

Peacekeeping and the Return of Imperial Policing

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UN peacekeeping rose to prominence as an instrument of international action based on its enacting a root metaphor that promised the reversal of politics as usual and the creation of a more equitable world. Practices developed in traditional peacekeeping created a culture of peacekeeping that reinforced this root metaphor through a linking of strategic policy to actions in operations. This article argues that developments in the way that peacekeeping has been used are undermining the root metaphor such that the cultural inversions associated with peacekeeping are increasingly difficult to maintain, if they can be continued at all. The result is that peacekeeping has been sliding toward recreating earlier practices of imperial policing by placing the concerns of international actors ahead of those of the local communities in which peace operations take place.

This article considers changes in the domain of peacekeeping that have created important challenges for the management of international affairs. Much of the initial argument and analysis presented here is based on material developed in the author's *Peacekeeping under Fire* (2008), developing a particular anthropological perspective on peacekeeping.¹ The implications of that analysis for the future of peacekeeping are then presented. The thrust of the argument is that changes in peacekeeping practice, and the loose use of the term 'peacekeeping' itself, create missions in which the essential properties of peacekeeping are no longer recognizable. As a result both the legitimacy of peacekeeping as an institution is threatened and peacekeepers as individuals are in danger of personal harm. The article further suggests that peacekeeping is morphing into a new form of imperial policing.

The analysis takes a somewhat different perspective from analyses that focus on particular local cultural aspects of peacekeeping missions. The form of cultural analysis presented here is an adjunct to, not a replacement for, those other, in fact complementary, approaches. The argument can be summarized as follows:

1. The UN was created to promote and maintain international security; this entails certain commitments to re-envisaging the world in a way that it is more equitable for all, and establishes a root metaphor that supports the organization. The UN played a major role in decolonization,² and developed peacekeeping as a way of limiting or stopping conflicts.
2. Peacekeeping developed a set of practices through which a peacekeeping culture was constituted and came to be recognized throughout the world. As a result of these practices, UN peacekeeping qua instrument of international action gained and maintained legitimacy.

3. That legitimacy was based, in part, upon the enactment of cultural and psychological reversals. These reversals instantiate and support the radical re-envisaging of the world that derived from the root metaphor that supported the UN's founding.
4. Towards the end of the Cold War many observers of world affairs became enthusiastic about what peacekeeping might do. This enthusiasm led to peacekeeping being put to use more rapidly and in a wider array of circumstance than it had been previously.
5. The activities associated with this sudden expansion of peacekeeping undercut the reversals essential to peacekeeping. As a result the legitimacy of peacekeeping as a collective enterprise has diminished.
6. Finally, the geopolitics of the post-Cold War era resulted in a relatively uncontested unipolar power, that of the United States. Peacekeeping is increasingly being outsourced and used to promote national interests and to promulgate a neoliberal view of good governance. The result of these processes is to shift peacekeeping toward becoming a form of 'imperial policing'.

The conclusion of this line of analysis is concordant with observations made by others from different disciplinary and theoretical perspectives. Those observations suggest, for example, that international interventions have developed so that they strive to create or reinforce market economies and a narrow conception of what counts as a democratic electoral process, or to conform to a 'neoliberal' or 'cosmopolitical' perspective more generally.³ These observers apply models that, while taking culture to be important, treat it mainly as a dependent variable in the analyses and rely on theoretical structures from political science or international affairs.⁴ Although mutually reinforcing, the line of argument presented in this article leads to a different understanding of what might be done to change this situation.

