Assessing the Relationship Between the Use of Force and Local Perceptions of "Operational" Legitimacy in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations

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Abstract

The 2015 report of the United Nations (UN) High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations highlights challenges in achieving UN peace operation (PO) operational goals in contexts which are characterized by heightened violence and the absence of viable peace processes. Implementing POs in these contexts, referred to as "conflict management" by the UN, raises questions about the role of the use of force in UN POs, a sphere of PO scholarship which also relates closely to scholarship concerning legitimacy in peacekeeping. This project hypothesizes that the use of force by conflict management-type UN POs, negatively impacts local perceptions of the legitimacy of these POs, with provisional answers focusing on PO impartiality, PO cooperation with non-UN actors deploying force, and perceptions of the appropriateness of a UN PO as an intervening actor. However, the findings of this project, based on a qualitative analysis of case studies of ongoing POs in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and Mali (MINUSMA), reveal that POs seem to be more frequently the subject of backlash at the local level when they are perceived as *not* using force, than when they do deploy force. This suggests that the *non-use* of force by UN POs, specifically in contexts of conflict management, risks having a negative effect on the perceived operational legitimacy of those POs. Moreover, the analysis argues that expectations at the local level created by the authorization of increasingly robust PO mandates, fuel backlash against those POs when they are perceived as not having deployed sufficient force. The project ultimately reveals the complex position of robust POs operating in violent settings: robust mandates alone do not create political willingness for POs to use force, but they do seem to bolster expectations at the local level that POs will deploy force, specifically to uphold civilian protection responsibilities, with greater frequency and intensity, thus widening an existing 'expectations gap' in peacekeeping.

Acknowledgements

List of Abbreviations

ADF	Allied Democratic Forces
CAR	Central African Republic
CMA	Coordination des mouvements de L'Azawad
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
EPON	Effectiveness of Peace Operations Network
FACA	Forces armées centrafricaines
FAMA	Forces armées maliennes
FARDC	Forces armées de la république démocratique du Congo
FIB	Force Intervention Brigade (MONUSCO)
HIPPO Report	Report of the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations
HRDDP	Human rights due diligence policy on United Nations support to non-United Nations security forces
IPI	International Peace Institute
KST	Kivu Security Tracker
MINUSCA	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic
MINUSMA	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali
MONUSCO	United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
M23	Mouvement du 23 mars
NGO	Non-governmental organization
PO	Peace Operation
PoC	Protection of Civilians
UPDF	Uganda People's Defence Force
UN	United Nations
UNAMIR	United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda
UNMISS	United Nations Mission in South Sudan
UNOCI	United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution

I. INTRODUCTION

In 2013 the United Nations (UN) Security Council (SC) authorized the creation of an "Intervention Brigade" as part of the authorized troops for the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO).[1] The "Intervention Brigade," referred to as the Force Intervention Brigade (FIB) in practice, was authorized in UNSC Resolution (UNSCR) 2098 to support MONUSCO in four capacities: protection of civilians, neutralization of armed groups, monitoring the implementation of an arms embargo, and provision of support to national and international judicial processes. The creation of the FIB was authorized within a context in which the UNSC recognized heightened tension and increased instability in the DRC caused by the actions of non-state armed actors and foreign armed groups and the preamble to the Council's resolution underscored its members' commitment to the implementation of the only agreed-upon framework for peace in the DRC: the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the DRC.[2] The FIB was tasked to facilitate conditions that would help to consolidate state authority, as made clear by the Brigade's explicit mandate of "reduc[ing] the threat posed by armed groups to state authority and civilian security."[3]

The example of the FIB in the DRC highlights larger issues emerging in the realm of UN Peace Operations (POs): specifically, POs face mounting pressures to proactively deploy force against increasingly violent armed actors. Firstly, the authorization of the FIB, as what the UNSC refers to as its first-ever authorized "offensive combat force," is indicative of the more challenging contexts in which UN POs are being deployed.[4] This is reflected in the 2015 Report of the High-Level Independent Panel on POs (HIPPO Report), which warns that UN missions are now increasingly adopting a "conflict management" role, as they are "deployed into more violent settings without the enabling frameworks that have previously driven success."[5] Conflict management POs contrast with those that might be labelled as "classic" or "traditional," whose

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[1] United Nations Security Council Resolution 2098, S/RES/2098, 2013, http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/2098.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid., §9.
[4] "Intervention Brigade Authorized as Security Council Grants Mandate Renewal for United Nations Mission in Democratic Republic of Congo," United Nations, 28 March 2013, https://www.un.org/press/en/2013/sc10964.doc.htm.
[5] "Report on the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations on uniting our strengths for peace: politics, partnership and people," Report No. A/70/95, United Nations, 2015: §109, https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2015/446.

mandates have largely emphasized monitoring, supervision, buffer, and verification functions.[6] Secondly, the FIB's deployment as an offensive component of MONUSCO showcases pressures which have forced UN POs to become increasingly robust. In fact, the 2008 "Capstone Doctrine" for UN Peacekeeping recognizes "robust peacekeeping" as the use of force by a UN PO with the aim of defending "its mandate against spoilers whose activities pose a threat to civilians or risk undermining the peace process."[7] Importantly, the mandates of these more robust POs extend beyond mere civilian protection and include the punishment and deterrence of spoilers. This type of mandate is not unique to the case of MONUSCO but can also be observed in the cases of the POs currently deployed in Mali (MINUSMA), South Sudan (UNMISS), and the Central African Republic (MINUSCA). In all three cases, POs have been tasked both with supporting conditions that are conducive to the implementation of specific political agreements and with the extension of state authority and civilian protection.[8]

These developments, when combined, raise particular challenges for the legitimacy and thus viability of POs. This analysis is specifically interested in the challenges which might arise for POs when they face increased pressure to deploy force, especially when that use of force may undermine proven frameworks for successful peacekeeping. While robust peacekeeping is not new in itself,[9] the cases of UN POs which might be characterized as robust, *and* which have been mandated to play a "conflict management" role, are more novel.[10] The implications for legitimacy

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[6] "United Nations Peacekeeping Operations Principles and Guidelines," Department of Peacekeeping Operations, 18 January 2008: 21, https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/capstone_eng_0.pdf; David M. Malone and Karin Wermester, "Boom and Bust? The Changing Nature of UN Peacekeeping," *International Peacekeeping* 7, no. 4 (2000): 38, doi: 10.1080/13533310008413862.

[7] "United Nations Peacekeeping Operations Principles and Guidelines," Department of Peacekeeping Operations, 18 January 2008: 98, https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/capstone_eng_0.pdf

[8] MINUSCA: United Nations Security Council Resolution 2552, S/RES/2552, 2020: §31(b)(i), http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/2552; UNMISS: United Nations Security Council Resolution 2567, S/RES/2567, 2021: §3(a), (c), http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/2567; MINUSMA: United Nations Security Council Resolution 2584, S/RES/2584, 2021: §30 (a),(c). http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/2584.

[9] Examples of POs which might be defined as robust include: UNOSOM II (Somalia: 1993-1995), UNAMSIL (Sierra Leone: 1999-2006), and UNOCI (Côte d'Ivoire: 2004-2017). Those POs which are both robust and undertaking a function of conflict management are: UNMISS, MINUSMA, MINUSCA, and MONUSCO.

[10] The 2008 "Capstone Doctrine" highlights several key characteristics of a robust peacekeeping operation: (a) the use of force at a tactical level (98); (b) authorization of the use of force by the PO by the UNSC (98); (c) the use of force to protect civilians or to uphold a peace process—including against spoilers; and (d) the requirement of the consent of host nation and/or main parties to the conflict to the presence of the PO (34). Those POs which might be described as robust *and* operating in contexts of conflict management not only uphold mandate responsibilities of civilian protection and deterrence of spoilers using force, but also operate in a situation of violent conflict where there is an absence "of a viable peace process or where the peace process has effectively broken down" (HIPPO Report 2015, §113). It should, however, be noted in drawing the distinction between both PO types that the language around 'conflict management' employed in the HIPPO Report oscillates between using the term to describe a type of

are twofold. To begin, in terms of mandate operationalization, it is more difficult for this type of PO to uphold the key three tenets of so-called 'classic peacekeeping'—consent of all parties to the mission, impartiality, and the minimum use of force—given that the use of force is necessary beyond the bounds of pure self-defense may be necessary for the effective implementation of the broader PO mandate.[11] This is particularly so where peace implementation entails forms of peace enforcement, and thus might require "the use of military assets to enforce a peace against the will of the parties to a conflict […]."[12] Second, the use of force in the context of such mandate defense carries with it the potential for negative impacts. For instance, in thinking specifically about perceptions of the PO as an impartial actor, Di Razza (2018), writing about MINUSMA, highlights instances "of MINUSMA interventions that have been officially pursued to protect civilians but ultimately favor one group against the other."[13] This analysis also develops the argument that the use of force by POs may ultimately reveal those POs to be inappropriate intervening actors, in terms of forceful intervention, in the violent settings in which those POs are deployed. This is fueled by the fact that POs are deployed in contexts today where they face pressures to take on the characteristics of counterterrorism or counterinsurgency forces, a type of use of force which a UN PO is ill-suited for and should not be asked to undertake.[14] It may even be the case that a PO has been deployed in a context where the groups engaging in the most violent behaviours in the conflict

around 'conflict management' employed in the HIPPO Report oscillates between using the term to describe a type of mission (§115), a type of operating scenario or conflict environment (§115), and a particular mission structure or posture (§117).

[11] Trevor Findlay, *The Use of Force in UN Peace* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 4; "United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: Principles and Guidelines," Department of Peacekeeping Operations, 18 January 2008: 34, https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/capstone_eng_0.pdf.

[12] Richard Caplan, "Peacekeeping / Peace Enforcement," Encyclopedia Princetoniensis (Princeton University), Accessed April 2022. https://pesd.princeton.edu/node/561#:~:text=Peacekeeping%20forces%20are%20therefore%20usually,instance%2C%20a%20ceasefire%20has%20failed. The risk of peacekeeping becoming more akin to peace enforcement is further confirmed by the HIPPO Report which implies that some of the UN's largest ongoing POs have taken on the characteristics of peace enforcement missions. The HIPPO report notes that multidimensional POs (a category which includes MINSUCA, MINUSMA, MONUSCO, and UNMISS) are "typically" peace implementation missions at their core (HIPPO Report 2015, §111), a mission-type which can be seen as a "variant" of peace enforcement (Findlay, footnote 12, 6). When mandated by the UNSC, missions engaged in peace enforcement can seek to "induce," or "coerce," parties to the conflict through "means which include the use or threat of military force" (Findlay, 6).

[13] Namie Di Razza, "Protecting Civilians in the Context of Violent Extremism: The Dilemmas of UN Peacekeeping in Mali," International Peace Institute, 2018: 31. https://www.ipinst.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/1810_POC-in-the-Context-of-Violent-Extremism.pdf.

[14] "Transitioning from stabilization to peace: An independent strategic review of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo," S/2019/842, 25 October 2019: §71. https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N19/337/60/PDF/N1933760.pdf?OpenElement; Di Razza, "Protecting Civilians in the Context of Violent Extremism," 30.

are not party to the agreement for which the PO is providing implementation support. This points to how the military component of POs can come to "overshadow" their civilian components, possibly at the cost of the political work of POs.[15]

As analysts have noted, the possible negative effects of the use of force by POs are relevant not only for the particular conflict context, but also for the broader standing of POs in the contemporary era.[16] Indeed, the UN's own "Capstone Doctrine," formally the UN Peacekeeping Operations Principles and Guidelines, warns broadly of the "unforeseen circumstances" of the use of force by UN POs.[17] This thesis is centrally concerned with such effects at a more local level, by examining whether the mandated use of force by POs in conflict management roles might change the ways in which the local population views these missions. This project's focus on legitimacy at the local level is informed by Jeni Whalan's (2013) dual observations that "[POs] aim to change the behaviour of a variety of local actors in ways that promote peace and security" and that "the decisions and actions of local actors determine the outcomes of [POs] in important ways […]."[18] Both observations point to the importance of the legitimacy of POs at the local level, insofar as a PO perceived negatively in terms of its legitimacy will likely struggle in both changing behaviour at the local level and successfully cooperating with actors at the local level to secure positive political outcomes. The project is organized around two central research questions: *Does the use of force by UN POs weaken the local legitimacy of those operations? If so, how?*

II. FRAMING THE PROJECT'S RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The first aim of the project is to investigate whether the use of force by UN POs weakens the local legitimacy of those operations. However, this task also implicitly raises the question of whether the use of force by UN POs might strengthen the local legitimacy of those operations. For instance, in the DRC, we might consider the FIB's participation in joint operations with Congolese Armed Forces (FARDC) against the Mouvement du 23 mars (M23) in 2013, which resulted in the armed group's 'defeat.' The 2019 assessment of MONUSCO by the Evaluating Peace Operations

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[15] "Transitioning from stabilization to peace: An independent strategic review of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo," S/2019/842, 25 October 2019: §75. https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N19/337/60/PDF/N1933760.pdf?OpenElement.

[16] Findlay, *The Use of Force in UN Peace,* 1.

[17] "United Nations Peacekeeping Operations Principles and Guidelines," Department of Peacekeeping Operations, 18 January 2008: 35, https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/capstone_eng_0.pdf.

[18] Jeni Whalan, *How Peace Operations Work: Power, Legitimacy, and Effectiveness,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 21; 33.

Network (EPON) notes that "[…] in the aftermath of [the FIB's] offensive against the M23, MONUSCO enjoyed a moment of credibility that impacted on the entire Mission […]."[19] To consider whether the use of force by a PO might bolster its local legitimacy implies that a PO's *non-use* of force might be detrimental to its locally perceived legitimacy. UN POs have persistently faced criticism, including at the local level, for failing to intervene to protect civilians.[20] The possible argument here, in contrast to the project's hypotheses, is that UN POs may incur reputational costs for failing to intervene on the grounds of civilian protection, specifically where there is a strong *expectation* at the local level that the UN PO would intervene. A secondary question, which will ultimately be explored in this thesis, concerns whether this expectation may in fact be stronger when a PO has a robust form.

