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**Notes**

# An Analytical Framework for Whole-of-Government Approach Implementation during Complex Emergencies in Fragile States

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**Abstract**

This short paper raises an analytical framework for a whole-of-government approach (WGA) by intervening countries managing complex emergencies in fragile states. Building on extant literature, this framework intends to clarify how WGA is to be generated and what possible factors could promote it. The framework unpacks policy process stages and levels of cooperation, outcomes to be produced, dynamics of such generation, and incentives for promoting WGA. Such a framework may become a tool for understanding a variety of policy outcomes among Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries that pursue WGA for further effectiveness and efficiency in their external policies.

## 1. Introduction

Handling complex emergencies in fragile states is a challenge for intervening countries. Often, a single agency cannot solve the multiple crises and

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protracted instability that vulnerable state authorities face, namely insecurity, natural disasters, massive population displacement, infectious diseases, and increasing poverty and inequality. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA 1999) defines such emergencies as requiring multiple international interventions (Keen 2008). From the perspective of interveners, maximal support is needed in fragile states that suffer from violent conflict and multiple crises, and to achieve this, intervening countries have adopted a 'whole-of-government approach' (WGA). A WGA tackles 'wicked issues', including complex emergencies that multiple state agencies handle jointly (Christensen & Lægreid 2007). While ministries and agencies that take an approach involving diplomacy, development, and defence—the so-called 3D approach—comprise the core organisations addressing these issues, other ministries may also be involved, such as those handling economic affairs, trade, police, finance, justice, and/or migration. Since the Blair Labour government, the United Kingdom (UK) has become a leader in adopting the most coherent WGAs by intermittently developing the approach's structure. In 2011, the Building Stability Overseas Strategy (BSOS) was jointly launched by the UK's 3D ministries to provide a vision and strategy for reforming the instruments and processes involved in managing conflict and building stability. They noted that an 'integrated approach' is necessary to organise different resources, capabilities, and areas of expertise that can enable effective coordination across government institutions (DFID et al. 2011). Apart from the UK, a range of studies have explained that many Western European countries follow an integrated approach (e.g., OECD, 2006; Patrick & Brown, 2007; Weiss, Spanger, and Van Meurs, 2010; Below & Belzile, 2013; Rotmann & Steinacker, 2013; Van der Lijn, 2015).

By contrast, Japan's experience of pursuing a WGA to deal with complex emergencies has been quite unique. According to the authorities' interpretation

of Constitution Article 9, the activities of the Self-Defense Force (SDF) must be restricted, especially in a war zone. With such a constrained legal system and national context, the Japanese government began to incorporate both state and non-state actors to support fragile countries. According to Yamamoto et al. (2012), without a clear strategy, rigid instrument, or specific mechanism to promote a WGA, actors in the field voluntarily coordinated their activities to maximise efforts in a 'bottom-up' approach. For example, the Ground SDFs (GSDFs) created projects that supported locals in Timor-Leste, Haiti, and Iraq in cooperation with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and international organisations that accessed funding administered by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA). Called an 'All-Japan Approach', these activities were promoted by Japanese officials who pursued it as an end in and of itself (Uesugi 2014). Additionally, Hanatani and Urakami (2016) evaluates viable cooperation between MOFA, GSDFs, and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) to create projects that benefit locals. As a variety of objectives and outcomes from pursuing WGAs are evaluated, a comparative analysis of WGAs between intervening countries can further elaborate on and, in turn, explain the multiple approaches and factors affecting implementation of WGAs to deal with complex emergencies.

In this context, this short paper raises an analytical framework for WGA implementation during complex emergencies in fragile states. This framework intends to elaborate on the elements that characterise the approach each intervening state adopts to guide case studies for examining a variety of WGA formations through to their implementation and outcomes. It identifies the level of cooperation that actors attempt to achieve in their respective policy stages. While top-down and bottom-up tactics are two typical dynamics explaining WGA generation, beyond these, the framework enables us to consider potential factors that drive actors to pursue certain stages of policy processes and

levels of cooperation, and in turn examine what outcomes are produced from their cooperative actions.

The second section provides an overview of recent works examining WGAs by intervening states and the two dynamics for achieving a WGA. Following the identification of actors and their relationships within a WGA, the section explains effectiveness and efficiency as its main objectives. It then offers the expected result of achieving a WGA, which largely distinguishes between pursuing policy coherence or collaboration in the implementation stage. Section three discusses the possible factors that can promote a WGA. It introduces a security environment and political leadership in addition to institutions, with these factors helping the analysis of the various paths to achieving a WGA. The last section concludes with a summary and potential future research topics.