Early Background

Despite what is commonly asserted, early peacekeeping operations are highly relevant to understanding the status of peacekeeping today. Thus it is in order to review briefly the essential features of the origins of UN peacekeeping.⁵ UN peacekeeping began in 1948 with the deploying of observer missions to monitor ceasefires between the Arab nations and Israel, and between India and Pakistan in Kashmir. These early missions were largely improvised, but they set the pattern for observer missions that followed. Because these missions were the concrete expression of international cooperation through the UN, they symbolized consensual conjoint, and impartial action. The symbolism linked peacekeeping to the root metaphor of the UN, which involved the envisaging of a new world order.⁶

In 1956 a second form of UN peacekeeping was created, involving the fielding of lightly armed military units, which could use force in self-defence, to administer a conflict area or to serve as a buffer between belligerents. Their activities included providing security for citizens in the area, maintaining calm in the

administered area, ensuring the separation of forces, and pursuing negotiated settlements to a conflict. Some of these forces had more substantial weapons and were deployed under the authority of Chapter VII of the Charter, which deals with the circumstances under which the Security Council may authorize the use of force when it deems it necessary to ensure or restore international peace and security. In the early 1960s the mission in the newly independent Congo became embroiled in what some call peacekeeping's first war, where peacekeepers participated in the violent conflict.⁷

There is no need to repeat the range and timeline of peacekeeping deployments during the first 45 years of the UN's existence, as those are widely available. By the late 1980s there had developed a kind of informal doctrine of UN peacekeeping.⁸ That doctrine included the following elements:

1. Peacekeeping was to take place only when a conflict was ripe for resolution.
2. Peacekeeping often took place where the parties to the conflict had reputational concerns that would bring them to the negotiating table.
3. Support from the Security Council was a requirement for a mission to take place. The support emerged from the give and take of consensus-building discussions.
4. Any peacekeeping mission required consent on several levels: to deploy, for the mandate, for the force commander, and for the troops involved.
5. A further element of this informal doctrine was the belief that clear mandates and careful specification of those mandates were essential for peacekeeping missions to succeed.
6. It was essential to the success of peacekeeping missions that the troops and civilian field staff be multinational, thus further representing and symbolizing the promotion by the UN of international cooperation.
7. Because the window of opportunity for deployment of peacekeeping missions was small, missions should be deployed when the time was right. An essential element of this informal peacekeeping doctrine was that they should deploy rapidly.
8. Especially in early missions, the ideal of non-use of force by peacekeepers became part of doctrine, except in self-defence.
9. Finally, the idea that peacekeeping forces should be impartial in their actions was enshrined in early doctrine.

From these early principles, what I here call 'doctrine', a set of practices developed that characterized peacekeeping. As for any society, the practices in which members of peacekeeping missions engage are shaped by and shape the culture in which they participate. In a general sense, culture is a tool people use for solving the basic problems of living. It is through culture that people are able to give meaning to their experiences. It is of course very difficult to know why certain cultural practices developed, especially since the reasons why cultural practices are maintained may differ from the reasons they were created.

In the case of UN peacekeeping, many of the practices that later became identified with the culture developed in an ad hoc manner as they came into being to

solve particular practical problems faced by particular peacekeeping missions. Whether intentional or not, many of the practices developed in peacekeeping serve to support the cultural inversions associated with the UN. Once these practices were elaborated, they became naturalized (that is they appeared to be the 'right way' of doing peacekeeping). One of the broader consequences for the legitimacy of peacekeeping that resulted from the elaboration of these practices was the creation of a 'peacekeeping safe space'. UN peacekeepers would be seen as something apart from ordinary military operations. Although they wore their national uniforms, they also wore symbols and engaged in practices that give them special status.

This status is analogous to that of, for example, the historical situation for the International Committee of the Red Cross and Crescent and other humanitarian workers who could go safely into a crisis area because of their status as neutrals. Peacekeeping created a 'peacekeeping space' analogous to what we know as 'humanitarian space'. Peacekeepers derived a certain amount of protection from the fact that their deployment and actions symbolized the consensual concerns of the 'international community'. One of the principles upon which this peacekeeping safe space depended was the idea that disputants would seek to avoid the opprobrium that would result from violating that space.

Peacekeeping developed a culture that affected both the way participants in particular missions behaved and interpreted their experiences, and also the ways in which people in places to which peacekeeping missions had been deployed understood and acted towards peacekeepers. It was through these practices that the day-to-day legitimacy of peacekeeping became established.

