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## **Police work in international peace operation environments: a perspective from Canadian police officers in the MINUSTAH**

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Deployment of police officers on international United Nations peace operations is still a marginal topic addressed only by transnational police scholars. In this paper, based on interviews conducted with Canadian police officers who participated in the United Nations Mission for Stabilization in Haiti, we focus on how participants negotiate the transposition of a ‘home grown’ constabulary ethos in order to provide effective police work in such transnational operations. While the strict transfer of domestic police methods to the new environment is ineffective, we show that police officers elaborate innovative strategies and practices that reveal promising routes for the prevention and de-escalation of violence in the peace operation context. Such innovations may also serve as the basis for the development of more accurate paradigms that will advance police work in a transnational context.

**Keywords:** Haiti; transnational policing; Canada; police work; United Nations

[P]olicing is not a magic bullet for development and peacebuilding but ensuring that the police are as professional and impartial as they can be is one of many important features of it. (Peak *et al.* 2008, p. 67)

In the past several decades, international peacekeeping operations have changed profoundly in both their nature and mission. Their beginnings involved a strict mandate to deal with monitoring ceasefires between two clashing parties, but they now deal with a broad range of responsibilities, such as stabilisation and peace building, and all dimensions of the ‘responsibility to protect’ (R2P) doctrine,<sup>1</sup> promoted by international aid agencies, NGOs and the United Nations (Goldsmith and Sheptycki 2007, Bowling and Sheptycki 2012). In particular, they address the complex issue of post-conflict public security, focusing on individual crimes, public disorders and small-scale disruptions. Their core functions call for the parsimonious use of force, a focus on local populations and human security issues, and the ability to interact with local criminal justice institutions. As documented by Alice Hills (Hills 2001), military forces, or ‘Blue Helmets’, are poorly equipped to carry out public security-related tasks, which are mainly the responsibilities of the police component of international operations. Peacekeeping and peace-building scholars have, however, focused largely on the military component and empirical knowledge about what international police, better known as United Nations Police (UNPOL) or International Civilian Police, actually do in peace operations is

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scarce. A growing body of research addresses police participation in post-conflict, articulating both top-down doctrine and bottom-up approaches (Greener 2009, Rotmann 2011, Ellison and Pino 2012). Five dimensions have been examined mostly: (1) the model of policing supposed to best suit post-conflict environments (Brogden 2005); (2) the training of local police forces (Bayley 2006, Bayley & Perito 2010); (3) the nature of police forces to be deployed, whether of a military or civilian police ethos (Perito 2004); (4) the evolution of the UNPOL role (Hansen 2002, Greener 2009), and (5) the legal framework and the UNPOL mandates (Linden *et al.* 2007). Yet, very little evidence is available about the organisational and operational dimensions of police work in the context of the post-crisis, or post-conflict, environments.

Our objective in this article is to draw a portrait of what police work consists of in the field of peace operation based on Canadian UNPOL accounts. According to the vast literature on police occupation (Ericson and Haggerty 1997, Manning 1997, Reiner 2010), police work is shaped largely by knowledge and skills acquired *specifically* in the area where police officers have been socialised and where they learned the art of policing (Chan *et al.* 2003). But what happens in the case of international deployment? Are such skills and ‘arts of the profession’ usable and transferable to the context of international peace operations and, if so, under what conditions? These questions should precede and ground any policy debate related to the deployment of police troops in post-conflict environment, not only in terms of what can be expected of such police missions, regardless of their professionalism, but also with regard to the decision as to what model of policing to adopt given the specific local operational contingencies such deployments will have to deal with. As the philosophy of the UN doctrine on post-conflict crisis management is continuing to evolve, understanding the police component of international peace operations is all the more crucial. In a recent report on peace building, the secretary-general of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon, put forward a series of measures addressing the challenges of peace consolidation (United Nations 2009). In addition to asking member states to renew and maintain their commitment to international support, the secretary introduced a programme based on increasing the efficiency of the administration and management of peace operation missions, which is required for more efficient coordination in the implementation of strategies as well as management of the required capacities and resources, and stressed that nations accepting such responsibilities *have an obligation to provide results*. In this context, particularly given the growing responsibilities of police in peace building, a more thorough analysis of *police work* in post-conflict settings is called for.

Doctrinal considerations of what police should or should not do should be based on a grounded and evidence-based rationale. Of course, policing is about politics (Reiner 2010). However, to understand police organisations only as instruments of dominant political, economical or social forces is to make a simplistic and hypernormative assumption, particularly when it comes to causes, such as international development, that do not involve immediate gains for the contributing nations (Deflem 2002, Peake and Marenin 2008). Police work is first and foremost the result of a professionalisation process – the outcome of a complex interplay between immediate public order needs, political contingencies, and technological progress – through which authorities have delegated law enforcement and public order to police organisations (Deflem 2002, Sheptycki 2002, Bowling and Sheptycki 2012). As ‘professionals’, police organisations enjoy a certain ‘latitude’ or discretion as to the means of policing they decide to employ and the priorities they follow. It is precisely this ‘latitude’ and the rationale according to

which decisions are made by police organisations, particularly police officers on the ground, that should be a matter of concern. It is necessary to open the police 'black box' and recognise that studying police deployment in peace operations requires moving beyond normative doctrines and international relations politics. It requires documenting and analysing how police organisations, and their employees, understand and actually do police work in new and unfamiliar environments. Such an approach will contribute to developing more realistic policies and expectations about the role of police officers in international peace operations. In the following sections, we focus on the participation of Canadian police officers in the United Nations Missions for the Stabilization in Haiti (MINUSTAH).

