Leading UN Peace Operations
Complimenting a Leader–Centered Approach

Abstract

Peace operations present recurring polarities to leaders leading them. Leading polarity is not well understood. This paper presents an approach to how collectives can lead in polarized contexts. Polarities are always experienced by leaders. This paper helps prepare leaders to see them and to lead them.

Introduction

Over the past years' debate on UN Peace Operations focus has been placed on various aspects of individual, organisational and political performance at the strategic and operational levels, most recently reflected in the "Action for Peacekeeping" initiative (A4P) and the subsequent Declaration of Commitments by Member States. The Challenges Forum Policy Brief 2017:1 on *Leading United Nations Peace Operations*[1] (Gordon, 2017) lays out core fundamentals regarding the characteristics, styles and practices of individual leaders of central relevance to leading peacekeeping operations. This document complements those fundamentals and explores collective fundamentals of leadership that are on the edge of our understanding of what leading in fragile contexts entails. Our hope is to complement a 'leader–centred' view of developing the capacity to lead on Peace Operations with a 'substantively and collectively contextualised' view to developing such capacity to lead.

First, we briefly summarise the Challenges Forum Policy Brief 2017:1 (CFPB 2017:1) on *Leading United Nations Peace Operations*. We introduce three additional views on 'leading' and 'leader development' to those raised in the CFPB 2017:1. We conclude by addressing the need to improve the collective capacity to lead, and the practices of leading peace operations that surpasses fragile contexts: that of leading in the presence of 'leading polarity.' The capacity to lead polarity in fragile (or really any) context is recognized as essential, yet theory and

1   Robert Gordon, Challenges Forum, 2017.

practices of leading itself often miss the centrality of polarities at work.

Leading United Nations Peace Operations

In 2015 the "UN High-level Independent Panel's consultations, all partners and stakeholders identified the quality of leadership as one of the most crucial factors in the success of UN peace operations."[2] Leadership in English means multiple and sometimes confusing denotations. In policy briefs and other writings, leadership is used to mean different things in differing contexts, for example: a) the top cadre (or persons) of a mission or an organisation; b) a set of practices; c) a set of characteristics or styles of behaving.

The Geneva Leadership Alliance's experience in working with hundreds of leaders from dozens of cultures is that non-native English speakers can easily become confused between them-

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selves regarding to what the word leadership is referring, in the sentence quoted above '... stakeholders identified the quality of Leadership as one of the most crucial factors in the success of UN Peace operations.' To what or to whom is the word leadership pointing? To the quality of the Mission Leadership (as people)? To the quality of practices enacted mission-wide? To the quality of specific persons behaviours and styles? Etc.

Gordon (2017) poses two questions: 1) 'What is good leadership?' and 2) 'What is leadership'? The nuances of personal characteristics (humility, inclusiveness, empathetic, etc.) of leaders for non-native English speakers often lead two people from different cultures to disagree in terms but agree in principle. Gordon summarises in this way:

The list of what is needed for good leadership is always long and daunting. People new to the UN system often wonder whether they have the expertise or the personality to be good UN leaders. A useful technique is perhaps not just to think

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2   United Nations, Report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations on uniting our strengths for peace: politics, partnership and people, A/70/95-S/2015/466, 17 June 2015, para 268.

of good leaders whom you have admired, and therefore must try to emulate; but also to think of those people who were in positions of power and authority and who showed poor or no leadership. A way to get closer to understanding the essentials of good leadership is simply by determining to avoid their behaviour and their mistakes.

Fundamentally, this view focuses on how a leader, leads others, by drawing attention to inputs be they characteristics, styles, or patterns of influence like authoritative, directive, participative, collaborative, etc.

