The Case for ‘Trust Awareness’ as a Key Soft-Skill for Peacekeepers: A Study on how Trust Impacts Inter-Organizational Cooperation and Local Ownership with Military Peacekeepers Deployed to UNIFIL

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Abstract

This article uses the case study of the UNIFIL mission in South Lebanon to explore the role of trust in facilitating or obstructing inter-organizational cooperation and local ownership in a traditional UN peacekeeping mission. Peacekeeping is distinct from many other forms of military engagement in the level of cooperation it requires, not only between different national military contingents, but between militaries and international police and civilian staff, personnel from local institutions and municipalities, and local communities. This article argues that the inter-organizational cooperation necessary for effective interoperability will not happen unless there is trust between the militaries working together. Equally, local ownership is not possible unless local populations trust peacekeepers to be impartial. However, this soft skill – awareness of the role of trust and how to engender it – is not included in pre-deployment training for military personnel. We outline the soft skill of ‘trust awareness’, including a typology of trust relevant for peacekeeping, and ‘trust mechanics’- practical actions and behaviors that foster trust.
Introduction

In a peacekeeping mission, a degree of trust is necessary for inter-organizational cooperation and local ownership, trust between the different militaries involved, and trust between international peacekeepers and local communities. Given the significance of trust based interactions in peacekeeping, and that these interactions have not previously been studied in depth, our research question was broad and exploratory: what role can trust play in achieving or obstructing inter-organizational cooperation and local ownership? Inquiry into the experiences of personnel confirmed existing research findings on impediments to constructive trust-based interactions in peacekeeping. Analysis yielded theoretical insights that have the potential to contribute to more effective and efficient peacekeeping. We present a typology of trust relevant for peacekeeping, a tangible way for peacekeeping personnel and practitioners to conceptualize trust, and focus on two key concepts generated from thematic analysis of the interviews: ‘trust awareness’ and ‘trust mechanics’. What we call the soft skill of ‘trust awareness’ is not the ability to trust, but rather, knowing when and how to deploy different types of trust, and skills in how to build trusting relationships. It is important for peacekeepers to be aware of how perceptions of trustworthiness/untrustworthiness can develop and to understand how to foster behaviors that produce trust, enabling cooperation both among organizations that comprise the mission, and among international peacekeepers and local organizations and communities. We describe these practical steps and behaviors as the ‘mechanics of trust’. We argue that it is essential to take a systemic perspective for enabling well-placed trust and trustworthy behavior in the long term, making trust a core part of the systems design of peacekeeping.

Social scientists have identified trust as a basis for the functioning of communities, markets, and organizations; however, the types and degrees of trust needed for cooperation will vary between social systems and organizational forms. Trust, trustworthiness and trust-building has been recognized as necessary for...
myriad tactical aspects of peacekeeping: from the interaction between military peacekeepers,\(^2\) to the role of trust in understanding and delivering on the needs of local communities,\(^3\) and for gathering intelligence and filtering this information through ranks and networks to decision makers.\(^4\) With some notable exceptions\(^5\) the ‘on-the-ground’ realities of those involved in peacekeeping, both local communities and the staff of UN missions, are often neglected in favor of evaluating peacekeeping from a political or strategic level. Similarly there is a paucity of studies examining trust in peacekeeping missions at a tactical or operational level while the majority of existing research on the role of trust in peacekeeping has taken the form of large scale opinion and attitude surveys, either from the international community\(^6\) or from the regions that peacekeeping missions operate.\(^7\)

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Peacekeeping is distinct from many other forms of military engagement in the level of cooperation and it requires, not only between different national military contingents, but between militaries and international police and civilian staff, personnel from local institutions and municipalities, and local communities. The organizational form of a peacekeeping mission is unique as while formal hierarchies participate, they must be able to work in an environment where they become temporarily part of a networked structure. In a networked organization people and groups linked across boundaries to work together for a common purpose; it has multiple leaders, voluntary links and interacting levels. The culture of a networked organization will be one that is flexible, open, socially embedded and accountable. Militaries have been described as amongst the most enduring and persistent hierarchies, while networked forms of organization increasingly proliferate. In hierarchies there are clearly defined roles, rules and responsibilities, and an intrinsic degree of trust in your superiors, who in turn will have a large degree of responsibility for the outcome of your work. In contrast, networks function in the absence of a centrally coordinated mechanism of sanction and reward and consequently can only produce cooperation if there is a high level of acquired trust as organizations in a network are not under each other’s command and must persuade each other of the desired course of behavior.

