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An architecture for peace: deciphering the UN's multidimensional approach to the Israel - Arab Conflict (1967 - 1982)

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Chapter 1

The UN Architecture in the Middle East

Introduction

The Government House is a magnificent compound atop a hill in Jerusalem. Its location provides a stunning view of the Old City and the Mount of Olives. For the last 75 years, this historic and impressive compound has served as the headquarters of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation (UNTSO) and the epicentre of the UN's diplomatic and security work in the region. This beautiful building is a prominent and permanent fixture in the Jerusalemite skyline as much as the United Nations (UN) is one in the Israel-Arab conflict.

Over the decades, the UN employed two mechanisms to facilitate dialogue and manage the conflict: peacekeeping operations and high-level diplomatic engagement. In the former, the Security Council authorised the deployment of the following operations: UNTSO in 1948, two iterations of the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF I and II) in 1956 and 1973, the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) in 1974, and the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) in 1978. All of these operations except UNEF I and II remain on the ground today.

This prolonged high degree of operational concentration is undoubtedly an anomaly, which warrants discussion for three reasons. First, while the Security Council (UNSC) withdrew both iterations of UNEF (see Chapters 3 and 5 respectively), the remaining operations have a quasi-permanent status on the ground. Even though peacekeeping in the Middle East receives criticisms (Abrams, 2018; Nachmias, 1996; Orion, 2016) due to its inability to prevent confrontations, there is no indication that the Council is seriously considering withdrawing these operations (Myers & Dorn, 2022; Novosseloff, 2022).

Second, UNTSO, UNDOF and UNIFIL appear to be impervious to the sort of political turmoil other operations face such as budget cuts from the principal donors, unwillingness from Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs) to send troops, even if the situation in Syria and between Israel and Lebanon continues to be downright dangerous for peacekeepers, and

serious resistance from host countries to hosting the operations for decades. Moreover, no other conflict has had more operations on the ground than the Israel-Arab conflict. While the processes have different mandates, Areas of Operations (AO) and face different challenges, they are working to deal with *one* overarching conflict. This dissertation studies all operations as part of a regional architecture rather than standalone endeavours.

Third, the operations' structure and *modus operandi* are not entirely self-contained. Throughout the history of UN peacekeeping in the Middle East, the operations relied on each other in areas such as sharing military assets, logistics and even administrative affairs. Despite the fact that each operation had and has its own mandate, structure and budget, they rely on each other to achieve success and, at times, ensure their survival. This dissertation highlights that the Secretariat created an interdependent and complex architecture in the Middle East, which pulls and shares resources and charters a unified set of long-term objectives.

Throughout their time on the ground, the operations shared their most important asset: people. Between 1967 and 1982, almost all first Force Commanders in the region had previously served in a leadership role in UNTSO. To this day, UNTSO continues to provide UNDOF and UNIFIL with Military Observers (UNMOs), which carry out sensitive tasks such as reporting violations to the Security Council and performing observation duties (Howard, 2019; Myers & Dorn, 2022). The degree to which the Security Council implicitly and explicitly *expects* the operations to cooperate is unique. This dissertation looks at the processes through the lens of Inter-Operation Collaboration (IOC) and provides a working definition of a theoretical framework for this understudied concept.

On the diplomatic front, the Secretariat in New York dealt with the Israel-Arab conflict through three main activities: the (co) organisation of multilateral conferences, the dispatch of high-level diplomatic envoys, and the creation of an office tasked with coordinating the UN's actions (and the operations on the ground). In 1947, the Secretary-General dispatched Count Folke Bernadotte¹, the first-ever UN Mediator, to the partition plan, who negotiated

¹ Members of the paramilitary group Lehi assassinated Bernadotte on September 1948.

the first cease-fire (Stanger, 1988). Dr Ralph Bunche, one of the most influential and skilled UN Staff Members in the UN's history, succeeded him and chaired the Rhodes Conference, where the parties discussed the 1949 Armistice Agreements (Ben-Dror, 2016). Chapters 3 and 4 critically analyse the role of subsequent high-level mediators, envoys that include the Under-Secretaries-General for Special Political Affairs. The diplomatic engagement was complementary to the work of the operations, and they often successfully collaborated. This dissertation critically analyses the relationship between the operations in the field, diplomatic initiatives and the politics in New York.

The UN's involvement in the Israel-Arab conflict was particularly significant between 1967 and 1982. Throughout this period, the Council deployed UNEF II, UNDOF and UNIFIL. UNTSO, which managed the transformational aftermath of 1967's Six-Day War fought between Israel and the Arab states by itself, became the keystone of the UN peacekeeping architecture in the region, while the Secretariat tried to manage the conflict with varying degrees of autonomy and success. Following the Six-Day War, the Secretary-General dispatched Gunnar Jarring to negotiate the implementation of the Security Council Resolution 242 (Waage & Mørk, 2015). After the Yom Kippur War in 1973, UNEF II's Force Commander chaired the initial military negotiations between Israel and Egypt held at Km 101 on the road between Suez and Cairo and the Military Working Group, which followed the Geneva Peace Conference (Jonah, 1992). The Secretary-General supported the organisation of said conference, which served as the framework through which Israel signed two disengagement agreements, with Egypt and with Syria. In 1975, the Secretary-General created the role of Chief Coordinator of UN Peacekeeping in the Middle East, an actor who played a significant role in the UN's work until it was prematurely abandoned in 1978 (see Chapter 5) – and one whom the academic literature has forgotten. This study sheds light on the importance of this role throughout the timeline.

Undoubtedly, the Secretariat invested significant time, resources and political capital into managing the conflict. Between 1967 and 1982, three individuals held the post of UN Chief:

U Thant (1961-1971), Kurt Waldheim (1972-1981) and Javier Perez de Cuellar² (1982-1991). Regardless of the different approaches and successes and failures, the region “dominated each one’s attention during his time in office” (Gilmour, 2017, p. 48). However, the effectiveness and impact of these initiatives in achieving peace and stability in the region remain subject to debate. This dissertation will critically analyse the political role of each Secretary-General and elaborate on how their decisions shaped the UN’s work in the region.

Studying the UN’s history in the Israel-Arab conflict can shed light on the UN’s history for several reasons. First, the UN’s involvement in the conflict is prolonged and multidimensional. Throughout the conflict, the Secretariat had to respond to changing dynamics. Chief among them is the transformation from a state-centric, Israel-Arab conflict to an Israeli-Palestinian conflict whereby the epicentre became the Palestinian question. Understanding the UN’s involvement throughout provides insights into the organisation’s evolution, capacity to adapt to changing circumstances, and efforts to address multifaceted and deeply rooted issues.

Second, the Israel-Arab conflict has significantly influenced the development of the UN’s structure and mandate over time. The Secretariat co-created the principles of peacekeeping – neutrality, consent and use of force only in self-defence – as a response to the Suez Canal Crisis (Urquhart, 1994). Moreover, while most of the literature on peacekeeping claims that the concept of Inter-Operation Collaboration (IOC) started in West Africa in the 2000s (Angelo, 2011; Aubyn, 2015; Doss, 2020), this thesis will show that it began in the Middle East in the 1970s. The operations engaged in unprecedented (and unforeseen) tasks such as the re-deployment of military personnel, sharing administrative and programme services, and helping other operations at the onset. Furthermore, the establishment of the Office of the Chief Coordinator of Peacekeeping in the Middle East was unprecedented in the history of the UN. For the first time, the Secretariat had a high-level UN Staff Member with a *regional* mandate and became the focal point for Headquarters *and* the host countries. The Chief

² Out of the three UN Chiefs, Perez de Cuellar receives the least amount of attention because he took office on the last year of this study’s timeline. The work of U Thant and Waldheim are at the centre of Chapters 3, 4 and 5.

Coordinator set a precedent for peacekeeping leadership³, as he was the first person to hold the rank of Under-Secretary-General⁴. Today, the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General, who are civilians, do similar work as their predecessor; however, they do so for *one* operation (Karlsrud, 2013). The one-of-a-kind Chief Coordinator post had a very positive impact on military and political affairs, working as an honest broker, supported the Heads of Operations in their dealings with the host countries and served as the highest-ranking UN Staff Member in the region.

Third, the Middle East became one of the most prominent battlefields of the Cold War (Yaqub, 2013). The evolution and tensions of the international system affected the conflict and vice versa. Studying the UN's involvement in the conflict offers an opportunity to examine how these power dynamics have shaped its actions and the constraints and opportunities it faces in navigating competing interests among Member States.

Fourth, studying the UN's involvement in the Israel-Arab conflict provides a deeper understanding of the conflict itself. It offers critical insights into the history, evolution and effectiveness of the UN as an organisation dedicated to maintaining international peace and security. "We cannot understand where we are now, and what problems the United Nations faces today in the field of peace and security, without understanding what was intended, and what has occurred in the past" (Higgins, 1970, p. 445). This dissertation critically assesses whether the UN was a proactive or reactive actor in the conflict. Whether the UN shaped history or let itself be led by history is a crucial question at the heart of this study.