### **Police in international peace operations: facts and issues**

Police work in peace operation missions has evolved tremendously within the last decades. Looked at quantitatively, police participation in international peace building has increased by almost 900% during the last fifteen years. In 1995, the total number of police officers deployed on such missions was 1600, compared to 14,526 in February 2012.<sup>2</sup> Of the 82 countries that currently contribute to the programme, Bangladesh, Jordan and India provide 35% of the contingents, deploying respectively 2081, 1998 and 1038 police officers.<sup>3</sup> In February 2012, six peace operations included both UNPOL and Formed Police Units (FPU)<sup>4</sup> contingents. The MINUSTAH was the second largest mission in terms of police officers deployed (3534), following the African Union – the United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur – which had 5182 police officers.<sup>5</sup> These figures reveal that police officers' missions are evolving and are no longer confined to their domestic territory (Greener 2011). More than one-third of police contingents deployed in international peace operations are in Haiti, which is also the main field for Canadian police deployment, with 126 of its 157 international police officers deployed there.

From a qualitative perspective, a brief history of police participation in peace operations reveals that, while the first police missions were limited to advising local police (Congo, Cyprus, 1964), there was a major change at the end of the 1990s with deployments such as the United Nations Interim Administrative Mission in Kosovo and the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor Leste. In these missions, the international civilian police were responsible, for the first time, for all executive tasks related to law enforcement (Hansen 2002, Greener 2009). This responsibility included managing road traffic, conducting criminal investigations, and advising, training and monitoring the local police – all tasks for which the military component was regarded as ill-suited or unequipped (Lutterbeck 2004, Hills 2009). UNPOL became a pivotal element in the peace-building field (Gregory 1996). Despite such an increase in responsibilities, with the exception of the work of a few scholars (Perito 2004, Hills 2009, Greener 2009, 2011; Goldsmith 2009, Grabosky 2009, Bayley and Perito 2010, Tanner and Dupont 2012, Tanner 2013), very little empirical knowledge has been collected on police work in peace operations. Peace-building research programmes remain largely focused on the military and policy components and what little research is available focuses mainly on police mandate doctrines – peacekeeping, local police training, reform of the security sector – or reforms to be conducted on the field – understood from a top-down perspective and framed by a bureaucratic outlook (Linden *et al.* 2007, Peake and Marenin 2008).<sup>6</sup>

When it comes to the question of the need to achieve results, addressed by the new Ban Ki-moon doctrine, the issue of how to evaluate the police contribution to peace operations comes to the fore. Assessing police work should not begin from a normative position that promotes a particular view of what police should, or should not, do. Such a perspective would undoubtedly be grounded in the standards of long-stabilised liberal democracies (Brogden 2005) and promoting a neo-liberal ideal – and neo-liberal criteria for police work assessment – might be counterproductive, as has been shown (Greener 2011). Also, the professional values that underlie democratic policing – which is based on a highly formalised expertise – may not be adaptable to the context of these missions, nor easily accepted by police personnel coming from developing countries where a political model of policing remains dominant. On the contrary, and this is the perspective we adopt here, assessing police work should identify and focus on what police officers actually do when they do ‘police work’ in peace operations. That assessment should focus first on a meticulous and detailed description of police activities, practices, values, guides and methods that are being used by officers on the field. Also, the terms ‘assessing’ and ‘evaluating’ should be interpreted as appraising *and understanding* police work in the context of peace operations. Before any evaluation of the results of the actions of the police component of the peace operation assemblage is possible, it is necessary to know and understand how this component negotiates and carries out its mandate in such unusual environments. Doing police work in peace operations and attempting to transpose police knowledge acquired in a neo-liberal and pacific society – the situation of the Canadian police officers studied here – presents organisational (Dupont and Tanner 2009) and operational challenges.

### **Police knowledge in peace operations: a Canadian perspective in the MINUSTAH**

Our analysis is grounded on a series of 36 interviews conducted between 2004 and 2011 with three major Canadian police organisations that cover the federal, provincial and municipal service delivery levels. Mostly exploratory, these interviews focus on the experience of police officers deployed in the MINUSTAH in Haiti from a global perspective, addressing the pre-deployment phase (candidate selection and training), the deployment phase (activities and organisation once on the field) and the reintegration of the police officers into their respective organisations once the mission is over (new competencies, added value for the organisation and the candidates). This article concentrates on the deployment phase; for more details on the organisational challenges with regard to the Canadian experience the reader should refer to Dupont and Tanner (2009).

Haiti is of course not the only region where Canadian police officers are deployed.<sup>7</sup> However, most of the Canadian contingents are concentrated there, and it is thus the area where they have developed most of their expertise and knowledge on police work in international peace operations. Also, according to UN resolution 1542, the MINUSTAH operates under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, which gives security forces including UNPOL, the authority to use force if necessary to protect civilians. Yet, as it appears in the interviews below, many police officers say that they have a non-executive role, meaning they do not use force and mostly understand their presence in terms of local police training. Our objective is to create an analytical matrix based on a single example of police work in peace operations – the Canadian one – and thus develop

conceptual tools that will hopefully allow for, and inspire, further comparative analysis in order to grasp and understand police work in international peace operations. The present attempt rests on a small sample of participants ( $n = 36$ ) who belong to a western country contributor, itself not representative of all western countries. Even within the western countries, competencies and philosophies of law enforcement and police work vary greatly, so our results may be difficult to extrapolate outside anglo-policing. Further empirical and comparative research will need to be conducted in order to better ground our theoretical framework. Despite these limitations, we give some suggestions as to what it is realistic and relevant to expect from the police component in terms of meeting the obligation to provide results.

