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Accord Internship: A South African Ngo's Approach to Peacekeeping in 2015

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**ACCORD INTERNSHIP: A SOUTH AFRICAN NGO'S APPROACH TO
PEACEKEEPING IN 2015**

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School for International Training

South Africa: Social and Political
Transformation

Fall 2015

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Abstract

Since the fall of apartheid and the forty quarters of subsequent growth under Thabo Mbeki, South Africa has been recognized as an emerging global power and one of the most powerful countries in Africa. Because of its relatively newfound power and the way in which South Africa negotiated its own peace and freedom, it has taken a leading role in conflict resolution and peacemaking on the continent. The African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD) assists South Africa in its dedication to diplomacy and conflict management. The biggest conflict resolution non-governmental organization in Africa, ACCORD works to peacefully resolve conflicts around the continent. It provides assistance and support to African governments in peacemaking, peacekeeping, peacebuilding, and democracy building. For my ISP I will be interning in the Peacekeeping Department at ACCORD. I worked primarily on training materials for peace personnel, policy brief recommendation documents and an occasional paper. I studied specifically how a South African non-governmental organization approaches peacekeeping in 2015 on the most conflict-prone continent of the last 25 years. I focused on ACCORD's Peacekeeping Unit's research tasks as potentially innovative approaches to peacekeeping. My methodology will centre on analysis of my unit's publications, but also on participant observation, and I will also conduct informal interviews with ACCORD staff and make as many non-participant observations as I can around the office.

I will detail my findings through a research case study to show ACCORD's approach to international peacekeeping and how it relates to South Africa's progressive constitution. I discovered that, through a research project on gender issues in African mission support elements of peace operations and through general observations of the organization, ACCORD's primary focus in peace operations are the people. That might seem trite, but it is not as widely-shared a mentality as people tend to think.

Introduction

Despite the gargantuan size of the United Nations and the growing influence of the African Union, peace and security threats are still on the rise, particularly on the African continent, but certainly not limited to it. No one seems to have an answer to the quickly-evolving conflict landscape, especially in regards to the menace of extremist groups and non-state actors. Genocides are still being carried out in Syria, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Darfur. Peace operations are unable to be completed, playing an integral, long-term role in the stability of more than a dozen countries around the globe. Although this is a bleak outlook on the status of the world today, a world that has made great progress in many areas in the last century, it is the unfortunate reality of a global conflict scenario that we must begin to deal with. With the unique opportunity to intern at the largest and most-respected conflict resolution non-governmental organization on the continent¹, I decided to examine how such an institution is grappling with these challenges.

I hope that this paper will be seen as a window into the reasons for ACCORD's success in Africa, and thus will serve as a small, innovative ideas-based recommendation paper for more traditional peacekeeping bodies. I strongly believe that ACCORD takes a creative approach to peacekeeping because of its extreme emphasis on the humanitarian side of its operations, and that many transnational and state organizations could benefit from emphasizing the human element of their own peace operation undertakings in the future. This will not be a holistic set of recommendations on all elements of peace operations, or a definitive declaration of what makes peace operations successful. This paper will simply show the multitude of maladies in peace operations today and the innovative approach that ACCORD is utilizing to combat them.

¹ ACCORD is ranked 32nd out of all non-US think tanks globally, 63rd overall in the world, and 1st in Africa. (University of Pennsylvania, 2014).

This paper consists of five main sections. I will begin by giving background information on ACCORD as an organization, which is pertinent to understanding the structure of the business and its history. I will then present a literature review. That will be followed by a comprehensive review of peace operations around the world today, with a specific focus on the African context. I will then detail a case study of an ACCORD project, an original research production. I will end with my conclusions drawn about ACCORD's approach to peacekeeping and what a similar approach spread throughout more peacekeeping organizations could mean on the international stage.

ACCORD Background

The African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes describes itself as, "a South Africa-based civil society organization working throughout Africa to bring creative African solutions to the challenges posed by conflicts on the continent."² Founded in 1992 by Vasu Gounden, a young man educated in Kwa-Zulu Natal, ACCORD began as an organization hoping to promote and assist in negotiations between key South African parties. Since then, it has expanded its work to all regions of the continent. In its 23 years of operation, ACCORD has provided conflict management, analysis, and prevention in more than thirty of Africa's 54 countries.³

Operationally, ACCORD is broken into two departments: Knowledge Production and Interventions.⁴ I will be working in the Interventions Department, which encompasses peacemaking, peacekeeping, peacebuilding, and training work. Since the toppling of many colonial regimes in Africa in the mid-1900s, the continent has undergone a period of widespread instability as it has worked to shed its colonial and now neo-colonial shackles. While some countries, like South Africa, have successfully established independent democracies, others have struggled. In some instances colonial constructs created ethnic conflicts such as in Rwanda. In others, the power vacuum left

² ACCORD. "The Peacekeeping Context." *The African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes*. ACCORD, 2015. Web.

³ Gounden, Vasu, and Daniel Forti. "ACCORD at Twenty Years." *Conflict Trends* 3 (2012): 3-11. Web.

⁴ ACCORD. "The Peacekeeping Context." *Op. Cit.*

behind by colonial oppressors led to lengthy civil wars, like in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Whatever the cause, conflicts on the African continent have been anything but few and far between. Because of the unfortunate number of ongoing conflicts on the continent, ACCORD has been hard at work for over two decades intervening in dangerous situations to ensure maximum protection of civilians and swift ends to budding and ongoing conflicts alike. Central to ACCORD's peacekeeping division operations is its Training for Peace (TfP) program. The program seeks to train civilian and police peacekeeping and peacebuilding personnel, complete critical field research, and to develop policy in the international peacekeeping sector.⁵ Currently, the program is responsible for having trained 7000 peacekeeping personnel directly and producing more than 300 publications for further training of peacekeepers. The Training for Peace program has reached Zambia, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Mozambique, Mauritius, and many other countries. Some examples of recent publications include reports entitled "Developing the Mediation and Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development Pools of The African Union Peace and Security Department Civilian Standby Roster" and "The Conflict Management Work of The Civil Affairs Division of The United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS)."⁶ These reports serve to make peacekeeping around Africa more efficient and better operated, and to ensure that the United Nations and the African Union have sufficient resources to intervene in conflicts if necessary.

The Historical-Theoretical Approaches to Peacekeeping

Peacekeeping today is completely different than peacekeeping fifty years ago. Conflicts, the mandates of missions and international structures are thoroughly altered. Therefore, in our current millenium, the United Nations and other international and transnational actors have been forced to adapt to keep up with the rapidly changing conflict landscape that they are presented with. However, they have fallen behind. I believe that this dissynchronization is at the root of what has caused ACCORD to have to come up with its innovative approach to peacekeeping around the world.

⁵ ACCORD. "The Peacekeeping Context." *Op. Cit.*

⁶ ACCORD. "The Peacekeeping Context." *Op. Cit.*

Peacekeeping as a field is quite broad. There is extensive literature written about the legality and ethics of peacekeeping and humanitarian interventions. Peacekeeping is often discussed in literature in the context of the United Nations mandate and operations. Although more recently there has been an increase in literature written about the African Union's role in peacekeeping operations, the vast majority of peacekeeping theory literature is written about the United Nations.⁷ Edward C. Luck's book entitled *UN Security Council: Practice and Promise* provides an in-depth background about the legal mandates of the United Nations Security Council, and the frequent disjoint between that mandate and the action or inaction of the Security Council. Luck's work analyzes a number of case studies, including Rwanda, Kuwait, and Serbia, to demonstrate the pitfalls of certain international approaches to peacekeeping and the merits of others. He focuses on the Security Council's failure to act upon its mandate in the case of Rwanda, as a microcosm of what he believes is the United Nation's long history of peacekeeping failures.⁸

There is still critical widespread debate about when peacekeeping is warranted, what the United Nations and African Union's mandates should be, and what the mandate of peacekeepers on the ground is. Ian Hurd's *International Organizations: Politics, Law, Practice* provides a historical and modern legal perspective on peacekeeping. Hurd's work focuses predominantly on the organizations that are involved in international peacekeeping, such as the African Union. The book provides an unbiased account of peacekeeping throughout history and its evolution in the 1900s with the development of modern day transnational organizations.⁹ But, even though his work is unbiased, it still details the factual failures of transnational peacekeeping organizations like the United Nations and the African Union specifically in the last few decades, which is precisely the problem that I will be focusing on during the internship at ACCORD.

⁷ Nkiwane, Tandeka. "Peacekeeping in Africa: Prospects for the Future?" *African Journal of Political Science Afr Jnl Pol. Sci.* 6.2 (2001): n. pag. Web.

