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Political leverage and UN peacekeeping: the case of UNOCI's withdrawal from Côte d'Ivoire

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ABSTRACT

The United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) is widely regarded as having been a successful peacekeeping operation. However, UNOCI bequeathed a number of challenges to Côte d'Ivoire which represented 'unfinished business' on UNOCI's part. The continuing challenges are attributable in part to UNOCI's limited political leverage vis-à-vis the sovereign Ivorian authorities, the consequence of which was partial and/or inconsistent implementation by these authorities of reforms designed to safeguard peace and security in the former conflict-ridden country. The experience highlights the limits of the political leverage that a peacekeeping operation may wield vis-à-vis a host-state government as it endeavours to implement its peacekeeping mandate, especially as closure draws near. Political leverage rarely figures in analyses of peacekeeping operations, but given that peacekeeping performance is often evaluated in relation to the quality of the peace which prevails in a host state in the aftermath of a peacekeeping exit, the focus on political leverage adds an important factor of consideration to the evaluation exercise, in the case of Côte d'Ivoire and more broadly.

Introduction

The closure of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) on 30 June 2017 is judged by many to have ushered in a period of sustained economic growth, enhanced security, and an improved political climate in Côte d'Ivoire for which UNOCI deserves considerable credit. Reporting for the US State Department in December 2016 in anticipation of the closure, Colleen Traughber, an International Affairs Officer, observed: 'By all accounts, UNOCI is a peacekeeping success story – a mission that helped national stakeholders to return a war-torn country to peace in a relatively short amount of time'.[1] Echoing this view two months later, Marcel Amon-Tanoh, Côte d'Ivoire's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, announced to the UN Security Council that his country's 'definitive return' to peace and development was now 'irreversible'.[2]

Not only is UNOCI regarded as having been a peacekeeping success in many respects but also the closure itself is thought to have been handled deftly, thus helping to ensure the preservation of gains achieved with the support of the operation. Planning began early;

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benchmarks were devised to guide the transition; and timelines were formulated for handing over the mission's residual responsibilities to national and international authorities.[3] Yet it was clear to UNOCI as plans for its withdrawal were being drawn up that significant challenges for Côte d'Ivoire would remain in such critical areas as security-sector reform, human and civic rights, and social cohesion that threatened to compromise peace and stability in the future. Why did UNOCI not do more to address these issues before its departure? Why did it not follow the example of other UN peacekeeping operations, including in neighbouring Liberia and Sierra Leone, and step up rather than wind down its peacebuilding efforts?[4]

It will be argued here that while the UN was aware of remaining challenges, and UNOCI would leave Côte d'Ivoire before peace had been fully consolidated, attempts to do more on its part might not have been possible and, indeed, might very well have rendered the mission less effective in the face of an increasingly capable government determined to re-assert its sovereign authority, both internally and externally. The experience highlights the limits of the political leverage that a peacekeeping operation may wield vis-à-vis a host-state government as it endeavours to implement its peacekeeping mandate, especially as closure draws near. Political leverage can be understood as the capacity to influence national political elites to adopt a specified behaviour and/or set of policies. Political leverage rarely figures in analyses of peacekeeping operations, but given that peacekeeping performance is often evaluated in relation to the quality of the peace which prevails in a host state in the aftermath of a peacekeeping exit,[5] the focus on political leverage adds an important factor of consideration to the evaluation exercise, in the case of Côte d'Ivoire and other operations. Of course, political leverage is not the only factor bearing on UNOCI's performance; the 'primacy of politics' more broadly – in particular, the strategic direction provided by the Security Council – should not be overlooked.

The article proceeds in four sections. The first section examines the experience of UNOCI's drawdown and withdrawal from Côte d'Ivoire, observing that the country would face continuing challenges to peace and security at the time of UNOCI's closure. The second section discusses in greater detail the six areas of concern which the United Nations identified as the principal continuing challenges that Côte d'Ivoire would be facing. The third section discusses the salience of political leverage in relation to the closure of peace operations in general and to the withdrawal of UNOCI in particular. The final section extends the analysis to a consideration of the relevance of political leverage to evaluations of peace operations. A short conclusion follows.

