

Beyond Generations

An Alternative Approach to Categorizing Peace Missions

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Abstract

Authors commonly categorize peace missions according to different generations: first-generation missions serving as interposition forces to monitor a ceasefire, second-generation missions with multidimensional mandates, and third-generation missions with enforcement mandates. While the generation typology is useful to show the development of peace missions over time, this article points to four main limitations: ambiguity, reductionism, linear connotations, and restricted applicability. It proposes an alternative categorization distinguishing between a *minimalist* approach aiming at ending violence, a *moderate* approach aiming at ending violence and installing some form of good governance, and a *maximalist* approach aiming at addressing the root causes of conflict. Based on an analysis of all UN peace missions between 1991 and 2020, the article demonstrates how this new classification overcomes the flaws of the generation typology and presents further advantages related to its focus on objectives, its versatility, and its potential for statistical analysis. It thereby allows for a more accurate analysis of UN peace missions and their effectiveness.

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Keywords

United Nations – peace missions – peacekeeping – peacemaking – peacebuilding

1 Introduction

First introduced in 1948, UN peace missions gained important momentum at the end of the Cold War, with the end of bipolar rivalries unblocking decision-making within the international apparatus. This shift was reflected in an increased academic focus on the issue. In an attempt to create analytical tools to understand the changing context of these peace missions, scholars identified chronological trends, which were argued to represent different “generations” of peace missions.¹ The *first generation* denotes the deployment of interposition forces between two warring parties, as was dominant practice during the Cold War; the *second generation* designates missions with multidimensional mandates, as was prevalent in the immediate post-Cold War years; while the *third generation* concerns missions with peace enforcement mandates that have appeared more frequently in recent years.

The generation typology is useful to show the development of peace missions.² However, we argue that it has four main flaws. First, the generations are ambiguous and overlapping. The beginning of one generation does not necessarily mean the end of another, and different authors have used the typology differently, indicating the lack of consensus on how to apply it.³ Second, the generation typology is reductionist. It is based on a mission’s most dominant features rather than on a detailed assessment of its individual mandate tasks. This means that missions are grouped together according to a prevailing characteristic, such as their authorization to use force, though their mandates may differ substantively in other aspects. Third, the generation typology has a linear connotation that implies a movement toward greater mission complexity.⁴ However, the evolution of peace missions is nonlinear and contains nuances not captured by the generations. Fourth, the generation typology applies only to *peacekeeping* missions and does not take into account special political missions or good offices engagements (UN special envoys and advisors), which are just as integral a part of the UN’s effort to promote peace.

¹ Mackinlay and Chopra 1992; Findlay 1996; Richmond 2001; Thakur and Schnabel 2001; Stähle 2008; Bellamy, Williams, and Griffin 2010; Malan 1998, Oksamytna and Karlsrud 2020.

² Brühl 2017, 715.

³ Bercovitch and Jackson 2009, 75; Bellamy, Williams, and Griffin 2010, 231; Kenkel 2013, 132.

⁴ Wilde 2003, 397.

Considering these limitations, in the article we propose a new categorization to classify peace missions, which is based on a distinction between a *minimalist* approach aimed at ending violence and thus a negative peace, a *moderate* approach aimed both at ending violence and installing some form of good governance, and a *maximalist* approach aimed at addressing the root causes of conflict and thus a positive peace.⁵ As we show in the article, this categorization not only overcomes the four flaws of the generation typology, but also provides other advantages related to its focus on objectives, its versatility, and its potential for statistical analysis, allowing for a fine-grained analysis of peace missions. It thereby makes two main contributions. First, by proposing and applying a new categorization of UN peace missions, it contributes to research on the classification of peace missions.⁶ Second, by providing a more detailed analysis of UN peace missions, it lays the foundation for more accurate research on peace mission effectiveness.⁷

In what follows, we first provide an overview of the generation typology and its main flaws, underlining the need for an alternative approach. Second, we introduce the *minimalist-moderate-maximalist* categorization. Finally, we show how this new approach addresses the four flaws of the generation typology and demonstrate its further advantages. In sum, the article underlines the importance of a detailed understanding of UN peace mission mandates as a basis for a more accurate analysis of their effectiveness in making, keeping, and building peace.

2 The Generation Typology

The term *generation* and the generation-based typology began to be used around 1992, in both English and French.⁸ Authors usually highlight three chronological segments. The first generation of peace missions is presented as encompassing a time frame from the late 1940s until the end of the Cold War. Constrained by a political stalemate due to Cold War rivalries, this period was the stage to missions that

⁵ Call and Cousens 2007.

⁶ Badmus and Jenkins 2019, 56–61 provide an overview of existing methods of classification.

⁷ Doyle and Sambanis 2006; Fortna 2008; Hultman, Kathman, and Shannon 2014; Walter, Howard, and Fortna 2020.

How effectiveness of peace missions is measured is subject to debates, see for instance Kim, Sandler, and Shimizu 2020; Di Salvatore and Ruggeri 2017.

⁸ Hatto 2013, footnote 31. See Abi-Saab 1992; Ghébalí 1992; Mackinlay and Chopra 1992.

are presented as being, for the most part,⁹ little more than ad hoc operations tasked to help the belligerents end hostilities and prevent the resurgence of combat.¹⁰ For instance, the UN Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) was deployed in 1948 to oversee a truce in the war between Israel and its Arab neighbors.¹¹ Other examples include the UN Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP, since 1949), the first and second UN Emergency Force (UNEF I, 1956–1967 and UNEF II, 1973–1979), or the UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP, since 1964). The limited mandates of these missions were further underlined in the so-called ‘holy trinity’ of peacekeeping that former UN Secretary-General, Dag Hammarskjöld, developed. He stated that peace missions should be guided by the three principles of consent, impartiality, and non-use of force except in self-defense.¹² This showed that international interventions were tolerated only with the consent of the host state, if they remained purely impartial, and if force was used only in self-defense.

