

Cultural Diversity in Peace Operations: Training Challenges

By Nana Odoi¹



KAIPTC Paper, No. 4, March 2005

¹ Nana Odoi served as a Research Intern with the Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution Department of the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping and Training Centre (KAIPTC) from 01 August to 31 October 2004. [Email: o_nana@web.de](mailto:o_nana@web.de). Mark Malan of the KAIPTC provided extensive input and advice for finalisation of this paper.

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	3
THE CONCEPT OF CULTURE	5
CULTURE, CODES AND CONDUCT	9
CULTURE AND TRAINING FOR PEACEKEEPERS	12
CULTURAL TRAINING METHODOLOGY	16
Limits of standardisation.....	16
Understanding one's own culture	17
Evaluation and feedback.....	18
CONCLUSION.....	19

INTRODUCTION

In a world that seems to be growing smaller by the day through the visual and technological reduction of distances and barriers, it might be tempting to assume that the ‘imagined reduction’ of the globe has also led to a reduction of conflict and cultural differences.² However the intrinsic paradox within this sense of ‘global community’ is that the reduction of space has also led to a reaffirmation of the cultural and ethnic location of others, through the increase of local villages around the globe more aware of each other, thus increasing the opportunities for conflict.³

With the upsurge of conflict situations since the ending of the Cold War, the number of peacekeeping operations rapidly increased. Progress in the development of peace operations has not, however, been even. By the mid ‘90s, after several perceived peacekeeping failures (notably in Rwanda, Somalia and Angola), it was thought that severe limits should be imposed on the concept and conduct of peace operations. Recently, since 1999, there has been a sharp increase in the demand for UN and regional peacekeepers – especially in Africa. The increase in peacekeeping operations has been accompanied by a transformation from traditional peacekeeping to a complex amalgam of challenging interrelated multitask operations for peacekeepers, including disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR); humanitarian assistance; institution building; strengthening the rule of law; electoral assistance in post-conflict environments and demining activities.⁴ Both the functional and the operational level have become multilateral, multidimensional and multinational/multicultural.⁵

Civilians are involved in all levels of mission management, in political analysis, in emergency relief and humanitarian assistance, and in the various facets of *peace-building*. There is also a large and growing demand for civilian police. With a rising number of peacekeepers and over 100 UN troop and police contributing countries, there is a high potential for a ‘clash of cultures’ among the various players who are involved in a peace operation. This potential increases with interactions with local people, as all individuals have different national, institutional and personal backgrounds that impact on the individual’s behaviour and perception.⁶ While peace operations should aim at the empowerment of peoples and be based on local traditions and experiences, rather than the imposition of foreign modes of conflict management and governance, the reality is that every peace operation reflects the wider political interests of a global political culture that are manifested in the mandate and composition of particular operations, thereby impacting on the perceived legitimacy of peacekeepers as either occupying forces or as part of a supporting mission.⁷

Within this context of highly structured intersections of political interest, occupational differences and cultural differences, the successful completion of a mission will depend predominantly on

2 Appadurai, A. (1997/cf.) *Modernity at Large*, Minnesota Press, Minnesota.

3 Nye, J. S. Jr. (1992) *What New World Order*, in: *Foreign Affairs* 71/2.

4 UN Peace Operations, Year in Review 2003, page 17. Available at http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/pub/year_review03/Overview.htm, [Date of Access: 05.10.2004]

5 Hansen, W. & Ramsbotham, O. & Woodhouse, T. (2003/3) *Hawks and Doves Peacekeeping and Conflict Resolution*, in: *Berghof Handbook for Conflict Transformation*, Berlin.

6 Rubinstein, R. A. (2003/3) *Cross-Cultural Considerations in Complex Peace Operations*, Institute Working Paper No. 10 February 2003; The Campbell Public Affairs Institute; Available at <http://www.maxwell.syr.edu/campbell/Campbell/library.htm>; [Date of Access: 24.09.2004].

7 Paris, R. (2003/442) *Peacekeeping and the Constraints of Global Culture*, in: *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 9(3).

establishing good and trustful relations with the host community. Recent events involving use of force by French peacekeepers in Cote d'Ivoire illustrate how easily the delicate relationship between host country and peacekeepers can grow hostile. Thus it is vital that peacekeepers are conscious of their own cultural and historical context and that they are aware of the discourse of power and domination that they symbolise through their nationality. In addition, peacekeepers must be able to manage and adapt to different multicultural settings that they will encounter in their relations with host communities; with peacekeepers from other nationalities, and in relation to the occupational differences within their own mission.