For purposes of this article, we assume that police knowledge is the outcome of profession-specific solutions turned into collective knowledge and learned by police officers facing challenges in the course of their daily missions. Such collective knowledge shapes police work and guides practices related to the police mandate. An initial step in analysing action in the field consists in identifying and selecting a sample of problems or difficulties police officers deal with on a daily basis that are specific to their occupation. Based on a first attempt at tracing the policekeeper occupation's outline, inspired by Janet Chan's work on police culture (Chan 1997, Chan *et al.* 2003), we can locate four major axes that allow a comparative analysis of domestic and post-crisis zones with regard to police knowledge. Such a comparative approach will yield a systematic identification of the events that make up police work in the context of international peace operations, thus identifying and tracing the contours of – Canadian – collective police knowledge in the context of the MINUSTAH.

According to Janet Chan, police knowledge can be looked at in terms of the passing on of know-how – designated by Bourdieu's notion of *habitus* – and can be divided into four categories:

- (1) *Axiomatic knowledge*, which 'refers to the fundamental assumptions about 'why things are done the way they are' in an organisation' (Chan 1997, p. 76). Such knowledge constitutes the police mandate.
- (2) *Dictionary knowledge*, which refers to the way police officers develop routine ways of categorising their environment and the people they encounter in the community', or direct surroundings (Chan 1997, p. 77).
- (3) *Recipe knowledge* or values. According to Chan, recipe knowledge is normative and proposes what should, or should not, be done in specific situations: 'It provides recommendations and strategies for coping with police work' (Chan 1997, p. 79).
- (4) *Directory knowledge* or police methods. Directory knowledge 'informs police officers how operational work is carried out' (Chan 1997, p. 78).

These four dimensions provide a frame, or matrix, that allows us to understand police work in a broad variety of contexts, from uniformed patrols in western cities to peace operations in post-conflict societies. The negotiation of each of these types of knowledge leads to a set of solutions developed in response to the differences between the familiar domestic context and the new environment. This set of solutions allows the elaboration of a – Canadian – 'policekeeping' collective knowledge or culture.

### Axiomatic knowledge: the police mandate

In the domestic context, the police are expected to fight crime. Everyone – police officers included – acknowledges that the most important role the police play is to preserve and maintain social order – using force if necessary – to provide a rampart against social disorganisation and chaos. It is what Manning called the ‘impossible mandate’ (Manning 1997). Yet this view is actually a caricature and far from capturing the reality of police work. While literature and fiction nourish this public images of the police (Brodeur 2010), research has made it clear that police work consists largely of administrative responsibilities (paperwork) and frequent boring patrols (Manning 1997, Reiner 2010). In consequence, it is necessary to make a distinction between a *normative mandate* – a war on crime and the myths that come along such a romantic understanding of police work – and an *operational mandate* – all the complexities, difficulties and obligations – including paperwork – that accompany actual police work. The discrepancy between these two mandates is often a significant source of frustration for police officers (Manning 1997).

Both the discrepancy and the resulting frustration are also apparent in police participation in peace operations. In the context of the MINUSTAH, UNPOL’s mission is to form and train local police forces according to international standards while respecting democratic norms. The mission is part of a larger objective that encompasses the building, restoration and maintenance of a legally constituted state, as well as the stabilisation of Haiti. However, testimonies from UNPOL officers working in Haiti emphasise the unrealistic character of such a mandate. For example, noting the critical lack of basic resources needed for the Haitian National Police (HNP) to operate, as well as the risks this lack entail for its officers in the field, one respondent said:

I cannot advise the Haitian police officer to ask for a [bulletproof] vest from his boss, or to ask for lighting and trestles to indicate a roadblock. I asked him what was he going to do [once the car was stopped]? There is no license plate system; there is no [central] intelligence police [database]. What are you going to do halfway [in your intervention]? You’re gonna get killed, that’s the only thing. That is what I’m telling you, it is so far [from the way we operate]. There are no [resources] and we can’t... If I go to another investigating office, it’s the same thing. (p. 12)

A second illustration of the discrepancy between what is expected from police officers and the operational reality with which they have to deal reveals a serious security risk for UN personnel, as shown in the next three quotations:

Stories, slaps in the face that I have seen, kicks in the face ... what I am supposed to do about rights and liberties, about global human rights? Do I blow the whistle or not? I’ve talked about it to others, French, Canadians, what do I do? Do I blow the whistle? [The suspects in custody of the local police] were kicked in the face. What I am doing? At some point I had to [intervene] and I said, ‘The next [person] who throws a kick, I’ll denounce him’. But if I denounce him, I will never be able to be on my own again, they will find me. It may be a fleabite, a lost bullet, whatever. You live among the population. You shut your mouth and you try to say that it will not happen. (p. 8)

Once, there was a demonstration in downtown Port au Prince ... There, the demonstrations are not small peace and love demonstrations like we have here. There are big rocks and this is irritating, this is irritating when they throw them on your vehicle and it goes BONG on your hood ... If it had struck a window, for sure people would have been injured, or even killed, maybe. Once, after the earthquake, there was a truck that got emptied for the food [it

carried], looted. There were gunshots, Haitian police officers were present and they shot in the air, but there is nothing to be done. People run over your hood, it is madness, it is stressful. (p. 7)

