Offering the Carrot and Hiding the Stick?
Conceptualizing Credibility in UN Peacekeeping

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Abstract

Credibility has been used to explain theories of deterrence and cooperation in international relations. In the peacekeeping environment, for what purposes should credibility be built and how can it be signaled? Despite being listed by the UN as a success factor in peace operations, our understanding of credibility in peacekeeping remains limited and focused on deterrence. This article argues that credibility in peace operations must be built for both deterrence and cooperation purposes. Drawing on the international relations, civil war, and peacekeeping literatures, it conceptualizes credibility in peacekeeping by identifying the purposes for which credibility must be built and signaled: deterrence and cooperativeness. It contends that while a peace operation’s ability to deter is limited, signaling cooperativeness—credibility in cooperation—enables a force to cultivate cooperation with national and subnational audiences. This helps to create a more predictable security environment by enabling the force to function on a daily basis.

Keywords

peacekeeping – United Nations – credibility – cooperation – deterrence
1 Introduction

UN guidelines on peacekeeping identify credibility as a factor in the success of peace operations, yet it remains a fuzzy concept in an environment where deterrence and cooperation are required simultaneously. In this article I ask, What gives a peacekeeping force credibility, for what purpose, and with whom? Credibility can be defined in most standard dictionaries as “the capacity to be believed or believe in.” In the context of peacekeeping, I contend this means being seen as capable and willing to deliver on commitments. In the peacekeeping environment, credibility is required for both cooperation and deterrence: cooperation from the parties, and deterrence of those who seek to attack the peace operation or drive it out. While the international community may support a peace operation, international commitment alone is not sufficient to make a peace operation work on the ground. It is often at the national and subnational levels where success and failure play out. When we consider the importance of national and subnational audiences for a peace operation we need to ask how can a peace operation cultivate cooperation while simultaneously presenting as a credible deterrent to the same audiences? To capture this tension, I argue the concept of credibility needs to be disaggregated into two separate terms: deterrence and cooperativeness.

In peacekeeping, deterrence refers to the capacity and willingness of a peace operation to use force in defense of the mandate. I introduce cooperativeness to capture how a force cultivates cooperation from national and subnational audiences. The dictionary definition of cooperativeness is ‘the state or quality of being cooperative’. I use these terms for two reasons: first, to help us distinguish conceptually between two competing objectives: the need for deterrence and the need to foster cooperation. Second, by introducing cooperativeness, I show how a force can cultivate cooperation by identifying the behaviors that signal their willingness to cooperate.

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2 OED Online 2022b.
3 Whalan 2013. The local-international legitimacy gap can be defined as the difference between the perceptions of the international community and the local community about the legitimacy of an international intervention. See also Newby 2018; Pouligny 2005.
4 See, for example, Autesserre 2010, 2014; Pouligny 2005.
5 OED Online 2022a.
The United Nations has three established pillars of peacekeeping: impartiality, consent, and minimal use of force. As the complexity of peace operations increased after the end of the Cold War, the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPO) introduced three additional factors that contribute to the success of a peace operation. These factors are defined in the 2008 Handbook on United Nations Multidimensional Peacekeeping, Operations or Capstone Document, and might be termed second-order success factors: legitimacy, credibility, and the promotion of national and local ownership. I contend that the current definition of credibility in peacekeeping requires a new conceptualization in terms of what it is, how it works, and among which audiences.

As Barbara Walter, Lise Morjé Howard and V. Page Fortna recently observed, we no longer need to ask if peacekeeping works, but rather how it works. Until now, discussions of the second-order success factors in peace operations have largely been about local ownership and legitimacy. Credibility as a concept in peacekeeping has been ignored, and yet the success of a mission often rests on its ability to present as a credible deterrent and convince the warring parties to cooperate with the mission. Both tasks require a peacekeeping force to make credible commitments with national and subnational actors. Peacekeepers need to demonstrate they have the capability to deter violence and, more importantly, the willingness to do so. But there is also a second part of this equation that has been even less discussed: How does a peace operation signal its willingness to cooperate with national and subnational actors? What behaviors indicate it is an honest partner capable of making credible commitments?

In some cases, where local audiences accept the legitimacy of the UN presence, perceptions of the force’s cooperativeness may flow naturally from that. But often local legitimacy wanes as conflicts evolve over time: the parties to
the conflict change, mistakes are made by the UN, the procedural legitimacy of the force wanes, and the rationale for the mission’s presence erodes among national and subnational audiences. Thus, maintaining cooperation with stakeholders at national and subnational levels remains an important objective to enable a peace operation to function.

In this article, I do the following: 1) Explore the weaknesses in discussions of credibility in peacekeeping that have largely avoided analyzing how deterrent force should be applied and have ignored the need for peacekeepers to cultivate cooperation. To illustrate how credibility functions in peacekeeping I present a conceptual model that unifies the material and behavioral aspects of credibility in peacekeeping. 2) I then introduce the terms deterrence and cooperativeness to the peacekeeping lexicon to create two distinct categories. 3) I list a set of behaviors that signal resolve and build credibility in deterrence and cooperation. I then discuss the futility of force in peacekeeping and argue that winning cooperation is more important for successful peacekeeping. Finally, I discuss audiences for credibility and the purposes for which cooperativeness should be built in peacekeeping.