³ The main difference between the Chief Coordinator and the contemporary SRSGs is that the former was a military officer who had a regional mandate while the SRSGs are civilians with a mandate focused only in the operation's area of operations.

⁴General Siilasvuo also made history even before his appointment as Chief Coordinator. When the Secretary-General appointed him as Force Commander of UNEF II, he concurrently chaired the negotiations between Israel and Egypt at km 101. In short, he was the first Force Commander to have a quasi-diplomatic and a military role at once.

A new approach

From a research perspective, while plenty of scholars tackle '*UN peacekeeping in the Middle East*' (Higgins 1995; Hylton 2013; Mackinlay 1989; Sommereyns 1980), little work provides a nuanced understanding of the degree of interdependence the operations had and whether the Secretariat had a regional strategy to deal with the conflict holistically .

The Secretariat plays a pivotal role in shaping institutional behaviours of all the elements of the architecture because it establishes the frameworks that guide the actions of all the actors. Therefore, the Secretariat, understood as the designer and implementer of norms, values, and standards, delineate the behavioural boundaries for all actors working under its preview (Balding and Wehrenfennig. 2011). Conversely, the Secretariat embody the regulatory structures that delineate the operationalization of these shared norms, values, and standards (Traub 2007). These organizational mechanisms are not merely peripheral components of an institution but are fundamental in determining its evolutionary trajectory and its capacity to achieve the Security Council's mandates.

Complexity Theory and UN Peacekeeping in the Middle East

Throughout the dissertation, the guiding theoretical lens is complexity theory (Day and Hunt 2023; Hunt 2020; Paananen, et al. 2021). Employing a complexity theory lens reveals the nuanced dynamics *both within* the UN System and *within* the region and this highly regionalized conflict. The Security Council, at various junctures, *de facto* sanctioned expansions of roles and responsibilities of the operations beyond the original mandates, facilitating resource sharing, personnel deployment, and cost distribution without formally amending the operations' mandates *de jure*. Such decisions, indicate two critical points. First, the Council, at the time and insofar peacekeeping in the Middle East, took a very pragmatic approach as the operations kept both sides of the Cold War sufficiently content. Second, the Secretariat implemented the work of all operations and built one strategy for the entire architecture. In other words, the Security Council designed a complex system and the Secretariat built it.

The Secretariat adopted a complexity-aware perspective where its actions reflect an understanding of the interconnected nature of peacekeeping in general and the Israel-Arab

conflict in particular. Guided by a holistic vision, the Secretariat navigated the multifaceted dimensions of the conflict, leveraging operational interdependencies to enhance the coherence and effectiveness of the UN's peacekeeping architecture in the region. The application of complexity theory to analyse the UN's architecture in the Middle East offers a novel approach to understanding the UN's historical engagement with the Israel-Arab conflict. It highlights the importance of recognizing the interconnected, adaptive nature of peacekeeping operations and the strategic, albeit implicit, efforts of the UN Secretariat to manage the conflict through a comprehensive, integrated framework. This approach not only enriches the scholarly discourse on UN peacekeeping but also provides valuable insights into the operational dynamics and strategic considerations underlying the UN's efforts to navigate complex conflict scenarios in the Middle East.

One of the most important elements of using a complexity lens is the recognition of how multiple actors can be decisive in the overall work of the architecture. Case in point, the literature does not adequately study the role of General Ensio Siilasvuo during his tenure as UNEF II Force Commander and, later, Chief Coordinator of UN Peacekeeping in the Middle East. Siilasvuo was instrumental in the early stages of the road toward peace between Israel and Egypt, and yet the literature does not study his role with sufficient care. This oversight stems from the fact that Siilasvuo was a relatively unknown player in the political arena whose expertise was, above all, in military affairs. Furthermore, Siilasvuo's role at the Km 101 and during the Geneva Peace Conference occurred before he became Chief Coordinator. The Secretary-General dispatched Siilasvuo from UNTSO to UNEF II as a stopgap measure and, simultaneously, gave him the task of chairing the meetings at Km 101. Most scholars treat the initial discussions as part of Henry Kissinger's step-by-step approach and are correct. However, they also neglect that the United States did not have a representative at the tent and, at times, did not know what the countries discussed. In addition, while Israeli and Egyptian scholars tend to minimise the UN's role, evidence from the archives shows the extent to which Siilasvuo's mediation was instrumental in brokering the Six-Point Agreement. In addition, his tenure as Chief Coordinator – and the role's existence – were short. While the Secretariat discussed his appointment as of 1974, it only became effective in 1975 and lasted until 1978. During this time, Siilasvuo focused on improving the

peacekeeping architecture from within through standardising procedures, ensuring that the cooperation of operations during the crisis became standard practice in military and administrative affairs. While these issues are fundamental to understanding IOC and regional strategy, they seldom get attention from scholars. Moreover, as Chapter 5 explains, the role became part of Camp David's collateral damage, and the Secretariat decided against appointing a successor.

Lastly, the literature does not adequately study the UN Office of Special Political Affairs' work. The personalities and personal stories of UN giants like Ralph Bunche and Brian Urquhart have received attention (Fröhlich, 2021; Lyman, 2004; Jonah J. O., 2014) the work of this small office as a whole warrant a more nuanced survey. From the moment peacekeeping started until the early 1990s, this small office managed the entire peacekeeping effort. The degree to which Bunche, Urquhart and Guyer participated in the day-to-day management of the operations is stunning. With such a small bureaucracy, the office provided policy advice to the Secretary-General, provided guidance to the field and liaised with the TCCs. This dissertation highlights this office's work, challenges and shortcomings, and outlines how its effectiveness was disproportionate to its size.

Therefore, this dissertation reviews all aspects of the UN peacekeeping architecture, with each chapter a stepping-stone in breaking away from the usual paradigm of evaluating peacekeeping in the Middle East. Instead of having separate chapters per operation, the thesis discusses them holistically, as approached from different angles.

Research Question

This research aims to better understand the role of UN peacekeeping architecture in the Middle East and whether the UN has had a successful comprehensive strategy to deal with the overarching Israel-Arab conflict.

The overarching research question is:

To what extent did the four peacekeeping operations UNTSO, UNEF II, UNDOF and UNIFIL; the Office of the Chief Coordinator of Peacekeeping in the Middle East; and the

Office of Special Political Affairs shape the diplomatic and security landscape of the Israel-Arab conflict between 1967 and 1982?

Supplementary Research Questions:

To what extent did UNTSO, UNEF II, UNDOF and UNIFIL collaborate on tactical and operational matters between 1973 and 1982?

To what extent did the Secretariat successfully act as a policy broker in the political negotiations in the aftermath of the Yom Kippur War and Operation Litani River?

To what extent did the Camp David Accords and the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon affect the ability of the UN Peacekeeping Architecture to perform its duties?

The "diplomatic and security landscape" refers to the complex interplay between diplomatic efforts, political negotiations, and security arrangements that define the state of international relations within a specific context, such as the Israel-Arab conflict. Diplomacy in international relations involves the management of international relations by negotiation; the method by which these relations are adjusted and managed by ambassadors and envoys (Berridge, 2022). Security, on the other hand, encompasses measures taken by states and international organizations to ensure mutual survival and safety, including military operations, peacekeeping operations, and conflict resolution strategies (Buzan, 1991).

The intertwining of diplomatic and security dimensions within the context of UN peacekeeping operations underscores the complex nature of managing and resolving conflicts through the UN. The military dialogue in the Israel-Arab conflict was military diplomacy, particularly after the Yom Kippur War. The literature defines this term, broadly speaking, as a set of international activities based mainly on peaceful dialogue and cooperation carried out by high-level military officers on behalf of their governments at bilateral and multilateral fora (Drab, 2018; Cheyre, 2013; Swistek, 2012; Harkavy & Neuman, 2001).

UN Peacekeeping diplomacy is the "effort initiated by impartial UN military representatives in conflict and post-conflict situations" (Schori, 2013, p. 2). Military officers played a fundamental role in the military diplomacy needed to advance the cause of UN Peacekeeping

in the Israel-Arab conflict. This is another example demonstrating that peacekeeping in the region was dynamic and flexible (more on this in Chapter 5).

In the specific cases of UNEF II, UNDOF, and the negotiation processes leading to the Israel-Egypt and Israel-Syria disengagement agreements, military officers played pivotal roles not just in operational capacities but also in diplomatic negotiations. Moreover, the UN was represented throughout the process by Siilasvuo, a military officer as opposed by the civilian UN Staff. Siilasvuo, equipped with a deep understanding of the military stakes and strategic considerations, were instrumental in bridging the gap between diplomatic negotiation and military strategy (Cottey & Forster, 2004).