I almost died there in a prison riot. We went there to restore order, you go there to help, and finally we got stuck in a dead end and they threw pieces of concrete, and you say to yourself that if I stay here I will die. So you have to be on the lookout with your colleague, and tell yourself, we have to leave, we will not die here. (p. 9)

The environment in which police officers operate in Haiti is volatile and uncertain. The unexpected reactions from the local population – at least part of it – and how police officers *interpret* and cope with this reaction legitimately deters them from undertaking what theoretically, or normatively, appears to be their role: to stop violence and enforce public security, as is expected and required by the MINUSTAH stabilisation mandate. For instance, being a witness to a violation of human rights and willing to arrest, its author may not be a sufficient reason to initiate police action. The immediate threat to a police officer's security created by such an action is a crucial part of the equation in such volatile and unfamiliar environments.<sup>8</sup> As police officer n°9 says, action must be thought out in advance since it may cause reprisals. The lack or dysfunction of accountability mechanisms, particularly as compared to the Canadian domestic context, must also be taken into account in evaluating the police officer's decision to take action or not. Such situations not only frustrate police officers but demonstrate a conflict of different understandings between UNPOLs and the local population. UNPOLs reaction to the risks they face daily – and their restrained action because of the difficulty of carrying out the MINUSTAH mandate – may give the population the impression that its protection and rights will not be guaranteed by the international police. This predicament provokes concern or, worse, distrust of international police contingents by the population. As a consequence, if in the domestic sphere a police officer's nightmare is paper work, in the context of peace operations, the nightmare is associated with core elements of police work, particularly the inability to guarantee that basic police functions such as peace enforcement and order maintenance will be available to protect the population. Police officers have to attempt to fulfil their mandate without the elaborate institutional support they are used to in their domestic sphere, which guarantees them authority and legitimacy – and also back-up. A female officer from the municipal police organisation told one of us that, because of lack of back-up and authority, she was once unable to intervene to prevent a summary execution she witnessed directly, the perpetrators having threatened to kill her next if she interfered.

In addition to the risks it presents for their own security, the conduct of the stabilisation mandate entails a major metamorphosis of the conditions in which police work is conducted. At least three areas in which this occurs were mentioned by respondents: (1) an unfamiliar local geography; (2) the pace and rhythm of police work and (3) working conditions. With regard to the first area, orienting one's self within an unfamiliar geography, respondents point to a context that is often difficult to interpret, affecting their ability to intervene effectively. For example, one respondent said:

Completely different, completely different, that's it. We dealt with people who were dispersed in many places. So you ride the 4 × 4 vehicle and you drive on such roads, it is special, you climb in the mountains, and you say you'll never make it, but you have to climb. There are lots of rocks, lots of mud, you cross rivers ... [At] some point, I was driving in a

river, because this is what happens when it rains, the erosion erodes the banks ... and the trail is not there anymore. (p. 6)

It is difficult to provide consistent intervention when, even if you know the road, it may not be there the next day. Other respondents mentioned the disappearance of road signs, emphasising how such things can increase the difficulty of arriving in time when intervention is needed. The human environment and the administrative context in which daily activities take place are also sometimes difficult to 'read' and understand, complicating the mission even further. For example:

You do not have call flows, because this is not like here [Canada]. [The population] does not call the police [to request intervention]. It is completely different. Often, you patrol for several hours and it is very calm. (p. 6)

Many respondents also indicate a qualitative change in their work pace in comparison with their usual work habits:

There, [in Haiti], you may wait for a computer for two months, it's normal. In the meantime, you twiddle. But here [in Canada], you don't twiddle while waiting for a computer. Do something, otherwise [you are going to be in trouble]. (p. 11)

Because the beat is slow when it is 40°C, or 45°C, it is not easy to work, and even for the HNP [Haitian National Police] it is difficult. We are doing a good job, but it is much slower than here. [Here] it is very fast. (p. 5)

They are here and they say, 'Of course, we will bring you the report', but it can take two weeks for them to bring the report. This is the Haitian beat, the Haitian pace. (p. 7).

If in the domestic context there is sometimes a discrepancy between a normative mandate (what is expected from the police) and how such a mandate is put into operation, in the peace operation context frustration is usually related to helplessness or the inability to act rather than to uninviting or boring paper work. And while in the domestic context, most of the interventions required are foreseeable and identified; in peace operations, the collective solutions and know-how developed by police officers must generally be formulated or used in response to more dangerous situations or threats than are common in the domestic sphere – often to ensure survival. In peace operations, the wait that characterises police work is generally not seen as boring; the adoption of the 'Haitian beat' is a widespread coping mechanism, or a collective solution, that helps police officers deal with their mission.

### **Dictionary knowledge – categories of the police**

Many police interventions involve interlocking situations where officers must act quickly despite the social intricacies of the circumstances. In order to manage such complexity, police officers divide it into simpler and more meaningful units, or categories, that are shared by their colleagues and the specific police occupational culture they belong to. Such categories make up dictionary knowledge. The more experience police officers accumulate about their work and their geographic and human environments, the more categories police elaborate to map their surroundings and make sense of them quickly and easily. This dictionary knowledge delineates what is normal and what is not, what is

ordinary and what is suspicious, who belongs and who does not, thus helping to determine when police action is required. Directory knowledge and the operational categories that help police accomplish their mission efficiently are highly dependent on the sphere, or field, in which police officers have been trained.