UNOCI drawdown and withdrawal

The closure of UNOCI marked the end of a UN peacekeeping operation which the Security Council had established 13 years earlier with a mandate to facilitate implementation of a peace agreement (the Linas-Marcoussis accord) that had been signed by the Ivorian parties in January 2003 following months of violent confrontations between government and rebel forces.[6] As Alan Doss, the UN's Deputy Special Representative to the Secretary-General in Côte d'Ivoire, would later recall, 'there was growing apprehension that the peace process was floundering and hostilities might resume', as indeed proved to be the case.[7] Weak commitment to the political settlement by the parties resulted in a resumption of hostilities that prompted a succession of mediation efforts by

the UN and regional actors, culminating in the decisive presidential election of November 2010 in which UNOCI intervened militarily to enforce respect for the electoral outcome.[8] UNOCI then turned its attention to other elements of its mandate to which it had devoted comparatively less attention, notably security sector reform; disarmament, demobilisation, and the reintegration of former combatants (including the repatriation of foreign ex-combatants); and the monitoring and promotion of human rights.

The formal decision to close UNOCI was preceded by the progressive drawdown of UN forces in the wake of the 2010 election crisis. Recognising 'the overall progress towards restoring security, peace and stability in Côte d'Ivoire', the UN Security Council on 26 July 2012 took the first of several decisions to reduce troop levels (from 9,792 to 8,837 soldiers initially) which the Council had increased gradually in tandem with the mounting crisis.[9] The reduction of troop levels was not undertaken at the outset as part of a withdrawal process, according to Alexandra Novosseloff, but as an adjustment to restore troop numbers to pre-crisis levels.[10] Nevertheless, as Novosseloff observes, the reductions initiated the drawdown process which was formalised on 28 April 2016 with the Security Council's endorsement of the UN Secretary-General's withdrawal plan and the extension of the mandate of UNOCI 'for a final period until 30 June 2017'.[11]

The transition process that would lead to the closure of UNOCI was informed by two strategic reviews conducted by the United Nations in February 2013 and February 2016. The reviews contained recommendations for further reductions in UN military and police forces, which the Security Council subsequently authorised. The Council, on 26 July 2012, also requested that the Secretary-General elaborate benchmarks 'to measure and track progress towards the achievement of long-term stability in Côte d'Ivoire and to prepare the transition planning'.[12] The Secretary-General, in consultation with UNOCI and the government of Côte d'Ivoire, in turn proposed three broad benchmarks in relation to: 'security and stability, political dialogue and reconciliation, and justice and human rights'.[13] In a subsequent report, the Secretary-General added a fourth benchmark – 'the consolidation and restoration of State authority' – as well as detailed indicators.[14] Noteworthy was the exclusion of benchmarks on humanitarian/socioeconomic development because, the Secretary-General explained, 'the United Nations has taken into account the view of the Government that the economic growth of the country is sufficient to address crucial employment and economic development challenges … ').[15] Already, then, with the elaboration of the transition benchmarks we can see a process of negotiation at work between the United Nations and the host-state government regarding the modalities of transition, a point to which we return below.

The benchmarks and indicators are also important to note because they are a point of reference for appreciating the acknowledged challenges that Côte d'Ivoire would face with the impending departure of UNOCI. However, it is questionable to what extent the benchmarks actually informed the process of transition. According to Novosseloff:

> In the case of UNOCI, these benchmarks did not constitute a roadmap for the transition; they were instead mainly used to assess the mission's achievements in the reports of the secretary-general. UN member states did not use them in their regular interactions with the Ivorian authorities, and the Security Council did not hold the Ivorian government

accountable when it did not meet them. It is unclear if they were used by the mission leadership in its interaction with the Ivorian government.[16]

For the purpose of transition planning, UNOCI would rely instead on the work of a mission task force that it established which had a mandate 'to map all mission activities, identify tasks for possible handover and develop strategies and mechanisms for taking the broader civilian transition process forward'.[17]

As UNOCI's closure drew near it became apparent, as acknowledged by UNOCI itself, that a number of challenges to peace and stability, as well as to other mission objectives, would endure beyond the mission. These challenges, reflected in the UN's own reporting, are discussed in the following section.[18]

After exit: continuing challenges

In reports by the UN Secretary-General to the Security Council and on the basis of interviews conducted by the author for this study with UN and government officials and independent analysts in Côte d'Ivoire,[19] it is evident that the mission, the Secretariat, and the Security Council were all aware of continuing challenges that the country would face in a number of critical areas following the withdrawal of UNOCI. In his report to the Security Council of 31 January 2017, the Secretary-General highlighted six areas of concern: human rights and transitional justice; social cohesion; security sector reform; disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration, weapons management and civilian disarmament; defence, security and law enforcement; and communications.[20] These six areas and their relevance to peacebuilding are discussed below.