⁸ Luck, Edward C. *UN Security Council: Practice and Promise*. London: Routledge, 2011. Print.

⁹ Hurd, Ian. *International Organizations: Politics, Law, Practice*. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge UP, 2011. Print.

Most peacekeeping literature focuses on certain case studies in order to illustrate the problematic approaches that the United Nations and the African Union have taken historically. Michael Barnett's *Eyewitness to Genocide: The United Nations and Rwanda* gives an extremely detailed account of why the United Nations failed to deploy peacekeepers effectively in Rwanda. Barnett describes two crucial issues within the peacekeeping field: countries acting in self-interest, and the lack of resources and capacity that peacekeeping bodies often face.¹⁰ ACCORD is trying to fix both of these issues within Africa. They have worked hard to guarantee resources for The African Standby Force, a force that is rapidly deployable and always present, that would somewhat fix both of the structural problems outlined by Barnett and many others.

A critical element of the Rwandan genocide debate and the international peacekeeping mandate is R2P. In writing, the Responsibility to Protect doctrine should prevent genocide itself. Alex Bellamy presents the first of three interwoven concepts critical to theoretical approaches to peacekeeping: humanitarian obligation, global peacebuilding and development aid's role in both. In his article entitled "Realizing the Responsibility to Protect," Bellamy writes, "[At] the UN's 2005 World Summit...World leaders unanimously declared that all states have a responsibility to protect their citizens from genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and ethnic cleansing."¹¹ However, as of today this pledge has proved more theoretical than practical, with two genocides having occurred after 2005. Bellamy concludes that there are three elements to the international reluctance to enforce R2P. First, he writes about the need for conceptual clarity – specifically, the need to "Work out the relationship between prevention, reaction, and rebuilding."¹² The more concrete the definition of all three of those elements of R2P, the more legally enforceable the doctrine is. Secondly, Bellamy addresses the need for progress in the doctrine's practical measures, primarily referring to the necessity of an always-accessible peacekeeping force.¹³ In terms of actively

¹⁰ Alex J. Bellamy. "Realizing the Responsibility to Protect." *International Studies Perspectives*. 2009

¹¹ Alex J. Bellamy. *Op. Cit.*

¹² Alex J. Bellamy. *Op. Cit.*

¹³ Alex J. Bellamy. *Op. Cit.*

enforcing the doctrine on the ground, the United Nations must have the ability to immediately deploy troops to protect civilians as soon as R2P is violated, in order to carry a legitimate, deterrent threat. Similarly, Bellamy also discusses the need for strengthened institutional capacity, in order to help the United Nations garner enough resources to actually be able to enforce the Responsibility to Protect doctrine.¹⁴

While all of the elements Bellamy presents are crucial to making the Responsibility to Protect more enforceable, he spends the most time outlining the main issue holding countries back from fully committing to upholding R2P. He says that R2P is inexorably linked to humanitarian intervention and all of the negative stigmas surrounding it.¹⁵ Essentially, Bellamy asserts that the international community is stuck on the reaction aspect of R2P, and disregards the prevention and rebuilding elements. Developing nations, and even some developed nations, are wary about allowing countries to quickly utilize R2P to justify interventions that in actuality are motivated by state interest or agendas. Because of the concern from developing nations about the possibility of ulterior state motives in supposedly humanitarian interventions sanctioned through R2P, invoking R2P has lost critical legitimacy. In order to restore some of the concept's legitimacy, it is imperative that the international community steers its focus on R2P from the reaction aspect to the prevention and rebuilding elements.

ACCORD is leading the charge toward that focus, what it calls the "peacekeeping-peacebuilding nexus." While it is the job of peacekeepers to establish, culture, nourish and maintain peace, ultimately peacebuilding is needed to move a society or state fully back into a peaceful situation. Although I will be focusing on the peacekeeping side, it is important to address the bigger picture here. Elizabeth Cousens' concept of peacebuilding goes more in depth on these areas of the Responsibility to Protect. In her article entitled "Peacebuilding as Politics," Cousens focuses on both maintaining and restoring peace through what she calls peacebuilding. Peacebuilding can be broken

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

into two definitive parts: deductive and inductive peacebuilding. Deductive peacebuilding, the version most pertinent to peacekeeping in an African context, “Emphasized the “what” and the “who” of peacebuilding over the “how” “why” or “to what end.”¹⁶ It amounted to an inventory of those needs that could be filled by international actors, with the larger purpose of peacebuilding remaining vague.” The more directly applicable of the two peacebuilding aspects, deductive peacebuilding, when combined with the Responsibility to Protect, draws focus away from the reaction element and onto the more practical prevention and rebuilding elements. In doing so, Responsibility to Protect as a whole gains legitimacy. By forcing countries, and the United Nations for that matter, to make peacebuilding an essential part of R2P, the concern surrounding the possibility of self-interested “humanitarian” interventions under the guise of R2P reactions is alleviated somewhat. Instead of an inevitable association of solely humanitarian intervention with R2P, peacebuilding aspects of development and structural prevention would have to be considered as well by the international community.

Peter Uvin’s chapter “Development Aid: Conclusions and Paths for Reflection,” discusses conflict and poverty prevention through development aid. Such analysis is extremely helpful in determining how to better prevent conflict in the future. In fact, by incorporating Uvin’s ideas into those of Cousens, it is easy to see how development aid is a critical aspect of peacebuilding in the future. Peacebuilding seeks to prevent conflict by creating structures built to maintain peace. Similarly, Uvin writes about Rwanda, “The reach of the state, the survival and reproduction of the elite, the unfolding of the processes of exclusion, inequality, and humiliation are all so intertwined with the presence of foreign aid – and in some cases, impossible to envision without foreign aid – that any separation between them is artificial if not meaningless.”¹⁷ By this reasoning, the accurate targeting of aid is critical in preventing what Uvin calls the “genocidal edifice.” The inclusion of Uvin’s ideas into the concept of peacebuilding updates peacebuilding as a concept.

¹⁶ Cousens, Kumar, and Wermester. *Peacebuilding as Politics: Cultivating Peace in Fragile Societies*. 2001

¹⁷ Peter Uvin. "Development Aid: Conclusions and Paths for Reflection." 1998.

Peacekeeping theory literature recommendations can be divided into two different categorical opinions: increase the amount of peacekeeping missions, or severely alter the way that peacekeeping missions are carried out before undertaking any more. Almost all literature critiques the applications of peacekeeping. According to Druckman et. al, peacekeeping operations are frequently deployed incorrectly – either too late, in too small a capacity, or when there is hardly a conflict at all. Sometimes, it seems that peacekeepers have not been trained to handle certain types of conflicts such as ethnic conflicts, civil wars, and government violence against its own people.¹⁸ One of the largest critiques of peacekeeping is that it often reinforces the African status quo, both within Africa and in a neo-colonial way.¹⁹ One argument is that often Security Council and other wealthier global powers utilize the Responsibility to Protect doctrine for their own self-interest and as a way to “legitimately” violate the sovereignty of a developing nation.²⁰ Especially in Africa, a continent with a long, dark colonial past, this is particularly damaging and often directly reinforces the neo-colonialist dependency that developing nations have on their ex-colonizers, such as in the Ivory Coast with France.²¹ Within Africa, the status quo is reinforced due to the unequal supplying of peacekeeping troops. For example, a study done by the United States Department of Defence shows that states with less stable governments and lower state legitimacy contribute much more to continental peacekeeping forces than more developed, less politically oppressed states do.²² These problems are central to the development of peacekeeping operations and training literature today.

¹⁸ Druckman, Daniel, Paul C. Stern, Paul Diehl, A. Betts Fetherston, Robert Johansen, William Durch, and Steven Ratner. "Evaluating PeaceKeeping Missions." *Mershon International Studies Review* 41.1 (1997): 151. Web.

¹⁹ Victor, J. "African Peacekeeping in Africa: Warlord Politics, Defense Economics, and State Legitimacy." *Journal of Peace Research* 47.2 (2010): 217-29. Web.

²⁰ Alex J. Bellamy. "Realizing the Responsibility to Protect." *International Studies Perspectives*. 2009

²¹ Nkiwane, Tandeka. "Peacekeeping in Africa: Prospects for the Future?" *African Journal of Political Science Afr Jnl Pol. Sci.* 6.2 (2001): n. pag. Web.

²² Victor, J. "African Peacekeeping in Africa: Warlord Politics, Defense Economics, and State Legitimacy." *Journal of Peace Research* 47.2 (2010): 217-29. Web.