There is a vast literature on leadership. The vast majority of this literature addresses the individual, personal inputs to leading. Yet in a multi-cultural context, bridges become difficult to build when we are confronted by multiple vocabularies and their nuances, stemming from diverse histories, beliefs and customs (particularly around leaders and leadership). Arriving at agreement on just what 'good leader characteristics or just what patterns of good leader practices and characteristics are most effective' leads to 2 typical approaches in the literature of keen relevance to leading peace operations:

1. Situational or Contingent approaches where the leader's characteristics and practices vary across contexts. This is challenging enough in stable conditions. And this approach is often what is required 'on the ground' because local customs must be addressed as well as international norms that are coming to bare on peace operations.

2. Normative Policy-driven approaches where the 'leading' institution (in this case the UN Mission) more or less identifies and enforces the expectations and parameters of leader practices and behaviours. In the case of UN Peace Operations, there is a strong case to be made that the former (policy-driven) approach has eroded the situational/contingency-driven approach. The longer term effects, the longer 'tail' left from the adoption of either policy- or situational and contingent approaches, at the expense of the other approach, is to perpetuate divisions rather than bridge them. Imagine, leadership perpetuating divisions when its purpose is to minimise them?

We turn our attention from the 'how' of leading to 'what' is being led. As Gordon (2017) summarised:

It is the nature of the environment, the opaqueness of authority

and responsibility, and the complexity of the multi-national, and multi-disciplinary structures, which make it different from leading in a purely national context. Leading in a UN peace operation is about operating in an extreme, ambiguous, dangerous and complex environment; the task at all levels is to provide vision and direction when all around is confusion, while being able to manage constant change (and crises) through good planning skills (starting at the why) by building integrated teams through the empowerment of staff and by communicating well and widely.[3]

This summary shifts focus to 'what' is being led: 'all levels share similar tasks of providing direction and vision' and aligning people, activities and resources toward creating and sustaining transitions from violence to peace. Leading this transition from violence to peace is inherently a collective endeavour with collective outcomes. No leader creates peace. People create peace, collectively. Gaining peace is what is led.

By focusing on 'what' is being led, we: 1) shift frames and attention to some emerging theories and practices of leading and 2) simultaneously clarify our language about leading and leadership[4]. 'Leader-centred' capacity building in peace operations are traditionally associated with the essential work of 'negative peace building', that of stopping violence. [5]Recently, 'positive peace building' approaches are encouraging a shift from leader-centred views to community building, inclusive approaches, dialogue and more.[6]

We now make two things clear. We will distinguish between 'leaders' and 'leading' and when we use the word 'leadership' we will qualify exactly to what we refer.

Leading refers to practices and actions intended to mobilise individuals, communities and systems to accomplish specific outcomes. These may be individual or collective practices and actions.

Leaders are people who attempt leading.

3   Robert Gordon, ibid, page 15.
4   For a thorough review of keen relevance see: Satterwhite, R., McIntyre Miller, W., and Sheridan, K. Leadership for sustainability and peace: Emergent themes for leadership education and development. In M. Sowcik (Ed.) Leadership 2050: Contextualizing Global Leadership Processes for the Future (pp. 59-74). Bingley, United Kingdom: Emerald Group Publishing Limited, 2015.
5   Ibid.
6   Adler, N. J. (1998). "Societal leadership: The wisdom of peace." In S. Srivastva and D. L. Cooperrider (Eds.) Organizational Change and Executive Wisdom (pp. 205-221). San Francisco, CA: The New Lexington Press. Ledbetter, B. (2012). "Dialectics of leadership for peace: Toward a moral model of resistance." Journal of Leadership, Accountability, and Ethics 9(5): 11-24. Spreitzer, G. (2007). "Giving peace a chance: Organizational leadership, empowerment, and peace." Journal of Organizational Behavior 28(8): 1077-1095. As cited Ibid.

Inherent in this approach is an understanding that leading happens at all levels and a leader is (can be) anyone who influences people and impacts systems to mobilise toward specific outcomes. With these clarifications we also sharpen focus on the specific nature of 'what' is being led in peace operations.

Three areas led in peace operations.

