Power-Centric Approach to Stability: Implications for the Comprehensive Approach*

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ABSTRACT

This article proposes an alternative approach to the current population-centric and nation-building strategies for future NATO stabilization operations, one based on influencing the political interactions between power-holders viewed as a complex adaptive system to generate political stability. This alternative power centric approach would also rely on a close collaboration between key civilian and military capabilities to deploy political influence activities to achieve stability. Influencing the political interactions of power holders would require a more focused comprehensive approach in terms of essential military and civilian expertise and key agencies. It would notably exclude civilian agencies not essential to the achievement of political stability, especially agencies that resist the perceived co-optation of their activities under the political objectives of stabilization missions.

INTRODUCTION

What mission design could we have for future NATO stabilization missions if we remove the population and nation building as key variables to re-establish stability in countries experiencing internal armed conflict? What impact would an alternative approach have on the scope and the degree of inclusiveness of civilian organizations for the comprehensive approach?

The inspiration for this research came from the author's tour in 2008-2009 with the civilian-military planning team (J5) of the Canadian brigade headquarters in Kandahar Province. Working on district development plans based on the counter-insurgency clear-hold-build model, it never seemed evident that focusing on the population provided a workable narrative to achieve stability. How could protecting the population and fostering local development translate into political power to influence the establishment of a stable government at the national level?

This article proposes an alternative to the current population-centric and nation building approaches to stability operations, and challenges the idea that current approaches could become more effective if more civilian agencies accepted to align their efforts to the political goals of future missions. This alternative approach argues that countries experiencing conflict or just emerging from conflict can be stabilized through the establishment of sustainable, legitimate governments based on institutionalized power-sharing arrangements between power-holders.

This alternative approach sets aside the Western liberal view of state stability, based on the assent of the governed and on universal franchise democracy as the foundation for government legitimacy. Instead, this article opts for a more pragmatic view that sees legitimacy as the extent to which a government can rely on the support of other essential power-holder groups to execute its decisions. This supposes that power-sharing

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arrangements between power-holder groups can become institutionalized beyond the immediate cost-benefits calculations of groups to support the government. These power sharing arrangements could also survive the end of external incentives provided by stabilization missions and donor nations in support of governance during a mission.

This article will first discuss the different definitions for stability as the end state for stabilization operations. It will then examine the roots of the population-centric and democratic foundations of stability operations based on the Western political tradition of the Enlightenment. The discussion will then point to the post-Cold War efforts to implement an offensive version of the democratic peace theory as the rationale for spreading democracy and liberal democratic state institutions to bring stability to targeted host nations. This first section will conclude on the implications of the population-centric and national building strategies on the comprehensive approach, arguing that seeking broader civilian participation is not the answer to improving the effectiveness of stabilization missions designed around Western political and normative biases instead of a pragmatic approach to political stability.

The second section will present theoretical foundations for a power-centric approach to state stability, and how future stabilization missions could achieve such the objective of establishing legitimate governments by influencing the political interactions of power-holders as a complex adaptive system. It will then propose operational benefits for future missions that this alternative strategy would present, such as reducing the scope and inclusiveness criteria for a more focus civilian contribution and coordination of efforts to achieve stability.

1. Stability, assent of the government and the offensive version of the democratic peace theory

1.1 Defining Stability

What do we mean by stability for the purposes of missions operating in countries experiencing conflicts? Definitions of what stabilization covers in terms of objectives and scope vary across military and civilian organizations. “Stabilization” has referred to strategies to deal with failed and fragile states, fragility and instability, counterinsurgency operations (COIN), early recovery, and, state building in peacebuilding. For example, the definition from U.S. Field Manual 3-07 *Stability Operations* is as follows:

> [Stability operations encompass] various military missions, tasks, and activities conducted outside the United States in coordination with other instruments of national power to maintain or reestablish a safe and secure environment, provide essential governmental services, emergency infrastructure reconstruction, and humanitarian relief.

Canadian military doctrine offers a similar definition:

> Stability activities are specific missions and tasks carried out by armed forces to maintain, restore, or establish a climate of order…The development and maintenance of a safe, secure, and stable environment remains the underlying reason to conduct stability activities. Therefore, the focus will be on improving the capacity of the host nation government and institutions (i.e. judiciary and military) to achieve an enduring change to the environment that addresses the causes of instability. (Canada CFJP-01)

These definitions serve more as a doctrinal placeholder for military operations between war and peacekeeping than as a conceptualization of what an end state of stability could consist of. Both definitions place the emphasis of stability operations on the establishing of safe and secure environments, but without addressing the question of what these safe and secure environments would ultimately serve in terms of defining stability as an end state. From a military planning perspective, not being able to precisely define the

end state-changes in the situation in the area of responsibility that allow a commander to determine whether the mission has been achieved-can only be problematic.

Civilian agencies have also attempted to define stability. For example, The United States Institute of Peace (USIP) manual *Guiding Principles for Stabilization and Reconstruction* places stabilization within the continuum of conflict-sensitive development. Thus, stabilization aims to "Ending or preventing the recurrence of violent conflict and creating the conditions for normal economic activity and nonviolent politics." USIP defines the ultimate aim of development, supported by stability and reconstruction operations during times of conflict, as contributing to long-lasting peace. (USIP 1-5) Arguing that the end state of stabilization corresponds to the end of violence raises both practical and conceptual issues. Equating stability as an end state on the end of violence would exclude post-conflict situations where the political situation would be stable enough but with remnants of political violence or social unrest that could be managed in time by the government. From a practical planning perspective, tying the end state of a stabilization mission to the end of violence in a host nation may be too heavy a commitment both troop contributing governments' exit strategies.

The point here is not to provide a comprehensive review of Western military stabilization doctrine or of civilian peacebuilding theories. Rather, the aim is to propose a definition of stability that could serve as an achievable end state for stabilization operations, while at the same time allow to draw from different theoretical foundations from the population-centric and democratization approaches to stability.

Thus, this article proposes a concept of stability as an end state extrapolated from the definition of stabilization from the United Kingdom Stabilization Unit, which in 2008 stated:

> Stabilisation…refers to an approach used in violent situations where it is difficult or impossible to pursue conventional programmes. *Its aims are explicitly political: to help establish and sustain a legitimate government*. And it often involves a degree of military coercion to reduce violence sufficiently to allow recovery, development and peace-building programmes. (Emphasis added) (UK Stabilisation Unit)

This definition is preferred to others since it points to stability as an inherently political process that can be achieved even though manageable levels of violence can remain in the host nation. From a planning perspective it does not tie stability as an end state to social resolution of grievances, to social well-being or to long-term sustainable development. Rather, it links stability to the achievement of a political outcome, which from a Clausewitzian perspective can better tie strategy and operational design to the political object set by NATO, troop contributing governments and host nation authorities.

Of course, defining stability as an end state as the establishment of a legitimate, sustainable government in the host nation raises both theoretical and practical questions about what is meant by sustainable and legitimate as applied to state hosting a stabilization mission in conflict or post-conflict environments.

The general English definitions for legitimate do not provide a clear concept that can be applied for a stability mission. The Oxford dictionary defines legitimate as "conforming to laws or to rules"[1] from the Latin root *legitimus* or lawful. Merriam-Webster's provides a very similar definition, namely: "allowed according to rules or laws'[2]

Such a purely legalistic definition for a legitimate government raises certain difficulties when considering the situations inherent in internal conflicts. By definition, internal conflicts represent a breakdown of the legal

[1] http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/legitimate

[2] http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/legitimate

order that go beyond "internal disturbances and tensions, such as riots, isolated and sporadic acts of violence and other acts of a similar nature." (Art. 1(2) Add. Prot. II to the Geneva Conventions)

Armed groups directly challenge the government's authority, and by extension, the former legal order that validated that rule. The winning side in an internal conflict tends to adopt amnesty laws to validate its own claim to political legitimacy and expunge the criminal implications of acts of violence carried out in support of their 'struggle'. Alternatively, the losing side tends to be branded as terrorists and criminals by the government and dealt under criminal or emergency legislation.