Culturally diverse contexts are very demanding; they add significantly to the challenges of establishing trust and professional relationships within a (post-) conflict environment. Consequently, the need to deploy peacekeepers who are capable of working and communicating effectively within a dynamic multicultural environment has become more salient than ever.

The overall need to change the culture of peacekeeping towards addressing the multidisciplinary tasks of 21st century peacekeeping and peace enforcement was identified by the *Brahimi Report*.⁸ Although this report did not address the issue of cultural training directly, it did identify the need to improve training of personnel deployed to peace operations. Importantly, Brahimi recommended the standardisation of training, which has since led to the development of the standardised peacekeeping training modules by the Training and Evaluation Service (TES) of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO).⁹

Although extensive research has been done on the topic of culture and intercultural relations within the fields of sociology, cultural anthropology and pedagogy,¹⁰ little research is available on cultures and intercultural relations within the peacekeeping context. Moreover, recent reports on gender and peace operations in Africa by Refugees International (RI) and the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) have started to stress the need for incorporating a cultural perspective in the analysis of complex peace operations, as the incidents of sexual abuse and discrimination by peacekeepers cannot be understood without positioning them within a wider framework of complex culture, gender, class, and 'race' relations.¹¹

The aim of this paper is to analyse what kind of mindset, skills and knowledge peacekeepers have to obtain, to become competent in unfamiliar multicultural contexts, and to explore how this competence might possibly be acquired through training. This is done against a brief background on

8 The *Brahimi Report* is the result of the UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan's appointment of an international panel in spring 2000. The task of the panel was to recommend measures that could improve the UN's capacity in planning and carrying out international peace operations. The panel was led by former Algerian foreign minister Lakdar Brahimi.

9 However the actual implementation of these modules "remains with the Member States (MS) and training modules remain issue or theme specific. Sharma, K.K. (2004/126) *The Challenge of Change: An Approach to Training for UN Peacekeeping Operations*; in: *Perceptions, Journal for International Affairs, Vol. VIII/No.4*.

10 See, for example, Clifford, J. & Marcus, G. E. (1986) *Writing Culture The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, The University of California Press; McLaren, P. (1995) *Critical Pedagogy and Predatory Culture: Oppositional Politics in a Post-modern Era*, Routledge, London; Refugees International (2004).

11 Peacekeeping in West Africa: A Regional Report, RI June 2004. Highgate, P. (2004) *Gender and Peacekeeping, ISS Monograph No.91/2004*. Although Highgate uses the term "race", it is to be understood as a socio-political concept that was introduced at the beginning of the 18th century by the French philosopher J. A. Gobineau to classify people into hierarchies of higher and lower races on the basis of phenotype. Throughout the 18th and 19th century racial hierarchies served as ideological justification for the domination and colonisation of others. Nowadays the term 'ethnicity' is often used to refer to people with a different phenotype and culture, as 'race' is no longer acceptable as a marker of differences between human beings. However, as the concept of 'race' is still prominent in racism and discrimination, the term cannot be abolished and will be used in quotations throughout this paper to show that there is no valid scientific basis for separating the world into different 'races'.

the concept of culture and cultural diversity within peace operations. The relationships between culture and behaviour are then explored with reference to cases of sexual abuse by peacekeepers and the efficacy of codes of conduct. Finally, existing approaches to cultural and human rights training for peacekeepers are evaluated, before suggesting some methodologies and approaches that may enhance the efficacy of cultural awareness training presented to peacekeepers.

THE CONCEPT OF CULTURE

Culture is a term that is often used to denote differences in e.g. nationality, ethnicity or ‘race’¹² because it is an important aspect that marks humans as in- or outsiders of a particular social group or context. Although the general use of the term ‘culture’ can lead to the idea that ‘culture’ is an existing fixed entity, culture is not static but dynamic and changing. In everyday life cultural characteristics are manifested in aspects of language, food, behaviour, clothing, housing, transportation etc. In practice, the gap between our conceptual understanding of culture and actual behaviour or action leads, as Matsumoto (2000) outlines, to a “reciprocal cycle” because “when something is labelled culture, it becomes culture [and] then the culture reinforces the label”.¹³ The inherent danger of labelling other cultures is that the label might turn into a fixed stereotypical image about the other culture (e.g.: ‘Ghanaian culture’, ‘German culture’, ‘Chinese culture’ etc.), which annihilates the fact that each cultural group has various sub-groups and that each group is made up of individuals whose actions and norms might not conform with ideas of an existing “unitary concept of culture”.¹⁴ This aspect is particular relevant to peacekeepers who operate in societies whose societal and thus also cultural norms might have changed in response to conflict situations that have created new social and environmental realities.¹⁵