There is an extremely high level of diversity among peacekeepers in terms of nationality, ethnicity and religion. This article examines the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), a mission made up of troops from 41 Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs), across five continents. In peacekeeping missions, diversity extends to levels of training and corresponding perceptions of competence and professionalism. Military cultures themselves can vary

8 Holohan, Networks of Democracy.
9 Elinor Ostrom, Governing the Commons. (Cambridge University Press, 2015).
12 Ostrom, Governing the Commons
13 For a full breakdown by contributing see unifil.unmissions.org/unifil-troop-contributing-countries.
14 Elron et al., “Why don’t they fight each other? Cultural diversity and operational unity in multinational forces”; Ben-Ari & Elron, “Blue Helmets and White Armor multi–nationalism and multi–culturalism among UN peacekeeping forces.”
highly between national armies, e.g. voluntary vs. paid national armies, and combative national armies vs. armies that carry out peacekeeping exclusively.\(^\text{15}\) Although as soldiers, military peacekeepers share a background of socialization in a military institutional culture, perceived differences between national contingents and their capacity to fulfill the tasks at hand remain strong.\(^\text{16}\) For a peacekeeping mission to be successful there must be trust within, but also between, organizations. Without a degree of trust between the militaries involved information will not be shared and resources cannot be fully deployed.\(^\text{17}\) With peacekeeping missions, diversity in this broad sense and the lack of a command structure that encompasses all personnel makes the cooperation necessary for effective interoperability difficult to achieve.

Local consent and trust, developed in part through interaction between peacekeepers and civilians, has been found to be closely related to the concept of legitimacy\(^\text{18}\) and when present, provides a mission with a “certain stock of goodwill” that, when absent, will ultimately negatively influence the nature of civilian-peacekeeper relations and the outcome of missions.\(^\text{19}\) An absence of local ownership means that peace is not sustainable and will breakdown when peacekeepers are withdrawn. Local ownership is dependent on local populations consenting to the presence of international peacekeepers, for them to act exclusively in defense of the mandate, and critically, to be impartial with the local populations.\(^\text{20}\) Similarly, to inter-organizational cooperation, local ownership is not automatically produced, and cannot be ‘commanded’; and, as the local populations are arguably the most crucial part of the broader network of a mission, cooperation between the peacekeepers and the local populations can only be achieved through trusting relationships. Just as the hierarchical

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\(^\text{15}\) Tallberg, “Bonds of burden and bliss: the management of social relations in a peacekeeping organisation.”

\(^\text{16}\) Elron et al., “Why don’t they fight each other? Cultural diversity and operational unity in multinational forces.”


\(^\text{18}\) Daisaku Higashi, *Challenges of Constructing Legitimacy in Peacebuilding: Afghanistan, Iraq, Sierra Leone, and East Timor* (Routledge, 2015).


\(^\text{20}\) These three core principles are inter-related and mutually reinforcing: Consent of the parties, Impartiality And Non-use of force except in self-defence and defence of the mandate https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/principles-of-peacekeeping.
structure and culture of militaries make it difficult to trust across organizational boundaries, it is important to acknowledge that history, politics and power influence the dynamics of trusting relationships and the absence of trust can easily spill over into suspicions about the partiality of peacekeepers. Research with local communities in ‘peacekept’ countries has found that individual positive experiences with peacekeepers were crucial in willingness to cooperate, even in settings where negative attitudes to peacekeepers had become entrenched. The need for trust flows in both directions and peacekeepers must be able to demonstrate a degree of trust in local populations to gain the trust of these communities. Trust and credibility are reflexive: if a particular military (or a mission more broadly) is seen as credible, the peacekeepers from that organization are more likely to be seen as trustworthy, while trustworthy personnel help build an organization’s credibility.

11 Methodology

Trust, although a fascinating and fundamental social concept is also described as one of the most ‘elusive’ and challenging in terms of study. Qualitative methods are seen as superior to survey methods at capturing the subtleties of concepts, like trust, that are defined ambiguously person to person. The experience of trust is highly subjective and often unarticulated, consequently, qualitative open-ended interviews were chosen as the optimal way to access experiences and stories which could yield insight into the conceptualization and practice of trust in contemporary peacekeeping operations. With an interview guide that included open ended questions on the topic of trust, the interviews allowed us to explore our theoretical and empirical interest in the role that trust plays in the interaction and cooperation between organizations that are part of a greater collective or network. The topics discussed in the open-ended qualitative interviews included:

– Who would you trust if you are in a potentially dangerous situation on the ground? (If they ask what you mean, say someone from a specific organization, male or female, nationality?)
– Who would you not trust, and why?