Secondly, the framing of this project needs to acknowledge that a multitude of factors interact to inform local perceptions of a PO's legitimacy, which therefore makes it challenging to isolate the particular effect of a PO's use of force.[21] In focusing on one specific legitimacy relationship, this project does not ignore that alternative explanations exist regarding why a UN PO may experience a decline in its locally perceived legitimacy. For instance, we might consider how the moral authority of the PO, which risks being undermined by allegations of PO personnel misconduct, or how the formal mandate of the PO itself, and consequently the actors which it empowers, are both related to the local legitimacy perceptions of the PO.[22] While this project will primarily investigate the question of a positive or negative relationship existing between PO legitimacy and use of force, it recognizes that such a relationship is embedded within, and exists parallel to, various other relationships that inform perceptions of a PO's legitimacy. Moreover, it considers that the relative importance of the PO's use of force in terms of shaping legitimacy perceptions may vary over time as other factors fluctuate in importance in PO legitimacy

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[19] Alexandra Novosseloff, Adriana E. Abdenur, Thomas Mandrup, and Aaron Pangburn, "Assessing the Effectiveness of the UN Mission in the DRC," Effectiveness of Peace Operations Network – Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, 2019: 105. https://effectivepeaceops.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/EPON-MONUSCO-LowRes.pdf.

[20] Hanna Bourgeois, "Failure to Protect Civilians in the Context of UN Peace Operations: A Question of Accountability?" EJIL: Talk! – Blog of the European Journal of International Law, 5 September 2018. https://www.ejiltalk.org/failure-to-protect-civilians-in-the-context-of-un-peace-operations-a-question-of-accountability/.

[21] Interview with a peace operations researcher in Paris, 20 April 2022.

[22] Sharon Wiharta, "The Legitimacy of Peace Operations," in *SIPRI Yearbook 2009: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security*, (Stockholm: SIPRI, 2009), 106; 97. https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/SIPRIYB0903.pdf.

evaluations at the local level. Indeed, the POs of concern in this analysis, those operating in conflict management contexts, have been operating for years in shifting environments. These POs have already lived "many lives," an idea captured in Novosseloff's (2018) study of the UN Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI), where the idea of a 'life' refers to a distinct "stage" of the PO.[23] Through this acknowledgement that POs have more than one 'life,' it is possible that in one of those lives a PO's use of force is a more salient factor informing legitimacy perceptions of that PO, than in another life. It is also possible that in one life the PO's use of force positively affects legitimacy perceptions of the mission, and in another life a negative relationship is observed. As I will show in the case of MONUSCO, for example, the PO's use of force in its joint offensive against the M23 had different results in terms of the PO's legitimacy when compared to the PO's robust responses, or lack thereof, to the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF).

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

There are two large bodies of literature which are valuable in situating my project and informing my approach to answering my central research questions . Firstly, the UN has produced its own in-house assessments of PO effectiveness that include material on issues related to legitimacy. The relationship between POs and the use of force has historically been fraught with tension and controversy. The "minimum use of force," meaning the use of force "only as a last resort and only in self-defence" has been one of three key characteristics of UN POs.[24] As peacekeeping has developed and POs have been deployed in increasingly complex conflicts, the question of the use of force within POs has re-emerged within discussions of 'peace enforcement.' de Coning highlights the distinction between peace enforcement and classic peacekeeping as being the fact that the latter is constrained to defensive action, whereas the former may undertake offensive actions, as authorized by the UNSC.[25] The issue of how force has been employed and should be employed within POs has therefore become increasingly prominent in the past several decades within the UN itself,[26] and there have been increased warnings that the use of force

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[23] Alexandra Novosseloff, "The Many Lives of a Peacekeeping Mission: The UN Operation in Côte d'Ivoire," International Peace Institute, 2018: 1. https://www.ipinst.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/1806_Many-Lives-of-a-Peacekeeping-Mission.pdf.

[24] Findlay, *The Use of Force in UN Peace,* 4.

[25] Cedric de Coning, "Peace Enforcement in Africa: Doctrinal distinctions between the African Union and United Nations," *Contemporary Security Policy* 38, no. 1 (2017): 147. https://doi.org/10.1080/13523260.2017.1283108.

[26] "Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (Brahimi Report)," A/55/305-S/2000/809, 21 August 2000. https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/55/305; "United Nations Peacekeeping Operations

(beyond self-defence) may ultimately undermine the core tenets of POs. We see these concerns coming to fruition within the context of "stabilization missions" in particular, which have been authorized in states experiencing ongoing conflict without a concrete definition of what 'stabilization' meaningfully consists of.[27] Aoi, de Coning, and Karlsrud (2017) adopt their definition, of stabilization as a "'process' that builds a political settlement and framework for a stable state, not to a concrete end-state," from a report produced by the British Ministry of Defence report.[28] Importantly, "[s]tabilization presupposes a lack of political solution to the conflict […],"[29] a characteristic which aligns with the HIPPO Report's conception of contexts of conflict management.

Secondly, as noted earlier, there is an important body of literature, produced by scholars such as Sarah Von Billerbeck (2015, 2017) and Jeni Whalan (2013, 2017) which addresses questions of legitimacy in relation to UN POs.[30] Von Billerbeck focuses specifically on the question of local ownership in peacekeeping and comments on the effectiveness of POs more broadly.[31] Importantly, Von Billerbeck concludes that there is a distinction between the UN's understanding of local ownership, and how local ownership "works in discourse," and what "national actors" understand local ownership to be,[32] which has implications for the legitimacy of POs. A similar tension, relating to the use of force specifically, is encapsulated in Howard's

Principles and Guidelines," Department of Peacekeeping Operations, 18 January 2008: 1-100. https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/capstone_eng_0.pdf; "Report on the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations on uniting our strengths for peace: politics, partnership and people," Report No. A/70/95, United Nations, 2015: 1-104. https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2015/446; Carlos Alberto dos Santos Cruz, "Improving Security of United Nations Peacekeepers: We need to change the way we are doing business," United Nations – Independent Report, 19 December 2017: 1-35. https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/improving_security_of_united_nations_peacekeepers_report.pdf.

[27] "Report on the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations on uniting our strengths for peace: politics, partnership and people," Report No. A/70/95, United Nations, 2015: §114. https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2015/446.

[28] Chiyuki Aoi, Cedric de Coning, and John Karlsrud, "Introduction: Addressing the emerging gap between concepts, doctrine, and practice in UN peacekeeping operations," in *UN Peacekeeping Doctrine in a New Era: Adapting to Stabilisation, Protection and New Threats*, edited by Cedric de Coning, Chiyuki Aoi, and John Karlsrud, (London: Routledge, 2017), 4-5. eBook.

[29] Ibid., 5.

[30] Sarah B. K. Von Billerbeck, "Local Ownership and UN Peacebuilding: Discourse versus Operationalization," *Global Governance* 21, no. 2 (2015): 299-216; Sarah B. K. Von Billerbeck, *Whose Peace? Local Ownership & United Nations Peacekeeping* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017); Jeni Whalan, *How Peace Operations Work: Power, Legitimacy, and Effectiveness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Jeni Whalan, "The Local Legitimacy of Peacekeepers," *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 11, no. 3 (2017): 306-320.

[31] Sarah B. K. Von Billerbeck, *Whose Peace? Local Ownership & United Nations Peacekeeping* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 11.

[32] Ibid., 46-47

conclusion that "[a]uthorizing peacekeepers with a compellent mandate has not endowed them with the capacity or legitimacy to use force effectively."[33] In addition, Von Billerbeck's work speaks to how actions undertaken by a PO might ultimately undermine the PO's legitimacy, which is a mechanism at the heart of this project. Von Billerbeck's insight regarding differences in UN reporting on local ownership and local ownership as it manifests will thus inform the project's method by affirming that capturing a conception of local perceptions of a PO's legitimacy will need to go beyond how a given UN mission *itself* conceives of the local perception of its legitimacy.

Whalan's work (2013) also serves as an important starting point for this project, both conceptually and empirically. Two contributions from Whalan's work are especially helpful. Firstly, Whalan makes a clear connection between perceived mission legitimacy and the effectiveness of the mission.[34] Secondly, Whalan highlights how legitimacy is influenced by both formal and informal aspects of the PO itself, with "rules and structures" as key formal elements and "interactions" as informal aspects.[35] This insight informs the project's method, insofar as I sought to investigate the informal aspects of POs by deploying interviews as part of its methodology.

Lastly, Paddon Rhoads' recent work which focuses on the principle of impartiality in UN peacekeeping offers insightful analysis on 'robust' peacekeeping in contexts of conflict management.[36] Crucially, Paddon Rhoads speaks to the tension which seems to exist between explicitly authorized 'robust' POs and the principle of non-use of force which underlies UN peacekeeping doctrine.[37] Practically, it is important to consider how such a tension might relate to the willingness of different troop-contributing countries to have their personnel deploying force in the field.[38]

This overview of the existing literature forms a helpful foundation for the research that I will undertake. Specifically, Whalan and Von Billerbeck's contributions to the literature play an important role in shaping the methodological approach of the project, and Whalan's writings have

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[33] Lise Morjé Howard, *Power in Peacekeeping* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 199.
[34] Jeni Whalan, *How Peace Operations Work: Power, Legitimacy, and Effectiveness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013, 75.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Emily Paddon Rhoads, *Taking Sides in Peacekeeping: Impartiality and the Future of the United Nations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 68.
[37] Ibid., 77.
[38] John Karlsrud, *The UN at War: Peace Operations in a New Era* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 19.

also greatly informed this project's conception of PO legitimacy, which will be developed in the following section. Howard and Paddon Rhoads' scholarship points to the challenges which robust POs currently face in terms of a mandate operationalization, an idea that will be seriously elaborated in the discussion of the project's hypotheses. There are two principal gaps identified in the literature in which this project stands to contribute. Firstly, this project's focus on the category of operational legitimacy—further defined below—will contribute to a better understanding of a legitimacy-type which is infrequently discussed in the PO-specific, legitimacy scholarship. Secondly, the project's specific selection of cases of POs taking on roles of conflict management will contribute to the broader understanding of the contexts in which these POs operate. The UN acknowledges that it has authorized conflict management POs, but it, and the literature, seem unsure regarding whether the mandates of these POs are sustainable and feasible.

IV. DEFINING LEGITIMACY

As part of answering both research questions, this thesis begins by conceptualizing legitimacy in the context of UN POs. Barnett & Finnemore (2004), Hurd (1999, 2008), and Zaum (2013) study the concept of legitimacy in relation to international organizations and importantly highlight the complex relationship between the concepts of legitimacy, power, and authority.[39] Hurd helpfully defines legitimacy as "the belief by an actor that a rule or institution ought to be obeyed."[40] Zaum adds that it is specifically "moral and other socially embedded beliefs" which legitimate the power of an institution.[41] While Barnett & Finnemore employ the language of authority at a greater frequency than the language of legitimacy, the relation between both concepts is clear when we consider Zaum's argument that an organization's "practices of legitimation" include its claims to authority, and Hurd's point that perceived legitimacy effectively acts as a precursor to the recognized authority of a given organization.[42] A key takeaway from this literature is that both legitimacy and authority are fundamentally relational and embedded within social

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[39] Michael, Barnett and Martha Finnemore *Rules for the World: International Organizations in Global Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004). https://doi.org/10.7591/9780801465161; Ian Hurd, "Legitimacy and Authority in International Politics," *International Organization* 53, no. 2 (1999): 379-408; Ian Hurd, *After Anarchy: Legitimacy and Power in the United Nations Security Council* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008); Zaum, Dominik Zaum, *Legitimating International Organizations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).
[40] Hurd, *After Anarchy*, 30.
[41] Zaum, *Legitimating International Organizations,* 9.
[42] Zaum, *Legitimating International Organizations*, 10; Ian Hurd, "Legitimacy and Authority in International Politics," *International Organization* 53, no. 2 (1999): 381.

practices,[43] which points to the social aspect of legitimacy underlying this project which studies the relationship between UN POs and local populations.

Further studies have highlighted the fact that legitimacy perceptions can change across different audiences. Von Billerbeck, for example, notes that in relation to UN POs there are many actors who might act as audiences for judging their legitimacy, Von Billerbeck & Gippert add that legitimacy perceptions can actually conflict, as certain actions and behaviours may become highly contentious among diverse audiences.[44] For instance, we might consider the perspectives and legitimacy criterion of different political actors in the field: in the case of MONUSCO, an EPON report comments on the difficulty of maintaining political alliances in the field.[45] As will be discussed later, the concept of legitimacy audiences is of great importance for this project and has implications for the proposed research method.

Von Billerbeck (2017) and Whalan (2013) form part of a more recent body of literature which looks specifically at the legitimacy of UN POs with respect to local audiences.[46] Whalan argues that the legitimacy of a PO is "defined by the belief that a peace operation and its goals are right, fair, and appropriate within a particular normative context."[47] She further elaborates and unpacks this conception of legitimacy, by distinguishing between source legitimacy, substantive legitimacy, and procedural legitimacy, which mirrors the strategy adopted by scholars, such as Schmidt (2013), studying the legitimacy of international organizations like the European Union.[48] In this thesis, I am most interested in studying local perceptions of what might be termed as "operational legitimacy," *which refers to the perceived appropriateness of the means through which a UN PO operationalizes its mandate responsibilities.* Defining the term in such a way has two important implications. Firstly, the definition rightly suggests that there are multiple means

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[43] Hurd, *After Anarchy*, 30; Barnett and Finnemore, *Rules for the World*, 20; Zaum, *Legitimating International Organizations,* 10.

[44] Von Billerbeck, *Whose Peace? Local Ownership & United Nations Peacekeeping*, 116; Sarah B. K. Von Billerbeck and Birte Julia Gippert, "Legitimacy in Conflict: Concepts, Practices, Challenges," *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 11, no. 3 (2017): 277. https://doi.org/10.1080/17502977.2017.1357701.

[45] Alexandra Novosseloff, Adriana E. Abdenur, Thomas Mandrup, and Aaron Pangburn, "Executive Summary: Assessing the Effectiveness of the UN Missions in the DRC," Effectiveness of Peace Operations Network – Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, 2019: 5. https://effectivepeaceops.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/EPON-MONUSCO-Report-Exec-Summary.pdf.

[46] Von Billerbeck, *Whose Peace? Local Ownership & United Nations Peacekeeping*; Whalan, *How Peace Operations Work*.