Overall, cultures are not only an observable phenomenon but also a medium through which a set of “shared meanings”¹⁶ is symbolically expressed and performed by a group of people who belong to a particular community and thus understand the cultural common-sense symbolism that is expressed. The cultural dimension of life is thus also the symbolic dimension and vice versa, because “the symbolic dimension is the place where we are constantly making meaning and enacting our identities”¹⁷ about who we are in relation to others. As has been established by various cultural theorists like Matsumoto, Hofstede and others, cultural traits can be divided into so called extrinsic and intrinsic attributes.¹⁸ Whereas the former are made up of observable phenomena (e.g.: dress code, food) and thus of aspects that constitute a ‘surface culture’, the latter are made up of unobservable phenomena (e.g. values, attitudes, concepts of justice and ‘self’) that are not necessarily

12 The concept of culture emerged from within the discourse of American cultural anthropologists (i.e.: Boas) who developed the concept of ‘culture’ (Kultur) in opposition to the prevalent racial discourse of explaining difference by ‘race’ in his famous book *Kultur und Rasse* that was published in 1913. Rodekamp, V. (Ed.) (1994) *Franz Boas 1858 - 1942. Ein amerikanischer Anthropologe aus Minden*, in: *Anthropos No. 90*. Morris, B. (1991/188), *Western Conceptions of the Individual*, Berg Publication: London.

13 Matsumoto, D. (2000/22) *Culture and Psychology*, Brooks Cole Publishing: Pacific Grove.

14 Binsbergen van, B. (1999/39) *Cultures Do Not Exist*, in: *Quest Vol. XIII, No. 1-2*

15 Rubinstein, R. A. (2003/17) *Cross-Cultural Considerations in Complex Peace Operations*; Available at <http://www.maxwell.syr.edu/campbell/Campbell/library.htm>, [Date of Access: 23.09.2004].

16 Hofstede, G. (1991/5). *Cultures and Organisations: Software of the Mind, Intercultural Cooperation and its Importance for Survival*. McGraw-Hill: Maidenhead, Ontario.

17 LeBaron, M. (2003) *Culture and Conflict*; Available at http://www.beyondintractability.org/m/culture_conflict.jsp, [Date of Access: 23.01. 2005].

18 Matsumoto, D. (2000) op. cit, Hofstede, G. (1991) op. cit.

visible in behavioural patterns ('deep culture'). This view of culture is also known as the 'iceberg model'¹⁹, as the idea behind this model is that culture can be pictured as an iceberg: only the tip of the iceberg is visible above the waterline, but it is supported by a much larger and invisible foundation below the waterline.

Consequently, the 'iceberg model' highlights the difficulty of understanding people from different cultural backgrounds, because although we may see the visible parts of their 'iceberg' we cannot straight away understand what the foundations are and might thus overlook the complexities that determine aspects of life and living. This aspect is particularly relevant to peacekeepers who operate themselves within a multinational and multicultural contingent of peacekeepers whilst being at the same time deployed within a context whose societal and cultural norms are different from their own. This dualism is also underlined by LeBaron who stresses that "these teams themselves experience cultural miscommunications and conflicts as they are dealing with the same in the populations they have come to serve".²⁰

Nonetheless some variables of another culture like language and concepts of time and space are still helpful for supporting initial orientation in unfamiliar cultural contexts. Although there are various cultural models that have been developed by anthropologists and cultural theorists, the most common framework differentiates between the following cultural styles:

Narrative resources and verbal style (direct versus indirect)

Whereas direct speech patterns are predominantly practiced in the West, non-direct speech is more common within a non-Western context. However, also occupational groups (e.g.: the military, the army) tend to have different styles of speech from e.g. non-governmental organisations, even if they are from the same geographic area.

Culture and Context (high-context versus low context)

Variations in context refer to a prioritisation of individualist (low-context) versus group approaches (high-context) to decision making and communication processes.