It is also of utmost importance to discuss the rights-based approach, which is detailed more specifically as a human rights-based approach, to peacekeeping. With the development of different violent scenarios into which peacekeeping forces are deployed, there has been a need to bolster force capacities in those operations, and the more human side of peacekeeping has been somewhat neglected. This becomes a training issue. The paramount importance of human rights in peacekeeping must be communicated to peacekeepers during training courses and in course materials, so that in scenarios that require quick action and decisive decision-making, peacekeepers have human rights principles engrained in them already. Another aspect of this approach is the inclusion of a gendered lens in peacekeeping decisions and operations. The inclusion of all genders in the peacekeeping and particularly the peacebuilding processes is critical to the longevity and stability of missions and peace. This requires the re-gendering of the peacekeeping theoretical sphere, similar to the work of Ann Tickner in the international relations field.

Methodology

I interned at ACCORD Monday through Friday from October 26th to November 25th. I worked from 8am until 5pm under Ms. Irene Limo, the Senior Programme Officer of the Peacekeeping Unit. I worked and assisted on a few projects during my month here. The first was supporting the development of a new curriculum for African Union peacekeeping troops that details their role in protecting civilians. I completed extensive research and basic information synthesizing. Another large project I undertook was editing a policy brief on recommendations for alleviating gender issues in the peacekeeping missions in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Darfur. I also assisted in creating a handbook for both military and civilian groups operating in conflict zones to better coordinate the two kinds of operations. My final, biggest research undertaking was the drafting of an occasional paper on gender mainstreaming in mission support, where I found a lot of the data used in this paper today.

I also engaged in participant observation during my time at ACCORD. Within the peacekeeping unit I observed the way that people approached the concept of peacekeeping and how the unit makes decisions as a group. I had the opportunity to speak to multiple members of the unit and got a better sense of why they personally are part of the department and what their individual thoughts on peacekeeping are. I also read numerous past Training for Peace program publications to get an idea of the trajectory that ACCORD's approach to peacekeeping has taken, and whether or not there have been significant changes to its approach since its founding (there have not been).

Limitations of Study

Although my internship was not a study, I still believe that certain changes to my internship could have given me a better idea of ACCORD's approach to peacekeeping. Time was the biggest limitation. Because part of my knowledge was supposed to come from talking to other members of my unit, I could have used more time to get more comfortable with my colleagues to be able to speak to them more frankly. Additionally, I could always have used more time to work on more peacekeeping projects to get a better sense of the Unit's publication trajectories.

Another problematic aspect of my internship was the lack of involvement from my supervisor. Although not her fault at all – she was travelling around the continent and beyond for all but three days during my month at ACCORD – it would have been helpful to talk more with her, as she was by far the most knowledgeable member of the unit in terms of its approach to peacekeeping. She is primarily responsible for educating me on the sentiments and the angle, as well as plenty of the information, on the case study on gender issues in mission support discussed later.

An African Peacekeeping Overview

United Nations Peace Operations are needed more than ever now. With growing numbers of new-age conflicts that include new perpetrators, victims, and forms of violence, the international

community must be constantly aware of emerging conflict situations around the globe constantly. Presently, 87 percent of uniformed UN peacekeepers are deployed in Africa and 80 percent of the UN's annual peacekeeping budget is spent on Africa. In total, the continent has 62.5 percent of the world's peacekeeping operations deployed throughout its many regions.²³ Africa is also a central contributor to United Nations peace support operations (PSOs). It is responsible for 45 percent of the UN's uniformed peacekeeping personnel. There are currently nine UN peace operations deployed across the African continent. Ranging from long-term missions such as the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) to much more recent deployments like the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilizations Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), these nine peace operations together make Africa the recipient of the vast majority of the United Nations' peace operations resources.

Many challenges persist throughout the UN PSOs in Africa, and unfortunately many of these challenges are the exact same issues illustrated in the Brahimi Report in 2000. There is still a perpetual, critical need for more resource and personnel commitments from Member States on a more consistent basis. PSOs still have not reached full rapid and effective deployment capacity due to structural inefficiencies and a lack of resources to create a functional standby or "on-call" force. The mandates of PSOs around the continent remain unrealistic and unattainable at times. There is still a systematic underrepresentation of women in PSOs around the world, particularly in leadership positions. Now, while engaging these problems that are still present fifteen years after the publishing of the Brahimi report, the UN must pivot and also combat new issues arising from the aforementioned shift in modern PSOs, such as sexual exploitation and abuse, ultra-aggressive non-state actors, and never seen before forms of intra-state conflict. There is plenty of peacekeeping operations work needed to eliminate persistent problems of the past as well as new operational problems that they face today.

²³ High-Level Independent Panel on United Nations Peace Operations. (2015). *Uniting Our Strengths For Peace - Politics, Partnership and People*. New York: United Nations, pp. 62-63

Complexities of Peacekeeping Operations in Africa

When UN peacekeeping operations began in 1948, they were focused on preventing inter-state conflicts and maintaining internationally dictated ceasefires and peace resolutions, such as in their first ever deployment to the Middle East to maintain peace after the introduction of Israel to the region.²⁴ The African peacekeeping landscape is far from the clear, defined state-on-state conflict threats that were present around the globe during the late 1940s through the Cold-War Era. African peacekeeping scenarios are dominated by non-state actors (NSAs).²⁵ Of the nine different UNPSOs in Africa, only two – The United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) and the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) – address inter-state conflict. The remaining seven missions promote stability in countries with threatening NSAs or civil conflicts, providing a new logistical challenge for UN and AU forces, particularly in peacebuilding activities.

The AU deploys a single PSO to Somalia (AMISOM), one of the most complex, conflict-laden countries on the continent. AMISOM works with the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia to try to bring peace to a country with multiple declared autonomous states within its borders and the constant threat of Al-Shabaab, a combative and violent NSA with transnational connections trying to gain regional and territorial control. With numerous regional, ethnic, economic and political factors to consider in its peace process, AMISOM is an example of the complexity of modern peace operation missions in Africa.

²⁴ United Nations Peacekeeping. (2015). *History of peacekeeping*. New York: United Nations.

²⁵ Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces and Geneva Call. (2015). *Armed Non-State Actors: Current Trends and Future Challenges*. Geneva: DCAF and Geneva Call.

NSAs like Al-Shabaab and other asymmetric threats play a critical role in the regional destabilization that leads to complicated PSO operations on the continent. Similarly to Al-Shabaab, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA)²⁶ operates as a transnational NSA, passing freely through the porous borders of the Great Lakes Region and waging asymmetric warfare on rebel groups and state forces alike. The LRA's relatively unchecked operation in the region has had adverse effects on the PSOs in both the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and the Central African Republic (CAR). In terms of peace and security operations, transnational NSAs create a difficult dynamic when negotiating peace processes and implementing peacebuilding structures because it is often in the best interest of transnational NSAs for states to remain weak. The asymmetric nature of these NSA threats sometimes leads to areas where the state has no control and subsequently where peace processes cannot be implemented. Additionally, because they tend to operate outside of the realm of international humanitarian law (IHL), NSAs often undermine the work of PSOs to disarm, demobilize, and reintegrate (DDR) armed forces and populations in conflict zones as they continue to perpetrate violence and human rights violations.

A number of African missions also fall under the 'no peace to keep' category, such as MONUSCO²⁷, UNAMID and AMISOM, missions operating in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Darfur and Somalia, respectively, instances of long-term civil conflicts. In both cases, the state has had minimal capacity to protect its civilians and to quell violence within its borders. In civil conflicts with no dominant state actor, the implementation of peace processes is an extremely lengthy endeavour and without proper force authorizations, PSO mandates are often unattainable in both time period and protection of civilian orders. One solution to the force authorization issue was the deployment of the intervention brigade in the DRC, which allows UN peacekeeping forces to work independently or in cohorts with state forces to combat the LRA, the 23 March Movement (M23)

²⁶ United Nations Security Council. (2014, May 12). Violence in Central Africa Threatening Efforts to Eliminate Lord's Resistance Army, Security Council Notes. New York, United States of America: United Nations.

²⁷ MONUSCO. (2015). *MONUSCO Background*. New York: United Nations.
<http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/monusco/background.shtml>

and the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR).²⁸ This gives some agency to the UN PSO in the region to assert its presence and attempt to stop the uncooperative NSAs in the region that continue to undermine state legitimacy.

