Human security promotion in (the grey area of) stabilization[1]

Ana Carina S. Franco

Gilder's work consists of an extensive literature review on the evolution and issues pertaining to contemporary peace operations undertaken by the United Nations (UN). This work brings clarity to the debate in a moment when one still witnesses an impasse or the beginnings of a transition from the liberal peace paradigm.[2] This process was accompanied by the return to the concept of stabilization, which presupposes the absence of a peaceful resolution to the conflict, namely in intra-state conflict scenarios.

Gilder draws a relevant connection between the concepts of stabilization and human security. After elaborating on the historical evolution of UN peace missions and the conceptual framework (Part I), Part II focuses on three case studies, namely UN peace operations in Mali, the Central-African Republic and South Sudan. The book ends by problematizing current mandates of so-called stabilization operations,[3] including their growing militarization.

In fact, the return to the concept of stabilization was a pragmatic alternative to the liberal peace paradigm – largely based on statebuilding – which dominated the 2000s.[4] The concept of human security reflects a paradigm shift, from armed conflict to law, in an international context in which laws apply to the individual more than the state.[5] In this context, despite the differences between the two approaches, Gilder argues that UN stabilization missions have the potential to aspire to human security, because they can reinforce existing norms and laws.
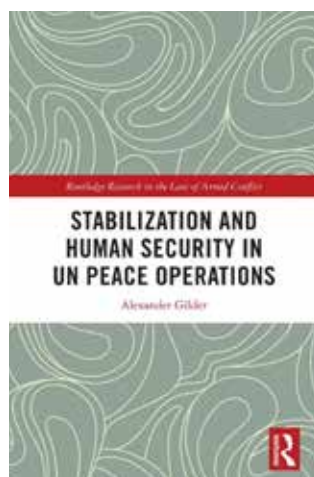
STABILIZATION IN THE CONTEXT OF CONTEMPORARY UN PEACE OPERATIONS

In 1992, the report 'An Agenda for Peace' by UN Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali presented the instruments for the promotion of peace, prevention and conflict resolution, among which were peacemaking

and peacekeeping operations. Nonetheless, the peacekeeping modality remained absent from the UN Charter. Reflecting the Brahimi Reform (2000), the UN Capstone Doctrine (2008) reinforced the non--linearity between the different types of peace operations, that is, the instruments stated in 1992, and aimed at safeguarding the principles of impartiality, consent and limited use of force.

Initially, at the end of the 1990s, 'stabilization' emerged as a political concept, and, to this day, it lacks a definition under the UN purview.[6] The Security Council authorizes peacekeeping missions under the framework of peaceful resolution of disputes (Chapter VI) and peace enforcement (Chapter VII). While not corresponding to any of these chapters, stabilization is part of the broader UN crisis management modality.[7] Gilder recognizes the implications of the robustness of stabilization mission mandates, placing these between peacekeeping and peace enforcement.

Among the attempts at reaching a definition, stabilization is conceived as a process in which military actors support a civilian leadership, for example, in the context of peace support or counterinsurgency operations.[8] In the academic literature, the concept sometimes corresponds to that which was developed by the British government,[9] and underpins the research of some authors.[10] These understand 'stabilization' as a provisional measure aiming at the establishment of a political framework and agreement for a stable state, crucial for the fulfilment of peace processes but not necessarily a concrete endpoint.[11] Indeed, Gilder recognizes the

complexity that is inherent to these types of interventions, given that, while supporting the government of the receiving country, the UN becomes one of the parties in a conflict.

CIVILIAN PROTECTION AND HUMAN SECURITY

Human security was increasingly institutionalized since the establishment, in 2003, of the UN Commission on Human Security, culminating in the 2012 Security Council resolution.[12] According to the author, the Council is in a unique position to mobilize this new approach, even though it is recognized that this is primarily the responsibility of states.

Gilder argues that the effects of stabilization operations can be looked at from the perspective of human security, namely in its civilian and development components, and in the priority given to individuals and communities. This approach is in line with the questioning of the liberal peace paradigm over the last two decades, namely through the development of new concepts and practices – for instance, the concept of 'positive peace' which brings together peace and development.[13]

The author has sought to identify the potential of integrating human security into UN peace operations. He engages with three fundamental principles of human security (the vital core, the recognition of vulnerability, protection and empowerment), analysing each in turn in the context of three case-studies. This is a markedly normative approach, currently overlapping with human rights,[14] and subject to the interpretation of international

law. The vital core implies the identification, on the part of individuals, of their own security needs, through a bottom-up approach. The concept of security is therefore analysed in a broad sense, presupposing a holistic approach in the context of different interventions.

Integrated or multidimensional missions[15] – known as third-generation – tend to include civilian protection and peacebuilding, humanitarian assistance or capacity-building of state actors. They imply close collaboration and coordination with other UN departments (among which those related to development and political issues). The concept of human security, as developed by Gilder, thus has a relevant basis for its operationalization.