Thinking and reasoning styles (non-linear versus linear)

Linear reasoning styles view rationality and reason as the parameter by which outcomes and discussions are measured whereas non-linear styles give more attention to the thinking process than to the outcome.

Information processing style (strong ambiguity avoidance versus weak ambiguity avoidance)

Strong ambiguity avoidance refers to a highly structured and normative way of work where new things are not necessarily tried out. In contrast, weak ambiguity avoidance tends to refer to a culture where rules and norms are not static and changing styles are part of work and life.

19 AFS Orientation Handbook Vol. VII, page 14, *ASF Intercultural Programs Inc.* 1984

20 LeBaron, M. (2000/1) *Transforming Cultural Conflict in an Age of Complexity*, Available at http://www.berghof-handbook.net/articles/lebaron_hb.pdf, [Date of Access 23.01.2005].

Management of power and social relations (large power distance versus small power distance).²¹

In relation to management structures a large power distance signifies that social interactions with managers and subordinates are rare. Instructions are generally uncritically accepted by the subordinate. The reverse is the case in management structures with large power distance where cooperation between management and subordinates exists and instructions can be challenged or even refused.

As previously mentioned, none of these cultural categories contain certain truths about any particular culture, especially as cultural norms might change in response to conflict situations and thus create new social and cultural realities. However, being aware of differing cultural styles and knowing one's own overall cultural style can provide some initial guidance in unfamiliar cultural environments thus enabling a form of "cultural fluency"²² between diverse cultural settings.

However, a cognitive understanding of cultural models within a society does not prevent the feeling of disorientation or so called 'culture shock' that may be experienced when peacekeepers are suddenly confronted with unfamiliar situations. The uncertainty resulting from 'critical incidents'²³ can either lead to a feeling of helplessness or to negative feelings and even resentment towards the other culture, both emotions that hinder the process of handling the particular situation well. As Glasl rightly points out, "differences in themselves do not constitute conflict between people; what is important is how people handle their differences and how they experience them".²⁴

The culturally determined experiencing of differences can lead to the mishandling and misjudgement of conflict situations and people's behaviour, which can create an environment of distrust on both sides and might even trigger a new conflict. One way of reducing experienced differences among each other is thus through the process of communication. As our daily life is predominantly managed through various patterns of intracultural and intercultural communication, the first cultural barrier that peacekeeper will experience is usually in the realm of verbal and non-verbal interactions. In particular, "difficulties in language ... necessitate greater reliance on non-verbal forms of communication. Unless the individual peacekeeper is well acquainted with the subtle differences in non-verbal behaviour related to body movements, facial expressions, gestures, eye movements etc., the quality of interaction may degenerate even further due to the transmission of unintended signals".²⁵ Moreover, as peacekeepers must often rely on local interpreters, messages and meanings become easily distorted through the translator's own framework of codification and interpretation.

For enabling a common context of communication, encoded messages must be received and decoded appropriately. Consequently peacekeepers must acquire some culturally accepted norms of communication from the other culture (process of acculturation), in order to create "relatively stable, reciprocal and functional relationships within unfamiliar or changed cultural environments".²⁶

21 Rubinstein, R. A. (2003/6-10) *Cross-Cultural Considerations in Complex Peace Operations*; Available at <http://www.maxwell.syr.edu/campbell/Campbell/library.htm>, [Date of Access 23.09. 2004]

22 Le Baron, M. (2003/3) op. cit.

23 Critical incidents are a special form of social interaction in which the different cultural standards of two or more persons from different cultures clash in a certain situation.

24 Glasl, F. (1999/18) *Confronting Conflict – A First Aid Kit for Handling Conflict*, Hawthorn Press, Gloucestershire.

25 Stanley, C.H.K. (2001/3) *Psychological Dimensions of Peacekeeping: The Role of Organisation*. Available at http://www.mindef.gov.sg/safti/pointer/back/journals/2003/Vol29_2/1.htm, [Date of Access: 25.07.2004].

26 Kim, Y.Y. (2001) *Becoming Intercultural – An Integrative Theory of Communication and Cross-Cultural Adaptation*, Sage, London.