This fusion of military and diplomatic efforts is particularly evident in the negotiation of peacekeeping mandates and disengagement agreements. The mandates for UNEF II and UNDOF were not merely military directives but diplomatic tools negotiated to stabilize tense situations and create conditions conducive to conflict management and stabilization. The initial steps toward the Israel-Egypt and Israel-Syria disengagement agreements further illustrate this point, showcasing how military diplomacy can lead to significant diplomatic breakthroughs and how military decisions cannot be decoupled from diplomacy. These negotiations, often conducted or facilitated by military officers, underscore the necessity of incorporating military perspectives into diplomatic efforts to ensure that peacekeeping mandates are realistic, achievable, and sensitive to the security concerns of all parties involved (Boulden, 2006).

The integration of diplomatic and security components within the landscape of the architecture reveals the essential nature of military diplomacy in conflict resolution and peacebuilding. By leveraging the unique capabilities and insights of military personnel in diplomatic processes, UN peacekeeping operations navigated the complex dynamics of the conflict. This approach not only enhances the likelihood of successful conflict resolution but also contributes to a more nuanced understanding of peacekeeping's role in shaping the diplomatic and security landscape.

Brief Reflections on the Research Questions

The overarching research question is designed to explore the impact of the architecture *as a whole* on the Israel-Arab conflicts diplomatic and security dimensions between 1967 and 1982⁵. The question is pertinent because it acknowledges the intertwined nature of diplomatic negotiations and security arrangements, reflecting the complexity of international relations where diplomatic efforts are often supported by security measures to ensure their success and sustainability.

The first supplementary question delves into the operational and tactical collaboration among the operations. This question is crucial for understanding the security landscape, as it examines the extent of coordination and joint efforts in peacekeeping, which directly impacts the effectiveness and outcomes of each operation's mandate. By analysing this collaboration, the research sheds light on the practical challenges and successes of implementing security measures in a highly volatile environment. In other words, the only way to assess each operation is by discussing their place within the architecture.

The second supplementary question investigates the Secretariat's role as a policy broker in political negotiations, particularly following the Yom Kippur War and Operation Litani River. This question addresses the diplomatic side of the equation, highlighting the UN's efforts to mediate and facilitate negotiations between conflicting parties. It underscores the significance of diplomatic initiatives in achieving and maintaining peace, as well as the challenges faced by international actors in navigating the complex political landscape of the Middle East.

The third supplementary question focuses on the impact of two transformational events: the Camp David Accords and the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon. This inquiry is vital as it examines instances that had transformative (and detrimental) impacts on the Secretariat's capacity and leverage to influence the diplomatic and security landscape. By exploring these events, the research aims to understand how significant geopolitical developments can reshape the operational environment and effectiveness of peacekeeping efforts.

⁵ For a more detailed discussion on the time period, see 'Methodology' section.

The research questions collectively aim to critically and thoroughly understand the history of the UN within the Israel-Arab conflict. By adopting a multifaceted approach that explores tactical and operational collaboration, the role of (military) diplomacy, and the influence of transformational geopolitical events, the research endeavours to provide a comprehensive understanding of how these elements interplay to shape the course of the conflict. Adopting a multidimensional approach is not only justified but an absolute requirement for grasping the full spectrum of challenges and opportunities faced by the United Nations in one of the conflicts which still haunts the organization and the international system in 2024.

Methodology

It is critical to outline the systematic approach that forms the backbone of this analysis. The methodology section, structured to offer clarity and precision, has three distinct yet interrelated sections. The first section discusses archival research, illuminating the sources, their relevance and the rationale behind their selection. In the second section, the focus pivots to a comprehensive explanation of the actors chosen for this study, outlining their significance and roles within the larger context of the research. The third section delves into a thoughtful discussion on the rationale behind the specific time chosen, highlighting its importance and the unique insights it offers. This tripartite structure ensures a holistic and rigorous methodological foundation, setting the stage for the subsequent chapters of this work.

UN Archives

The UN Archives and Records Management Section – UN Archives (UNA) for short – is an invaluable resource for historians. The Archives store all non-current records “preserved as evidence of the organisation’s functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations or other activities of the United Nations or because of the informational value contained therein” (United Nations Secretary-General, 1947, p. 1). While the UN is obligated to be transparent and accountable to its Member States, the organisation deals with sensitive issues that warrant confidentiality. Therefore, the Secretary-General outlined rules on information management and the classification of documents. In 2007, the Secretary-General refined the rules by outlining three classification levels: unclassified, confidential and strictly confidential (2007). Moreover, the policy also stated, “documents are automatically

declassified after 20 years, and strictly confidential documents require reviews by the SG or his/her representatives” (Habermann-Box, 2014, p. 22). The Secretary-General discussed the usage of the Archives for academic research in 1977; his directive reaffirmed the importance of scholarly research on the UN and instructed the Archives to provide access to the records in line with the regulations in place (1977). This dissertation relies extensively on the UN Archives.

I visited the UN Archives twice for a total period of 25 days. Before each visit, I studied the finding aids. I requested documents, records, and correspondence that can offer unprecedented insights into these entities' decision-making processes, internal dynamics and day-to-day operations within the context of the Israel-Arab conflict. I requested access to 69 folders from the files of the Secretary-General, UNTSO⁶, and the Office of Special Political Affairs. I also requested access to 20 strictly confidential folders and 10 confidential folders, which dealt with, *inter alia*, correspondence between the Secretary-General and the operations, internal and external meeting minutes, mail between the Secretary-General and Henry Kissinger⁷, confidential political reports and memoranda. The Archives granted me access to 14 strictly confidential and 10 confidential folders. In addition, I reviewed 46 folders, which are unclassified, or that the Archives had previously declassified. Overall, I reviewed over 2,000 individual documents.

Moreover, I supplemented documents from the Archives with documentation from the UN Digital Library. This online repository has digital versions of all relevant Reports and Special Reports of the Secretary-General, Resolutions from the Security Council and General Assembly, press releases, speeches, voting records and budgets. Furthermore, I triangulated information and insights gathered from the UN Archives and the UN Digital Library with secondary sources, such as books, peer-reviewed articles, reports, and literature on the Israel-Arab with, UN peacekeeping, and the specific operations and offices under study. At

⁶ Documents related to UNDOF, UNEF II, UNIFIL, and the Chief Coordinator for Peacekeeping in the Middle East are within UNTSO's files.

⁷ Kissinger played a major role in the aftermath of the Yom Kippur War (see Chapter 4). The Secretary-General liaised with Kissinger with the objective of securing the UN's participation in the 1973-4 Geneva Peace Conference, and assisting (where allowed) in the negotiation processes of the disengagement agreements between 1974 and 1975.

this junction, it is critical to highlight the inclusion of a particular type of secondary source: books and papers written by the protagonists.

This dissertation relies on the autobiographies of critical players who wrote about their experiences in the Israel-Arab conflict. This output provides a first-hand account of the decision-makers who shaped the UN's activities vis-à-vis the conflict. Their unique insights into the motivation, the decision-making processes, and the understanding of the relationship with key stakeholders gave this dissertation critical insight. Moreover, these political autobiographies shed light on lesser-known UN actors. The most significant example is the case of Siilasvuo, who played a decisive role in conflict management on behalf of the Secretariat. As his role remains grossly understudied, and many of his experiences did not get sufficient exposure, his book complemented the information from the Archives and the scarce literature available.

Of course, it is also critical to highlight the potential challenges. Autobiographies are subjective, and the author willingly or unwillingly writes through the lens of their personal biases. Moreover, human memory can affect the writing as the author might misremember, embellish or omit certain facts and events. This dissertation tackles these challenges through two avenues. First, all information collected from these books and papers is cross-referenced with primary sources whenever possible. Second, Chapter 2 critically assesses this output and acknowledges that political autobiographies and academic papers, in which the protagonists write about their own experiences, have limitations and weigh their positive contributions against the potential risks.

This serves to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter and allow for a more robust and well-rounded analysis. By incorporating primary and secondary sources in its research, this thesis will contribute to the existing literature on the topic and provide a unique perspective on the UN's involvement in the Israel-Arab conflict between 1967 and 1982. The following section discusses the period that this dissertation analyses.

1967 – 1982: A Tumultuous Period

The period of 1967 to 1982 represents a critical juncture in the evolution of the Israel-Arab conflict, with a number of significant events happening between these years. During this

time, the region fought the most dramatic wars of the conflict: the Six-Day War in 1967, the War of Attrition between Israel and Egypt between 1967 and 1973, the Yom Kippur War in 1973, the Israeli Operation Litani in 1978 in Southern Lebanon and the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982. In addition, this period saw Israel sign two disengagement agreements with Egypt. One was with Syria, and in another – the most important – Israel and Egypt signed the Camp David Accords and made peace. These events transformed the region's geopolitical landscape and brought the UN's political role and peacekeeping operations to the fore.

