalation factor between Lebanon and Israel.

One additional criticism of UNIFIL was the accusation of having a weak mandate that would allow it to succeed in stabilizing Southern Lebanon (Orion, 2016). Doyle and Sambanis (2011) conclude that the main problem within any Peace operation mandate originates in New York where the mandates are drafted by officials who [O1] are disconnected from reality. This limitation affects the efficiency of any Un mission in the short run and its capability to succeed in the long run. That is why, a great amount of effort should be put in when drafting any

resolution with the consent of the actors (Sharga, 2000). Chesterman (2009) argues that this could be one of the original challenges for UNIFIL in which the mission was requested by a weak government without the consensus of non-state actors located in the South of Lebanon.

1.2 Approaches and Methods:

The challenges and limitations disturbing the capabilities of UNIFIL will be examined using a qualitative approach which will allow us to interpret the complex dynamics that affect peacekeeping operations. The study will adopt a multifaceted strategy formed by a combination of case study and fieldwork.

The first approach will provide a general interpretation of the role of UNIFIL in maintaining peace and the effectiveness of its mandate while the second approach will allow for a detailed understanding of the underpinning that influences the outcome of the mission. To assess the performance of UNIFIL, this study will not use basic evaluation criteria to measure the success of the mission based on mandate implementation and the number of goals reached. However, it will utilize a new concept introduced by Professor Vanessa Newby from the Faculty of Governance and Global Affairs - Institute of Security and Global Affairs (ISGA) at Leiden University. In her book "The Role of Credibility in Peacekeeping" she provides a progressive approach that depends on the prism of credibility and legitimacy on a local level to observe and assess the behavior and effectiveness of a mission (2018). The case study method allows for the analysis of primary and secondary sources related to the shortcomings of the peacekeeping mission in Lebanon, the distinctive relations with the different actors in its area of operation, and the application of the three principles of peacekeeping.

This will be followed by fieldwork consisting of non-participant observation of the behavior of the different actors. Peacekeepers and the different local actors in southern Lebanon including civilians, authorities, and Hezbollah were observed and the different interactions between them were analyzed. Also, it is important to note that this approach will cover all major events that happened between 2015 and 2023 with a focus on specific incidents that occurred in 2022 and 2023. The analysis will not cover the period after the Gaza War due to the ongoing status of the conflict at the time of writing. The case study of UNIFIL will not permit the generalization of outcomes to all peacekeeping missions, yet it will provide a better understanding of the challenges that face UN peacekeeping, and it will allow for triangulation using the data analyzed to validate the findings of the fieldwork (Natow, 2020).

Due to the multifaceted shape of the methodology used in the research, I will examine various types of data acquired from document analysis related to the case study and the fieldwork which will also lend itself to be used in triangulation providing additional validation. This will include a thorough review of multiple literature and UN official documents related to the implementation of UNSC resolution 1701 and the impartiality of the mission. The data is gathered from online databases, official governmental websites, UN official reports, and the UNIFIL website. This method will help in formulating a clear understanding regarding the factors that withhold the implementation of the mission's mandate and the application of UN peacekeeping principles. Based on the transparency of the UN, access to these documents is possible and available in many databases.

Regarding the case study, UNIFIL was chosen as a resilient example of a UN peacekeeping mission with little research written on it regarding the application of principles of

peacekeeping missions especially from the lens of complexity theory. The method of case study is usually used when well-structured research is applied to a single case with the aim of gathering the largest amount of information about it. Since this study aims to discover the non-linear dynamics functioning in UNIFIL's theater including the implementation of impartiality and its mandate, a case study was considered an appropriate approach as it seeks to test and expand on complexity theory within the specific framework of UNIFIL's mission.

This will allow for a better understanding of the dynamic nature of peacekeeping and the application of impartiality within UNIFIL. This will require data collection from a variety of primary and secondary resources which includes policy documents, UN official reports, journal articles, and UNSC resolutions. The analysis of these sources will help in the understanding of the role of UNIFIL in maintaining stability and the factors withholding the implementation of the mission's mandate. One problem that is faced when analyzing governmental documents and official policies is the risk of dealing with biased data which is understandable based on the politics that go in foreign policy. Such an issue could threaten the validity of the results and will misguide the outcomes from reality. Yet, the observation and analysis of the performance of UNIFIL at a strategic and operational level will help in validating the outcomes.

Regarding non-participant observation, it will focus on the behavior of the local community with the peacekeepers in everyday life to analyze the different perspectives of actors based on their interaction with the peacekeeping force. Also, it is important to examine the response of UN peacekeepers to the continuous challenges they face, and the measures and tools they use to implement UNSC resolution 1701. The observation of these factors will provide insight into the limitations responsible for the prevention of the mission's mandate. It is

important to note that this method is applicable because I am a Lebanese who lived my entire life in UNIFIL's area of operation. This fieldwork will be an added value to the research due to the broad spectrum of data gathered despite the risk of being biased leading to the process of triangulation in order to increase the validity and credibility of the findings. This strategy will allow for cross-verifying of the data gathered from the observation with the findings of document analysis gathered from the exploratory case study which will provide a more robust understanding. Moreover, due to the constructivist ontological perception of the research, it provides more justification for triangulation (Natow, 2020).

One change from the original research approach was the shift from applying semi-structured interviews which wasn't applicable due to the events of the 7th of October 2023 and its ramifications on Southern Lebanon which is UNIFIL's area of operation. The semi-structured style of the interviews was supposed to allow for flexibility and increase the chance of acquiring real data and exclusive insight into the nonlinearity of peacekeeping operations. Yet, this approach has many limitations such as limited access due to unavailability or even for security reasons which was the case. With the increase in hostile activities in Southern Lebanon after the events of October 2023, UNIFIL peacekeepers were locked in their camps most of the time with limited encounters which didn't allow the use of interviews for this research. This gave another reason to apply non-participant observation as an additional approach in case the interviews were not possible. I believe that it can provide similar real results with more objectivity.

2. APPLICATION OF COMPLEXITY THEORY:

Unlike traditional theories in political science such as Liberalism and Neo-realism, the complexity model originates from the study of complex systems in the fields of medical science, computer science, and finance. The theory was developed to explain and facilitate the interpretation of phenomena in these areas; it highlights the importance of understanding that complex systems are distinguished by multiple interconnected and interdependent variables. These variables interact in a non-linear manner which leads to adaptive and flexible behaviors that cannot be captured by simple input-output models (Johnson, 2009). Applying this model to medical science, the nervous system showcases a great example of complex interactions where small changes can have significant effects. In finance, the stock market displays how market trends can be influenced by the inputs of individual transactions (Convey & Highfield, 1996). Yet, despite the existence of different and distinctive applications of this theory, one common feature between them all is that linear interpretations are insufficient to understand the interconnection between the different variables in a complex system. This theoretical framework is now being applied to political science and international relations to explore and interpret the dynamic interactions within political entities (Day & Hunt, 2022).

In contrast to complicated systems such as a car engine where there are several interacting variables, it is impossible to precisely predict what will happen in a complex system regardless of the level of knowledge. Complicated systems are fixed and predictable with the right knowledge. However, complex systems in general have many additional independent variables leading to unpredictability of interaction and limitation in outcome projection. This

phenomenon is easily relatable to many social systems which it can provide a framework to facilitate the understanding of the behavior of these complex systems (Mitlekon-Kelly, 2003). To be more specific this model provides a framework that interprets the interactions between individuals and entities, and their evolvement in the same ecosystem. It also explains how these interactions could have unpredictable outcomes.

> "*The intricate inter-relationships of elements within a complex system give rise to multiple chains of dependencies. Change happens in the context of this intricate intertwining at all scales. We become aware of change only when a different pattern becomes discernible*" (Mitlekon-Kelly, 2007).

2.1 Complex Systems Characteristics:

Complex systems are characterized by being self-organized where actors and variables interact with each other inside one system without the intervention of external variables, and in the process, they produce new outcomes. This is the result of interacting within a complex setting and not a totally independent process (Lemke, 1993). This trait was observed originally in biological systems where autopsies were introduced to explain internal processes that help the system reproduce itself by transforming its components (Walby, 2003).

A second characteristic is emergence which is the result of the initial structure of the system and the interactions within it but it cannot be measured with the examination of individual elements alone (Mitlekon-Kelly, 2007). New couplings and shifts in the available dynamics within the system could be influenced by accidental factors or random fluctuations (Lemke, 1993).

A third and important trait in any complex system is non-linearity which simply means not proportional. Traditional approaches to analysis promote that small inputs lead to small outputs and that larger inputs will lead to larger outputs. However, in a complex system, this proportionality is fragile where feedback plays an essential role in influencing the outcome. Negative feedback acts as a regulator, like a radiator in a car, aiming to preserve stability. In contrast, positive feedback acts as an amplifier where it intensifies the effects or the outcome. Within a complex system, a small-scale variable through the mechanism of positive feedback could produce large-scale outcomes (Hendrick, 2009).

One more characteristic is adaptation where a complex system is considered flexible and open to exchanges and interactions. The actors in the system behave in a way that shows adaptation to the actions of other actors who also will adapt later. Also, an adaptive system is highlighted by its interaction with the theater it is located in which eventually leads to changes and then this dynamic system will adapt to these changes themselves (Hendrick, 2009).

2.2 Complexity Model in UN Peacekeeping:

A general overview of the available literature and research pointed out that the application of complexity theory has been rarely applied to studies related to UN peacekeeping operations and that it is almost always disregarded from the UN decision-making process until recently. It is indicated that traditionally, peacekeeping presented an inclination toward linear models of change which usually include a range of typical activities of the peacekeepers like patrols, developmental projects, and military training which is expected to enhance security and promote de-escalation (Brusset, de Coning & Hughes, 2017). However, quite often, such

practices do not ensure the delivery of expected outcomes as an approach of results-based budgeting dominates it, and the application of an adaptation approach is required to maintain peace. Thus, more scholars are now demanding more recognition of the variability and complexities of conflict theaters and the need for more modest and realistic approaches when designing a peace mission (Brusset, de Coning & Hughes, 2017).