Rather than a legalistic view of legitimacy, this article proposes to examine two streams of political theories that could serve as the foundation for NATO stabilization operations. The first stream of theories is being implemented in Afghanistan. The mission for stabilization operations there occur within a framework that conceives legitimacy as flowing from the consent of the population to be governed, supported by the establishment of the institutions of a Western liberal democratic state to achieve stability. This first stream ascribes to political theories that believe that the promotion of democracy best serves enduring international peace and stability.

The second stream of political theories asserts that a legitimate government can emerge from political arrangements between power-holder groups. This second stream is not population-centric, and does not place the establishment of democratic institutions as the crucial first step to achieving stability. This stream of theory refutes the assumption that a central government has the ability to gain the monopoly over means of coercion within its territory, and is a direct contradiction to Max Weber's definition of legitimacy of state. (Weber)

Each of these two streams of political theories will be discussed below, along with their implications for their application to the design of a strategy for the Comprehensive Approach to support the establishment of a legitimate and sustainable government as the political end state for future NATO missions.

1.2 Population-centric stabilization: government legitimacy as social contract

The first stream of theories concerning the legitimacy of government draws from the Western political tradition that considers that legitimate state authority comes from a social contract between the state and those who consent to be governed.

Associated notably with the theories of Thomas Hobbes and John Locke, this political philosophy argues that man existing outside of the state is either living under the constant threat of private violence from others (Hobbes) or not being able to fully enjoy liberty and property even under divine natural law (Locke). To escape this state of nature, man agrees to surrender some of his inherent rights and freedom to the state in exchange for security and better economic outcomes. (Stein 201)

Locke considered that man's consent to state authority could be revoked if the sovereign abused its powers or failed to provide security. The sovereign would then in breach of the social contract, which would legitimize armed resistance against him. On the other hand, Hobbes considered that individuals placing themselves under the authority of the state for protection against the risks of living in a situation of anarchy would lose the right challenge sovereign political authority. (Williams 219)

Thus, the will of individuals citizens serves as the foundation of the authority of the state to coerce obedience to laws, raise taxes, conscript for war, etc. This idea, drawing from earlier Stoic and Christian philosophy about the dignity of individuals under divine natural law has permeated Western political culture since the English civil war, and the successful American and French insurgencies against royal rule. Historically, placing the individual as the legitimate source of state authority supported the aspirations (and emergent political power) of merchant classes and Puritans who were disenfranchised by the rule of feudal lords, monarchs and the Church. (Wright 179)

The discussion regarding the 'assent of the governed' as the foundation for the state's legitimate powers of coercion continues to this day. For example, certain individuals in North America and elsewhere have in recent years attempted to withdraw their consent to being subjected to state taxation and other laws, such as the Canadian Freemen movements. (The Economist 46) Interestingly, the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) regards the more extreme groups denying the authority of the American Federal and state governments as 'sovereign citizen extremists' as posing a threat of domestic terrorism.[3]

Traditional sources and current doctrine for COIN operations adopt this political philosophy of the assent of the governed as the causal inference for political stability. To illustrate this point, below are selected examples from the classic sources from David Galula's *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice*, Sir Robert Thompson's *Defeating Communist Insurgency: The Lessons of Malaya and Vietnam,* and finally from the inevitable U.S. Army *Field Manual 3-24 Counterinsurgency* (FM 3-24).

Galula (6) calls upon both theories in saying that "in the final analysis, the exercise of political power depends on the tacit or explicit agreement of the population, or, at worst, on its submissiveness". Thompson (54) refers directly to Locke: "if the government does not adhere to the law, then it loses respect and fails to fulfill its contractual obligation to the people as a government", and further (143), "security by itself is not enough to make the peasant willingly choose to support the government. The next step, therefore, is to influence his choice, which must still remain a free choice."

Consistent with American political tradition, the US COIN doctrine clearly favors Lockian liberalism. FM 3-24 (1-1) refers to political power as the "central issue in insurgencies and counter-insurgencies; each side aims to get the people to accept its governance or authority as legitimate", and, "long-term success in COIN depends on the people taking charge of their own affairs and consenting to the government's rule". And, "In Western liberal tradition, a government that derives its just powers from the people and responds to their desires while looking out for their welfare is accepted as legitimate." (Ibid. 1-21)

Another philosophical conclusion drawn from the population-centric approach of the liberal Lockian tradition is that instability comes from unresolved socioeconomic and political grievances from the population. In this regard, COIN forces must contribute to addressing these grievances. (Canada FP-003 1-2) This in turn justifies the deployment of related functions and mechanisms that include, but are not limited to: provincial reconstruction teams; quick impact projects; and, investments in support of host nation government institutions for the delivery of social services and enabling economic improvement.

While the Western liberal tradition for the assent of the government has served industrialized countries well, the offshoot of the population-centric approach suffers from a number of theoretical challenges. This renders the underlying political philosophy a flawed platform to support the work of a stabilization mission attempting to generate national political effects in a different social, cultural and political context.

This article only reflects on two of these problems here, drawing from the experience with district stabilization plans in Kandahar Province. The first theoretical challenge is how to account for the problem of political emergence. The second refers to the problems with collective action in large groups as identified by Mancur Olson.

Political emergence represents the processes whereby the global behavior of a political system results from the actions and interactions of agents. (Sawyer 2) Emergence considers that political stability is a complex system that is more than just the sum of its parts, with the "basic insight that societies are complex configurations of many people engaged in overlapping and interlocking patterns of relationship with one another". (Ibid. 1) Emergence does not only apply to politics. For example, a classic problem of emergence in biology is determining at which point consciousness appears from molecules organized in increasingly complex structures and mechanisms. (Clayton 502)

[3] http://www.fbi.gov/stats-services/publications/law-enforcement-bulletin/september-2011/sovereign-citizens accessed 31 January 2014

The problem of political emergence for stabilization is simple enough. How can the preferences of individuals, for either side of the insurgency or the government, translate into political power at the national level? Galula and Thompson consider this to be a linear military equation: popular support for the insurgency allows it to grow sufficiently in military capabilities to eventually overthrow the government. Stability then becomes a matter of rebalancing military capabilities between a government supported by external counter-insurgent forces and its armed insurgent and opposition.

Population-centric approaches assume a linear relationship between individual support for the government from improvements to their security and welfare at the tactical level to political stability at the national level. As such, population-centric is a form of political reductionism that assumes a direct causal relation between 'the people' and national political power. Even in Western democracies several institutions stand between each citizen's individual vote and political power, such as political parties serving to select representative and party leaders, electoral colleges, or a candidate's capacity to raise campaign contributions from moneyed supporters. These institutions further a path of historical, political compromises between power holders and the population, for example the evolution of Westminster parliamentary democracy from the Magna Carta, the English Civil War, and the political impacts of the industrial revolution.

The concept of political emergence, and its underlying notion of complex adaptive systems, challenges this ahistorical, linear relationship between 'the people' and national power. A society's political system is complex by the number of agents and their diversity: the number of communities with different ethnic, religious preferences, differences in historical grievances, diversity of opinion leaders, of power holders, etc. New forms of this complexity evolve and emerge from these systems of agents preempting, responding and adapting to changes within the system itself, and the behavior of other agents. Further, attempts to influence a complex, adaptive political system run into the additional problem of accounting for the difference degrees of influence that each agent has on the system's outcome. Agents interact on the political system based on their social and societal preferences, which are influenced by their culture, values and a sense of their identity formed in their particular social and historical contexts.