There are three main reasons why this period warrants in-depth analysis. First, it allows for a comprehensive understanding of the UN's political role in mediating the conflict, facilitating negotiations and pursuing diplomatic resolutions. This comes from studying the impact of crucial Security Council resolutions 242 and 338, which became the framework for early negotiations, such as the Geneva Peace Conference of 1973 and the subsequent work of its Military Working Group, which facilitated the Israel-Syria and Israel-Egypt Disengagements. Other opportunities for deeper understanding are when, in 1978, the Security Council deployed UNIFIL to respond to Israel's Operation Litani, and in how the Camp David Accords saw a historic breakthrough in the Israel-Egypt portion of the conflict yet had a profoundly negative impact on the UN's overall efforts (see Chapter 5).

Second, the 1967 to 1982 period was the busiest for UN peacekeeping operations in the region (James, 1983; Jonah J. O., 1975; Salama, 2023; Sommereyns, 1980). Days before the Six-Day War, the Secretary-General had to deal with Egypt's request to withdraw UNEF I from the Sinai Peninsula. After the War, UNTSO worked by itself to manage the aftermath of the Six-Day War. It took another regional war for the Security Council to enhance the architecture. The Yom Kippur War of 1973 required the UN to deploy UNEF II and UNDOF to the Sinai Peninsula and the Golan Heights respectively. During this period, the Security Council relied on the operations to maintain ceasefires, supervising disengagement agreements. The operations became an integral part of the negotiations. Analysing the effectiveness, challenges and limitations of these peacekeeping operations can offer valuable insights into the role of the UN in conflict resolution and management.

Third, by focusing on this specific period, the dissertation can delve into the interactions between various UN entities, such as the Office of the Chief Coordinator of Peacekeeping in the Middle East, the UN Office of Special Political Affairs, and the Executive Office of the Secretary-General. These three entities had interdependent yet distinct roles vis-à-vis the conflict. Studying this period can provide lessons and recommendations for the region's current and future peacekeeping efforts. By analysing the successes and failures of the UN's political and peacekeeping roles in the Israel-Arab conflict during the 1967-1982 period, the thesis can contribute valuable knowledge and inform policymakers and practitioners working to resolve the ongoing conflict.

Moreover, during the late 1970s, the conflict's epicentre moved from the strife of Israel and its neighbours to the Israel-Palestine conflict (see below). The political focus of the time was state-centric, such as the Palestinians using the time to build their political and military agency. During the 1970s, the Secretariat started dealing with the Palestinian people directly at the political level and on the ground through peacekeeping in Southern Lebanon. The following section discusses case selection and introduces the key players.

The UN Architecture in the Middle East: A Note on Case Selection

The UN peacekeeping architecture in the Middle East comprises the operations, the Office of Chief Coordinator (1975-1978), and the Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Special Political Affairs (OUSGSPA) in New York. Drawing these actors together provides a comprehensive understanding of the internal dynamics and decision-making processes. This study critically assesses the extent to which these actors worked in a collaborative and strategic manner and whether their individual and collective decisions contributed to the UN's success in managing the conflict. In New York, the Secretary-General leaned heavily upon the expertise and capabilities of the Office for Special Political Affairs. This office played a pivotal role in overseeing and steering the everyday management of operations, including managing crises on the ground and liaising with the Security Council in New York. Moreover, the Chief Coordinator, alongside the Force Commanders, maintained a consistent line of communication with the Secretary-General, but did so *through* the OUSGSPA. Such a hierarchical structure ensured both coherence in directives and clarity in feedback (Jonah J. O., 1991; Urquhart, 1983).

The interdependence and integrated functionality of these entities are not just structural but also were instrumental in shaping the outcomes on the ground. As James Jonah elucidated (1991), these individual offices and roles were not in silos. Instead, they were interconnected parts of a larger structure, each influencing, supporting and reinforcing the others. The selection of this specific case, therefore, is not merely to dissect individual actors but also to comprehend their collective role and impact in the conflict.

Rationale for Exclusion: UNRWA and the Broader UN System in the Analytical Framework

At this juncture, it is fundamental to discuss the rationale behind excluding the rest of the UN System from the analysis, particularly the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), an Agency almost as old as UNTSO. UNRWA⁸, while playing an important role in providing humanitarian assistance to Palestinian refugees, operated primarily within the humanitarian domain rather than the diplomatic or security realms that are the focus of this research (Irfan, 2020; Peters & Gal, 2009). The agency's efforts were fundamentally geared towards relief and development, which, although crucial, do not directly engaged with the operations or their work providing ceasefire monitoring, and buffer between the Israel and all its neighbours. The components of the architecture, by contrast, were explicitly established with mandates to navigate and mitigate the military and diplomatic intricacies of the conflict.

This is not to understate or diminish the critical humanitarian support UNRWA provided to Palestinian refugees, which was of immense importance. However, the political influence and involvement of UNRWA grew significantly after 1982, making it a more central figure in discussions about the current UN architecture in the Middle East. Therefore, a PhD focusing on the contemporary setup and implications of UN involvement in the region would rightly need to include UNRWA in its analysis. The exclusion of UNRWA from this particular study is an acknowledgment of the distinct separation that existed during the specified period between the political efforts to resolve the conflict and the humanitarian efforts to mitigate

⁸ Over the decades, UNRWA's political role increased significantly however, at the time of this dissertation, the agency was exclusively dedicated to operational matters and it did not have a seat at the political table. For example, during the Km 101 negotiations, the Geneva Peace Conference of 1973 the Secretariat had senior staff hailed from the Office of the Chief Coordinator and OUSGSPA exclusively.

its impacts on the civilian population. This delineation is not a commentary on the value or impact of UNRWA's work but rather a methodological choice to focus on the political and peacekeeping mechanisms of the UN during a specific historical window.

Extending this line of argumentation, the exclusion of the broader UN system from the analysis follows a similar logic. The UN System was present in the region from the onset; multiple agencies, funds and programmes established field offices across the region and provided support across the board to tackle developmental, humanitarian, and socio-economic challenges. Notably, the UN Development Programme, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, the UN Children's Fund provided essential services for Palestinian refugees by way of channelling all the foreign aid in development assistance. However, their mandates and activities did not directly intersect with the strategic interventions and negotiations of those within the architecture (Bennis, 1997).

This approach ensures a targeted investigation into the effectiveness and implications of these operations, shedding light on the UN's capacity to navigate and influence the complex dynamics of international peace and security. Excluding from the analysis does not mean to underplay their work and impact however, analysing the interplay between the operations and the rest of the UN System requires a standalone research project.

A Voice to the Peacekeepers

This dissertation intentionally gives a strong voice to civilian and military peacekeepers. Multiple senior officials wrote journal articles, book chapters and even entire books narrating their experiences and sharing first-hand insights that are extremely relevant and fill gaps that only the protagonists can. Among the key contributors are the ever-prolific Sir Brian Urquhart (1980; 1981; 1983; 1984; 1987; 1994; 1998), Ensio Siilasvuo (1981; 1982), James O.C. Jonah (1975; 1980; 1991; 2014), Emmanuel Erskine (1989), Bertil Stjernfelt (1992), Indar Rikhye (1980), E.L.M 'Tommy' Burns (1968), among others.

Practitioner scholars offer nuanced accounts of decision-making processes, institutional culture, inter-organizational dynamics, and other factors influencing the UN's actions and policies. They enrich our understanding by adding depth and dimension to the historical narrative and allow us to interpret events through the eyes of those directly involved. To

obtain a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the UN's role in the Israel-Arab conflict, we must incorporate these perspectives into our study, balancing them with other scholarly works and primary sources.

Literature Review on 'Peacekeeping in the Middle East': An Incomplete Approach

Several scholars stepped back from the operations and reviewed the entire architecture. This section assesses the extent to which they analyse the dynamics *within* all the UN actors working in the conflict. Sommereyns (1980) analyses the legal aspects of the UN peacekeeping missions' establishment, organisation and operations in the Middle East. The paper makes two significant contributions to our understanding of the architecture. First, on the issue of authority and command, the author stresses that the Security Council established them under their charter-given rule. Moreover, the Secretary-General remarked that the Council vested in him the authority to command the operations. The Security Council, however, requested the Secretary-General to brief them on the operations' functions and challenges. The Secretary-General appointed the Force Commanders with the Council's consent. Second, the author stresses that the processes worked the most efficiently in times of crisis. UNTSO and UNEF II supported UNDOF through the temporary redeployment of assets and personnel and by covering UNDOF's initial budget. Overall, the author concludes that cooperation works well in times of crisis and dwindles afterward, given the constraints of the mandates. The paper however, does not include the role of Chief Coordinator to its analysis, and while it is correct in pointing that the Force Commanders answer directly to the Secretary-General *de jure*, they do so *through* the Chief Coordinator and OUSGPA *de facto*.