For better interpretation, a complex system is considered a model that includes several actors that when interacting together, produce outcomes that are different from what each actor can create alone in contrast to an input-output system. This highlights an important feature which is the interdependence of actors in such models where this connectivity affects the dynamics of the system (Hunt, 2017). In peacekeeping missions, the actors are usually the peacekeepers, local government, NGOs, and the civilian populations where interdependency between them exists in many forms such as cooperation through civilian-military cooperation teams (CIMIC). The success or the failure of the mission is highly dependent on this connectivity which promotes stability and peace in the area of operation. Moreover, a complex system is also loaded with positive and negative oriented feedback processes which in combination with the interdependency produce emergent outcomes in the form of new stimuli (Meadows, 1999).

Going back to the positive feedback process, it is when the loop in a complex system continuously reinforces itself. Applying it to UN peacekeeping, it is seen in reinforcing stability or failure to do so. Focusing efforts on disarmament and reintegration of insurgents can lead to increased stability while the failure to maintain impartiality in the conflict can lead to escalation and more instability. In contrast, a negative feedback process acts as a corrective mechanism deployed against the variable that caused it. The mediation role that peacekeepers can play

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between the conflicting parties, if successful, is considered a corrective measure to ongoing tensions when such efforts manage to resolve disputes and create a framework for sustainable peace (Day & Hunt, 2022). Again, the combination of interdependency and feedback processes leads to unpredictable emergent outcomes owed to the complex interactions between the different actors in the system which highlights the importance of adaptability. In peacekeeping, the success of a mission can lead to long-term stability while its failure can lead to renewal of the conflict. Also, it indicates that an effective mission must be flexible and able to adapt to emerging challenges from political shifts, to changes in local dynamics, or new security threats.

The dynamic and interrelated nature of complex systems indicates that changes happen in a non-linear way (Westley, Zimmerman & Patton, 2006). In complex systems, the inputs or alterations may be affected unevenly or unpredictably in a disproportionate manner due to the atypical distribution of parts of a system and characteristics of relationships among them which make such systems significantly difficult to control or predict its trajectory. The main problem with complex systems is that nonlinear relationships like this lead to them being very sensitive to their initial conditions. This means that even small changes to the status quo can produce significant and disproportionate changes in the dynamics of the system (McGlade & Garnsey, 2006). The dynamic nature of complex systems illustrates that changes within UN peacekeeping missions are non-linear and, in most cases, unpredictable. Within the area of operation of a UN peacekeeping mission, a multifaceted relationship exists between the host government, peacekeepers, locals, and other non-state actors in such a manner that inputs of independent variables are bound to produce disproportionate outputs. This irregular distribution of influence and the sensitive interrelations among the actors in a complex theater make it much more

difficult to control or predict the trajectory of peacekeeping efforts (Holt, Taylor & Kelly, 2009). The sensitivity of these missions to initial conditions infers that even minimal changes in the political, social, or security sphere can impose major shifts in mission dynamics. One wrong step in the engagement with local actors might blow up the tensions, but a minor success in community building may create widespread stability (Day & Hunt, 2022). For instance, the increase of patrols within a highly populated area can lead to significant hostilities from the locals toward the peacekeepers while the application of quick impact projects (QIP) could sustain stability for a long period. A fundamental property of such complex systems is, therefore, an understanding and balancing of the non-linearity of relationships with initial conditions of variables, traits, and contexts. This would be an essential way to plan and perform UN peacekeeping operations effectively: efforts adapted and responsive to evolving on-ground realities.

These analyses showcase complex systems as chaotic and irregular. Yet, taking into consideration the behavioral patterns involved, repetition is noticed which is able to settle down the system over time. Paths of behavior that occur repeatedly support themselves through what we mentioned previously as feedback processes and play the role of attractors that channel behavior toward recurrent outcomes. For example, in a complex conflict between two groups, in the course of the development of the conflict, every single behavior or action of every group gets linked to the idea that the other group is an adversary, escalating the conflict and further negative perceptions (Coleman, 2011). The Israeli-Palestinian conflict could be seen as an example of this attractor dynamic, where the attractor serves as a hub in a complex psychological setting in which psychological variables such as the behavior of the parties are attracted to (Colemen,

2011). This does not eliminate the freedom of choice but it makes it significantly difficult to escape from such an attractor, especially in a collective manner. Also, sometimes, it can be hard to identify attractors within a social landscape but still maintain significant influence in the system while remaining out of sight (Cramer, 2009).

In the context of UN peacekeeping, it is critical to identify these attractors which could be based on ethnic rivalry that generates rounds of violence. The conflict in South Sudan is one example where the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) has the responsibility to address the imminent security concerns. In this situation, and following the previous analysis, the mission could work on identifying entrenched patterns and disrupting them. The process would involve significant mediation efforts to challenge the deep-rooted attractors which are often hard to locate. That is why, effective and efficient peacekeeping requires the acknowledgement of these hidden variables and must implement designated efforts to disrupt them so the collective behavior would be directed toward reconciliation.

Considering UNIFIL's area of operation as chaotic and unpredictable and structured by the repetition of some patterns of behavior that stabilize this complex system over time. The long-standing conflict between Lebanon and Israel creates a psychological setting in which actions and reactions are consistently drawn by conflict and mistrust, embedding the perception of the other as an enemy. Understanding these attractors is crucial for UNIFIL to be successful in its mission in which it operates in an environment embedded with historical grievances and repeated cycles of hostility creating a self-reinforcing pattern and making it extremely difficult to disturb the existing dynamics. Most often, UNIFIL's efforts to keep the peace and security along the Blue Line clash with these deeply rooted behaviors. That is why, in addition to exercising

conventional peacekeeping by monitoring and patrolling the borders, UNIFIL plays the role of a mediator among the warring parties to facilitate dialogue (Hatto, 2013). This is done by holding tripartite meetings regularly in which UNIFIL arbitrates and liaises between representatives from the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) and the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) as a proactive approach to manage any tension and any misunderstandings from spiraling into open conflict. These meetings establish a channel of communication that has the potential to gradually change perceptions and decrease the chances of accidental clashes. However, conflict attractors such as deep-rooted antagonism and mutual distrust could be invisible but powerful. Therefore, acknowledging the existence of these attractors and addressing them is important for UNIFL to succeed in its mission. In a counterfactual scenario not exclusive to UNIFIL, this can be brought out by increasing local peacebuilding efforts and promoting community engagement which requires a lot of continuous and robust effort because changing collective behavior within such a complex and historically tense environment is always not guaranteed, and requires strategic intervention and sustained commitment.

Charles Hunt emphasizes that the different roles of peacekeeping such as the protection of civilians have evolved in a non-linear way in which utilizing complexity theory to assess peacekeeping missions is considered a more adaptive mechanism for evaluation (2016). Monitoring these missions through the complexity lens provides a better understanding of the challenges that face peacekeepers deployed in a complex environment thus considering complexity theory when designing a mission's mandate would facilitate the understanding of this environment significantly (Clement and Smith, 2009).

One way that complexity theory can help in the development of peacekeeping is the recognition of non-linear dynamics in complex settings that are hard to control (Day and Hunt, 2022). These systems are multidirectional and composed of complex networks of relations between the different actors and their behavior which is observed through the difficulties a mission faces when trying to implement its mandate. A mission with the responsibility of disarming, demobilizing, and reintegrating (DDR) combatants and insurgents will be overarching when following the general UN guidelines based on linear protocols designed from previous missions. Yet, this approach disregards the distinctive non-linearity of each system where local actors and their distinctive interdependency, and interactions dictate how the shape of the outcome.

Another aspect of peacekeeping that complexity theory sheds light on is unintended long-run outcomes of the mission which are usually disregarded due to the nonlinearity of the reaction towards the implementation of a mandate (Day and Hunt, 2022). A mission tasked with supporting the deployment and training of local law enforcement will put a great effort into developing their capacities on multiple levels. While it's the goal, the increased capacity of law enforcement bodies could lead to a rise in detention levels and increase the strain on government institutions which will yield more tension and dissatisfaction with the local community. Furthermore, deploying peacekeepers to disarm an insurgency group could lead to increased stability on the short run, but also could lower significantly the acceptance rate of the mission within the local community which will generate more tension on the long run.

3. THE CASE STUDY OF UNIFIL: MANDATE AND STRUCTURE

3.1 Resolution 425:

In 1978, the UNSC passed resolution 425 after the Israeli invasion and offensive operation in Lebanon. This resolution established the peacekeeping operation called UNIFIL with a few main goals including the full withdrawal of the IDF from Lebanese territory and the assistance of the Lebanese government in strengthening its control and authority in southern Lebanon. UNSC resolution 425 included 4 articles yet only 2 of them were directly related to the role of UNIFIL and will have significant importance in interpreting the performance of the mission and the changes it went through.