Peacekeeping Culture as Cultural Inversion

Although 'culture', in the sense used here, is a cognitive and affective attribute of human social life, it is also crystallized in the behaviours, activities, and artefacts associated with peacekeeping. Elsewhere, I explore in detail how each of these works.⁹ The way these are expressed is through social processes such as:

- *symbols*: words, pictures, activities, objects that convey meanings recognized by those who share the culture;
- *rituals*: repetitive, stereotyped, symbolic group activities that serve to reinforce conjoint action and perceptions;
- *behavioural models*: examples of 'proper' ways of acting in various settings, actions and expectations recognized as legitimate;
- *linguistic practices*: verbal and linguistic representations that render behaviours comprehensible, plausible, justifiable, and socially acceptable, including the rules for when and how to speak.

Importantly, these categories of analysis are common to any anthropological approach to the study of a group's culture. Moreover, these kinds of units of analysis are embedded in the mundane day-to-day activities of groups of people, and those with whom they interact. Hence, what appear to be

insignificant even frivolous items and activities might become importantly symbolic. For peacekeepers, and the populations among whom they work, the kinds of things that get symbolized include the colour of vehicles, and the headgear, patches, and badges worn by peacekeepers. These both distinguish the peacekeepers from ordinary military members and their actions, and incorporate them into new kinds of social status.

Likewise, rituals in peacekeeping can be ordinary activities. For instance the kinds of repetitive activities used to mark the comings and goings of group members, or gatherings that symbolize changes in authority and power relations, become important rituals for peacekeepers. Both peacekeeping symbols and rituals may be based upon ordinary military activities, but these activities are given new meanings. Often that content relates to how the group is connected to the will of the 'international community', as expressed through the UN, to the pacific resolution of disputes, and to restorative rather than adversarial social relations. Not infrequently the idioms used invoke images of family, community, and selfless service to a larger international community. For example, the categories of 'going on patrol' or 'maintaining an observation post' (OP), which in ordinary military operations would indicate an offensive posture, take on an entirely different meaning in the traditional peacekeeping context. Similarly, the usual military rituals signifying the change of command or the distribution of awards for meritorious service are used in the context of peacekeeping to indicate the activities being undertaken are different from, apart from, ordinary methods of military action.

Of course, symbols and rituals take place at all levels of social organization, from those conducted on the ground to those enacted in the international arena. The particular linguistic repertoire that is deployed to construct an image of peacekeeping is apart from ordinary activity. At the international level, peacekeeping missions are authorized by the activities of the UN Security Council. Those activities include discussion and debate, both formal and public and informal and away from public scrutiny. The language and action involved in the formal domain include highly stylized ways of speaking, regulation of turn-taking, and other communication-based ways of interaction that contribute to the ritual construction of peacekeeping safe space. An additional consideration is that, while the formal procedures and structure of the Security Council have remained the same over the organization's history, there has been a significant change in the content of Council activities. Since peacekeeping denotes the joint *consensual* activity of the 'international community', it was important that during the Cold War debates within the Council were often heated, perhaps even acrimonious. As studies of consensus-building have repeatedly demonstrated, one of the things that contribute to the durability of decisions so taken is that deliberations are public, often long, and include lots of talk that leads (some would say inefficiently) to decisions. With the end of the Cold War much of the activity that signals genuine consensus-building no longer takes place within the Council. This change is not lost on those observing the actions and decisions of UN and affects in a negative way the legitimacy of Council decisions.

These rituals and symbols allow the construction of a story about peacekeeping, a story that feeds into the idea that it is delivering aid and acting on a broad international consensus. The symbols, rituals, behavioural models and linguistic practices serve to unite otherwise disparate peoples into a common institution. Individuals become part of a historically recognized social institution, whose participants have expectations about how they should behave, as do those who interact with the institution.