The difficulty within this whole process of ‘acculturation’ lies within the transformation of abstract knowledge about the other culture into actual practise, as this process of transformation requires the individual peacekeepers to distance themselves from their own cultural conditioning and therefore functions as a form of gatekeeper to their own cultural ‘reality assumptions’.²⁷

Following Barna (1997) there are six “stumbling blocks”²⁸ to practising effective cultural communication; namely:

1. *Assumption of similarities* (All people are the same)
2. *Language differences* (Underestimating that speaking a different language affords more than just uttering words)
3. *Nonverbal misinterpretation* (Misunderstanding the meaning of symbols or gestures)
4. *Preconditions and stereotypes* (Stereotypes can negatively impact on communication styles and manners)
5. *Tendency to evaluate* (Dissimilar values can lead to negative evaluation of others)
6. *High anxiety or tension* (Great levels of stress and anxiety can trigger dysfunctional actions)

These ‘stumbling blocks’ become even more complex due to the interrelation of culture and power relations where there are structural inequalities, such as those between peacekeepers and local people. In Africa, for example, peacekeepers should be aware of the post-colonial discourse that is continuously being rearticulated through political and economic relations between Africa and the West. As Houston notes, “inherent within all forms of action ... is power and a drive to attain the upper hand through sometimes deliberate, but more often habitual or tacit, strategising.”²⁹

Peacekeepers should also attempt to deconstruct their own ethnocentric perspective that every individual brings to an unknown cultural setting. Hoopes refers to this form of ethnocentrism as ‘natural ethnocentrism’, because it is a form of ethnocentrism that appears as a natural, cognitive pre-requisite, whereby the individual attempts to understand the alien cultural context through categories of his/her own culture.³⁰ Consequently, peacekeepers not only have to be aware of the cognitive, affective and behavioural biases and frameworks within which they normally operate, they also have to be conscious of the cultural ‘blindness’ that they often bring to conflict mediation situations.³¹

According to Gudykunst, such consciousness requires: motivational competence; cognitive competence; and skill competence.³² All of these competencies must be practised together, to enable competent intercultural communication, because knowledge and awareness are mundane if they are not consciously combined with the ability to transgress an abstract discourse into real action. Likewise competence must denote more than mere competence towards ‘the other culture’

27 Rubinstein, R. A. (2003/17), op. cit.

28 Barna, L. (1997) quoted in: Matsumoto, D. (2000/373) op. cit.

29 Houston, S. (2002/155) Reflecting on Habitus, Field and Capital: Towards a Culturally Sensitive Social Work, in: *Journal of Social Work* 2(2) 2002

30 Hoopes, D. S. (1981) Intercultural Communication Concepts and the Psychology of Intercultural Experience, in: Pusch, M. D. (ed.) *Multicultural Education: A Cross-Cultural Training Approach*, Chicago.

31 Gudykunst (1988) *Culture and Interpersonal Communication*, Sage, London.

32 Gudykunst, (1988/375-6) op. cit. Please note that Gudykunst uses the term ‘factors’ instead of ‘competence’.

but also competence in questioning and transgressing rigid categories of one's own culture, as any sense of relating and positioning must always be in relation to ourselves and the world.³³

CULTURE, CODES AND CONDUCT

The cultural competencies that peacekeepers need to possess for being able to work, manage and communicate within intercultural and intracultural settings are fairly basic, at least in the realm of theory. These competencies are also reflected in the three UN core values of *integrity*, *diversity* and *professionalism*. Moreover, peacekeepers are bound by a Code of Conduct, which informs them about their responsibilities and prohibits any form of immoral acts, psychological abuse or exploitation of the local population, especially women and children.³⁴

Military codes of conduct have been around for centuries, but what is new is the idea of codes of conduct for the military when involved in peace operations. In modern times, it is generally deemed essential for the upholding of the rule of law that the armed forces be bound by their national constitution and other laws of the land, that they answer to the elected government, and that they are trained in and committed to the principles of human rights and humanitarian law in the execution of their constitutionally-defined roles and tasks.

While traditional military training, in many cases, includes attention to the laws of war, including the four Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their 1977 Protocols, specific training in the area of human rights has been conspicuously absent. Indeed, the notion that human rights training and sensitization are inconsistent with effective military training is not uncommon in some military circles. According to this line of thought, soldiers are warriors and the waging of war is, by its very nature, contrary to human rights.

Such arguments tend to ignore the history of armed conflict. Although not based on a human rights culture as we know it, soldiers have since ancient times had codes of conduct based on the warrior's honour – from the Christian code of chivalry to the Japanese *Bushido* which was developed in feudal Japan and codified in the sixteenth century. These codes were primarily concerned with establishing the rules of combat and defining the system of moral etiquette by which warriors judged themselves to be worthy of mutual respect.