The daunting challenge for a stabilization mission then is how to design military, political or aid actions to influence a complex, adaptive political system to generate the desired end state. A population-centric approach inspired by political philosophy of assent of the governed for the legitimacy of government to achieve stability cannot easily account for the emergence problem. The assumption is that popular support for the government generates legitimacy, which in turn produces stability. This is at best a hypothesized syllogism, if not a normative view of how political dynamics between the people and the state ought to be according to Western political philosophy.

The second theoretical problem affecting a population-centric approach to government legitimacy derived from economist Mancur Olson's theory of collective action. In his 1965 book *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups*, Olson postulated that members of a large group have no individual interest in paying for the cost of collective benefits like roads or public safety. (Olson 1971) Olson considered that each member of a large group would generally prefer to "free-ride", that is let "the others pay the entire cost, and ordinarily would get any benefit provided whether he had borne part of the cost or not." (Ibid. 24)

Free-riding attitude can also be explained by perception that an individual contribution will not make a noticeable difference to the totality of the common benefit produced, and that the community is not likely to notice the absence of that person's contribution. Olson further stipulated that selective incentive such direct benefits, shaming or coercion are required to make members contribute to the collective welfare of the group. Olson's theory goes a long way to explain the logic of tax evasion and conversely why states make the payment of taxes mandatory.

The logic of collective action applies even more keenly to individuals living in the host nation of a stabilization mission. Very few persons find themselves in a position where their contribution makes a

difference to stability in the country experiencing conflict. That would encourage people to free-ride, since active participation for the government or the insurgency can attract brutal selective incentives from other side. Thus, the most rational course of action for the average person in a civil war is to free-ride by keeping one head's down and see to the immediate needs of his or her family. Counter-insurgency approaches proposed by Galula and Thompson have focused on how to discourage individuals from joining an insurgency, by providing selective incentives for people to free ride or at best to support the government. Their counter-insurgency tactics may have utility in reducing the military capabilities of an insurgency, but these tactics do not address how focusing on the population generates national political power. Rather, the aim is to defend the status quo for a preferred government in place.

Another element of the reductionist approach between the people and political power is that people can be expected to behave according to their best interest, with a normative assumption that this best interest would be to live in a liberal democratic state. Of course, one must always question assumptions that people will always adopt a course of action that is in their best interest, especially in war zones. Pure rational choice theory posits that actors seek complete information to optimize cost-benefit decisions, while being perfectly aware of what outcomes they prefer. Nobel Prize-winning research on rational choice has rather determined that people are likely to choose objectively worse options depending on how the options are framed, and that they are likely to only seek good enough information to make decisions. (Kahneman) One of these framing effects of particular interest to national building efforts is that people tend to avoid options that represent a loss. Individuals are likely to defect from contributing to a theoretical, better long-term future of political stability when faced by immediate costs in terms of security and welfare. People in a non-Western society may perceive the promotion of a liberal democratic state as a threat to their values, further complicating assumptions made by an external agent of how people in that society make cost-benefit calculations.

As Thompson remarked about COIN operations in Malaya, it was suicide to ask the population to actively support the government until the area has been cleared of insurgent forces. Insurgents or organized crime groups tend to have much greater freedom of action to target violence to make examples out of alleged collaborators. Governments and counter-insurgent forces face the much more difficult task of providing security to the greater number. This greatly complicates the task of encouraging individuals to take an active role in supporting the government, since insurgents and criminals may apply brutal negative incentives to keep the population on side or to at least defect from supporting the government.

1.3 Government legitimacy and the democratic peace theory

> Democratically governed nations are more likely to secure the peace, deter aggression, expand open markets, promote economic development, protect American citizens, combat international terrorism and crime, uphold human and worker rights, avoid humanitarian crises and refugee flows, improve the global environment, and protect human health.
>
> - US State Department[4]

A natural extension of the social contract as the basis for the authority of the state is the concept of universal franchise democracy, where every citizen has the right to vote and to run for elections. But this preference for democracy goes beyond the normative bias of Western states for their own political regime as the preferred form of political order. (O'Donnell).

As indicated by the statement from the US State Department above, there is also a belief among those who support a liberal view of international relations that the spread of democracy to all states represents the best way to achieve international peace and security. In international relations this is referred to as the democratic peace theory. (Ungerer)

[4] U.S. State Department http://www.state.gov/j/drl/democ/ accessed 31 January 2013

The general logic of this theory is that democracies are less likely to wage wars because the population would have to bear the burden of the fighting can vote to sanction governments that pursue aggressive policies. Authors from the liberal tradition of international relations have even claimed that the democratic peace is “as close as anything we have to a law of international relations.” (Moravcsik 531, quoting Levy)

Other authors have questioned the generalization of the democratic peace, noting for example that democracies tend to have a greater willingness to intervene and overthrow non-democratic foreign rivals than other autocratic countries. (Bueno de Mesquita) The general argument that the population would use their democratic vote to avoid burdening the costs of foreign “wars of choice” needs to consider that Western governments now rely on small professional armies, and that the size of their economies enables them to engage in wars without exposing their populations to noticeable hardships. Also, NATO members have to weigh their obligations to the alliance against the reservations of their populations against a given conflict.

The recent novelty since the end of the Cold War is that the democratic peace has morphed into an offensive version, meaning that the Western states have been willing to engage in military operations to spread democracy and human rights. During the Cold War period there was a relative status quo between the normative divide of approaching human rights as either civil and political rights and social and economic rights, with interventions in unstable countries limited in the East-West spheres of influence. The most notable exception during that period being the Vietnam War, where strategist Bernard Brodie described the American involvement as “Liberal evangelism”, as a “saving mission to the world, including a global New Deal-ism that the US deal with poverty, repression, and injustice everywhere.” (Brodie 116)

Post-1991 however, the West, and especially the United States, has aggressively promoted democratization and human rights as the fundamental basis for international peace. (Morgan 2012) With the notable exception of Rwanda in 1994 where insurgent forces under the command of Major-General Paul Kagamé overthrew the genocidal government in place, international operations since the end of the Cold War have principally relied on a strategy of setting up the institutions of democracy as a short hand for achieving an end state of stability.

This is somewhat odd given the difficulties involved in establishing the interdependent institutions needed for a functioning democracy as a stable political system. As Francis Fukuyama notes: “Liberal Democracy is more than majority voting in elections; it is a complex set of institutions that restrain and regularize the exercise of power through law and a system of checks and balances.” (Fukuyama). Therefore, committing to the project of democratization, missions have gone beyond setting up voting mechanisms to the much broader challenge of state building.

What is this complex set of institutions mentioned by Fukuyama? The USIP *Guiding Principles to Stabilization and Reconstruction* notably point to effective rule of law and governance institutions: justice and just legal frameworks; public order; accountability to the law; access to justice; and, culture of lawfulness. (USIP 7-3) Some of these institutions require investments in building up organizations with significant needs for infrastructure and frontline capabilities like the “three c’s” of the governance line of operation, i.e., cops, courts and correctional services. Missions have tended to focus on building the tangible outputs needed to build public institutions, such as building schools and courthouses, procuring equipment, and investing in training of a new civil service and of security forces.