## 2. Paths for Achieving a WGA to Address Complex Emergencies

### *Actors and their relationships*

Activities that address complex emergencies in fragile states may involve political mediation, stabilisation, peace operations, humanitarian relief, reconstruction, and development. The principal WGA actors that initiate such a wide range of activities are the critical government agencies in the intervening state. Simultaneously, other actors become engaged in the issue, from other intervening states, international organisations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), the private sector, citizens, and the government and society of the country (Figure 1). Another notable characteristic of dealing with external emergencies is the physical distance between actors in intervening states. The geographic dimensions of engagement range from country-level headquarters (HQ), where policy is formed and adapted for the relevant country, to the ground level where field operations are implemented.

The separate locations of HQ and field activities characterise the distinctive inter-actor relationships in a WGA dealing with complex emergencies. Both horizontal and vertical interactions exist between actors in the HQ and those in the field. Actors in the field may include dispatched special envoys; embassy, military, and civilian missions; and local offices established on the ground by different agencies.

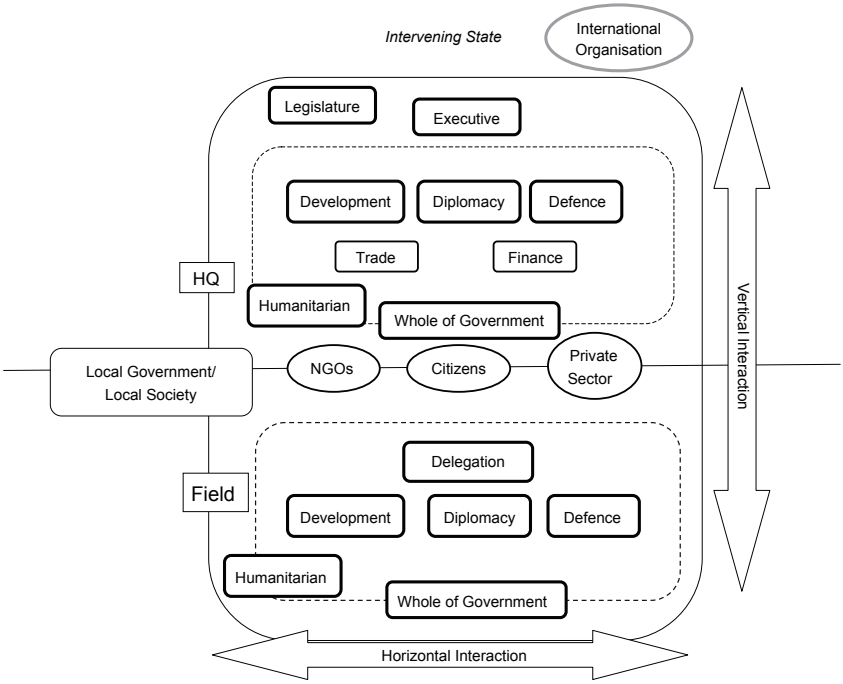



Figure 1: Inter-actor Relationships in a WGA for Addressing Complex Emergencies in Fragile States (Source: Tanaka (Sakabe) 2020)

***Stages of generating a WGA and expected outcomes***

HQ and field actors engage in distinctive stages of WGA generation. Applying a policy studies perspective, HQ actors manage policy or strategy formation and adaptation, but also evaluate and assess policies and strategies after implementation. This is called the 'policy assessment' stage, where policies and strategies are generated as outcomes through cooperative actions. On the other hand, actors in the field mainly deal with policy implementation and operation. This is where policies and strategies are organised into programmes with specific objectives in respective policy areas and then into projects that include actions in the field intended to meet local needs such as food distribution, providing policing services supporting agricultural development. Programmes and projects are often generated not only by actors from intervening countries, but also through iterative interactions with the local government, society, and NGOs. We call this second stage the 'implementation/operation' stage, where programmes and projects are generated through cooperative actions.