> "*Calls upon Israel immediately to cease its military action against Lebanese territorial integrity and withdraw forthwith its forces from all Lebanese territory; Decides, in the light of the request of the Government of Lebanon, to establish immediately under its authority a United Nations interim force for Southern Lebanon for the purpose of confirming the withdrawal of Israeli forces, restoring international peace and security and assisting the Government of Lebanon in ensuring the return of its effective authority in the area, the Force to be composed of personnel drawn from Member States;"* (UNSC, 1978)

UNIFIL's headquarters was established in the southern town of Naqoura located within the Lebanese-occupied territories and the Ghanaian Major General Erskine was appointed the first force commander of the mission. Peacekeepers were deployed to join UNIFIL from western and eastern TCC from all over the globe and mainly from European countries. Despite this, there

was no apparent Western dominance over the force in general. According to UN reports, the size

of the force reached a number of around 6000 peacekeepers by June. Logistical battalions were

formed by 218 Norwegians, 117 Canadians, and 537 French. Furthermore, infantry battalions

responsible for ensuring the withdrawal of the IDF were formed by an additional 703

Norwegians, 644 French, 500 Fijians, 599 Iranians, 630 Senegalese, 640 Nepalese, 676

Nigerians, and 660 Irish. Between March and April 1978, these forces were spread in the

mission's designated area of operation in multiple waves of deployment which took place south

of the Litani River in the conflict zone between different actors including Palestinians, local

forces, and the IDF (Report of the Secretary-General on UNIFIL, 1983).

      After its deployment, UNIFIL started implementing a three-wave thorough withdrawal

plan for the IDF. Nonetheless, with this plan and the pullout confirmation from the Israelis, the

IDF employed a proxy occupation by facilitating and paving the way for the South Lebanese

Army (SLA) to take control over their bases and positions instead of giving them to UNIFIL.

The force didn't undergo any significant change since its initial deployment in terms of

implementing some alteration to the mandate or even an increase in the size of the mission

despite the 1982 invasion. One notable addition was the adoption of UNSC resolution 508 which

called for an immediate cessation of all hostile activities on Lebanese territories between the

PLO and the IDF and for the protection of civilians recalling UNSC resolutions 425, 426, and

501 (UNSC, 1982).

      The role of UNIFIL was portrayed as limited and restricted by its mandate which

decreased the relevance of the force during the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon

(MacQueen, 2006). This profiling was owed to the static role of the force and its lack of

adaptability within a complex and ever-changing environment where Israel reinvaded Lebanon in 1982 and occupied large territories for around 18 years. Furthermore, in this period, TCC started withdrawing some of its forces from UNIFIL like France which started to experience difficulties in playing its role due to its lack of peacekeeping experiences, and to its dislike from several actors including the Muslim population and the IDF. Despite these difficulties and the limited mandate in the middle of occupation and warfare, the force launched several military operations against the IDF and the SLA.

3.2 Resolution 1701:

After the withdrawal of the IDF from southern Lebanon on 25 May 2000, the process of downsizing UNIFIL began, and for 5 years, the operational activities of the force started to decrease gradually due to an uncommon calmness that noted the possibility of terminating the mission. However, Hezbollah remained active during this period by reinforcing its capabilities while eliminating this resistance model remained the goal of Israel (Makdisi, 2011).

On 12 July 2006, a war erupted between Israel and Lebanon after Hezbollah launched a surprise attack against a group of Israeli soldiers and abducted two hoping to exchange with Lebanese prisoners detained in Israel. In response to this attack, Israel launched a full-scale military operation which included airstrikes and artillery fire that targeted the civilian infrastructure in Lebanon and imposed a naval blockade with the aim of eliminating the threat of Hezbollah. This war continued for 33 days and was the main variable that led to the expansion of UNIFIL under a new mandate. In the effort to stop all hostile activities, the UNSC unanimously adopted resolution 1701 which was approved by the Lebanese and Israeli governments and

demanded the cessation of hostile activities, withdrawal of the IDF from Lebanese territories, and the expansion of UNIFIL to support the deployment of the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) in Southern Lebanon in area that goes south of the Litani river to the Blue Line (Kassem, 2024).
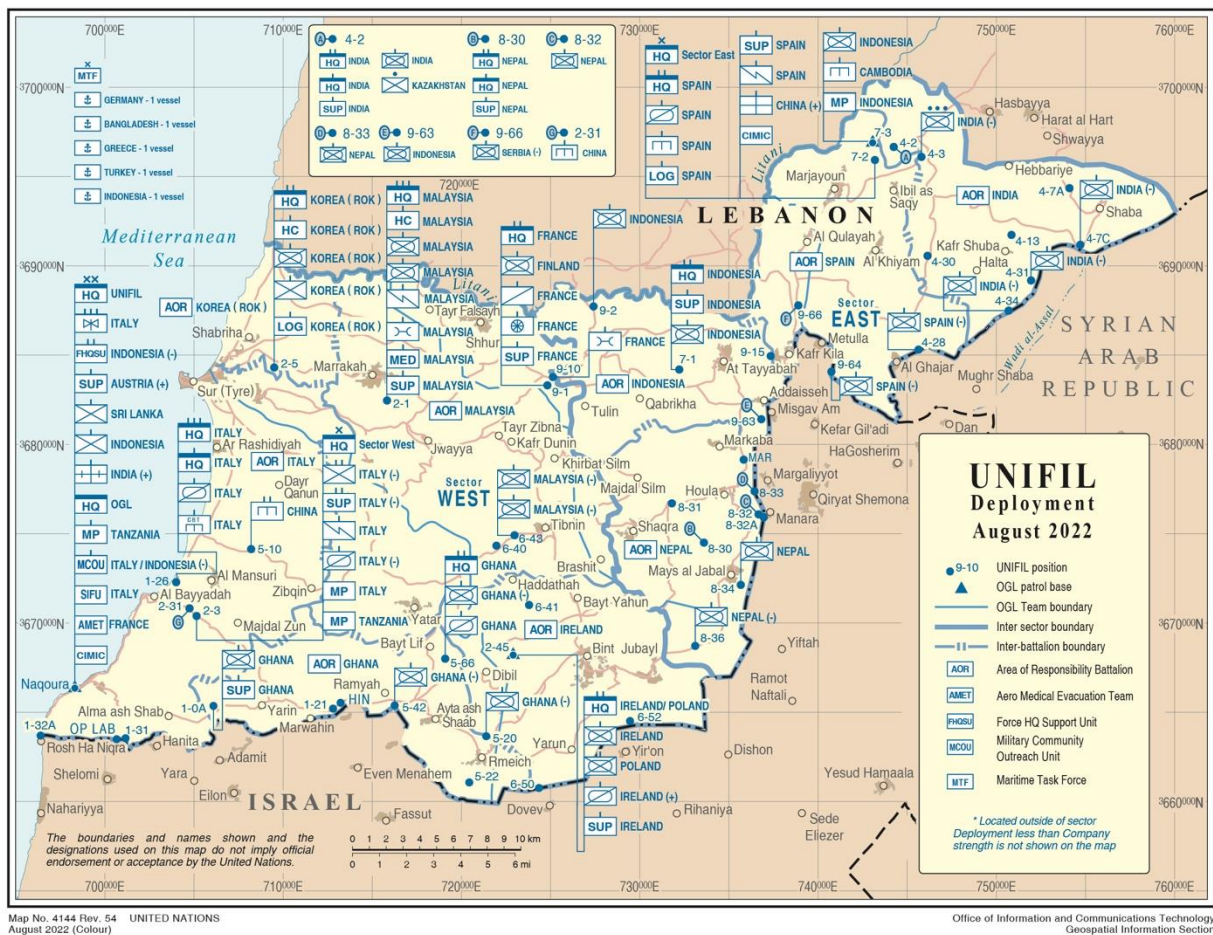
Figure 1 UNIFIL Deployment in Southern Lebanon (UN Geospatial, 2022)

Initially, the mandate of UNIFIL focused on border security and the protection of civilians with the aim of maintaining stability to a realistic level by acting as a liaison between the IDF and Lebanese state and non-state actors. However, despite UNIFIL's mandate eventually expanding to include naval forces as part of its component and stronger ground forces, the new

mandate limited the force to peacekeeping capacities. One goal was that with a much more robust Lebanese state, UNIFIL would disarm the non-state actors which would lead to more stability, but it didn't materialize (Norton, 2007). Yet, UNSC resolution 1701 managed to expand the capacities of the mission which includes:

- Monitor the cessation of hostilities;

- Accompany and support the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) as they deploy throughout the South, as Israel withdraws its armed forces from Lebanon;

- Coordinate these activities with the Governments of Lebanon and Israel;

- Extend its assistance to help ensure humanitarian access to civilian populations and the voluntary and safe return of displaced persons;

- Assist the LAF in taking steps towards the establishment between the Blue Line and the Litani River of a zone free from any armed personnel, assets, and weapons other than those of the Government of Lebanon and of UNIFIL deployed in this area;

- Assist the Government of Lebanon in securing its borders and other entry points to prevent entry of arms or related materiel in Lebanon without its consent (UNSC, 2006).

Unlike the difficulties encountered in the making of UNSC resolution 425, resolution 1701 was easily adopted due to the coinciding interests of the UN, the US, and Israel. The political settings in which both resolutions were shaped are different in which resolution 425 was adopted in parallel with the US Arab -Israeli peace effort in 1979 while Resolution 1701 was adopted in the setting of the US War on Terror which was a joint concern to both Israel and the US (Makdisi, 2014). Under resolution 425, UNIFIL's main responsibility was to interpose between Palestinian militias and the IDF and its proxies on the front of southern Lebanon.

However, under resolution 1701, the force's task expanded to include the support of the

Lebanese government and LAF to assert their authority in the mission's area of operation.