Arguably, the greater challenge deals with cultural issues. The Western liberal democratic state model relies on the acceptance of norms of how civil servants, politicians and member of the security forces ought to serve the state and the population. These norms have to take root where preexisting institutions in the host nation society, like clientelism and craft, are viewed by power holders and the population as more effective and legitimate than the new depersonalized norms. Missions make assumptions to the effect that with enough financial incentive, over-the-shoulder mentoring and education actors will naturally abandon former norms for the liberal state package. The risk of holding steadfast to that assumption is that these organizations could become mere Potemkin villages, where existing power structures persist behind the

facades of electoral systems. (Cameron; Schumpeter 271-272) Host nation power holders can adapt more quickly to the incentive structure imposed by Western missions than for missions to adapt to the baseline institutions of the host nation. In this way missions can soon become boxed in by power holders who learn to build Potemkin institutions to exploit international funding while preserving existing power relationships.

Even if the host nation society is open to democratic change, the norms and institutions of democracy may be reinterpreted in accordance with existing notions of the place of individuals within group identities and the expectations of redistribution of the spoils of power. These expectations are also complex, as they feed into a network of perceived and actual obligations to both established and emerging constituencies and dependents. Frederic Schaeffer's research in Senegal provides an interesting case about how Western- style democratization was transformed into institutions of *Demokaraasi* realigned with existing norms of 'big man' authoritarianism. (Schaeffer 40-49)

The same phenomenon tends to happen to the public administration of the host nation supported by stabilization mission funds and trainers. Missions expect that host nation officials will automatically internalize a culture a depersonalized, professional civil service that is posited as the norm in the West. It is somewhat optimistic to expect that a public service system based on graft supporting complex networks of redistribution (up to patrons and down to clients) can be changed in the short time frame of stabilization missions.

Stabilization missions, ideally, should define end states and exist strategies based on the achievement some measurable level of sustainable stability. The bias in favor democratization however leads to a counter-productive shortcut in this area. There may be a temptation to equate the establishment of formal institutions of democracy and running of a few "good enough" national elections as a substitute for an exit strategy. Elections results may be coopted, and represent little in terms of stable political coalitions.

1.4 Impacts of the population-centric approach and nation-building on the comprehensive approach

The aim here was not to provide a thorough review of the literature on the causal inference between liberal democratic state building and stability. Rather, the argument here is that normative bias for individual welfare and the spread of the democratic states bring unrealistic expectations on the scope and level of inclusiveness of the comprehensive approach.

The comprehensive approach is meant to capture the scale and spread of governmental and non-governmental civilian agencies whose contributions are necessary in theory to achieve stability under the liberal democratic state building model. Tasks range from the delivery of life-saving humanitarian assistance to long-term economic development. The model also heavily relies on reforming, restoring and building institutions for the rule of law and security, requiring a reinforced legion of judges, lawyers, police and military mentors from different contributing countries.

A complete list of all civilian agencies and of experts required for nation building would undoubtedly spread across more pages than this article. The point here is the sheer number and varieties of civilian actors required for nation building raise a formidable problem of Clausewitzian friction. According to Clausewitz "Everything is very simple in war, but the simplest thing is difficult. These difficulties accumulate and produce a friction, which no man can imagine exactly who has not seen war". (Clausewitz Bk.1 Chap. 7)

This plethora of actors and the interdependence of functions create a complex system of moving parts. Even simple difficulties with building one part will accumulate and compound the risk of achieving the end state. For example, rule of law institutions are dependent on working constituent parts. It is nice to have decently competent police force, but without proper criminal laws, courts to convict offenders and acceptable correctional facilities to hold them,

Beyond the general problem of friction for nation-building, the liberal democratic state building model also imposes a very high requirement for inclusiveness on the comprehensive approach. Or, more simply put, a requirement for civilian agencies to contribute to the 'unity of effort' of the mission objectives. Difficulties for integration can be expected to arise from fundamental differences between the aims and internal cultures of humanitarian and development actors. Further difficulties can also come from a basic problem of collective action between government agencies of states contributing to the mission, as well as individual national agendas and expectations.

Humanitarian agencies-especially those basing their operations on the principles of neutrality and impartiality- can be expected to resist cooptation to support the mission's political objectives. Some of this resistance can still be attributed to cultural differences between humanitarian culture and negative perceptions of the military institutions. However, in recent years humanitarian NGOs and United Nations (UN) aid agencies have considerably improved in their capacity and readiness to interact with multinational stability missions based on existing humanitarian-military guidelines. (Oslo Guidelines 2007)

Substantial potential conflicts between humanitarians and multinational forces do remain, such as a lack of acceptance of the notion that military forces need to establish security before humanitarian activities can take place. Humanitarian agencies' preferred concept of operation is to gain the agreement of all actors to ensure access to beneficiaries and security for field staff. As a result, agencies tend to view multinational forces as just another party to the conflict. Mission planners should not assume that humanitarian agencies would naturally become partners because the mission proposes to bring security at field level. Or, for that matter, assume that humanitarian agencies buy into the military notion that international forces are needed to establish security to allow aid operations to proceed.

Civilian agencies active in the development and post-conflict recovery fields have traditionally had less resistance to interacting with stabilization missions. This can perhaps be explained by the culture of development actors that tends to align with the liberal tradition of peace and progress. To offer a broad generalization, development NGOs typically do not have the same experience as humanitarian agencies in negotiating access and security with armed groups in conflict environments. Development actors may therefore be more inviting to place themselves under the security umbrella of a stabilization mission and to support community-based projects and political objectives of the mission.

Cultural and operational frictions between development actors and a stability mission nevertheless remain. Individuals dedicated to improving the welfare and human rights in other countries may negatively perceive violence in general and security forces in particular as philosophical sources of human oppression. Their perception of men and women in uniform acquired from the behavior of certain forces in authoritarian states may color their perception of NATO troops. Development actors do not generally see their work as inherently political. Often, beneficiary populations and communities have been disenfranchised from a direct say in their national politics, but most development work does not focus on fostering direct political action.

Frictions with development actors would rather come from operational factors. Development programs normally adopt long timelines to generate substantial change, much beyond the duration of typical stabilization missions. Although on that point the timeframe of the international military presence in the Balkans, DR Congo, and now Afghanistan aligns more with the life cycle of development programs than of immediate life-saving humanitarian aid.

Military and civilians leaders of stability missions, pressed by their political masters back home given the financial and political costs of prolonged missions, tend to insist on more rapid pace for achieving measurable results. Development projects seldom generate change in a one to three year window. Development program planning certainly does not produce the sort of short-term milestones that that mission planners would hope from civilian actors. More fundamentally however, the core objective of development is to enable human and social progress, and not lead to short-term political and security stability. Aligning

the objectives of both worlds under a perfect assumption of 'unity of effort' in any case can be expected to present substantial challenges.

Mission planners should also not underestimate the difficulties inherent in herding the efforts of the civilian ministries of governments contributing to a broad scope national building stability mission. In theory, contributing governments agree to actively support the political objectives of the overall mission. One can also assume that the internal coordination of defense, foreign affairs and aid ministries has greatly improved, such as Canada's own whole-of-government approach gained from shared experiences in Kandahar province. Bureaucratic competition between these departments for funding and policy position within their own government agenda will be echoed and multiplied in the cooperation between civilian agencies within the stabilization mission.

While NATO's military organizations can rely on long-standing efforts to foster cooperation and interoperability, equivalent arrangements do not exist between all the different states' foreign affairs and aid ministries. There are multiple forums where diplomats and donor agencies exchange and collaborate, both bilaterally and within multilateral institutions, which may also include formal memoranda of understanding and official letters of agreement that provide documentation of "special relationships". But this diplomatic and donor collaboration does not naturally extend towards contributing with a single voice to the efforts of a stabilization mission. Embassies can be expected to seek bilateral diplomatic advantages with the host nation government. In addition, domestic foreign policy and aid agendas, subject to changing domestic political climates, will have an impact on how and how much foreign and aid ministries of each contributing government support the common end state of the mission.