The UN missions in Mali and the Central African Republic focused on restoring the authority of the state. Nonetheless, the author explains how the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali[16] had a prevention and dissuasion nature in the context of the civilian protection framework envisaged in its mandate. Moreover, he joins those voices that have alerted to the risks inherent to the direct or indirect collaboration with counterterrorism operations.[17] The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic[18] stood out by investing in the (re)establishment of the rule of law, which would be the second step of the stabilization process.

The selection of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) as a case-study is justified by the emphasis given to civilian protection and by its strongly militarized character. However, the conclusion is that in practice this mission displayed less robustness than the other two missions – which presented a more holistic approach – and moved away from a nature that required more prevention than response with a view to protecting civilians.

Finally, Gilder explains how the intervention of the UN favoured the implementation of the principle of civilian protection. It also presents recommendations towards a greater integration of human security in the totality of its principles. However, the contested application of the stabilization concept, at a moment when the liberal peace project is in need of transformation, implies an additional risk to the recommendations for the operationalization of human security in the UN framework.

In sum, this volume offers a comprehensive introduction of the complexity inherent to contemporary peace operations, including an explanation of their evolution, particularly since the 1990s. Furthermore, it brings an important contribution to the debate about the operationalization of a complex concept – human security – in UN interventions aiming at a rarely delimited goal – stabilization. R:I

Ana Carina S. Franco PhD candidate in International Relations at School of Social Sciences and Humanities – NOVA University of Lisboa. **>** IPRI-NOVA, Rua de D. Estefânia, 195, 5.º Dt.º, 1000-155 Lisbon, Portugal | afranco@fcsh.unl.pt

▪▪▪ E N D N O T E S

1 A previous version of this paper was published in Portuguese in the journal *Relações Internacionais*, No. 80, December 2023.

2 See, for instance, MOE, Louise Wiuff; STEPPUTAT, Finn – 'Introduction: peacebuilding in an era of pragmatism'. In *International Affairs*. Vol. 94, No. 2, 2018, pp. 293–99; CHANDLER, David – *Peacebuilding. The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1997-2017*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017.

3 The first UN mission encompassing 'stabilization' in its designation happened in 2014 in Haiti. The others were established in Africa: Mali, Democratic Republic of Congo and Central African Republic.

4 ANDERSEN, Louise Riis – 'The HIPPO in the room: the pragmatic push-back from the UN peace bureaucracy against the militarization of UN peacekeeping'. In *International Affairs*. Vol. 94, No. 2, 2018, pp. 343–61.

5 KALDOR, Mary – *Routledge Handbook of Human Security*. London: Routledge, 2014, pp. 65–75.

6 The High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO) confirmed the absence and the need for such a definition. Cf. UNITED NATIONS / GENERAL ASSEMBLY / SECURITY COUNCIL – 'Report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations on Uniting Our Strengths for Peace: Politics, Partnership and People'. 2015. Accessed: 1 August 2020. Available at: https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_2015_446.pdf.

7 Taking the mission in Mali as an example, John Kalsrud mentions the alternative modality, which he terms as 'Chapter VII and a half'. See KARLSRUD, John – 'From liberal peace-building to stabilization and counterterrorism'. In *International Peacekeeping*. Vol. 26, No. 1, 2019, pp. 1–21.

8 CURRAN, David; HOLTOM, Paul – 'Resonating, rejecting, reinterpreting: mapping the stabilization discourse in the United Nations Security Council, 2000-14'. In *Stability: International Journal of Security & Development*. Vol. 4, No. 1: 50, 2015, pp. 1–18; MAC GINTY, Roger – 'Against stabilization'. In *Stability: International Journal of Security & Development*. Vol. 1, No. 1, 2012, pp. 20–30.

9 As mentioned by the author, Security Council resolutions were influenced by the activism of Council members – namely the United Kingdom, the United States of America and France – involved in more complex conflict scenarios including counterinsurgency (for example, Afghanistan and Iraq).

10 For example: AOI, Chiyuki; DE CONING, Cedric; KARLSRUD, John – 'Introduction. Addressing the gap between concepts, doctrine, and practice in UN peacekeeping operations'. In *UN Peacekeeping in a New Era*. London: Routledge, 2017, pp. 1–30; FRANCO, Ana Carina – 'External interventions in Mali and its borderlands – a case for stabilization'. In *Janus.net, e-journal of international relations*. 2021. Accessed: 15 November 2021. Available at: https://observare.autonoma.pt/janus-net/en/janusnet/external-interventions-in-mali-and-its-borderlands-a-case-for-stabilisation.

11 AOI, Chiyuki; DE CONING, Cedric; KARLSRUD, John – 'Introduction ...'.

12 The human security concept became known by the phrase 'freedom from fear and freedom from want'. The first component is limited, pertaining mostly to personal and physical safety; the second is broad, including basic and essential needs (see, for example, HANLON, Robert J.; CHRISTIE, Kenneth – *Freedom from Fear, Freedom from Want: An Introduction to Human Security*. University of Toronto Press, 2016).