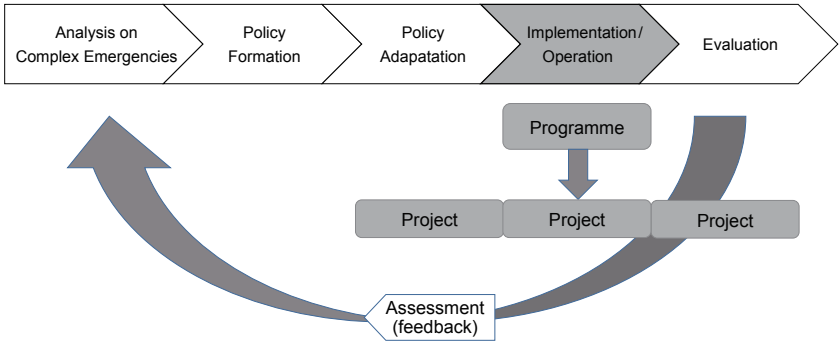



Figure 2: Stages of generating a WGA and expected outcomes
(Source: modified from Kawaguchi 2020)

***Goals and Challenges***

Since complex emergencies create a range of problems that no single actor can tackle, the purpose of a WGA is usually summarised as achieving effectiveness and efficiency by including multiple intervening actors to generate a positive force for sustaining peace. In other words, sequential causal relationships are embedded within this approach (De Coning & Friis 2011). That is, because of its challenging nature, achieving a WGA does not automatically guarantee peace. Outcomes of cooperative actions are just part of many efforts by intervening countries, affected by the rapidly changing conditions of fragile states. This paper thus narrows its focus to examining the process for achieving a WGA, that is, to identify the incentives for generating a WGA, how planning and implementation are sought, and its outcomes.

'Effectiveness' is achieved if cooperation produces a variety of outcomes, from a new policy/strategy, programme, to a project that cannot be achieved by a single agency. 'Efficiency' refers to the amount of effort expended as well as the proper utilisation of time (Friis & Jarmyr 2008). While development actors are concerned with the long-term impact of support, speed is an important factor in emergencies; therefore, a WGA handles the selection of joint activities (European Commission 2015).

Policy level coherence, which is a primary vision of the UK's WGA, emphasises cooperative actions and outcomes at the policy assessment stage. However, policy-led collaboration may be questionable because of the number of deeper impediments to enhancing policy coherence (De Coning & Friis 2011, 252). First, theories assume that, overall, actors pursue long-term impact by mitigating crises, but in practice, they value immediate output at the individual level. Each ministry and agency has the jurisdiction and right to allocate its resources (e.g., goods, human capacity, financial budget, and information). This fundamental division of labour based on functionalism creates sectionalism,

which promotes a strong organisational culture and philosophy in each agency.

Thus, the processes employed to generate a WGA are expected to alleviate differences in organisational culture and decrease barriers to the joint mobilisation of resources (Christensen & Lægreid 2007; Rintakoski & Autti 2008). The degree of cooperation, therefore, is concerned with the degree of autonomy each actor retains. In other words, the extent to which a WGA is achieved can be measured by the extent to which each actor's freedom of action is controlled. Therefore, the process can be scrutinised from the perspectives of 1) the level of cooperation that actors can form, 2) outcomes from cooperative actions, and 3) what factors promote cooperation.

***Level of Cooperation and Two Dynamics for Achieving a WGA***

We modified the model developed by De Coning and Friis (2011) to examine WGA characteristics based on the two stages and expected outcomes as stipulated in the previous subsection. Table 1 specifies that the two stages in achieving a WGA include (1) policy assessment and (2) operation/implementation. This ensures the necessary degree of cooperation. Policy assessment includes policy development and planning, monitoring, and evaluation, which can be primarily conducted at the country-level HQ. Operation/implementation refers to policy implementation through field-level actions, which are often applied outside the HQ, or directly in fragile states.