Human rights and transitional justice

Human rights abuses were one of the root causes of the unrest in Côte d'Ivoire. Politically motivated and arbitrary detentions; extrajudicial killings by government and rebel forces; abductions, rape, and violence against women; confiscation of private property; and intimidation of opposition leaders all contributed to a serious deterioration in human rights. The Secretary-General did not mince words with regard to the human rights challenge facing Côte d'Ivoire in his reflections on the role of UNOCI one year after its departure: 'For many observers, the human rights efforts of the United Nations in Côte d'Ivoire concluded prematurely, given the fragility of national human rights institutions'.[21] The problem, in part, was that the government of Côte d'Ivoire was not willing to accept the UN's recommendation for the establishment of a UN human rights office following the closure of UNOCI.[22] The 'continuing engagement of an independent human rights expert', the Secretary-General maintained, 'could have played a useful role in advising the Ivorian authorities as they build stronger human rights and transitional justice mechanisms'.[23] As a consequence, perhaps, of this indisposition, the public's general view of transitional justice mechanisms put in place by the government was very low: in a nation-wide survey conducted for the UN Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) two years after the closure of UNOCI, only 5 per cent of those polled judged the government's efforts in this area to be 'sufficient', while only 7 per cent said they were 'satisfied' with these efforts.[24]

Social cohesion

By contrast, the same survey found that nearly three-quarters of individuals polled (72 per cent) had a positive view of their personal intercommunal relations, and a majority of those surveyed (57 per cent) thought that intercommunal tensions had diminished in the course of the preceding 12 months. However, more than half of the participants judged intercommunal tensions in their locality to be either 'rather high' or 'very high'.[25] In the final period of its deployment, UNOCI had prioritised the promotion of social cohesion, reconciliation, and conflict prevention. Nonetheless, social cohesion remained a continuing concern because many of the sources of intercommunal tension, notably ethnic cleavages, land and border disputes, and political polarisation, were not adequately addressed before the closure of UNOCI. One difficulty, Giulia Piccolino explains, is that while the national leadership expressed its support for reconciliation,[26] it showed little interest in actually working towards reconciliation with its political opponents, with whom it had fought fierce military and political battles over the course of a decade. As a consequence, invoking the language of 'local peacebuilding' to justify its actions, the national leadership relegated social cohesion to the local level where, however, its efforts were undermined by an apparent lack of commitment on the part of local authorities.[27]

Security sector reform

Despite palpable improvements in the security situation throughout Côte d'Ivoire by the time of UNOCI's closure,[28] the security sector was only partially reconstituted. Bloated, fragmented, politicised and, in some cases, only loosely controlled by civilian authorities, the armed forces resisted various national and international efforts at restructuring. Many factors were responsible for this state of affairs. Among them was the reluctance of the fragile government of President Alassane Ouattara to pressure the military, on whom it relied for support, to accept force reductions.[29] There were also concerns that pushing (too) hard for security sector reform (SSR) could threaten economic recovery. Reform efforts seemed to benefit the armed forces that were loyal to Ouattara, as opposed to rebel forces, disproportionately. As a study of the security sector reform process by the Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance (DCAF) observed, 'the public perception was of a victor's peace, and this significantly limited the ability of the SSR process to advance national reconciliation or national representation'.[30]

Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, weapons management and civilian disarmament

In the absence of a more thorough security sector reform process, it was inevitable that a programme of disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) of armed forces could not be fully achieved. More specifically, rebels and militias could not integrate into national defence and security forces that had not yet been restructured. As a consequence, DDR started later than planned and reached only a fraction of the eligible ex-combatants (69,500 out of an estimated 110,000).[31] Moreover, only a fraction of ex-combatants' weapons were collected,[32] and, as with security sector reform, the

programme appeared to benefit forces loyal to Ouattara disproportionately. The DDR programme also failed to address the problem of child soldiers, who may have constituted as many as 25 per cent of all combatants.[33]