21 Newby, “Power, politics and perception: the impact of foreign policy on civilian–peacekeeper relations”.
– How do you get people to trust you in the field? (from your own organization, other organizations, local people?)
– How do you build trust?

The answers to other questions on communication, cooperation, gender awareness and cultural competency also frequently produced answers that encompassed trust and were also drawn upon for our analysis. We developed a typology of trust based on a review of the relevant literature and initial coding of the interviews. Through an iterative process of thematic analysis of the interview data and working with the literature, the soft skills of ‘trust awareness’ and ‘trust mechanics’ emerged as key components of the peacekeeper skillset.

We focus on a subset of 20 interviews with military personnel with substantive experience working with UNIFIL: 16 from Defense Forces Ireland (15 Male, 1 Female) and 4 from the Finnish military (1 Male, 3 Female). Ages ranged from 25 to 56 and cut across all levels of seniority from cadets to a Lieutenant Corporal. UNIFIL was selected as it is a large, well-established, relatively stable, traditional UN mission, where interactions between military peacekeepers from different contingents, and interactions between peacekeepers and local communities can be explored. All organizations have a common mandate, with the core elements being:
– Monitor the cessation of hostilities.
– Accompany and support the Lebanese armed forces as they deploy throughout the South, including along the Blue Line, as Israel withdraws its armed forces from Lebanon.
– Coordinate its activities referred to in the preceding paragraph (above) with the Government of Lebanon and the Government of Israel.
– Extend its assistance to help ensure humanitarian access to civilian populations and the voluntary and safe return of displaced persons.24

UNIFIL is distinct from the so-called more ‘robust’ peacekeeping missions, e.g. the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), and the United Nations Supervision Mission in Syria (UNSMIS), where risk, operating procedures and protocol will greatly affect inactions and trust dynamics and there is limited interaction with local populations. As such, the article is not generating theoretical insights relevant for more robust forms of intervention.

Analysis is drawn from interviews with the Finnish and Irish Defense Forces; these contingents were selected purposefully as they have subtle, but significant, differences in terms of their organizational structure and institutional

culture and have shared a common AO (Area of Operation) in South Lebanon on multiple missions allowing their relationship to be explored. Ireland has a long history of prominent participation in UN peacekeeping and has contributed a battalion to UNIFIL from its beginning in 1978 until 2001, when the mission was scaled down by the UN. Finland also contributed a battalion from 1982 to 2001. The first joint Finnish/Irish battalion was formed for a 12-month period in 2006–7 to support the instigation of the enhanced UNIFIL mission, and the second (and current) joint battalion was created in 2013 when Finnish troops returned to south Lebanon to join the Irish, who had returned in 2011. Both Ireland and Finland are small neutral European countries, whose militaries main occupation is peacekeeping. One key difference is that Ireland has a professional military, whereas the Finnish military is primarily volunteer reservists, with most of their careers spent in their civil occupation.

111 Analysis

Impediments to Operationalizing Trust
It can be especially difficult for trust to develop within the social system of a peacekeeping mission for reasons linked to the inherent nature of peacekeeping and the understood social mechanisms of how people trust. These are documented in both peacekeeping literature and trust literature, and were confirmed in the interviews. Principally, it is far more complex than needing to increase levels of trust between the different organizations and individuals involved in peacekeeping as trust needs to be balanced with a level of caution and the monitoring of peacekeeping personnel. Personnel must also be able to build trusting relationships with colleagues across different organizations and militaries and build trust with local communities where they are based while remaining impartial.


(i) Risk
Trust must develop in the high-risk environment of an ongoing or recent conflict, where there is a real risk of, and exposure to, injury and death. In the military ‘force protection’ is paramount and this leads to risk aversion and potentially aggression in the face of danger, and yet, contradictorily, the mission can’t succeed unless you make yourself vulnerable to an extent. This was put succinctly by a senior officer:

You have to risk your security to engage with people and a lot of the risk averse nature of leading in a multinational mission, the first order you are given is, bring everyone home...It’s easy to do that and go home as a success but you will have achieved very little.

MICHAEL, Lieutenant Colonel, Defense Forces Ireland

(ii) Corruption
Trust needs to develop in a low-trust environment where corruption is common, and conditions lend themselves to institutional corruption and degradation.27 This can lead peacekeepers starting relationships with local communities and personnel from a position of low trust as described by one Finnish peacekeeper:

I would say that even though we always try our best to support the local officials and the local administration establishment, you should be well aware of that, a lot of these people have their own reason for doing things, that not everything is done in good conscience, and you should not be too, if I use the term politely, too trustful, you should be in a way always a bit realist.