[47] Whalan, *How Peace Operations Work,* 6

[48] Whalan, *How Peace Operations Work,* 65; Vivien A. Schmidt, "Democracy and Legitimacy in the European Union Revisited: Input, Output *and* 'Throughput.'" *Political Studies* 61, (2013): 4-5. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-9248.2012.00962.x.

through which a UN PO might operationalize its mandate responsibilities, and more specifically, there are multiple ways through which a PO might operationalize a single aspect of its mandate. Regarding the former point, this thesis is centrally concerned with the use of force as a means of mandate operationalization; regarding the latter, it makes a distinction between an offensive attack undertaken by the forces within a mission, and the PO's broader "protection through projection" strategy, as two different means of operationalizing the PO's specific civilian protection responsibilities. Secondly, the definition implies that choices are made within POs regarding the means through which a given mandate responsibility will be operationalized. It then follows that expectations will develop at the local level regarding the appropriateness of those different means, based on the specific context of the field in which the PO operates. The argument that these local level expectations influence assessments of the appropriateness of a PO's means of mandate operationalization, which in turn affects the local legitimacy perceptions of that PO, is distinct from a separate question of whether those *expectations* themselves are legitimate.[49]

The concept of operational legitimacy differs from what Whalan calls "substantive legitimacy," or what is sometimes referred to as "output legitimacy,"[50] which focuses on analyzing the effectiveness of a PO in building and sustaining peace.[51] This project's research question is less interested in assessing the broader outcomes of the use of force—alongside other tactics of the POs—in terms of meeting the original goals of the PO, and it is instead more interested in investigating the consequences of the *use of force itself*. In this sense, while I concede that a locally perceived decline in operational legitimacy might impact the PO's overall effectiveness, for instance by reducing the willingness of local actors to collaborate with the PO in the political sphere of the mission's mandate, this question of outcomes is not at the core of my project. I care most about how operational legitimacy is weakened in the first place.

Furthermore, while this project's definition of operational legitimacy borrows from Whalan's notion of procedural legitimacy, important distinctions persist between both concepts. Whalan's definition of procedural legitimacy is unsuitable for this project because it emphasizes a

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[49] Alexander Brown, "A Theory of Legitimate Expectations," *The Journal of Political Philosophy* 25, no. 4 (2017): 435-460. doi: 10.1111/jopp.12135 – Brown (2017) outlines three characteristics of a "legitimate expectation": (1) they are "*predictive*," insofar as they are "partially constituted by *beliefs* or *predictions* about what will or will not happen in the future" (435); (2) they are "prescriptive" (436); and (3) they are "justifiable" (436). The two latter characteristics of a legitimate expectation are further elaborated in the body of my analysis.

[50] Vivien A. Schmidt, "Democracy and Legitimacy in the European Union Revisited: Input, Output *and* 'Throughput.'" *Political Studies* 61, (2013): 4-5. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-9248.2012.00962.x.

[51] Whalan, *How Peace Operations Work,* 68.

broader set of legitimating strategies for POs, beyond the boundaries of operational legitimacy per se. Her inclusion of "participation, consultation, and accountability" as strategies of legitimation, while consistent with other accounts of the procedural legitimacy of international organizations (Suchman 1995), are less relevant for this project's study of operational legitimacy, which does not investigate *how* decisions are reached within the context of UN POs to employ military means.[52] Here, the decision of a given PO to robustly employ the use of force is taken as a given, since PO case studies will explicitly be selected based on their UNSC-authorized robust mandates. Ultimately, my own concept of operational legitimacy borrows from Schmidt's category of "throughput legitimacy," which concerns the "space between the political input and the policy output,"[53] whereas Whalan's conception of procedural legitimacy, with its focus on participation and accountability, more closely resembles a form of "input legitimacy."[54]

V. HYPOTHESES

Drawing on relevant theoretical literature and preliminary empirical observations, this project addresses the second research question by proposing three possible ways, or mechanisms, through which the use of force by a UN PO might negatively affect local perceptions of its operational legitimacy.

i. The Erosion of Impartiality

The first mechanism that might contribute to a decline of local perceptions of a PO's operational legitimacy is rooted in the context characterizing conflict management-type POs, where mandates often require that peacekeepers use force in ways that go beyond "defence of the mission," thereby giving rise to questions about impartiality.[55] The project's first hypothesis [H$_1$]

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[52] Whalan, *How Peace Operations Work,* 71; Mark Suchman, "Managing Legitimacy: Strategic and Institutional Approaches," *The Academy of Management Review* 20, no. 3 (1995): 580. http://www.jstor.com/stable/258788. – Suchman, in discussing procedural legitimacy, highlights "socially accepted techniques" as a strategy of legitimation in the context of procedural legitimacy (580), which is reflected in Whalan's flagging of accountability as a strategy of procedural legitimation.

[53] Vivien A. Schmidt, "Democracy and Legitimacy in the European Union Revisited: Input, Output *and* 'Throughput.'" *Political Studies* 61, (2013): 5. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-9248.2012.00962.x.

[54] Ibid., 4.

[55] Findlay, *The Use of Force in UN Peace,* 4; "Report on the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations on uniting our strengths for peace: politics, partnership and people," Report No. A/70/95, United Nations, 2015: 12. https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2015/446.

thus suggests that *if a PO uses force, especially beyond strict self-defence of the mission, then an erosion of local perceptions of the POs impartiality will occur, which can, in turn, lead to declining perceptions of the PO's operational legitimacy at the local level.* It seems that there is a greater likelihood of POs being perceived as increasingly partial when they are authorized to deploy, and do deploy, force offensively, as opposed to strictly defensively. One instance of this mechanism at work might be the case of the UN PO in Côte d'Ivoire (2004-2017), where the PO's positioning between two warring factions in the aftermath of divisive elections ultimately served to undermine the perceived impartiality of the mission.[56] The example of UNOCI highlights the risk that the perceived partiality of PO may in turn negatively impact the local perception, and thus potentially the legitimacy, of the mission. However, it is also important to note that this example does not perfectly encapsulate the notion of a PO deploying force in an offensive capacity, as opposed to a defensive one.

The risk that an erosion of perceived PO impartiality seems likely to pose to local legitimacy perceptions is especially salient if we consider three further factors. First, as Paddon Rhoads argues, impartiality is an "intersubjectively held [belief]," which means that perceptions of partiality and impartiality can vary across different audiences.[57] This is seen in the UNOCI example where different segments of Ivorian society, pro-Ouattara and pro-Gbago, viewed the PO's interventions differently. The very fact that perceptions of PO partiality may vary across audiences suggests that there is greater potential for one of those perspectives to question the impartiality of the mission.

Second, as emphasized by the UN's "Brahimi Report" (2000),[58] impartiality for UN operations entails "adherence to the principles of the Charter" and is "not the same as neutrality or equal treatment of all parties in all cases for all time, which can amount to a policy of

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[56] Alexandra, Novosseloff. "The Many Lives of a Peacekeeping Mission: The UN Operation in Côte d'Ivoire," International Peace Institute, 2018: 18. https://www.ipinst.org/wp content/uploads/2018/06/1806_Many-Lives-of-a-Peacekeeping-Mission.pdf. – The election loss of incumbent President Laurent Gbago in 2010 in the second round of elections, which was certified by the state's Independent Electoral Commission and the PO's Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG), placed the PO in the crossfire of Gbago's forces and led Gbago to accuse the PO of acting in support of "rebel forces" (Novosseloff 2018, 18). UNOCI was effectively forced to adopt a robust position in regard to its protection of Alassane Ouattara, the winner of the election, from pro-Gbago forces (Butler 2015, 256). The position of UNOCI in relation to pro-Gbago and pro-Ouattara forces was made more delicate in light of UNOCI's interventions against pro-Gbago forces in late March and early April of 2011 (Butler 2015, 258).

[57] Paddon Rhoads, *Taking Sides in Peacekeeping*, 28.

[58] "Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations."

appeasement."[59] This interpretation of impartiality was borne out of PO experiences which exposed the errors of what Paddon Rhoads calls a "passively impartial" posture, which shaped the UN's PO's posture in Rwanda in 1994.[60] In this case, UNAMIR, under orders from New York, did not intervene meaningfully to prevent the murder of over 800,000 Tutsis and Hutu moderates by Hutu extremists. The UN's impartiality as it manifests today is thus more active in terms of mandate implementation and the prevention of, and response to, violence which undermines ongoing, fragile peace processes.[61] If we take this organizational conception of impartiality into account, then the risk of changing local perceptions of impartiality might exist among actors that conflate neutrality and impartiality. In certain contexts, local actors may expect a UN PO to remain neutral (i.e., not engage in the use of force against any 'side') as a signal of its impartiality, which would in fact contest the mandate responsibilities of the UN PO, as well as its internalized conception of impartiality. As a result, the PO's use of force might be perceived by some segments of the local population as an inappropriate operationalization of mandate responsibilities.

A third and final factor associated with the risk of legitimacy loss through the erosion of impartiality relates to the 'classic' peacekeeping principle of consent. As noted in the HIPPO Report, in many contemporary conflict management settings "there may be practical obstacles to obtaining consent beyond that of the Government,"[62] thereby challenging the capacity of a PO to obtain consent from the main parties to a conflict. The impartiality of today's stabilization operations is particularly subject to this challenge,[63] since in these contexts, POs are quite literally working with national armies in order to "advance the campaign" of one of the "belligerents" implicated in the civil conflict in which the PO is intervening.[64]

ii. Proximity and 'Contamination'

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[59] "Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (Brahimi Report)," A/55/305-S/2000/809, 21 August 2000: §50, https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/55/305.

[60] Paddon Rhoads, *Taking Sides in Peacekeeping*, 47.

[61] Ibid., 65-67.

[62] "Report on the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations on uniting our strengths for peace: politics, partnership and people," Report No. A/70/95, United Nations, 2015: §127. https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2015/446.

[63] Cedric de Coning, "The Future of UN Peace Operations: Principles Adaptation Through Phases of Contraction, Moderation, and Renewal," *Contemporary Security Policy* 42, no. 2 (2021): 217. https://doi.org/10.1080/13523260.2021.1894021.

[64] Lisa Hultman, Jacob. D. Kathman, and Megan Shannon, *Peacekeeping in the Midst of War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 51. eBook.

The second mechanism that might give rise to a loss of operational legitimacy arises from situations where contemporary POs deploy force parallel to other actors engaged in the use of force as well,[65] and in support of, or in cooperation with, national security forces. Regarding the former case, The HIPPO Report explicitly recognizes the increasing need of UN POs to collaborate with actors "beyond the UN" to ensure mandate implementation, including "Member states and regional partners."[66] However, the report also points to potential risks for a UN PO that is deployed "in parallel with" a non-UN offensive force, by flagging that in these contexts "a clear division of labour and distinction of roles must guide their respective operations."[67] MINUSMA is a clear example of case in which a UN PO is authorized to use force in a context in which non-UN actors, such as French forces and the G5 Sahel Joint Force, have similarly engaged in the use of force.[68] This increased proximity between the PO and non-UN forces may blur the distinctions between those forces in such a way that could undermine local perceptions of the legitimacy of the PO: expectations of the PO at the local level may now may be shaped by the intervention of non-UN forces in the field.[69]

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[65] Jaïr van der Lijn et al., "Executive Summary: Assessing the Effectiveness of the United Nations Mission in Mali," Effectiveness of Peace Operations Network – Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, 2019: 4. https://effectivepeaceops.net/wpcontent/uploads/2019/05/EPON-MINUSMA-Report-Exec-Summary.pdf.

[66] "Report on the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations on uniting our strengths for peace: politics, partnership and people," Report No. A/70/95, United Nations, 2015: §192. https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2015/446.

[67] Ibid., 12.

[68] United Nations Security Council Resolution 2584, S/RES/2584, 2021. http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/2584; Namie Di Razza, "Protecting Civilians in the Context of Violent Extremism: The Dilemmas of UN Peacekeeping in Mali," International Peace Institute, 2018: 30. https://www.ipinst.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/1810_POC-in-the-Context-of-Violent-Extremism.pdf.

[69] Beyond MINUSMA, two other empirical examples come to mind and might helpfully illustrate this risk. Firstly, we might think of the case of UNAMIR and French Opération Turquoise. Since the beginning of the genocide, France adopted a "pro-Hutu policy in Rwanda" and would not use its position on the UNSC or its knowledge of events on the ground to gather support for a robust UN intervention (Wallis 2006, 107). As the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) gained ground against the French-backed Forces armées rwandaises (FAR), French calculations in regard to intervening changed and they received UN authorization to intervene (Wallis 2006, 128). Considering the 'contamination risk' mechanism I propose, is it possible that French complicity in crimes perpetrated by the *génocidaires*, as part of what was a sanctioned intervention, eroded the legitimacy of the PO, vis-à-vis the RPF, which consequently undermined UNAMIR's political work? I deploy this example while also recognizing that UNAMIR was not authorized with a robust mandate in the way that POs at the center of my project have been. Secondly, a similar mechanism might be observed in the case of MINUSCA. Howard highlights the fact that French forces "departed in the midst of a sexual abuse scandal" (2019a). The author later highlights how MINUSCA's legitimacy has suffered because of past abuse perpetrated by peacekeepers (specifically in the 2015-2016 period). Is it possible that the specific circumstances of the withdrawal of French special forces might have further undermined the PO's legitimacy? I recognize that this second example is also imperfect given that the predicted decline in PO legitimacy is not a consequence of the PO's use of force.

I also consider that this same mechanism might also arise in relation to a PO's cooperation with national security and military forces, which has become an integral component of PO mandates in terms of bettering the security situation in operating fields and creating conditions which are conducive to the eventual exit of the PO. Examples include the UN's cooperation with actors such as the Forces armées de la république démocratique du Congo (FARDC) in the Demoractic Republic of the Congo (DRC) or the Forces armées centrafricaines (FACA) in the Central African Republic (CAR). UN policy already explicitly acknowledges the potential for 'contamination risk' in the cooperation of POs with these types of force, as reflected in the organization's "Human rights due diligence policy on United Nations support to non-United Nations security forces" (HRDDP). This policy stipulates the kind of support that POs, as UN support-giving entities, can provide to recipient entities, and notes that adherence to the policy is important if the legitimacy of UN POs is to be maintained.[70] As part of the policy, UN POs must engage in a risk assessment, prior to support being given, "of the recipient entity committing grave violations of international humanitarian law, human rights law or refugee law."[71] Moreover, an "effective implementation framework" must include "procedures for monitoring the recipient entity's compliance" with the aforementioned bodies of international law.[72] As analysts have noted, however, HRDDP implementation is imperfect, which suggests that the risk of a 'contamination' is an ongoing challenge for the legitimacy of UN POs.[73] The second hypothesis [H$_2$] therefore suggests that *when a PO intervenes in a context in which other actors are deploying force—and those actors are viewed negatively by the local population—then the PO's association with these actors can lead to a decrease in local perceptions of the mission's operational legitimacy.* The potential of this mechanism to contribute to a decrease in perceptions of the PO's legitimacy might be referred to as a 'contamination problem.' The risk posed by such a problem

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[70] "Human rights due diligence policy on United Nations support to non-United Nations security forces," A/67/775 – S/2013/110, United Nations, 5 March 2013: §3. https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/HRBodies/SP/AMeetings/20thsession/IdenticalLetterSG25Feb2013_en.pdf.

[71] Ibid., §2(a).

[72] Ibid., §2(c)(i).