The end of the Cold War unlocked the UN Security Council (UNSC) due to the reduction of geopolitical competition between the superpowers, marking what is presented as the start of the second generation of UN peace missions. In this period, the number of UN peace missions grew substantially.¹³ Between 1988 and 1992, fourteen new operational missions were established.¹⁴ Over roughly the same period of time (1987–1994), the number of military forces deployed in peace missions increased from 10,000 to an estimated 70,000¹⁵ and the budget for peacekeeping rose from approximately \$400,000 in 1990 to \$3.7 billion in 1993.¹⁶ While the first operations established in the aftermath of the Cold War were quite faithful to the traditional peacekeeping model – that is, having mandate tasks such as monitoring the withdrawal of foreign forces, supervising cease-fires, and overseeing peace agreements – UN peace missions’ focus gradually extended from *peacekeeping* to *peacebuilding*. The first UN peace mission specifically tasked with peacebuilding activities was the UN Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) in Namibia (1989–1990) with the primary mandate to observe free and fair elections. UN

⁹ The UN Operation in the Congo (ONUC, 1960–1964) was an exception.

¹⁰ Wiseman 1983; Goulding 1993; Findlay 1996; Richmond 2004, 86; Bellamy, Williams, and Griffin 2010, 84–86.

¹¹ Goulding 1993.

¹² Bellamy, Williams, and Griffin 2004, 100; Paris 2004, 14; Doyle and Sambanis 2006, 11.

¹³ Goulding 1993.

¹⁴ Sabaratnam 2011, 15.

¹⁵ Doyle and Sambanis 2006, 6.

¹⁶ Fetherston and Nordstrom 1995, 100.

peace mission mandates became increasingly multidimensional with liberalism as a key influential factor.¹⁷ They involved “the implementation of multi-faceted peace agreements, which often included humanitarian, political, and economic elements, in addition to more traditional monitoring of a cease-fire.”¹⁸ Examples were the UN Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL, 1991–1995), the UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC, 1992–1993), the UN Operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ, 1992–1994), or the UN Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (UNMIBH, 1995–2002).¹⁹

A third generation of peace missions emerged around 1999 with a shift toward robust missions with enforcement mandates. Their appearance is linked to the introduction of two principles: the protection of civilians (POC) and stabilization.²⁰ Regarding POC, it was first adopted in UNSC Resolution 1265 (1999) and confirmed in subsequent resolutions.²¹ It is part of a reconceptualization of the holy trinity of peacekeeping; in particular, the principles of impartiality and the non-use of force except in self-defense. The 2000 Brahimi Report redefined impartiality as non-neutrality, stating that the UN cannot sit silently in the face of violations of core norms enshrined in the UN Charter, such as targeted attacks on civilians.²² UN peace missions should hence be allowed to use force to defend their mandates, including for the protection of civilians.²³ The first UN mission with a POC mandate was the UN Assistance Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL, 1999–2006). Subsequently, all multidimensional missions deployed had a POC mandate.²⁴ Regarding stabilization, it has become a core feature of UN peace missions.²⁵ Such missions operate in active conflicts and are authorized to enforce the end of violence. The UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH, 2007–2009) was the first to include the term stabilization in its name. The UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO, since 2010), the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA, since 2013), and the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the

¹⁷ Bellamy, Williams, and Griffin 2004, 94–103.

¹⁸ See also Newman, Paris, and Richmond 2009, 11; Paris and Sisk 2007, 2; Von Billerbeck 2016, 331; Gizelis, Dorussen, and Petrova 2016, 5-6.

¹⁹ Ottaway 2003, 314; Chetail 2009, 12; Paris 2011, 33.

²⁰ De Coning 2019; Karlsrud 2019; Curran and Hunt 2020.

²¹ See UNSC Resolutions 1269 (2000); 1502 (2003); 1674 (2006); 1738 (2006); 1894 (2009); 2150 (2014); 2175 (2014); 2222 (2015); 2286 (2016); 2417 (2018).

²² Brahimi 2000.

²³ Bode 2020, 4.

²⁴ Howard and Dayal 2018; Hunt 2019.

²⁵ Curran and Holtom 2015.

Central African Republic (MINUSCA, since 2014) followed suit. The implementation of POC and stabilization mandates required justification. Thus, the UN's 2008 Capstone Doctrine²⁶ reasserted the fundamental principles of UN peace missions while acknowledging that the use of the force may be indispensable to protect a mission and its mandate.²⁷

The above summary illustrates that the generation typology is useful in showing the development of UN peace missions in terms of the expansion of UN influence in intrastate affairs and the means deployed to do so.²⁸ It can hence be valuable to get an overall understanding of peace missions. However, it also has important flaws, to which we now turn.

3 A Critique of the Generation Typology

Several authors have pointed to the limitations of the generation typology.²⁹ These critiques can be clustered around four main themes: ambiguity, reductionism, linear connotations, and restricted applicability.

A first critique relates to the ambiguity of the generations. To be sure, the generation typology seeks to describe an evolving process rather than clear-cut breaking points, but the distinction between the generations is empirically ambiguous. For instance, the implication of a turn toward robust peace missions with third-generation missions starting from 1999 onward can be misleading. Indeed, several missions predating this time frame were authorized to use force. For instance, the UN Protection Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina (UNPROFOR, 1992–1995), the UN Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission (UNIKOM, 1991–2003), and the UN Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM II, 1991–1995) all had enforcement mandates. Similarly, MONUSCO, MINUSMA, and MINUSCA have multidimensional as well as stabilization mandates, but are generally classified as third- rather than second-generation missions. Moreover, authors use the generation typology in different ways. For instance, some have introduced a fourth generation to denote missions mandated to serve as transitional administrations,³⁰

²⁶ De Coning, Detzel, and Hojem 2008.