The contributions of this article are that it clarifies the concept of credibility in peacekeeping. It brings new terminology into the peacekeeping literature that captures the need for a peace operation to cultivate cooperation and deterrence at the same time. It also brings together in one place the behaviors believed to influence the success of peace operations showing how they fit under this conceptualization of credibility in peacekeeping. Furthermore, the conceptual model of cooperativeness in peacekeeping that I present here could be empirically researched and tested. Finally, from a policy perspective, this article provides a renewed set of guidelines on the behaviors that build credibility for peace operations.

2 Credibility in UN Peace Operations

The most comprehensive UN definition of credibility in peacekeeping is in the 2008 Capstone Document mentioned above. It stipulates that the credibility of a UN peacekeeping operation is “a direct reflection of the international
and local communities' belief in the mission's ability to achieve its mandate."\textsuperscript{16} This statement assumes a synergy between the international and local views of the mission, which research has shown cannot be assumed.\textsuperscript{17} However, the remainder of the definition situates the discussion of credibility in the local environment, so we can assume that the UN's primary focus for credibility is national and subnational audiences.

In speaking about credibility, the UN definition focuses on the deterrent capability of the force. The initial paragraph places a clear emphasis on the need to maintain security:

United Nations peacekeeping operations are frequently deployed in volatile, highly stressed environments characterized by the collapse or degradation of state structures, as well as enmity, violence, polarization, and distress. Lawlessness and insecurity may still be prevalent at local levels, and opportunists will be present who are willing to exploit any political and security vacuum. In such environments, a United Nations peacekeeping operation is likely to be tested for weakness and division by those whose interests are threatened by its presence, particularly in the early stages of deployment.\textsuperscript{18}

The definition states that capacity plays a significant role in maintaining credibility:

Ideally, in order to be credible, a United Nations peacekeeping operation must deploy as rapidly as possible, be properly resourced, and strive to maintain a confident, capable and unified posture.\textsuperscript{19}

It then goes on to specify the need to deter spoilers to reduce the need to use force:

Experience has shown that the early establishment of a credible presence can help to deter spoilers and diminish the likelihood that a mission will need to use force to implement its mandate. To achieve and maintain its credibility, a mission must therefore have a clear and deliverable mandate, with resources and capabilities to match; and a sound mission plan

\textsuperscript{16} UN 2008, 38.
\textsuperscript{17} Pouligny 2005; Autesserre 2010.
\textsuperscript{18} UN 2008, 38.
\textsuperscript{19} UN 2008, 38.
that is understood, communicated, and impartially and effectively imple-
mented at every level.\textsuperscript{20}

What is most apparent is that this definition prioritizes deterrence. This is
reflected in the mention of “spoilers,” “lawlessness and insecurity,” and “enmity,
violence, polarization and distress.”\textsuperscript{21} In several places, the definition also men-
tions the importance of capability, explicitly linking credibility to the need to
be properly resourced.\textsuperscript{22}

What is missing from this definition are two terms that are integral to most
research on credibility, and vital to a UN peace operation: signaling behav-
iors and winning cooperation on the ground. The UN reduces the behaviors
required to build deterrent credibility to a single clause: “strive to maintain a
confident, capable and unified posture.”\textsuperscript{23} This suggests a behavioral aspect to
credibility, but stops short of unpacking what this means. Despite the obvious
need for a peace operation to obtain cooperation from national and subna-
tional audiences, there is no mention of how credibility might be built to culti-
vate local cooperation. As such, there are two main weaknesses with this defi-
nition: it focuses on building credibility in deterrence, and it does not describe
the signaling behaviors that would indicate a peace operation’s willingness to
cooperate.

Additionally, the UN definition makes a number of assumptions that contra-
dict existing research on local-level peace operations. First, it implies that arriv-
ing fully equipped with a confident posture and will immediately reassure local
civilians of peacekeepers’ deterrent capabilities. But deterrent powers to do
what? Research has shown that local civilians first need to learn how the force
will use its resources. Beatrice Pouligny notes that local reactions can be neg-
ative when a well-equipped peace operation arrives with an overtly confident
posture; there is no immediate assumption by civilians that these resources will
be used for their benefit.\textsuperscript{24} Severine Autesserre observes that peacekeepers are
not always able to provide security to local civilians in ways they might wish,
and oftentimes appear more engaged with their own security than the safety
of the local population.\textsuperscript{25} I have shown that different audiences may not wel-

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{20} UN 2008, 38.
\item \textsuperscript{21} UN 2008, 38.
\item \textsuperscript{22} UN 2008, 38.
\item \textsuperscript{23} UN 2008, 38.
\item \textsuperscript{24} Pouligny 2005.
\item \textsuperscript{25} Autesserre 2014.
\end{itemize}
come shows of military force in the postconflict environment. These findings reflect the need for a fuller description of the behaviors required to build credibility, and clarity on the purposes for which credibility might be built.