Those difficulties can increase with the need to involve government agencies not typically involved in mentoring duties in conflict areas, such the judiciary, customs or treasury officials. Countries with no standing civilian deployment roster for public administration experts may struggle with recruiting enough civil servants willing and capable to support nation-building functions. Once in the host nation these civilian mentors may be outside the diplomatic loop and as a result, do not fully grasp how their role in host nation ministries can support the broader stability end state of the overall mission, thus creating more internal points of friction within the mission. In certain cases contributing governments may volunteer to build essential sectors of the host nation's public administration. Should a contributing government or international organization drop the ball in building an essential system like courts, this would create a major friction point and force the mission to fill the gap. (ICG 10) The use of private civilian contractors can add to this problem, since contractors are guided by the terms of reference of their contracts to guide their performance, and not by how their work affects the political outcome.

Coordination issues between different states' civilian agencies pale in comparison with the fundamental problem of collective action between civilian agencies of troop-contributing governments to fully commit to a mission's stability end state. At the best of times civilian ministries tend to be fairly risk averse in serving the will of their political and legislative masters. Ministries face numerous domestic legal and bureaucratic constraints, such as rules on how to transfer public funds a foreign government's civil service or how to award contracts to private contractors to support a host nation ministry.[5] For the most part, civilian ministries tend to be risk averse because civil servants themselves are seldom rewarded for committing their organizations to an ambitious foreign project with unclear hopes for success. Similarly the performance measurement frameworks utilized by government agencies may use aspirational targets that do not reflect the complexity of the implementation context.

As with other collective action problems, the expected behavior of most contributing governments is to free ride to gain collective benefits, such as scoring alliance points with the mission's leading power(s), but defect from paying a political or bureaucratic cost for any failure of the mission. The more ambitious the stated end

[5] Canada. Policy on Transfer Payments. Treasury Board of Canada, Secretariat. October 2008. http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pol/doc-eng.aspx?section=text&id=13525

state – for example, building a liberal democratic state in Afghanistan- the more likely ministries of contributing states will find ways to insulate their governments and individual agencies against blame for potential failure.

Arguably, one such mechanism is the use of multilateral trust funds to manage complex stability projects, such the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund, managed by the World Bank (WB), and Law and Order Trust Fund, managed by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). Trust funds are convenient mechanisms for transferring public funds to a qualified recipient like the UN to fund projects in the host nation. But, they also create layers of diffused accountability that place distance between the funds provided and the actual results or lack thereof on the ground. They create a chain of partners, from the donor agency getting a certain amount of influence on the governance of the fund based on the contribution, to the managing agency, then on to the host nation ministry, then on to the implementing agency, then maybe onto community development.

These arrangements between donors and implementing agencies may be convenient for valid, and not so valid, bureaucratic and legal reasons. However, they do make it difficult for project funding and implementation to match the requirements of military planning to bring together partners and resources to generate complex nation-building effects. On the one side, such a complex arrangement for funding and implementing social and civil service projects raise the likelihood that Clausewitzian friction will form in the system, and as a result stability effects do not get delivered. On the other, this complexity offers an opportunity for all actors to deflect blame on the other layers for poor results. It is unclear whether or not this is a bug or a feature of the civilian aid and development delivery mechanisms in stabilization missions.

In any case, this points to a deeper problem with democratization and nation-building as achievable approaches to generate stability within the means and time-frames available to stability missions. Arguably, a fundamental problem with current stabilization approaches may be that the spreading of the liberal democratic state to non-Western contexts is an unworkable political object to give to NATO military forces. In keeping with Clausewitz and with modern democratic and civilian political control of the military, the responsibility to determine achievable political objectives rests with civilian political leaders. However, a political object based on the democratic peace theory, may be fundamentally flawed and stretch the capabilities and expertise of otherwise very professional forces designed to provide national military security.

If this argument holds any kind of real-world application for stabilization missions, then more involvement by civilian experts and agencies under a broader and deeper comprehensive approach cannot rescue an unworkable approach to stabilization based on a Western normative bias for the liberal democratic state. It is not surprising that many civilian agencies resist the call to align their efforts to flawed political object and mission design. The rally call made by stabilization mission commanders to civilians agencies to that ‘we are all in the same boat’ to encourage the unity of effort may not be so appealing to civilians if they consider that the nation-building boat is not seaworthy.

2. CASTING THE POPULATION AND DEMOCRACY ASIDE: A POWER CENTRIC THEORY TO ACHIEVE STABILITY

2.1 Theoretical foundation for a power-holder centric strategy

Stability can be very difficult to achieve given the limited time and resources available to multinational missions. That can be made especially hard as previously argued when missions adopt strategies that focus on gaining the support of the population and on ambitions of building a liberal democratic state. A broader comprehensive approach cannot be expected to drastically improve the effectiveness of stability operations when based on theoretical foundations that may owe more to the promotion of Western political institutions than to the power dynamics in a given conflict.

Instead, a more practical theoretical foundation to achieve stability should focus on shaping the political interactions between host nation power holders towards the desired end state, and not on the political will of the population. This different foundation removes the population as a central variable to political stability, and by extension greatly reduces the scope of operations away from playing whack-a-mole with insurgents while building democratic institutions. It removes the ambitious demand on international and government security forces to protect the population, and even to achieve monopoly over means of coercion throughout the national territory. The aim remains for stabilization missions to influence the establishment of a sustainable, legitimate government as way to reach stability.

This alternative foundation borrows from the political science theories on political order by of Charles Tilly, Guillermo O'Donnell, Carles Boix and Milan Svolik, and finally by Stathis Kalyvas. Taken together, these authors' reflections on complex governance furnish a coherent theoretical framework that can anchor the overall strategy of stabilization missions. The second element of the alternative approach is to treat this power-centric political arrangement as a complex adaptive system, with power-holders as the key agents to the system to be influenced by a stabilization mission towards a desired political end state.

In *War Making and State Making as Organized Crime*, Charles Tilly sees the development of the Western state as the most advanced form of a protection racket. The state provides both the threat of violence if the populace does not conform to the laws of the land, and offers protection against that threat. That state also promises to protect the people against the specter of foreign attacks. Mancur Olson in 1993 proposed a similar argument, where he saw government as stationary thieves limiting their predations out of self-interest to allow trade and investment to flourish. (Olson, Dictatorship, Democracy and Development)

Tilly adopts a conflict-driven view of the origin of the state, one where the survival of a group as an independent political entity depended on the capacity to extract and direct national resources for war. To maximize resources, capital accumulation is required, which tends to flourish in environments where private property is respected and contracts enforced. As with Olson's stationary thief, governments must limit protection money demanded (taxes) so as not to discourage investments, and establish national institutions and infrastructures to enable mass-mobilization to defend against competing states.