A Lack of Global Cohesion

The UN and Africa currently suffer from lacking partnerships with regional organizations in Africa and global organizations involved in Africa. These partnerships assist with the critical need to engage as early as possible in peacekeeping operations, a critical element to stemming the eruption of conflicts. In order to achieve this, restructuring of the funding of peacekeeping operations as a whole, diverting more resources to the prevention and mediation aspects of PSOs and away from conflict management operations is a must. Through close consultation of regional stakeholders, the UN would be able to more effectively eliminate potential conflicts and disputes at an earlier stage, and would in turn save countless lives, funds, and personnel for conflicts that were not stopped before they commence. Member States are the first line of defence in this; however, due to a concern about global image, they have not reported as thoroughly the occurrences of emerging conflicts within their borders as they should have.

Increasingly, in a world where multi-actor scenarios comprise the overwhelming majority of conflict settings, there is no obvious primary mediating force in such circumstances at the state level. Similarly, mediators often fail to incorporate non-state actors of every kind, including violent extremists. The expansion of regional partnerships is critical to effectively mediating conflicts. Currently, there is no global framework that encourages and reinforces regional partnerships in order to realize efficient conflict mediation in the future. It is important to strengthen partnerships and operate with regional entities such as the African Union in order to more thoroughly establish regional and global networks. Specifically in Africa, the recent deployments of African AU troops in

²⁸ MONUSCO. (2015). *Op. cit.*

neighbouring countries shows the potential effectiveness of utilizing regional partnerships, although not without some political interest concerns. Certain innovative missions in the CAR, Mali, Somalia, and the hybrid mission in Darfur²⁹ demonstrate another important aspect of bolstering regional partnerships. In the cases of joint missions, the United Nations Office to the African Union (UNOAU) provided important technical support to AU troops or missions to achieve maximum operational capacity in the region.

The criticism of the UN Security Council (UNSC) in its unwillingness to assist in AU missions in Mali and Somalia demonstrates an occasional lack of collective commitment, especially by supranational organizations, to support conflict prevention missions to their fullest capacities. Regardless of whether or not the UNSC was at fault, the dearth of consistent and flexible funding mechanisms provided for the Mali and Somalia AU peace operations negatively impacted their effectiveness and, when the UN operations took over, negatively impacted the UN operations as well. Both sustained funding and an unwillingness of larger organizations to support peace operations on the ground are big problems in the peacekeeping sector today.

Operations and Standby Capabilities or a Lack Thereof

A critically hindering aspect to PSOs success is the lack of clarification of their mission mandates around the globe. Too often, UN operation mandates are unachievable, too formulaic or written with unspecific or deficient rationales. In some cases these maladies can be attributed to increasingly complex and challenging peacekeeping scenarios. In others, these operational deficiencies are caused by the use of template language in mandate writing and the underdevelopment of rationale for mission tasks included in mandates. Thus, peacekeeping operations are at times carrying out mandates that are inapplicable to the scenario that they are in,

²⁹ High-Level Independent Panel on United Nations Peace Operations. (2015). *Uniting Our Strengths For Peace - Politics, Partnership and People*. New York: United Nations, p. 63

or that ask them to do more than their operational capacity allows.³⁰ Particularly in the case of unachievable mandates, progress becomes extremely difficult to realize over time, and efforts at prioritization and sequencing during implementation are frustrating, unproductive and inefficient. Unrealistic mandates also hinder the UN's capacity to engage at the earliest possible stage – the need for The Secretariat to lobby the UNSC with the SG's recommendations for mission functions often leads to missed opportunities to engage at the optimal time on the ground. One facet of the UN's issue with mission mandates is the continued framing in national terms, which inhibits the streamlining of mission tasks and resource allocations.

Effective dialogue and consultation between the multitudes of actors involved in any peace process is another important element to improving the mandate implementation and the effectiveness of UNPSO standby mechanisms. One of the perpetual frustrations on the logistical side of peace operations is the inability to efficiently communicate between the Secretariat, the UNSC, and the troop- and police-contributing countries.³¹ These triangular consultations are often problematic because of the timeframe in which they are carried out in. The Secretariat has a history of not establishing dialogue with troop- and police-contributing countries until after a given mission is established, thus leading to a bureaucratic stagnation of the force generation process, sometimes at critical moments when forces are needed the most. Force contributing countries are entitled to know the nature of the operation before they commit personnel. By providing this information at the earliest possible date, the Secretariat will leave more time for consultations and dialogue with force contributing countries that have all necessary relevant information. The same practice must be established for mandate renewals as well.

The speed, capability, and performance of all uniformed personnel can always be improved. A vital capacity element of all personnel operations that requires vast improvement is rapid deployment capability. With the increased levels of danger and complexity in modern PSOs, it is

³⁰ (Berkman & Holt, 2006)

³¹ (Aoi, de Coning, & Thakur, 2007)

more important than ever to deploy operations at their full capacities as quickly as possible, so that portions of forces are not unnecessarily exposed to harm and are not overwhelmed by the situation on the ground. At this time, the UN does not have a standby force that it can deploy, which has severely inhibited its ability to stem budding disputes before they evolve into full-scale conflicts.³² This is part of the above-mentioned timeframe issue with force generation; without the ability to acquire troop and police commitments from countries before a conflict begins, there is a significant delay between when personnel is requested and when they can be deployed, due to the triangular consultation and information process that must occur. Nonetheless, the Brahimi Report called for the UN to reach full rapid deployment capability in 30 days for a traditional mission and 90 days for a complex mission. Aside from a few notable cases of successful and self-sustaining Member State deployments, the average UN deployment time is six months.³³

Countering asymmetrical threats and insurgency in Africa: The Importance of the Protection of Civilians (POC)

Protecting civilians is a core responsibility of every PSO in the world if innocent lives are at stake. While it seems trite to state, it is paramount that the obligation of any peace operation personnel acting upon a mandate that calls for the protection of civilians – as 98 percent³⁴ do – is practically realized as soon as possible. Conflicts occurring in Darfur and the DRC accounting for millions of civilian casualties after the publishing of the Brahimi Report unfortunately justify reiterating the importance of POC in peacekeeping operations. The SG hopes to further develop the UN's non-military protection activities for civilians. These include strong political advocacy, credible reporting, more extensive human rights monitoring and strengthened relationships with local communities. The UN should also continue to uphold and build up its relationships with

³² (Aoi, de Coning, & Thakur, 2007)

³³ High-Level Independent Panel on United Nations Peace Operations. (2015), *op. cit.* p. 51

³⁴ (Berkman & Holt, 2006)

humanitarian organizations around the world, as they plan an integral role in protection of civilian operations.

Although non-military protection activities should be used whenever possible to ensure a protective situation for civilians, the extreme level of violence in some African conflicts today continues to permeate peacefully constructed civilians. In cases where civilians are directly threatened, there can no longer be hesitance, nationalist thought or insubordination by UN troops. It is imperative that the use of force is considered part of the UN's obligation to protect civilians at all costs. Peacekeeping forces must be seen as a deterrent body willing to go to extreme measures to ensure the safety of its protectorates. Since the Brahimi Report, the rules of engagement and authorization of the use of force are more liberal and expanded, respectively. Extended even to preventative and pre-emptive realms, the authorized use of force by the UN against physical threats to civilians demonstrates a priority shift from liability concern to a Human Rights Up Front approach. While there have been significant inroads made recently in protecting civilians, it is important that the UNSC and Member States continue to support POC missions with all necessary resources and personnel, particularly in cases of state party attacks on civilians.

The development of the intervention brigade³⁵ in the DRC as part of MONUSCO is a demonstrative shift in modern peacekeeping praxis. With a full mandate to carry out counter-strike missions with or independent of local state forces, the intervention brigade is an example of a unit acting in a preventative and pre-emptive way. Quick-strike missions against the LRA and other dissenting regional actors have proved effective. AMISOM's military presence is another example of a more forceful shift in modern peacekeeping missions. Responsible for reclaiming many areas and critical infrastructure elements from extremist groups such as Al Qaeda and Al Shabaab, the AMISOM military wing is another example of an offensive peacekeeping unit that has, through military force, established relative peace in much of Somalia.

³⁵ MONUSCO. (2015), *op. cit.* <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/monusco/background.shtml>

Although there are many challenges associated with UN troops using force, in the increasingly complex, violent PSO environments today, it is necessary to establish peace to keep. These challenges include: ceasefire monitoring taking place in more hostile settings, peace implementation is being undertaken in more difficult operating environments often with political processes susceptible to collapse and conflict management missions are being deployed in more violent settings without the enabling frameworks that have previously driven success.³⁶ Recently, ceasefire monitoring missions have been particularly vulnerable to asymmetric threats, and the undoing of peace agreements by third-party non-state actors. Additionally, often ceasefire mission mandates chart success simply as the cessation of hostilities, and do not take into account the more multifaceted conflict landscape in the region. Similarly, peace operations have often been undermined by ‘spoilers,’ which are non-state actors that purposefully disrupt peace agreements and negotiations, as they have no stake or desire for peace to prevail. Conflict management missions often lack the capabilities to properly execute their mandates, and increasingly are tasked with ‘stabilization’ missions, a term that needs clarification. As more and more similar missions are deployed, the UN must evaluate how to alter the original peace implementation tasks to better fit the framework of a conflict management operation.