Bouillon (2015) stresses that the operations successfully managed crises due to the fact they could rely on each other. The aftermath of the Yom Kippur War and Operation Litani of 1978 required immediate responses in the form of new operations. With significant technical assistance from the existing UN actors on the ground, the Secretariat deployed UNEF II, UNDOF and UNIFIL efficiently and quickly. However, the author limits itself to military cooperation, which took place under specific circumstances. This paints only a portion of the picture. The fact of the matter is that the operations institutionalised their partnership and included both military and political affairs to it.

Saikal (1998) expresses that the operations kept the temperature low enough to avoid a confrontation between the superpowers. Moreover, the author stresses that the Secretariat's peace initiatives (such as the Jarring mission of 1967 and the Geneva Peace Conference of 1974) did not have a real chance to succeed because, during that time, the United States positioned itself as the essential player in the region and decided that any long-term agreement would be on their terms. This contribution eloquently showcases the limitations of the Secretariat's agency; however, it misses the multiple instances whereby the Secretariat played a constructive albeit understated role, such as in the Km 101 negotiations (see Chapter 3).

Walker (1996) discusses the UN's additional roles throughout the conflict. The Security Council and the regional players used the different pieces of the architecture in many ways, including as a mechanism for lowering tensions, a platform for negotiations and a buffer for keeping the peace. While the UN has valuable actors working on the ground, the author expresses that the peacekeeping architecture is only as effective as the Security Council allows. He does not believe the UN's involvement in the Israel-Arab conflict is futile, stating that despite its constitutional and financial limitations, its operations deterred Israel and its neighbours from engaging in another regional war, such as in 1967 and 1973.

Urquhart (1980; 1983) emphasises that a peacekeeping operation can function only with the full cooperation of the parties concerned and their understanding of and acquiescence in what the force is trying to do. Full support of the Security Council and its understanding are essential. Any wavering on the part of its members instantly transmits itself to the parties to the conflict and even to the members of the Force in the field, with highly damaging results. At the same time, the operations and the Secretariat have agency and the ability to influence their work. He highlights that the UNEF II and UNDOF are two examples of the Secretariat taking the initiative and the Security Council endorsing it. Immediately after the Yom Kippur War finished, the UN designed UNEF II's mandate in coordination with Israel and Egypt. Moreover, UNEF II and UNTSO developed UNDOF's mandate and prepared for its arrival. The fact that the UNEF II Force Commander Siilasvuo attended the meetings in Geneva, where the countries negotiated the disengagement agreements, allowed for smooth coordination and division of labour.

Bar-Yaacov (1980) notes that the mere presence of the operations contributed to the satisfactory outcome of the disengagement negotiations. The UN personnel worked efficiently and impartially, and senior UN officers such as the Chief Coordinator, the USGs of Special Political Affairs and the Force Commanders served as proper channels between the parties in matters of alleged violations of the applicable agreements. While the Camp David Accords brought peace in one of the sectors, it also torpedoed the chance of progress in the rest. Therefore, the UN's liaison duties remain vital to managing the conflict.

Kohavi (1980) is more critical as he sees the operations as unable to get the confidence of the countries involved, particularly Israel, which never trusted the UN enough to rely on it for its security arrangement. Of course, the operations provide benefits as they reduce the chance of another surprise regional attack. Overall, the fact that the Security Council placed a buffer at every border deterred the countries from another large-scale war.

This section's last paper is also the latest scholarly contribution. Myers & Dorn (2022) conducted a longitudinal study of UNTSO, UNDOF and UNIFIL to assess their effectiveness and, at the same time, evaluate the extent to which they successfully integrated new technologies. The authors suggest that UNTSO's support of UNIFIL and UNDOF through OGL and OGG allows the operations to carry out the tasks of observing and conducting inspections and investigations. The authors also highlight that the parties themselves continue to support the renewal of the mandates, which is a restatement of the operation's usefulness. They suggest that keeping these missions in place and allowing them to evolve is arguably the less costly option for both dollars and lives. The authors claim that despite criticisms and shortcomings, the operations successfully achieved their mandate in 2006, and the parties have not fought a major war.

The history of UN peacekeeping in the Israel-Arab conflict has received much attention from the literature. However, neither the operation-specific papers nor the regional studies provide an in-depth review of the processes and decision-making of the entire architecture.

This critical survey of relevant academic literature on '*peacekeeping in the Middle East*,' which includes the four Chapters of the *Oxford Handbook of United Nations Peacekeeping Operations* (Diehl, 2015; Ruddlof & Diehl, 2015; Novosseloff, 2025; Theobald, 2015)

illustrates the three main gaps in the literature this dissertation addresses. First, while the above mentioned are a step forward in studying the UN's history in the Israel-Arab conflict, they still see the operations as 'neighbours' that happen to work on the same overall conflict and regional cooperation as an ad-hoc response to the conflict's evolution. Academic scholarship on peacekeeping operations usually evaluates the operations one by one, which is a perfectly acceptable method in most cases. However, it is an incomplete way to evaluate, let alone discuss, the history of peacekeeping in the Middle East, because of how much the operations relied on and continue to rely on each other to succeed, and how influential the Chief Coordinator was. For example, the authors only see that UNEF II works within the Israel-Egypt portion of the Israel-Arab conflict; they do not take into consideration the extent to which the operation relied on UNTSO, nor do they understand how many resources UNEF II devoted to supporting UNDOF and UNIFIL. This dissertation bundles all relevant UN entities working in the Israel-Arab conflict through the lens of complexity theory. It reviews their relationships, the roles and actions of each one, and their impact on the overall conflict.

The literature treats each operation as a standalone exercise due the fact that each one has a separate mandate. The reason the literature mainly treats the operations individually revolves around their mandate and the general principles of peacekeeping. The Security Council deploys one operation to deal with one conflict within a specific Area of Operations (AO). The single-operation scholarly contributions provide critical insights into the history and work of the operations. However, almost every single one of them fails to widen its scope and explore to what extent the fact that a single operation belongs to a regional architecture affects its successes, failures and *modus operandi*. The literature barely acknowledges the other operations and does not explore the implications of having four operations working within driving distance of each other, tackling the same regional conflict, albeit from a different perspective. While the papers do an excellent job of studying an operation's day-to-day work, we must now critically review the literature focusing on regional dynamics.

Theoretical Reflections

This section provides a theoretical reflection on the applicability and limitations of International Relations theory in illuminating the nuances of the UN's peacekeeping architecture in the conflict. This dissertation proposes an innovative and somewhat

pioneering theoretical approach by way of adopting complexity theory. This lens is of particular relevance as it offers a nuanced understanding of the multi-layered interplay of diverse actors within the architecture.

Studying theory allows us to ground our understanding and framing of it. The theory is “a heuristic device for organising what we know, or think we know, at a particular time about some more or less explicitly posed question or issue” (Inkeles, 1964, p. 28). Understanding how international relations theorists have viewed peacekeeping through the years is a valuable tool worthy of consideration (Blaikie, 2010). The study of International Relations (IR) theory is crucial for a comprehensive understanding of any issue within the International System, such as the Israel-Arab conflict. IR theories provide a set of analytical tools and conceptual frameworks through which it is possible to decipher the complex dynamics of the international system.

The objective of this brief, theoretical reflection is to assess the extent to which theory can frame the *sui generis* phenomenon of the peacekeeping architecture in the Middle East. Therefore, this section is not an exhaustive list of all IR theories, which discuss and try to explain peacekeeping. The section draws significant knowledge from a 2020-edited volume titled *UN Peace Operations and International Relations Theory* (Oksamytna & Karlsrud, 2020). The book provides a substantial review of IR theories and their views on peace operations.

Before delving into the complexity theory it is essential to evaluate the framework provided by mainstream international relations (IR) theories, particularly mainstream approaches such as realism and liberalism. Realism, characterized by its state-centric, power-focused perspective, views peacekeeping as a tool wielded by Member States to serve national interests, with the Security Council maintaining overarching control. Cunliffe (2009, 2020) emphasizes that this delegation of implementation to the Secretariat by the Council, under the UN Charter, offers a unique opportunity for the Secretariat to influence international dynamics, albeit within the constraints of Member States' interests. Mearsheimer (1994) and Finnemore (2007) critique international institutions' influence, suggesting that

peacekeeping serves primarily for crisis management, underpinned by the geopolitical interests of powerful states.

However, this perspective is challenged by the complexity of inter-operation collaboration, which realism's focus on power dynamics and Council control cannot fully encapsulate. The critique by Bouillon (2015) on the Council's focus on crisis management, and the observations by Yaqub (2013) on superpower competition, underscore realism's limitations in acknowledging the nuanced, cooperative dynamics within the UN peacekeeping efforts in the Middle East. This gap highlights the necessity for a broader analytical lens that incorporates the collaborative synergy and regional dynamics often emerging between different operations.