[73] Di Razza, "Protecting Civilians in the Context of Violent Extremism," 36; 2018, 36; Levine-Spound, Daniel. "Enabling Support by Mitigating Risk: MONUSCO's Implementation of the Human Rights and Due Diligence Policy in the Democratic Republic of the Congo," Center for Civilians in Conflict, June 2020: 2. https://civiliansinconflict.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/CIVIC_HRDDP_Report_Final-Web-1.pdf.

seems especially salient in light of recent budget constraints which increase the chances of UN POs working alongside other actors.[74]

iii. <u>Challenges to Expertise</u>

The third mechanism that could change local perceptions of the operational legitimacy of UN POs arises from the ways in which the use of force, and specifically, the use of force without positive and visible results, affects the perceived expertise of the PO. Here, a positive or visible result might consist of the PO's direct prevention of an attack by an armed group against civilians, or the PO's armed intervention during an attack against civilians. A robust PO might also successfully contribute to an offensive to defeat an armed group or push an armed group out of a certain piece of territory. The successful use of force by a PO relates to perceptions of its expertise, and expertise has been identified more broadly in the scholarship as a key source of authority for international organizations.[75] In this case, it is not judgements about the overall effectiveness of the PO which are doing the work, as a project focused on output or substantive legitimacy may suggest, but instead the fact that a lack of tangible results from the PO's use of force, in the short-to-medium term, calls into question whether it is "the right organization for the job."[76] Essentially, the PO's use of force might effectively reveal that it is an inappropriate, or non-suitable actor for the job at hand. The PO may technically possess a sufficient military competence to deploy force, but it does not appear to do so in such a way which aligns with the PO's mandated responsibilities, such as civilian protection. The final hypothesis [H$_3$] thus suggests that *when a UN PO's use of force does not seem to produce substantial, visible results, then skepticism about the PO's military capacity will lead to a decline in local perceptions of the mission's operational legitimacy.*

There are two specific ways in which this mechanism might work. Firstly, it is possible that the perceived expertise of the PO decreases due a widening gap between the PO's *form* and *function*.[77] The perceived operational legitimacy of the PO will be reduced when its form, as a robust PO, does not seem to successfully follow its functions: the punishment of spoilers and protection of civilians. The PO's use of force might effectively expose it as a unsuitable actor in

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[74] de Coning, "The Future of UN Peace Operations," 213.
[75] Barnett and Finnemore, *Rules for the World*, 24; Zaum, *Legitimating International Organizations,* 9.
[76] Suchman, "Managing Legitimacy," 581.
[77] Touko Piiparinen, "The Interventionist Turn of UN Peacekeeping: New Western Politics of Protection or Bureaucratic Mission Creep?" *Journal of Human Rights* 15, no. 1 (2016): 109. https://doi.org/10.1080/14754835.2015.1062721.

situations where another actor that can deploy force may be more appropriate, which would in turn reduce the perceived operational legitimacy of the PO.[78] This risk could be heightened by the dynamic outlined above, in the discussion of H$_2$, regarding the PO's proximity to other actors deploying offensive force, as the PO might be working alongside a force that comes to be seen as having greater expertise in deploying force.

The second process is broader and could occur if the continued use of force by those POs taking on roles of conflict management begins to undermine the principle of using force as a last resort.[79] This would then call into question whether the robust stance of the PO is the appropriate means of operationalizing its mandate. An example is the FIB operating in the DRC as part of MONUSCO, which, while initially expected to be a "temporary mechanism,"[80] actually became "semi-permanent" and struggled to form a cohesive exit strategy.[81] The FIB's continual use of force without the expected outcomes in the short-term, may have undermined the broader operational legitimacy of the PO by raising questions about whether it had sufficient expertise to 'get the job done.'

VI. METHODOLOGY

In order to examine the explanatory power of these hypotheses, I use a qualitative study of the nature and evolution of local legitimacy perceptions in the cases of MONUSCO and MINUSMA. Assessing local perceptions of legitimacy, and how they might change as a result of

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[78] A helpful empirical to illustrate this mechanism might be identified in the case of MINUSCA where French forces were deployed with significant airpower and adopted a military position in which spoilers understood that if they attacked civilians they would face serious consequences (Howard 2019a). Conversely, and has Howard highlights, MINUSCA's legitimacy has suffered because it is seen as being unable to sufficiently punish and disincentivize spoilers (2019a). In this case, the effectiveness of a non-UN actor's intervention might have weakened PO legitimacy because it was viewed *too* positively by local actors. This example is interesting because it showcases two important points. Firstly, it points to how a UN PO's legitimacy may suffer because its own actions, specifically in relation to the use of force, undermine its own characterization of itself as an appropriate intervening actor. Secondly, the example adds a wrinkle to the predicted 'contamination problem,' by pointing to how the *positive* reputation of an actor intervening parallel to the UN might also undermine the local perceptions of the UN PO's operational legitimacy.

[79] "United Nations Peacekeeping Operations Principles and Guidelines," Department of Peacekeeping Operations, 18 January 2008: 35. https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/capstone_eng_0.pdf.

[80] "Report on the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations on uniting our strengths for peace: politics, partnership and people," Report No. A/70/95, United Nations, 2015: 4. https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2015/446.

[81] Alexandra Novosseloff, Adriana E. Abdenur, Thomas Mandrup, and Aaron Pangburn, "Assessing the Effectiveness of the UN Mission in the DRC," Effectiveness of Peace Operations Network – Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, 2019: 63. https://effectivepeaceops.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/EPON-MONUSCO-LowRes.pdf.

the use of force, is a central part of this analysis. Hurd notes that such assessments can be challenging given that a given individual's perception of legitimacy "is not directly accessible to outsiders."[82] The challenge of studying local perceptions of legitimacy was difficult given my lack of access to the field. Moreover, in light of Von Billberck and Gippert's (2017) analysis on the fragmentation of legitimacy audiences, it was important to ensure that the beliefs of certain legitimacy audiences were not prioritized over the beliefs of others. Dellmuth and Tallberg, in a study assessing the social legitimacy of international organizations, offer guidance on navigating these difficulties in assessing legitimacy perceptions by highlighting three possible methods of inquiry in the study of legitimacy perceptions: analysis of audience beliefs, behaviour, and/or statements.[83] This project considers these three methods of inquiry (i.e., proxies for legitimacy) through the lens of Whalan's (2013) distinction between formal and informal components of POs. This project's research primarily relied upon more formal manifestations of audience beliefs, behaviour, and/or statements, which included publicized statements issued by local actors or public opinion surveys conducted by third party actors such as NGOs or think-tanks, given that these were easier to access away from the field. Interviews provided some insight into the more informal dimensions of the three legitimacy proxies, by filling in gaps that remained after a document analysis of publicly available documents relating to the POs.

The project proceeded in two stages. The first stage sought to determine whether there exists a negative relationship between the use of force by a UN PO and the locally perceived operational legitimacy of that PO. As will become clear in the discussion of the project's findings, this first stage of the project revealed that in some cases it is in fact a PO's *non-use* of force which negatively impacts its perceived legitimacy, as opposed to its *use* of force. Thus, the second stage of the project considered how the relationship between the non-use of force and local legitimacy perceptions might be explained, and whether the hypotheses held any explanatory power in the selected cases.

The overarching method of the project consisted of a case study analysis of two ongoing UN POs. As per Gerring's definition of case studies, these cases were employed as a means of

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[82] Hurd, *After Anarchy*, 31.

[83] Lisa Maria Dellmuth and Jonas Tallberg, "The Social Legitimacy of International Organizations: Interest Representation, Institutional Performance, and Confidence Extrapolation in the United Nations," *Review of International Studies* 41, no. 3 (2015): 460. https://www.jstor.org/stable/24564339.

drawing conclusions about a broader population.[84] The case selection method was "typical," using Seawright & Gerring's (2008) categorization, because cases were selected with the understanding that they are "examples of some cross-case relationship."[85] In my project, this is the predicted negative relationship between the use of force by POs undertaking conflict management and their locally perceived legitimacy. I employed this method for several reasons.

Firstly, this kind of case study approach can be used to confirm or falsify both whether and why the use of force weakens the operational legitimacy of POs.[86] I used a "most-likely" research design by selecting cases that might be expected to fit the predicted theory;[87] therefore, if the dynamics I predicted in my hypotheses are not observed, then the theoretical expectations will be undermined. Secondly, selecting and studying case studies allows for an in-depth investigation, or a study "within" the case,[88] of the project's research question, which is important given the difficulty in assessing 'legitimacy.' More specifically, an in-depth investigation enabled me to identify which hypothesized mechanism, or mechanisms, held the most explanatory power in my relationship of interest. The "exploratory nature" of case studies also allowed me to discover new, legitimacy-related dynamics which I had not considered in my initial research.[89] The difficulty in assessing and operationalizing perceived legitimacy as a series of variables also informed my decision against employing a quantitative approach.[90]

Lastly, by analyzing two case studies I hoped to be able to confirm or reject the explanatory power of my proposed mechanism across *both* cases. This strengthens the external validity of my

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[84] John Gerring, "Single-Outcome Studies: A Methodological Primer," *International Sociology* 21, no. 5 (2006): 710. doi:10.1177/0268580906067837.

[85] Jason Seawright and John Gerring, "Case Selection Techniques in Case Study Research: A Menu of Qualitative and Quantitative Options," *Political Research Quarterly* 61, no. 2 (2008): 297. doi: 10.1177/1065912907313077.

[86] John Gerring, "The Case Study: What it is and What it Does," in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Science*, ed. Robert E. Goodin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 1143.

[87] Jack S. Levy, "Case Studies: Types, Designs, and Logics of Inference," *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 25, no. 1 (2008): 12. doi: 10.1080/07388940701860318.

[88] Seawright & Gerring, "Case Selection Techniques in Case Study Research," 299.

[89] Gerring, "The Case Study," 1142.

[90] Two further comments in regard to this project's decision to employ a qualitative, instead of quantitative approach: firstly, given the project's focus on POs which are both robust and undertaking conflict management roles, the universe of cases is limited to the point that a large-*N* quantitative study is effectively impossible. Secondly, a quantitative approach to the project's research question might mean coding the PO's use of force as the independent variable and the locally perceived operational legitimacy as the dependent variable. Then, the legitimacy beliefs of local audiences would likely need to be operationalized quite narrowly as a means of facilitating the running of a linear regression. Furthermore, in such an approach, mitigating biases would necessitate an incredibly thorough process of data collection across-time which is unfeasible due to my lack of access to the field and a lack of existing data sets.

project,[91] and might enable me to make claims about conflict management POs at a broader level, especially if we consider—as discussed below—that the universe of cases is relatively small.[92] My project therefore sought to make a relatively definitive claim as to (1) whether the use of force by UN POs tends to reduce the locally perceived legitimacy of those POs; and (2) how this weakening, if it does take place, might be explained. Overall, I was less interested in determining whether one explanatory mechanism of delegitimation was the primary one, and more interested confirming whether any of my outlined hypotheses held weight.

There are currently twelve ongoing UN POs which served as the first cut for my case selection. The decision to specifically select cases from a pool of ongoing POs is informed by two considerations within my most-likely case study research design. First, it is in ongoing POs that the blurring of the line between classic peacekeeping and 'robust' peacekeeping is notably observed, especially in contexts characterized as conflict management.[93] Second, in several ongoing POs there has been a specific concern about a lack of clarity surrounding the use of force.[94] It is thus reasonable to assume that it is in these cases we are most likely to observe the use of force by POs eroding the local legitimacy of those operations.[95]

Of the twelve ongoing POs, four are "considered to be the most difficult of the current UN missions,"[96] and thus served as the pool for my final case selection: UNMISS, MINUSCA, MONUSCO, and MINUSMA. The decision to conduct only two case studies from this group, even though the universe of cases is quite small, was informed by the space constraints of the final project. A further factor guiding case selection was the fact that three of these POs (MINUSCA, MONUSCO, and MINUSMA) are classified as "stabilization missions," which signals "UNSC authorization of PO use of force beyond self-defense and mandate obligations to punish and deter

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[91] Ibid., 1140.

[92] Patricia A. Hays, "Case Study Research," in *Foundations for Research: Methods for Social Inquiry in Education and the Social Sciences,* ed. by Kathleen deMarrais and Stephen D. Lapan (New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2004), 219.

[93] "Report on the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations on uniting our strengths for peace: politics, partnership and people," Report No. A/70/95, United Nations, 2015: §113; §115; §127. https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2015/446.

[94] Ibid., 12.

[95] Howard, whose project focuses on the exercise of power by UN POs, adopts a similar approach in their project by searching "for cases that would provide the best examples of the ways in which peacekeepers *try* to exercise power in peacekeeping" (2019c, 22).

[96] Howard, *Power in Peacekeeping*, 9.

spoilers."[97] The robust mandates and conflict management roles of these POs,[98] mean that these are the cases in which we are *most* likely to see the use of force beyond "defence of the mission."[99] If we do not observe the predicted decline in local perceptions of operational legitimacy in these cases, where we are most likely to, then it is unlikely that the project's hypotheses about the legitimacy effects of the use of force will be confirmed in the cases of other POs. Ultimately, the decision to select MONUSCO and MINUSMA from this set of 'stabilization' missions was based on more pragmatic considerations, including the fact that my preliminary research and background knowledge is more substantive in these cases and because my networks were more promising regarding connecting with interviewees in these two cases.

I used two main data sources in order to determine whether the hypothesized mechanisms were at work in the case studies. Firstly, I engaged in a broad document analysis, which included UN-produced documents, third-party assessments of POs, such as those conducted by EPON and the International Peace Institute (IPI) and NGOs, including Human Rights Watch, as well as scholarly, peer-reviewed studies of POs. This document analysis was especially helpful in terms of assessing audience perceptions through audience statements and behaviour, especially in documents produced by interlocutors who were 'on the ground.' This method dominated the first portion of the project's research with a key goal being the identification of informational gaps which required interviews to be filled. I also used YouTube videos found on the YouTube channels of news media outlets as a key source to gain a better sense of perceptions of both POs at local level.