The Importance of Gender and Human Rights in PSOs

I would be remiss if I did not discuss the realm of gender and human rights in peacekeeping theory and praxis today. At both the AMISOM and UNSOA missions, there has been a pointed adoption of the SG’s Human Rights Due Diligence Plan (HRDDP) through the creation of a working group focused on human rights development in Somalia.³⁷ Although there have been significant improvements in attention to human rights, there is still more to be done to eliminate the unfortunately persistent violations still occurring. In some cases, these violations have come in the

³⁶ High-Level Independent Panel on United Nations Peace Operations. (2015), *op. cit.* p. 29

³⁷ AMISOM, UNSOM. (2014, February 15). *Joint UN, AMISOM Working Group on Human Rights holds inaugural meeting*. Retrieved from AMISOM: <http://amisom-au.org/2014/02/joint-un-amisom-working-group-on-human-rights-holds-inaugural-meeting/>

form of brazen attacks targeting UN and AU forces, particularly in Somalia, where Al-Shabaab has killed dozens of AU troops in the last year alone during a number of assaults on AMISOM bases.³⁸

First and foremost, the UN and AMISOM must be able to maximize the safety of their own troops in order to execute their mandates.

Regrettably, UN and AU personnel have also been guilty of illegal, abusive activities.³⁹ One of the most notable inclusions and additions in this year's report on peace operations compared to that in the Brahimi Report of 2000 is extensive material on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA). In 2005, the UN began developing its own legal framework for trying cases of SEA. It further concretized that framework in 2012⁴⁰ with the establishment of the Integrated Conduct and Discipline Framework and the deployment of conduct and discipline teams. However, findings in 2013⁴¹ show a "culture of enforcement avoidance," demonstrative of the insidious practices continuing to undermine UNPSOs. Local communities often remain uneducated about reporting processes, responsibilities are dispersed and reported incidents are not responded to by Member States or take over a year to be processed.

Countries that have state parties with poor human rights records in terms of children in armed conflicts and conflict-based sexual violence will no longer be able to contribute personnel to UNPSOs. Africa currently has six⁴² countries with affirmed violations against children including: the CAR, the DRC, Mali, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan. African countries listed as having poor conflict-based sexual violence records are the aforementioned six, with the addition of Côte d'Ivoire and

³⁸ United Nations News Centre. (2015). *Somalia: UN condemns Al Shabaab attack against African Union mission base*. New York: United Nations.

³⁹ (Pouligny, 2006)

⁴⁰ High-Level Independent Panel on United Nations Peace Operations. (2015), *op. cit.* p.74

⁴¹ Expert Team. (2013). *Expert Mission to Evaluate Risks to SEA Prevention Efforts in MINUSTAH, UNMIL, MONUSCO and UNMISS*. New York: United Nations.

⁴² Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary General. (2015). *Countries Where Children are Affected by Armed Conflict*. Retrieved from Children and Armed Conflict: <https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/countries/countries-caac/>

Liberia⁴³. Until de-listed, these countries will be barred from contributing troops and will not be allowed to participate in UN operations.

There should be a strong emphasis on the protection of women and children by police forces, especially from any forms of sexual violence. Member States should commit extra forces to police units especially placed to prevent potential conflict-based sexual violence against women and children. There is also a need to further integrate the UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 regarding women, peace and security more systematically in peace operations. Large steps, such as the deployment of the first gender officer by the AU to AMISOM in 2012⁴⁴, show the impressive forward progress made in the last decade in strengthening the role of women in African PSOs. However, evidence shows a stark contrast to the success story above, as women continue to be vastly underrepresented, particularly in the higher ranks of UN leadership. The number of deployed female personnel – despite their vital role in reaching out to girls and women in conflict-stricken communities – also remains appallingly low; women comprise just three percent of the UN military and ten percent of the UN police forces.⁴⁵ The UN is striving to change this. Through the explicit inclusion of women in mandate tasks, the integration of gender issues into all facets of UNPSOs, increased funding for gender-based initiatives, more relationships with female leaders and women civil society organizations and increased dialogue about the implementations of UNSCR 1325, the SG hopes to more completely integrate women into the security framework of peace operations.

African PSOs have a particularly large need for these improvements. The establishment of a formal funding mechanism for resolutions regarding women, peace and security is of utmost importance. It will help alleviate implementation issues having to do with a lack of funding, and will

⁴³ Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary General for Sexual Violence in Conflict. (2015). *Sexual Violence in Conflict*. Retrieved from <http://www.un.org/sexualviolenceinconflict/countries/cote-divoire/>

⁴⁴ Limo, I., Davies, O., & Weldemichael, E. T. (2015). *Recommendations for Strengthening Gender in Africa's Peace Operations*. Durban: ACCORD.

⁴⁵ High-Level Independent Panel on United Nations Peace Operations. (2015), *op. cit.* p. 54.

help make more funds available for local gender operatives. Additionally, women should be included as often as possible in peace processes, in order to help the UN to commit to always including gender issues in all peace negotiations. The UN must also increase the protection for women in conflict areas, particularly in marginalized internally displaced persons (IDPs) or refugee populations. Also, by increasing the flow of information regarding instances of sexual violence, threats to women and the different features of UNSCR 1325 and other similar resolutions, more can be done to prevent future instances of sexual violence and women and gender issues will become more integrated in UN and AU political discourse.⁴⁶

Case Study: Evaluating Issues in Peace Operation Mission Support Sectors in Africa

The reason that I choose to refer to this presentation of research as a case study is that I believe it is a clear demonstration of one of the primary themes in ACCORD's Peacekeeping Unit: gender equality. On an even more macrocosmic level, the Peacekeeping Unit's attention to gender is demonstrative of ACCORD's larger focus on humanitarian elements of peace operations, and its dedication to holistically engaging with the peace operation process, from trainings to exit strategies. To contextualize this research, I was asked by my supervisor to examine potential areas with gender equality and consideration issues in mission support – something I will explain below – within the UN and in African missions. As a whole, gender issues remain rampant in peace operations around the world. However, there has been increasingly more material published on topics such as the role of women in peace operations and military peace operations, and the prevention of SEA by peace personnel in deployment regions. Gender issues in mission support have never been addressed, and thus ACCORD and I delved into the problem.

Gender Equality Issues in UN Peace Operations

As defined by the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), "gender refers to the socially constructed, rather than physical or biological, roles ascribed to women and

⁴⁶ (Pouligny, 2006)

men. Gender roles vary according to socio-economic, political and cultural contexts and are also affected by other factors such as age, race, class and ethnicity."⁴⁷ Since the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 in regards to Women, Peace and Security in 2000, gender has been an omnipresent theme and area of concern and dialogue in UN peace operations. UNSCR 1325 was followed by UNSCR 1820 and 1888, which both officially obligated peacekeepers to protect women and children from sexual and gender-based violence in conflict settings. Another resolution passed in 2010, UNSCR 1960, explicitly calls for more women to be involved in PSOs. Despite notable improvements over the past fifteen years, there is still a lot of work to be done in terms of gender issues in the peacekeeping sector. In 2015, only four percent⁴⁸ of UN peacekeeping personnel deployed around the world were women.

Peace operations continue to be perennially plagued by a lack of female representation, especially in leadership positions. In total, five women have ever lead UN peace operations. These numbers are just one example of the lack of full implementation that United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 still suffers today. According to the High-level Independent Panel on Peacekeeping Operations report released in June 2015, despite a few victories in getting more women involved in political processes, UN and AU operations and other aspects of peacebuilding activities, there are still numerous obstacles plaguing the path to full realization of UNSCR 1325. The Horta panel that published the report cited the consistent view of UNSCR 1325 as "a woman's issue"⁴⁹ that only women need to address. There still is a distressing lack of consideration for women and girls in conflict situations when developing plans and strategies to deploy operations there. There is too large a focus on assigning gender officers to combat gender issues in peace operations, and there needs to be a return to approaching gender issues more holistically, and to integrate

⁴⁷ United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations. (2003). *Handbook on United Nations Multidimensional Peacekeeping Operations*. New York: United Nations.