By the end of the twentieth century one of the outcomes of the practices associated with peacekeeping at all levels was the creation of a set of cultural inversions. Cultural inversions are periods during which activities that would otherwise not be allowed are permitted and perhaps even celebrated. Often cultural inversions are apparently frivolous while they actually have a deeper social importance.¹⁰ Familiar cultural inversions are, for example, the activities sustained during the celebration of Mardi Gras. In such carnival settings a great deal of playful activity takes place, often transcending social boundaries that a society would otherwise strictly observe. Anthropological analyses show that such activities are more than mere fun.¹¹ Indeed, these activities serve to both reinforce and support the boundaries and social arrangements they appear on the surface to undermine. The cultural inversions involved in peacekeeping are discussed in detail in other publications.¹² Table 1, drawn from that work, outlines the essential reversals in peacekeeping. The column on the left displays activities that are commonly associated with ordinary military activity, what I call ‘business as usual’. The column on the right shows those activities that are commonly associated with peacekeeping, with a ‘vision of a world transformed’, at the close of the twentieth century.

It is immediately apparent from inspection of this table that there is an inversion involved in peacekeeping. For a military officer or unit to do the opposite of their ordinary actions is a significant symbolic act, one with real substance. It is worth highlighting two of the pairs in the table.

Usually, militaries seek to separate themselves from their adversaries. In peacekeeping not only is separation among troops unnecessary; it is not even

TABLE 1:
CULTURAL INVERSIONS IN PEACEKEEPING

Traditional military: business as usual	Peacekeeping: a world transformed
No foreign troops on sovereign soil	Other countries’ troops on sovereign soil
Separate from potential adversaries	Work with potential adversaries
Retain national command of troops	Command officer from other country
Stealth and surprise	Transparency of action
No contact with civilians	Intense interaction with civilians; cooperation with civilian organizations
Basic war-fighting	Negotiation and persuasion
Victory through force	Conflict management or resolution through pacific means
Strict observation of prerogatives of rank	Officers may perform duties ordinarily done by lower ranks

Source: After Rubinstein (see n.1), p.51.

desirable. For example, in my very early peacekeeping research, which took place when the Soviet Union still existed, I visited an OP staffed by a Soviet lieutenant colonel and a US major. Their time at the OP was much like that I had experienced elsewhere, with one exception. It turned out that as part of his professional military education, and in pursuit of a promotion, the US officer was studying Soviet tactics through a kind of correspondence course. I observed the Soviet colonel tutor the US major about Soviet tactics, correcting information that was in the course.

The second opposition worth particular note is that between the use of stealth and surprise in ordinary military activities and the transparency of action among peacekeepers.

Not only does effective peacekeeping depend upon a cultural inversion, some elements of which are displayed in Table 1, but there are changes in individual psychology that must take place for peacekeepers to act effectively. To act effectively peacekeepers must adopt a unique motivational framework. Each day everyone goes through changes in their motivational states. As Michael Apter describes, an individual’s reaction to a stimulus – whether that is an environmental stimulus or a social setting – varies depending upon the motivational framework from which that person is acting.¹³ In other words, a person may act toward an identical situation differently at different times depending upon their motivational states. Like culture itself, motivational states tend to be experienced outside of our awareness.

According to Apter and his colleagues, motivational states may be described as configured by the interaction of four states. The four oppositions are as follows: goal oriented versus activity oriented, rule following versus rule breaking, competitive versus cooperative, and a concern with self versus a concern for others. Table 2 describes the constellation of these states that supports effective peacekeeping.

Elements of this ‘peacekeeping motivational framework’ are inversions of the motivational state necessary for effective ordinary military activity.

Destabilization of Peacekeeping

Cultural inversions generally do not last for long periods. Thus, the creation of practices and a symbolic world to support the cultural inversion upon which

TABLE 2:
MOTIVATIONAL STATES

Traditional military TCMAu	Peacekeeping PSCAL
Goal oriented, anxiety avoiding (Telic)	Activity oriented (Paratelic)
Rule following, cooperative, and compliant (Conformist)	Rule following, cooperative, and compliant (Conformist)
Competitive, seeking control, and objectifying others (Mastery)	Expressing caring, experiencing people as people (Sympathy)
Concerned with self (Autocentric)	Concerned about others (Allocentric)

Source: Modified from Rubinstein, ‘Motivation et Maintien de la Paix’ (see n.12 below), p.149.