LARS, Officer, Finnish Defense Forces

(iii) Short Deployments
The transitory nature of peacekeeping with deployments averaging six months per person for military personnel can hinder the development of forms of trust that are commonly built over time by repeatedly interacting with the same people.28 Many interviewees responded that it was difficult to trust people before you know them or understand their capability and that trust can only come from experience, for example with one person remarking:

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27 Goldsmith & Harris, “Trust, trustworthiness and trust-building in international policing missions.”

I remember talking to one young officer [from another military] saying 'look I don't trust you, that's not a criticism, I said, we just don't know each other, and I said 'obviously, I would imagine you don't trust me'

MICHAEL, Lieutenant Colonel, Defense Forces Ireland.

These short deployments are necessary because of the intensity of missions but impede trust developing, particularly the form of trust necessary for personnel to operate as an efficient networked organization.

Gaining the trust of local people when you are there for a short period is also challenging. Interviewees mentioned their hesitation to encourage locals to trust them for reasons including; feeling that they would be betraying that trust when they finished their rotation, not knowing whether the peacekeepers who replaced you would treat the community in the same way, and not wanting to give local people the idea that could help more than they could in a short period.

So in some respects it's unfair to establish relationships with people if you can't hold up your end of the bargain because you can't get them to commit to you if you're not going to be there for them and that's a mistake that's constantly being made in the last 15 years...where they have, like the term goes, 'mowed the grass for a couple of weeks' – they're withdrawn, the grass grows back.

MICHAEL, Lieutenant Colonel, Defense Forces Ireland.

(iv) Power Differentials
There are both explicit and implicit hierarchies at play between international peacekeeping personnel, whether that is the explicit hierarchies between military ranks or the implicit but influential hierarchies between different forms of organization (i.e. NGO vs. military), local and international organizations, and between international peacekeepers of different nationalities (i.e. western vs. non-western peacekeepers\(^\text{29}\)), as well as the power international peacekeeping personnel will hold versus their local counterparts and the local population.\(^\text{30}\)

The local civilian community will also be extremely heterogeneous, with individuals in position of power more likely to engage in meaningful or

\(^{29}\) Tallberg, “Bonds of burden and bliss: the management of social relations in a peacekeeping organisation.”

\(^{30}\) Fortna & Howard, “Pitfalls and prospects in the peacekeeping literature”; Rubinstein, *Peacekeeping under fire: Culture and intervention.*
influential exchanges with international peacekeepers,\textsuperscript{31} which can unintend-
edly consolidate existing or emerging power structures.\textsuperscript{32} In “Collective para-
noia: Distrust between social groups”, Roderick Kramer contends that more
powerful actors hold both greater ability and responsibility to generate trust.
33 “Trust awareness’ relating to power dynamics is necessary here on the part
international peacekeeping staff.

(v) Balancing Interpersonal Trust and Impartiality
We bond with and increase our trust in people (and them in us) when we
have repeated close contact, but military peacekeepers must remain impartial
while engaging with local communities sufficiently for trust to develop. This is
however difficult as illustrated by Eric, a captain with Defense Forces Ireland:

If we had guys who are based up near the Israeli militias, they’d obviously
be engaging with these, because they’re near them and all. They’d be more,
you just naturally, because they’d get on with them, you’d be more inclined
to say, well these guys aren’t too bad. If you’re in the village with the, with
largely Arabs, then it could be Christian Arabs as well, there was a lot of
them there in Lebanon. Ah, you would be more leaning towards them

\textit{A Typology of Trust for Peacekeepers}
Trust is said to be crucial wherever risk, uncertainty, or interdependence ex-
ist and requires a degree of vulnerability and uncertainty on the part of a
trustee.\textsuperscript{34} At a basic level, we trust when: "we refrain from taking precautions
against an interaction partner when through self-interest or incompetence
they could act against our interests."\textsuperscript{35} Trust as a complex phenomenon has
multiple conceptualizations across disciplines. We propose a typology of trust
for peacekeepers, taking concepts and highlighting their relevance to core ar-
eas of peacekeeping. Trustors must know about the trust-dependent behaviors
and their significance in the specific environment that they are based.\textsuperscript{36}

