

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.