TABLE 3:
DESTABILIZED CULTURAL INVERSIONS OF PEACEKEEPING

Traditional military: business as usual	Contemporary peacekeeping: confusion reigns
No foreign troops on sovereign soil	Other countries' troops on sovereign soil
Separate from potential adversaries	Fight against and work with potential adversaries
Retain national command of troops	Command officer from other country but also command by national capitals
Stealth and surprise	Stealth, surprise, with occasional transparency of action
No contact with civilians	Contact with some but not other civilians; unclear lines of cooperation with civilian organizations
Basic war-fighting skills used	War-fighting and negotiation
Victory through force	Use of force and pacific means
Strictly observe prerogatives of rank	Unity of command stressed

Source: After Rubinstein, 'Intervention and Culture' (see n.12), p.537.

effective peacekeeping depends stands as a genuine achievement. Yet, as missions have become more robust, the relative mix of activities that are undertaken has changed. It is not that peacekeeping in the twenty-first century has involved activities totally alien to earlier peacekeeping. Rather, the relative proportions of activities have shifted over time. Some of the activities that have always been part of peacekeeping operations might be called 'expeditionary' in nature. Yet, the relative importance of expeditionary activities has increased. As a result of this shift there has been a fundamental change in the strategic attitude of peacekeeping. Importantly, it is the change in the attitude of peacekeeping (*not* in the activities of peacekeeping) that serves to destabilize the essential cultural inversion and psychological reversals necessary for effective peacekeeping.

The destabilization of the cultural inversion essential for peacekeeping to be effective is displayed in Table 3.

What are the specific practices that lead to the destabilization of the cultural inversion supporting peacekeeping? Here it is useful to understand, at least in brief, that peacekeeping and imperial policing are distinguishable not so much by the activities each undertakes but by the intentions that animate those activities. The strategic vision upon which the actions of 'peacekeepers' are premised is critically important to the legitimacy of their enterprise.

From Imperial Policing to Peacekeeping and Back Again

As David Last points out, it is the strategic orientation that separates peacekeeping from imperial policing. As he puts it, some peacekeeping missions have more in common with imperial policing because, 'notwithstanding the humanitarian cover story in each case, they were primarily concerned with the interests of intervening powers, which formulated strategy and deployed forces without reference to the parties to the conflict. This reflects the principal distinction between the

“light blue” lexicon of peacekeeping, extending even to peace enforcement, and the harsher world of colonialism, imperialism, and imperial policing. The former takes the interest of the parties to the conflict as the starting point for resolution; the latter is concerned primarily with the interests of intervening powers.¹⁴ Implicit in Last’s comment is the notion that imperial policing serves the interests of a single national entity. It is perhaps more difficult to imagine UN peacekeeping, which is by nature a multilateral action, as fulfilling the role of imperial police.

Two circumstances suggest that this connection is not so difficult to make. First, many commentators have suggested that in exercising its authority the UN has become a force supporting a particular neoliberal, market-oriented, individually based understanding of how societies ought best be structured.¹⁵ In doing so the states that define the scope and practices of contemporary missions enforce a particular power differential that serves the interests of the hegemonic powers, not the interests of those where interventions are taking place. Second, a hallmark of imperial policing is that it creates the structural context in which local forms of governance, economics, and moral order become non-adaptive.¹⁶ Developments in UN peacekeeping can, arguably, be understood to create that kind of maladaptation. Six examples capture both of these conditions.

‘Unintended Consequence’ in Peacekeeping

As Jok Madut Jok and others have shown, people living in post-conflict settings face challenges to which their traditional ways of living must be adapted.¹⁷ While those adaptations are not always straightforward or successful, the strategies that people employ in post-conflict situations are rooted in their cultural understandings of their world. In the face of these challenges people struggle to use their skills and resources to the best of their ability. When peacekeeping missions, especially those that have a post-conflict stabilization element, engage those populations they can either support or reject the indigenous interests and ways of understanding the world.