Finally, the UN definition of credibility states that the mandate must be clear and deliverable. In fact, all UN mandates are known to be unclear, as Autesserre notes: “Mandates provide the broad guidelines for a given mission, but offer little detail.” As such, a fuller definition of the behaviors that generate credibility for a peace operation would be useful to help compensate for the lack of clarity in peacekeeping mandates.

3 Deterrence and Cooperation in International Relations

In the international relations literature, credibility is often used to advance theories of deterrence and cooperation with little discussion of it as a stand-alone concept. In realism, it is employed to discuss threats, deterrence, and military capability; and, in liberalism, cooperation between international regimes and institutions.

Early deterrence literature focused on interstate wars, whereby credibility rested on a state’s capacity to fight a war and its willingness to do so. Credibility was evaluated by a record of past performance, the statements and behavior of its government, domestic and allied public opinion, and firmness. Later work specified the importance of context suggesting that the specific conditions of a threat will influence state responses to it. Relatedly, reputation, which also depends on context, has been identified as a key factor informing state calculations about threats from other states. Yet as Daniel Drezner wisely observed, credibility must always build for some purpose: “Countries should develop a reputation for what exactly? Can a reputation for toughness

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26 Newby 2018.
28 See also Lipson 2010, 253: “Security Council resolutions that define mandates are themselves political documents, and mandated goals are often crafted in vague terms in order to embody political compromises.” Allen and Yuen 2014 found that the greater the heterogeneity in the UN Security Council, the more likely it is that a mandate will be general and not specific.
29 See Powell 1990; Schelling 1966.
30 Kaufman 1954.
31 Schelling 1966.
33 Downs and Jones 2002; Press 2005; Crescenzi 2007.
be reconciled with a reputation for compliance with international law? ... Does reputation in one issue area ... spill over into other issue areas?" This point is salient for peace operations given their competing objectives of cultivating cooperation and deterring violence. Research on the reputation of peace operations is currently limited to how the UN deals with bad conduct, and how it directs peace operations to behave on the ground when the reputation of the UN as an international organization is damaged.

In theories of cooperation, credibility is also regarded as important; otherwise, states would have no faith in each other’s commitments to one another. Here, scholarship is concerned with how states cooperate in an anarchical system often making heavy use of game theory based on the assumption that states are rational actors. Institutions foster the conditions that enable states to be seen as credible actors. Transparency, repeated interaction, and the provision of information are considered key to successful international cooperation. In cooperation, past behavior is seen an important indicator that states will make good on their commitments. Reliability plays a critical role in building a reputation for being believable and worthy of trust. The rationale for cooperation is also based on the idea that social punishment—ostracizing, withholding favors, future cooperation, and friendship—is what keeps states in line rather than the threat of war. As shown later, Lise Morjé Howard makes this claim in her discussion of what gives a peace operation power.

What emerges from this literature are three main points: first, credibility has a behavioral component (resolve) and material components (capability and resources). Therefore, to be credible, an actor requires material evidence of its capability, and must demonstrate resolve through signaling behaviors (repeated interaction, the provision of information, past behavior). Second, credibility must be constantly sustained. If a state stops signaling its intent through the regular provision of truthful information, or is caught bluffing about its resources, it will lose credibility. Hence, a state must be consistent and reliable in its signaling. Third, context matters: different capabilities and

34 Drezner 2009.
35 Karim 2019; Daugirdas 2019.
36 Tudor 2021.
41 Keohane 1984.
42 Howard 2019.
different signaling behaviors reflect different intentions. By identifying these factors, we can see more clearly how credibility functions in cooperation and deterrence.

While the state-to-state literature provides useful insights on credibility, the civil war literature is also instructive given that a UN peacekeeping force is not a unified state actor. In this literature, Barbara Walter’s quantitative work on the nature of credible commitments in civil war is helpful. Walter argues that a third-party security guarantee is the crucial element that ends protracted civil wars. Her main finding is that the robustness of the deterrent force of the third party is critical to the success of these agreements along with institutional agreements for power sharing. However, she also notes that “while enforcement is crucial to the short-term implementation of a peace treaty, especially under conditions of severe helplessness, institutions and creative constitutional contracts are crucial for long-term success,” concluding that “a mixture of deterrent force and institutions provides the desired outcome.” This demonstrates the importance of cultivating cooperation at all stages of a conflict.

Walter makes two additional points relevant to this article. First, context matters: “the situation in which anarchy emerges greatly affects the probability for successful cooperation.” Second, states can avoid committing large numbers of forces if extensive power-sharing arrangements are made that guarantee all sides a voice. This suggests that the more work a peace operation puts into fostering cooperation, the less deterrent force it will need to use.

Walter’s findings have been supported in several other quantitative studies that found that civil war conclusion is facilitated by third-party intervention with credible security guarantees. Also relevant is work by Matthew Hoddie.