As outlined in Table 1, a WGA's potential level of cooperation is organised into five categories: unity, integration, collaboration, coordination, and coexistence/competence. 'Unity' is the highest degree of cooperation and is 'likely to occur only in certain unique circumstances and cannot be sustained for long' (De Coning & Friis 2011, 25) because actors' independence is rigorously restricted. 'Coexistence' and 'competence' are categorised into a common degree of cooperation, as neither entails interaction and no

instruments or tools are provided.[1] The highlight of our framework, however, concerns the remaining three degrees of cooperation. 'Integration' is likely to be pursued when autonomy remains intact, especially at the operational stage. This means that the individual actions of respective actors, which are motivated by policies and strategies from HQ, generate outcomes separately, but combinations of such outcomes create cohesive policy implementation. On the other hand, 'collaboration' and 'coordination' assume that HQ does not instruct actors through policies and strategies. Given that the degree of freedom is determined at both the policy assessment and operation/implementation stages, 'collaboration' results in joint working actions on an ad hoc basis when actors meet on common ground. This level of cooperation assumes that cooperative interactions can be organised at the operation stage without clear policy and strategies from HQ, in turn producing programmes and projects. 'Coordination' alternatively highlights separate actions without creating duplications or overlaps among actors in the field. At such a level of cooperation, actors recognise actions taken by other actors but do not interfere with each other and do not have any cooperative interactions to create outputs. This maintains a high level of actor autonomy in both stages. The programmes and projects produced through coordination have no joint-working actions.

We then consider how actors assess cooperation during these two stages. Weiss et al. (2010) suggested that there are two dynamics for generating a WGA: 'top-down' and 'bottom-up'. [2] The top-down tactic '[defines] policy coherence as a strategic priority and subsequently [breaks] it down to the

1) According to De Coning and Friis (2011), competence assumes that actors have significantly competing values, visions, and strategies. This does not result in cooperation, but in conflict. An example of this is a group that is politically or violently opposed to the presence of a military operation in the country.

Table 1: A Framework for Analysing WGA Implementation（Source: Authors）

| Policy Process Stages | | |
|---|---|---|
| Policy Assessment | Operation / Implementation | |
| Joint-working actions | Joint-working actions | |
| Joint-working actions | Separate actions | |
| Separate actions | Ad hoc joint-working actions | |
| Separate actions | Separate actions but can avoid duplication or overlap | |
| Separate actions | Separate actions | |

operational level of concrete joined-up institutions' (Weiss et al. 2010). In this case, 'integration' is the best fit for the framework we introduced above. It pursues the creation of common understandings and systems, processes, and structures that allow different actors to unite in a holistic effort through policies and strategies, while operations are carried out by separate agencies or actors in the field. In contrast, the bottom-up tactic '[proceeds] incrementally, coordinating existing initiatives rather than converging and integrating existing policies' (Weiss et al. 2010). Based on the framework, this bottom-up tactic is interpreted as pursuing 'coordination' or 'collaboration', in which actors' autonomy remains at the policy level, while their cooperative actions at the operation/implementation stage may create joint programmes and projects.

In practice, 'coordination' emerges from occasional field interactions by respecting the autonomy of different agencies so that each manages its own operations. 'Collaboration', however, may distort the autonomy of some actors involved if cooperative interactions increase in the field. These two theoretical dynamics shed light on the horizontal and vertical interactions between

2) Similarly, Friis and Jarmyr (2008) suggested that the two main schools of thought for pursuing cooperation among agencies are the 'integrated' and 'coordinated' approaches.

| | Level of Cooperation between Actors | Expected Outcomes | Dynamics |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |
| | Unity | | |
| | Integration | Policy/Strategy | Top-down |
| | Collaboration | Programmes/Projects | Bottom-up |
| | Coordination | Programmes/Projects | Bottom-up |
| | Coexistence/Competence | | |

actors that exist in the two stages. In a WGA meant to deal with complex emergencies, the relevant agencies interact at the HQ and out in the field, horizontally strengthening interagency relationships. Simultaneously, actors in the respective agencies at the HQ also interact with those in the field, thus strengthening intra-agency relationships as well.

Thus, this subsection explains the two dynamics through actors' interactions at two stages of the WGA generation process: policy assessment and operation/implementation. Policy-led coherence, or integration, pursues joint-working actions mainly in the first stage, which is categorised as top-down dynamics. By contrast, collaboration, where actors pursue joint-working in the latter stage, creates the bottom-up dynamic. The links between cooperative actions and dynamics are shown in Table 1.

### 3. Possible Factors for Generating a WGA

Drawing from previous literature, this section assesses the factors that can promote the interactions necessary for generating a WGA. Countries pursuing a WGA commonly tend to set up a range of instruments and mechanisms to link different policy areas, actors, timeframes, and geographical factors. In fact, based on the experience of countries that have adopted a WGA, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD 2006)

explains the institutional arrangements for policy assessment and operations, emphasising the former. It assumes relevant ministries jointly analyse the country and form country-specific joint operational strategies while planning, monitoring, and evaluating policies.