However, the codes also required warriors to distinguish between combatants and non-combatants, legitimate and illegitimate targets, moral and immoral weaponry, and between civilised and barbarous practices in the treatment of prisoners and of the wounded. Although such codes were honoured as much in the breach as in the observance, Ignatieff observes that “without them war is not war – it is no more than slaughter”.³⁵ But such codes were very particularistic, applying to certain peoples and not to others. For example, the chivalric code applied only to Christians, while warriors could behave towards infidels without restraint. The Moslems responded with the concept of *jihad*.

33 See also Hall, S. (1996/cf.) *Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*, Routledge, London.

34 The Ten Rules of Personal Conduct for Blue Helmets can be viewed at http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/training/tes_publications/list_publi.htm

35 Ignatieff, M. (1998/117) *The Warrior's Honour: Ethnic War and the Modern Conscience*, Vintage, London.

It was the Geneva Conventions that both codified the European warriors' honour and sought to make it universal, to open its protections to everyone. However, adherence to law in times of war has always been uncertain, and there are no judges or policemen at the place where the killing is done in combat. Moreover, in post-modern warfare belligerents are often unconcerned with a universal (Western) ethic based on notions of human rights; they adhere rather to an ethic that defines the tribe, nation, or ethnic group as the limit of legitimate moral concern. Under such circumstances, Ignatieff believes that "*the decisive restraint on inhuman practice on the battlefield lies within the warrior himself, in his conception of what is honourable and dishonourable for a man to do with weapons*".³⁶

Of course, where there is a functioning military hierarchy and disciplinary code, soldiers have been held accountable and brought to book for atrocities and excesses committed in the heat of battle. There is also some hope that the International Criminal Court will come to play the role of an effective judge, and that combatants will keep this in mind. However, it is warriors themselves that, in the main, 'police' the profession of arms.

In addition to military disciplinary codes which form the basis of military law, it is common for national military organisations, and even units or branches of such forces, to adopt one or more codes of conduct, codes of honour and/or credos. For example, a Code of Conduct for U.S. Armed Forces was first published by President Dwight D. Eisenhower in Executive Order 10631 in 1955. It was later amended by President Carter in 1977.³⁷ However, like many other national military codes, this is rather 'gung-ho', and based more on notions of sacrifice, bravery and patriotism than on universal human rights principles or acceptance of cultural diversity.

Such codes reflect core military values that are inculcated and reinforced throughout the process of military socialization. This process begins with basic training for recruits and continues throughout military service, to preserve the uniqueness of military culture – a culture which emphasizes conformity and obedience, and strongly discourages notions of diversity and rights. Military codes and the culture they reflect are obviously fraught with contradictions where the duties of soldiers are not limited to the waging of war, but increasingly include civil policing duties, the maintenance of order and public safety under states of emergency, and assignment to international peacekeeping operations. The effective, professional and humane performance of these duties requires a knowledge of and intense process of sensitization to international human rights standards and cultural diversity, as well as the learning of skills to apply such understanding in the daily work of the peacekeeper.³⁸

However, since the UN mission in Somalia, there have been an increasing number of reports on the misconduct of individual peacekeepers in the field, which strongly suggest that the UN core values are not embraced by all who wear blue helmets, that the UN code of conduct may have little impact on actual behaviour, and that cultural competencies may be woefully lacking amongst peacekeepers. The publication of a report in February 2002 on sexual violence and abuse of children and women by UN personnel and NGO workers in West Africa³⁹ has been followed by a steady stream of

36 Ibid, (1998/118).

37 The Code of Conduct for U.S. Armed Forces was first published by President Dwight D. Eisenhower in Executive Order 10631 in 1955. It was later amended by President Carter in 1977.

38 Malan, M. & van der Merwe, D. (2000), *Codes of Conduct and Children in Armed Conflict*, in: Special Edition of Canadian Foreign Policy/La Politique étrangère du Canada, Vol. 8, No. 1 (Fall) 2000.