Liberalism offers an alternative, emphasizing the role of international institutions in fostering cooperation and promoting shared norms, suggesting a broader potential for agency among peacekeeping operations beyond the immediate dictates of powerful states. Monteleone and Oksamytna (2020) argue that peacekeeping fits well within a liberal framework, emphasizing international cooperation and institution building. Yet, liberalism's optimistic view of institutional agency may overlook the constraints posed by power politics, especially evident in the Israel-Arab conflict where the UN's extensive peacekeeping architecture has struggled to effect lasting peace, and assert itself as a leading actor who had a seat at the decision-making table.

This dissertation seeks to transcend these theoretical confines by viewing the UN's engagement in the conflict as a holistic architecture, a perspective that reveals the interdependent and multidimensional nature of peacekeeping efforts. This approach not only challenges the traditional IR theoretical paradigms but also illuminates the evolution of peacekeeping from isolated operations to a comprehensive strategy aimed at managing the multifaceted dynamics of regional conflicts.

Therefore, the quest of finding a theoretical framework must move beyond mainstream towards a more flexible approach. John Mearshimer and Stephan Walt (2013) stated that understanding certain phenomena of the International System requires a 'middle-range'

theory⁹, and this dissertation adopts complexity. The decision to omit other middle-range theories is also deliberate. While these theories could potentially provide additional layers of understanding, the scope of this dissertation would not allow for a comprehensive exploration of each theory and its implications. Therefore, the theoretical reflection opts for a selective theoretical approach that can best facilitate a systematic and coherent historical analysis of the research question without exceeding the limits of a PhD.

Complexity Theory: A New Lens

Complexity Theory, a pivotal framework in understanding the intricate behaviours of systems, emerged from the intersections of mathematics, physics, and computer science. It challenges traditional linear models by emphasizing that systems exhibit properties not predictable by the behaviour of their individual parts alone. Central to this theory is the notion of emergent behaviour, where higher-order complexity arises from simple rules followed by elements within a system (Mitchell, 2009)

At the heart of Complexity Theory lies the concept of non-linearity, where small changes can lead to disproportionately large effects, often referred to as the "butterfly effect" (Lorenz, 1963). This sensitivity to initial conditions underscores the unpredictability and dynamic nature of complex systems. Emergence, a related concept, describes how novel patterns and properties manifest at the macro level that are not observable at the micro level, challenging reductionist approaches (Goldstein J., 1999)

Complex systems are characterized by their ability to adapt and self-organize without a central controlling entity. This adaptive capacity enables systems to respond to environmental changes through feedback loops, leading to the evolution of new structures and behaviours (Kauffman, 1993)

The structure of complex systems is often analysed through the lens of networks, where nodes (agents, cells, individuals) are interconnected in ways that influence the system's behaviour and resilience. The study of networks has illuminated how patterns of connectivity affect the diffusion of information, disease, and innovation (Barabási, 2002).

⁹ According to the authors, a 'middle-range' theory is one that focuses on specific phenomena rather than explore foundational questions of the International System as a whole.

Another foundational claim of Complexity Theory is the "edge of chaos" principle, positing that complex systems operate in a region between order and complete randomness. This boundary condition is believed to be optimal for creativity, adaptation, and evolution (Langton, 1990)

Application of Complexity Theory to Peace Operations

Incorporating Complexity Theory into the analysis of peace operations offers a nuanced lens through which to examine the multifaceted nature of international interventions in conflict zones. This section will explore the application of Complexity Theory in understanding peace operations, focusing on the inherent unpredictability, the interconnectedness of actors and factors, and the emergence of outcomes unforeseen by linear planning processes. The discussion will be contextualized within the broader field of International Relations, highlighting the theory's relevance and potential to contribute to more effective peacekeeping strategies.

Peace operations are quintessential examples of complex adaptive systems, characterized by a dynamic interplay of political, social, and military factors. Complexity Theory posits that such systems are inherently non-linear, meaning small inputs or changes in one part of the system can lead to disproportionate and unpredictable outcomes (Day & Hunt, 2023; Urry, 2003). This perspective challenges traditional approaches to peace operations that often rely on linear cause-effect assumptions, advocating instead for adaptive strategies that can respond to the system's evolving nature.

The theory underscores the importance of viewing peace operations through the prism of interconnectedness, where various actors—or as this thesis labelled them, the members of the Architecture—are seen as part of a broader network. This approach facilitates an understanding of how relationships and interactions within these networks influence the success or failure of peace operations (Bousquet, 2011)

A key insight from Complexity Theory is the concept of self-organization, suggesting that complex systems have the ability to adapt to changing conditions through internal processes. In the context of peace operations, this implies a need for missions to be designed with

flexibility, allowing for adaptation to unforeseen challenges and the self-organizational capacities of local communities and institutions (Ramalingam, 2008)

With regards to emergence, where new properties or behaviours arise that are not inherent in the individual parts of the system. This aspect is particularly relevant for peace operations, where interventions often lead to unintended consequences. Recognizing the emergent properties of complex systems can help in anticipating and mitigating negative outcomes, while also identifying opportunities for positive change (De Coning, 2016)

The application of Complexity Theory to peace operations has significant theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, it prompts a revaluation of established paradigms in International Relations and conflict resolution, advocating for a shift towards more holistic and adaptive approaches. Practically, it suggests that peacekeeping strategies should prioritize flexibility, local engagement, and continuous learning to effectively navigate the complexities of conflict environments.

Complexity theory affords us a more nuanced lens to dissect the multifaceted dynamics within the UN peacekeeping architecture in the Middle East. Applying complexity to the study of peace operations confirm that the architecture has intricate relationships, thereby making them interdependent. This lens allows us to deepen our understanding of how the different interactions between the parties affect the course of events. Furthermore, complex systems adapt to change and learn from experience. Treating the architecture in the Middle East as a complex system allows us to explore how the operations adapted to the ever-changing political landscape of the Israel-Arab conflict and how their relationship with each other evolved as time passed.

Perhaps most importantly, complexity theory acknowledges that cause-and-effect relationships in complex systems are often nonlinear, meaning small changes can lead to disproportionately large effects. This can help us understand why some interventions in peacekeeping operations have unexpected outcomes. Over the last five years, Charles T. Hunt spearheaded the usage of complexity in peacekeeping. The author summarises the benefit of this new theory.

Overall, complexity theory does not offer a theory of IR. As with constructivism, it does not claim to designate the most significant actors, nor does it purport to predict future events. On the contrary, it offers an alternative framework for revealing how seemingly *insignificant* players can have disproportionate influence over the course of events in highly *unpredictable* ways (Hunt, 2020, p. 199)

This dissertation's most prominent contribution to the literature is an in-depth analysis of the 'seemingly insignificant players'. The most prominent example is Ensio Siilasvuo, who served in multiple capacities throughout his tenure in the UN (see Chapter 2). He chaired the initial Israel-Egypt negotiations at the Km 101 tent and the Military Working Group, which negotiated the disengagement agreements between Israel and Egypt and Israel and Syria. While the majority of the literature treats Siilasvuo as middle-manager with almost no authority or agency, this dissertation dissects the entire architecture and discovers that his role was fundamental in the Secretariat's efforts to manage the conflict.

Day & Hunt (2023) applied complexity theory to peacekeeping and remark that "complexity theory offers insights and perspectives on processes in the peacekeeping system¹⁰ that orthodox social science struggles to reveal and insufficiently explains" (p. 17). The authors argue that a complexity-oriented approach encourages mapping all key actors *within the system* as nodes in the system, focusing on their power relations and the reality that not all nodes are equal. The relevance of using complexity theory in peacekeeping operations is an acknowledgement that the environment where peacekeeping operations work is complex. Day, Gorur, Holt, & Hunt (2020) reaffirm this view and stress that the landscape where peace operations work is becoming more complex, which can reduce the operations' ability to work in the political realm. Embracing complexity allows an operation to build a solid strategy considering all relevant actors and their relationships with each other.

The application of complexity theory in peacekeeping is a new approach, which has, so far, only focused on large operations with stabilisation mandates in Africa. However, the theory also applies to the architecture in the Middle East now and during this dissertation's period. Adopting complexity theory as a prism to study the UN's history within the Israel-Arab

¹⁰ Peacekeeping system is another term for peacekeeping architecture.

conflict is fundamental for four reasons. First, and foremost, this theory provides network perspective, allowing bundling all operations, together with OUSGPA and the Office of Chief Coordinator, as parts of *one* complex web. As Chapter 3 demonstrates, this perspective is especially useful in understanding the regional dynamics and IOC at the military and administrative levels. Chapter 4 demonstrates how the different actors of the architecture engaged with the conflict at the political level and to what extent their interactions answered to a regional strategy.