²⁷ De Coning 2019, 312.

²⁸ Bellamy, Williams, and Griffin 2004; Brühl 2017.

²⁹ Diehl, Reifschneider, and Hensel 1996; Wilde 2003; Bellamy, Williams, and Griffin 2004.

³⁰ Oksamytna and Karlsrud 2020.

others for non-UN operations carried out by regional organizations,³¹ and yet others for robust peacebuilding operations or peace support operations.³² Some go further, positing hybrid missions that are under mixed command of the UN and regional organizations as a fifth generation.³³ Because of the complex nature of mission mandates, we hence argue that the generation typology fails to provide the level of accuracy required to fully grasp how mandates evolve and overlap.

Second, the generations are reductionist. The assignment of a mission to a generation is made deductively and according to their most dominant mandate features (i.e., cease-fire monitoring, multidimensionality, or use of force), rather than inductively through a detailed assessment of individual mandate tasks. Such an approach lacks flexibility and conceals the fact that peace missions carry out a wide array of tasks.³⁴ For example, first-generation missions are mostly defined by the mandate task of cease-fire monitoring, which was indeed performed by many. However, some early missions' mandates exceeded this designation by far, as demonstrated for instance by the UN Operation in the Congo (ONUC, 1960–1964), which also engaged in state building and peace enforcement.³⁵ Generalizing missions in the pre–Cold War period as first-generation therefore fails to account for the historical and political complexity of many of the missions in this period.

Third, the generation typology has been critiqued for its linear connotation that leads to a misguided assumption that peace missions develop sequentially toward higher levels of complexity.³⁶ Yet as pointed out in the preceding paragraph, their evolution did not follow a linear pattern.³⁷ Therefore, a mere chronological categorization misses analytically insightful elements. For instance, rather than evolving toward more complex mandates, some post–Cold War missions, such as the UN Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT, 1994–2000), the UN Aouzou Strip Observer Group (UNASOG, 1994), or the UN Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP, 1995–1999) retained the traditional peacekeeping focus of ending violence. Meanwhile, some of the Cold War missions, such as ONUC,

³¹ Bercovitch and Jackson 2009, 75.

³² Bellamy, Williams, and Griffin 2010, 231; Kenkel 2013, 132.

³³ Kenkel 2013, 135.

³⁴ Badmus and Jenkins 2019, 59.

³⁵ Bellamy, Williams, and Griffin 2010, 17.

³⁶ Hatto 2013, 501; Wilde 2003.

³⁷ Bellamy, Williams, and Griffin 2010; Hatto 2013; Wilde 2003.

already had complex multidimensional mandates, including providing technical assistance to the host government.

Finally, the generation typology applies to only *peacekeeping* missions, even though special political missions and good offices engagements are an equally important part of the UN's repertoire of peace interventions. A typology of peace missions that ignores them risks presenting an incomplete picture of UN peace activities.³⁸ The generation typology, for instance, depicts the early 1990s as being characterized by multidimensional second-generation missions, ignoring the fact that several good offices engagements were conducted during that time, such as the Personal Representative on the Border Controversy between Guyana and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (1990–2017), the Personal Envoy to Greece–former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (1993–2019), and the Personal Envoy to Western Sahara (since 1997). These missions carried out important political functions in support of the respective peace processes. For a more accurate account of UN peace missions, it is thus important to extend the analytical framework beyond peacekeeping operations.

The above shows that despite helping us to understand the development of UN peace missions over time, the generation typology remains ambiguous, is reductionist, relies on linear assumptions, and does not apply beyond peacekeeping missions. Although it can provide insights into the evolution of peace missions, a more fine-grained categorization is needed to overcome the four flaws described above.

4 A New Approach: Minimalist-Moderate-Maximalist Categorization

4.1 Introducing the Categorization

Given the critique of the generation typology, we propose an alternative categorization of peace missions. Overall, we suggest to move from a fixed typology, defined as an “organized system of types that breaks down an overarching concept into component dimensions and types,”³⁹ toward a more open categorization that is more flexible in its use. Our proposed categorization is based on a distinction originally made by Charles T. Call and Elizabeth M. Cousens between three standards for measuring

³⁸ Clayton, Dorussen, and Böhmelt 2021.

³⁹ Collier, LaPorte, and Seawright 2012, annex.

peacebuilding effectiveness: minimalist, moderate, and maximalist.⁴⁰ The minimalist standard aims at ending violence; in other words, at a negative peace. It is associated with a conflict management approach as the main objective is to stop the fighting.⁴¹ The moderate standard aims at both no renewed armed conflict and a decent level of governance. It considers negative peace necessary, but not sufficient, and also foresees structural measures for good governance without predetermining a specific governance model. Finally, the maximalist standard aims at addressing the root causes of conflict, with the purpose of creating a positive peace.⁴² Such a standard requires “a wide range of political, development, humanitarian and human rights programs.”⁴³ It emphasizes the institutionalization of governance measures to allow for long-term peace. While it is often associated with liberal peace values, the maximalist standard is not reducible to liberal peacebuilding as locally led peacebuilding endeavors can be just as maximalist as externally driven interventions.⁴⁴

Call and Cousens’s approach has two main analytical strengths. First, it codifies highly intuitive categories that have been used elsewhere to describe approaches to peacekeeping⁴⁵ and standards for international humanitarian intervention.⁴⁶ Second, it is openly phrased in that it refrains from automatically linking more extensive mandates to liberal peacebuilding,⁴⁷ while still providing important qualitative information about the invasiveness of each particular mission.

To apply this categorization to peace missions, we adopt a mandate-centric approach. Several scholars have emphasized the analytical centrality of mandates to the study of peace missions.⁴⁸ On the one hand, mandates determine the content of peace missions by providing the legal and political basis for their actions.⁴⁹ On the other hand, they reflect the evolution of international norms, indicating trends in the UNSC and broader peacebuilding conceptualizations.⁵⁰ While there may be discrepancy between a mission’s mandate and its implementation as mission staff have some flexibility in implementing the

⁴⁰ Call and Cousens 2007.