Once I identified informational gaps in my document analysis, I conducted interviews with three PO specialists to fill those gaps. The interviewees had an "in-depth knowledge" of the selected PO cases.[100] Dirk Druet, a researcher and policy advisor with significant experience in the sphere of UN peacekeeping, was selected as an ideal interlocutor given his experience on the ground in both Mali and the DRC, which enabled him to fill in gaps in the research left open due

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[97] de Coning, "The Future of UN Peace Operations," 216-217.
[98] MONUSCO: United Nations Security Council Resolution 1925, S/RES/1925, 28 May 2010. http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/1925; MINUSCA: United Nations Security Council Resolution 2149, S/RES/2149, 10 April 2014. http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/2149; MINUSMA: United Nations Security Council Resolution 2100, S/RES/2100, 25 April 2013. S/RES/2100. http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/2100.
[99] Findlay, *The Use of Force in UN Peace,* 19.
[100] Kathleen deMarrais, "Qualitative Interview Studies: Learning Through Experience," in *Foundations for Research: Methods for Social Inquiry in Education and the Social Sciences,* ed. Kathleen deMarrais and Stephen D. Lapan (New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2004), 52.

to my own inability to access the field. Cedric de Coning, EPON Coordinator and a Research Professor at the Norwegian Institute for International Affairs, was able to provide specific insight on the challenges which POs face in cooperating with other actors deploying force. By speaking with actors who do not work directly for the UN, I was able to gain a different perspective of the POs than what may have been reflected in UN-produced documents. The interviews were semi-structured and open-ended, a format which better enabled me to access interviewee insights regarding my project's hypotheses.[101] Undertaking interviews within my project showcases a recognition of Whalan's argument that a PO's legitimacy is informed by both "informal interactions" and "formal rules,"[102] with the former being specifically difficult to identify in a document analysis alone. The challenge of identifying and analyzing informal interactions is especially salient given this project's focus on operational legitimacy, which manifests itself through PO practices that may be informal in the sense that they are not included in official UN reporting on PO mandate operationalization. Lastly, given the specificity of the three hypotheses which I propose in relation to my second research question (i.e., how the use of force weakens local perceptions of operational legitimacy), interviews were helpful in terms of teasing out specific mechanisms, which better enabled me to confirm or reject my hypotheses.

VII. MONUSCO'S USE OF FORCE

The analysis of MONUSCO's use force first began with an attempt to identify instances of the PO's use of force, specifically in the eastern DRC in the provinces of North Kivu, South Kivu, and Ituri, with a specific focus on Beni territory. This strategy for the project's analysis was adopted for several reasons. First, my preliminary research enabled me to gain access to detailed data of MONUSCO's use of force in this region using the Kivu Security Tracker (KST)—a joint project of the Congo Research Group and Human Rights Watch—which has data mapping violence in the eastern DRC dating back to April 2017.[103] The KST's recording of violent incidents, specifically those incidents categorized as "clashes," is used as a proxy for MONUSCO's use of force, operating under the assumption that many of the cases in which MONUSCO may be implicated through the use of force fall within the category of a clash between

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[101] Cathie Jo Martin, "Crafting Interviews to Capture Cause and Effect." in *Interview Research in Political Science*, ed. Layna Mosley (Cornell: Cornell University Press, 2013), 117.

[102] Whalan, *How Peace Operations Work*, 75.

[103] "About," Kivu Security Tracker, accessed May 2022. https://kivusecurity.org/about/project.

armed actors.[104] For instance, the KST records an incident (#3451) labelled a "violent death, clash, destruction of property" on September 22nd, 2018, when the FARDC and FIB responded to an ADF raid in the city of Beni. [105] Incident descriptions also note the number of civilians and soldiers who were killed and wounded in each incident. Secondly, this is a region in which the PO often finds itself either needing to deploy force offensively to operationalize its mandate responsibilities or finds itself facing pressures from the local population to deploy force. Following the logic of a 'most-likely' case design, it makes sense to focus the analysis on cases within this geographical area, insofar as we are most likely to observe the PO's use of force in this space, which allows for a better assessment of my ingoing hypotheses. Lastly, the headquarters of MONUSCO's FIB is in Beni,[106] which suggests that locals in that geographic area have a strong sense of the PO's robust posture and operational capacity, and expectations for the PO's behavior which flow from this understanding. This enabled me to assess legitimacy perceptions in terms of not only the PO's actions, but also expectations of how the PO *ought* to act regarding its authorized mandate and posture.

I began by exploring the extent to which MONUSCO has engaged in the use of force at all, specifically in the post-April 2017 period when the KST began recording violent incidents in the Ituri, North Kivu, and South Kivu provinces of the eastern DRC. One type of incident which the KST tracks, and which acts as a helpful proxy for MONUSCO's deployment of the use of force, is those incidents which are coded as a "clash." In this period,[107] the KST recorded 62 incidents of clashes where MONUSCO was implicated, including those in which MONUSCO deployed force defensively, as opposed to offensively, and some cases where it intervened using force to support the FARDC.[108] For context, in the same period, the KST recorded a total of 3,682 incidents of clashes, and for comparison, the FARDC was implicated in 2,451 incidents of clashes

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[104] Some incidents coded by the KST are coded as belonging to more than one of the seven categories which the KST uses to categorize violent incidents. The seven categories are: "violent deaths, clashes between armed groups, abductions, kidnappings, mass rape, the destruction of property, and the repression of peaceful demonstrations" ("About," Kivu Security Tracker, https://kivusecurity.org/about/project).

[105] Information accessed through the Kivu Security Tracker map, https://kivusecurity.org/map; Incident #3451 – ADF Violent Death," Kivu Security Tracker, accessed August 2022. https://kivusecurity.org/incident/3451.

[106] Daniel Levine-Spound, "Backlash in Beni: Understanding Anger against the UN Peacekeeping Mission in the DRC," Center for Civilians in Conflict, 18 December 2019. https://civiliansinconflict.org/blog/backlash-in-beni/.

[107] The period spans from April 2017 to August 8th, 2022 (the date when the data was confirmed in the Kivu Security Tracker's incident tracking map).

[108] Information accessed through the Kivu Security Tracker map in August 2022, https://kivusecurity.org/map; "Incident #3451 – ADF Violent Death," Kivu Security Tracker, accessed August 2022. https://kivusecurity.org/incident/3451.

in the same time span.[109] This is not to say that MONUSCO has not deployed force as part of its mandate, but instead to highlight that MONUSCO is not implicated in the vast majority of clashes between armed actors which are recorded the eastern DRC. In this sense, MONUSCO seems to act more reservedly, in terms of its use of force, than might be expected for a robust PO.

However, two caveats should be considered. Firstly, the KST does not include cases of the use of force which might be classified as "large-scale military operations"[110] or offensive military campaigns, such as the military campaign launched on October 30th, 2019, by the FARDC against the ADF, which benefitted from limited MONUSCO support. The dataset is largely limited to specific, singular incidents. Secondly, the dataset offers no information in terms of MONUSCO's decision-making in terms of intervening in or initiating a given incident, nor does it offer any insight as to whether MONUSCO *could have* intervened in an incident but chose not to. This matters because it would contextualize the 62 out of 3,682 number that was raised above. That proportion may not be so glaring if we consider whether MONUSCO could have even intervened. For instance, one PO researcher, with knowledge of the field, emphasized that the challenges posed by the physical terrain of the field in which MONUSCO is deployed may be such that PO personnel are unable to reach a certain area.[111] Despite these identified limitations of the dataset, it remains an important and well-verified source, which reveals that the PO does not deploy offensive force as much as it might be expected to, given its exceedingly robust posture. Taking this implication to the local level, I consider a community member in Beni (2019) who noted in an interview with a UN-authorized PO review team that the "United Nations seems to 'care more about trees and animals [in Virunga National Park] than about Congolese being slaughtered every day.'"[112] This sheds light on how individuals at the local level perceive of how MONUSCO has operationalized its civilian protection responsibilities.

Even if the PO is not implicated through the use of force in a vast majority of violent incidents which have occurred in recent years in the eastern DRC, it has still used force with seemingly successful results, as evidenced below. On July 31st, 2018, in Beni Territory, the PO and the FARDC "launched a joint offensive operation against three Mai-Mai camps," which

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[109] Information accessed through the Kivu Security Tracker map in August 2022, https://kivusecurity.org/map.
[110] Levine-Spound, "Backlash in Beni."
[111] Interview with a peace operations researcher in Paris, 20 April 2022.
[112] "Transitioning from stabilization to peace: An independent strategic review of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo," S/2019/842, 25 October 2019: footnote 3. https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N19/337/60/PDF/N1933760.pdf?OpenElement.

resulted "in the destruction of the camps […and] the capture of a number of armed group elements […]."[113] In another instance categorized by the KST as a "clash" (KST incident #3344), on August 31st of the same year, when MONUSCO retook ADF positions in Beni territory, which pushed the ADF to retreat "into the Virunga Park."[114] The PO's counter-offensive caused no casualties. Earlier in the year, as noted in the MONUSCO EPON Report, members of the local population indicated that they had been "encouraged" by the PO's "responsiveness to mitigate civilian casualties" in Ituri province in February-March 2018.[115]

Despite MONUSCO's deployment of offensive force with seemingly positive results in the immediate to short-term, the PO has still been frequently criticized by local populations for *not doing enough* to protect civilians and punish armed groups. This criticism of the PO, which has frequently manifested itself in public demonstrations against both the PO and the FARDC, has persisted for several years. In August 2016, for example, 2,000 protesters staged demonstrations against MONUSCO and the FARDC because of a "perceived lack of action" on the part of both actors in the aftermath of "massacres attributed to the [ADF]."[116] One protestor is seen in a video of the protests holding a sign which says, "we want MONUSCO in action."[117] In a public opinion survey conducted in May through September of 2016 by the Congo Research Group, nearly 57% of residents in North Kivu, and just over 50% in South Kivu, "said the UN mission should leave," with nearly 30% of all respondents answering "no" when asked whether MONSUCO does a "good job protecting civilians."[118] When a UNSC Mission to the DRC later met with representatives of civil society organizations in October 2018, those representatives again emphasized that "the ongoing massacre of the civilian population in Beni [was] illustrative of what they said were insufficient efforts by the [UN]," and noted that the FIB "had not met the expectation that it would

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[113] Ibid., §49.
[114] Information accessed through the Kivu Security Tracker map, https://kivusecurity.org/map.
[115] Novosseloff et al., "Assessing the Effectiveness of the UN Mission in the DRC," 79.
[116] "United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo: Report of the Secretary-General," S/2016/833, 3 October 2016: §26. https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_2016_833.pdf.
[117] "DRC / Beni Demonstrations," UNifeed, 18 August 2016, video, 2:02, https://www.unmultimedia.org/tv/unifeed/asset/1692/1692442/.
[118] Jason K. Stearns, "Is MONUSCO Doing a Good Job at Protecting Civilians?" Global Peace Operations Review, 13 December 2016. https://peaceoperationsreview.org/commentary/is-monusco-doing-a-good-job-at-protecting-civilians/.

neutralize armed groups effectively."[119] In the same month, the local population of Beni town "staged several demonstrations […] to denounce violence against civilians and call on the national security forces and MONUSCO to step up efforts to protect civilians."[120]

Criticisms that the PO has done too little to uphold its civilian protection mandate through the use of force, persisted even as MONUSCO offered informal support to FARDC offensives against the ADF. At the end of October 2019, the FARDC launched a new offensive against the ADF. MONUSCO did not formally join the offensive but did offer support by conducting reconnaissance flights at the request of the FARDC as well as evacuations of wounded soldiers.[121] Consequently, in the following month, the ADF conducted reprisal attacks against civilians, such as "in and around the village of Mbau," in North Kivu, where the ADF killed at least 15 civilians in an attack on November 16th, 2019.[122] By November 25th, the KST reported that 77 people had been killed by ADF attacks since the beginning of the FARDC's offensive.[123] The Report of the UN Secretary-General on MONUSCO covering the period from September 28th - November 25th, 2019, notes that in the days between November 20th and the publication of the report there had been "increasingly violent demonstrations" in Beni, Butembo, and Oicha, which led to "the breaching of MONUSCO premises."[124] A subsequent report, covering a time period beginning on November 26th, 2019, highlighted the "strong sentiments among some members of the local

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[119] "Report of the Security Council mission to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 5-7 October 2018," S/2018/1030, 15 November 2018: §25. https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N18/383/35/PDF/N1838335.pdf?OpenElement.

[120] "United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo: Report of the Secretary-General," S/2019/6, 4 January 2019: §22. https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N19/000/11/PDF/N1900011.pdf?OpenElement.

[121] "After the Death of at 77 Civilians, the Congolese Army's Strategy Against the ADF is Called in Question," Kivu Security Tracker, 25 November 2019. https://blog.kivusecurity.org/after-the-death-of-at-least-77-civilians-the-congolese-armys-strategy-against-the-adf-is-called-into-question/; "Lutte contre ADF à Beni : Même si elle ne prend pas part aux combats, la Monusco apporte son soutien aux FARDC notamment dans les renseignements," Actualite.cd, 20 November 2019. https://www.actualite.cd/2019/11/20/lutte-contre-adf-beni-meme-si-elle-ne-prend-pas-part-aux-combats-la-monusco-apporte-son.

[122] "Democratic Republic of the Congo Discussion under 'Any Other Business,'" Security Council Report, 5 December 2019. https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/whatsinblue/2019/12/democratic-republic-of-the-congo-discussion-under-any-other-business.php.

[123] "After the Death of at 77 Civilians, the Congolese Army's Strategy Against the ADF is Called in Question," Kivu Security Tracker, 25 November 2019. https://blog.kivusecurity.org/after-the-death-of-at-least-77-civilians-the-congolese-armys-strategy-against-the-adf-is-called-into-question/.

[124] "United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo: Report of the Secretary-General," S/2019/905, 26 November 2019: §28. https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N19/373/83/PDF/N1937383.pdf?OpenElement.

population against MONUSCO and the Congolese authorities […].”[125] The report notes that the MONUSCO Boikene office, located in Beni town, was destroyed[126] after the building was set on fire by “angry” demonstrators.[127] Protests “continued throughout November and December throughout North Kivu Province and in particular the Beni and Butembo areas,”[128] and also spread to Goma, where protestors blocked a road going to Beni.[129] Protesters were demanding the departure of the PO,[130] and one civil society leader cites the PO’s (perceived) “inaction” as fueling the demonstrations.[131]

Recently, public perceptions of MONUSCO seem to have soured once again in the wake of joint FARDC-UPDF (Uganda People’s Defence Force) operations against the ADF, which began at the end of November 2021. Legally, MONUSCO’s mandate only authorizes the PO to support the FARDC, which means that there is no legal basis for the PO to support joint FARDC-UPDF operations (‘support’ excludes some necessary information sharing between the PO and the UPDF).[132] Levine-Spound notes that there is some popular support for these operations at the local level, which may leave MONUSCO in a position where it is “publicly blamed for not participating” in the operations, specifically if we consider that HRDDP limitations imposed upon the PO can be “invisible” from civilian perspective at the local level.[133] In April 2022, the Commander of the Ugandan ground forces, when commenting on the progress of the operations, noted that he “was

[125] “United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo: Report of the Secretary-General,” S/2020/214, 18 March 2020: §16. https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N20/062/75/PDF/N2006275.pdf?OpenElement.
[126] Ibid.
[127] “UN mission in DR Congo appeals for calm as violent protests continue,” UN News, 25 November 2019. https://news.un.org/en/story/2019/11/1052151.
[128] “United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo: Report of the Secretary-General,” S/2020/214, 18 March 2020: §16. https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N20/062/75/PDF/N2006275.pdf?OpenElement.
[129] Levine-Spound, “Backlash in Beni;” “Protests spread in east DRC as fury against UN peacekeepers rise,” Al Jazeera, 27 November 2019. https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/11/27/protests-spread-in-east-drc-as-fury-against-un-peacekeepers-rises.
[130] “United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo: Report of the Secretary-General,” S/2020/214, 18 March 2020: §16. https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N20/062/75/PDF/N2006275.pdf?OpenElement; “Protests spread in east DRC as fury against UN peacekeepers rise,” Al Jazeera, 27 November 2019. https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/11/27/protests-spread-in-east-drc-as-fury-against-un-peacekeepers-rises.
[131] “DR Congo crowd burns UN base and Beni town hall,” BBC, 25 November 2019. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-50544588.
[132] Daniel Levine-Spound, “Ugandan and Congolese Troops are Conducting Joint Operations: What Could that Mean for MONUSCO,” IPI Global Observatory, 20 December 2021. https://theglobalobservatory.org/2021/12/ugandan-congolese-troops-joint-operations-monusco/.
[133] Ibid.

waiting for MONUSCO, the UN forces, to help us in the operation. We would appreciate their assistance,"[134] even though MONUSCO legally, on the basis of its mandate, could not, and cannot, provide this assistance. This points, on one hand, to the demanding set of expectations that MONUSCO must engage with and sheds some light on how local populations may come to believe that MONUSCO is intentionally choosing a path of 'inaction.'