In the peace operation context, as might be expected, simply transposing the police categories used in the domestic sphere is impossible. Domestic dictionary knowledge is useless and might even be counterproductive. In addition to the major changes in working conditions discussed above, interactions with local populations are radically different from what the respondents are used to in the Canadian sphere. The distinction between the 'normal' and the 'unusual', between what is expected and what is suspicious, is not easy for police officers to determine when they are dealing with people whose customs, habits and traditions are usually totally unrelated to the Canadian way of life.

[In Haiti], you do not have any control over popular beliefs. They may believe that a white man getting off the plane is the cause for the spread of cholera<sup>9</sup> [that occurred in 2010] ... When there is a popular belief, it may get dangerous'. (p. 13)

They blend voodoo [and] Catholicism. I'll give you a nice example. We were investigating murders. A murder occurred in Hinche, about one-hour drive North of Port-au-Prince [the respondent explains that murders often happened in the evening, and international police could not always go to the crime scene]. [In the] morning, I drove there to see how they handled the [investigation]. A doctor got killed. He got shot, strangled, and thrown in the swimming pool, a carved-up swimming pool from a hotel in Hinche. I arrived and asked how everything went. [The local police officer] said that everything went well, and that they had started to secure the crime scene. So far, everything was going well. Then I asked what they did with the body. They told me they could not remove it immediately. I asked why, and he said, 'Because of the devils'. 'The devils', I asked??? 'Wait a little bit, I don't follow you here...' Then he started to draw and tell me that all around the pool it was possessed [by the devils]. He said, 'We could not go take the body'. So what did you do in these circumstances? My legs were cut off ... What is the next question you ask? 'So did you let [the body] stay there?' He said, 'No ... we emptied the pool, and then with a branch we hooked the dead body and we took it'. Do you understand? This is Haiti. (p. 7)

Making decisions can be difficult for police officers who are confronted by situations that are completely foreign. The categories of what is normal and what is not, what is suspicious and what is not, that make sense in the domestic sphere, where they have been trained, are not relevant anymore. They are useless in such a radically different environment and might even be dangerous. They are confronted by social and environmental configurations that they are not (yet) used to. As one participant mentions:

It has nothing to do with what we know, here, and this is what is difficult for us. (p. 3)

Once they enter the field of police work in international peace operations, participants need to dramatically change their expectations and the way they frame their categories of understanding. In such situations, if they are going to be able to respond quickly to emergencies, it is necessary to realise that it is futile, if not impossible, to make use of dictionary knowledge developed in the domestic field and that it is also difficult to map human relations – at least during the first period of the mission – and establish the landmarks and constants needed to conduct efficient police work.

### Recipe knowledge – the values of the police

Recipe knowledge refers to values and their normative and constraining nature – in this case, the values that must be accepted by anyone who plans to work effectively as a police officer. Suspicion of the hierarchy (Reuss-Ianni 1983, Punch 1985), solidarity with colleagues, attachment or commitment to one's unit or organisation are some examples of the values that guide routine police work. They can be considered a code. But values may also be understood as providing an ideological, or philosophical, orientation or model for police organisations themselves. For example, most of the police officers who participated in the present research were affiliated with organisations that promote community policing: that is, organisations driven by the idea that police provide services to the community and are responsive to its concerns and needs, rather than focused strictly on crime fighting and crime control.

In the context of peace operations, participants usually emphasise solidarity, or comradeship, as crucial to operating within a complex and unfamiliar environment. For example, a police officer explained:

This aspect, comradeship, it develops, it is incredible. This is something that you don't see [in the domestic sphere] necessarily. The only moment I last saw that, it was when I was in the army, because you need your pal, and your pal needs you. It develops there as well. If you are someone individualistic you will not survive, you will dig yourself a black hole and you will never get out of it. (p. 3)

Such solidarity or comradeship is not limited to the individuals in the field within the Canadian contingent but also needs to be considered at the organisational level. On several occasions, participants stated that their Canadian nationality was instrumental in helping them secure a good position within the UN organisation.

Back then, when I arrived [in Haiti], there was a strong concentration of Canadians amongst the decision-makers. The head of the UN mission for the police was a Canadian. There were many Canadians in the group, so it was easy through our contacts to get good jobs. (p. 6)

Such solidarity contrasts with the suspicion felt towards other UN police contingents, depending on the region they come from, as illustrated by the same respondent:

I will not name nationalities, but there are some ... that have nothing to do here ... The problem is that, sometimes, it [their lack of skills] generates personal insecurity and you are exposed. What next? (p. 3)

The personal insecurity felt by participants usually reflected a perceived lack of training among the police officers from other contingents but also their lack of functional equipment, such as guns, that is essential for police work. For example, one participant notes:

Look, ...they have rudimentary and rusty guns that are over... I would say that [this person] is not someone you patrol with and if a riot happens or something ... or if you use your weapon, or use force, there are some individuals ... it would be difficult to trust. Some other nationalities as well ... You have to take control yourself and you have to trust only yourself ... They do not share the same code of ethics and they are not equipped as we are. (p. 10)<sup>10</sup>

It is interesting to note that such suspicion is not exclusively related to international peace operations. In the Canadian domestic context for example, there is an informal hierarchy between patrolmen, investigators and tactical teams, such as SWAT teams, in which every 'clique' mistrusts members of the organisation that do not belong to their subunit. In the MINUSTAH, police officers mention an excessive hierarchy among police contingents, to the point that some of their colleagues have to ask their superior before they can put gas in their vehicle, thus complicating work even more. Furthermore, police contingents from different nationalities have different ethos with regard to intervention and police work. Some adopt a military style, like gendarmes, while others are more oriented towards a civilian approach. Beside the difficulties and consequences resulting from sharing of territory and linked to the use of force, these varying approaches also entail counterproductive differences in theories about how local police should be trained. While police who adopt a more civilian approach usually promote a community-oriented philosophy, those who model themselves on gendarmes tend to push for a 'professional' or 'crime fighting' model. They promote a military ethos, which entails the risk that local police organisations will develop a model of policing that isolates them from the population, rather than attempting to (re)gain public confidence. On this issue, Canadian participants display a strong commitment to a civilian police model.