Second, complexity theory enables us to comprehend the multi-level interactions that are inherent in such conflicts, where individual, organizational, and international actors interact dynamically over time. While this dissertation discusses the personal role of the different Secretaries-General, at heart, the focus revolves around the people *below* the UN Chief. Moreover, the dissertation discusses (particularly concerning UNIFIL and Southern Lebanon) the interactions the different members of the architecture had with non-state actors.

Third, complexity theory understands that the nature of the relationships inside the architecture can lead to interdependence. Chapter 3 is devoted entirely to understanding how the role of one actor had a profound impact on the rest. For example, UNTSO provides critical support to all other operations – and continues to do so to this day. As the chapter clearly demonstrates, the Security Council relied on this interdependence, and the Secretary-General planned the work of all operations with the understanding that they worked in the same ecosystem. Furthermore, Chapter 3 discusses the issue of UNDOF's strategic autonomy and the extent to which the Secretariat succeeded in ensuring that the operation benefits from being part of the system and, at the same time, stand on its own.

Fourth, the theory allows one to study the extent to which the operations adapted to crisis. It understands that the conflict is fluid, and the operations have had to adapt to changing circumstances. Chapter 3 explores the UN's reactions to the wars of 1967, 1973 and to Israel's Operation Litani of 1978. The Secretariat dealt with the crises by way of moving assets between operations and fostering flexibility. Moreover, Chapter 5 discusses how the

architecture adapted to losing UNEF and the Office of Chief Coordinator in 1978. Complexity contrasts with theories that treat such operations as static entities with fixed mandates.

In summary, complexity theory captures the multidimensional and fluidity of the Israel-Arab conflict, providing insights that mainstream and even critical theory do not. It allows for a more realistic and robust understanding of the inter-operation interactions, the influence of the operations and the Secretariat on the design and implementation of mandates, and the complex dynamics of the peacekeeping architecture in the Middle East.

The Role of the UN Secretariat and Peacekeeping Operations

Now we must turn our attention to the scholarly view on the agency of the Secretariat and peacekeeping. The degree to which it has had the autonomy to make decisions, take the initiative and influence events in New York and on the ground is paramount to understanding whether the architecture affected the situation on the ground between 1967 and 1982.

Under the UN Charter, the UN as an organisation is constrained by its creators and donors: states. However, their state-centric features do not necessarily undermine their power and autonomy (Barnett & Finnemore, 2004). Indeed, one of the critical innovations the UN made was giving the Secretary-General a broader platform by which to participate in the political side of the organisation. Article 99 of the Charter reads:

The Secretary-General may bring to the attention of the Security Council any matter that, in his opinion, may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security.

Article 99 “both expressly and by implication, gives the Secretary-General greater power and seems to expect more constructive leadership from him” (Goodrich, 1947). Johnstone (2003) concludes that because the article gives the Secretary-General the option to act, he has the latitude to build a political agenda. “The discretion embodied in the notion that he may (not must) bring any matter (not only disputes) which in his opinion may threaten peace requires the SG to exercise independent political judgment” (p. 444). Even with these provisions, the Secretary-General's political manoeuvre room is somewhat constrained by Member States, who elect the Secretary-General and adopt the organisation's budget (Traub, 2007).

Nevertheless, scholars such as Barnett & Finnemore (2004) and Nye (2007) argue that international institutions have a degree of independence stemming from their constituted authority and are given a degree of autonomy to deal with particular issues.

Utilising Principal-Agent (PA) theory, we can understand the balance of power between the Member States (principal actors) and the Secretariat (agents) (Hawkins et al., 2006; Gutner, 2005). This relationship is especially critical in UN peacekeeping, where the Secretariat and the Security Council share the role of Principal. While the Secretariat administers and carries out each mission, the Security Council provides the mandate, and the Secretariat is accountable to the Security Council (Nielson & Tierney, 2003).

The concept of 'agency slack', where the agent's actions diverge from the Principal's expectations, highlights the Secretariat's potential to maximise its autonomy (Copelovitch, 2010). This autonomy enables the Secretariat to act as a regulatory mechanism of the international system and try to influence the agenda of both the General Assembly and the Security Council (Barnett & Duvall, 2005; Broome & Seabrooke, 2012). Hence, the UN Secretariat has considerable agency allowing the UN Chief to be an active player in world politics.

However, the Secretariat's agency has major constraints. The Secretary-General's power relies on the support of the Security Council and other UN Member States. Moreover, the organisation is limited by the mandate provided by the Member States, which can be adapted or withdrawn (Traub, 2007). While the Secretary-General manages the UN from New York, peacekeeping operations worldwide address multidimensional conflict. The agency of these operations and their successful political role are discussed in the following sections.

UN Peacekeeping: An Improvised Development

While peacekeeping, as a principle or activity, was not explicitly written into the Charter of the United Nations, now it is one of the most visible, expensive and complex endeavours the organisation pursues. As a result, peacekeeping is now one of the most important, used and accepted tools for maintaining international peace and security (Bellamy & Williams, 2015). It is necessary to evaluate its history to understand how it became so important. The fact of the matter is that “the history of UN Peacekeeping is a mirror to the record of the

organisation's evolution: the initial high-hopes, the many frustrations on the ground and the sometimes bitter disappointments in the end" (Thakur, 2006, p. 43). Understanding and tracing this evolution will also shed light on the degree of agency of the Secretary-General, which has been the subject of a great deal of academic literature. This study will contribute to that conversation by taking an original view on peacekeeping and the agency it may or may not have in the Middle East. This issue will be discussed in depth at the end of the review and throughout Chapter 3.

To understand how peacekeeping operations can have agency, we must review the work of Barnett & Finnemore (1999). They firmly rebuff the validity of the claim that international organisations are passive and have no independent agendas. In their study of many UN Agencies and UN Peacekeeping Operations, they conclude that while constrained by states, they do have autonomy. The Secretariat and the rest of the UN System often face the fact that their agenda sometimes clashes with the interests of some Member States. Another interesting contribution Barnett & Finnemore make is that the agency derives from the image the UN portrays as an organisation with technical expertise. They interpret the mandates of Security Council resolutions as an investment of the agency. The authors contribute to the subject of agency in peacekeeping operations by reviewing the case of Rwanda (2004). This contribution is essential because it highlights a necessary tension. While Operations and the Secretariat have an agency, they sometimes tend *to refrain from using it*. Indeed the study showed that the Secretariat chose to avoid pushing for a more significant intervention because this would have broken two sacrosanct principles of peacekeeping: consent and impartiality. While true that the notion of impartiality was partially to blame, this case showed an essential degree of agency, but using it requires political courage of the sort Dag Hammarskjöld would approve.

Karlsrud (2016) notes Barnett & Finnemore's contributions and agrees that the UN has agency. However, he questions their approach by highlighting that the different organs (i.e. the Secretariat, General Assembly, Security Council) and even the different departments within the Secretariat have different agendas and levels of agency, which are not static. This results in "diverging and conflicting norm pressures and practices, particularly between

headquarters and the field” (p. 18). This creates a disuniform ecosystem whereby different actors compete for agency and often have conflicting agendas.

Gowan (2016) takes on an even broader stance in support of the notion that there is an agency in peacekeeping, not based on the rules and principles but in practice. While the Security Council and the TCCs have significant influence during the negotiation of an operation’s mandate and scope, once the operation is on the ground, they delegate a significant portion of the authority to the Secretary-General and the head of the operation.

Day, Gorur, Holt, & Hunt (2020). The operations can build a political strategy to support the host country by conducting scenario planning and stakeholder mapping to understand for what issues the operation must push forward. Walter, Howard, & Fortna (2021) elaborate by stating that peacekeeping works effectively when it is appropriately tailored to the specific conditions of the conflict and when it receives robust international support. Moreover, they express that operations have a positive impact on strengthening the rule of law in participating countries, primarily through political and economic inducements rather than military force alone.

Stojek & Tir (2014) concur that while the Secretariat might have operational agency once the boots are on the ground, it has less to say in choosing which countries get a task in the first place. Based on a review of the economic relationship between P5 countries with host countries, they find the Security Council is more amenable to sending peacekeepers to countries with whom they have either an economic relation or geopolitical interests. This appears to confirm that the P5 sees peacekeeping through a realist prism.

However, Doyle & Sambanis (2007) took a more nuanced approach. They studied the impact peacekeeping operations have on post-civil war countries. While the success of any mission is partially dependent on external factors, they express that mandates usually allow for the Secretariat in New York and the operations in the field to have a certain degree of manoeuvre. They highlight that the Secretary-General has significant leeway to influence the strategic outlook of the operations. However, Allen & Yuen (2013) caution that the Security Council can revoke the operation’s autonomy whenever they feel it is overstepping their

interpretation of the mandate. Moreover, if a P5 country is directly interested in the countries where operations work, they are much more likely to scrutinise the operation.