1. Turbulence.

2. Collectives of people (not only individuals).

3. Polarities or tensions.

Leading Turbulence

Turbulence is a state, marked by seemingly random fluctuations in parameters. We compare turbulence to "change" where change is a process. Leading in a perpetual state of turbulence is different than leading a process of change. Leading change implies leading "from somewhere (the current state) to somewhere else (a new state)." One can argue that peace operations are about leading change: from violence to non-violence. This is often achieved via combinations of diplomacy and peace-keeping force. It is viewed as a "problem to solve." Operational peace interventions are essential. The save thousands (conservatively) of lives. However, the underlying reasons for the violence in the first place (scarce resources, tribalism and migration, artificial scarcity of resources created by corruption, historical vendetta, etc.) if not addressed, result in peace operations calming a state of turbulence that actually simmers under the surface. The state of felt turbulence can simmer for a decade only to flare-up when peace-keeping operations are withdrawn. Even today in the Balkans, younger generations are loath to speak of the past. To do so is too disruptive to the present.

From the perspective of a mission leader, they are often chosen as 'best of the best'. Yet they become stationed and accountable to and for others who all too often have had far less experience and "success" in their lives. Political appointees, tribal authorities in charge of police brigades, well intended persons who simply are less globally experienced and wise, but who "know their culture." These mission leaders receive a mandate to "transform a nation, lead the mission, lead international donors, and lay the framework for governance sys-

tems that may be entirely foreign in operations to the cultures involved". This is often referred to as "mission impossible".

These challenges playout in what we recognize to be disRUPTive contexts. Contexts where events unfold Rapidly, with seemingly Unpredictable actions and actors, where tensions and Polarities among actors, actions and interests are ever present, and the link between actions, actors and outcomes is Tangled in such a complex context that one action may not only NOT cause an intended outcome, but may actually spur other events and outcomes. Rapid, Unpredictable, Paradoxical and Tangled (RUPT) describes the context or "state" a mission lead must lead in.

In RUPT, the context is too complex to rely on one leader. RUPT is created collectively and can only be led through in a collective fashion where leading happens at all levels, even by those who are not leaders, by role.

Leading Collectives

Leading peace operations in the contexts from which they spring requires BOTH leading institutions to help create conditions for violence to stop (aka peace), AND the eventual transfer of authority and accountability from individual leaders to the engaged collectives, because only the collectives can hope to address and sustain peace.[7] This brings to bare both leader-centred AND collective views of leading.

Over the past 15 years the Centre for Creative Leadership and a core set of researchers and practitioners[8] have developed a view on leading framing it as a collective-relational effort over that of a leader-centred effort. The vast majority of leader-centred theory and practice is framed as leaders 'getting' individuals to accomplish certain things (as reviewed in the CF Policy Brief 2017:1). That is essentially a 'leader-follower-goal' frame that makes clear distinctions between each, and depending one's view, places the leader, followers or the goal in the 'centre' of successfully leading.

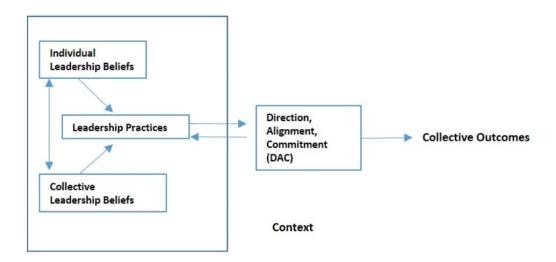A collective-relational view of leading frames 'accomplish-

7   Here we focus on some observations made by Grint in addressing leading in 'wicked problematic' contexts. See K. Grint, *Leadership: A very short introduction*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2010.