39 UNHCR and Save the Children-UK Report on Sexual Violence & Exploitation: The Experience of Refugee Children in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, February 2002.

allegations of sexual abuse by UN personnel in UN missions in the field, from Kosovo to the DR Congo.⁴⁰

These allegations not only taint the public image of the UN, they also damage relations between local communities and peacekeepers, as the emergent tales of abuse and misconduct start to blur the line between peacekeepers as protectors and peacekeepers as violators of the host population. For example, with regard to personnel of the UN Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE), an Eritrean government spokesman felt that "... these people call themselves peacekeepers, when in fact all they want is a long holiday and a chance to fool around with our women. They did not respect our country, our culture or our people".⁴¹

Peacekeepers' sexually abusing women and children, in addition to violating international and in most cases national criminal law standards, has a serious impact on the credibility of the UN peace operation and eventually its ability to fulfil its tasks. It affects relations with the host population, who expect protection, not further victimization, by international peacekeepers. It makes the peace operation's work in areas such as the protection of human rights, especially of women and children, less credible and more difficult to carry out.

The reasons for lack of respect or concern for host populations have been explored by Higate, who observed that some of the UN personnel within the UN Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) associated the worsening of conflict in their area of operations with "the Congolese citizen". As a result, their sense of responsibility towards local people became weaker.⁴² Through blaming individuals ('the Congolese'), rather than social and political structures for existing situations, complex realities are simplified and ascribed to 'the cultural other'. As the perceived 'other' is in most cases not in a position to challenge such negative forms of representation, they go unchallenged and become easily naturalised as the 'normal way' of relating to local people.

Such cultural concepts of one's own and the other's culture have been highlighted by Laye & Kamhuber, in their study of German soldiers who were deployed as part of United Nations Operation in Somalia II (UNOSOM II).⁴³ Most German soldiers interviewed saw themselves as "generous helpers, who bring personal and material aid to deplorable and backward people, who are unable to keep peace or help themselves".⁴⁴ Within such hierarchical articulations of culture it becomes apparent that the concept of culture is used, like 'race', to mark out differences between human beings, except that the focus is more on the 'cultural otherness' rather than on phenotypical distinctions.⁴⁵ Once these categories of 'them' (e.g. the Congolese, the Somalis) and 'us' (the peacekeepers) are established as coherently different entities, abuse and discrimination are a predictable consequence. For example, behaviour towards local women is seen in an entirely different context to conduct with women 'back home'.

40 In 2003, responding to the need to strengthen UN action to prevent such abuses, to monitor the conduct of its personnel, and to ensure proper punishment, the UN Secretary-General issued a Bulletin on Special Measures for Protection From Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse ([ST/SGB/2003/13, 9 October 2003](#)). The Bulletin applies to all staff of the United Nations.

41 Walsh, D. & Byrne, N. (2002) UN Peacekeepers Criticized, in: *The Scotsman* December 22, 2002. Available at <http://www.globalpolicy.org/security/peacekpg/general/2002/1223peace.htm>, [Date of Access: 29.10.2004].

42 Higate, P. (2004/12) op. cit

43 Layes, G. & Kamhuber, S. (1999) *Development of Intercultural Competence for German Military Personnel*, Available at <http://www.nato.int/docu/colloq/w970707/m01.rtf>; [Date of Access: 25.07.2004].

44 Ibid.

45 Culture as a 'quasi biological' category

Because the average military contingent is still predominantly male in composition, aspects of machismo and thus also sexism are part of the institutional culture that forms the attitudes and behaviour of male peacekeepers within a ‘hypermasculine milieu’.⁴⁶ Within the peacekeeping context, the discourse of masculinity imputes notions of privilege and domination and thereby impacts heavily on distortions of local people, in particular women. Since peacekeepers have also considerable amounts of money, that attracts the attention of local women who are desperate for income, sexual engagements with local women can easily become exploitative, due to the unequal power conditions of these liaisons.⁴⁷

Existing control mechanisms, “including training of military and civilian personnel, promulgation of code of conduct and implementation of administrative instructions,” simply do not prevent peacekeepers from exploitative and discriminative behaviour towards others.⁴⁸ The regulatory framework is particularly weak when it comes to military personnel, as the military is only morally bound by UN administrative regulations and remain under the exclusive criminal jurisdiction of their own national authorities. Thus rather than responding to the needs of protection and supporting the aspirations of the local population, peacekeepers have (in some cases) become an additional problem for local communities.

