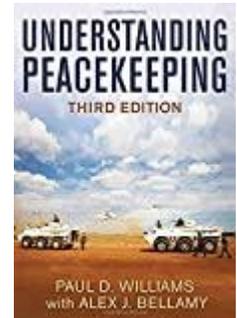**Paul D. Williams**, **with Alex J. Bellamy.** *Understanding Peacekeeping.* 3rd ed. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2021. Maps, tables, figures. 496 pp. $29.95, paper, ISBN 978-0-7456-8672-1.

Reviewed by Peggy McWeeney (University of Maryland)

One could be intimidated at the prospect of reviewing the third edition of the encyclopedia of peacekeeping. With over four hundred pages of details regarding 194 peacekeeping missions since 1947, it serves as a record of the theory, practice, and future of peacekeeping operations. *Understanding Peacekeeping* also reflects nearly a decade of scholarship and insight from Paul D. Williams and Alex J. Bellamy, who additionally contributed to *The Oxford Handbook of United Nations Peacekeeping Operations* (2015).

In their account, peace operations are military personnel (troops, military observers, and experts) used to prevent, limit, and manage violent conflict. This assistance originated as troops donated from sympathetic states, but now the most significant forces come from international organizations, such as the United Nations. The authors make the origins of peacekeeping engaging with a comprehensive and novel history of the transformation of peacekeepers over five eras. The book follows peacekeeping eras across the failed League of Nations, the rebuilding of world order post-World War II, the Cold War and decolonization, the genocides of the 1990s, and the twenty-first-century "preventative diplomacy" mandate (p. 57). The authors find that peacekeeping is more influential than ever, with the UN Department of Peace Operations creating twenty-five new operations just between 1999 and 2002. Enhanced research, management, and evaluation techniques and the post-9/11 prevention of terrorism mandate have only bolstered peacekeeping's raison d'être, even when mission success is called into doubt.

Of particular interest is the Westphalian versus post-Westphalian discussion of peace operations. Westphalian peacekeeping argues that any operations should be fundamentally based on sovereignty, host state consent, non-interference, and the peaceful resolution of decolonization. Post-Westphalian peacekeeping advocates the liberal peace agenda: increased human rights, preventative action, and a push toward democracy. These competing tensions exist at the individual, state,

and organization levels, with key operational components sometimes based on individual perspective. One example the authors provide is when secretary general of the UN, Kofi Annan, promoted the 2005 Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine, which made states responsible for the well-being of their citizens. In doing so, he also paved the way for greater challenges to host state consent and sovereignty, much to the chagrin of China and Russia.

From there, the authors discuss six strategic functions of peace operations: prevention, observation, assistance, enforcement, stabilization, and administration. Each chapter introduces the concept, defines it in the UN Charter and elsewhere, and adds two to three case studies. Here, the tension between the Westphalian and post-Westphalian strategies is also evident. Westphalian strategies, such as observation, rely on "consent, impartiality, and the minimum use of force," the so-called holy trinity of traditional peacekeeping (p. 131). In contrast, post-Westphalian missions, beginning with the 1956 Suez Canal crisis, offer greater military enforcement and stabilization. Post-Westphalian missions now prevail, although Westphalian missions still occur, usually when the conflict is frozen or the consent of the host state and Security Council is fragile. This differentiation of peacekeeping is additionally helpful in explaining why peacekeeping operations have a contested track record.[1] Some functions, such as observation and assistance, have a considerable record of success, while enforcement and administration face greater obstacles and carry a mixed record of mission success.

Lastly, part 3 of *Understanding Peacekeeping* describes future challenges, such as force generation, regionalization, and civilian protection. For example, as more peace operations are conducted by regional or private organizations, states should be less inclined to donate troops to UN peacekeeping operations. However, states are doing so more now than ever. The authors provide myriad theor-

ies for this, including realism, liberalism, public goods concerns, and normative attractiveness.

Additionally, increasing concerns over protection have allowed greater use of force by peacekeepers. The use of preventative force is growing in missions like the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), although the authors also present research on the unintended consequences of military force. The authors also discuss security sector reform, which includes transforming disarmed groups into a civil police force and combatting organized crime. Fittingly, the last chapter discusses exiting peacekeeping operations as the final challenge. This is often accomplished by phasing out the mission over years or meeting specific benchmarks.

The main criticism of the work is that the authors state that Westphalian and post-Westphalian perspectives are individual and ad hoc. Although peacekeeping occurs in many different forms, the UN remains the most prolific organization for peacekeeping. Due to this, the authors fail to critically acknowledge the Westphalian and post-Westphalian tension that governs the entire UN. Decisions are not made on an ad hoc basis. Patterns exist, such as an operation's likelihood given the opinions of the Security Council or neocolonialism in the North-South theater.[2] Mentions of the power imbalance between the global North, which comprises the Security Council, and the global South, where most missions are sent, are buried in case studies.[3] The authors refer to remnants of postcolonialism in peacekeeping efforts but do not point out that most peacekeeping efforts have been the result of poorly managed decolonization efforts by the global North, which also controls peacekeeping operations. Referring to these patterns as ad hoc leaves the story of peacekeeping incomplete. The authors admit that politics in the UN shape peacekeeping strategy but greatly underemphasize the patterns in the larger political landscape that govern peacekeeping operations.

Understanding Peacekeeping is an impressive tome of information on peacekeeping operations. Parts 1 and 2 lend a theory and history of peacekeeping, while the remainder of the book reads more as a field guide on themes, previous missions, and lessons learned. The authors offer both a theoretic and realistic lens to peacekeeping operations, stating, "ultimately, peace operations will remain little more than a band-aid or exercises in damage limitation unless they are based on an accurate theory of ... [turning] war-torn territories into zones of stable peace" (p. 5). However, the authors punt on the larger systemic obstacles governing UN peacekeeping and leave these discussions to case studies. In all, this book is very readable. The authors mix interesting theories, themes, and deep institutional history with statistics and data on peace operations. It is a very engaging read for its size and stature.

Notes

[1]. Virginia Page Fortna, "Does Peacekeeping Keep Peace? International Intervention and the Duration of Peace after Civil War," *International Studies Quarterly* 48 (2004): 269.

[2]. Thomas G. Weiss, *What's Wrong with the United Nations and How to Fix It* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2016), 53.

[3]. Oliver Turner, "'Finishing the Job': The UN Special Committee on Decolonization and the Politics of Self-governance," *Third World Quarterly* 34, no. 7 (2013): 1201.

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