Other authors like early 20th century right-wing German legal scholar Carl Schmitt have suggested that communities gain their identities through opposing external groups. (Poggi 6) As the Second World War demonstrated, extreme identity politics represent a threat to peace and human welfare. War as maker of states and national identities may also explain the relative weakness of certain African states, including the forces pushing for the partition of others. According to this theory, African states are weak because they inherited borders and populations from arbitrary colonial pens on maps rather than from a war-driven process of territorial competition and identity formation. (Herbst; Rosberg; Reno)

Germane to state stability is Tilly's reflection on the notion of government legitimacy beyond the control of the most force by a given group Tilly adopts Arthur Stinchcombe's view of legitimacy, which depends rather little on an abstract principle of assent of the governed: "The person over whom power is exercised is not usually as important as other power-holders." (Stinchcombe 150) From this, Tilly argues, "Legitimacy is the probability that other authorities will act to confirm decisions of a given authority." This is not only because other power holders fear retaliation from the group controlling the most force, but because they share an interest in maintaining a stable environment. (Tilly 171)

While Tilly's pragmatic view of government legitimacy may represent a solid start for stability strategies, it may not be enough to lead to *sustainable* stability. Political arrangements built around a punctual balance of power may not survive changes in the material capabilities of actors. PH coming to power may forget soon forget about the interests of author authorities needed to execute the government's decision.

Western states have gradually developed institutions that remove these sorts of calculations of balance of power and interests between the executive, other branches of government and powerful social actors. Political institutions, such as civilian oversight of the military or the binding nature of court decisions, have evolved progressively as societies rejected absolutist rule. Institutions acquired power because actors within that society came to accept the binding nature of the rules and practices that institutions represent. Actors also adopted social identities in line with the rules and values of these institutions, e.g. police officers, judges, and commissioned officers. People in these societies comply with institutions not only because of the "logic of consequence" out of fear of some coercive or social sanction, but because they feel that following the rules is the appropriate behavior. (March & Olsen)

Institutions, then, do matter for the sustainability of political orders. In civil wars unfortunately institutions have lost their power to as an external authority regulation the conflicts between power holders. Even more unfortunately, the imposition of liberal democratic institutions by an external force is not likely to immediately create viable institutions. Military force and coercive diplomacy may force power holders to adopt a logic of consequence, and as a result motivate them to play along by not confronting new state institutions. Power holders are less likely however to adopt a logic of appropriateness, to follow new institutions because it is what they "ought" to do. Should the external pressure be lifted, power holders may no longer be bound by a logic of consequence and jettison the imposed institutions.

A difficulty for stabilization strategies then is to pursue the establishment of adapted institutions that are likely to be accepted by the actors, but without mortgaging the future acceptance of democratic institutions as an appropriate regime to resolve political and social conflicts. Political scientist Guillermo O'Donnell in his research on recently democratized countries (notably in Latin America), proposed that one such institution may be what he called the *institutionalized wager*. (O'Donnell)

O'Donnell suggests that democracy is more than the sum of its institutions, such as the right to vote and to run for elections, supported by afferent rights such as free speech, freedom of assembly, etc. What mattered most for political stability is that actors accept an institutionalized wager, namely that voting can result in the "wrong" people gaining power. (Ibid. 18) The wager applies in the belief that the "right" people can regain power in future elections, and that incumbents will yield to election results.

Although O'Donnell writes about newly established democracies, this notion of institutionalized wager is arguably transferable to the political interactions between power holders in stabilization contexts. In absence of a functioning democracy, the crucial first step is to influence the conclusion of power sharing and power-rotation arrangements that the players will follow beyond the immediate logical of consequence.

Admittedly this is no small feat, especially if political interactions between power-holders constitute complex adaptive systems. Why would power holders agree to these arrangements then? Authors Boix and Svolik offer a promising theory. After studying authoritarian regimes, they suggest that it is possible for even dictators to respect power-sharing arrangements. This is because dictators "do not control enough resources to govern alone, and therefore seek the support of notables with whom they promise to share power." (Boix 1)

The authors argue that these arrangements cannot function for long without a degree of predictability and transparency. Otherwise, power holders may come to suspect that the people at the top are reneging on sharing the spoils, and the people at the top may start to suspect that other authorities resume the business of planning coups. A lack of an institutionalized power-sharing practice would tend to threaten the stability of the system, and ultimately fail to serve the best interests of the players. Boix and Svolik's research suggests that it is possible to institutionalize a power-sharing wager between power holders in the host nation as a cornerstone to stability.

In addition to Tilly and O'Donnell, another theoretical foundation that would assist in designing better operational design for stability comes from the research of Stathis Kalyvas on political violence in civil wars published in 2003. (Kalyvas) In this article, Kalyvas argues that civil wars are more than monolithic blocks of actors resorting to conflict either because of greed of long-standing grievances between groups, or fought along a 'master cleavage' narrative. Rather, Kalyvas sees in civil wars a complex and ambiguous system or relationships and alliances woven through the interactions between the central actors of a conflict, and peripheral power-holders and groups at the periphery.

In states containing diverse religious, linguistic and ethnic communities, what was initially identified as the central conflict may become reinterpreted along the lines of local political tensions. For example, the author mentions a case during the Spanish civil war in the 1930s where a local conflict was fueled by the competition between two doctors to obtain a state-sponsored position. At the local level both sides claimed to follow the Republican/Nationalist cleavage, but fighting occurred along deeper lines of group competition and alliances. Local actors often seize upon the opportunity to reopen local conflicts by using the national instability as a pretext. (Ibid. 478)

Kalyvas' argument for centre-periphery dynamics in civil wars offers a quite useful insight to the power-holder centric approach to stability proposed here. It helps refine strategies to influence the right target audiences, so to speak. Namely, it allows separating power-holders between central and peripheral actors. Instead of trying to extend government authority down to local populations, a centre-periphery lens simplifies the equation by opening options for power holders to be leaned upon for providing immediate security. This would relieve a nascent government and the stabilization mission from having to stand up huge numbers of soldiers and police officers to provide security to the entire national territory. The challenge would remain regarding how selective incentives can be successfully applied on peripheral power holders to support the desired balance of power between core actors.

By the same logic, peripheral actors could also be leaned upon to facilitate the work of civilian agencies providing humanitarian aid, and assisting with the delivery of social services and economic development. This largely reflects the operational experience of humanitarian agencies operating in conflict. Security guarantees granted by local power-holders mean more in general than government decrees issued in the capital.

2.2 Operational benefits of the power centric approach to achieve stability

Drawing from the theories from Tilly, O'Donnell and Kalyvas, this power-holder centric approach offers advantages for mission effectiveness and efficiency when compared with population-centric and nation building efforts.

First, a power-centric approach sets power as one of the key independent variables to have an effect on the dependent variable of political stability. Power must be taken in its most basic form, namely the "ability to act or produce an effect."[6] As such, the ability may come from force, money, granted by institutions, social norms or from personal influence, etc. Political power can be measured just like in physics, since it manifests itself on the effects it produces, or potentially can produce, over a given period of time.

Second, influencing the political behavior and the interactions of power holders can draw from state practices and research in deterrence and compellence theories. *Deterrence* is the use of a credible threat to prevent a party from pursuing a certain action; *compellence* involves actions to persuade an opponent to take some action, particularly targeting these persuasive actions at the elites who are taking the decisions that are most influential to the country's development. (Schelling; Waxman) Deterrence theories received vast

[6] http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/power

investments in research from the start of the nuclear age, with great attention paid to understanding and anticipating the reactions of adversaries to different threats.

Compellence theories are supported by centuries of state experience with coercive diplomacy. The historical range can be traced back to Thucydides' dramatic dialogue between the Athenians and the Melians in the Peloponnesian War (Thucydides Bk. 5) up to current Security Council resolutions. (Morgan) Secretary of State Kerry's press statement of March 1, 2014 regarding the situation in Ukraine[7], and following media interviews, are clearly couched in deterrence language to discourage Russia from intervening militarily.