UN peacekeeping missions necessarily introduce important social and economic distortions into the communities where they are deployed. Nonetheless, it is not necessary that those distortions make the local forms of governance, economic activities, and patterns of social behaviour maladaptive. Unfortunately, as the studies collected by Chiyuki Aoi, Cedric de Coning and Ramesh Thakur suggest, more often than not this is exactly what happens when missions become established.¹⁸

One example of how economic distortions affect social relations is provided by Katarina Ammitzboell, who notes that peace operations hire locals and pay them much higher wages than national salary levels: ‘locals who work with international organizations earn four to five times more than local colleagues who stay within local institutions’.¹⁹ As a consequence of this, unskilled labourers working for peacekeeping missions earn more than they would working in the open economy. The disparity is so severe that a woman cleaning a building used by a peace operation can earn triple the amount earned by a government minister. This creates a kind of ‘local hire syndrome’ in which highly skilled professionals

fill unskilled, often menial, positions because they can earn more in those unskilled positions than they could practising their profession in the open market. So it is not uncommon to find local professionals, including doctors and other highly educated people, working as drivers or local bodyguards of peacekeeping troops.

The result is that rather than serving local interests, those interests become secondary to the interests of the intervening countries and international organizations, which often evaluate peacekeeping missions based on models of governance and effectiveness that are alien to the places to which the missions are deployed.

Peacekeeping and Empire

One of the primary reversals established in traditional peacekeeping was the placement of foreign troops, sometimes including troops from states that are themselves in an adversarial relationship, on sovereign territory. Ordinarily, foreign troops would be stationed in a country only as the result of a negotiated agreement between friendly nations. During the Cold War, both the United States and the Soviet Union posted troops outside their own borders in countries with which they had strategic alliances. These Cold War postings were welcomed by the host nations, or at least they were not actively opposed. In the context of political developments in the post-Cold War world, the maintenance by the United States of approximately a thousand military bases outside its borders takes place in a much different political environment. Now these bases are seen as tools of empire and are unwelcome in many places, destabilizing the peacekeeping inversion of 'no foreign troops on sovereign soil'.²⁰

Collapse of Peacekeeping Safe Space

In many contemporary missions military units have sought to win over the local population by engaging in activities explicitly intended to persuade local peoples of the military's good intentions. Although they go by various names, these activities have included 'quick impact projects', in which military units deliver humanitarian-like or development-like services to communities. Too frequently these projects are arrived at without full consultation with the communities involved. Rather, they are conceived as ways to show 'goodwill' while at the same time reinforcing strategic alliances with perceived powerful figures in the community. Unsurprisingly, community members are not fooled into believing that these projects are being conducted for their own good. Moreover, the conduct of these kinds of activities may blur the line between military and humanitarian or development work, thus putting all at equal risk. It is for this reason that many humanitarian organizations object to these actions.²¹ Some have argued that as a result of these confusions the protection afforded by humanitarian space is severely threatened, while others think it no longer exists.²²

Spreading Democracy and Justice

Critics of international intervention have frequently noted that ideas about good governance and the moral order of society promulgated by peacekeeping

operations can be seen as supporting a particular view developed in the West and alien to many of the places where interventions take place.²³ (As well, these critics argue that the decision to intervene is itself an expression of a promotion of a particular Western sense of political participation and governance.)