Ultimately, in looking at different episodes of civilian criticism of MONUSCO over a period of several years, it appears that MONUSCO is more frequently criticized for its *non-use* of force, than its *use* of force. While this finding offers a preliminary answer of "no" to the project's first research question, it also opens up a new line of inquiry, addressed further below, about the effects of non-use of force on local perceptions of the mission's operational legitimacy. At first glance, these effects seemed to have been shaped by the fact that POs operating in this context were explicitly authorized as robust. As a civil society activist in Beni told Al Jazeera in Spring 2021 in the wake of protests against the PO: "We denounce the ineffectiveness of the UN force MONUSCO, *which has an offensive mission* but which for years has failed to do anything."[135] The use of the word "but" in the comment is telling: MONUSCO has been authorized to be robust and has the mandated power to act unilaterally, should it so choose, against armed groups, *but* it does not seem to be doing this to the extent expected by local populations.

VIII. MINUSMA'S USE OF FORCE

Similarly to MONUSCO, MINUSMA has also shown a reluctance to deploy force offensively, which has had consequences for its civilian protection responsibilities. In 2013, as Artiñano et al. (2014) note, the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General issued a clarification that "'MINUSMA is not taking part in offensive operations.'"[136] However, pressure for the PO to take on a more offensive stance seems to have increased in recent years. While MINUSMA's 2019 mandate renewal (UNSCR 2480) makes no reference to the "offensive" use of force, the document

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[134] Chief Bisong Etahoben, "Ugandan Military Chief Says Joint Forces Have Clears ADF Rebels From Bases," HumAngle, 22 April 2022. https://humanglemedia.com/ugandan-military-chief-says-joint-forces-have-cleared-adf-rebels-from-bases/.

[135] "DR Congo: Dozens detained in Beni during anti-UN protests," Al Jazeera, 8 April 2021. https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/4/8/dr-congo-dozens-detained-in-beni-during-anti-un-protests. Emphasis added.

[136] Mauricio Artiñano et al., "Adapting and Evolving: The Implications of Transnational Terrorism for UN Field Missions," Princeton University: Woodrow Wilson School Graduate Policy Workshop, April 2014: 23. https://spia.princeton.edu/sites/default/files/content/docs/591c_Adapting_and_Evolving_The_Implications_of_Transnational_Terrorism.pdf.

does note that the PO is mandated to "take mobile, flexible, robust and proactive steps to protect civilians [...]."[137] Operationalizing this mandate responsibility has been challenging in the field.

Firstly, MINUSMA has acquired the label of the "world's most dangerous" PO, with 19 peacekeepers losing their lives in the year 2021.[138] MINUSMA is also a case of a PO where some of the most violent parties in the conflict today, are not parties to the agreement that the PO was originally mandated to support the implementation of.[139] Attacks against MINUSMA personnel have pushed the mission to "bunkerize," which has reduced the PO's visibility vis-à-vis the local population and seems to have undermined the PO's projection in the field.[140] However, this is not to say that the PO has not deployed force offensively. For instance, on April 2nd, 2021, Chadian MINUSMA troops in Aguelhok "launched a successful close-combat counter-offensive" against "terrorist armed elements," resulting in the death of four peacekeepers and around "40 suspected terrorist elements."[141] MINUSMA has also taken advantage of the presence of French forces as a means of improving security for civilians (i.e., a form of offensive cooperation). Artiñano et al. (2014) highlight that there have been instances where French forces have "clear[ed] an area," and MINUSMA troops have then entered to "stabilize it."[142] This points to how cooperation with French forces has enabled MINUSMA to better execute its mandate in some circumstances.

Secondly, protection of civilian responsibilities in MINUSMA's mandate have changed over time in a way that has complicated the PO's approach to those responsibilities. Civilian

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[137] United Nations Security Council Resolution 2480, S/RES/2480, 28 June 2019: §28(c). http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/2480.

[138] "At Least 25 Peacekeeping, Associated Personnel Killed in Malicious Attacks during 2021, United Nations Staff Union President Says," United Nations – Meeting Coverage and Press Releases, 3 February 2022. https://www.un.org/press/en/2022/org1722.doc.htm#:~:text=For%20the%20eighth%20year%20in,in%20the%20Ce ntral%20African%20Republic%20(.

[139] In Mali, MINUSMA's "primary strategic priority," as mandated by the UNSC, has been to "support" the implementation of the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali (2015), also referred to as the Algiers Agreement (UNSCR 2531, §19). The parties to this agreement include the Malian state, the Plateforme, which "comprises several [armed] groups that favour Malian state authority" (European Council on Foreign Relations), and the Coordination des mouvements de L'Azawad (CMA, also referred to as the Coordination), which "comprises mainly Tuareg and Arabs" from various armed non-state groups (van der Lijn et al. 2019a, 33). Both the Plateforme and the Coordination operate primarily in northern Mali, which is where conflict ignited in 2012 when the Mouvement national de libération de l'Azawad (MNLA), which is now part of the Coordination, initiated a rebellion and took up arms against the Malian state. However, since 2015, violence has spilled over into Mali's central regions and Islamist insurgent groups pose a significant threat to civilian populations and MINUSMA itself (van der Lijn et al. 2019a, 36-37).

[140] Artiñano et al., "Adapting and Evolving," 6; Di Razza, "Protecting Civilians in the Context of Violent Extremism," 32.

[141] "Situation in Mali: Report of the Secretary-General," S/2021/519, 1 June 2021: §45. https://minusma.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/s_2021_519_e.pdf.

[142] Artiñano et al., "Adapting and Evolving," 22.

protection in Central Mali was only added to the PO's mandate as a second strategic priority in 2019,[143] and Di Razza (2019) highlights that there has been a noted "prioritizing" of "support to counterterrorism efforts and the peace process in the north, rather than [protection of civilians] in the center."[144] MINUSMA, as part of its protection of civilian responsibilities, has thus executed large-scale operations in difficult-to-reach, remote areas, such as Operation Mongoose, Operation Buffalo, Operation Cobra, and Operation Oryx.[145] These operations have made use of "temporary operating bases," which enable MINUSMA to increase its presence and "engagement with communities."[146] However, violence has persisted in Central Mali. On March 23rd, 2019, in an attack referred to as "Mali's worst atrocity in recent history," armed men (some part of Dogon self-defence groups) killed 150 people in Ogossagou.[147] Nearly one year later, on February 14th, 2020, an "ethnic militia" killed over 35 people in the same village an hour after a UN peacekeeper convoy had passed through.[148] In the aftermath of the 2020 attack, residents of the village "expressed outrage at the lack of protection."[149] In Spring 2019, following the March 2019 attack in Ogossagou, thousands, and in some cases tens of thousands, of protesters took to the streets of Bamako to protest rising levels of ethnic violence and perceived "government inaction" in regard to preventing this violence.[150] Protesters, as evidenced by images of their signs at a protest in early

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[143] Smith, Seán. "Protecting Civilians in Mali: Why Air Assets Matter for MINUSMA," Center for Civilians in Conflict, 6 May 2020: 1. https://civiliansinconflict.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/CIVIC_Report_Mali_EN_web-1_FINAL-UPDATED.pdf.

[144] Di Razza, Namie. "Massacre in Mali Demonstrates Need to Prioritize Protection of Civilians in MINUSMA's Mandate," IPI Global Observatory, 15 April 2019. https://theglobalobservatory.org/2019/04/massacre-mali-demonstrates-need-prioritize-protection-civilians-minusma/.

[145] "Situation in Mali: Report of the Secretary-General," S/2019/983, 30 December 2019: §56. https://minusma.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/s_2019_983_e.pdf; "Situation in Mali: Report of the Secretary-General," S/2020/1281, 28 December 2020: §40 https://minusma.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/s_2020_1281_e.pdf; "Point de Presse de la MINUSMA du 10 Décembre 2020," MINUSMA, 10 December 2020. https://minusma.unmissions.org/point-de-presse-de-la-minusma-du-10-d%C3%A9cembre-2020; "Situation in Mali: Report of the Secretary-General," S/2021/519, 1 June 2021: §58. https://minusma.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/s_2021_519_e.pdf.

[146] Situation in Mali: Report of the Secretary-General," S/2019/983, 30 December 2019: §56. https://minusma.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/s_2019_983_e.pdf.

[147] Corrine Dufka, "'How Much More Blood Must be Spilled? Atrocities Against Civilians in Central Mali, 2019," Human Rights Watch, 10 February 2020. https://www.hrw.org/report/2020/02/10/how-much-more-blood-must-be-spilled/atrocities-against-civilians-central-mali.

[148] "Mali: Army, UN Fail to Stop Massacre," Human Rights Watch, 18 March 2020. https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/03/18/mali-army-un-fail-stop-massacre.

[149] Ibid.

[150] "Malians protest, calling for an end to massacres," France 24, 22 June 2019. https://www.france24.com/en/20190622-malians-protest-calling-end-massacres; "Mali: Thousands protest inaction after deadly ethnic attack," DW News, 6 April 2019. https://www.dw.com/en/mali-thousands-protest-inaction-after-deadly-ethnic-attack/a-48234061.

April, also explicitly expressed their frustration with MINUSMA's perceived failure.[151] Similarly to MONUSCO, this case provides evidence of backlash against the PO that relates not to cases where it does deploy force, but instead to those where it does not. Such a finding calls into question the project's initial expectation that the use of force by a PO would likely result in increasingly negative perceptions of the operational legitimacy mission, by suggesting that the use of force by a PO could, in some cases, *enhance* its legitimacy at the local level.

IX. FINDINGS: UNDERSTANDING MECHANISMS OF LEGITIMATION AND DELEGITIMATION

Even if the findings of MONUSCO and MINUSMA case studies suggest a negative answer to the project's first research question, meaning that the project's hypotheses lack explanatory power, we might still consider if underlying mechanisms identified in the hypotheses are working differently than expected. Firstly, in assessing the hypothesis concerning impartiality, it seems that, at least in the MONUSCO case, this mechanism may have less of an effect on legitimacy perceptions than first thought. This may reflect the fact that neither of the POs analyzed in this thesis are impartial in the sense of 'classic' peacekeeping doctrine; instead, the forces of both POs are actively intervening alongside state security forces to tackle the threat posed by armed groups. Cedric de Coning suggests that this "dilution" of impartiality may not pose problems at the isolated level of a singular case, and while it may still be "bad" for peacekeeping more broadly, in terms of understanding its identity, this concern does not entirely fall withing the scope of this analysis.[152] At the same time, he notes that impartiality, and partiality, can manifest differently across the various spheres of a PO's work.[153] For instance, in the case of MINUSMA, there has been a historical questioning of the PO's political impartiality, with some groups seeing the PO as a "as an ally of the government with a biased role," instead of an unbiased "mediator."[154] As a result, concerns about impartiality and PO legitimacy may have less to do with the PO's use of force and might instead be rooted in the PO's political mediation and outreach. This opens up a related line of inquiry about the relationship between the political and military components of the PO. Could

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[151] "Mali: Thousands protest inaction after deadly ethnic attack," DW News, 6 April 2019. https://www.dw.com/en/mali-thousands-protest-inaction-after-deadly-ethnic-attack/a-48234061.
[152] Remote Interview with Cedric de Coning, 4 May 2022.
[153] Ibid.
[154] Karlijn Muiderman, "Narrowing the gap between the UN and Malians," The Broker, 24 December 2015. https://www.thebrokeronline.eu/narrowing-the-gap-between-the-un-and-malians-d98/.

the use of force alongside national security forces, or even non-offensive cooperation with national security forces, undermine the political aspects of a PO's work? This still seems more likely when the PO has effectively become a "main party to the conflict," as it has in Mali.[155]

Secondly, in assessing the effects of proximity, we can consider the effectiveness of the HRDDP as part of the PO's strategy to reduce the 'contamination problem.' In the DRC, the implementation of the HRDDP has been a challenge due to the human rights violations perpetrated by members of the FARDC,[156] some of whom have been internationally sanctioned.[157] The FARDC has also "resisted" joint planning with MONUSCO, specifically in the case of offensive operations in Fall 2019, which has limited the degree to which MONUSCO can offer the FARDC substantive support.[158] When asked whether the HRDDP seemed to be accomplishing its stated goal, de Coning noted that the policy itself was a "great innovation," which seemed to be doing a "good job" of addressing legitimacy and reputational concerns in those contexts (i.e., both the DRC and Mali, as well as CAR) where UN POs need to collaborate with other security forces.[159]

Nevertheless, the findings of this thesis suggest that by effectively mitigating one risk to the PO's legitimacy, the HRDDP may have inadvertently created other legitimacy risks—at least in the case of the DRC. Levine-Spound's report on the implementation of the HRDDP in the DRC (2020) notes that "[r]estrictions, as well as misperceptions about how the HRDDP is impacting support to Congolese security forces can lead to tensions […] between the Mission […] and residents of communities under threat."[160] The report goes on to describe a sentiment at the local level, expressed by local interlocutors, that the PO's focus on recording FARDC human rights violations comes at the cost of the PO supporting FARDC offensives against armed groups.[161] In other words, it is the perception that MONUSCO is *withholding support* to the FARDC (because

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[155] John Karlsrud, "Towards UN counter-terrorism operations?" *Third World Quarterly* 38, no. 6 (2017): 1216. doi: 10.1080/01436597.2016.1268907.