43 In the literature on third party guarantees, states or state-like entities are invoked to explain deterrent credibility. Walter 1997 notes that interstate actors often behave like state actors: “Security dilemmas can emerge in any anarchic situation, even at the substate level and even for short amounts of time ... incumbent governments and rebels act exactly like states in the international system: they resist collective security and rely instead on their own self-help systems,” 360.

44 Walter 1997.


46 Walter 1997, 360. Walter notes this can include inequalities of power, conflict length, and the parties’ willingness to settle. However, other contingencies can and will arise such as disproportionate attacks and so forth.


48 Lounsbery and DeRouen 2018; Balch-Lindsay, Enterline, and Joyce 2008; Pearson et al. 2006; Hartzell, Hoddie, and Rothchild 2001.
and Caroline Hartzell, who discuss how parties in a civil war can signal their willingness to sustain peace. However, all these studies focus on states in which the war has concluded with a peace agreement in place. This is not the situation in many of the peace operations today; even if a peace agreement exists on paper, it may remain unimplemented. In several of the older missions, no peace agreements have been reached. How can peacekeepers signal their willingness to cooperate with combatants (and vice versa) in the absence of a peace agreement or the collective implementation of one? Furthermore, what enables peacekeepers to make credible cooperative commitments without the use of force?

The only author thus far to examine credibility as a stand-alone concept is Alvin Tze Tien Tan. He identifies two main components of credibility at the international level: “structural,” which is the ability of a state to fulfill its commitments that include capability and material interests. The second component he terms “behavioral credibility,” which is the willingness of a state to fulfill a promise. Tan argues that the structural components of credibility have been utilized a great deal in the cooperation and deterrence literature, but behavioral credibility has not. He provides a definition of credibility as “the belief by outside observers in the ability and willingness of a state to fulfil its promises.”

In this article, I develop Tan’s definition and argue a suitable definition for credibility in peacekeeping is “the belief by national and sub-national audiences in the capability and willingness of a peace operation to deliver on its commitments.” I concur with Tan that while material resources are an important aspect of credibility, in peacekeeping signaling behaviors are key to establishing reputation and indicating resolve.

Figure 1 illustrates my argument thus far. It illustrates the essential components of credibility. However, as noted above the purpose for which credibility is earned is key. Different strategic objectives will require different types of evidence and behavior. The following section provides a review of the literature on credibility in peace operations thus far and highlights the need to disaggregate the purposes of building credibility for peace operations.

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49 Hoddie and Hartzell 2003.
50 See, for example, International Crisis Group 2020.
52 Tan 2001, ii.
4 Credibility in the Peacekeeping Literature

Until recently, qualitative discussions of how peace operations function at the national and subnational levels have largely examined the second-order success factors of legitimacy and local ownership. Authors that examine credibility in peacekeeping constitute a small group and, thus far few have examined in detail the signaling behaviors that cultivate cooperation.

In his examination of what builds credibility in peacekeeping, Brigadier Vere Hayes focuses mostly on the need for deterrent force, arguing material resources and capacity are critical. To account for the need to build cooperation, he contends local consent is what enables the force to function, but he fails to discuss this in any detail. Dan Lindley links behaviors with credibility in peace operations, noting that the provision of honest information helps build credibility. Andrea Ruggeri, Theodora-Ismene Gizelis, and Han Dorussen ask, under what conditions would local actors cooperate with an

54 Hayes 2000.
intervention force? They contend that the size of a UN peace operation is the clearest demonstration of its resolve, and agree with the UN and Walter that the threat of the use of force is the strongest signal of credibility for a peace operation. Despite this finding, the authors also acknowledge that specific signaling behaviors may help increase cooperation, such as the provision of information and regular monitoring that they argue reduces uncertainty. In a later work, the same authors contend that commitment to the peace agreement can be demonstrated by peacekeepers “via monitoring and reporting on activities on the ground,” and that the use of mediation and the provision of information also help to reassure local actors.

Several gaps in the literature remain. Credibility has been used to justify an end without a clear explanation of the means. The specific behaviors that signal credibility, such as the provision of information, are mentioned in passing. Credibility in peacekeeping is regarded as useful for deterrent purposes, but how a peace operation cultivates cooperation remains under-researched. Below in Figure 2 I provide a fuller model of what credibility comprises.

Figure 2 clarifies that credibility has a strong relationship with material evidence. In the conceptual model presented here, capability includes patrolling equipment, effective command control and functional structure. Patrolling equipment can include white armored personnel carriers (APCs) or tanks, communication equipment, uniforms and blue helmets, and defensive equipment. Patrolling is an important way of signaling resolve; therefore, having the resources to patrol can be said to be a critical element of peacekeeping.

Capability also includes the need for strong communication networks that ensure the smooth functioning of the peace operation and this is the most traditional military component of credibility in peacekeeping. Command and control are defined by NATO as: “The exercise of authority by a properly designated commander over assigned and attached forces, performed through an arrangement of personnel, equipment, communications, facilities and procedures in the accomplishment of the mission.”