Defence, security and law enforcement

Notwithstanding very significant improvements in the security situation in Côte d'Ivoire, with the departure of UNOCI it was thought that the country would face a variety of security-related challenges that, in the words of the UN mission, 'could hinder Côte d'Ivoire's long-term path to enduring peace, stability, and economic prosperity'.[34] Among the anticipated challenges were inter-communal conflicts; labour and student strikes as well as demonstrations by the public that might turn violent; terrorism and violent extremism; sexual violence; land disputes; cross-border security threats, notably along the border with Liberia and Mali; and continuing mistrust between the security forces and communities.[35] There was concern that Côte d'Ivoire would be ill-equipped to handle these challenges and that continuing efforts would be required to professionalise the security forces (the National Police and the National Gendarmerie in particular); enhance the capacity of the government and regional actors to address border security challenges; and strengthen cohesion within the security forces and between the security forces and the general population.

Communications

Reflecting a growing recognition within the United Nations of the pivotal role that media can play in fragile and conflict-affected states[36] – conveying disinformation and sowing division, on the one hand, or providing reliable information and promoting peaceful relations, on the other – UNOCI pursued a strategy throughout its existence which sought to professionalise the Ivorian media and to monitor the quality of its coverage. Towards that end, UNOCI established its own radio broadcasting capacity (ONUCI FM), which covered some 76 per cent of the country; monitored (and even sanctioned) the Ivorian media with respect to incidents of incitement by the media to hatred, intolerance and violence; and trained several thousand Ivorian media personnel.[37] Less a matter of 'unfinished business' than one of an ongoing quotidian challenge, strategic communications, it was recognised, would need to be a critical component of peace consolidation efforts in the period following the withdrawal of UNOCI.

The limits of political leverage

Continuing challenges are not uncommon for peacekeeping and, indeed, it was always expected that the UN Country Team (UNCT), as well as the Ivorian government, would take up the baton from UNOCI.[38] However, in the case of Côte d'Ivoire there was clear pushback from the government that prevented the adoption of some measures that might have mitigated the extent of the challenges that Côte d'Ivoire would face. In addition to opposing the establishment of a UN human rights office, the government rejected the suggestion of establishing a follow-on special political mission (SPM), as has been the practice in a number of other host states.[39] As we have seen, the government also resisted

UN appeals to increase its efforts in support of national reconciliation, choosing instead to concentrate on poorly executed local-level initiatives. Similarly, the government resisted UN pressures to reform and restructure the national armed forces in fundamental respects.

Why was the United Nations not more effective in promoting the adoption of these and other recommendations?[40] The principal reason is that UNOCI had limited political leverage. All peacekeeping operations possess political leverage to varying degrees in relation to their host-state governments. Political leverage can be defined as the capacity to influence national political elites to adopt a specified behaviour and/or set of policies. It is an aspect of the power that peacekeepers wield as described by Lise Morjé Howard in her book *Power in Peacekeeping*.[41] Howard identifies three 'basic forms' of peacekeeping power: coercion, inducement, and persuasion. Howard's basic forms are the instruments which peacekeepers employ in their exercise of power, whereas political leverage is the *capacity* of a peacekeeping operation to exert influence.

A peacekeeping operation possesses more or less political leverage. Several factors underpin a peacekeeping operation's political leverage, including the perceived legitimacy (authority) of the operation; incentives (carrots) which may be at the operation's disposal; the aptitude (ability) of the operation's leadership to persuade; and the receptiveness of the host-state government, on the one hand, and the strength and assertiveness of the host-state government, on the other. In the case of UNOCI, the latter two factors were especially salient.

Political leverage will vary across peacekeeping operations; it may also vary within a given peacekeeping operation over time. As Piccolino has observed, '[A]s the post-conflict reconstruction process advances and the state becomes stronger, national authorities' dependency on the UN gradually withers and state officials become more assertive vis-à-vis the UN'.[42] Such was the case with Côte d'Ivoire as UNOCI wound down. As a result, notes one former Political Affairs Officer with the UN Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC), peacekeeping operations are often willing to compromise and settle for 'good enough' results.[43] While no official UN report will make so bold a claim, it is evident from the interviews with UN officials conducted by the author that the progress Côte d'Ivoire had made by 2017 was deemed to be very good indeed even if the country faced continuing challenges.