⁴¹ Call and Cousens 2007, 4–5.

⁴² Call and Cousens 2007.

⁴³ Call and Cousens 2007, 4.

⁴⁴ Mac Ginty and Richmond 2013, 769; Richmond 2009, 558.

⁴⁵ Gowan 2008 refers to minimalist and maximalist positions taken by the UNSC in the establishment of peacekeeping missions.

⁴⁶ Weiss 1999 describes the minimalist approach as aiming to do no harm in delivering relief, and the maximalist approach as employing aid as part of a larger strategy of conflict transformation.

⁴⁷ Richmond 2004.

⁴⁸ Hegre, Hultman, and Nygård 2018; Lloyd 2021; Di Salvatore et al. 2022.

⁴⁹ Di Salvatore et al. 2022, 927–928.

⁵⁰ Peter 2015; Di Salvatore et al. 2022.

mandate, we argue that mandates constitute a valid source for categorizing peace missions because they provide the overall framework within which a mission operates.

4.2 Applying the Categorization

In the following, we apply Call and Cousens's minimalist-moderate-maximalist categorization to UN peace missions between 1991 and 2020. We proceed in two steps: first, we classify individual *mandate tasks* as minimalist, moderate, or maximalist; and, second, based on the composition of the individual mandate tasks, we classify *overall missions* as minimalist, moderate, or maximalist.

Regarding the first step, we coded the mandate tasks of all UN peace missions since the end of the Cold War (between 1991 and 2020) according to whether they are minimalist, moderate, or maximalist. We coded the mandate tasks in two phases. First, we coded the UNSC resolutions, which establish and revise the mandates for peacekeeping operations and special political missions, as well as the letters exchanged between the UN Secretary-General and the president of the UNSC, which usually appoint special envoys and advisors for good offices engagements. In case a mission did not have a written mandate, which is sometimes the case for good offices engagements, we relied on other UN sources. Second, we validated this initial coding based on secondary sources on each mission. This two-phased approach enabled higher validity as each mandate was coded by two different persons and our coding was cross-validated with secondary sources.

Table 1 shows how we assigned the mandate tasks to the minimalist-moderate-maximalist categories. To allow for even greater specificity, we divided the tasks under the different categories according to whether they concern humanitarian, security, economic, legal, or political aspects. Minimalist tasks focus on negative peace and the absence of renewed armed conflict. They include the largest share of humanitarian- and security-related tasks, such as humanitarian assistance, demilitarization, and demining, but also a few political tasks such as the coordination of donors, partners, and UN agencies as well as good offices and mediation. Moderate tasks aim at no renewed armed conflict and decent governance. They include no humanitarian aspects and fewer security-related tasks, but more economic, legal, and political tasks, such as recovery, rehabilitation, and reconstruction, monitoring violations of international humanitarian and human rights law, and electoral assistance. Finally, maximalist tasks aim

at addressing the root causes of conflict and at a positive peace. They include the largest share of legal and political tasks, such as human rights promotion, civil society capacity building, and institution building.⁵¹

Table 1 Overview of mandate tasks

	Minimalist tasks	Moderate tasks	Maximalist tasks
Humanitarian	Humanitarian assistance		
	Refugee/Internally displaced person (IDP) assistance		
Security	Demilitarization	POC children	Sexual and gender-based violence
	Demining	POC conflict-related sexual violence	Security sector reform (SSR) military
	Elimination of chemical weapons program	POC general	SSR police
	Observing, monitoring, or reporting (OMR) military	Disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR)	
	OMR police		
	Small arms and light weapons		
	Secure environment for delivery of aid		
Economic		Recovery, rehabilitation, and reconstruction	Economic reforms
Legal		Support to international criminal justice	Human rights promotion
		Monitoring and/or investigating international humanitarian law (IHL) and/or international human rights law (IHRL) violations	Rule of law (ROL) judicial reform
			ROL legal reform ROL penal system reform Transitional justice
Political	Coordination of donors, partners, UN agencies	Conflict assessment and early warning	Civil society capacity building
	Good offices and mediation (Track 1)	Electoral assistance	Dialogue and reconciliation (local)
		Electoral security	Dialogue and reconciliation (national)

⁵¹ We coded the use of force as an overarching category as we consider it a method to achieve tasks (e.g., POC) rather than a task itself.

		Information campaigns	Dialogue and reconciliation (regional)
			Good governance
			Promotion of independent media
			Women's rights and participation
			Institution building
			Support to permanent state institutions

In a second step, we aggregated the individual mandate tasks to determine the overall mission's classification. We used a weighted formula (see Figure 1), assigning a weight of 1, 2, and 3 to minimalist, moderate, and maximalist tasks respectively. We then divided the weighted sum by the total number of tasks assigned for the mission, as not all missions have the same number of mandate tasks, resulting in a score between 1.0 and 3.0.⁵² The formula is designed to account for the fact that the categorization is cumulative. This means that while minimalist missions include only minimalist tasks, moderate missions necessarily include moderate tasks or have a balanced composition of minimalist and maximalist tasks,⁵³ while maximalist missions necessarily include maximalist tasks. Besides the aggregate classification, the individual mission *score* provides information on the exact ranking of a mission as it can range from being 'low' minimalist/moderate/maximalist (low score within the relevant banding) to being 'high' minimalist/moderate/maximalist (high scoring within the relevant banding).