\textsuperscript{31} Newby, “The Pieces That Make the Peace: The Micro-Processes of International Security.”
\textsuperscript{32} Amitav Ghosh, “The global reservation: notes toward an ethnography of international
\textsuperscript{33} Roderick M. Kramer, \textit{Collective paranoia: Distrust between social groups} (Stanford, 2004).
\textsuperscript{34} Mishra, “Organizational Responses to Crisis”
\textsuperscript{35} Jon Elster, \textit{Explaining Social Behaviour: More Nuts and Bolts for the Social Sciences} (Cam-
\textsuperscript{36} Jens Riegebsberger, Angela Sasse, & John McCarthy. “The mechanics of trust: A framework
for research and design.” \textit{International Journal of Human-Computer Studies}, vol. 62 (3),
Table 1 is a typology based on synthesis of cross-disciplinary trust definitions and analysis of interview data.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trust Concept</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
<th>Relevance for peacekeeping</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive Trust</td>
<td>A knowledge-driven form of trust based on a rational evaluation of the trustee’s ability, competence or reputation.</td>
<td>Peacekeeping is often chaotic and unpredictable, and a person is unlikely to have full cognitive control and will need to make decisions based on incomplete information.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Affective Trust</td>
<td>An emotion-driven form of trust within personal relationships, based on personality cues and emotional connectedness. Affective trust is link to the concept of ‘thick trust’, trust based on experiences embedded in deep personal roots and relationships.</td>
<td>Military peacekeepers will have intense emotional bonds with members of their national military contingent and will often form close relationships with members of local communities where they are based.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bonding Trust</td>
<td>Bonding trust is the social capital that exists within a group, often with distrust for those outside the group.</td>
<td>Within peacekeeping there may be very strong bonding trust within organizations and national contingents, due to training and living together for long periods of time and facing high-risk situations. Bonding trust is positive particularly in building links with local communities. Negative effects include intense in-group loyalty at the expense of sharing essential information, or not trusting people outside your organization or group who may be more capable for the task at hand.</td>
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38 Ibid.
40 Ibid.
41 Elron et al., “Why don’t they fight each other? Cultural diversity and operational unity in multinational forces”; Tallberg, “Bonds of burden and bliss: the management of social relations in a peacekeeping organisation.”
Table 1: Typology of trust for peacekeepers (cont.)

<table>
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<tr>
<td>Bridging Trust</td>
<td>Bridging trust a form of social capital facilitates ties between people across groups and across cleavages that typically divides society, like race, class, or religion.(^{42})</td>
<td>For the mission to cooperate as one unified network organization and with local populations, bridging trust is central to successful peacekeeping.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Process-based Trust</td>
<td>Trust grounded in past direct experience of working together and future expectations.(^{43})</td>
<td>With militaries deployments on average lasting six months, process-based trust is difficult to establish with people outside one’s own military contingent.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Character-based Trust</td>
<td>Trust formed based on attributes (characteristics) identified in the other party (e.g., ethnic group, religious affiliation, age and/or role in an organization).(^{44})</td>
<td>Character-based trust can lead to us trusting people closer in background to ourselves and trusting people based on past experiences with people in the same category. Relevant in peacekeeping as can be pragmatic to trust based on characteristics on short deployments.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trustworthiness</td>
<td>A moral value considered to be a virtue. A trustworthy person is someone in whom we can place our trust and be sure that the trust will not be betrayed due to the strength of their character. Trustworthiness can be based on perceived competence, integrity and benevolence.(^{45})</td>
<td>Trust or distrust for a group or category of people can develop through socialization and social interaction and perceptions of either that individual or organization as trustworthy (or untrustworthy) can be built up over time.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transferable Trust</td>
<td>If A trusts B and B trusts C, then it follows that A is likely to trust C.(^{46})</td>
<td>Important with short rotations that trust can be both passed on by reputation or transferred to new personnel (including between newly deployed international military peacekeepers, and local actors).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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\(^{43}\) Zucker, “Production of Trust: Institutional Sources of Economic Structure, 1840–1920.”

\(^{44}\) Ibid.


\(^{46}\) Granovetter, “Economic action and social structure: The problem of embeddedness.”
Trust Awareness: Trust as a soft skill

Soft skills are personality traits, goals, motivations, and preferences that are valued in the workplace, in school, and in many other domains. Soft skills, in general are not a major part of training for most militaries, beyond briefings on gender equality policies and information sheet type cultural training. Trust is not explicitly part of current training for the Finnish or Irish militaries or part of induction training for UNIFIL, yet the experiences of the peacekeepers interviewed indicated that trust was a perquisite for successful cooperation, communication, negotiation and leadership. ‘Trust Awareness’ is knowing when and how to trust and when to exercise caution, and the ability to build trusting relationships. We argue that ‘trust awareness’ operates on four levels:

1. Understanding key trust concepts for peacekeeping (contained in the typology in Table 1)
2. Understanding ‘trust mechanics’, practical actions and behaviors that foster trust
3. Understanding that trust is transferable, both between individual peacekeepers and between militaries involved in peacekeeping
4. Understanding that difference underpinned by trust means greater resources with which to work

Trust Mechanics: Actions and Behaviors that Foster Trust

The analysis includes examples from interviewee’s experiences in UNIFIL that illustrate the impact of different levels of trust awareness and their manifestation in actions and behaviors that foster or inhibit trust.