Piccolino's point merits closer consideration. It is not always the case, of course, that a host state becomes stronger on the UN's watch. If it does, however, we would expect it to become increasingly capable of providing many of the services for which it has relied on the peacekeeping operation heretofore either to deliver or to ensure – services such as the provision of security, the protection of human rights, and the fair administration of justice. In other words, where a peacekeeping operation has resulted in the enhancement of host-state capacities, the national authorities are able increasingly to *substitute* for the peacekeeping operation and may be more inclined, therefore, to assert themselves vis-à-vis the operation, as was the case in Côte d'Ivoire.

Seen from another perspective, the ease with which political leverage is exercised by a peacekeeping operation is inversely proportional to the 'adoption costs' associated with the measures in question. Adoption costs refer to the costs (e.g. monetary, political) to host-state governments for implementing reform measures. As Christoph Zürcher and his colleagues observe in their study of democracy promotion within the context of post-

conflict reconstruction, peacebuilding is an 'interactive bargaining process' between external parties and host-state governments, and the interests of peacebuilders and domestic elites do not always coincide.[44] While peacebuilders – and the same holds true arguably for peacekeepers – may pursue a range of reforms, domestic elite preferences are shaped to a large extent by considerations of the adoption costs associated with those reforms. If the costs are low, national political elites are more likely to adopt the measure; if the costs are high, they are more likely to resist the measure.

In the case of Côte d'Ivoire, the costs associated with the adoption of a number of measures proposed by UNOCI were deemed by national elites to be too high.[45] Why? For one thing, Côte d'Ivoire was eager to demonstrate that it was no longer a ward of the international community. It was eager to restore its image as a zone of political stability and economic prosperity in West Africa, and to regain the mantle of regional leadership it had worn before the 2010–11 crisis.[46] From 2012 Côte d'Ivoire exhibited strong economic growth, averaging 8 per cent annually (see Figure 1). It assumed leadership roles in the African Union (AU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). It contributed civilian and military contingents to numerous UN peacekeeping operations, including MINUSCA (Central African Republic), MINURCAT (Central African Republic and Chad), MINUSTHA (Haiti), UNAMID (Darfur), MONUSCO (Democratic Republic of the Congo), and MINUSMA (Mali). In 2016 it launched a campaign – ultimately successful – for an elected seat on the UN Security Council as a non-permanent member for the period 2018–19.[47] It was important for the success of the campaign for Côte d'Ivoire to demonstrate that its troubles were behind it. Continued UN scrutiny and tutelage, the Ivoirian leadership surmised, was not consistent with this view.

Limited political leverage may manifest itself not only in relation to the host-state government but also between different parties within peacekeeping operations. Consider the case of the UN Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET). East Timor (Timor-Leste) was a former Portuguese colony and non-
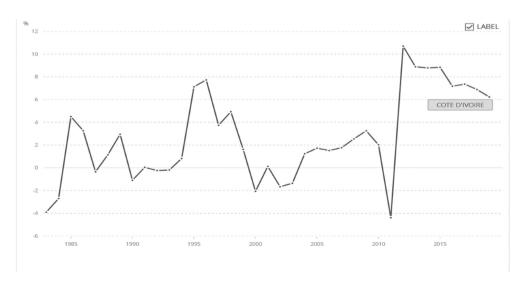

Figure 1. Côte d'Ivoire: GDP growth 1983–2019. *Source*: World Bank, *World Development Indicators*.

self-governing territory occupied by Indonesia until 1999 and then administered by the United Nations until it achieved independence in 2002, after which it was supported by a UN peacekeeping operation (UNMISET). Mindful of the deteriorating internal security situation, the UN Secretariat sought to slow the pace of the down-sizing of the peacekeeping operation but faced resistance from the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia, whose preferences ultimately won out.[48] Had there been a continued presence of UN peacekeepers, they might have prevented the eruption of violence in East Timor that occurred in May 2006. Indeed, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan warned openly in February 2005 against the risks associated with the scheduled drawdown of UN forces: [S]ignificant challenges remain', he told the Security Council. '[A] withdrawal of UNMISET would have a potentially negative impact on the security and stability of the country as well as the proper functioning of State institutions'.[49] Criticisms of the UN's premature departure from East Timor often miss the point that the UN Secretariat sought to maintain a larger peacekeeping troop presence but lacked sufficient leverage (persuasive power) to prevail over influential members of the Security Council.