8   L. Kristin et al., "Getting to 'We': Collective Leadership Development", *Industrial and Organizational Psychology*, Vol 5(4), 2012, pp.428–432.; H. D. Wilfred et al, "Direction, alignment, commitment: Toward a more integrative ontology of leadership", in *The Leadership Quarterly* 19, Vol 19(6), 2008, pp. 635–653.; D. V. Day, "Leadership development: A review in context", *Leadership Quarterly,* Vol 11(4), 2000, pp. 581–614.; W. H. Drath, *The deep blue sea: Rethinking the source of leadershi*p, San Francisco, Jossey–Bass, 2001.; M. Uhl-Bien and S. Ospina (eds.), *Advancing relational leadership research: A dialogue among perspectives*, Leadership Horizons, Greenwich, Information Age Pub, 2012.

ments' as collectively produced outcomes as well as being accomplishments of the actions of individuals identified as leaders influencing followers to attain certain outcomes. This collective-relational view, to some, represents a shift in theory and practice from an individualistic view of leading, leaders, and the development of the capacity to lead, to a view of leading as being a collective effort filled with relational dynamics that complement (extend) 'leader-follower-goal' views. The fact is this is a both/and complementarity of views and not actually a shift from an individual to a collective view of leading.

A central theme is this view is that there are three core, collective, accomplishments specific to leading: producing 1) shared Direction, 2) effective Alignment, and 3) common Commitment to achieve shared objectives. Leading is about the collective continuous production of Direction, Alignment and Commitment toward common ends. The actual accomplishment of the goals themselves says little about the leading that got there, in this view.

Developing the capacity to lead, then, is about developing the collective level and capacity to produce shared D-A-C. D-A-C is not a leader characteristic, or style, or pattern of behaviour. D-A-C is a collective accomplishment wherein everyone engaged must and does fill a leading role in some fashion. D-A-C stems from individual and collective beliefs on what leading is, and how leading is practiced.

In summary: A collective view of leading helps prepare for positive peace building that accommodates local beliefs and practices needed to accomplish shared Direction, Alignment and Commitment. A leader-centred view of leading disguises an oft-made trade-off between situational/contingent leading and norm- or policy-based leading, which ultimately keeps 'leading authorities' accountable (and thus empowered over others) rather than transferring accountability and empowerment to the collectives themselves. This view complements leader-centred views of the 'how' of leaders, by lifting focus to the 'what' of leading. What is being led? In this view, leading is the collective capability, capacity and extent to which shared Direction, Alignment and Commitment is focused and sustained. The third area of leading and the development of the collective capacity to lead in UN Peace Operation is that of leading in Polarity.

Leading Polarities in Peace Operations: Learning from the 2010 Challenges Forum Study on *Considerations for Mission Leadership in UN Peacekeeping Operations*[9]

Keeping our focus on 'what' is being led (rather than the 'how' of leading), in the context of Rapid, Unpredictable,

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9   This section draws freely from two complementary streams: 1) Adaptive Leadership, see: R. Heifitz and M. Linsky, Leadership on the Line: Staying Alive through the Dangers of Leading, Boston, Harvard Business School Press, 2002; and 2) Leading Polarity, see: B. Johnson, Polarity Management, Amherst, HRD Press, 2014. 3) G. Kohlreiser, Hostage at the Table, San Francisco, Jossey-Bass. 2006.

Polarized and Tangled (RUPT) events, we now turn to a very specific challenge facing Peace Operations, that of leading polarized tensions. We focus on leading 'polarized tensions' because these require collective responses and collective leading, often resulting from or even causing turbulence. Individual leaders are ineffective in leading polarized tensions as the tensions must be relieved by many parties in tension themselves if these tensions are to be sustainably relieved.

Sources of conflict come from many places, oppression, power struggles, scarce resources, competition-corruption, race, religion, the list is as long as history. One common element to all conflict (and its reduction or re-direction) is the presence of chronic tensions that perhaps are never 'solved' but rather recognized, led and sometimes (unfortunately all too rarely) transformed.

Peace operations present complex challenges. Chief among these is cultivating the local capacity to lead collaboration and engender practices that mobilize and sustain positive peace among diverse stakeholders. Meeting these challenges requires leaders and leading that engender not just cooperative, but collaborative, capacities and practices among stakeholders that seek to encourage and support long-term progress (stability, peace, development, justice, etc.). In short, it is the development of a collective capacity to not become hostage to the conflicts and polarities at hand. Collaboration acknowledges interdependence in generative ways. Cooperation focuses on independence and stabilisation. Leading into collaboration/interdependence is a higher-order demand than leading into cooperation. Ultimately, peace operations stop at cooperation.