***Institutions***

The most rigid institutional arrangement for managing this process and achieving policy coherence is unifying command and control. First, if actors work as a single unified organisation, they lose a significant degree of autonomy. The second option is to establish permanent interagency management units as a common mechanism for integrating each organisation's approaches and activities (Stabilisation Unit 2019). Third, analytical tools to monitor and evaluate policies and formulate a shared understanding and strategy are effective in strengthening joint actions at a lower overall fiscal cost (the UK's Joint Analysis of Conflict and Stability; Stabilisation Unit 2017; OECD 2006 30). Fourth, instruments for mobilising partial resources are also major features of countries pursuing WGAs. For instance, pooled funding enables Official Development Assistance (ODA) and non-ODA funding to be applied to a wide range of activities (the Global Peace and Security Fund of Canada; Government of Canada 2011). Pooling human resources potentially accelerates the dispatch of capable teams to meet urgent needs within an appropriate timeframe (e.g., the International Deployment Group of the Australian Federal Police; McFarlane 2007).

Intra- and inter-departmental information systems can be developed to facilitate the sharing of communication and information to various degrees. Often, these systems are formed temporarily for each intervention. For example, the Netherlands launched task forces comprised of Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) stuff, and potentially from other ministries, to respond

to direct ministerial-level requests (Van de Goor 2010). At the request of embassies and regional directorates, the Netherlands also established a small security sector reform (SSR) team of MFA and Ministry of Defence (MOD) employees (Van de Goor 2010). In this respect, employing personnel jointly trained in different agencies effectively overcomes cultural differences by enhancing dialogue and facilitating further understanding (Rintakoski & Autti 2008). While most instruments for enhancing interactions exist at the HQ level, some joint working arrangements are created at the field level. The UK first established a joint field office in South Sudan, combining the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and the Department for International Development (DFID), which was led by the latter (House of Commons 2012). In another case, the Danish MFA representative functions as a pivotal contact in coordinating civil and military departments at the tactical level (Below & Belzile 2013). Sessions for information sharing and constructing networks promote interactions without degrading actors' autonomy, while information exchanges are largely carried out on a personal level.

***Other Factors to Consider***

While institution has been primarily discussed as the driver of top-down dynamics, there are two other major factors to consider. The first refers to external threats to intervening states, and the second involves political leadership and individual interests.

***Security Environment***

Intervening countries claim multiple threats from the fluctuating security of fragile states. The UK's BSOS stipulates that its interest is in responding to prevent risks—such as terrorism, refugee flows, and organised crime—by maximising the capabilities of different UK ministries before the cost of

managing instability rises (DFID et al. 2011). These threats are intensified by political disorder, prolonged war, and economic crises in the region and neighbouring countries that cannot manage the situation themselves (Fearon & Laitin, 2004).

The Bush administration was originally reluctant to engage in fragile states, but 9/11 changed its stance. This threat galvanised the US government to intervene in Afghanistan and Iraq. In addition to such swift action, to coordinate interagency involvement in stabilisation and reconstruction projects, the US established the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilisation (S/CRS) within the State Department (Ballou 2014). After struggling to coordinate local and federal departments in response to the 9/11 attacks, the US also established the Department of Homeland Security (Kettl 2003). By supporting the US's counter-terrorism policy and directly responding to the 2002 Bali attack, Australia strengthened coordination across departments by creating a national security division within the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (Halligan & Adams 2004). These institutional arrangements are examples of efforts to enhance HQ-level joint-working actions.

In the field, the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) is a notable WGA that generally aims to enhance security through reconstruction and SSR (Jakobsen 2005). Each state develops its national models; for instance, America's PRT has a military command with only a tiny civilian component, while Germany's PRTs contain substantial civilian units under a Federal Foreign Office and Federal MOD dual command system (Eronen 2008). In a PRT, the military's role is generally force protection, but its size and other roles (e.g., patrolling and supporting reconstruction projects) vary. Requests from SSR and Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration (DDR) create crosscut arrangements between 3D agencies but also among the police,

customs, judiciary, and civil society in the UK and the Netherlands (Kiso 2010; Van de Goor 2010). It is notable that these joint-working actions are observed both at the policy assessment and operation/implementation stages.