(i) Interpersonal and Informal Interactions Build Trust with Local Communities

Over a long period of deployments (1975– the present), the Irish peacekeepers had developed a generalized trust in the local populations and vice versa, which can be typified as ‘affective’, ‘process-based’ and ‘characteristic-based’. The Irish peacekeepers interviewed felt casual and personal interactions were the predominant way they built trusting relationships. This familiarity was not

spontaneously produced – attention was paid to opportunities to build trust, whether that be sharing personal stories of their families and background with local counterparts, or in the case of more junior personal, they felt encouraged to engage with people as frequently as possible in local markets, shops and businesses while on patrol, giving business to local communities and gaining information and intelligence. Basic human level connections were made:

“So you wouldn't only be out saying ‘do you know what happened last night?’ you also would just be asking ‘how are you?’”

JOE, Corporal, Defense Forces Ireland

(ii) Showing Trust Engenders Trust with Local Communities
The Finnish interviewed responded that doing the job of patrolling in a skilled and efficient way would lead local communities to trust them (cognitive trust, process-based trust). A far more cautious attitude towards the local population was described by the Finnish military, including Kiia, a CIMIC officer: “It’s just more dangerous because you never know if the local in the background has something that might hurt you or your family in Finland, or the whole rotation, or the whole mission” and later goes on to say “you are supposed to trust another human...but all the time you can't trust or you have to think ‘what is he thinking’ or ‘what is his agenda behind this’. Maria, another Finnish CIMIC Officer echoes this attitude: “you know that this is a game...so you have to be polite and diplomatic but remember that it is a game”. The Finnish reported few informal interactions with the local communities, staying inside their vehicles for much of their patrols. The Irish perceived that the Finnish contingent drove in armored vehicles with the windows rolled up and never stopped in local shops while out on patrol:

And you could see the difference in the attitude with the Lebanese towards the Irish and the Finnish right, even though we were all coming out of the same area. So the Finnish used to walk around with their weapons up, they looked very threatening; they looked like they were going to do something. And the Lebanese obviously hated that.

MICK, Corporal, Defense Forces Ireland

For the Irish, stopping while on patrols required a degree of trust in the face of risk, following a strategy of ‘showing trust engenders trust’. These ‘trust mechanics’ built trust with local population, and in turn contributed to showing the local population that they were trusted.
Demonstrating Impartiality is Key to Maintaining Trust with Local Communities

The main source of tension and violence among the local populations is perceived, or at times actual, partiality by the peacekeepers. An officer assigned to liaison on the blue line noted the importance of impartiality:

I had to forge relationships with the Israeli Army and with the Lebanese Army, even though those two armies are still at war with each other. So one day you could be having lunch with an Israeli guy and your evening meal with a Lebanese guy...And as one of them says, 'We don't care if you hate us and the Israelis or if you love us and the Israelis, as long as you treat us equally'...Everyone didn't like my boss. But they say that at least my boss – the French guy who left – they say, 'He was a bastard to us, but he was also a bastard to the Israelis.'

Alan, Israeli-Lebanese Liaison Officer, Defense Forces Ireland

Behaviors that affect trust are not just when on patrol or interacting with locals, but crucially, on social media, which is monitored by all parties to a mission.

You're even watching the Facebook posts of the guys on your teams. Some guys would be putting up very pro-Israeli Facebook posts. And our Facebook pages would be monitored by the Lebanese and you'd have to say to them, 'Don't put that up. You can't put that up on your Facebook post.'

Alan, Israeli-Lebanese Liaison Officer, Defense Forces Ireland

Awareness that any partiality undermined trust was essential for peacekeepers at all levels. The above examples highlight the need for trust awareness around the negative aspects of bonding trust that have the potential to form between international peacekeepers and local communities where they are based. There is a need to balance the professionalism and personal boundaries of the Finnish peacekeepers with the bonding trust the Irish peacekeepers developed with local communities to ensure impartiality and local ownership.