Peace operations are in place due to deep, chronic tensions of interest on many levels. If there ever was a 'space' where 'either/or' thinking leads humanity astray, it is in times of chronic conflict among leaders, interventionists, and people who ultimately must learn to complement 'either/or' thinking with 'both/and' leading. Succumbing to either/or approaches is to become 'hostage' to the tension rather than freeing everyone to lead the tension itself in a generative and collaborative way.

Think of problems or challenges as falling into two general classes: Technical problems and Adaptive challenges. 'Either/or' (solutions's) thinking is useful in resolving a specific class of (technically solvable) problems. Adaptive challenges, on the other hand, stay with us. You can recognize adaptive challenges when there is chronic, reoccurring crisis, tension, conflict, failure etc. These chronic situations are not technical problems

to 'fix'. And although there may be solid technical tactics to stabilise violent tensions, history shows that peace is sustained when people adapt to new ways of leading and relating, governing and cohabitating. Western European reconstructive security, governance and trade institutions erected after World War II offer an example of new ways of leading in a region torn by divides that have existed for centuries. Tensions across boundaries are led. They have not disappeared. Nor will they. These problems are not fixed, but rather these tensions are led via these institutions (as imperfect and sometimes fragile as they are). An underlying tension is that of cooperation AND collaboration; that if maintaining and advancing both (cooperative) independence AND (collaborative) interdependence. Over attending to independence to the neglect of interdependence, and your institutions will breakdown. Push interdependence to the relative neglect of independence and eventually efforts toward division arise, aka current pressure for Brexit.

Adaptive challenges take us into areas where we (all stakeholders involved) have no known solutions. And for some of these types of adaptive challenges, there are underlying dynamics that are never 'solvable' by 'either/or' thinking. Either/or thinking is driving Brexit, and we see it is causing further problems (as well as presumably 'solving' some others).

An example to compare technical problems and adaptive challenges might be heart surgery that redirects clogged arteries. Surgery is a technical fix to a technical problem. Surgery will stabilise a patient. However, after the surgery, the patient is faced with changing her/his diet and lifestyle, forever, if s/he is to avoid heart disease. The surgery is a technical solution to a technical problem. Either extend your life by doing it or don't. The resultant diet and lifestyle challenge is an adaptive challenge that never goes away. An adaptive challenge is characterized by the people involved being both part of the problem (poor lifestyle/diet) and being essential to a sustained outcome. If the patient does not adapt, s/he will relapse.

In the class of adaptive challenges, there are specific challenges that emerge as tensions or polarities. Polarities are ever-present tensions that require shared 'both/and' attention. In the case of EU membership, one key tension is advancing both cooperative independence and collaborative interdependence. Approaching polarities with either/or solutions will eventually lead to crumble by (temporarily) negating one side of tensions. When the other pole of the polarity gets 'bad enough', attention is focused there, often at the expense of attention to the

first pole. Hence they are chronic oscillations at best. And vicious cycles at worst. Leverage the upsides of each pole and you create a virtuous cycle!

The nature of a polarity is best represented by breathing. The longer you breath-in, the greater the pressure to exhale. The longer you exhale, the greater the need to inhale. We must 'both' inhale 'and' exhale or our system fails. You cannot inhale to the negation of exhaling, forever, and vice versa. Polarities require reiterative efforts to create and maintain a space of equilibrium acceptable to all critical stakeholders over time.

More practically in our social sphere, we see that some polarity tensions are simply ridiculous if phrased in 'either/or' terms. For example: Should I love my children unconditionally or should I hold them accountable for their actions? As a nation, should we focus on Freedom OR Equality? Independence or interdependence? These polarities constitute adaptive challenges by forming 'interdependent pairs' of values and drives. These are framed as 'bilateral pairs' but I am sure the reader has experienced 'multilateral interdependent tensions.