Figure 1 Weighted formula and classification scheme

$$\text{Overall Mission Classification Score} = \frac{(\text{No. of } \textit{minimalist} \text{ tasks} * 1) + (\text{No. of } \textit{moderate} \text{ tasks} * 2) + (\text{No. of } \textit{maximalist} \text{ tasks} * 3)}{\text{Total no. of mission tasks}}$$

The classification criteria is as follows:

Score	Overall Mission Classification
1.0	<i>Minimalist</i>
$1.0 < \text{score} \leq 2.0$	<i>Moderate</i>
$2.0 < \text{score} \leq 3.0$	<i>Maximalist</i>

⁵² It is not possible for a minimalist mission to score different than 1.0.

⁵³ It is possible for a mission with maximalist tasks to receive a moderate score if the number of minimalist and/or moderate tasks substantially outweighs the number of maximalist tasks. For example, a mission with eleven minimalist tasks, eleven moderate tasks, and one maximalist task has a moderate score of 1.6.

This second step allowed us to classify overall missions. Minimalist missions focus on ending violence in the form of a negative peace. Examples include the UN Supervision Mission in Syria (UNSMIS, since 2012) or the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen (OESGY, since 2011). UNSMIS was a peacekeeping operation with three minimalist mandate tasks: support demilitarization; observe, monitor, or report on cease-fire arrangements; and secure the environment for aid delivery.⁵⁴ OESGY is a good offices engagement with two minimalist tasks: coordinate with partners and provide its good offices to the Yemeni conflict parties.⁵⁵ Both missions have a score of 1.0 and are focused on ending violence and addressing the immediate consequences of armed conflicts.

Moderate missions also aim at supporting the end of violence, but include additional tasks such as electoral assistance or disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) that seek to create decent forms of good governance. Examples include the UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO, since 1991) or the UN Mission in Nepal (UNMIN, 2007–2011). MINURSO has five mandate tasks: support demilitarization; demining; monitor ceasefire arrangements; assist refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs); and support the organization of a referendum. The first four tasks are minimalist while the last task is moderate, classifying the overall mission as moderate with a score of 1.2. UNMIN, in turn, had two mandate tasks: monitoring the cease-fire arrangements and providing electoral assistance,⁵⁶ thus classifying as a moderate mission with a score of 1.5. This also shows that the degree to which a mission is classified as moderate (with 1.1 being the ‘least’ moderate and 2.0 being the ‘most’ moderate) depends on the composition ratio of minimalist to moderate tasks.

Finally, maximalist missions aim at addressing the root causes of conflict and establishing a long-term peace. Examples include MONUSCO in the Democratic Republic of Congo (since 2010) or the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA, since 2002). MONUSCO has tasks such as civil society capacity building, promotion of human rights, good governance, rule of law, security sector

⁵⁴ UNSC Resolution 2043 (2012).

⁵⁵ UNSC Resolution 2051 (2012).

⁵⁶ UNSC Resolution 1740 (2007).

reform, and transitional justice.⁵⁷ In total, it has five minimalist, ten moderate, and thirteen maximalist mandate tasks, giving it an overall score of 2.3. UNAMA also has a far-reaching mandate, including the support to state institutions, promoting human rights and the rule of law, and supporting reconciliation and dialogue.⁵⁸ Overall, it has three minimalist, two moderate, and eight maximalist mandate tasks, giving it an overall score of 2.4. The two examples show again that the degree to which a mission is classified as maximalist depends on the composition ratio of its mandate: The higher the ratio of maximalist to moderate and minimalist tasks, the higher the maximalist score.

4.3 Using the Categorization in Different Ways

The above-described method does not represent the only approach to classifying UN peace missions according to the minimalist-moderate-maximalist categorization. Indeed, there are at least three other ways in which these categories might be used.

First, we identified forty-one mandate tasks through an inductive coding process. Alternatively, one can apply the minimalist-moderate-maximalist categories to lists of UN peace mission mandate tasks derived through other approaches. The UNSC Affairs Division's Field Missions Dashboard, for instance, identifies twenty-one mandate tasks,⁵⁹ while the Tasks Assigned to Missions in Their Mandates (TAMM) developed by Gabriella Lloyd distinguishes between forty tasks.⁶⁰

Second, one might use alternative methods than the weighted formula we propose above to aggregate mandate tasks into the overall mission classification. Some researchers may for instance want to treat the categorization levels not as cumulative and, thus, base the aggregation on the simple average of mandate tasks without weighting them. Other researchers may want to include the further distinction between humanitarian, security, economic, legal, and political tasks in the assignment of the minimalist, moderate, and maximalist categories.

Third, besides different methods of elaborating and aggregating the mandate tasks list, there is also room for further disaggregation. For instance, one could focus on a subset of missions only, for instance

⁵⁷ UNSC Resolutions 1925 (2010); 1991 (2011); 2502 (2019).

⁵⁸ UNSC Resolution 1401 (2002); UNSC Resolution 2543 (2020).

⁵⁹ UNSC Field Missions Dashboard.

⁶⁰ Lloyd 2021. She adds ten tasks that concern what other organizations the UN missions are tasked to cooperate with. See Clayton, Dorussen, and Böhmelt 2021; Di Salvatore et al. 2022 for further lists of mandate tasks.

on stabilization missions, to understand variations in their mandates. Another possibility is to do type-specific analyses; that is, examine the differences in mandate tasks of peacekeeping operations, special political missions, and good offices engagements.

These examples point to some of the manifold ways in which the proposed categorization can be used and further developed, underlining its flexibility. We now turn to the advantages of employing it in the analysis of peace missions and empirically illustrate its relevance with the case of UNSMIS.

5 Advantages of the Minimalist-Moderate-Maximalist Categorization

5.1 Overcoming the Four Flaws of the Generation Typology

The minimalist-moderate-maximalist categorization overcomes the four flaws of the generation typology discussed above.