Joint Training is an Opportunity to Build Inter-organizational Trust

It is more challenging to develop process-based trust with peacekeepers from other militaries than it is with your own national contingent, which will have
developed by working together and training at home. Joint training has been found to be particularly important in developing trust, across all ranks.\(^{49}\)

Now that takes time but once that is established you’re looking at joint training, joint military activities, looking at different skills...That allows the lowest level soldier to interact with the lowest level of Finnish soldier. It is easier for the commanders to interact because we have more to talk about, but for the lower guy, simply, ‘this is my weapon, this is the capability,’ that’s interaction.

**Eoin, Officer, Defense Forces Ireland**

Without an opportunity to developed process-based trust through joint training, peacekeepers will have a far greater degree of trust with people they have trained with at home at the expense of sharing information and resources across contingents.

(v) **Interpersonal and Informal Interactions Build Inter-organizational Trust**

Straightforward friendliness was also surprisingly uncommon but could produce significant trust with military colleagues outside one’s national contingent.

I walk over and shake his hand, ‘well, how are you doing? What’s your name? You know. It’s the most basic thing in the world...And I’d say that goes an awful long way, just, on the basic human level, just be polite to them, chat to them, talk to them like a human being like, like you’re soldiers but you’re people like

**Mick, Corporal, Defense Forces Ireland**

Sports and social activities were found to be an additional informal way that military peacekeepers built both bonding and process-based trust across military contingents. Interviewees describe activities between the Irish and the Finns, including sports days, sharing saunas, soccer matches, quizzes, sharing coffee and meals together. Elron et al. contend that peacekeeping forces are multinational rather than transnational in nature and peacekeepers tend to be identified and identify themselves according to their particular

The camaraderie and close interpersonal bonds between peacekeepers serve as a way of mitigating the high levels of stress (due to danger, time away from families, boredom etc.) However, this can also lead to cliques forming between different military contingents as noted explicitly by interviewees that despite the Irish living in close proximity with the Finnish, there was limited social interaction. There remains the question of how to prevent the negative or exclusionary aspects of this bond, whether the bonding trust can be extended across all peacekeeping actors, or is there a way this bonding trust can work in tandem with the bridging trust needed for collaboration in the network organization of a peacekeeping mission.

Trust as a Transferable Resource

In transferring and expanding trust, militaries need to move beyond solely depending on their individual professional status and experience, which was frequently referred to in interviews as a source of trust. It is also important to work to develop trust in the mission more broadly. The relationships described by Irish interviewees were importantly the relationship between the Lebanese communities and Irish peacekeepers, not between Lebanese communities and the mission itself as the Irish felt they had invested significant time and effort in building up relationships and wanted to protect this. The Irish perceived that their longevity in the Lebanon and their approach with local communities had developed a trust in Irish peacekeepers specifically, and they were eager to protect this, flying the Irish flag while on patrol and indicting that they were Irish at the earliest opportunity. The Finns described different incidents of aggression from the civilian population. This was noticed by the Irish peacekeepers, but the awareness of trust in inter-organizational cooperation, and the possible transfer of trust, was lacking.

So, we noticed then, we’d go through a village, and (speaking Arabic), and they’d be all like ‘ah, yeah, hello’ and then two hours later the Finnish would come through, and they’ll have rocks thrown at them, and they’d use, they’d set up wires for the vehicles that their heads are out to try and injure them, like you know.

Mick, Corporal, Defense Forces Ireland

50 Elron et al., “Why don’t they fight each other? Cultural diversity and operational unity in multinational forces.”

51 Tallberg, “Bonds of burden and bliss: the management of social relations in a peacekeeping organisation.”
The security and the overall success of the mission however can only be guaranteed if the local population has trust in the overall mission. The Irish peacekeepers had built up a store of ‘characteristic based’ and ‘process-based’ trust, which, if recognized as transferable, could have extended the trust of the locals to their Finnish military colleagues. Awareness of the impact of different types of trust and the transferable nature of trust could have led the Irish peacekeepers to work to engender trust between communities and the mission more broadly, but their view of trust stopped at the borders of their own military. If there were a greater awareness of the role of trust in a network organization, militaries could grasp that they can help each other and ultimately help themselves by generating trust for other militaries, and the overall mission. Trust that is confined to the Irish does not ultimately benefit the mission, unless it is shared.