The community policing model, given its focus on interaction with the population and the theoretical possibility of rebuilding confidence between the local population and police forces in the context of a post-crisis society, appears to be the most appropriate model when it comes to training local police forces. However, its operational implementation is problematic as counties in post-conflict or weak state contexts do not possess even the minimal conditions needed to implement community policing. Remarks by participants, such as those quoted above in the section on analysing axiomatic knowledge, point out some of the problems. UNPOL officers sometimes have to deal with groups that are much more violent than those found in the domestic context, necessitating more coercive means of intervention. Also, accounts from police officers point to a problem in developing a shared idea of community. For example local populations – which are sometimes further fragmented into different groups – do not share the same political, economical or social interests, nor do they share the same level of commitment to seeing UNPOL contingents as responsible for their safety and security. Issues of legitimacy and trust often remain a problem for the local population. In such a context, UNPOL officers risk to be considered as representatives, or sometimes even instruments, of powerful local lobbies, including criminal groups, who may paradoxically be seen as able to provide the population with more security than state institutions, even if it is recognised that they are involved in illegal practices (Dupont *et al.* 2003).

Some aspects of 'recipe' knowledge are easily apparent, such as a strong suspicion of the UN hierarchy. Participants expressed a manifest lack of confidence in the UN, sometimes even characterising it as the 'Dis-Organisation of the United Nations'. They did not feel they were systematically backed by the UN in their tasks and also mentioned that they quickly came to understand that they could count on only their national colleagues, some international colleagues, or themselves. With regard to a 'police-keeping' culture and knowledge, such Canadian testimonies reveal a professionalism in their everyday tasks but also – and this may be a necessary condition for them to accomplish their mission – a great deal of suspicion towards some foreign contingents based on previous negative experiences. This attitude may lead to reliance on the professional know-how developed in the domestic sphere. Paradoxically, and exclusively

in relation to work in the foreign context, police work in peace operations appears to increase commitment to participants' domestic values, sometimes at the cost of a problematic discrepancy between what is seen as necessary and local policing needs and capacities.

### Directory knowledge – police methods

Directory knowledge drives police officers in their daily work and informs their practices. It is subordinated to dictionary knowledge. To put it another way, if dictionary knowledge enables police officers' to map their environment in terms of a distinction between the normal and the abnormal, the usual and the exceptional, what fits and what is suspicious, police methods – and directory knowledge – provide a way *to act* in order to maintain order; that is, to maintain what is seen as normal and usual according to the distinctions made by dictionary knowledge. To that end, police organisations are allowed an exclusive and specific means: the use of force – or the potential of the use of force – when necessary (Bittner 1974, 1990, Chan 1997, Brodeur 2010). Use of this ultimate method depends on the categories, or decision grid, a police officer creates in a specific situation, but results from the discretionary power that comes with police work and the extent to which the police officer *decides* to use force (Monjardet 1996). Not all situations defined as abnormal systematically lead to or require police intervention. Therefore, as described by Peter Manning, a police officer's decision to take action relies not so much on an abstract theory of police practices or a strict application of the law as on the interaction of his or her common sense, experience and evaluation of the immediate context. Manning refers to police actions as being *situationally justified actions* (Manning 1978, 1997).

Not surprisingly, the negotiation of police methods in the field of international peace operations echoes the observations noted above about dictionary knowledge. The difficulties involved in mapping such an unfamiliar and volatile environment complicate the development of grids or schemes of action that enable UNPOL officers to target and act accordingly in relation to the abnormal, the unusual and the suspicious. As one participant said:

All I had mentally developed during months, of course it counts. You get off the plane, and you are like, wow, holy f[\*\*\*], it is chaos here, really. (p. 3)

Similarly, transporting domestic directory knowledge is difficult because of the shortage of resources that characterises local police work. This is illustrated in the next comment, which refers to the management of a crime scene.

I told the Haitian police officer to come and have a look ... There was a nice footprint; there were [also] two finger[prints], blood fingerprints. But they did nothing, they never took any picture of the [traces]... [In Canada], we have all the services; we have the forensic police unit very close, specialists, and cameras. They do not have anything, nothing. (p. 7)

In consequence, police officers systematically point to the inability – and even the impossibility – of introducing domestic operational methods into the transnational operational field. In Haiti, UNPOL's mission – as understood by Canadian police officers – consists of supporting and training the HNP, as stated by the next participant:

When I say responsible, I do not mean 'the boss', [rather] we are invited by the Haitian people to help them. Therefore, they [are] the boss and you suggest to them things to do during interventions. Then, inevitably sometimes they accept, and sometimes they don't, it is how it goes, *they* decide. (p. 4)

Such situations can lead to frustration, as shown in the next excerpt:

Our mission is about that; it is really about assisting the national police in the accomplishment of its tasks and we do not have an active role, we have a passive role. This is why I found it difficult in the beginning. I lived two months of anger, two months [for sure]. I was angry. Because I am a professional, I run tac, tac, tac. But you cannot do this over there; you cannot do anything over there. You have to take it easy, really easy. (p. 8)

The feelings of helplessness and frustration created by such missions may make participants wonder about their own abilities and police knowledge:

When you are there, you do make a lot of compromises; and you look at it and say to yourself that it does not make any sense. You finally get over it, but you are still wondering: do I slide into the mould of such incompetency? (p. 13)

Despite the present analysis, it would be wrong to see UNPOL as having only a small effect on the field or to restrict deployments of police officers to international peace operations in the belief that they are only a cosmetic aspect of international solidarity. If UNPOL's contribution to peace building and the restoration of a secure environment is difficult to assess – perhaps due to a lack of relevant criteria – the role they play in training the HNP is fundamental and the results tangible.