Given the geopolitical importance of the Middle East during the Cold War, the superpowers scrutinised the work of the UN significantly. Nevertheless, the Council allowed the operations to cooperate in times of crisis, authorised the creation of the Office of Chief Coordinator and empowered the UNEF II Force Commander to chair the initial negotiations between Israel and Egypt at the Km 101 tent (Levitt, 1997). The Council treated the Secretariat as a partner that had the space to think along and co-design the mandate of new operations (UNEF II and UNDOF) and allowed it to play an active political role.

Weiss & Thakur (2010) discuss two critical factors in securing the success of missions. First, mandates need to be more pragmatic and based on the conditions on the ground. This means that the Secretariat has the opportunity (and, therefore, agency) to shape the Security Council's view by providing the necessary information to the TCCs and the P5. Second, to the fullest extent of what is realistically possible, the Secretariat must 'stand up' to the Council by requesting what is needed and making assessments not based solely on the P5's interests.

However, the Security Council revoked that autonomy whenever it felt it was in their interest. The two most prominent examples are UNIFIL's deployment and UNEF II's withdrawal. In the former, the United States forced the Secretariat to deploy UNIFIL to save the Camp David Agreements (Urquhart, 1987). On the latter, the Soviet Union retaliated to the Camp David Agreements by preventing the Secretariat from playing any part in the peace treaty's implementation. Therefore, the Council withdrew UNEF II despite still having work to do.

Ruggie (1985) evaluated the role of the UN in the peace and security area and concluded that the organisation "has not worked at all well in the peace and security area of late because governments have failed to exercise their influence and provide support on behalf of collective efforts" (p. 348). This statement is worth quoting because it comes from a liberal internationalist who has made scholarly and policy contributions to the UN. While he does acknowledge, there is a degree of agency and cooperation. As seen in the previous section, Ruggie has tremendous faith in the Secretariat but is keen to show its limitations. Multiple

authors who take a less idealistic view of the UN have shared and expanded this middle-ground thinking.

Inter-Organization Collaboration

The genesis of inter-agency cooperation in the post-World War II era was marked by an imperative to address the multifaceted challenges of reconstruction, development, and peacekeeping. Early endeavours were characterized by a collaborative spirit among the nascent agencies, each contributing unique expertise towards global recovery and peacebuilding. Despite these noble intentions, coordination and role delineation issues often marred these initial efforts, as agencies navigated the establishment of their operational domains within the UN's broader framework (Urquhart, 1983)

Inter-institutional cooperation involves the collaborative efforts of multiple international organizations to address complex global challenges. This form of cooperation is essential for the effective management of issues that transcend national borders, such as climate change, security, and humanitarian crises. Biermann and Koops (2017) argue that synergistic partnerships among international institutions enhance collective action capabilities, enabling a more cohesive response to global problems. Moreover, Oberthür and Gehring (2011) emphasize the importance of institutional interplay in environmental governance, illustrating how strategic collaboration can lead to significant progress in addressing environmental issues.

The concept and practice of inter-agency cooperation within the UN have significantly evolved, particularly in response to the complex global challenges that emerged towards the end of the 20th century. The introduction of "integrated missions" in the 1990s, aimed at consolidating humanitarian, development, and peacekeeping efforts under a cohesive operational strategy, marked a pivotal shift towards a more holistic approach to conflict resolution and post-conflict reconstruction (Durch, 1993). Despite advancements, inter-agency cooperation within the UN system continues to confront significant challenges. The overlapping mandates of UN agencies have led to resource competition, jurisdictional conflicts, and operational inefficiencies, often resulting in a fragmented approach to global issues (Barnett & Finnemore, 2007). The decentralized nature of the UN system has impeded

effective coordination and communication, leading to disjointed operations and suboptimal outcomes in humanitarian and peacekeeping missions (Minear, 2002).

The journey of inter-agency cooperation within the UN system from its inception to the present day reflects a complex narrative of ambition, evolution, and persistent challenges. Despite significant progress in fostering collaboration, the literature underscores the ongoing need for reform and innovation to overcome obstacles related to mandate overlap, coordination difficulties, and external political and financial dependencies.

The examination of the United Nations' architectural framework and operations in the Middle East through the lens of Complexity Theory underscores its utility as the most apt theoretical perspective for such an analysis. Complexity Theory, with its emphasis on non-linearity, interconnectedness, adaptation, and emergence, offers a nuanced understanding of the multifaceted nature of peacekeeping operations, the political role of the Secretary-General, and inter-agency cooperation within the UN system. This approach allows for a comprehensive examination of how these elements interact dynamically, influencing both the process and outcomes of peacekeeping efforts in the region.

The arguments presented herein highlight Complexity Theory's ability to capture the essence of the UN's operations in the Middle East. By focusing on the inherent unpredictability and the intricate web of relationships that define the UN's efforts in the area, Complexity Theory illuminates the challenges and opportunities that arise from the system's inherent complexity. It acknowledges the role of the Secretary-General not just as an administrative head but as a pivotal figure in navigating the political and operational terrain of peacekeeping efforts. Moreover, it recognizes the significance of inter-agency cooperation as a critical factor in the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations, where synergies and conflicts among UN agencies can significantly impact mission outcomes.

Despite the richness of literature on the evolution of peacekeeping, the political influence of the Secretary-General, and the dynamics of inter-agency cooperation, a gap exists in the holistic examination of these elements within the context of the UN's architecture in the Middle East. Most studies tend to analyze these aspects in isolation or with limited consideration of their interdependence within the broader UN framework. This fragmented

approach overlooks the complex interactions and cumulative effects that shape the UN's peacekeeping architecture and its capacity to address the challenges of the Israel-Arab conflict. This thesis posits that a comprehensive understanding of the UN's operations in the Middle East necessitates a holistic analysis that considers the Secretary-General, the peacekeeping operations, and the Chief Coordinator of Peacekeeping in the Middle East as components of a single, interdependent architecture. By adopting Complexity Theory as the theoretical lens, this research aims to bridge the existing gap in the literature, offering both a policy and theoretical contribution. It seeks to elucidate the complex dynamics at play, providing insights into how the UN's architectural framework can be optimized to enhance the efficacy of peacekeeping efforts in the region. Through this analysis, the thesis will contribute to a deeper understanding of the UN's role in international peacekeeping and the potential for more integrated and adaptive approaches to conflict resolution in the Middle East.

Structure of the Dissertation

The dissertation has six chapters. Chapter 2 offers a critical historical overview of the Israel-Arab conflict and meticulously traces the inception and evolution of the UN's peacekeeping architecture from 1948 to 1967. Setting the geopolitical stage, this chapter first delves into the intricate roots and dynamics of the Israel-Arab conflict, offering readers a nuanced understanding of the broader regional tensions. Following this, the chapter introduces the various peacekeeping entities and mechanisms that the UN instituted, beginning with UNTSO and the Office for Special Political Affairs. Subsequent sections provide insight into the UN's interventions, challenges, and achievements between 1948 and 1967. The latter parts of the chapter present a comprehensive introduction to UNEF II, UNDOF, the Office of Chief Coordinator and UNIFIL. By the end of this chapter, readers will have a firm grasp of the multifaceted architecture of the UN's peacekeeping endeavours and the pivotal role it played amidst the Israel-Arab conflict up until 1967.

Chapter 3 studies the Secretariat's involvement in the conflict from the prism of the operations. Unlike the majority of the existing literature, the dissertation studies them through the concept of IOC – a concept the dissertation builds from very limited literature.

The Chapter provides a nuanced contribution to our understanding of peacekeeping in the Israel-Arab conflict.

Chapter 4 takes a step back from the operations and focuses on the political role of the Secretariat in the conflict. The chapter highlights the extent to which the Secretariat succeeded in becoming a political actor in the conflict. Through documents from the Archives, the chapter highlights the decision-making process within the Secretariat and the relationship the Secretary-General, the OUSGPA and the Chief Coordinator had with the host countries and the superpowers. Moreover, the Chapter places the work of the UN within the context of the Cold War.

Chapter 5 discusses the impact of the Camp David Accords and the Israel invasion of Lebanon of 1982. These two instances shocked the peacekeeping architecture in the Middle East and had a profound and negative impact on the Secretariat's involvement in the conflict and the overarching peace process. Moreover, the chapter discusses how the epicentre of the conflict moved from being state-centric to being an Israeli-Palestinian conflict. These two instances are the end-points of the dissertation because they, effectively, froze the UN's ability to influence the conflict.

Chapter 6 provides a comprehensive analysis to the research question and emphasizes that, despite the various obstacles and limitations, the UN peacekeeping architecture played a significant role in attempting to establish peace and stability in the region, even if it could not fully resolve the underlying issues driving the Israel-Arab conflict.