[156] Ida Sawyer and Anneke Van Woudenberg, "'You Will be Punished': Attacks on Civilians in Eastern Congo," Human Rights Watch, 13 December 2009.
 https://www.hrw.org/report/2009/12/13/you-will-be-punished/attacks-civilians-eastern-congo; Gisela Hirschmann, "Cooperating with evil? Accountability in peace operations and the evolution of the United Nations Human Rights Due Diligence Policy." *Cooperation and Conflict* 55, no. 1 (2019): 23. https://doi.org/10.1177/0010836719828406;

[157] Daniel Levine-Spound, "Enabling Support by Mitigating Risk: MONUSCO's Implementation of the Human Rights and Due Diligence Policy in the Democratic Republic of the Congo," Center for Civilians in Conflict, June 2020: 10. https://civiliansinconflict.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/CIVIC_HRDDP_Report_Final-Web-1.pdf.

[158] Levine-Spound, "Backlash in Beni."

[159] Remote interview with Cedric de Coning, 4 May 2022.

[160] Levine-Spound, "Enabling Support by Mitigating Risk," 3.

[161] Ibid., 11.

of human rights considerations), and not associating with them, which is fostering "anti-Mission sentiment among civilians,"[162] and contributing to negative legitimacy perceptions of the PO. HRDDP implementation has also been undermined by the FARDC's cooperation with other security forces, notably the UPDF, as discussed above. Overall, and in terms of assessing the prediction implicit to H_2 in the MONUSCO case, it seems that a PO's legitimacy might suffer if it is perceived as doing too little in terms of its cooperation with another actor deploying force. However, it remains important to note that this observation is made in a context where the implementation of the HRDDP mitigates the most severe risks of this possible cooperation, and it is not certain that the same observation could be made if the HRDDP did not exist.

In turning now to consider the contamination risk in the context of MINUSMA, we might first look at the challenges the PO faces in terms of cooperation with national armed forces, the Forces armées maliennes (FAMA). Malian forces have perpetrated human rights violations, which some have suggested might "amount to crimes under international law,"[163] and, in late March 2022, it was credibly reported that FAMA soldiers were involved in the summary execution of 300 civilian men in the town of Moura in Central Mali.[164] While cooperation with the FAMA has been an issue for the PO, some argue that the PO also has little choice given that cooperation with national security forces is a key part of the PO's mandate.[165] Di Razza also highlights a "limited [MINUSMA] capacity" for HRDDP implementation, and notes that the PO's mandated responsibilities to support the FAMA and protect civilians can be seen to be "in tension" with each other.[166] Even UN Secretary-General Guterres has highlighted the "'very difficult cooperation' between Mali and [MINUSMA] on the question of human rights."[167] In this case, then, we see the potential for the proximity and contamination mechanism to operate more indirectly: MINUSMA's support for FAMA may enable FAMA to commit human rights violations, which in turn can make MINUSMA's civilian protection mandate more difficult, which might then

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[162] Ibid.

[163] "Mali 2021," Amnesty International, accessed May 2022. https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/africa/west-and-central-africa/mali/report-mali/.

[164] "Mali: Massacre by Army, Foreign Soldiers," Human Rights Watch, 5 April 2022. https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/04/05/mali-massacre-army-foreign-soldiers.

[165] Interview with a peace operations researcher in Paris, 20 April 2022; United Nations Security Council Resolution 2584. S/RES/2584. 29 June 2021: §30(b)(ii); §30(c)(ii) http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/2584.

[166] Di Razza, "Protecting Civilians in the Context of Violent Extremism," 36.

[167] "UN Chief wants African Union force with tougher mandate for Mali." Radio France Internationale. 6 May 2022. https://www.rfi.fr/en/africa/20220506-un-chief-wants-african-union-force-with-tougher-mandate-for-mali-guterres.

undermine the PO's legitimacy if it is seen as failing to uphold its mandate. A similar dynamic could be observed in the MONUSCO case, where the PO might offer non-robust support to FARDC operations against the ADF, but then has to take on the responsibility of developing "contingency plans for the protection of civilians in the context [of those operations]."[168]

In assessing the contamination risk in the MINUSMA case, we might also consider the relationship between the PO and French forces intervening in Mali as part of Barkhane. There does not seem to be clear evidence that negative perceptions of French forces at the local level have consistently had a negative effect on perceptions of the PO, which is an especially interesting finding given the closeness between the PO and French forces. In 2021, perceptions among a notable portion of the Malian population towards French forces in the country were decidedly negative, with protests occurring in Bamako in 2021 and early 2022 against the French military presence in Mali.[169] While Malian interlocutors interviewed at the protests highlighted their demand for the exit of French forces from the country, there is no mention of any relation between French forces and the PO.[170] However, in light of the February 2022 announcement of the withdrawal of French troops from Mali, MacDougall (2022) questions whether "animosity toward the French and European forces will be redirected toward [MINUSMA]."[171]

Finally, the analysis for this thesis identified possible consequences of the use of force which had not been considered in the project's original framework. Notably, findings of civilian

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[168] "United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo: Report of the Secretary-General." S/2019/905. 26 November 2019: §28.   https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N19/373/83/PDF/N1937383.pdf?OpenElement.

[169] "Malian police disperse protest against French military presence," Reuters, 21 January 2022. https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-mali-security-france-idUSKBN29Q0SG; "Mali: Protesters call for French troops to leave, some call for greater Russian cooperation," Africanews, 26 June 2021, video, 1:28. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZxKVVyQrKtQ; "Demonstrators protest French presence in Mali on Bamako streets." Africanews, 30 October 2021, video, 1:20. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c2DpPM1nYP0; "Malians say they once appreciated French military support, but 'things have changed,'" France 24, 20 January 2022, embedded video, 1:41. https://www.france24.com/en/africa/20220120-malians-say-they-once-appreciated-french-military-support-but-things-have-changed.

[170] "Mali: Protesters call for French troops to leave, some call for greater Russian cooperation," Africanews, 26 June 2021, video, 1:28. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZxKVVyQrKtQ; "Demonstrators protest French presence in Mali on Bamako streets." Africanews, 30 October 2021, video, 1:20. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c2DpPM1nYP0; "Malians say they once appreciated French military support, but 'things have changed,'" France 24, 20 January 2022, embedded video, 1:41. https://www.france24.com/en/africa/20220120-malians-say-they-once-appreciated-french-military-support-but-things-have-changed.

[171] Claire MacDougall, "As French Troops Leave Mali, Will the UN Mission Face Deadlier Risks?" PassBlue, 23 March 2022. https://www.passblue.com/2022/03/23/as-french-troops-leave-mali-will-the-un-mission-face-deadlier-risks/.

backlash against MONUSCO, seemingly rooted in the PO's non-use of force specifically in relation to its civilian protection mandate, revealed the possibility of reprisal attacks perpetrated against civilians. These attacks then serve as a mechanism for a decline in local perceptions of the PO's operational legitimacy.

Particularly in the MONUSCO case, it is well-established that offensive operations against the ADF have prompted the group to commit violent reprisals against the local population.[172] For the purposes of this thesis, it is important to note that these reprisals are not exclusively linked to offensive operations initiated and primarily executed by the PO. In the case of the FARDC's offensive operation against the ADF beginning at the end of October 2019, for example, MONUSCO was not offensively deploying force against the armed group, yet the group still retaliated against local civilians. My analysis of MONUSCO suggests that a PO's legitimacy may nevertheless be negatively impacted by the occurrence of civilian reprisal attacks, even if the mission did not meaningfully contribute to the offensive which triggered those attacks. The 2019 FARDC offensive case illustrates this well: the PO made a cautious decision *not* to offer offensive support to operation, which was informed by the anticipation of reprisal attacks against civilians,[173] but when those reprisals did occur, the PO's legitimacy suffered as it was accused by the local population of not doing enough to protect civilians. In sum, while the use of force by the PO in this context could decrease the PO's local legitimacy by leading to reprisal attacks against civilians, it is also clear that the PO may incur legitimacy costs even in cases where it did not use force but where there are still reprisals against the local population. The mechanism for a decline

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[172] Adam Day, "The Best Defense Is No Offense: Why Cuts to UN Troops in Congo Could Be a Good Thing," Small Wars Journal, 4 August 2017. https://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/the-best-defense-is-no-offense-why-cuts-to-un-troops-in-congo-could-be-a-good-thing; "Civilians killed in eastern DRC by ADF rebels in revenge attack over Congolese army's operation," Radio France Internationale, 16 November 2019. https://www.rfi.fr/en/africa/20191116-civilans-killed-eastern-drc-adf-rebels-revenge-attack-over-congolese-armys-operation; "After the Death of at 77 Civilians, the Congolese Army's Strategy Against the ADF is Called in Question," Kivu Security Tracker, 25 November 2019. https://blog.kivusecurity.org/after-the-death-of-at-least-77-civilians-the-congolese-armys-strategy-against-the-adf-is-called-into-question/; "United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo: Report of the Secretary-General," S/2019/905, 26 November 2019. https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N19/373/83/PDF/N1937383.pdf?OpenElement; "1,300 civilians killed in the DRC in past eight months – Bachelet," Press Release – United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 5 June 2020. https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2020/06/1300-civilians-killed-drc-past-eight-months-bachelet?LangID=E&NewsID=25928; Jared Thompson, "Examining Extremism: Allied Democratic Forces," Center for Strategic & International Studies, 29 July 2021. https://www.csis.org/blogs/examining-extremism/examining-extremism-allied-democratic-forces; Daniel Levine-Spound, "Ugandan and Congolese Troops are Conducting Joint Operations: What Could that Mean for MONUSCO," IPI Global Observatory, 20 December 2021. https://theglobalobservatory.org/2021/12/ugandan-congolese-troops-joint-operations-monusco/.
[173] Remote interview with Dirk Druet, 25 April 2022.

in local perceptions of the PO's operational legitimacy—at least in this case—is *not exclusively linked to the mission's use of force.*

In the case of MINUSMA, reprisal attacks are also a source of insecurity for civilian populations and complicate the POs civilian protection responsibilities. However, unlike the case of MONUSCO, it seems that the use of force by the PO, *or* a security force supported by a PO, is not a necessary condition for the occurrence of reprisal attacks. This means that a delegitimating effect relating reprisal attacks in the MINUSMA case is *not exclusively linked to the use of force.* Di Razza highlights that populations are "harass[ed] once the UN leaves," and that "civilians have been killed, abducted, tortured, or threatened by extremist groups after talking to the UN mission."[174] Artiñano et al. note that the specific terrorist groups which pose security threats in Mali have "designat[ed] [the] UN as a priority target for attack,"[175] which also speaks to how civilians that are seen to be interacting in any number of ways with the PO may become the victims of reprisal attacks. In considering the possible erosion of legitimacy associated with the 'reprisal attacks' mechanism, my findings suggest that in the MINUSMA case the mechanism is not even necessarily related to the use of force at all, thus undermining the explanatory power of a mechanism based solely on the PO's use of, or support for the use of, force.

X. UNDERSTANDING EXPECTATIONS AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

To make sense of what might be characterized as backlash at the local level against POs due to a perceived *non-use* of force, it is useful to employ the notion of an 'expectations gap' in UN peacekeeping, a long-established concept which exists both between POs and their authorized mandates, and POs and local populations.[176] In regard to the former, scholars have observed a notable gap between that which a PO has the capacity to reasonably achieve and its mandated responsibilities and goals.[177] However, this thesis contends that the authorization of conflict management POs with robust mandates and an enhanced ability to use force, has widened both of these gaps in such a way that local perceptions of PO legitimacy have become more negative, specifically in the context of a PO's decision about whether or not to use force. The authorization

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[174] Di Razza, "Protecting Civilians in the Context of Violent Extremism," 35.
[175] Artiñano et al., "Adapting and Evolving," 11.
[176] Remote interview with Cedric de Coning, 4 May 2022.
[177] Philip Cunliffe, *Legions of Peace: UN Peacekeepers from the Global South* (London: Hurst & Company Publishers, 2013), 233; Karlsrud, *The UN at War*, 2.

of visibly robust military components of POs, such as the FIB, has increased expectations at the local level that POs will intervene forcefully and consistently, both offensively and defensively. At the same time, however, these missions lack both the capacity and political will of troop contributing countries and mission leadership to intervene in such a way.

The disconnect between mandates of multi-dimensional POs and 'stabilization missions,' and the complex environments in which they operate, undermines the ability of those POs to achieve their mandated goals;[178] an issue which is further exacerbated by the overall lacking capacity of POs to target sources of insecurity in their respective fields. For instance, there is an expectation at the local level that MONUSCO will offensively deploy force to uphold its civilian protection mandate. However, the leadership of the PO might be reluctant to escalate conflict against armed groups in the field out of recognition that it lacks the ability to respond sufficiently in case of a further escalation.[179] For the PO, this is ultimately a policy of risk aversion in which the PO fears that a more robust deployment of the use of force could further undermine the safety of civilians and MONUSCO personnel. There is a similar reasoning underlying the "bunkerization" of MINUSMA.[180] However, for the local population, which expects that offensive force will be deployed to protect civilians, the behaviour of the PO is read as passivity instead of reasonable risk-aversion.[181] Such passivity can also be perceived as inappropriate given the high threat-level which civilians often face in these contexts, and the PO's legitimacy as an intervening actor is thus called into question. As one local interlocutor in the DRC put it: "MONUSCO must either act or pack up."[182]

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[178] Alexandra Novosseloff et al., "Assessing the Effectiveness of the UN Mission in the DRC," Effectiveness of Peace Operations Network – Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, 2019: 22-23. https://effectivepeaceops.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/EPON-MONUSCO-LowRes.pdf; Jaïr Van der Lijn et al., Van der Lijn, Jaïr et al. "Assessing the Effectiveness of the United Nations Mission in Mali," Effectiveness of Peace Operations Network – Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, 2019: 59. https://effectivepeaceops.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/EPON-MINUSMA-Report.pdf.

[179] Interview with a peace operations researcher in Paris, 20 April 2022; Artiñano et al. (2014) make a similar point based on a conversation with a UN Somalia official (19).

[180] Di Razza, "Protecting Civilians in the Context of Violent Extremism," 32.

[181] Alexandra Novosseloff et al., "Assessing the Effectiveness of the UN Mission in the DRC," Effectiveness of Peace Operations Network – Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, 2019: 81; 106. https://effectivepeaceops.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/EPON-MONUSCO-LowRes.pdf; "Protests spread in east DRC as fury against UN peacekeepers rise," Al Jazeera, 27 November 2019. https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/11/27/protests-spread-in-east-drc-as-fury-against-un-peacekeepers-rises; "Transitioning from stabilization to peace: An independent strategic review of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo," S/2019/842, 25 October 2019: footnote 3. https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N19/337/60/PDF/N1933760.pdf?OpenElement.