The interviews reveal a new dimension of police work in peace operations that we think must be considered in any evaluation: an important number of police officers develop innovative activities or practices that improve local conditions and help prevent increases in social tensions. These practices are all the more important because they are not confined to classical police work or the simple – and useless – transposition of domestic practices to the transnational sphere. Rather, they indicate awareness of the new field police officers are acting in, as well as the political and social landscapes in which these practices are evolving. Though such practices go beyond police officers' axiomatic mandate, they reflect not only the effort to promote international solidarity but also the usefulness of a less bureaucratic and less exogenous framework in such stabilisation efforts. The next participant illustrates such an idea:

We started soccer tournaments. The junkyard, next to our place, we asked the population to clean it and we told them to come and plug their sound system at our place when we had electricity power. People came and went from here and there. [Sometimes] there were big soccer tournaments. My roommate, from [...], he brought about forty soccer balls, even more. We equipped more than 80 soccer teams in the northwest of the country. ...When we were off duty, our boss sometimes gave us a break, we would leave with a car full of soccer balls, and drive for four or five hours to distant villages. That is what I did during my off duty time – you do not have any choice, you have to do something. (p. 14)

Even though conducted during off-duty time and because they provide distraction, such initiatives contribute to the rise, or consolidation, of a social network and interpersonal links between the local population and international police officers, thus fulfilling a *sine*

*qua non* condition for efficient informal social control. Such strengthening of local relations is also furthered by the organisation of soccer tournaments by police officers, on a voluntary basis. Interviews also reveal fund-raising initiatives by police officers to benefit orphanages or volunteer work in these same institutions. On the issue of fund-raising, a participant told about his efforts to collect money to organise an open house at the police academy in Port-au-Prince. That event allowed the local population, the HNP and the UNPOL to meet and exchange information on both a formal and informal basis. It encouraged closer social ties with the population and consolidated the trust between various local security governance stakeholders. If such practices initially stem from a 'trial and error' logic, they can lead to a more systematic understanding of the situation of the police officers in the field and the reality they are operating in. Analysis of our data in this area is ongoing and will be the object of further publications. However, it is possible to pick out several steps that occur as police officers alter their course in their new mission. For example, when they become aware of how unfavourable conditions are for police work, and once the frustrations resulting from their inability to use their usual know-how are overcome, their perspectives change. Their expectations become different and their energies are redirected towards activities that are more satisfying and are seen as more tangible and useful. Such humanitarian activities – such as organising soccer games or fund-raising – may be seen as a way to cope with frustration and to compensate for the inability to act on their law-enforcement ethos. They also express an alternative way of negotiating dictionary, recipe, and directory knowledge that makes it possible to innovatively develop axiomatic knowledge. In other words, such solutions are the outcome of a learning process whereby police officers begin to better manage their mission and progressively build a new knowledge or culture, or, more specifically, a policekeeping culture or knowledge. That observation requires a new image of police officers in peace operations that differs from their past association with the use of force. Given this, even though our hypothesis needs further analysis to be sure it is solidly grounded, our results seem to indicate that the lack of opportunities to use of force – though perpetuating the myth that police organisations are mainly concerned with the use of force (Brodeur 2003) – may ironically be a definitive dimension of policework that can be transposed from the domestic to the transnational field.

### **Police work in international peace operations as an 'art of improvisation'?**

Based on interviews with Canadian police officers deployed in the MINUSTAH, we have drawn a first sketch of what 'police work' means in the context of international peace operations. Following Gordon Peake and Otwin Marenin's (2008) recommendations, our approach documents police practices in the field rather than discussing doctrine, normative issues, or what police work should be in peace operations. In particular, we have addressed the situation encountered by police officers involved in peacekeeping through a police knowledge perspective understood as a set of solutions developed in relation to what Janet Chan identified as the implementation of axiomatic knowledge (mandate), dictionary knowledge (police values), recipe knowledge (police categories) and directory knowledge (police methods; Chan 1997, Chan *et al.* 2003). The development and application of each of these types of knowledge result in the emergence of a collective knowledge, which is the sum of individual solutions developed by police officers in order to overcome the discrepancy entailed by the difficulty, or impossibility, of transposing domestic police knowledge to the international operation field. This

collective knowledge can be seen as the (Canadian) policekeeping culture that guides police officers in the field.