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56 Ruggeri, Gizelis, and Dorussen 2013; they do acknowledge that other factors can indicate resolve or the lack of it irrespective of size. See also Howard 2008.
57 Ruggeri, Gizelis, and Dorussen 2013, 391. They note that when the balance of power is in the government’s favor, a large force increases the likelihood of local (and rebel) cooperation with the force.
59 Even if patrolling does not deter violence, it signals resolve by maintaining a regular presence, shining an international spotlight on the activities on the ground. See Newby 2018; Howard 2019.
60 NATO C2COE, nd. https://c2coe.org/.
a good functional structure are seen as essential to successful peacekeeping by the UN.\textsuperscript{61} Howard, however, reminds us that when attempting compellent force, UN peace operations “do not function by a typical, unified command and control structure (when challenged, often answering first to their home governments rather than the UN’s force commander).”\textsuperscript{62} This is one reason UN forces are often unable to use deterrent force. A form of hierarchical functional structure is present in most missions, but as Sebastian Rietjens and Chiara Ruffa note in their study of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), coherence within UN missions across functions remains weak.\textsuperscript{63} However, a functional structure can be said to be an essential component of credibility in peacekeeping given its multidimensional nature.\textsuperscript{64}

What behaviors are needed to indicate deterrence? In her chapter on the use of compellent force, Howard does not articulate the specific behaviors that comprise deterrence in peacekeeping, noting: “Observable implications of deterrence are notoriously difficult to demonstrate because we must demonstrate a negative, whereas failures of deterrence are easier.”\textsuperscript{65} From the literature on deterrence and the peacekeeping guidelines, however, it is possible to identify the behaviors in Table 1 that can be said to be used in deterrence in peacekeeping.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{61} Hayes 2000; UN 2008.
\item \textsuperscript{62} Howard 2019, 199. While the UN states it has operational authority over all peacekeeping operations, this is not reflected in the reality on the ground.
\item \textsuperscript{63} Rietjens and Ruffa 2019; Newby 2018.
\item \textsuperscript{64} It is beyond the scope of this article to discuss how capability should best be built.
\item \textsuperscript{65} Howard 2019, 139.
\end{itemize}
### Table 1  Signaling behaviors for deterrence in UN peacekeeping

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<tr>
<th>Signaling resolve</th>
<th>Specific activities</th>
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| **Provision of information** | – Overt displays of weaponry on patrol.  
– Patrolling with swagger to indicate resolve to use offensive force where necessary.  
– Overt use of technology to surveil and monitor such as mobile phone blocking and drones.  
– Overt surveillance to give the impression of control over the area of operation. |
| **Repeated interaction** | – Regular roadblocks and checkpoints that securitize the environment, interrupt weapons movement, and the command and control of local militia.  
– Regular and consistent patrolling, often without the symbolic blue helmets. |
| **Responsiveness** | – Selective use of offensive force to establish a reputation of resolve to use deterrent force if needed.  
– Use of defensive force in response to attacks to indicate military capability.  
– Home invasions to search for weapon stashes after intelligence is obtained.  
– Detention of suspects prior to handing over to local security forces to indicate ability to interrupt the operations of local militia. |

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a  Art 1980, 10–11. Art defines “swagger” thus: “Swaggering almost always involves only the peaceful use of force and is expressed usually in one of two ways: displaying one’s military might at military exercises and national demonstrations and buying or building the era’s most prestigious weapons.”

b  For example, troops in Democratic Republic of Congo currently patrol without blue helmets as it made them more vulnerable to attack from local militia.

I contend that the behaviors in Table 1 signal deterrent resolve in peacekeeping and can be indicated by a peace operation based on the three principles: repeated interaction, provision of information, and responsiveness. The provision of information in deterrence is overt signaling of weaponry and the capacity to surveil. Repeated interaction is the regular use of security measures to monitor weapons transfers and militia movements such as checkpoints and roadblocks, and consistent patrolling. Responsiveness captures the selective use of force or detainment. I have included responsiveness from a previous
model of credibility,\textsuperscript{66} whereby I found that the swift ability to respond to local emergencies helps build confidence in the mission at subnational levels and indicates consistency that is key as credibility must be regularly maintained.\textsuperscript{67} Some behaviors identified in Table 1 may overlap with each other; for example, regular patrols designed to signal deterrence will include overt displays of weaponry.

In this model, I replace the concept of past behavior with responsiveness. While some authors argue that the use of compellent force demonstrates that deterrence has failed,\textsuperscript{68} I contend the selective use of force assists in building a reputation for deterrent resolve in the same way others argue that past behavior is an indicator of deterrent credibility.\textsuperscript{69} Ultimately, a UN peace operation does not have the luxury of a record of past behavior when it is established. A precedent must be set early on. As such, sustaining credibility in deterrence may require regular highly selective uses of force as the conflict develops; hence, my use of the term responsiveness.\textsuperscript{70}

Above, I have discussed the literature on credibility as it applies to peacekeeping, showing conceptions of credibility in peacekeeping have largely rested on deterrence. I have provided a conceptual model of credibility in peacekeeping and listed the signaling behaviors that indicate deterrence. In what follows, I unpack credibility in cooperation, which I term cooperativeness, and show how this benefits a peace operation.