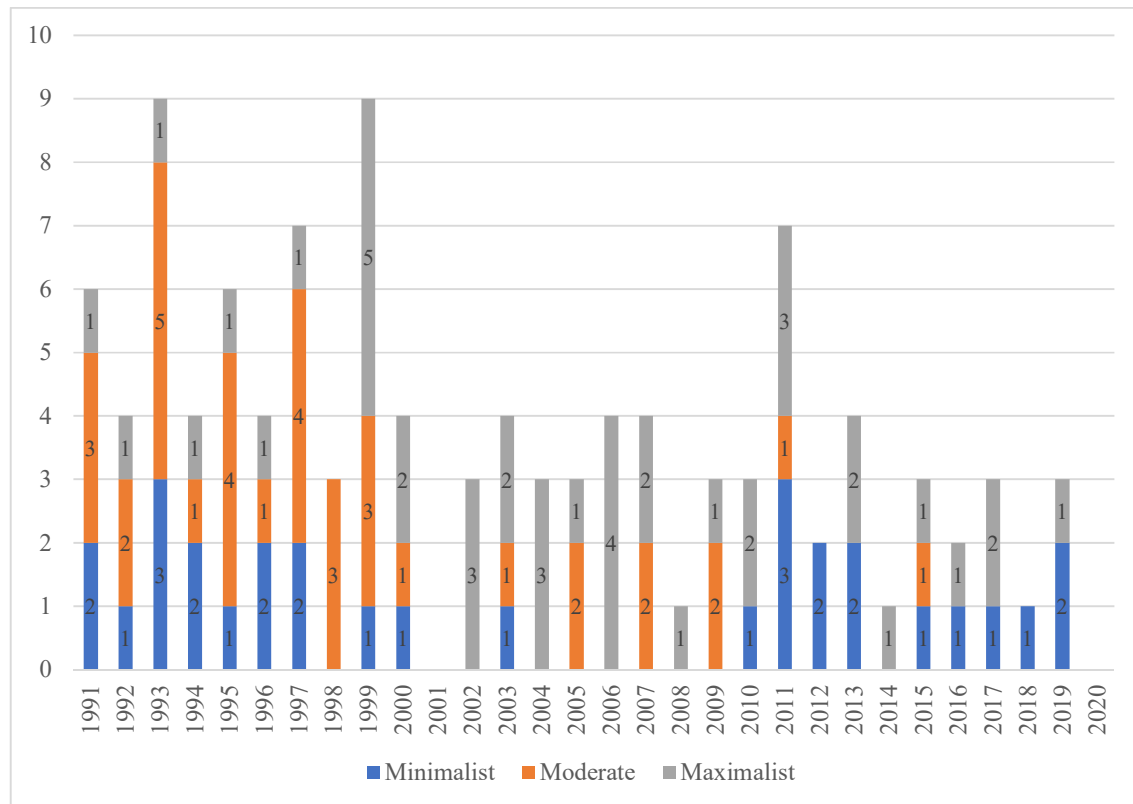
First, in contrast to the generations, the categories are unambiguous. They are mutually exclusive in that mission tasks and overall missions cannot at the same time be classified as minimalist, moderate, and maximalist. Even if a mission has minimalist, moderate, and maximalist tasks, the formula introduced above gives a unique overall classification score to each mission. This is also because the categories are criteria consistent: the minimalist-moderate-maximalist approach consistently applies a predefined criteria to all missions. The generation typology, in turn, emphasizes different types of criteria inconsistently, using historicity in some instances and mandate features in others.

Second, the minimalist-moderate-maximalist categorization is not reductionist and derived from dominant mandate features as the generation typology, but is based on an inductive methodology that considers all individual mandate tasks of a given peace mission. Thereby, it accounts for the granular composition of mission mandates and provides descriptive categories based on broad, but well-defined, qualitative criteria to analyze mission task compositions. The subdivision into different types of tasks (humanitarian, security, economic, legal, political) further nuances the categorization. Finally, the aggregation rationale from individual mandate tasks to overall mission categorization can be adapted depending on the research rationale and design.

Third, the minimalist-moderate-maximalist typology does not have a linear connotation, but enables a temporally unbounded classification of missions. To illustrate this point, Figure 2 shows the

number of minimalist, moderate, and maximalist missions established by year, from 1991 to 2020. It depicts that some years feature one type of mission only (e.g., only maximalist missions were established in 2002, 2004, 2006, 2008, 2014); other years feature multiple mission types. This overview shows specific temporal trends. For instance, moderate missions were most frequent in the period from 1991 to 2000;⁶¹ maximalist missions dominated from 2001 to 2010;⁶² and minimalist missions were the most commonly established mission type from 2011 to 2020.⁶³ This provides a different picture from the generation typology, which mostly describes a shift from multidimensional (second-generation) to robust missions (third-generation) from 1991 to 2020.