An example of a polarity dynamic in the peace-building space i that of the need to recognize both local and national interests. Focus on national interests (to the negation of local interests), and the system becomes centralized and often authoritarian. Fractionalize entirely into local interests (to the negation of common interests), and an ever-present imbalance of critical resources (for example) will often lead to conflict. BOTH local and national/common interests must be addressed to different degrees and in varying ways. They represent an interdependent polarity. And are mirrored at the regional and international levels.

An example: Respecting national sovereignty (metaphorically 'inhaling') AND guaranteeing UN Operations personnel freedom of movement (metaphorically 'exhaling').

Since fighting erupted in South Sudan in December 2013, the United Nations Missions in South Sudan (UNMISS) Mission Leadership Team (MLT) has been challenged with leading an equilibrium between recognising and respecting South Sudan's sovereignty and UNMISS personnel's need for safe, freedom of movement. Two UNMISS staff members were attacked and detained in early 2014 by suspected members of South Sudan's security forces. These acts were clear violation of the Status of Forces Agreement, which regulates relations between UNMISS and the government of South Sudan. It was noted that President of South Sudan reassured Secretary-

General Ban Ki-moon, that the government of South Sudan is committed to cooperating with UNMISS. Yet in 2016 UNMISS Force Chief of Staff was travelling alone and unarmed when he was attacked and grievously assaulted by unknown gunmen (believed to be attached to the South Sudan's security forces), before managing to escape. This illustrates the chronic tension between respect for sovereignty has eroded the ability of UN peace operation's freedom of movement. Addressing this issue involves leading a tension between leniency towards GoSS against the backdrop of insufficient UNMISS strength to credibly assert its rights. The manner in which this tension is led, impacts ongoing mission safety as well as local and international reviews of effectiveness, not to mention that a misstep can put the mission itself in jeopardy thus risking leaving a legacy of felt injustices all around which will negatively impact reconciliation and building sustainable, positive peace.

Like inhaling and exhaling, focus on one pole of an interdependent polarity to the negation of the other pole (eg. Using either/or tactics) will lead to chronic problems. Not striking dynamic equilibrium tension in our oxygen/carbon dioxide needs will harm us. This not a probability. It is a certainty. It is in fact a primary function of our organism. So polarities are inherently adaptive challenges in that you cannot focus on one pole of the pair as a "solution" to the neglect of the other pole and expect sustained 'equilibrium' to result. Unfortunately, traditional models of leading emphasize 'either/or' technical planning, problem-solving, etc. And certainly, the first phase of stopping violence and stabilizing conflict is tactically very technical. But transforming stability created in a technical ceasefire into sustained, positive peace is an adaptive challenged filled with many unknowns and many interdependent polarities.

So, 'what' is being led is critical? If leaders lead a polarity as though it were a technical problem to solve, this natural tension becomes a vicious cycle of chronic dysfunction, pain and suffering. However, if leaders recognize that 'what' is being led are interdependent polarities, and subsequently treat these as adaptive challenges (rather than technical problems), natural tensions can be transformed into virtuous cycles lifting the situation into a more 'breathing' system of checks, balances, and synergies. However, this kind of leading demands that all stakeholders co-lead and become jointly accountable, aware and jointly monitor the polarities, which is a collective capacity to lead, rather than a leader's role to lead in say a certain style or manner by exhibiting certain characteristics.

Another polarity example: Respecting local culture AND pro-moting international standards AND working with Donors. A fuller picture of the complexity and ramifications of leading polarities shows how many 'polarities' are interrelated and ex-perienced as 'multilaritities', or instances of tensions drawing in many directions. Like inhaling and exhaling while mixing heavy sprint-training interval runs with rowing in heavy cur-rent!