Since the beginning, UNIFIL was shaped as a peacekeeping force with a mandate that

didn't include the capacity to use force when necessary permitted under Chapter VII of the UN

Charter. Yet, after the second Israeli invasion in 1982, the ceasefire fire agreement was violated

leading the way to the extension of the mandate of the mission with additional capacities (UNSC,

1982). Furthermore, the force returned to its initial tasks with a downsize after the withdrawal of

the IDF from southern Lebanon to the Blue Line in May 2000. This status lasted 6 years in

which the mandate of UNIFIL significantly expanded under resolution 1701 to cover more

humanitarian duties like aiding displaced civilians, implementing QIPs, and supporting

humanitarian workers. The shifts and expansions of the mission's mandate showcase the

complexity of the theater where UNIFIL operates in which the ever-changing dynamics of this

complex environment between 1978 and 2006 caused the shift to a mandate with a high focus on

humanitarian objectives (Kassem, 2024). These changing dynamics include the rise of Hezbollah

as a powerful non-state actor and a symbol of resistance which led to igniting a conflict with

Israel. Resolution 1701 covered many military tasks like supporting the LAF in their deployment

in southern Lebanon to keep it free from armed personnel and to secure the borders to prevent

arms smuggling. But, also the updated mandate called for humanitarian operations including

ensuring the safety of displaced civilians to return to their homes.

Despite this multifaceted role, Israel portrayed the newly mandated UNIFIL as a tool

with the main task of disarming Hezbollah. Regarding the position of Hezbollah, the mission was

welcomed under resolution 425 and regarded as a friendly force that came to protect and help the

Lebanese civilians suffering from Israeli occupation. This position changed with the adoption of

resolution 1701, this position shifted from seeing the force as a humanitarian mission to a robust

military force with the only aim of disarming Hezbollah and implementing US agendas in

Lebanon to maintain the best interest of Israel (Goskel, 2007).

4. COMPLEX DYNAMICS WITHIN UNIFIL

4.1 Credibility legitimacy:

The process of evaluating UN peacekeeping operations only on their ability to carry out the mandate or alleviate human suffering appears overly simplistic (Bardalai, 2019). After years of closely monitoring UNIFIL and interacting with peacekeepers in addition to Lebanese staff who work with the mission and the local community, the mission's capacity to maintain peace seems to be limited (Newby, 2018). The local population understands that any form of peace is temporary and resembles only a feeling due to the limitation of the mission and its interim nature. As a result, drawing on the fundamental prerequisites for a successful peace operation, Newby developed a new paradigm for monitoring peace operations performance which focuses on the concepts of credibility and legitimacy that a mission managed to attain in its area of operation. This credibility is earned by the mission's capacity to reach the locals' expectations. This framework will be used to materialize and interpret the results of my non-participant observation of the performance of UNIFIL.

As mentioned previously, the credibility of a UN peacekeeping operation is not guaranteed but is to be gained over time and granted by the local community. Similarly, the legitimacy factor mentioned in Newby's framework is the acceptance of the mission on a local level and not the legitimacy granted to the mission by the Security Council. This prism of local legitimacy provides the UN peacekeepers with the trust needed for freedom of movement to undertake their responsibilities and tasks which will be much easier than when such legitimacy is missing. With the presence of the needed level of local legitimacy, a mission will experience a

much easier time in implementing its mandate (Newby, 2018). This complex relationship can be observed in UNIFIL's daily interaction with the local community in its area of operation and outside of it. The force is seen by a large part of the population in southern Lebanon as a Western tool tasked to safeguard the interests of Israel which is creating doubts among people regarding the impartiality of the mission itself. This doubtness reduced the credibility and legitimacy of the peacekeepers among the locals affecting their freedom of movement when patrolling or undertaking logistical operations in which locals would block the roads in front of UNIFIL's patrols if they suspected that the peacekeepers were engaged in suspicious activities like taking photos or patrolling in residential neighborhoods. One extreme example of such incidents happened in the southern town of Al-Aqbieh just outside the mission's area of operation in December 2022, when an Irish peacekeeper was killed, and three others injured when a local opened fire on them. The Irish peacekeepers were part of a small convoy headed to Beirut International Airport before they got separated and lost their way until they got stopped by civilians. When trying to escape with their armored SUV, a local started shooting at the car which led to the killing of Private Sean Rooney (Michael, 2022). Technically, the mandate of UNIFIL grants it freedom of movement in Lebanon, especially in its area of operation. Yet, in reality, freedom of movement is interdependent with the level of trust of locals towards the mission. It is important to note that this was a one-time incident with no precedent to such intensity, but it showcases the significance of local credibility and legitimacy in a complex environment.

Differences between the factors used to evaluate a UN peacekeeping mission could be observed when comparing the traditional concept of mandate implementation with the concept of

credibility proposed by Newby while commonality in a mission's responsibilities could be seen also. With UNIFIL failing to fulfill its mandate after more than 45 years, the mission could be regarded as a failure (Bardalai, 2019). In contrast, after 2006, UNIFIL was able to manage the tension in southern Lebanon and prevent the conflict from escalating in many incidents owing to the force gaining some local credibility and legitimacy (Newby, 2018).

Building credibility in UN peacekeeping operations will take the doing of many initiatives and tasks. These could include rapid responses to security events along the Blue Line, producing detailed and impartial reports regarding these incidents, supporting LAF in enhancing and developing its capacity allowing it to take responsibility for the security of southern Lebanon, providing funds to local authorities and municipalities to implement development projects that could elevate the living conditions of civilians, and also by acting as a mediator between LAF and IDF to resolve any misunderstanding (Bardalai, 2021). In a nutshell, all of these efforts build the credibility of UNIFIL. In a stable setting, working on any of the previously mentioned initiatives could be a booster for credibility. However, due to the security situation in Southern Lebanon, tasks regarding security affairs will take priority over developmental ones in order to gain the credibility that UNIFIL needs to maintain stability along the blue line and avoid constant violations of its mandate. According to Lebanese Prime Minister Mikati, Israel has violated UNSC resolution 1701 around 35000 times since its adoption in 2006 including airspace, land, and maritime sovereignty while a UNIFIL report that covers the timeline between November 2022 and February 2023 counts 381 violations with Lebanese civilians crossing the blue line, and 320 occurrences of unauthorized weapons within its area of operations (Haddad, 2014). After the analysis of multiple reports Submitted by UNIFIL to the Secretary General and

reports submitted by the Lebanese authorities before October 2023, the most recurrent violations are based on the following:

- Violations of Lebanese air space by Israeli fighter jets;

- Violations of maritime borders by Israeli navy vessels;

- Limited confrontations between LAF and the IDF;

- Rocket attacks by armed groups on Israel;

- Accidental crossings of the blue line by shepherds and livestock from Lebanon;

- The continuous Israeli occupation of the Shebaa Farms (Report of the Secretary-General on UNIFIL, 2015-2023).

Efficient and timely handling of sensitive situations along the Blue Line is but the first step toward responding to doubts and concerns expressed by the actors involved which needs to be backed up by sustained efforts on the part of UNIFIL through the acceleration of the Blue Line marking procedure to avoid accidental crossings, robust system of liaison, transparency of information, and developing the capabilities of LAF enabling them to carry out their full duties in southern Lebanon (Mattelaer, 2009). The tripartite meetings mediated by UNIFIL between LAF and the IDF showcase a great operational example of the mission's liaison mechanism where the two actors are provided with the opportunity to work out misunderstandings and express their reservations (Elron, 2007). Furthermore, although UNIFIL was established as a traditional peacekeeping force, many of its functions are actually peacebuilding affairs. This is observed by the mission's collaboration with local authorities and municipalities in its area of operation to implement QIP funded by either the mission itself or by national contributions of TCCs (Bardalai, 2021). The QIP are developmental projects designed to enhance the quality of

life in a fast manner without using significant funds which facilitate the establishment of communication opportunities with the local populations, thus aiding cooperation and increasing the level of trust. It is also seen in the mission's continuous effort to support LAF and develop its capabilities with the training provided and the appeal for international assistance in the modernization of the LAF's military equipment.

A critical article in the mandate of UNIFIL is to assist LAF in establishing its authority in southern Lebanon which is a goal that the vast majority of locals including the Shiaas would like to see reached where the Lebanese government takes its responsibility in securing the southern border. However, the local population is fully cognizant of the fact that LAF is currently not in a position to take on this task in its entirety. LAF was never able to reestablish itself in southern Lebanon even after the 2006 war which opened doors for Hezbollah to strengthen its standing. This is also affected by the extremely fragile political system in Lebanon where Hezbollah is a strong player, and by the local's conviction in the armed group that it could take care of national security (Hughes, 2009). Despite that, UNIFIL's efforts in developing the capacity of LAF have remained a primary objective of the mission. However, with Hezbollah's enormous influence in southern Lebanon, both UNIFIL and LAF have to be very careful in such a complex setting, not to provoke the existing balance of power. This is dependent on understanding the cause of Hezbollah and its supporters, and on accommodating the role the group played throughout history in the Lebanese-Israeli conflict. UNIFIL could react to this status quo by trying to enforce its mandate and removing all arms from its area of operation which could work in the short run, but then the mission will be rejected by the local population and will lose its credibility and local legitimacy (Newby, 2016).

Despite the slow development of LAF's role in southern Lebanon, its capacity to play its security role in the area has been significantly enhanced. This is translated by intense confidence-building measures such as exchanging liaison officers, taking the initiative of resolving misunderstandings between UNIFIL and the locals, and engaging in joint patrolling and training exercises which have, de facto, enhanced cooperation between UNIFIL and the LAF and bolstered the LAF's role in the area (Bardalai, 2021). The main goal of the mission is to cautiously shift its tasks to LAF, allowing it to carry out its full duties of maintaining security in southern Lebanon and Lebanese maritime borders in the long run. In any country, the role of the army is to defend its territory and citizens against external threats and preserve the country's main interests. Yet, due to the complex case of Lebanon, LAF's responsibilities extend to internal relief operations, social development, and maintaining internal stability. All these responsibilities require capabilities that some of them are lacking from LAF.