Third, choosing to deal with only the essential power-holders simplifies the management of their collective action problems. By definition, essential power holders are those whose actions or defections have a noticeable impact on the system. Olson does notes that collective action situations can be more complicated in small groups, since members may act for the common good out of respect for shared social institutions or other motivations external to rational self-interest. (Olson 1971: 4) Nevertheless, small groups make it more difficult for members to free ride or defect. They also simplify the challenge of guiding members to the desired end state through the application of selective incentives.

These incentives may come in negative or positive varieties, such as bribes or threats, to reduce or increase the cost of non-compliance. Incentives may be applied directly to a power-holder, or indirectly through a "two step-flow" process of using an intermediary with influence on the target audience. The good news here is that both civilian agencies and NATO forces share theories of influence that may be used to shape selective incentives. Military commanders have doctrine and specialized troops trained in information and influence activities (e.g. US Army FM 3-13), while civilians working in development and reconstruction tend to have an education in social marketing.

It is unclear what impact NATO influence activities have had on the outcomes of the ISAF mission. Nevertheless, the tool kits offered by military influence activities, social marketing and commercial marketing can help the design of strategies to guide the decision-making processes of host nation power-holders. These tools can be made all the more effective with the support of civilian and military intelligence resources to establish the baseline conditions of the social and political system of the host nation, and to track how the agents and the system react to external incentives.

The way to achieve stability in this power-centric approach is to treat the political system of the host nation as a complex adaptive system, and to view the role of the civil-military stabilization mission as the influencing agent on that system. From a practical perspective, this means that the mission's governance line of operation, responsible for designing and executing the political influence campaign, becomes the supported line of operation for the duration of the mission. Activities in the security and development lines of operations must be designed and deployed with of view of how their effects will affect the achievement of the political end state.

The broader challenge for an external stabilizing agent is how to deliberately apply incentives to group members, while their collective interactions amount to a complex and adaptive system existing in another culture. It may be reasonably easy to anticipate how a player will reaction to a bribe or a threat based on available intelligence. It is more difficult to assess how each each member will react and adapt to reactions of other group members, and how the members will collectively adapt to the external incentives.

What would be the constituent elements of such a complex adaptive system? For the purposes of the model presented in figure 22-1 below, the mission would be the influencing agent, placed outside of the system. The mission, of course, is an agent of the system, with the potential to provide unintended and intended influence on the other agents in the system. A potential way to reduce the significance of the mission on the system is perhaps to keep the mission footprint small, so as to limit the points of contacts between it and the

[7] http://www.state.gov/secretary/remarks/2014/03/222720.htm

system. This would exclude, for example, deploying large number of coalition troops to avoid the complications that their presence would have as unintended incentives on other agents. Similarly, large bases, a multiplication of ‘consent-winning’ projects, and a large presence of private contractors, for example, should be avoided given their negative potential impact on the system.

As the influencing agent, the role of the mission is to provide selective incentives to the system to guide the system towards a desired end state. These incentives can be positive (e.g., resources, political support) or negative (e.g., political marginalization, use of force, disruption of the illegal economy). Ideally, the influencing agent would seek to apply *structural* incentives to the system, as opposed to incentives overtly directed at agents. A structural incentive would try to influence the rules of interactions between power holders, so that agents would respond to changes introduced in the environment to optimize their outcomes. This would limit the risk that power holders would adopt superficial changes to specifically react to the actions of the mission. Direct application of negative incentive may be required, such as the use of force against a power holder within the rules of engagement. Such direct action would have to be weighed according to the influence effect on other agents and on the system as a whole.

The system itself is actually a ‘system of systems’ where the core system to be influenced is the one representing the political interactions between power holders (PH), with its end state of a government supported by the power holders that have not been excluded from the system during the course of the mission (the crossed-out PH element in figure 22-1). Between the start state and the end state, the inner system of political interactions evolves within acceptable boundaries towards a margin of acceptable outcomes as determined by the mission. This is represented in figure 22-1 by the cone-shaped boundaries between the state-state and the end-state. Power holders are the primary targets for influence actions by the mission, under the assumption that these agents control resources and can influence constituencies.

Since a system becomes more complex the more agents and number of interconnections get added (Lansing), it is important to limit the number of power holders to those with sufficient power to interact as peers to influence the outcome of the system. The leadership of each power holder over their own constituencies needs to be also treated as a nested complex system (Lichtenstein). The taks of identifying the most significant power holders and to track their continued leadership over their constituencies would fall on the mission’s intelligence and political analysis resources.

In keeping with the complex and adaptive nature of the system, this does not necessarily mean that the mission would seek to guide a predetermined power holder-say, a group arbitrarily selected from the host nation’s diaspora-to come out on top as an end state. Rather, the mission should accept the emergent nature of the system, namely that an unexpected political arrangement may result from power holder interactions. The key is to keep these possible emergent arrangements within the tolerance boundaries of the desired end state.

Figure 22-1 also includes a peripheral area to the core power holder system that contains other agents relevant to the system. These can notably include local power holders, international organizations and non-governmental organizations, host nation private sector groups, civil society groups, and competing agents to the mission’s influence on the core system. This does not mean that the mission would have to apply negative or positive incentives on peripheral agents such as NGOs. On the contrary, predictable agents like the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) or Médecins sans frontières should only be included to account for their effect on the core system, should there be such an effect. For example, ICRC’s neutral and impartial humanitarian activities, such as visiting detainees on all sides of a conflict, may have a positive effect on building trust between power holders towards a political arrangement.

Direct influence activities may be required against certain peripheral agents like local power holders, but only is a direct intervention is absolutely needed to mitigate an effect on the core system. This would mean that a mission’s civil affairs assets should be dedicated to measuring the significance of peripheral agents to

the core system, instead of focusing on micro-tactical project delivery or efforts to herd hundreds of different NGOs to align to a theoretical unity of effort.