[182] "DR Congo police clear protesters demanding UN action," Al Jazeera English, 3 April 2021, video, 2:58. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZP6trGwKWtU.

Ultimately, MONUSCO lacks the capacity to wage a successful counterinsurgency against the ADF, which is why in some cases it adopts a risk averse stance, just as MINUSMA lacks the capacity to wage counterterrorism operations against Jihadist groups. However, in both cases, domestic pressures, encouraged by the overtly robust stances of the POs, have generated the expectation that these POs will become more proactive, and show an increased willingness to act offensively.[183] In MINUSMA's case, it seems that this pressure has only grown as the PO's responsibilities have grown in Central Mali,[184] and French forces have announced their withdrawal.

A further question raised by the analysis in this thesis is how different *types* of expectations have increasingly blurred together. Alexander Brown (2017), a political theorist, insists that there is such a thing as "legitimate expectations," and that the distinctive characteristic of this expectation-type is that the expectation is "*justifiable*, meaning that the agent has *epistemic justification* or warrant for expecting, in both the predictive and prescriptive senses, that some other agent […] will and should do or not do something in the future."[185] Brown's work specifically focuses on legitimate expectations for public administration, but I consider how his theoretical framework applies to expectations for POs. He elaborates a "Responsibility-Based Account" of the legitimacy of expectations, which focuses on whether agents can be deemed responsible for *creating expectations*, after they have been given or have assumed a "role responsibility, competence, or discretion over the relevant policies and measures."[186] Importantly, and in contrast to a Law-Based Account of expectations, "an expectation can be legitimate even if it is not based on a law or legal entitlement."[187] How does this characterization of legitimate expectations inform our understanding of waning PO legitimacy in the aftermath of the *non-use* of force?

This thesis argues that the authorization of increasingly robust POs, which assume particular roles and responsibilities, has resulted in the creation of *legitimate* local expectations

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[183] Remote interview with Cedric de Coning, 4 May 2022; "Transitioning from stabilization to peace: An independent strategic review of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo," S/2019/842, 25 October 2019: §71. https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N19/337/60/PDF/N1933760.pdf?OpenElement.

[184] United Nations Security Council Resolution 2480, S/RES/2480, 28 June 2019. http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/2480.

[185] Alexander Brown, "A Theory of Legitimate Expectations," *The Journal of Political Philosophy* 25, no. 4 (2017): 436. doi: 10.1111/jopp.12135. No emphasis added.

[186] Ibid., 444. No emphasis added.

[187] Ibid., 445.

regarding the use of force by POs, which previously might have been characterized as 'unrealistic' or 'illegitimate' expectations. The robust stances of POs, their support for and co-location with forces that offensively use force, and mandates which prioritize the protection of civilians through means which include the neutralization/targeting of armed elements, all combine to create legitimate expectations among the local population that POs will engage in a more robust and—in some cases—offensive use of force. Expectations that might once have been viewed as unrealistic, when PO mandates were less robust, have become increasingly legitimate as "[…] the UNSC has chosen to give increasingly robust mandates to UN [POs]."[188] Moreover, as argued above, these expectations are reinforced by PO-authorizing mandates (i.e., the legal entitlements referred to by Brown[189]) which clearly authorize the use of offensive force in a relatively wide array of circumstances, including situations of stabilization.[190]

The concept of an 'expectations gap' can assist in refining the hypotheses introduced at the outset of this thesis. To begin, the effect of the 'expectations gap' as a mechanism for legitimacy reduction occurs in situations of the PO's non-use of force, such as in Beni in 2019, and *not* in situations where a PO deploys force, as anticipated by the project's hypotheses. Nevertheless, a reframing of H_2 and H_3 might provide a useful lens through which to understand the decline in legitimacy perceptions which are observed in the aftermath of a PO's non-use of force.

H_2 predicted that the negative legitimacy perception of one actor using force, such as a parallel force or national security forces, might 'contaminate' local perceptions of the PO's legitimacy. However, in retrospect, it seems that instead of observing a contamination of legitimacy perceptions, what is being observed is a 'contamination of expectations': segments of the local population conflate the mandate of the PO, with the mandate of another intervening force that has a greater willingness and capability to deploy offensive force. The proximity between the PO and this other force then reinforces these expectations. The underlying mechanism, the proximity between the PO and another force, is the same in both explanations.

This seems to hold particular explanatory power in the case of MINUSMA, where the PO has provided support to counterterrorism forces.[191] Artiñano et al. highlight the views of one

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[188] Karlsrud, *The UN at War*, 20.

[189] Brown, "A Theory of Legitimate Expectations," 183.

[190] United Nations Security Council Resolution 2432, S/RES/2432, 30 August 2018: §43. http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/2432; United Nations Security Council Resolution 2556. S/RES/2556. 18 December 2020: §(i)(e). https://monusco.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/s_res_25562020_e.pdf.

[191] Di Razza, "Protecting Civilians in the Context of Violent Extremism," 25.

Malian interlocutor who noted that "for the average person in Mali, it is very hard to differentiate between any internationals operating in the country, let alone between Serval[192] and UN peacekeepers […]."[193] They add that the mandates of the French military operation and the PO have been "confuse[d]" by many local observers,[194] even if MINUSMA's mandate itself is careful to deploy the language of the PO "effectively respond[ing] to *threats* to the civilian population" in the civilian protection component of its mandate.[195] Overall, it seems that the presence of other actors deploying force in the field affects expectations at the local level of the use of force by the PO. Cedric de Coning notes that MINUSMA and the G5 Sahel Joint Force and French forces have "complementary" mandates, but that an expectation is created of MINUSMA being "just another fighting force that will help […]."[196] However, MINUSMA is obviously not a fighting force in the same way that the G5 Sahel Joint Force and French forces under Barkhane have been, which is at the root of unrealistic local expectations for the PO's actions in terms of the use of force. Here, the notion of 'contamination' is a useful analytical tool: expectations for the actions of other fighting forces have been projected on to MINUSMA, which comes to be seen as one of several foreign forces on the ground.[197] Moreover, it appears that MINSUMA may have internalized some of those expectations to the detriment of civilian protection. Di Razza (2018) references PO officials who "admit that the peacekeeping mission has become over-involved in counterterrorism efforts and has focused too little on POC,"[198] which offers insight into how PO mandate priorities can fall victim to this 'contamination problem'.

H3 proposed that the use of force by a PO may expose the UN as the 'wrong' organization for the job of employing military force, and that such a realization could stem from a mismatch between the PO's form and function. Ironically, if the term "use of force" in this hypothesis is replaced with "non-use of force," then the hypothesis holds up rather well, specifically in relation to the first mechanism associated with expertise and competence. Backlash against POs reveals that in several cases within both MINUSMA and MONUSCO, the POs' non-use of force has

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[192] Opération Serval was the French military operation in Mali, which was succeeded in 2014 by French Opération Barkhane.

[193] Artiñano et al., "Adapting and Evolving," 22-23.

[194] Ibid., 23.

[195] United Nations Security Council Resolution 2531, S/RES/2531, 29 June 2020: §28(c)(ii). http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/2531. Emphasis added.

[196] Remote interview with Cedric de Coning, 4 May 2022.

[197] Ibid.

[198] Di Razza, "Protecting Civilians in the Context of Violent Extremism," 30.

served as the basis for arguments at the local level that the mission is not effectively deploying its robust capacities in order fulfil its mandated responsibilities. This is the aforementioned 'mismatch.' In reality, however, what was initially characterized as a mismatch, or discrepancy, between PO form and function, now serves as the key dynamic underlying the 'expectations gap.' The PO's form is what serves to (at least, partially) inform the local level understanding of its appropriate functioning. The 'expectations gap' narrows when the PO's form and function are closely aligned, and widens, to the detriment of the PO's legitimacy, when the form and function seem to be increasingly disconnected. The findings of this thesis about the 'expectations gap' in cases of robust, conflict management POs thus support the hypothesis that when a PO's form and function are misaligned then we may observe a decline in local perceptions of the PO's operational legitimacy. This decline manifests in backlash against the PO, due to the perception that the PO's actions, or lack thereof, are inappropriate given its mandate.

XI. CONCLUSION

This project began with the expectation that the use of force by POs operating in contexts characterized by the UN as conflict management would ultimately harm local level perceptions of the operational legitimacy of those POs. I theorized that perceptions of PO legitimacy at this level may be undermined, because of the use of force, in three possible ways: the use of force by a PO might undermine its position as an impartial actor (H_1); the PO's use of force might become negatively associated with other non-UN actors deploying force in the same field (H_2); and/or the use of force might ultimately reveal that a PO was a poorly suited actor to be deploying force in the field in question, raising questions about its level expertise (H_3). However, this project's findings challenged all of these expectations, most significantly by revealing that a PO's legitimacy in these conflict management contexts frequently suffers not because it engages *in the use force*, but instead because it is perceived at the local level *as not using force frequently enough*. This unexpected finding, that a PO's non-use of force might erode perceptions of its operational legitimacy at the local level, prompted a secondary investigation. The key takeaways are discussed below.

First, it seems that the risk hypothesized in this project, that the use of force by a robust PO taking on a conflict management role might negatively impact perceptions of that PO's legitimacy, likely does exist. However, the project's hypotheses, which assumed that a PO's use of force would

negatively impact perceptions at the local level of the PO's legitimacy, might have incorrectly identified which actor has internalized this risk. The project's finding, that local populations are critical of the nonuse of force by POs, seems to have revealed that it is POs—and by extension the UN, their parent organization—which are particularly sensitive to the risk of the use of force in terms of possible repercussion on perceptions of their legitimacy at the local level. The UN's sensitivity to this risk in peacekeeping clearly manifests in its application of the HRDDP—a policy which acknowledges that a PO's use of force, specifically in cooperation with national security forces, risks negatively impacting the reputation, and thus operational legitimacy, of the PO. This risk is especially salient for UN POs, given that POs frequently find themselves in a position in which they have little choice in terms of needing to cooperation with national security forces. However, as highlighted in the analysis, misperceptions that HRDDP implementation by UN POs weakens offensive actions undertaken by national security forces, may bolster beliefs at the local level that the PO is shirking its protection of civilian responsibilities. Ultimately, this project might have misattributed where the possible repercussions of the use of force by a UN PO are most strongly internalized—it assumed that local populations in the spaces in which UN POs operate would be especially sensitive to these repercussions, however, in the cases analyzed, it is the UN which seems to be particularly sensitive to the consequences of a PO's use of force. This risk is perceived in terms of both possible impacts on legitimacy perceptions of the PO, and in terms of the possible risks to military and civilian PO personnel.

Second, the observation in the MONUSCO and MINUSMA case studies that local perceptions of the PO's legitimacy seemed to erode because the POs were viewed as doing too *little*, prompted an additional investigation, focused on the 'expectations gap' in UN peacekeeping, specifically as it relates to a PO's civilian protection responsibilities. While this gap has already featured in the PO literature, this thesis indicates that it is at risk of widening still further in the conflict management contexts in which MONUSCO and MINUSMA are currently deployed. Here, the authorization of increasingly robust PO mandates raises the expectation that POs with those mandates will more frequently and proactively deploy force. Moreover, the potential of the gap is exacerbated by what I have referred to as a 'contamination of expectations,' which is fueled by the presence of non-UN actors that deploy force in the same field as the PO. By addressing the possible widening of the 'expectations gap' in peacekeeping, this project sheds light on the feasibility of contemporary robust peacekeeping mandates, in terms of their operationalization in the field. The

findings also suggest that the authorization of robust PO mandates, including the authorization of specifically robust PO components, needs more careful consideration and assessment given the high degree of risk aversion which has been internalized by POs operating in conflict management contexts.

The discussion of both case studies makes clear that at the local level there is a want stronger civilian protection, through the deployment of the use of force, by POs. Nonetheless, it remains unclear how the gap between this expectation and the capacity of a PO to respond might be bridged. In the case of MONUSCO, the FIB seems to have proven effective at a particular moment in time where political dynamics converged in favour of its success—but as analysts have noted, it is not necessarily a viable model for future peacekeeping successes in other environments.[199] Moreover, shrinking peacekeeping budgets seem poised to further undermine the capacity of PO, and cooperation with national security forces—and national authorities more broadly—has become increasingly challenging.[200] POs operating in conflict management contexts are being strained to what might become, in the short- to medium-term, a point of breaking. Worsening legitimacy perceptions of these POs, due to perceptions that these POs insufficiently deploy force even though they possess robust mandates, only threaten to make the situation worse. This thesis thus suggests the need for more attention to meaningfully addressing the widening 'expectations gap,' without resorting to a strategy of 'expectations management' that offers little comfort to local populations.[201] The analysis also points to how a PO's mandated responsibilities in terms of the "provision of physical protection" can come to dominate discourse surrounding broader protection of civilian responsibilities, which also include "protection through dialogue and engagement" and the "establishment of a protective environment."[202] A focus on physical protection, which involves "the show or use of force,"[203] is likely worsened by the authorization of increasingly robust PO mandates, which likely raises expectations at the local level in 'conflict management' contexts that PO protection will prioritize physical protection. Ultimately, the safety

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[199] Artiñano et al., "Adapting and Evolving," 19.
[200] Since the beginning of 2022, MINUSMA "[…] has been required to request specific authorization from the authorities in Bamako for every land and air patrol […]" (Lotte Vermeij, Cleo Bigwood, Tobias von Gienanth, Liezelle Kumalo, et al., "UN Peacekeeping Operations at a Crossroads: The Implementation of Protection Mandates in Contested and Congested Spaces," Effectiveness of Peace Operations Network – Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, 2022: 81. https://effectivepeaceops.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/EPON-Protection-Report.pdf.)
[201] Remote interview with Dirk Druet, 25 April 2022.
[202] Vermeij et al., "UN Peacekeeping Operations at a Crossroads," 27.
[203] Ibid.

of civilian populations needs to be at the center of our thinking in peacekeeping doctrine, and scholars and policy-makers need to think critically about how POs might better balance civilian protection responsibilities with a risk-averse position in regards to the use of force.[204]

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[204] Namie Di Razza and Ralph Mamiya, "The Future of the Protection of Civilians in UN Peacekeeping Operations," 6-7, accessed August 2022.
https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/fopo_paper_nami_di_razza_ralph_mamiya_poc.pdf. The paper can also be accessed on the United Nations Peacekeeping website: https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/future-of-protection-of-civilians-un-peacekeeping-operations.

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