The insufficient level of strength and equipment has negatively affected the joint operational tasks between UNIFIL and LAF. Inadequate equipment and infrastructure render the LAF far behind its partner which refrains it from succeeding in its security responsibilities. Despite being supported by the West and specifically by the US, LAF still suffers from many shortcomings. This is because donor countries have some reservations concerning supporting an army that is considered an enemy of Israel. To alleviate these concerns, UNIFIL is continuously requesting donations for LAF units stationed throughout Lebanon and not just in its area of operation with some efforts succeeding in gathering half a million US dollars in one time from the UN General Assembly (Newby, 2016). Donor countries remain extremely wary, however, as the LAF can easily redeploy units between the country's north and south, and hence they were

not reassured that their donations would be good investments. While the donor countries may not air their concerns, Israel always lobbies against any financial assistance to LAF (Egozi, 2019).

Gaining credibility from the local population proves to be difficult since the political and religious backgrounds of locals directly affect how they interpret the behavior of peacekeepers. Earning this credibility requires building trust which involves knowledge of local traditions, sensitivity and respect to culture, and regularly offering support whenever it is needed. Unlike traditional peacekeeping, complex peacekeeping operations focus mainly on the civilian population, who often bear the brunt of war and violence (Newby, 2022). Because real peacekeeping work encompasses close interaction with the local community, peacekeepers are required to maintain impartiality and reflect some level of sympathy toward locals to be able to carry out their duties. Yet, regardless of their military training and professionalism, peacekeepers are humans with their own beliefs and perspectives. In a complex environment that sometimes requires critical decision-making, such preconceived ideas could influence the judgment and behavior of peacekeepers leading to a decrease in local trust and eventually increased tension. Prejudices often stem when one party considers the other party a credible threat to them. Thus, It is only natural that locals would hold the peacekeepers in suspicion until they have earned a sufficient level of trust and credibility.

Concerning UNIFIL, the mission constantly finds itself as a target of the local's prejudiced views in which the same civilians that the force is mandated to help will protest against the activities of peacekeepers and even block their patrols in some incidents (Levitt & Orion, 2023). Initially, after the deployment of a peacekeeping operation, locals of the host country accept and respect the peacekeepers as ambassadors of peace. However, if peacekeepers

fail to comprehend the local dynamics and to acknowledge and recognize their values, the mission will be faced with significant disapproval. It is expected that peacekeepers will be able to tolerate such behavior from locals and use their power carefully to avoid further provocation (Sarjoon & Yusoff, 2019). The language barrier is also considered a factor that contributes to the decrease in trust (Bove & Ruggeri, 2019). If a local civilian from southern Lebanon protested against a specific activity of UNIFIL, this behavior could be interpreted by soldiers as an unfriendly attitude by the local community towards the whole mission. Similarly, if a peacekeeper was seen engaging in a suspicious activity, locals would start cumulatively doubting the intentions of UNIFIL. This prejudice leads eventually to negative perception which further enlarges the gap between peacekeepers and the locals.

It is not necessary for peacekeepers to have a good command of English which is the operational language of UNIFIL. This indirectly affects the operational reports sent to the mission's headquarters where potential misinterpretation of events could lead to more complications. Incidents involving locals yelling at peacekeepers, a young person throwing a rock at an armored patrol vehicle (APV), or even children pointing toy firearms at them are examples where events could be misinterpreted during the reporting process due to a lack of language skills regardless of intentions. Because of this limitation, reports of unfriendly behavior increase and affect the way of interaction between locals and peacekeepers. Moreover, this issue could also face the encounters between UNIFIL and LAF where the details of events could be lost in translation and lead to more misunderstanding.

What distinguishes the local population of southern Lebanon from the rest of the Lebanese is that they have experienced and suffered wars and conflicts for decades, and they

have remained separated from the rest of Lebanon under Israeli occupation for more than 20 years until 2000. In addition, the differentiation of their thinking could be the result of this isolation and experience (Bardalai, 2021). Thus, taking into consideration this cultural distinction, peacekeepers are not required to personally adopt and embrace the values and norms of the host population but they are expected to show sympathy and respect their grievances. Establishing such relationships requires genuine effort from peacekeepers to learn about the values, culture, and social norms of the host population (Bove & Ruggeri, 2019). After observing many interactions, the outlook of peacekeepers regarding local communities varies from one TCC to another where soldiers coming from NATO countries focus more on security matters and are less interested in social affairs which require additional effort from them to establish a good relationship with the local population.

An important approach designed to establish a good relationship between peacekeepers and locals in addition to developing public infrastructure and enhancing living conditions is QIPs. However, the budget allocated to fund these developmental projects is limited which often leads to reallocation of funds and prioritizing expenditure. When such decisions are made, some projects will resume but others will be put on a halt which could be perceived as a partial treatment by the community that didn't benefit from it (UNIFIL List of QIPs, 2019). Lise Howard, a peacekeeping expert and a professor at Georgetown University, identifies QIPs as an inducement tool that aims to alter the behavior of parties of a conflict to de-escalate a situation (2019). Inducement is one of the three types of power in peacekeeping whereas the other two are persuasion with new ideas and Coercion by limiting available options. Within the operation of UNIFIL, inducement is the common type of power exercised (Howard, 2019).

Since the approach of QIPs has proven its benefits in maintaining a good relationship with local communities, the inconvenience of UN budgetary limitations was overcome by generous donations from wealthy TCCs to fund critical developmental projects in their designated area of operations. However, these efforts failed to eliminate the perception of partiality by some local groups due to the remaining imbalance in the distribution of these budgets causing a sense of negligence in the areas where TCCs with limited funds operate. In addition, even for the areas benefiting from rich TCCs, national funds are not guaranteed forever and are dependent on the continued deployment of these nations to UNIFIL. Once a TCC announces the termination of its participation in the mission, the money will stop coming, which is what happened in December 2014 when the Belgian battalion left UNIFIL and thus stopped funding developmental projects in its previous area of operations (UNIFIL News, 2019).

QIPs include but are not limited to, maintaining road infrastructure especially the one used by farmers to reach their lands, engaging in awareness campaigns, funding renewable power systems for hospitals and schools, and providing free medical services in rural areas. These incentives are appreciated and respected by the majority of the local population despite their background leading to a better relationship with the peacekeepers. This made TCCs consider QIPs as a method to buy the security of their peacekeepers. In reality, this approach is yielding results where local cooperation was noticed with UN patrols yet no substantial improvement in the regard of gaining trust. As CIMIC teams are responsible for the execution of developmental projects, their social engagement with locals is still limited to necessary interaction (Gordon, 2007). In addition, CIMIC teams started to organize what is called a "market walk" for peacekeepers where soldiers will interact with locals on a normative level in

an effort to increase trust and familiarity. Even after spending large amounts of funds on QIPs, the local perception of UNIFIL didn't change much and CIMIC teams only managed to gain material credibility that resulted in a notable level of local cooperation allowing the peacekeepers to perform their daily operational tasks but did not guarantee local legitimacy and trust. Regardless of the level of cooperation shown by locals, nothing will hinder their will to support Hezbollah when it is needed (Newby, 2018). It is important to note that, regardless of how much a mission spends on QIPs, if the local population sees it as a method of buying protection and cooperation, it can have a counter effect and develop negative behavior toward CIMIC projects in the mission (Gordon, 2007).

It is clear by now that UNIFIL increased its efforts in sympathizing with the mindset of the southern population aiming to earn credibility which would provide the mission with the local trust needed to implement its mandate. Yet, such endeavors are very hard to succeed because peacekeepers will always be seen as outsiders and not as part of society. Here comes the role of the Civil Affairs (CA) office in the mission's headquarters as a linking factor between locals and peacekeepers. The CA office is composed of Lebanese civilians employed by UNIFIL as local staff which directly makes them accepted by the local community because they are part of it. Despite some suspicion toward them from locals, CA staff are better accepted due to their familiarity with local culture and values, and the elimination of the language barrier. Their role also could be weighed up by civilian peacekeepers or the international civilian staff of the mission. Julian and Gasser argue that peacekeeping doesn't necessarily require soldiers and focusing on human rights and diplomatic efforts made by civilian staff are considered critical for any peacekeeping mission (2019). Furthermore, despite being a part of a military force, the CA

office engages in similar tasks to civilian peacekeepers by utilizing communication and negotiation as tools to alter the actions of warring parties. Additionally, they provide help to CIMIC teams during misunderstandings and act as a de-escalation factor.

These complex dynamics are part of the daily operation of UNIFIL. It isn't often but possible for a patrol to experience some unpleasant behavior from southern locals like blocking the road in front of the APVs, constraining the force's freedom of movement, throwing rocks at peacekeepers, or even making rude hand gestures. To be more specific, if peacekeepers were suspected of taking pictures and gathering information on a specific location, locals would consider this as an act of reconnaissance for Israel and then they would stop the patrol and take the cameras from peacekeepers (Author's observations, 2023). Despite the reason for such behavior and whether it's justified or not, tension could escalate quickly due to any uncalculated reaction from the peacekeepers. During such events and after observing many incidents, even with the right to use force for self-defense, the best response approach is to remain calm and request the presence of LAF and a member of the CA office if possible to defuse the situation and solve any misunderstanding.