⁴⁸ Kavuma, Z. (2015, October 5). Gender in Peace Support Operations. Karen, Kenya: United Nations Women.

⁴⁹ High-Level Independent Panel on United Nations Peace Operations. (2015). *Op. Cit.* p. 67

gender dialogue and changes throughout units. One of the largest problems is the lack of consistent funding for gender programs when they do have a chance to be implemented. Another problematic part of UNSCR 1325 is the failure of the UN to involve women leaders of and civil society groups as a whole.

Gender mainstreaming is of paramount importance in today's peace operations. One reason for this is because of the recent shift in the threats that define many conflicts today. The rise of asymmetrical threats and violence perpetrated by multi-dimensional non-state actors (NSAs) create extremely dangerous environments for women and girl children, and it is thus more important than ever to incorporate their security concerns into mandates and peace operation practice. In such environments, women and girls are often forced to become heads of household when the men and boys in their families are recruited by NSA or state forces. As heads of household, they become increasingly vulnerable to torture and rape, economic and food insecurity and the social stigmatization that follows sexual abuse in many societies.⁵⁰ In the 21st century, there has been a ubiquitous use of sexual violence as a weapon of war. The Handbook on UN Multidimensional Peacekeeping Operations notes the increased inequality and violence against women in conflict scenarios. These present mounting challenges to peace operations, and show the need for more gender mainstreaming, in order to properly address increasingly volatile women's issues as well as men's.

Peace operations often have the unique chance to not only address directly the security threats facing women, but also to shrink the gender gap and encourage gender equality in communities in which they are deployed. Promoting the participation of women in elections, training local police departments in how to respond to gender-based issues and by engaging with local women on the ground during times of mediation can empower women for much longer than just when the operation is on the ground. However, in many UN peace operations there have been

⁵⁰ United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations. (2003). *Op. Cit.* p. 115

marring accounts of sexual abuse and exploitation committed by UN troops and personnel. Cases of transactional sex – protection, food or materials in exchange for sex, “cultures of avoidance” and long case investigations are far too commonplace in modern peace operations. These instances have undermined some of the credibility of peace operations, especially with the female communities because cases of SEA vastly disproportionately affect women.

Gender Equality Issues in African Peace Operations

The trends in gender mainstreaming for the African Union are similar to those of the UN. While there has been significant improvement in the past decade, there is still plenty of work to be done. African countries currently account for seven of the top ten force contributing countries. In 2014, Ethiopia topped the list of military troop contributing countries, while Rwanda sent the most female police personnel to the UN.⁵¹ There are many obstacles to overcome before full gender mainstreaming can be achieved in peace operations. The complexity of many African conflicts directly contributes to these obstacles. As mentioned above, conflicts have taken a turn, involving less state-on-state violence and involving more and more NSAs. Particularly in the Great Lakes Region, including the conflicts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Burundi and, increasingly, the Central African Republic (CAR), the rise of the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) and the March 23 Movement (M23) have led to state destabilization and consistently undermined peace resolutions. The operational impunity that these groups have seems to supersede state lines and negotiating powers, and has created a full slate of issues in terms of peace negotiations and regional stability. The DRC in particular has garnered alarmed concern from the international community and the AU for its atrocious record of conflict-based sexual violence; in 2014, despite numerous years of policy implementations seeking to reduce cases of rape and sexual assault in the country, 11769⁵² incidences of sexual violence were reported. That number is supposed to be a low estimate. The

⁵¹ Kavuma, Z. (2015, October 5). *Op Cit.*

⁵² Secretary-General. (2015). *Conflict-related Sexual Violence*. New York: United Nations.

insurgent, asymmetrical nature of the threats in and around the DRC have led to brutal war tactics – including conflict-based sexual violence as shown above – and have had a devastating effect on women and children in the region. The changing landscapes of African conflict scenarios are one of the biggest contributing factors in the complexity of African peace support operations today.

Another aspect of the complex world of gender mainstreaming in the AU is the vast array of gender policies of force contributing countries. Ultimately, in either UN or AU peace operations, it is entirely up to the force contributing country to determine what personnel they send. As of 2013⁵³, 70 percent of AU Member States had comprehensive internal gender policies. Although that means that the majority of force contributing states have gender policies – certainly a positive – the lagging 30 percent alone contributes to the deficit of women particularly in the military and police sectors of AU peace operations. Even the 70 percent that was proactive and established a gender policy, something that all primary AMISOM force-contributing countries have, fail to implement their policies because of a lack of gender funding and establishments. Ethiopia, for example, has a national gender strategy policy, is a primary contributor to AMISOM (nearly 5000 military troops), yet still ranks 173rd on the United Nations Development Programme’s Human Development Report’s Gender Inequality Index⁵⁴ – surrounded by a plethora of African force-contributing nations. Because of what the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) dubs “low human development,” a country such as Ethiopia, one of the largest contributors to AMISOM, contributes very few female personnel. It is also worth noting that there is a wide range of gender development levels in Africa. South Africa and Botswana, for example, remain in the low hundreds of the rankings in the “medium human development” category. Another way to look at countries’ actual realized progress on gender equality is to see how many females are represented in their respective parliaments. While Ethiopia

⁵³ Martin, O. (2013). *The African Union's Mechanisms to Foster Gender Mainstreaming and Ensure Women's Political Participation and Representation*. Stockholm: International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance. p. 24

⁵⁴ United Nations Development Programme. (2013). *Human Development Reports: Gender Inequality Index*. New York: United Nations.

is an impressive 15th in the world in percentage of its lower parliamentary body that is female (38.8 percent), Djibouti and Sierra Leone, two of the other top military troop contributors, are listed at 105th and 107th respectively, with less than 13 percent of either countries' parliament made up of women.⁵⁵ Because the AU's gender policy incorporates all of its Member States, the goals it has set often are relatively easy targets for some states and are extremely difficult and unrealistic in the short term for others, creating somewhat of a disincentive to strive for gender equality.

There is also a general lack of accountability when it comes to hiring women in peace operations. In the UN headquarters, for example, there is still a gross underrepresentation of women. However, there is simultaneously a superfluity of rhetoric regarding the absolute importance of involving women at senior leadership levels and in peace operations in general. This disjoint and the lack of checks and balances on the Secretariat to put into practice what it discusses not only contributes to the dearth of women at senior management levels, but also to a hypocrisy that somewhat undermines the gender inclusivity decrees of the UN's senior authority. In some cases, however, it is as simple as a lack of will on the part of troop contributing countries to send women and especially to employ women in any kind of leadership position.

Mission Support and Related Gender Issues

Mission support is a critical aspect of peace operations today. With more volatile situations than ever in peace support deployment environments, the need for military cooperation with civilian aspects of missions is critical. The African Union has identified mission support as, "The weakest link in mission start-up so far."⁵⁶ At a base level, mission support is there to do exactly what its name suggests: support different mission elements of the overall mandate. Mission support is focused primarily in the administration, financial, logistical and the human resources side of planning.

⁵⁵ Inter-Parliamentary Union. (2015). *Women in national parliaments*. Geneva: Inter-Parliamentary Union.

⁵⁶ Aboagye, C. F. (2015). *Harmonised Standards for AU ASF Integrated Mission Support Training*. Addis Ababa: African Union Commission with support from APSTA.

Mission support departments are utilized when there are issues of shared assets, for example. They act as liaisons between the different components in a complex, integrated operation. They also assist with the provision of services for the operation, the incurrence of liability and any need for a formal, signed agreement like a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).⁵⁷

Mission support operations in the field are headed by a Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) that oversees the resources of the support team in its human, financial and material sectors. The administrative side of mission support is broken into many different functional areas: finance, personnel, procurement, asset management, technical and logistic functions of supply, communications and information technology.⁵⁸ Depending on the size of a given mission, there will be full individual staff for each area, or a few administrators may oversee multiple areas. These different functional areas are in charge of all critical elements of mission support operations.