5 The Futility of Force?

The application of deterrent force is a challenge in peacekeeping given the need to avoid being drawn into the fight, and the weak command and control that pervades most peacekeeping forces. As my previous work on the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) mission shows,\textsuperscript{71} it can be difficult or impossible for a peace operation to make binding security guarantees.

Likewise, Andrea Ruggeri, Han Dorussen, and Theodora-Ismene Gizelis struggle with how a peace operation implements deterrent force. When evalu-

\textsuperscript{66} Newby 2016; 2018. Responsiveness credibility is defined as "a demonstrated ability to respond quickly to military and civilian concerns in a predictable and reliable manner," 48.
\textsuperscript{67} Newby 2018; Howard 2019.
\textsuperscript{68} Howard 2019; Article 1980.
\textsuperscript{69} Weisiger and Yarhi-Milo 2015; Crescenzi 2007; Crescenzi and Enterline 2001.
\textsuperscript{70} Responsiveness helps establish a track record which can be equated with past behavior.
\textsuperscript{71} Newby 2018.
ating the success of peace operations, they state that “peacekeepers can deter the resumption of fighting if patrolling demonstrates effective control over an area,” although what effective control looks like is not discussed. They conclude by asserting that force size matters in deterrence, but other than calling for robust measures under specific conditions, there is no discussion of how a peacekeeping force can present as a credible deterrent without being drawn into the fight or driven out of specific territory.

Recent research has unpacked the use of force in peacekeeping in greater detail. Howard provides an insightful and authoritative account of what gives a peace operation power, identifying three categories of behaviors used by peace operations to effect results: coercion, inducement, and persuasion. Within these categories, she subcategorizes the different behaviors that produce largely successful outcomes. This article builds on her findings in the following ways.

First, Howard notes that some scholars from materialist and ideational perspectives “converge on an inaccurate assumption that the use of force by the UN enables successful peacekeeping.” She argues compellent force is not often used by peace operations mostly because it has proven to be unsuccessful or unimplementable. She contends that peace operations are unable to deter in the way a national military force might because of their inability to provide a credible security guarantee. She too concludes deterrence in peacekeeping is less likely to be due to the threat of force and more likely due to “sanctions or exclusion from economic or political processes.”

Howard’s finding concurs with other work critiquing the turn toward robust peacekeeping and counterinsurgency. These authors suggest that deterrence in peacekeeping comes from strategies other than military coercion. Furthermore, while judicious use of military force has occasionally been successful in specific cases, it has usually been performed by state actors, not UN peacekeeping forces. Moreover, when attempted by the UN, military deterrence has rarely led to optimal outcomes and has even led to crises in peacekeep-

73 Matanock and Lichtenheld 2017.
74 Howard 2019.
75 Howard 2019, 13.
76 Howard 2019, 139.
77 Matanock and Lichtenheld 2017; Karlsrud 2015, 2019; Howard and Dayal 2018; Tardy 2011.
78 Matanock and Lichtenheld 2017.
79 For example, the Joint Force of the Group of Five that works with MINUSMA in Mali, and the British troops in Sierra Leone.
ing.\textsuperscript{80} This problem has largely been attributed to weak command and control at the tactical and operational levels of peace operations.\textsuperscript{81}

However, this point is still being missed by the UN in its definition of credibility and, as Howard notes, myriad reports on the future of peacekeeping fail to pick up on it.\textsuperscript{82} She contends that most peace operations function in the absence of the use of force and clarifies in detail how inducement and persuasion work just as well if not better than coercion in helping a peace operation function. In addition, my research found that despite the inability to use force, UNIFIL manages to implement a large proportion of its mandate,\textsuperscript{83} which Howard attributes to material inducement and I attribute to building local cooperative relationships.

The above discussion illustrates the opportunities for deterrence in peacekeeping are extremely limited despite the increased use of force in newer UN peace operations in Africa.\textsuperscript{84} As such the question of how much credibility a peace operation has in presenting as a robust deterrent force remains pertinent.

6 Cooperativeness in Peacekeeping: A Conceptual Model

Thus far, a review of the literature finds there has been no examination of the signaling behaviors that cultivate cooperation with a peacekeeping force. Put differently, how can a peace operation encourage cooperation with national and subnational populations? What kind of signaling is required?

In the institutionalist and international relations literatures, cooperation, and the behaviors that signal willingness to cooperate, fall under the category of credibility. However, this is because in these discussions cooperation and deterrence are treated as distinct from one another. In peacekeeping, no such distinction exists: credibility for deterrence and cooperation are required simultaneously on the ground. As such, I contend it is useful to introduce a new term to capture credibility in cooperation in peacekeeping. This missing element that is present, and yet not discussed, I term cooperativeness. I define

\textsuperscript{80} The most notable case being Somalia in 1992 and the subsequent failure to prevent the Rwandan genocide.
\textsuperscript{81} Hatto 2009; Rietjens and Ruffa 2019.
\textsuperscript{82} For example, UN 1999a, 1999b; UN General Assembly 2000; UN 2015b; Cruz and Nationen 2017; UN 2015a, 2018.
\textsuperscript{83} Howard 2019; Newby 2018.
\textsuperscript{84} Karlsrud 2015.