Reported Harassment of UNIFIL Patrols, 2007–23
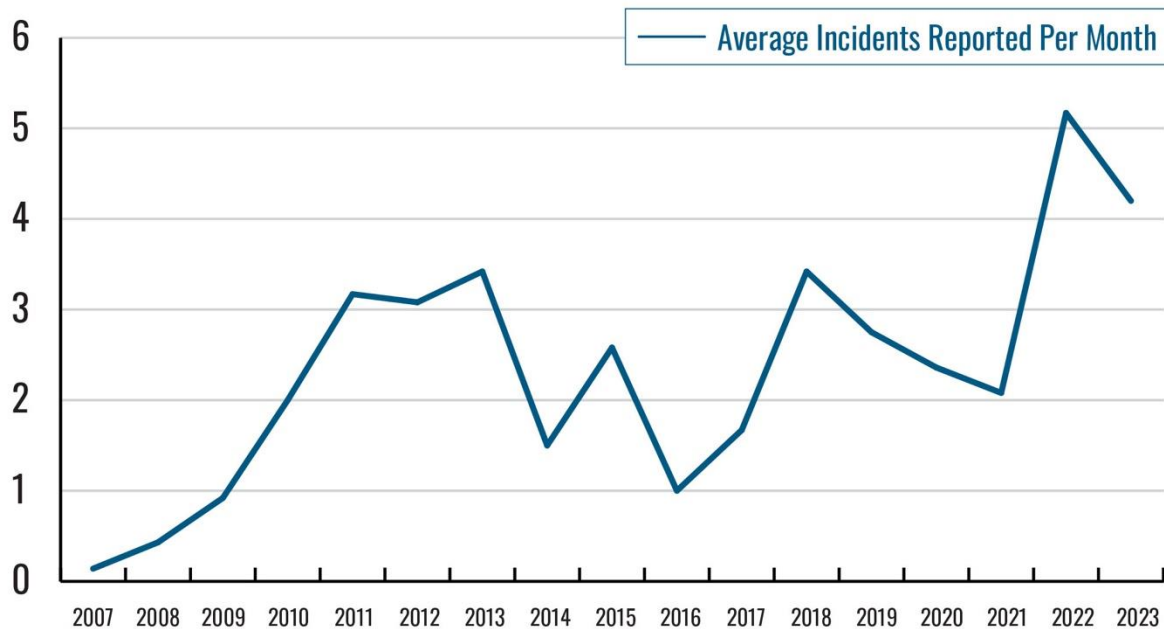
Source: UN secretary-general's reports to the Security Council

Figure 2 Harassment of UNIFIL patrols between 2007 and 2023 (Levitt & Orion, 2023)

At a higher operational level, a communication mechanism that doesn't involve locals is the tripartite meetings mediated by UNIFIL between LAF and IDF. These periodic meetings, headed by the Force Commander with the participation of LAF and IDF officers deal with topics related to violations of resolution 1701 from both sides, marking of the blue line, and many other issues that exceed the tactical level with the aim of reaching a common accepted solution. In addition, tripartite meetings are also utilized by the UNIFIL liaison division as a tool to interchange information, and as an opportunity for the Force Commander to interact with both parties (Elron, 2007). The results of these meetings have proven to be helpful where many bad encounters between LAF and IDF were solved under the sponsorship of UNIFIL making this

mechanism one of the most if not the most effective tools to gain trust and thus credibility from the Lebanese side (Newby, 2018).

4.2 Empirical Analysis:

After thorough observation and analysis of UNIFIL's activities in southern Lebanon, it is noted that the mission's effort in interpreting its mandate could be perceived as tolerant to one party of the conflict more than the other. It is important to note that the official parties of the mandate are the Lebanese and Israeli governments with Hezbollah kept away from the agreement while LAF speaks on its behalf (Cambanis, 2018). In May 2021, in the Security Council, the US accused Hezbollah and the Lebanese Government of interfering with UNIFL's duties. The US permanent representative Kelly Craft argued that Hezbollah dictates the trajectories of patrols for UNIFIL and the Lebanese government doesn't give permission for the force to conduct investigative operations which prevents the mission from fulfilling its mandate (Schenker and Orion, 2021).

Going through multiple UN reports on the implementation of UNSC resolution 1701, it is noted that incidents related to freedom of movement are listed many times. Despite being respected most of the time, UNIFIL did encounter some restrictions related to its patrols and freedom of movement (Report of the Secretary-General on UNIFIL, 2021). These incidents could be described as passive but with a certain level of violence reflecting a type of harassment that could lead to the perception of partiality. To avoid further incidents, UNIFIL uses designated and accepted routes to patrol the villages of its area of operations and is often escorted by LAF. The joint patrols have appeased the local actors but according to the mandate, it affected

UNIFIL's legitimacy in a negative way. In contrast, the perception of impartiality among the local community could be strengthened if UNIFIL could showcase tangible responses regarding the continuous IDF violations of Lebanese airspace which is a direct violation of resolution 1701. But the force doesn't have the capacity to do so (Orion, 2020).

Additional analysis implies consistency with the previous results but with distinctive terms. In the military, the primary source of strength and stability to ensure sustainability is called the center of gravity (Freedman, 2014). In the case of UNIFIL, the support of the local community is the center of gravity which is a critical goal not mentioned in the mission's mandate. Attempting to preserve this support along with acknowledging the local support for Hezbollah could hinder impartiality. After observing how peacekeepers react during and after patrol incidents, it is noted that they believe that they are doing a fine job in mitigating intense situations and defusing tension. Yet, they add that a stronger position regarding the restriction of freedom of movement would be beneficial in eliminating any allegations of overlooking certain violations. Without a stronger stance, further allegations could follow that could reflect partiality towards local actors. Peacekeepers go further and question the diligence approach of UNIFIL by fabricating an impartial response and staying outside diplomatic talks. If UNIFIL was really impartial, then it wouldn't face issues regarding freedom of movement but this is not the case (Author's observations, 2023).

UNIFIL finds itself in a complex setting filled with uncertainty and variability. Due to the continuous intervention of local actors, adaptation of the daily operations of the force to these circumstances was critical to ensure the implementation of the mandate and to preserve impartiality. UNIFIL's mandate has evolved from a UNSC resolution to ambiguous rules of

engagement. At the operational level of peacekeepers, their national instructions take priority over the force's commands and rules. This showcases how strong words written at the highest level of decision-making are translated into submissive guidance at the lowest operational level (Orion, 2019).

4.3 Impartiality:

According to Laurence, Impartiality is the main source of legitimacy for UN peace operations (2019). The legitimacy and credibility provided by the UNSC to a peacekeeping operation are significantly dependent on the recognition of impartiality. This main principle of any UN operation is defined by Collins' dictionary as the ability to provide an objective opinion regarding a specific situation by not being directly involved. The key term in this definition is not being directly involved which has shown to be a difficult task to sustain in a complex environment, especially after a shift in interpreting the principle of impartiality by peacekeepers (Nascimento, 2018).

After a thorough overview of the performance of UN peace operations, it is observed that the process of implementing a mandate is not always compatible with the mandate itself due to encountering a new range of problems within the complex settings they operate in (Peter, 2015). The logic behind this irregularity is peacekeepers understand the realistic prospects of mandate implementation by proactively applying impartiality. This has created a divergence in the way a mandate is interpreted where impartiality and not neutrality is the base of proactive operations (Badmus & Jenkins, 2019). The Red Cross defines neutrality as not taking sides in a conflict or participating in political, religious, or racial disputes under any circumstances in order to

maintain the trust of all parties. The available literature often mixes between neutrality and impartiality creating confusion that requires a clarification. Impartiality is regarded as proactive mandate implementation aimed to maintain cooperation with the parties of the conflict while neutrality is considered an inactive measure (Peter, 2015). Furthermore, according to Deputy Secretary-General Louise Frechette:

> *"Impartiality is not the same as neutrality. Of course, United Nations forces must apply impartially the mandate given to them by the Security Council. But that is not at all the same as being neutral between parties that obey that mandate and those that resist it, or between those who respect international humanitarian and human rights law, and those who grossly violate it"* (Levine, 2010).

A necessity for the success of any peacekeeping mission is the outlook of unbiased behavior by peacekeepers during routine operations (Marnika, 1996). Peacekeepers should act as unbiased third-party actors tasked with mediating a settlement between the warring parties. This is compatible with being an impartial player, an active player but at the same time independent, providing objective discernment without taking sides (Donald, 2001). If peacekeepers fail to fulfill this role, the mission could lose its credibility when being suspected of taking sides. Peacekeeping is a mechanism that reflects international commitment to influence parties of a conflict, a common solution to stop hostilities which is done by being impartial (Marnika, 1996). For better understanding, during peacekeeping, a mission should be neutral towards parties of the conflict but exercise impartiality when implementing the mandate.

Applying this analysis to UNIFIL, it is observed that the perception of the force by the parties of the conflict in southern Lebanon is asymmetric where the behavior of peacekeepers is interpreted as partial in some incidents. Locals accuse UNIFIL of being partial to Israel when requesting the search of private properties (Donald, 2001), while there are doubts regarding the effectiveness of the mission itself. Hezbollah regards UNIFIL as a Western tool to implement US agendas and safeguard the interest of Israel, while Israel often has criticized the performance of UNIFIL and even accused the force of indirectly acting as a cover for Hezbollah activities in southern Lebanon (Cambanis, 2018). Furthermore, some activities done by UNIFIL in the towns of its area of operations could be interpreted as an effort to gain appeasement of Hezbollah suggesting partiality towards one party (Orion, 2019). These irregularities in perception reflect that doubtness in the impartiality and effectiveness of UNIFIL.

In addition to impartiality, the consent of parties is an important principle to any peacekeeping mission. However, in the case of UNIFIL, there is some confusion regarding who the parties are which further intensifies the issue of the mission's impartiality. According to several UNSC resolutions, the Lebanese government along with Israel are the signatories to the agreement. Yet, the conflict is between Hezbollah and Israel. Moreover, UNSC resolution 1701 demands the establishment between the Blue Line and the Litani River of a zone free from any armed groups other than those of the Government of Lebanon and UNIFIL deployed in this area. This article puts the mission in a very hard position due to the continuous presence of Hezbollah in its area of operations which suggests compliance and partiality. The position of the Lebanese Government even complicates the situation further in which Hezbollah is the backbone of the national defense strategy which is based on the formula "Army, Nation, and Resistance"

(Cuevas, 2014). Avoiding interactions with Hezbollah will make UNIFIL look like a collaborator with the group leading to more criticism from Israel. Also, if the force confronts Hezbollah, the force will be accused of safeguarding the interests of Israel. This situation showcases the complexity of implementing impartiality in the case of UNIFIL which will be easier if Hezbollah halts its activities in southern Lebanon, and if locals will not see the mission as an arm for Israel (Cuevas, 2014).