In the case of Côte d'Ivoire, geopolitical factors also contributed to the decision to reduce the size of the UN's footprint there and ultimately to terminate the mission. France and other major powers on the Security Council were eager to trim the UN peacekeeping budget as two new operations – MINUSMA (Mali) and MINUSCA (Central African Republic) – had come online in 2013 and 2014, respectively.[50] Meanwhile, the United States was seeking to deflect pressure to close UNMIL, the peacekeeping operation in Liberia. Côte d'Ivoire's interests in this regard thus converged with those of at least two leading peacekeeping decision-makers.[51] There was no appetite for extending the life of the operation in the face of unfinished business that was not thought to represent a serious threat to peace and stability.

Political leverage: the omitted variable

Assessments of peacekeeping operations, whether conducted by scholars or practitioners, rarely take political leverage into account despite its potential explanatory value, as demonstrated here by the case of UNOCI. Assessments are often concerned largely with whether and to what extent an operation has fulfilled its mandate, as an examination of UN Secretary-General reports on peacekeeping operations will confirm.[52] These assessments tend to focus on what has been achieved by a peacekeeping operation, often without due consideration of why an operation may have met or fallen short of expectations.

Other assessments may be concerned with questions of peacekeeping effectiveness – for instance, whether an operation has contributed to a reduction in violence, the protection of civilians, the promotion of human rights, or the establishment of the rule of law, among other broad objectives. Two difficulties arise with regard to assessments of peacekeeping effectiveness. The first difficulty concerns the lack of consensus among scholars and practitioners with respect to the appropriate criteria for evaluating effectiveness.[53] What counts as peacekeeping success and who should make that deter-mination? As Vincenzo Bove and Ron Smith observe, 'There are no agreed criteria for the success of a peacekeeping mission . . . '.[54] – nor, one might add, are there agreed criteria

for many of its constituent goals. The lack of consensus can lead to widely divergent assessments of the same operation.

The second difficulty – and the more pertinent one for our purposes – concerns attribution. It is important to be able to identify the factors that are responsible for the outcomes that obtain in countries that host peacekeeping operations, for both scientific and practical reasons. However, it can be extremely difficult to isolate the effects of the many domestic and international factors that may have a bearing on conditions on the ground in what are highly complex situations.[55] As a consequence, misattribution is not uncommon, as Oisín Tansey demonstrates in his study of the role of responsibility in evaluating the legacies of state-building operations.[56] Claims of success or failure are often made wrongly, Tansey observes, because they are not – and in some cases they cannot be – substantiated by a clear demonstration of the causal responsibility of the parties in question.[57]

In the case of ONUCI and Côte d'Ivoire, and in the case of other peacekeeping operations, a focus on political leverage can be useful for the purpose of clarifying attribution. By taking into consideration a party's capacity for exerting influence, as well as the limits of that influence, it allows for a more precise understanding of the factors that are responsible for outcomes that we observe. This is not to suggest that more could not have been done by UNOCI to mitigate the challenges to peace consolidation. However, in the absence of consideration of political leverage, it is easy to succumb to (mis)judgements about the interests, motivations, efforts, and, ultimately, the responsibilities of the principal parties involved. For this and other reasons, careful process tracing is important for understanding the causal mechanisms at work in any given peacekeeping operation.[58]

Conclusion

UNOCI is widely regarded as having been a successful peacekeeping operation, and for good reasons. However, as this article has shown, UNOCI bequeathed a number of challenges to Côte d'Ivoire which represented 'unfinished business' on UNOCI's part. The continuing challenges are attributable in part to UNOCI's limited political leverage vis-à-vis the sovereign Ivorian authorities, the consequence of which was partial and/or inconsistent implementation by these authorities of reforms designed to safeguard peace and security in the former conflict-ridden country.