Tanja Hohe presents an important series of studies concerning the intervention in East Timor.²⁴ She demonstrates that the cultural models of political authority and political participation promulgated by the United Nations Assistance Mission in East Timor (UNAMET) were at odds with those held by the Timorese. In an analysis of how the intervention sought to rebuild the Timorese judiciary, Hohe demonstrates that international models imposed on Timor invoke a moral logic alien to the Timorese. The conflict between the internationally imposed ideas about justice and its conduct clashed with those of the Timorese on every level: from the understanding of who handles conflict, to the processes that should be used to address it, to the nature of restitution and the basis of punishment. In contrast to the legal theories supporting the judicial efforts of UNAMET, for the Timorese 'the punishment of the crime or conflict resolution is mainly concerned with the re-establishment of the correct exchange of values to reinforce the socio-cosmic order'.²⁵

Motivation and Murder in Sudan

The case of the murder of a 16-year-old Somali, Sidane Arone, by Canadian peacekeepers is now an infamous chapter in the history of peacekeeping. One of the things that appears to have broken down in the Canadians' treatment of Arone was that the individual motivational frameworks from which the peacekeepers were acting no longer accorded with the motivational framework necessary for effective peacekeeping. This misalignment resulted in part from a shift in the strategic aims of the mission because the motivational states of individual peacekeepers are linked through a 'strategic scaffold' to the overriding political goals of the mission.²⁶ When strategic goals shift so as to serve the interests of the interveners rather than those of the local population, peacekeepers' motivational frameworks, already stressed, can shift dangerously away from those necessary for effective peacekeeping and towards those aligned with imperial policing.

Working through Regional Organizations and Coalitions

In the face of budgetary pressures and tough criticisms from the United States and its allies, the UN has often outsourced to regional organizations and 'coalitions of the willing'. Although this trend is lauded for its economic and other efficiencies, in fact it carries with it considerable dangers for the institution of peacekeeping, as well as for those where the interventions are deployed. This is because, as demonstrated by Nigerian actions during the Economic Communities of West African States (ECOWAS) peacekeeping mission in Liberia, for example, regional organizations fielding the interventions have a stake in the conflict. As a result, those organizations can be perceived as acting on an imperial mission. Likewise, coalition efforts in post-conflict settings, like those currently being conducted under US leadership in Iraq and Afghanistan, also become tools of national

interests. Not only are local interests, including conceptions of moral order and proper social relations, undermined; so too is the effectiveness of the intervention.

Conclusion

During the second half of the twentieth century the UN developed the tool of peacekeeping as a way of supporting international peace and security. Although much of its development happened through trial and error, by the end of the century a culture of peacekeeping had emerged from the practices of the thousands of civilians and military troops who had served in missions. Perhaps coincidentally, but critically, this peacekeeping culture created a cultural inversion. The cultural inversion in turn made it possible for peacekeepers to deploy in diverse places around the world and to work relatively effectively.

With the end of the Cold War, the decade of the 1990s witnessed an acceleration in the pace and scope with which peacekeeping missions were deployed. Although peacekeeping missions had always performed quite diverse functions – from the inter-positional observation of ceasefires, to the imposition of peace in areas of active conflict, to the administration of populations in post-conflict settings – the balance of these activities shifted. With this shift the interventions began to promote more restrictive understandings of good governance, justice, and morality, which led to the destabilization of the cultural inversion essential for effective peacekeeping.

Because of these developments the boundary has blurred between peacekeeping, an essential characteristic of which is that it serves the interests of the local parties, and imperial policing, an essential characteristic of which is that it seeks to incorporate a troubled region into an economic and moral order imposed from outside. This blurring of the boundaries between imperial policing and peacekeeping is displayed in a variety of ways, six of which have been briefly reviewed in this article. Peacekeeping will continue to be transformed into a recreation of imperial policing just so long as it is used to promote a particular, single view of good governance and a moral society. The further this transformation is allowed to go the more difficult it will be to reclaim peacekeeping and restore it as a useful tool of international action.

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NOTES

1. Robert A. Rubinstein, *Peacekeeping under Fire: Culture and Intervention*, Boulder, CO: Paradigm, 2008.
2. Had it made no further contribution during its first 50 years of existence, its decolonization role for many would be enough to justify its creation. See also Stephen Schlesinger, *Act of Creation:*

The Founding of the United Nations: A Story of Superpowers, Secret Agents, Wartime Allies and Enemies, and Their Quest for a Peaceful World, Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2003.