The civilian personnel sector oversees the management of human resources. It is in charge of recruiting local persons, making sure contracts are up to date and coordinating civilian training, staff evaluation reports, conduct and behaviour issues and career development. Another critical aspect of administrative procedures is the planning and budgeting done in the financial department. Because of its importance, the CAO is directly involved in this process in order to assure the appropriate and efficient allocation of funds. The budget is always tied to strategic mission objects to keep it relevant and as pragmatic as possible. Similarly, the financial sector is also responsible for all financial management activities as dictated by the UN and overseen by the mission's Chief Financial Officer (CFO). Transparency and accountability through a complex series of checks and balances is imperative. Material management and acquisition is also vital to the success of any mission support operation. Because such a large part of mission support is in equipment procurement and distribution, it is crucial that the materials needed for different mission elements

⁵⁷ Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations. (2014). *Op. Cit.*

⁵⁸ United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations. (2003). *Op. Cit.* p. 126

are obtained in a timely and sufficient fashion. Another aspect of material management is the continued maintenance and inspection of any equipment, either on reserve or already deployed. Also, the military and police sectors of the mission are in charge of transporting the equipment in optimal condition to wherever it needs to be deployed. Finally, the administrative body of a mission support operation in the field is in charge of providing logistical support to all elements of the mission in which they are deployed. This includes material and resource distribution, transportation assignments, accommodation, civil engineer and geographical information system services (GIS), communications systems, medical facilities and services and general sustenance supplies such as food, water and fuel. This is all assisted by the establishment of a joint logistics operations centre.

If mission support in the field is the micro-level of mission support, then mission support at the UN headquarters in New York is the macro-level. The UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) is split into four different sub-level offices. One of those is the Office of Mission Support (OMS). Headed by the Assistant Secretary-General for Mission Support, the office oversees the establishment and maintenance of funding and operational mechanisms for mission support operations to work efficiently and successfully. OMS is in charge of missions on the ground from beginning to end – it oversees the planning, start-up and liquidation phases.⁵⁹ OMS is also constantly working to achieve rapid deployment capability of its missions. While a normal UN peace operation aims to deploy in 30 days for a standard mission and 90 days for a complex mission, OMS strives to deploy into even complex mission scenarios in 60 days. A critical enabling factor of this shorter deployment time is the strategic deployment stocks kept to eliminate the need for procurement and material identification and deployment during mission start-up, which are often unnecessary wastes of time. Mission support always aims to provide as much assistance as possible as quickly as it can. OMS is divided into two different operating branches: administrative support and logistic support. The administrative support sector oversees the aforementioned field deployed departments of

⁵⁹ United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations. (2003). *Op. Cit.* p. 129

finance, budget and human resources. The Administrative Support Division of OMS is further broken into two elements: personnel management and financial management. The personnel element focuses on macro-level recruitment, travel, administration and career development and separation of international civilian staff in the field. The financial branch provides support to field missions on UN financial policies, and oversees everything from mission budgets to expenditure reports to material reimbursements.

The personnel element is one of the first where gender issues are apparent in mission support. These problems stem from a number of different areas. First, the UN does not do enough recruiting of women, and especially needs to improve its recruitment of women into senior leadership roles. The issue is also not unique to the field missions, although it is more pronounced there. UN headquarters, at the macro-level, runs into the same lack of representation of women in personnel positions. The vast majority of gender issues in mission support can be attributed to this lack of representation. With the importance of planning, it is crucial to have women at the highest levels possible to ensure that the needs of all genders are considered equally.

In 2013 the UN Departments of Field Support, Peacekeeping Operations and Political Affairs released a report entitled “Bridging the Civilian Gender Gap in Peace Operations.” The report aimed to show the gender mainstreaming deficiencies on the civilian operation side of peace operations. Accounting for 53 percent⁶⁰ of all UN Secretariat staff, it is of equal importance to address the civilian dimension of gender mainstreaming in African peace operations as well as the military and police aspect. In the report, there is published data on a number of critical obstacles lying in the way of complete gender mainstreaming in civilian peace operations. One of the most compelling studies analyses the challenges and “choke-points” that seem to be associated with a lack of women

⁶⁰ United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations. (2015). *Women in Peacekeeping*. New York: United Nations.

employed, particularly in more esteemed positions. The study found that over the past two years, less than a quarter of applications received for job openings were from women.⁶¹

The report states that more general research suggests that there is a tendency for women to not apply for jobs that they believe that they are not qualified, compared to men that tend to apply for jobs even when they are not necessarily qualified. The same study shows that generally women have to be 70-80 percent qualified to consider applying. Currently, this can be attributed somewhat to the more cautious nature of women. However, it can also be attributed to the job descriptions that are used by the UN.⁶² By making descriptions more inclusive and removing any potential gendered language from them, the UN could make them much more accessible to women that are considering applying, even if it is just on a psychological level and the requirements of the actual job remain unchanged.

Women are also selected at a lower rate than men, especially in leadership roles. While it certainly is important to get more applications from women, it does not matter if people in the hiring processes are unwilling to consider both genders equally. For some reason, this is particularly pronounced in the applications of men and women externally.

The selection element of peace operations and deployments under the human resources sector of mission support at the UN is also worth analysing as an area to improve in order to further shrink the gender gap. Currently, the UN as a whole, peace operations being no exception, is seen as a gargantuan organization that is hard to breach into. Part of this perception comes from the UN's somewhat esoteric rostering and recruitment strategies that make up its selection process. It is sometimes even said that the selection process is more about "who you know" than the merit of an individual application.⁶³ The shortcomings of the process can be attributed to one main element of

⁶¹ United Nations Offices of Peacekeeping Operations, Field Support and Political Affairs. (2013). *Bridging the Civilian Gender Gap in Peace Operations*. New York: United Nations. p. 19

⁶² United Nations Offices of Peacekeeping Operations, Field Support and Political Affairs. (2013). *Op. Cit.*

⁶³ United Nations Offices of Peacekeeping Operations, Field Support and Political Affairs. (2013). *Op. Cit.* p. 23

the hiring process: the expert panel interviews and perceptions as well as potential for bias during interviews.⁶⁴

Because of the extremely high volume of applications received by the UN, a significant part of the selection process is done by computers. Computers are in charge of things like weeding out candidates that apply without proper credentials or experience, for example. While this may seem like a bad thing, it actually is a good way to ensure that there is no critical gender bias during the first few rounds of the process. The only bias that occurs seems to be an inherent characteristic difference between women and men – men much more frequently apply for positions they do not qualify for, while women tend to need assurance that they meet 75 percent of requirements before applying. Regardless, the different UN offices that put together the report entitled “Bridging the Civilian Gender Gap in Peace Operations” carried out a study to try to find out where women drop out of the selection process. Because of the high degree of certainty possessed over a lack of bias in the computerized parts, the researches focused on the human elements of the process. After a long research endeavour, the study was able to hone in on one particular aspect of human intervention in the application process. All applicants to UN peace operations are evaluated by an expert panel. Interestingly, the interview conducted by the panel seemed to be a make-or-break point in the selection process. If females did well before the panel stage of the process, they had a decent chance at being rostered. However, if they performed not as well before the panel, their chances of being rostered plummeted compared to those of men, and almost never were they rostered. Although it is not conclusive, the expert panel is worth examining further.

Women also experience a much higher turnover rate than that of their male counterparts. The UN offices responsible for the report entitled “Bridging the Civilian Gender Gap in Peace

⁶⁴ United Nations Offices of Peacekeeping Operations, Field Support and Political Affairs. (2013). *Op. Cit.* p. 23

Operations” call for a stop to the “bleeding” of the UN’s talented female employees.⁶⁵ Although over a longer period of time the turnover rates of men and women in UN field missions has been the same, between 2011 and 2012 men’s turnover rates dropped significantly, while those of women stayed more or less the same. The above-mentioned study speculates that this could be a result of changes to the conditions of service, but that cannot be affirmed by data at this time.

Another challenge is recruiting women to serve in the field elements of peace operations. With the rapidly increasing complexity and danger of many peace operation environments, there is a general lack of incentive to deploy in many modern peace operations, with significant potential sources of harm. There are certain specific stipulations that go along with being deployed in a conflict zone. This is where a difficult recruiting challenge comes in for UN mission support offices. Because of traditional gender role conceptions, women are still often seen as the primary caretakers of children, and the primary caregivers in many families, especially in Africa. Regardless of their roles as peacekeepers, it seems that women cannot shed this role. Unfortunately, one of the stipulations of conflict zone deployments is that you cannot be deployed with your family. This is quite a hindrance, as it forces women to choose the field or their families. Also, a number of occupational groups, including Logistics, Engineering and Aviation are all traditionally male-dominated professions, and are all critical elements of field operations. While the UN has started to carry out targeted recruiting for such fields, the numbers in those professions are still quite skewed toward men. However, timeframe disjoints between targeted recruiting efforts and GJO postings have led to the loss of some suitable female candidates.