Political leverage is an important but under-appreciated factor in the analysis of peacekeeping operations. Insufficient consideration of political leverage can lead to misapprehension of causal mechanisms at work in a host country, including misattribution of causal responsibility. The literature on peacekeeping is replete with evaluations of individual peacekeeping operations and with the enterprise overall.[59] Analysts often make judgements about the 'success' (or not) of these operations as well as claims about the consequences that these operations and their termination have had for the subsequent trajectories of the host states.[60] The criteria for success are much debated. What tends to be overlooked in these analyses, however, is an understanding of the opportunities for constructive engagement which may *not* be available to the United Nations and other peacekeeping actors because of the limited political leverage which they possess. These actors are often judged in relation to the array of all conceivable

actions without consideration of the very real constraints under which they are operating – constraints that may limit the actual availability of options.

UNOCI is not unique in experiencing pushback from a host state. Other UN peacekeeping operations, notably MONUSCO in Democratic Republic of Congo, MINUSCA in Central African Republic, and MINUSMA in Mali, have also met with host-state resistance in recent times. Of course, host-state consent is a cardinal principle of peacekeeping and is often key to the success of an operation. However, in cases where the Security Council deems it necessary to mandate activities which the host state is not supportive of, political leverage can make a critical difference.

Notes

1. Traughber, 'A Peacekeeping Success Story in Côte d'Ivoire'.
2. Quoted in United Nations, 'Peacekeeping Mission to Leave Côte d'Ivoire After 14 years, Mission Chief Tells Security Council'.
3. UN Security Council, 'Role of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire', para. 68.
4. On UNMIL in Liberia, see Forti and Connolly, 'The Mission is Gone, but the UN is Staying: Liberia's Peacekeeping Transition'; on UNAMSIL in Sierra Leone, see Bah, 'Sierra Leone'.
5. For a representative example, see Druckman and Diehl, *Peace Operation Success: A Comparative Analysis*.
6. UN Security Council Resolution 1528, adopted on 27 February 2004, authorised the establishment of UNOCI.
7. Doss, *A Peacekeeper in Africa: Learning from UN Interventions in Other People's Wars*, 65.
8. Novosseloff, 'United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI)'.
9. UN Security Council Resolution 2062 (26 July 2012).
10. Novosseloff, 'Lessons Learned from the UN's Transition in Côte d'Ivoire', 2.
11. UN Security Council Resolution 2284 (28 April 2016), para. 14. For the Secretary-General's Withdrawal Plan, see UN Security Council, 'Special Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire'.
12. UN Security Council Resolution 2062, para. 22.
13. UN Security Council, 'Thirty-second Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire', para. 70. However, in his assessment 15 months earlier, the Secretary-General had identified a broader range of factors:
    'Stabilizing the security situation in a sustainable manner also requires continued support by UNOCI and the United Nations Country team to the Ivorian authorities to strengthen the political process, rebuild national capacities, support the conduct of sensitive security-related processes, strengthen State authority, promote justice and reconciliation, provide basic services, promote and protect human rights, and address the root causes of the conflict, while supporting efforts with respect to humanitarian assistance and economic recovery'.
    UN Security Council, 'Special Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire', para. 60.
14. UN Security Council, 'Thirty-third Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire', para. 64 and Annex I.
15. United Nations, 'Thirty-second Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire', para. 70.
16. Novosseloff, 'Lessons Learned from the UN's Transition in Côte d'Ivoire', 16.
17. UN Doc. S/2013/761, para. 65.
18. Note that this analysis is concerned with continuing challenges that Côte d'Ivoire faced. I am not making claims about the effects of these challenges.
19. Interviews conducted by the author in Abidjan from 7–20 March 2020 with UN officials; Ivorian, French and British government officials; and representatives of local NGOs.