***Leadership/Actors' Interest***

Extant studies refer to the role of political leadership in directing ministries toward WGA generation by strengthening the vertical interactions of the political-administrative relationship via institution. As agencies have individual goals, a WGA institution that transforms strong divisions into joint working requires strong political leadership from the central government. As Patrick and Brown (2007, 132) argued, a strong authoritative entity must draft the strategy for fragile states, coordinating involvement in the field, and 'imposing discipline on independent-minded cabinet departments' by establishing a central interagency mechanism, such as the National Security Council. Similarly, the OECD (2006) mentioned that joint efforts between agencies with equal relationships need a leadership coordination role. Political leadership can be strengthened by not only issuing ad hoc guidance but also through consistent backing by public documents, such as national security strategies, diplomatic and development policies (e.g., the UK's NSS; UK Prime Minister's Office 2010), or legal documents.

An alternative explanation highlights the actors' interest, such as those of leaders or bureaucrats, in promoting a WGA. In principle, forming an intervening policy can be critical for leaders held accountable by the public. For example, the UK government generally faces public pressure to take the lead and become involved in crises (Kiso 2010), while the Dutch government and its people have been reluctant to participate in peace operations since the Srebrenica disaster. This Dutch experience was the result of poor mandates from UNPKO, inadequately armed forces, and a lack of military and political

support from allies. This led the Dutch government to strengthen the decision-making process in its parliament by amending the constitution (Van Willigen 2020). Consequently, the Defence and Foreign ministries jointly assess the situation and discuss whether the conditions for deployment have been met (Van de Goor 2010).

Moreover, some extant studies on the deployment of GSDFs have argued that Japanese political leaders and bureaucrats pursue a WGA in situations where no overall control has been institutionalised. Shoji (2015) sees MOFA as the main promoter of GSDFs to participate in UNPKO since the Gulf War, mainly with the intent to increase contributions to maintaining international peace, to gain a positive reputation in the international community, and to maintain general Japan–US relationships, while the government and politicians face negative public responses. In the operational stage, Yamamoto et al. (eds.) (2012) argued that one of the goals of realising a WGA could be to enhance the legitimacy of taxpayers, resource providers, and local actors. Uesugi et al. (2016) also refers to governmental incentives, such as enhancing the legitimacy of the government's reactions to complex emergencies or improving its positive impact on the field.

In Japan, 'coordination' between MOFA and the Defence Agency in Iraq to create reconstruction projects was a case where strong leadership, especially by PM Koizumi, promoted 2D (Diplomacy and Defence) at both HQ and field levels (Kawaguchi, 2012, p. 186). The dispatch of GSDFs to Iraq for reconstruction was enabled by issuing a special law responding to US requests to engage in counterterrorism policies and buttressed by the honeymoon relationship between Koizumi and President Bush (Kawaguchi, 2012). Under these circumstances, the Defense Agency was interested in achieving their mandates, contributing to the reconstruction of Iraq, and increasing acceptance by local people so that they could assure their own troops' security. MOFA

had sufficient ODA funding to support reconstruction and enough experience to formulate projects. Such clear advantages to reinforcing their respective capacities allowed the two agencies to work together in the field, but also generated coordination at HQ via daily online meetings. Information was also shared with the cabinet secretariat.

This section discussed possible influential factors in generating a WGA, such as institutions, the security environment, and leadership/actors' interests. While institutions are a viable factor in pushing relevant actors to cooperate at the policy assessment stage, it can launch joint-working actions in the field, as shown in PRT cases. It is also likely that strong leadership and the ministry's interests could drive joint-working actions without pressure from institutions. Case studies in Japan infer this possibility.

## 4. Conclusion

A typical WGA for dealing with complex emergencies in a fragile state requires policy coherence led by institutions that forcibly motivate relevant ministries, including leadership, to take joint-working action for policy planning and evaluation. As this emphasis and its verification could be assessed using alternative strategies and actions, this study suggests a framework for analysing WGA implementation. This framework is composed of the stages of the policy process, the level of cooperation that actors generate through their interactions, and the expected outcomes that are made possible through these cooperative actions. An alternative to policy coherence—that is, a bottom-up dynamic that expects actors' cooperation on the ground—is a strategy that would not distort actors' autonomy. The next question is what motivates actors to take such cooperative actions without vigorous instruction. We could further investigate variations in the institutions, leadership/actors' interests, and security environments that affect actors' choices.

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