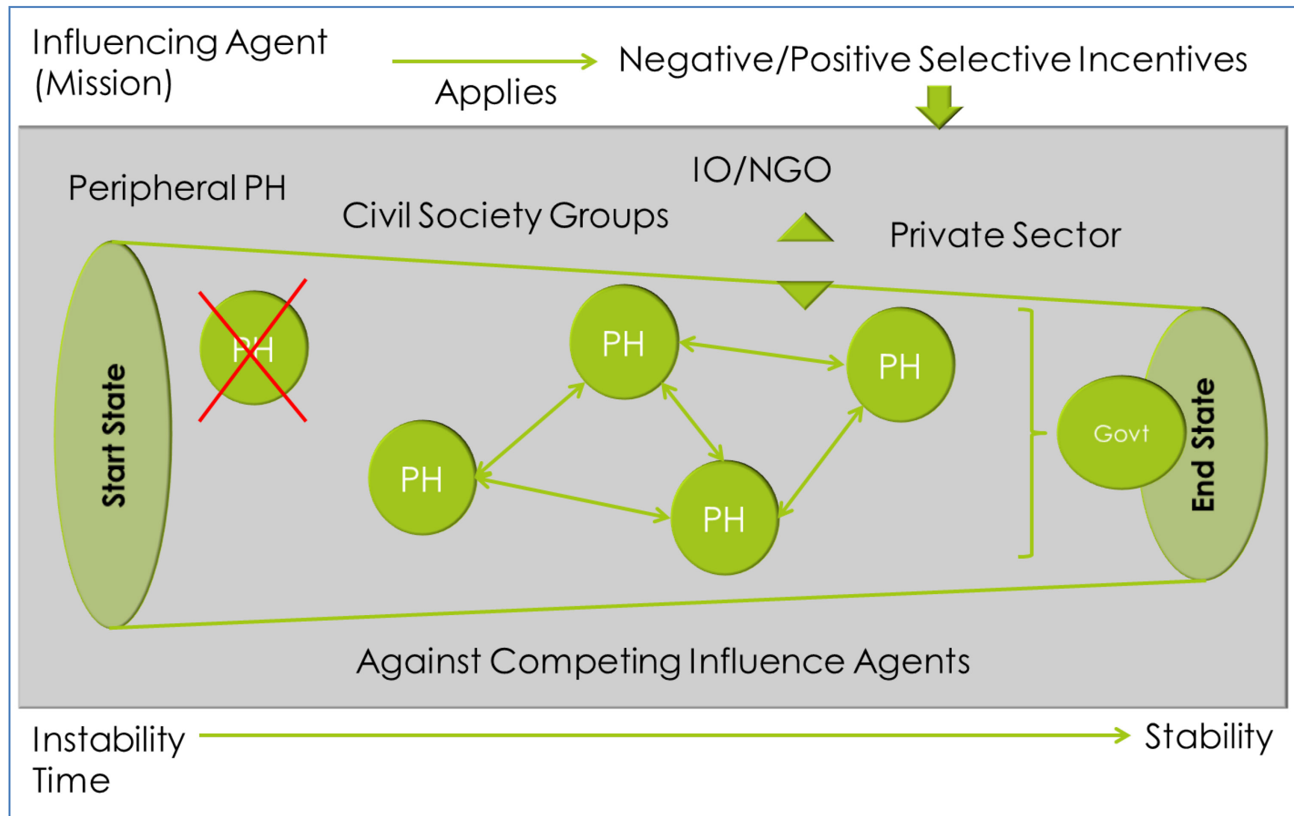

Figure 22-1: Tentative Influence Model on Power Holder Interactions as a Complex Adaptive System of Systems.

More research is required to fully articulate the theoretical and operational elements of this political influence model into a workable alternative for future stabilization missions. Notably, this authors intends to dedicate his upcoming PhD dissertation to the development of a mathematical model for stability in such a complex adaptive system that would include the general elements presented above.

2.3 Implications of the power-centric strategy for the comprehensive approach

What impacts would a power-centric approach aiming to influence a complex adaptive system have on the comprehensive approach for stability operations? The operational benefits of the power-centric approach make it likely that it would substantially reduce both the scope and the degree of inclusiveness of the civilian components of missions required for mission success.

With regard to the scope of the Comprehensive Approach, focusing on power-holders requires civilians with proven political and diplomatic skills and experience. These are more readily found in the diplomatic corps and in the senior ranks of the civil service. Senior civilians with development backgrounds would be needed to liaise with the donor community to ensure unity of effort for program incentives. Private sector contractors could reinforce senior government experts with qualifications in policing of organized crime groups, intelligence collection and analysis, planning, development and social marketing/mass media. However the focus would remain on government agents with experience in government to government relations.

Also in terms of scope, a mission would require a smaller cadre of civilian experts compared with broad nation-building and development tasks. This is advantageous since relatively few civilians in government and in the private sector have the skills, experience and familiarity with military institutions to take on complex stabilization assignments in dangerous environments. Quality matters more than quantity when it comes to civilian experts who can effectively navigate the complex cultural and political landscapes stabilization missions.

More spefically, such a mission would need first of all a very competent inner group of civilian and military leaders to take on the responsibility of delivering the desired political end state. This group would need to be supported by an integrated team of civil-military planners, with individual members fully capable of integrating the security, political and development lines of operations as structural incentives on a complex system. Planners would also play a key role in designing a system of measures of effectiveness to monitor the progress of the system towards the end state.

The mission leadership and planners could not hope to accomplish any of this without the support of military intelligence and political analysis resources. Such dedicated military intelligence assets would have to break from their habit of developing the enemy picture of a context, and instead shift their focus to political and social issues. This article assumes that current signals intelligence and other intelligence tools allow for the near complete monitoring of power holder interactions in real time. This would be essential to allow mission leaders and planners to adjust to the core system's adaptations to applied structural incentives.

Finally, the mission would need to retain a credible capacity to apply military effects, either directly to marginalize armed negative power holders, or indirectly to provide a credible deterrence capibility to the the mission. Arguably, less is more when it comes to the application of military force to generate political influence effects. Theoretically, this force would best be delivered by special operations forces and reliable precision munitions, both enabled by a very clear political and intelligence picture. This would limit the risk of collateral damage and the negative, unintended effects that civilian casualties can generate against influence objectives.

These very skilled civilians would be most needed in operational headquarters (such as in senior civilian roles, as planners, sectoral experts, etc.), with stabilization officers attached to tactical units to reinforce the application of influence activities. Integrated civilian-military teams should instead operate from the formation headquarters responsible for a sub-national area of operation. They should not operate from provincial reconstruction teams, since these structures encourage a micro-tactical view of the conflict, place too much emphasis on lower level key leader engagements at the community level, and focus on projects that have little impact on the national political end state. In fact, focusing on power-holders would allow missions to do away with provincial reconstruction teams completely.

A power-centric approach would also demand a far less ambitious degree of inclusiveness in terms of just how big the comprehensive approach tent needs to be to include external civilian agencies. Moving away from the strategy of bringing security, rule of law and social services to the population removes the need of having to draw in civilian agencies with incompatible mandates or poor institutional skills to generate political effects.

UN agencies and NGOs may be punctually nice to have on board to direct incentives towards a particular power-holder, but for the most part these agencies should be left to operate outside the mission. In missions where the delivery of aid may be of strategic importance, the emphasis should remain on leaning on power-holders to provide access and security. Civilian agencies will naturally use the political lanes thus created.

Missions should continue to deploy soft incentives for liaison and collaboration with external civilian agencies, such as setting up more NGO-friendly information exchange platforms as the Canadian Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) did during the relief effort for Typhoon Haiyan in 2013. (CEDMHA 30)

This way missions can dedicate more resources to collaborating with agencies willing to contribute to the achievement of the political end state as long as this is clearly communicated as the *raison d'être* of the mission.

CONCLUSION

This article for HFM 236 proposed an alternative theory of causal inference for stability that could contribute to better focusing the scope and inclusiveness of the comprehensive approach for future NATO missions. It is unlikely, however, that future missions will abandon population-centric and democratization strategies in favor of a power-holder centric approach that would accommodate less-than-democratic political arrangements as successful end states.

The holding of elections, and calling for the respect of the "voice of the people" are likely to remain fixtures of how Western governments and media articulate normative solutions to non-Western states faced with instability. This suggests continued support for democratic peace theory, and generally for governments to intervene in response to human suffering, to "do" something. It is not evident that in all cases this "something" should take the shape of liberal interventionist, military and state building response supported by a comprehensive approach.

Recent international responses to recent crises in Libya, Yemen, Mali, Central African Republic, South Sudan and Syria, for example, seem to indicate that large nation building missions have fallen out of fashion. It remains to be seen whether this trend originates from budget constraints, war weariness post-Afghanistan, or from the re-emergence of big power politics at the expense of international institutions.

Perhaps this retreat from large nation-building missions will open the way for future multinational interventions conducted under political influence strategies. It would require substantial retooling of mission design and intergovernmental dynamics compared to ISAF, but doing so would provide a clear framework to tailor a comprehensive approach better adapted to influencing political processes in countries requiring NATO interventions. A future focus on smaller missions could favour the power-centric approach presented here, and contributing governments could agree that civilian-military missions supporting the emergence of local legitimate, stable governments could form the basis of future stabilization missions.

Hopefully, further research on this political influence approach to generate stability will yield a workable model to design and deploy future stabilization missions that would be more effective, efficient and more respectful of host nation political dynamics than current population-centric and nation building approaches.

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