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| Repeated interaction | – Regular and consistent patrolling which includes symbolic displays of peaceful intent, i.e., blue helmets, white armored personnel carriers (APCs).  
– Consistent regular liaison and outreach with stakeholders at national and subnational levels. |
| Provision of information | – Transparent, open, and honest provision of information on the day-to-day activities of the force.  
– Monitoring and reporting events on the ground to the international community, national and subnational stakeholders.  
– Targeted information campaigns on the status of the peace agreement; the objectives of the mission; mandate implementation and the local security situation.  
– Training and education for national and subnational institutions and actors. |
| Responsiveness | – Shaming of key stakeholders in response to critical events through publicity.  
– Assistance with local emergency services.  
– Mediation at subnational levels to help solve local grievances.  
– Reassurance for local populations about the facts on the ground as they develop. |

cooperativeness as the belief by national and subnational audiences in a peace operation as an honest and reliable partner for cooperation. In other words, cooperativeness equals credibility in cooperation. The purposes of building cooperativeness are: 1) to reduce security escalations and confrontations with national and subnational audiences by obtaining local cooperation; and 2) to establish the foundations of a sustainable peace by taking steps to build inclusive institutions.85

Given the lack of guidance on what signaling credibility for cooperation purposes is in peacekeeping, Table 2 unpacks the signaling behaviors that foster

85 It is beyond the scope of this article to discuss how this can be achieved.
cooperativeness (or credibility in cooperation) in peacekeeping. In conceptu-
alizing cooperativeness, I draw on the cooperation literature noted above and
works by Howard and myself that focus on how peace operations function in
the absence of the use of force. In the left-hand column, I use the categories
in the model of credibility that I provide above. In the right-hand column, I out-
line the signaling behaviors necessary to signaling cooperativeness. For these,
I draw on Howard’s conception of persuasion in peacekeeping. In her assess-
ment of what gives a peace operation power, she identifies five categories of
behavior that she argues persuade the peacekept to concede to the wishes of a
peace operation: mediation; shaming; outreach and public information; sym-
bolic displays, and training/education. Additionally, Howard specifies three
conditions under which these behaviors work best: the need for peacekeepers
to align the message with behavior, respecting the target audience, and pro-
viding messaging the local population can relate to. These mechanisms all
correspond to extant theories of cooperation in international relations theory
detailed above, and as Howard herself notes, converge with guidelines in UN
peacekeeping about the need to persuade stakeholders to change their behav-
ior.

Howard’s discussion of power in peacekeeping is extremely persuasive, but
my point of departure is that I contend the behaviors described in the above
model do more than persuade. They signal cooperativeness that encourages
and sustains local cooperation even as the conflict goes through high and lows,
enabling peacekeepers to make credible commitments. As such, they fit as well
into the model of credibility conceived above, as much as they explain how a
peace operation exerts influence. I contend that the signaling behaviors listed
above indicate cooperativeness, and that it is within the capacity of peacekeep-
ing troops to enact these behaviors. Hence, they enable a peace operation to
cultivate local cooperation.

In line with my model of credibility, I collapse transparency and the provi-
sion of information into a single behavior because, in peacekeeping, the pro-
vision of information can be said to be part and parcel of being transparent.
The relevant behaviors include monitoring and reporting, information cam-
paigns, and training. Repeated interaction in cooperativeness includes consist-
ent interaction with the local population and regular patrolling. To clarify how
patrolling to signal cooperativeness might differ from signaling deterrence, the
example of the Spanish and the Indonesians in UNIFIL is instructive. The

86 Howard 2019; Newby 2016.
87 Howard 2019, 36–45.
88 Howard 2019, 42–45.
local population viewed Spanish patrols as aggressive because they engaged in mobile phone blocking, took an aggressive posture, and refused to stop and engage with the local population. In contrast, the Indonesians were seen as friendly because they smiled and waved as they moved around.\textsuperscript{89} Responsiveness captures the force’s dedication to building peace and helping the local community. This could be in the form of offering to clean out a building after a fire, responding to a traffic emergency, or attending to a local bushfire.\textsuperscript{90} Practitioners understand that these actions generate goodwill and build a positive reputation that cultivates local cooperation. In sum, I contend this model works as well for cooperativeness (credibility in cooperation) as it does for credibility in deterrence.

7 Audiences for Cooperativeness

The final piece of the credibility puzzle outlined in the introduction is the issue of audiences. With whom should a peace operation signal cooperativeness? As noted above, the Capstone Document is written with national and subnational audiences in mind. Given that national and international perspectives on any given peace operation often differ, a discussion of credibility at the international level is beyond the scope of this article. The focus is on the national and subnational levels for which Sung Yong Lee and Alpaslan Özerdem contend there are three main types: national government, subnational government, and then the local community.\textsuperscript{91} However, to understand the impact of the above activities on audience beliefs about the cooperativeness of a peace operation, a brief discussion about legitimacy and local consent is required.