Figure 2 Peace mission establishment by mandate objective



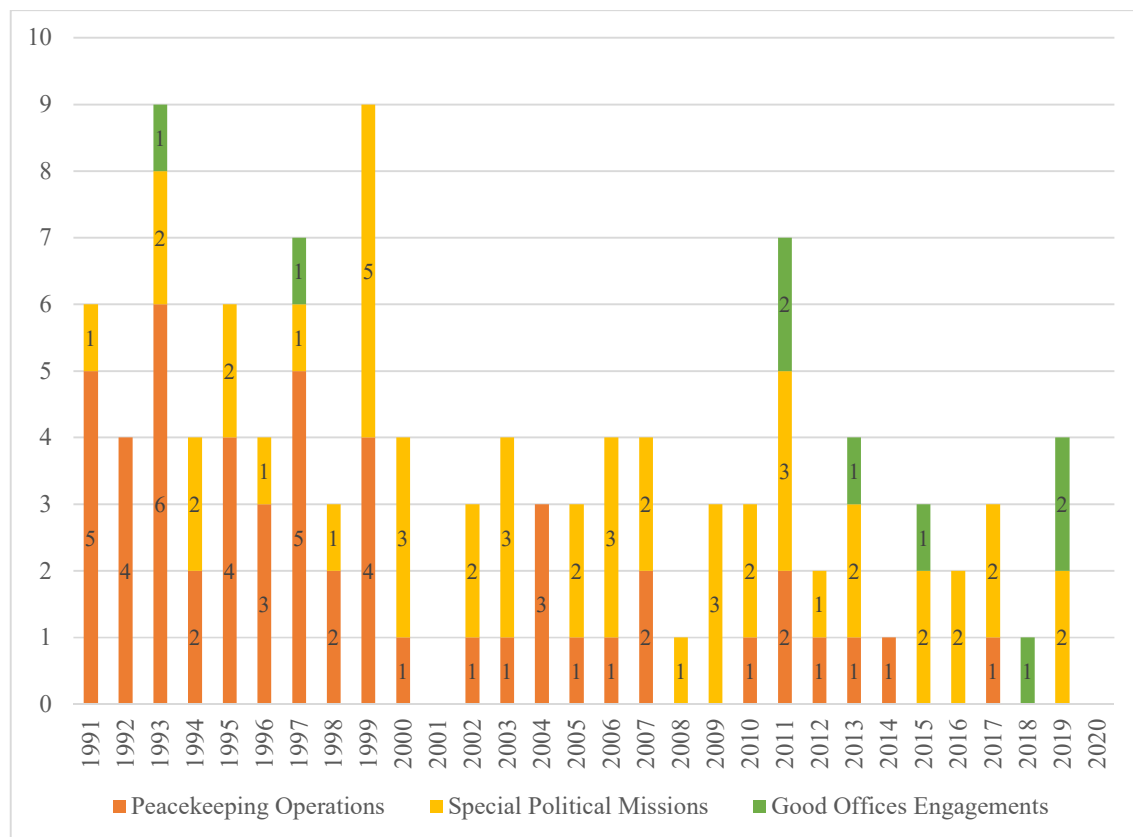
⁶¹ Twenty-seven moderate missions compared to fourteen maximalist and fifteen minimalist missions.

⁶² Nineteen maximalist missions compared to seven moderate and two minimalist missions.

⁶³ Thirteen minimalist missions compared to eleven maximalist and two moderate missions.

Lastly, the minimalist-moderate-maximalist categorization enables an extension of the universe of peace missions analyzed. Its rationale can be applied to political missions and good offices engagements just as easily as to peacekeeping operations. This is crucial as they play a key role in the repertoire of UN interventions for peace.⁶⁴ Figure 3 illustrates the increasing importance of special political missions and good offices engagements by showing the number of different mission types established per year, from 1991 to 2020. While in the 1990s, peacekeeping operations were more frequent, special political missions and good offices engagements outnumber peacekeeping operations in most years after 2000. Not including them when categorizing peace missions thus stands to miss a large part of the UN’s deployments for peace.

Figure 3 Peace mission establishment by type



⁶⁴ It is interesting to note that special political missions often have maximalist mandates as they contain a large number of legal and political tasks. Good offices engagements, in turn, often classify as minimalist as they do not contain many of the economic, legal, and political tasks that are typical for special political missions or peacekeeping operations.

5.2 *Further Advantages*

Beyond overcoming the four flaws of the generation typology, the minimalist-moderate-maximalist categorization provides three further advantages.

First, its focus on mandate objectives provides additional qualitative information to existing classifications. Current categorizations other than the generation typology organize missions according to broad mandate descriptions,⁶⁵ while datasets on UN peace mission mandates organize tasks into substantive categories such as peacekeeping, violence limitation, and peacebuilding⁶⁶ or functional modalities such as monitoring, assisting, or securing.⁶⁷ The minimalist-moderate-maximalist categorization's focus on objectives is unique and creates important avenues for further research. For instance, it may be used to provide information on UNSC (dis)unity and (non)willingness to intervene in specific conflicts. The fact that a minimalist peacekeeping operation (UNSMIS) and special envoy mission have been appointed for Syria while a maximalist peacekeeping operation has been sent to Mali can be linked back to dynamics in the UNSC.⁶⁸ Thus, questions such as how geopolitics influence UN peace missions' objectives can be examined by using the categorization proposed in this article. At the same time, the minimalist-moderate-maximalist categories can also be analyzed as an indicator of the UN's role in international peacebuilding more broadly. We may, for instance, ask whether the dominance of minimalist missions since 2010 indicates a normative change in UN member states' perceptions of how the UN should contribute to maintaining international peace. The minimalist-moderate-maximalist classification thus enables inquiries that go beyond substantive or functional distinctions of mandate tasks.

Second, and related to the point above, the minimalist-moderate-maximalist categorization is highly versatile in its use. It can, for instance, be used to support region- or duration-based analyses. Regarding the first, one option is to look at the percentage of minimalist, moderate, and maximalist mission mandates by region. Figure 4 shows that in Africa and the Americas, a majority of peace missions were

⁶⁵ Bellamy, Williams, and Griffin 2010.

⁶⁶ Lloyd 2021.

⁶⁷ Di Salvatore et al. 2022.

⁶⁸ Mahapatra 2016.

maximalist, while Asia has a majority of moderate missions, and in Europe and the Middle East, minimalist missions were deployed most frequently.

Figure 4 Percentage of Mandate Objectives per Region

	Minimalist	Moderate	Maximalist
Africa	22	33	45
Americas	19	31	50
Asia	7	53	40
Europe	46	36	19
Middle East	63	6	31

Regarding duration-based analyses, our approach allows for a yearly mission classification into minimalist, moderate, or maximalist and, hence, to observe evolutions of individual missions over time. For example, the UN Advance Mission in Cambodia (UNAMIC, 1991–1992) had a minimalist mandate in 1991 with OMR military as the mission's primary focus. However, in 1992, UNAMIC classified as moderate because recovery, rehabilitation, and reconstruction was added as a task.⁶⁹ This analysis can be extended to other missions or used in comparative studies on trends in mission mandate evolutions over time.