In its broad features, the portrait presented here is only preliminary. First, the (Canadian) 'policekeeping' culture is characterised by the presence of police officers who are sceptical about the nature of their mandate, which, as soon as they are confronted with operational field conditions, is generally seen as unrealistic. This first axis is not exclusive to the Canadian experience, as Andrew Goldsmith revealed in the context of Australian police participation in Timor Leste (Goldsmith 2009). A second axis involves participants who are disoriented, ill-equipped and struggle to understand an environment that is difficult to assess based on categories developed and used in the domestic context. Such confusion is largely due to the difficulty in orienting oneself geographically, coping with a different work pace and dealing with different and unusual events or situations. A third axis, which might be thought of as the logical consequence of the previous one, reinforces police officers' belief in their domestic values. As legitimate as such a withdrawal mechanism might seem, particularly when we consider the kind of interactions that participants describe with their foreign counterparts, the UN bureaucracy, or even local working conditions, such phenomenon evokes UN police contingents that function in silos or even in isolation from each other. It points to a fragmentation in stabilisation and consolidation police practices. That logic is mostly illustrated in the training of local police forces, specifically through the effect of the idiosyncratic philosophies that characterise each police contingent in determining which of the main police models to implement (community policing versus professional). These conflicting rationales create scepticism among local police organisations, which are confronted by sometimes contradictory foreign policing models. Finally, a fourth axis characteristic of such 'policekeeping' culture reveals a set of 'extra-policing' practices that can develop while participants attempt to deal with their mission.<sup>11</sup> These practices are related to how police officers cope with their frustrations with regard to the negotiation of the other types of knowledge. In particular, ad hoc innovative initiatives are being implemented that contribute to the development of a crucial dimension of stabilisation and peace building – the strengthening of local social webs. This process constitutes a fundamental element of informal social control, as well as a meeting point between international police officers and local populations. Such meeting points offer an opportunity to build confidence between the population and UNPOLs.

These preliminary results offer a new opportunity to understand the obligation to produce results demanded by Secretary General Ban Ki-moon of actors involved in post-conflict peace building. First, in order to ensure realistic expectations, such obligations – which focus on the output of policekeeping – need to be understood from an endogenous perspective that takes into account what doing police work actually entails in these still-uncommon missions. This approach is necessary or one risks placing unrealistic hopes – and too much pressure – on the police component by assuming that police work remains the same regardless of the context and environment in which it takes place. The ability to make use of police knowledge outside the conditions and sphere in which it has been developed remains a major dimension of the success of such police operations. Second, it is necessary to define what is meant by 'obligation to produce results' in order to properly evaluate the police work being considered. Should such an evaluation be based on a purely quantitative metrics, such as how many crimes have been solved, how many arrests have been conducted, and how many investigations initiated? Or, more constructively, does such obligation for results refer to a more global assessment of the

situation, based, for example, on a – still to be formulated – index of trust from the local population towards the international police contingents and towards their own police forces? On this perspective, our results tend to indicate that ‘policekeepers’ can play a crucial role due to their proximity to the local population and the exchanges they have with its members. Third, these thoughts on the obligation for results open the door to an ambitious programme on the sociology of transnational policing and call for more systematic research on a still-neglected field of police studies.

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### Notes

1. R2P is defined as the employment of coercive means to achieve positive social ends where there is no outcome (Bowling and Sheptycki 2012, p. 124). For critical assessments of this principle, the reader may refer to Bowling and Sheptycki (2012) and Harvard Law Student Advocates for Human Rights (2005).
2. United Nations Peacekeeping, Monthly Summary of Contributions of Military and Civilian Police Personnel, <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/contributors/documents/Yearly06.pdf>, consulted 16 March 2012.
3. These three contributing countries are followed by Pakistan (894), Senegal (742), Nepal (739) and Nigeria (692) all countries that are in the lower ranks of *The Economist* democratic index. This distribution may explain why so little evidence is available on the UNPOL component, since research on police in the highest contributing countries is still in the embryonic stage.
4. FPU are militarised police units dedicated largely to riot control. They are trained in their own countries and are usually homogenous, comprised of police officers who are used to working together, in contrast to UNPOL units, which group police officers from multiple countries who have a large – and unequal – diversity of expertise and competence, which affects their efficiency.
5. Bangladesh, 475; India, 458; Jordan, 477; Nepal, 139; Nigeria, 140; Pakistan, 276; Rwanda, 160; Senegal, 140.
6. In terms of proportions, peacekeepers are largely dominated by Blue Helmets, thus justifying the higher interest in the military component. However, in absolute terms, the number of police officers deployed in international peace operations more than doubled in six years. They were 6167 in September 2005 (9% of peacekeepers) and are 14,526 in February 2012 (14.6% of peacekeepers), *United Nations Peacekeeping, Monthly Summary of Contributions of Military and Civilian Police Personnel*, <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/contributors/documents/Yearly06.pdf>, consulted 16 March 2012.
7. Canadian police officers are also deployed in South Sudan, Ivory Coast and Afghanistan.
8. This does not mean that police officers do not face immediate threats in the domestic context. But police officers working in the context of peace operations describe a crucial lack of confidence in their institutional hierarchy and their international colleagues. They do not feel supported and thus experience a much higher degree of insecurity.
9. It has been confirmed that Nepalese soldiers were involved in the origin of the epidemic of that disease. Sometimes local knowledge is not as disconnected as one would think (Sontag 2012).
10. It is interesting to notice that all Canadian police officers are equipped with the same gear, both with regard to the outfit they are wearing (with only as a difference, a crest indicating from which police service they are affiliated in Canada) and the gun they are using. If no one critic the outfit, some police officers encountered are perplex about the principle of being equipped with a gun they are not used to in their domestic context, and considered by some as less efficient than their usual gear.
11. As relevantly brought to our attention by one of the reviewer, this phenomenon is not exclusive to police deployment in international peace operations, such as revealed in the British tradition, and what R. Storch (1976) referred to as ‘the Policeman as domestic missionary’.

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