It is acknowledged among practitioners and scholars that consent from the local population at the subnational level is a crucial factor in the success of a peacekeeping mission.\textsuperscript{92} To function, a peace operation needs to obtain what has been described as “permissive cooperation” which is a limited form of consent from local actors.\textsuperscript{93} Local consent has also been connected with the local legitimacy of a peace operation,\textsuperscript{94} although legitimacy can vary across audiences. If legitimacy for the mission is present, then beliefs about the credibility

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{89} Newby 2018.
\item \textsuperscript{90} Newby 2018.
\item \textsuperscript{91} Lee and Özerdem 2015.
\item \textsuperscript{92} Pouligny 2005; Autesserre 2010, 2014.
\item \textsuperscript{93} Ruggeri, Gizelis, and Dorussen 2013, 389.
\item \textsuperscript{94} Whalan 2013; Leonardsson and Rudd 2015.
\end{itemize}
of the force may flow from that; thus, in practice, the legitimacy and credibility of a peace operation may overlap in the local civilian context. For example, the procedural legitimacy of the peace operation, defined as: “judgements about the fairness for making decisions and exercising power,” could be conflated with some signaling behaviors such as shaming at the civilian level.\textsuperscript{95} For these reasons, I argue cooperativeness at times could be hard to disentangle from legitimacy at the grassroots local level of civilian-peacekeeper engagement.

However, there are several cooperativeness signaling behaviors that peace operations can use among local populations: regular and consistent patrolling that includes symbolic displays of peaceful intent—that is, blue helmets, and white APCs; targeted information campaigns on the status of the peace agreement, the objectives of the mission, mandate implementation, and the local security situation; shaming of key stakeholders in response to critical events in the duration of the peace operation, often through publicity; assistance with emergency services when the need arises; and mediation with key stakeholders at subnational levels to help solve local grievances as they arise.

The impact of cooperativeness in UN peacekeeping is often most visible at the institutional level. Cooperativeness is built with key stakeholders in institutions at the national and subnational levels,\textsuperscript{96} to build trust and confidence in the mission. It is here where credible cooperative commitments can be made, and where accountability is located. For example, in research on UNIFIL, I found the mission was able to signal resolve and intent to cooperate, which helped to maintain constructive security cooperation with the Israel Defence Force, the Lebanese Armed Forces, the local municipalities, and some state institutions.\textsuperscript{97}

8 Conclusion

The questions I asked at the beginning of this article were: What gives a peacekeeping force credibility? And if a peacekeeping force has credibility, what does it have credibility for, to do what, and to whom? In this article, I defined credibility in peacekeeping as “the belief by stakeholders in the capability and willingness (resolve) of a peace operation to deliver on its commitments.” I

\textsuperscript{95} Whalan 2013, 36.
\textsuperscript{96} The term institution here means a formal or informal organization.
\textsuperscript{97} Newby 2018.
contend that credibility in peacekeeping comprises two components: capability and resolve. The article has made resolve visible and shown how signaling resolve is a critical element of successful peacekeeping.

Discussions of the purpose and function of credibility have until now been absent from the literature; here, I contend it is useful to clarify the purpose of winning credibility in peacekeeping. I presented two components of credibility: deterrence and cooperativeness. Deterrence refers to the ability to deter violence, while cooperativeness cultivates cooperation from national and subnational audiences. I argued both are required simultaneously in a peace operation and, by using separate terms, I unpacked the behaviors that corresponded to each requirement. In doing so, I showed the inherent contradiction between these two goals. For example, patrolling with overt weapon displays sends a threatening message to local populations versus peaceful patrolling in APCs in blue helmets and engaging spontaneously with local populations may not.

In addition, I concur with Howard and others that deterrence in peacekeeping is hard to implement. Cultivating cooperation at national and subnational levels advances the goals of the mission and prepares the ground for building an inclusive peace. This does not require local legitimacy, merely the permissive consent of the population to engage in cooperative relationships with a mission. These partnerships may be instrumental, limited in scope, and require constant maintenance, but are nonetheless useful for facilitating the daily functioning of a peace operation by providing some predictability in the security environment. I contend that cooperativeness also contributes to what I term positive peacekeeping: peacekeeping that has more in common with a positive, rather than a negative peace.98

The conceptual models provided here capture much of what we already know about peacekeeping behavior, but in a format that helps explain their purpose and function. This model could be developed and empirically tested in peace operations to ask whether credibility was present for the mission and its role in the success of the mission. This has value in helping us conceptualize how credibility functions in different types of peacekeeping missions.

Research on peacekeeping has maintained a strong relationship with practice, which enables researchers to remain relevant to peacekeeping practice and, simultaneously, for practitioners to benefit from the latest research. While this article is largely conceptual, I argue that it can inform practitioners as to the value of understanding how credibility functions in a mission and for what purpose credibility needs to be built. Specifically, it provides guidance

98 Galtung 1969.
on how to improve the extant guidelines on winning credibility for deterrence and cooperation in the field in particular, capturing the behaviors that cultivate cooperation from local and national audiences.

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offering the carrot and hiding the stick?


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