Third, the minimalist-moderate-maximalist approach carries high potential for statistical analysis. The mission classification scores can be used as an independent, control, instrumental, or dependent variable. They lend a different analytical perspective than deployment attribute-based typologies, for example,⁷⁰ though this would ultimately depend on the research question. The variable can also be operationalized as a condition or an outcome in complexity-oriented research methods such as fuzzy-set Qualitative Content Analysis (fsQCA). In sum, the mission scores magnify the analytical possibilities

⁶⁹ UNSC Resolution 728 (1992).

⁷⁰ The Geocoded Peacekeeping Operations (Geo-PKO) Dataset provides the possibility of organizing missions by deployment attributes, including mission location, size, and troop-contributing countries. See Cil et al. 2020.

of the mandate data by quantifying qualitative information while nonetheless providing nuance and scale to our understanding of it.

The above shows the further advantages of the minimalist-moderate-maximalist categorization compared to existing classifications of peace missions. In the following, we provide an illustration of this new categorization to highlight its increased empirical accuracy.

5.3 Empirical Illustration

The case of UNSMIS illustrates the advantages of the minimalist-moderate-maximalist categorization. UNSMIS was a peacekeeping operation established by UNSC Resolution 2043 in 2012 and terminated that same year due to intensifying levels of violence in Syria.⁷¹ The mission was tasked with a limited observer mandate that consisted of monitoring the cessation of armed violence and the implementation of a peace plan devised by then UN / League of Arab States Joint Special Envoy Kofi Annan.⁷²

When applying the generation typology to UNSMIS, its limitations become obvious. Indeed, it is not clear whether UNSMIS would classify as a first-, second-, third-, fourth-, or even fifth-generation mission as its classification would change according to which author's generation typology is adopted. John Mackinlay and Jarat Chopra's account of the generations, for instance, presents second-generation or post-Cold War peacekeeping missions as being on a continuum: at one end are low-intensity operations such as conventional observer missions, and at the other end are high-intensity operations involving larger military assets such as enforcement operations. On their approach, UNSMIS would classify as a second-generation observer mission involving "the smallest number of assets and the least risk of conflict to UN contingents," meaning it would be situated at the lowest end of second-generation missions.⁷³ However, on Mark Malan's account of the generations in which he distinguishes between four (as opposed to Mackinlay and Chopra's two) generations, UNSMIS would classify as a fourth-generation mission given its lack of a Chapter VII mandate, absence of any peacebuilding tasks, and its

⁷¹ Department of Peace Operations, UNSMIS Mandate.

⁷² Department of Peace Operations, UNSMIS Background.

⁷³ Mackinlay and Chopra 1992, 116–117.

unwillingness to engage in the absence of a cease-fire agreement.⁷⁴ Finally, on Kai Michael Kenkel's account that distinguishes five generations, one would struggle to place UNSMIS. Kenkel at times stresses a historical progression of mission mandates and at other times the qualitative aspects of mission mandates in the assignment of a mission to a generation.⁷⁵ By virtue of its establishment date, UNSMIS would fit into the fourth or fifth generation, but it fulfills none of Kenkel's qualitative mandate criteria for these recent missions. Mandate-wise, UNSMIS would best be suited to Kenkel's first-generation missions, but it is precluded from being placed there due to the mission's post-Cold War date of establishment.

The above shows the limitations of the generation typology when applied to UNSMIS. This critique holds equally true of other post-Cold War peace missions.⁷⁶ The case of UNSMIS also underlines the important advantages of the minimalist-moderate-maximalist categorization of UN peace missions. First, there is no room for ambiguity. UNSMIS's mandate is constituted of three minimalist tasks (demilitarization, OMR military, secure environment for delivery of aid), and is thus classified as a minimalist mission. It cannot belong to two categories at the same time. Second, there is no reductionism as the categorization takes all of UNSMIS's mandate tasks into account rather than only the dominant features. Third, when categorizing UNSMIS, there is no implicit assumption about a linear evolution toward more complexity with regard to subsequent missions. Finally, the application of the minimalist-moderate-maximalist categorization opens up the possibility of comparing UNSMIS with other UN peace missions, including special political missions and good offices engagements.

6 Conclusion

The generation typology is frequently invoked to classify UN peace missions. However, in this article we outlined four of its main flaws. First, we showed that the generations are ambiguous, leading to an ambivalent use of the terminology. Second, the generation typology is reductionist in that it is applied to peace missions based on their most dominant features, rather than on a detailed assessment of their

⁷⁴ Malan 1998, 17–19.

⁷⁵ Kenkel 2013.

⁷⁶ For example, the UN Aouzou Strip Observer Group (UNASOG, 1994), UN Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP, 1995–1999), and UN Mission in Côte d'Ivoire (MINUCI, 2003–2004) could also classify as a range of generation types, based on which scholar's criteria is adopted.

individual mandate tasks. Third, the generation typology has a linear connotation and implicitly foresees a movement toward more complex missions over time. Fourth, the generation typology is limited to peacekeeping missions, while special political missions and good offices engagements play important roles in the UN's repertoire of peace interventions.

We therefore put forward a new categorization of peace missions according to a distinction between minimalist, moderate, and maximalist mandate tasks that can be aggregated to classify overall peace missions. Beyond overcoming the four flaws of the generation typology, this approach presents significant advantages, notably through its focus on objectives, its versatility, and its potential for statistical analysis. It thereby contributes to a better understanding of the characteristics and types of UN peace missions and their evolution over time and lays the foundation for a more accurate analysis of their effectiveness in making, keeping, and building lasting peace.

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