The United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSC) found itself striking the wrong balance in the chronic operational tension found in BOTH respecting local culture AND promoting international standards. In the wake of the political and military push-back of the group which was then led by the infamous Gen. Laurent Nkunda in 2009, parts of North Kivu were left without effective policing capacity. Policing had up until then been provided by Gen Nkunda and his entourage. It had been seen as effective and reasonably legitimate by the local population, yet unacceptable by the international community and consequently also by MONUSCO. As part of an effort to reform the security sector in order to restore "rule of law" some 150 police officers had been recruited and trained in Kinshasa. Under strong pressure from Donors, police officers were "deployed" with active assistance of MONUSC and UNOPS into various parts of North Kivu in what was at the time seen as 'best we can do' yet in retrospect was experiences locally as heavy-international-handedness creating its own additional tensions.

Another example:

The current situation in Mali may serve to illustrate this point. Like any other UN peace operation, MINUSMA's interlocutors are the parties to the conflict is seeks to resolve. Constrained by the absence of a formally inclusive yet widely accepted Peace Agreement, national interests are frequently understood to equate the interests of the political elite in Bamako. The local interests would then be embodied by the ethno-political groups predominantly found north of Bamako. In the absence of a political framework, the MLT must invariably balance the need to accommodate of national interest of political sovereignty on issues related to political power-sharing vis-à-vis the need to accommodate the local interest's demand for inclusiveness and influence with respect to political representation and decision-making. This translates to a rather high degree of

volatility in the Mission's oscillations between national and local interests (with a bias favouring Bamako), where the Mission is essentially fighting for its credibility by managing perceptions rather than guiding the process forward.

Summary: These examples of polarity illustrate just three of many interrelated ones found in leading peace operations. The 2010 CF 2010 Study on Considerations for Mission Leadership highlighted several interdependent polarities found in leading cross-cutting issues in pursuit of Mission Objectives, in specific contexts. In the 2010 Considerations Study, 30+ such polarities were documented (not as polarities per se) in Chapters 3-6. Chapters 3-6 addressed the '4 key objectives extracted from mandate analysis and the Core Functions of peacekeeping'. These objectives are: 1. Facilitating the Political Process, 2. Creating a Secure and Stable Environment, 3. Strengthening Rule of Law with Respect for Human Rights, and 4. Promoting Social and Economic Recovery.

In each Chapter there are 5-8 'Outputs' associated with the Chapter's Key Objective. For each of the 5-8 'Outputs' in each 'Objective', there are identified 2-5 'Considerations'. The majority of these 2-5 'Considerations,' for each 'Output' for each 'Objective', are framed as 'AND' tensions or as 'needs-to-balance' tensions.

Such tensions fill the criteria of interdependent polarities. Tensions that are framed 'as needs for balance' (for example: promoting international advocacy while supporting national ownership) present specific adaptive (chronic) challenges to leaders and the capacity of collectives to lead. If such polarities (or 'Considerations' as they are called in the CF 2010 Study) are approached by leaders or teams as technical problems (as opposed to adaptive challenges with underlying interdependent poles), the likelihood of success in sustainably leading those tensions is diminished (as compared to recognizing them as polar tensions and engaging stakeholders in regulating and calibrating how they are continually managed to the benefit of all).

Sustainably leading polar tensions requires collective monitoring for indications of when one pole is being neglected. The example, 'focusing on international advocacy while supporting national ownership' is a polarity that arises when pursuing the 'Output' of State Authority and Legitimate Institutions Strengthened as part of the Mission Objective of Facilitating and Supporting the Political Process. This requires collective

feedforward and leading, especially when one pole (say national ownership) is neglected with over-attention by international operations on international advocacy. What are the signs that 'national ownership' is neglected? When do stakeholders know/see when national ownership is being expensed? What will stakeholders experience? And what actions will be effective in correcting this? By whom? What should actors start or stop doing?

Below we offer a sample of questions to ask when monitoring a set of tensions (identified in the Considerations' Study).

Facilitating and Supporting the Political Process

1. Peace Process Supported

Addressing urgent needs while fostering legitimacy (in political institutions): What are the indicators that local patronage is overriding the building of long-term political legitimacy? How do we know that long-term political legitimacy is being neglected in favor of much local patronage?