**Differences Underpinned by Trust can Mean Greater Resources**

A key part of trust awareness is that trust in differences brings resources to the mission as a whole. ‘Trust awareness’ is necessary as there are different approaches as to how to build trust with the local population and awareness of these can allow the approach of other militaries to be understood and responded to appropriately. The Finns demonstrated an in-depth understanding of the gender mechanics of trust and power and how female peacekeepers can help to foster local ownership, with gender being discussed in the context of local ownership spontaneously by all Finnish respondents, while only one of the Irish peacekeepers recognized this. The Finns felt that female peacekeepers were able to engage with wide sections of communities (women and independent community groups) that are often less accessible or are ignored in peacekeeping in favor of dealing with influential figures i.e. Majors and Mukhtars in the case of Lebanon. When asked how having more female peacekeepers helped the mission one Finnish peacekeeper responded:

> Well it’s about reaching the whole population, females, males, children, elderly people and how the whole population is affected by the actions and decisions of peacekeepers. As a female I could talk to some different groups.

**Kiia, Cimic Officer, Finnish Military**

The Irish peacekeepers focused on traditional leadership while the Finns demonstrated understanding of tangible practices/mechanics of gender-based trust rather than normative statements on gender diversity as describe by Finnish CIMIC Officer Maria:
I felt it was quite easy to find those in the local people that have not been heard, because I know there are Mayors and Mukhtars that have been heard several times and we have spent so much time with them, but it was important to pinpoint other groups we could support, this was the most fruitful cooperation

MARIA, CIMIC officer, Finnish Military

Often pragmatism and the focus on efficiency in peacekeeping ends up strengthening or consolidating existing power structures rather than fostering fundamental transformation. Neither peacekeepers nor local communities are homogenous; serious consideration has to be given to whom to trust, and the most productive way of building trust is built with the local population as a whole. This involves reaching out to all parts of the country and ‘not just those in power or those with guns’, but crucially ‘non-governmental organizations, different political parties, women’s associations, youth and student groups’.

The importance of seeming non-threatening was important for building trust with local communities. When explicitly asked about the benefits of having female peacekeepers many of the male respondents mentioned that local people, particularly women and children, were more likely to trust female peacekeepers as they see them as softer and less aggressive (as per Zucker’s concept of characteristic-based trust). However, the only Irish female interviewee (reflective of the only 4% female military peacekeepers in international missions), felt that this is because male peacekeepers ‘hold back’ from engaging with women and children and that male peacekeepers should be encouraged to interact with women and children more to develop the trust of the local community.

While the perceived differences between the Irish and Finns are relatively minor, they still led to reluctance to trust when working together in comparison to working with one’s own national contingent. In extremely diverse

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53 Ibid, p.46.
54 Zucker, “Production of Trust: Institutional Sources of Economic Structure, 1840–1920.”
multinational teams, greater perceived difference, if not recognized as a resource can have highly detrimental effect on trust and consequently collaboration. ‘Trust awareness’ in the soldiers would foster an appreciation of the diverse resources and strengths of different militaries (in this case the ability of the Irish to understand and build on a common interactional/interpersonal approach to establishing relationships, and the Finnish highly professional approach and awareness of power differentials) and build mutual respect and trust with one’s colleagues of other nationalities. Trust mechanics would use joint training and everyday interactions to build trust that could be drawn on when needed.

IV Conclusion

The value of trust in peacekeeping missions was revealed in the interviews as having central importance; with many feeling it underpinned the strength or weakness of interactions in terms of communication and cooperation that participants encountered while on deployment, both with other national militaries and with the local population. However, we know little of how to categorize trust in a way that is useful for peacekeepers. This article contributes to our understanding of the role of trust and to our theoretical tools, through generating a typology of trust relevant for peacekeepers, and showing how this can be used to conceptualize a soft skill: ‘trust awareness’, and the behaviors associated with developing and maintaining different types of trust: ‘trust mechanics’.

Trust is complex in peacekeeping missions and needs to be ‘unpacked’ to address the dynamic and diverse interactions that peacekeepers have with a variety of actors. There are aspects of how trust is known to function that we found run contrary to the kind of trust needed in peacekeeping: (i) in situations of danger we become risk-averse, but in peacekeeping high levels of trust are required in the face danger; (ii) we bond with and increase our trust in people when we have repeated close contact, but military peacekeepers must trust across organizations, and peacekeepers must maintain neutrality while becoming somewhat embedded in the communities they are based; and (iii) we tend to trust more in the abilities of those we have worked with previously and trust people we can find commonality with, but peacekeepers must develop trust rapidly to cooperate across organizational and cultural boundaries. Trust is dynamic in a peacekeeping mission and being aware of the importance of trust, knowing what type of trust to deploy and when is a critical skill which is primarily produced through experience. We contend that what we call ‘trust awareness’ is undervalued as part of the peacekeeping skillset and needs to be
explicitly recognized and fostered to produce the cooperation necessary between militaries, and with the local population, for the ‘networked’ organization of a peacekeeping mission to be effective.

Research Note

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