It is currently also more critical a time for targeted recruitment or outreach than ever before. Women are graduating from educational institutions at unprecedented rates, and the general level of education of girls around the world is steadily increasing. Because of this, there is an untapped pool of suitable female candidates for field missions that needs to be discovered. Part of

⁶⁵ United Nations Offices of Peacekeeping Operations, Field Support and Political Affairs. (2013). *Op. Cit.* p. 26

the problem in this case is a lack of funding for the UN's Field Personnel Division which oversees the outreach component of field operation recruitment. There is a critical deficiency in outreach funding. Currently, there is only one staff member assigned to outreach on a 50 percent basis, and the funding is equivalent to one business class airfare from the Americas to Africa.⁶⁶ Without the ability to recruit talented women, application rates will most likely remain the same. However, the UN cannot stop at just increasing funding for outreach programs, although that is a critical element. It also has to attempt to alter its field missions' images of being undesirable deployments for female peace personnel.

UNAMID is noted as one of the positive examples of a mission dedicated to the inclusion and bolstering of women in its operation. It has successfully addressed many gender issues that plague missions at the mission support level. For example, many times in the planning phase of mission support there are very few or no women involved. Because of this, women's needs in terms of basic, day-to-day facilities or health materials – necessities when in the field – are often neglected, while men have all of their needs met. This gender imbalance creates an unfriendly and difficult environment for female personnel to live in, and therefore deters some women from field work entirely. This in turn creates a significant dearth of women in peace operations, particularly in the field. There have been cases, for example, of women not having access to ablution facilities that are gender specific. By having to share such facilities with their male counterparts, female personnel are often uncomfortable, subject to harassment and even risk sexual assault or abuse in that environment. This further contributes to the deterrence of women from participating in peace operations in the field. UNAMID is recognized because of its inclusion of ablution facilities for women, as one example of its evident strive to be completely gender inclusive.

The above problem, however, highlights a trend in United Nations mission support operations. As an overarching body, and currently responsible for 17 field missions, the UN is

⁶⁶ United Nations Offices of Peacekeeping Operations, Field Support and Political Affairs. (2013). *Op. Cit.* p. 30

undoubtedly the primary actor in peace operations today. Because of its massive funding capacity, the UN's Office of Field Support and mission support wings are responsible for the vast majority of the logistical elements of its peace operations. While force-contributing countries send some basic supplies and transport vehicles to the mission, the UN is responsible for everything from medical services to combat supplies to food. The provision aspect of UN mission support is rife with gender inequality, often caused by a lack of thought for women's needs. It is an area where significant improvements in gender mainstreaming must be made.

The medical field is one of the most negatively gendered aspects of UN provisions and organization in mission support. Naturally, men and women do not entirely have the same medical needs. Ranging from the size of bandages to different sanitary needs, men and women biologically need different things from their medical services. Sanitary needs are one of the lacking aspects of medical treatment offered to women. Currently, there is no place in most UN peace operation budgets for feminine hygiene products. Even though the UN provides soap, detergent and ablution and laundry facilities, this aspect of basic female hygiene necessities is neglected. This leads to female peacekeepers having to procure their own hygiene products. In dangerous areas, in which more and more peace operations are deployed, this is incredibly risky. In Darfur at UNAMID, for example, there is very little development and feminine hygiene products are not always readily available. Thus, female peacekeepers must sometimes travel relatively long, unfamiliar routes in order to obtain their hygiene essentials. This puts female peacekeepers in harm's way because of a lack of feminine hygiene products provided by the UN. In an interview with an anonymous mission commander, one of the authors of "Bridging the Civilian Gender Gap in Peace Operations" discovered that, "Men could take taxis while women could not even step out in the streets and had to make personal arrangements with men if they needed to go out to shop etc. Personal arrangements can come with implications..."⁶⁷

⁶⁷ United Nations Offices of Peacekeeping Operations, Field Support and Political Affairs. (2013). *Op. Cit.* p. 31

Another important aspect of medical services that is not normally provided by the UN is access to a gynaecologist during field operations. In the United Nations Infantry Battalion Manual Volume II, it details the need to prevent, “Female urinary tract infections, which is one of the most frequent medical problems faced in the field.”⁶⁸ Although not crippling serious if treated correctly, urinary tract infections can fester and become serious enough to require hospitalisation, and can even leave lasting negative health effects. Not only does this reduce the overall number of peacekeepers in the mission, but it is yet another deterrent to female peacekeepers feeling accepted in field operations environments.

Ultimately without the inclusion of women early in the planning stages of mission support, there is no way to thoroughly mainstream gender throughout peace operations. When women are lacking in all facets of mission support, missions do not sufficiently account for the needs of both genders. When gender is not successfully mainstreamed throughout peace operations, not only does the mission suffer but the population of women and girls in the community where the operation is deployed also suffers.

Conclusion

Since the Brahimi Report of 2000, countless improvements have been made to the realm of international peace operations. In Africa specifically, the AU has more efficiently partnered with the UN than ever before in Somalia, the MINUSCO mission in the DRC deployed an intervention brigade that successfully has acted upon the preventative and pre-emptive needs of civilian security and the effectiveness of non-state actors against state forces has drastically decreased. However, in the complex, multi-dimensional, volatile scene that comprises African peace support operations today, the UN and AU must continue to evolve with the changing landscapes of their deployment areas. There must be a primary focus on the formation of more regional partnerships, specifically between

⁶⁸ United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations and Department of Field Support. (2012). *United Nations Infantry Battalion Manual Volume II*. New York: United Nations. p. 302

the UN and the AU, to ensure efficient, early engagement operations on the ground, maximum civilian protection capacity and to promote compliance between intervening forces and local communities. As the UN tries to obtain a global standby force, the AU must continue to develop the African Standby Force (ASF) and its standby mechanisms, including its funding mechanisms, triangular consultations with Member States and its interior council and its rapid deployment and performance capabilities. With the particularly violent conflict in many African countries today, the protection of civilians (POC) is as important as ever. Improving imminent threat response, further developing the conflict management sector and bolstering and preparing forces for enforcement tasks will be critical in the near future. The UN and AU should also continue to make gender and UNSCR 1325 a primary focus of all peace operations, as well as continue to enforce a strong human rights agenda across the globe. By working in these key areas, the United Nations and the African Union, in their newfound partnership, will maintain the positive trend in global and African peacekeeping, and continue to save lives, prevent and manage conflicts and restore peace to the most conflict stricken continent on the planet. This is as far as I go with peacekeeping policy recommendations. But, these recommendations embody the mediation-focused, efficient and conflict-avoidant approach taken by ACCORD in peace operations, as they were guided by my unit and my supervisor.

Although I don't believe that humanitarian issues are the only thing that organizations involved in peacekeeping should be concerned with, as demonstrated by the brief recommendations above, I believe that ACCORD's success is testimony to the need to at least somewhat revert to the human rights-based approach that should be at the core of any international intervention. This case study, which is by no means representative of all of the work done by ACCORD, embodies the holistic approach of the organization, and the concern for the more human side of peace operations. Even it may seem like a jargon-filled, technical element of peace operations, mission support is the crux of every deployment and should be given the same attention, if not more, as any other element of a mission. A lack of women and gender mainstreaming in mission support sets off a chain

reaction: women do not feel welcome as peace operation personnel, and then populations of women and girl children in affected areas suffer as a result.

Further studies would be helpful to not only raise more awareness about gender issues in peace operations, but to actually lead to more implementation of discussed gender policies. As I stated earlier, there has been nothing published about mission support and gender issues within it. I also believe it would be very helpful for longer-term studies to be carried out to track the impact of more advanced gender policies and policy implementation in peace operations. Concrete information of that nature could help push organizations to actually act upon what they have been saying for many years now. It would be interesting, for example, to try to measure the impacts of ACCORD's efforts to diversify and mainstream gender throughout peace operations on the continent.

This focus on equality is not only practical, but is also purely and innately modern South African. ACCORD's pointedly progressive approach to peace operations shows a matching devotion to equal rights to those who drafted the country's constitution of today during the waning years of the anti-apartheid struggle. The Bill of Rights in the South African constitution reads, "The state may not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth."⁶⁹ In discussions within my unit, of which five out of seven members are female, the dedication to the upholding of these words not only within South Africa but in international endeavours as well could not be clearer. It is no surprise that the views of ACCORD's incredibly diverse staff have percolated and trickled through every piece of writing, training manual and workshop produced by the organization. One can only hope that similar approaches are adopted by other peacekeeping groups. With a similar mentality, peace operations all over the world would be able to dramatically improve their engagements with women

⁶⁹ (The Republic of South Africa, 1994)

and girl children – inherently 50 percent of all people – in conflict areas, one of the most marginalized populations in the world. This would be a massive step toward a comprehensively inclusive approach to peacekeeping operations, something that in 2015 we can only look to the future for and dream about.

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