Balancing short- and long-term needs: What indicators tell us that it is necessary to engage functional executive agencies (e.g. ministries of finance, planning, trade, legislative bodies, etc.) beyond the sectoral services (that restore basic services)? What specific incidents or data tell us that we have overly focused on restoration of services at the 'expense' of stabilising executive agencies of governance?

Weighing specificity against ambiguity to avoid contentiousness: When do we know that key provisions are too vague at the expense of specificity or that specificity of provisions are too fine-grained? How can we advance both specificity and 'space' for contentious issues to be harmonised over time?

2. National Reconciliation Promoted

Peace / Justice: How do we know when (what are the indicators of) formal reconciliation processes are advancing at the expense of immediate and local ownership that does not address reconciliation? What indicates that efforts or focus on justice is overriding the re-establishment of trust in institutions at large?

Balancing of international norms and human rights standards with local customs and needs: How do we know if advancing justice via local customs undermines the establishment of

international standards, or that advancing international standards is neglecting local fabric in a way that undermines long-term stability?

Promote international advocacy while supporting local ownership: When do we know (what do we look for to see) if national reconciliation is going too slowly, or that international advocacy (of donors and international partners) is exacerbating tensions at the expense of locally paced reconciliation?

3. Peaceful and Credible Elections Held

Early or well-organized elections: When do we know if the drive for fast elections is at the expense of making them credible? What are the indicators to monitor the pacing of elections that are quick but not at the expense of credibility?

Balancing comprehensive participation and selective exclusion or disqualification of "spoilers." What tells us that we are excluding "spoilers" to the neglect of inclusivity? What tells us that we are being overly inclusive to the neglect of constructive credibility?

Balancing electoral efficiency and national ownership: When do we know if the provision of external electoral management/ support is happening at the expense of local ownership and capacity building? Or what tells us that we are over-focusing on local electoral capacity building at the expense of efficient, cost-effective electoral system establishment?

4. State Authority and Legitimate Institutions Strengthened

Respecting local culture while promoting international standards: When do we know that the strength and legitimacy in leveraging local or traditional structures is happening at the expense of international standards expected of donors and international partners?
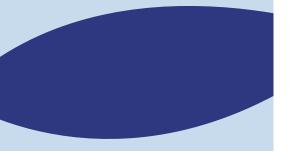
Balancing short-term, easily achieved goals and long-term, sustainable goals: How do we know if the demand for winning public support based on easily achieved, high-profile efforts is being pursued to the neglect of more durable, viable bureaucratic efforts more supportive of long-term peace? What can we monitor that will signal us that we are addressing long-term durable bureaucracy to the neglect of winning requisite public support?

5. Civil Society Revitalised and Independent Media Supported.

Supporting civil society while allowing it to stand on its own feet: How will we know that international support of civil society is happening to the neglect of its growth toward vibrant independence? How will we recognize if we are promoting the independence of civil society to the neglect of providing the support the ecosystem actually requires to take root?

You can see that this tension is not a technical problem but actually a continual adaptive challenge that will remain. If the parties instead 'swing' from either international or national to national or international, the tension becomes a serial chronic problem. But by keeping both international advocacy and national ownership in focus and monitored, the poles can be calibrated and potentially contradicting actions can be untangled before they cause chronic problems.

It is the hope of this writing that we have shed light on the nature of leading collectives, in turbulence and specifically leading polarities as especially challenging to more conventional views on what leaders, leadership and leading entail.

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Challenges Forum

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Challenges Annual Forum 2019 Background Paper

The Challenges Annual Forum is a platform to facilitate dialogue and discuss common understandings and recommendations on improving peace operations. The purpose of this Background Paper is to stimulate discussion, analyse and contextualise specific topics in preparation for the Annual Forum. The aim of the this year's Annual Forum is to build on the recommendations for actions and ideas from the 2018 Annual Forum, regarding implementation of the Secretary General's 'Action for Peacekeeping' initiative.

This paper presents an approach to how collectives can lead in polarized contexts. It sheds a light on the nature of leading collectives, in turbulence and specifically leading polarities as especially challenging to more conventional views on what leaders, leadership and leading entail.

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