These accusations are not only found on operational levels but they have also reached the international league. Israeli permanent representative to the UN Gilad Erdan showcased in 2020 Hezbollah activities south of the Litani River and argued how it hampers the operations of UNIFIL. Erdan provided a map that showcases the size of Hezbollah activities and argued that the group along with LAF is putting restraints on UNIFIL's freedom of movement (Siegal, 2020). Although Erdan didn't directly imply it, it is noted that he touched on the issue of impartiality in a more propitiatory manner. These Israeli allegations have also led to some discussions regarding the performance of UNIFIL. Despite being recognized as an important pillar of peacekeeping missions, not all members of the Security Council encourage the implementation of impartiality within UNIFIL. Despite the US's efforts to push for a more proactive approach in the implementation of UNSC resolution 1701, other members of the Security Council are less enthusiastic about it, highlighting the importance of preserving the sovereignty of Lebanon (What's in Blue, 2020). This is called great powers influencing peacekeeping at the highest level of decision-making. Taking into consideration the dynamics that could affect the level of impartiality, the permanent members of the Security Council present an unbalanced influence on the process of shaping and adapting a mission's mandate which

draws the path for the outcome of the mission. In simple words, the permanent members of the Security Council control the outcome of a UN peacekeeping mission (Henke, 2021). Regarding the other members of the Security Council, they are affected by the complex dynamics of such a level of diplomacy where the prevailing approach will be the result of the lowest possible compromise that often leads to the shaping of average mandates. Despite some consequences, these dynamics are the only approach that leads to agreement without the use of veto making consensus a prerequisite for adapting any resolution. Thus, it is the short-sighted interests of the permanent members of the Security Council that control the formulation and adoption processes of UN mandates (Henke, 2021). At this high level of decision-making, impartiality could be compromised at a very early stage.

In theory, the Security Council is a body designed to reflect the general views of the international community and provide a platform for state actors to express their opinion on security related matters. However, in reality, permanent members dominate the council with elected members complaining that their inputs are not being valued. It has become a custom for permanent members to discuss resolutions and then give the opportunity for the elected members to consider it with little time to provide any notable input just before its adoption (Security Council Report, 2015). This dynamic along with the veto mechanism creates further pressure on the UN when authorizing a mission which can lead to inconclusiveness in the process of mandate construction. The complexity within the decision-making process at the highest level provides opportunities for impartiality to be influenced by political interest.

At the operation level, peacekeepers are more susceptible to adapting their mandated tasks to be better compatible with the conditions of sustainable peace. The aspirations of the

international community for peace missions to fulfill their aims are dependent on the ability of peacekeepers on the ground to incorporate their mission within the local context (De Coning, 2020). It is observed that UNIFIL's level of acceptance by the local community increases with increased cooperation between the force and LAF. While local perception influences such adaptive behavior, the outcome of this adaptation may reflect a shift from the original aims of the mandate. According to De Coning, there are six principles to consider when implementing adaptive peacebuilding (2020). The iterative cycle is the most compatible with UNIFIL's approach to adaptation where the mission's reaction to complex dynamics in its area could lead the mission to move away from the original aim of its mandate.

4.4 Applying Complexity to Adaptation Approach:

UNIFIL faces a security dilemma that displays rational decision-making exercised by a social grouping trying to match the complexity of the dynamics taking place where the mission puts effort into developing a distinctive model that includes real-world actors within their complex socio-political setting. This is called Organized Hypocrisy which is a mechanism that explains how organizations react to incompatible variables within their external environment (Lipson, 2007). Although it barely justifies the gap between the predicted performance by the Security Council and the real-life implementation of the mandate by peacekeepers, it is perceived as an adaptation approach to overcome difficulties (Ruffa, 2014). In addition, peacekeepers further emphasize on the importance of preserving public acceptance and trust in which it could act as a balancing factor against the disliked tasks of the mission (Author's observations, 2023). To reflect on adaptive peacekeeping, the mandate of UNIFIL on an operational level is gradually evolving from UNSC resolution 1701 with additional distinctive tasks being included after each

amendment which demands increased adaptation efforts from the force in order to succeed in implementing its mandate.

Analysis of UNIFIL's adaptation efforts indicates the development of its reactive behavior. The Security Council published reports on the implementation of UNSC resolution 1701 that showcases UNIFIL as a force that is trying to balance traditional peacekeeping with maintaining peace on the ground. These reports mention several events and peacekeepers' reactions who were exposed to intimidation from local actors present within the mission's area of operations. In the long run, these incidents may lead to the submission of peacekeepers to local regulations (Orion, 2019). In contrast, these reports often disregard the continuous Israeli violations of Lebanese airspace or the shelling of locations in southern Lebanon which affects the local stance of UNIFIL which lacks the capacity to respond to these events.

Israeli Overflight Hours in Lebanon, 2017–23
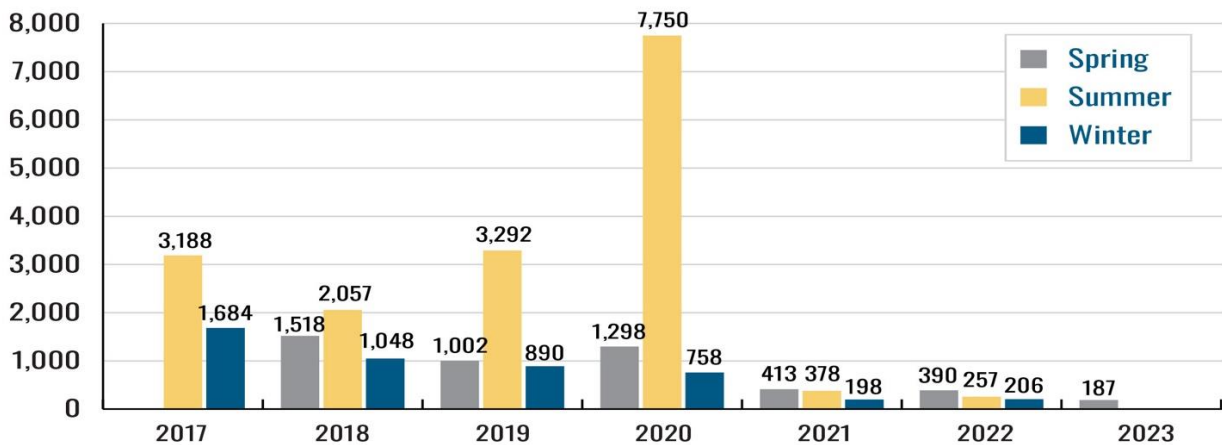
Source: UN secretary-general's reports to the Security Council

Figure 3 Israel violations of Lebanese Airspace between 2017 and 2023 (Levitt & Orion, 2023)

After the 2006 war, the expectations of UNIFIL increased to conceive the force as a robust mission with high military and legal capacities. These aspirations contradict the UN

charter, especially the chapter which UNIFIL is supposed to fall under. Yet, this desire was influenced by the US's war on terror and by Israel. UNIFIL falls under Chapter VI of the UN charter, but it is expected to operate under the articles of Chapter VII which is a contradiction that was pointed out by several temporary members of the Security Council. Yet, these concerns were countered by violent incidents that included multiple bombings conducted against peacekeepers in 2007 (Makdisi, 2018). It is noted that the actual efforts of UNIFIL to implement UNSC resolution 1701 on the ground could be faced by some type of confrontation (Kassem, 2018). Thus, the approach of adaptation has proven to be inescapable to sustain peace. It is believed that reported violations from the Israeli side and reported violations from the Lebanese side are treated in a disproportionate manner in the Security Council. Increased efforts have been employed for UNIFIL to be able to implement its mandate in southern Lebanon. However, the mission remains lacking in the capacity to respond to any Israeli violations which showcases an imbalance in the orientation of UNIFIL.

4.5 Mandate Interpretation:

An officer in the Irish battalion highlighted a political loophole where the Lebanese government sponsors an armed non-state actor which at the same time is regarded as a terrorist organization to safeguard the security of Israel. This showcases a flaw within the mandate itself (Author's observations, 2022). After critical analysis and observation of mandate implementation, it is noted that peacekeepers and especially officers have shared similar interpretations. While all recognize the official actors of the mandate, only a few are aware that the Lebanese government is not technically a party in the conflict. This is because peacekeepers didn't exhibit any disconnect between local actors and the Lebanese government which may lead

to difficulties in the implementation of impartiality on an operational level. This is observed in the presence of Hezbollah as a member of the Lebanese government which may complicate the interpretation of the mandate. In addition, the presence of Hezbollah as an armed resistance and a critical part of the Lebanese official defense strategy makes the mandate more fragile. The relationship between Hezbollah, LAF, and the Lebanese government was not considered which indicates a serious disconnection between the mandate and the complex dynamics taking place in southern Lebanon, potentially affecting the mission's impartiality.

Furthermore, UNIFIL is only deployed on the Lebanese side without any presence in Israel which limits its capacity to monitor violations from both actors. This means that the force is only able to react to violations that occur on the Lebanese side while it can only report the Israeli ones. This observation, although simple, is critical and has a negative effect on impartiality. Also, it is important to remember that the mission's mandate identifies southern Lebanon as an area free of arms. Yet, UNIFIL as a force lacks the capabilities that allow it to disarm non-state actors as much as it lacks the capacity to limit Israeli violations. These concerns were expressed by peacekeepers after a random incident with a routine patrol and implied that the mission had become careless in the approach it is taking to maintain impartiality which is indirectly preventing the force from implementing its mandate (Author's observations, 2023). A concern regarding the disproportionate response of UNIFIL towards violations of the mandate is credible (Wimmen, 2023). The force does not act in response to Israeli violations, and hostile activities from the IDF are not treated the same way as Lebanese violations within the Security Council.