3. Roland Paris, *At War's End: Building Peace after Civil Conflict*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004; Tanja Hohe, 'Totem Polls: Indigenous Concepts of "Free and Fair" Elections in East Timor', *International Peacekeeping*, Vol.9, No.4, 2002, pp.69–88.
4. See, for example, Volker Boege, Anne Brown, Kevin Clements and Anna Nolan, 'Building Peace and Political Community in Hybrid Political Orders', *International Peacekeeping*, Vol.16, No.5, 2009, pp.599–619; Kristoffer Lidén, 'Building Peace between Global and Local Politics: The Cosmopolitical Ethics of Liberal Peacebuilding', *International Peacekeeping*, Vol.16, No.5, 2009, pp.616–34; Tom Woodhouse and Oliver Ramsbotham, 'Cosmopolitan Peacekeeping and the Globalization of Security', *International Peacekeeping*, Vol.12, No.2, 2005, pp.139–56.
5. On the value of such a perspective, see also Ryan Grist, 'More than Eunuchs at the Orgy: Observation and Monitoring Reconsidered', *International Peacekeeping*, Vol.8, No.3, 2001, pp.59–78. As well, interventions intended to bring about order among conflicting parties were well known prior to the creation of UN peacekeeping. Various observer missions were fielded by the League of Nations. Those are not germane to the analysis here.
6. Rubinstein (see n.1 above), pp.1–6,48–53.
7. Trevor Findlay, *The Blue Helmets' First War? Use of Force by the UN in the Congo, 1960–64*, Clementsport, NS: Canadian Peacekeeping Press, 1999.
8. Rubinstein (see n.1 above), pp.23–31. See also Marrack Goulding, 'The Evolution of United Nations Peacekeeping', *International Affairs*, Vol.69, No.3, 1993, pp.451–64.
9. Rubinstein, 'Cultural Aspects of Peacekeeping: Notes on the Substance of Symbols', *Millennium*, Vol.22, No.2, 1993, pp.547–62; Rubinstein (see n.1 above).
10. Barbara Babcock (ed.), *The Reversible World: Symbolic Inversion in Art and Society*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1978.
11. See, e.g., Robert Dirks, 'Resource Fluctuation and Competitive Transformations in West Indian Slave Societies', in Charles Laughlin and Ivan Brady (eds), *Extinction and Survival in Human Populations*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1978, pp.122–80.
12. See Rubinstein (n.1 above); Rubinstein (n.8 above); Rubinstein, 'Intervention and Culture: An Anthropological Approach to Peace Operations', *Security Dialogue*, Vol.36, No.4, 2005, pp.527–44; Rubinstein, 'Motivation et Maintien de la Paix: Élaboration d'un Lien Entre Agir et Structure' [Motivation and peacekeeping: modelling the link between agency and structure], *Anthropologie et Sociétés*, Vol.30, No.1, 2006, pp.137–55.
13. Michael Apter, *Reversal Theory: The Dynamics of Motivation, Emotion and Personality*, 2nd edn, Oxford: Oneworld, 2007.
14. David Last, 'Marcher sur la Corde Raide: Le Maintien de la Paix et le Maintien de l'ordre Impérial' [Walking the line: peacekeeping and imperial policing], in Jocelyn Coulon (ed.), *Guide du Maintien de la Paix 2007* [Guide to Peacekeeping, 2007], trans. David Last, Outremont, QC: Athena, 2007, pp.63–88.
15. Roland Paris, 'International Peacebuilding and the "Mission Civilisatrice"', *Review of International Studies*, Vol.28, No.4, 2002, pp. 637–56; François Debrix, *Re-envisioning Peacekeeping: The United Nations and the Mobilization of Ideology*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999; Paul Higate and Marsha Henry, *Insecure Spaces: Peacekeeping, Power and Performance in Haiti, Kosovo and Liberia*, London: Zed Books, 2009; Jarat Chopra, 'The UN's Kingdom of East Timor', *Survival*, Vol.42, No.3, 2000, pp.27–40.
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