20. UN Nations Security Council, 'Final Progress Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire', para. 55.
21. UN Doc. S/2018/958, 29 October 2018, para. 99.
22. Ibid.; author interviews with senior UN officials, Abidjan, 7–20 March 2020.
23. UN Security Council, 'Role of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire', para. 99.
24. UN Peacebuilding Support Office, *Côte d'Ivoire: Étude de Perception*, 48. The survey was conducted in February and March 2019; 3,120 subjects in 15 *départements* were surveyed.
25. Ibid., 16–18.
26. See, for instance, Présidence de Côte d'Ivoire, 'Message à la nation du Président de la République'.
27. Piccolino, 'Rhétorique de la cohésion sociale et paradoxes de la «paix par le bas» en Côte d'Ivoire'.
28. UN Doc. S/2017/89, para. 65.
29. Martin, 'Security Sector Reform and Civil-Military Relations in Postwar Côte d'Ivoire', 529, 531.
30. Dieng, Ebo, and Sedgwick, 'UN Support to SSR in Peacekeeping Contexts', 107.
31. Novosseloff, 'The Many Lives of a Peacekeeping Mission', 31. See also UN Doc. S/2018/958, para. 38.
32. As the UN Secretary-General observed, 'The low number of collected weapons and items of explosive ordnance can be explained by the significant number of weapons still hidden within communities', UN Doc. S/2017/89, para. 30.
33. Olagboyé, 'Analyse Comparative du DDR en Sierra Leone et en Côte d'Ivoire', 10–11.
34. United Nations, *The End of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire*, 30. This document represents UNOCI's 'handover plan'.
35. Ibid., 30–33.
36. On the importance of strategic communications in the context of UN peacekeeping, see 'Statement by the President of the Security Council', UN Doc. S/PRST/2022/5, 12 July 2022.
37. UN Doc. S/2018/958, 29 October 2018, para. 61.
38. The UN Country Team at the time of transition comprised 21 agencies, funds, and programmes. See Novosseloff, 'Lessons Learned from the UN's Transition in Côte d'Ivoire', 39.
39. Author interviews with senior UN officials, Abidjan, 7–20 March 2020; see also Novosseloff, 'Lessons Learned from the UN's Transition in Côte d'Ivoire', 3. As pointed out by the UN Secretary-General in his final report on Côte d'Ivoire, 'no United Nations successor mission was seriously considered, owing primarily to the position of the Government . . . ', UN Doc. S/2018/958, 29 October 2018, para. 70.
40. The Fondation Félix Houphouët Boigny pour la recherche de la paix would seek to fulfil the recommendation to maintain a free and independent media sector with the establishment of Radio de la Paix (Peace Radio) on 1 March 2017.
41. Howard, *Power in Peacekeeping*, 1.
42. Piccolino, 'The Dilemmas of State Consent in United Nations Peace Operations', 228–29.
43. Interview with the author, 26 February 2021.
44. Zürcher, Manning, Evenson, Hayman, Riese and Roehner, *Costly Democracy: Peacebuilding & Democratization after War*.
45. The following observations are based on author interviews with Ivorian government and UN officials, Abidjan, 7–20 March 2020.
46. Piccolino, 'Rhétorique de la cohésion sociale et paradoxes de la «paix par le bas» en Côte d'Ivoire', 52.
47. The government promoted its candidacy with a campaign booklet titled 'Côte d'Ivoire at the United Nations Security Council (2018–2019)', (n.d.).
48. Goldstone, 'East Timor', 187.
49. UN Security Council, 'Progress Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor', paras 63, 67.

50. The United States would use its presidency of the Security Council in April 2017 to launch a debate on the funding of UN peacekeeping. See 'U.N. Peacekeeping Faces Overhaul Amid U.S. Threats to Cut Funding', *New York Times*, 26 March 2017.
51. For more details, see Novosseloff, 'Lessons Learned from the UN's Transition in Côte d'Ivoire', 2–3.
52. Reports of the Secretary-General can be found at: https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/reports-secretary-general.
53. Hultman, Kathman and Shannon, *Peacekeeping in the Midst of War*, 2.
54. Bove and Smith, 'The Economics of Peacekeeping', 240.
55. For a discussion of complexity and the conflict environment, see the contributions to Brusset, de Coning, and Hughes, eds, *Complexity Thinking for Peacebuilding Practice and Evaluation*.
56. Tansey, 'Evaluating the Legacies of State-building'.
57. Ibid., 184.
58. On process tracing, see George and Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*.
59. See, most notably, Diehl and Druckman, *Evaluating Peace Operations*; Peter, *Measuring the Success of Peace Operations*; and the reports of the Effectiveness of Peace Operations Network (EPON), available at https://effectivepeaceops.net.
60. On assessing the legacies of peacekeeping operations, see the special issue of *International Peacekeeping*, Vol. 27, No. 1 (2020).

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Ethics

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