5. CASE STUDY FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION:

5.1 Overview:

The purpose of this research was to investigate how non-linear variables such as mandate interpretation, application of impartiality, credibility, and adaptation affect the performance of peacekeeping missions utilizing UNIFIL as a case study. It aims to discover how much these dynamics are manifested in UNIFIL and by extension the UN using complexity theory. The results of observations and thorough analysis listed in the third section of the study showcase a significant fragility and wear in regard to the mission's impartiality and credibility. It is also noted by the observation done that peace actors are highly knowledgeable in the principle of impartiality but also aware of its erosion.

5.2 Key Findings:

This research has identified four main themes that shape the basis of the key findings. It has also showcased a high level of regard and extensive comprehension of impartiality within all decision-making levels, and recognition of the importance of credibility and legitimacy on an operational level. Yet, in reality, the application process in UNIFIL lacks transparency. At each level of analysis, the dynamics affecting the application of impartiality and hampering the activities of UNIFIL are noticeable ranging from the influence of major powers on the construction of a mandate to its implementation at the operational level by peacekeepers. These

peacekeepers often find their understanding and application of the mandate constrained by these dynamics.

Furthermore, according to De Coning, complexity theory has an impact on every level of decision-making in a system (2020). This is an intuitive behavior that occurs in an automatic manner and could be seen through administrative interactions in UNIFIL's headquarters up to political influence in the UNSC. The political ties and the diversity present within the UN in general and UNIFIL as a case study provide a perfect paradigm for complexity theory.

Following the dynamics that influenced the formulation of UNSC resolution 1701, it is clear that UNIFIL has chosen to apply an adaptation approach to maneuver the complex security environment in southern Lebanon. This approach was designed to sustain the force's existence in a shared landscape with Hezbollah, overcome the weaknesses of its mandate, and remain active while lacking military capacities. The existence of the mission for more than 45 years is considered a credible case of adaptation in UN peacekeeping.

5.2.1 Impartiality

My observation of UNIFIL's activities revealed that peacekeepers possess a tangible level of comprehension regarding the technicalities of impartiality. Yet, at the higher levels of the hierarchy, such understanding was limited. It is indicated that a disregard exists for the concern of the implementation of impartiality within the multiple levels of decision-making. It was not taken into consideration that by not responding to Israeli violations or by partnering with LAF, impartiality could be negatively affected. Also, the argument of the legitimacy of Hezbollah's presence in UNIFIL's area of operations as a part of the Lebanese government and a signatory was not considered. These limitations are the result of turning a blind eye to the

dynamics of international relations taking place at the time of the adoption of UNSC resolution 1701.

Moreover, my analysis indicated that, on a theoretical and academic level, impartiality is endorsed as a main principle for UN peacekeeping. Being discussed in much literature and upheld by peacekeepers, it is regarded as a foundation for the formation of a mandate. However, impartiality is greatly affected by the changing dynamics of international relations and the influence of the permanent members of the Security Council especially at the strategic level where its implementation matters the most. If the application of this principle is restrained on the strategic level, it will be more difficult to apply it on the tactical and operational levels. It is also revealed that UNIFIL often exercised caution when applying impartiality despite being highly regarded as a validation for having a higher moral ground. Again, the lack of response against Israeli violations and the compliance with the operational procedures provided by local actors and LAF could indicate partiality.

5.2.2 Credibility:

As observed from August 2006 until October 2023, UNIFIL was able to maintain peace and shape operational procedures to preserve a mainly stable status quo during that time allowing locals to continue their daily lives with minimum hostilities. For nearly 18 years, the force managed to earn a respectable level of credibility by generating a predictable security dynamic that is safer than an uncertain one. Thus, instead of specifying the mission as a success or failure, it can be characterized as a stabilizer where its presence is significantly superior to its absence. Yet, this credibility has led UNIFIL to a ploy where most likely it will not be able to escape until a strong ceasefire agreement is established. It is clear that the current relationship between Israel

and Lebanon will not get better and will probably get worse, especially with the complex regional geopolitics. Thus, UNIFIL's credibility will be hindered as it fails to fully fulfill its mandate.

5.2.3 Mandate Interpretation:

The research revealed that the interpretation of the mandate at the operational level significantly influences the implementation of impartiality. After the observation and analysis of several incidents, it is clear that there is an overlook in the literal interpretation of the mandate to avoid unnecessary tension with the different actors in UNIFIL's area of operations. As mentioned previously, the mandate only acknowledges LAF and the Lebanese authorities as the legal armed entities in southern Lebanon without a specific mention of Hezbollah which is referred to as armed groups. In addition, UNSC resolution 1701 allows UNIFIL to use any necessary means to make its area of operations free of arms. Yet, the mandate is not being interpreted as so due to the limited capacities of UNIFIL to engage in such business. Also, there is limited awareness regarding the legitimacy of Hezbollah by the Lebanese government and its role in the national defense strategy which could and probably is mixed in the effort of mandate interpretation. It is important to add that a lack of interest and concern is noted regarding this issue on the operational and tactical level which leads to a necessity for reconsideration on the strategic level in the UNSC.

5.2.4 Complexity in Adaptation:

Complexity theory provides a new lens to observe how different actors react to opposing pressures in the macro environment. Through this lens, this study pinned down a connection between complexity as a theory and the gap between the Security Council's aspirations and the

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real-life performance of UNIFIL. It has revealed the importance of sustaining peace and supporting Lebanese authorities at the operational level of the mission. Furthermore, gaining public legitimacy and acceptance was also critical, and has led to shaping new practices within UNIFIL that are being added to each renewal of the mandate. The acceptance of these opposing pressures made this mission a great example to examine adaptive peacekeeping through the lens of complexity theory.

Powerful dynamics that worked against UNIFIL since 2006 can be identified through the analysis of the different reports and literature. In a way, the mission was forced to adapt to ground circumstances and local expectations in order to accommodate the status quo and maintain peace. This approach was not entirely unforeseen, yet it was necessary. Non-permanent members of the Security Council expressed their concerns and reservations regarding some limitations within the mandate but as proof of the prevailing complex dynamics at that time, these doubts were not taken seriously. It is important to add that UNIFIL behavior was reactive and unavoidable while being adaptive at the same time.

5.3 Recommendations:

A. Peacekeepers should receive comprehensive training and undergo awareness workshops on the topics of local culture and historical background of the host country. This will provide peacekeepers a better understanding of local grievances to ensure respectful interactions which will help in building trust and enhancing the level of credibility and local legitimacy.

B. Increasing the efforts in building and sustaining partnerships with local authorities and communities. In the case of UNIFIL, this includes not only LAF but also community representatives and municipal leaders which can be done by deploying regular communication channels to develop cooperation efforts and limit the ramification of misunderstandings. Furthermore, this showcases the importance of transparency which should also be prioritized. This could be done by organizing regular meetings and providing reports to the local community to enhance their understanding of the mission's objectives and desired outcomes.

C. Establishing a robust feedback mechanism that aims to gather insights from local communities, authorities, and even peacekeepers. Anonymous questionnaires and municipal meetings are examples of tools that help in gathering feedback that provide critical concerns that need addressing and improve performance.

D. The budget of QIPs could be expanded to cover the increased community needs and improve the relationship between peacekeepers and locals. By focusing on critical projects such as healthcare, education, and infrastructure, these developmental efforts could provide the mission with the local legitimacy needed to sustain peace in the area.

E. Peacekeeping missions and especially UNIFIL should intensify their efforts of implementing impartiality. This incorporates an objective interaction with all parties of the conflict and transparent reporting of any incident from any side without bias. An independent body, responsible for the oversight and monitoring of maintaining impartiality could be established to answer these concerns.

5.4 Conclusion:

This study has identified a discordance in UNIFIL's mandate interpretation and application of impartiality. It is regarded as one of the three pillars of peacekeeping operations by representing justice and highlighting the importance of objectivity in decision-making rather than bias toward one party of the conflict. However, peacekeepers assume that impartiality antecedently exists with compliant application which is not true. From the critical strategic resolutions adopted in the UNSC for the greater cause of peace to its implementation by peacekeeping missions like UNIFIL, the application of impartiality must be consistently prioritized in order to avoid drifts and sustain peace. Furthermore, this study was able to highlight the effect of non-linear variables such as credibility, mandate interpretation, impartiality and adaptation affect the performance of peacekeeping mission by using UNIFIL as an example. By showcasing the complexities and challenges faced by the mission, linear models were proven to be ineffective alone to understand the intricate dynamics taking place, and that an adaptive approach is needed to effectively respond to the unpredictable outcomes.

The multifaceted challenges faced by peacekeeping missions in a dynamic environment were underscored by the thorough examination of UNIFIL using the lens of complexity theory. An adaptive approach to peacekeeping was necessary to mitigate the complex interplay taking place between local actors and international stakeholders within an ever-changing geopolitical prospect. While difficulties and challenges such as operational incidents with locals, doubts in impartiality, and limited capabilities constrained the performance of the mission, UNIFIL has showcased a significant player in maintaining stability through its credible mediation role and legitimate interactions with local actors. The case study of UNIFIL provides important insights

for other peacekeeping missions by highlighting the significance of adaptability and honest commitment to developmental and engagement efforts.

It is crucial to acknowledge the significance of the three principles of peacekeeping, especially impartiality, and consider them absolute with a functioning application approach and not only theoretical. If this is disregarded, the credibility of peacekeeping missions will be challenged

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