13 The concept was spelled out in 2005 by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, in the report titled 'In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all' (cf. UNITED NATIONS / SECRETARY-GENERAL – 'In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all'. 2005. Accessed: 1 August 2023. Available at: https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/543857).

14 In line, for example with the UN Human Rights Due-Diligence Policy – HRDDP.

15 UN peacekeeping missions are multidimensional when they include at least the following dimensions: civilian, military, police, human rights, elections. Cf. HOWARD, Lise M. – *Power in Peacekeeping*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2019.

16 In French : 'Mission multidimensionnelle intégrée des Nations unies pour la stabilisation au Mali' (MINUSMA).

17 BOUTELLIS, Arthur – *MINUSMA's 2021 Mandate Renewal in Uncertain Times*. 2021. Accessed: 1 August 2023. Available at: https://effectivepeaceops.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/EPON-MINUSMA-II-Report.pdf; CHARBONNEAU, Bruno – 'Intervention as counter-insurgency politics'. In *Conflict, Security & Development*. Vol. 19, No. 3, 2019, pp. 309–14.

18 In French: 'Mission multidimensionnelle intégrée des Nations unies pour la stabilisation en Centrafrique' (MINUSCA).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ANDERSEN, Louise Riis – 'The HIPPO in the room: the pragmatic push-back from the UN peace bureaucracy against the militarization of UN peacekeeping'. In *International Affairs*. Vol. 94, No. 2, 2018, pp. 343–61. DOI: 10.1093/ia/iix239.

AOI, Chiyuki; DE CONING, Cedric; KARLSRUD, John – 'Introduction. Addressing the gap between concepts, doctrine, and practice in UNpeacekeeping operations'. In *UN Peacekeeping in a New Era*. London: Routledge, 2017, pp. 1–30. DOI: 10.4324/9781315396941.

BOUTELLIS, Arthur – *MINUSMA's 2021 Mandate Renewal in Uncertain Times*. 2021. Accessed: 1 August 2023. Available at: https://effectivepeaceops.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/EPON-MINUSMA-II--Report.pdf.

CHANDLER, David – *Peacebuilding. The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1997-2017*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017. DOI: 10.1007/978-3-319-50322-6.

CHARBONNEAU, Bruno – 'Intervention as counter-insurgency politics'. In *Conflict, Security & Development*. Vol. 19, No. 3, 2019,pp. 309–14. DOI: 10.1080/14678802.2019.1608017.

CURRAN, David; HOLTOM, Paul – 'Resonating, rejecting, reinterpreting: mapping the stabilization discourse in the United Nations Security Council, 2000-14'. In *Stability: International Journal of Security & Development*. Vol. 4, No. 1: 50, 2015, pp. 1–18. DOI: 10.5334/sta.gm.

FRANCO, Ana Carina – 'External interventions in Mali and its borderlands – a case for stabilization'. In *Janus.net, e-journal of international relations*. 2021. Accessed: 15 November 2021. Available at: https://observare.autonoma.pt/janus-net/en/janusnet/external-interventions-in-mali-and-its-borderlands-a-case-for-stabilisation. DOI: 10.26619/1647-7251.12.2.6.

HANLON, Robert J.; CHRISTIE, Kenneth – *Freedom from Fear, Freedom from Want: An Introduction to Human Security*. University of Toronto Press, 2016. DOI: 10.3138/9781442609594.

HOWARD, Lise M. – *Power in Peacekeeping*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2019.

KALDOR, Mary – *Routledge Handbook of Human Security*. London: Routledge, 2014, pp. 65–75.

KARLSRUD, John – 'From liberal peacebuilding to stabilization and counterterrorism'. In *International Peacekeeping*. Vol. 26, No. 1, 2019, pp. 1–21. DOI: 10.1080/13533312.2018.1502040.

MAC GINTY, Roger – 'Against stabilization'. In *Stability: International Journal of Security & Development*. Vol. 1, No. 1, 2012, pp. 20–30. DOI: 10.5334/sta.ab.

MOE, Louise Wiuff; STEPPUTAT, Finn – 'Introduction: peacebuilding in an era of pragmatism'. In *International Affairs*. Vol. 94, No. 2, 2018, pp. 293–99. DOI: 10.1093/ia/iiy035.

UNITED NATIONS / GENERAL ASSEMBLY / SECURITY COUNCIL – 'Report of the High--level Independent Panel on Peace Operations on Uniting Our Strengths for Peace: Politics, Partnership and People'. 2015. Accessed: 1 August 2020. Available at: https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_2015_446.pdf.

UNITED NATIONS / SECRETARY-GENERAL – 'In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all'. 2005. Accessed: 1 August 2023. Available at: https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/543857.