The enforcement of behavioural norms through strict discipline and disciplinary procedures is one avenue towards upholding standards of conduct, but lasting and pervasive impact can only be achieved through positive attitudinal modification.⁴⁹ The latter, it is assumed, will result from appropriate training and education for peacekeepers. However, there are limits to what can be achieved through current UN approaches to discipline and training. As a member of the Training and Evaluation Service of the UN DPKO puts it:

“Since the issues of misconduct by peacekeeping personnel became publicised, nobody has been prosecuted and no amount of training will change the present activities or actions of people, because people know that what they are doing is wrong”.⁵⁰

CULTURE AND TRAINING FOR PEACEKEEPERS

In general, the military contingents within a peace operation tend to be the component that receives the most training. Pre-deployment training for military personnel in most cases starts four to six weeks before troops are deployed to their respective mission areas. However, for Ghana and many

46 Higate, P. (2003) *Peacekeeping and Gendered Relations*; Available at http://www.monitor.upeace.org/archive.cfm?id_article=47 [Date of Access: 15.12. 2004].

47 The UN defines sexual exploitation as any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, and sexual abuse as actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.

48 Assistant Secretary-General for Mission Support in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, Ms. Jane Holl Lute, during a press briefing on: Sexual Exploitation Allegations Related to UN Mission in Democratic Republic of Congo. Available at <http://www.un.org/News/briefings/docs/2004/lute041122.doc.htm>; [Date of Access: 22.11.2004].

49 Kofi Annan’s recent introduction of the “non-fraternisation” policy for peacekeepers in MONUC adds to existing control procedures for peacekeepers, rather than focusing on measures that change behavioural attitudes. ‘Letter from the Secretary-General to the Security Council introducing new measures for peacekeepers in DRC’ Available at <http://www.peacewomen.org/un/pkwatch/discipline/SGletterMONUC05.pdf>, [Date of Access 10.02.2004].

50 Interview with a senior TES official, Accra, 12 October, 2004.

other African countries, the cultural component within this pre-deployment training tends to be neglected, as most of the four weeks are spent on general administration and combat tasks and thus the training of ‘hard skills’.⁵¹ Thus there seems to be a lack of understanding within the military that cultural competencies, so-called ‘soft skills’ actually support the functional implementation of ‘hard skills’.

On the other hand, a 2002 UN report on sexual exploitation and abuse found that although cultural diversity training might in reality contribute little to change behaviours and attitudes that lead to the abuse and exploitation of vulnerable groups, training is one means of confronting current shortcomings and incompetencies of peacekeepers within the cultural terrain.⁵² The question is whether the perceived limitations lie in the concept of cultural training *per se*, or in extant approaches to the development and delivery of such training.

The training of military personnel for participation in peacekeeping operations is, and has always been, a Member State responsibility. However, with the increasing complexity of operations and greater demand for troops and new contributors, it has become necessary for the Military Division of the UN DPKO to provide guidelines and limited assistance to Member States, as well as to support mission training needs. It does so through the Training and Evaluation Service (TES), which has a modest staff complement of 19 (14 seconded military officers and 5 civilians) and a limited annual budget of some US\$1,8 million.⁵³

In response to the Brahimi Report recommendations, the TES was tasked to develop and disseminate standardized courses and modules for recognized training through a consultative process that included the fusion of knowledge and experience from Member States and various peacekeeping training organizations. A Level 1 package, consisting of basic training modules, was completed in 2002. A Level 2 training package, consisting of courses for middle ranking military officers and function specific training (for military observers, military staff officers, and civilian police officers) is in its final stage of development. Level 3 training, for senior mission management staff, is being developed and is due for completion by early 2005.

The modular approach to training development adopted by TES allows for the entire Level 1 training package (consisting of 16 discrete modules on topics ranging from the United Nations System to the Legal Framework for Peacekeeping Operations, and Safety and Security Awareness) to be presented as a course, or for specific modules to be utilized through integration into other military training courses. The standardisation of training by TES aims to increase the “mission readiness” of national contingents.⁵⁴ However, within the realm of culture and cultural diversity, the notion of standardisation should not be taken too far, as all nations should have the opportunity to train cultural awareness through their own culturally specific approach.

Current Level 1 UN peacekeeper training on cultural awareness is based on the UN Standardised Generic Training Module (SGTM 5B), which deals with “the attitudes and behaviours of United

51 See, for example, Malan, M., Nhara, W. & P. Bergevin, P. (1997), *African Capabilities for Training for Peace Operations*, in: ISS Monograph, No. 17, November 1997.

52 United Nations, Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC); *Report of the Task Force on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in Humanitarian Crises and the Plan of Action*; June 2002/8.

53 Malan, M. *Report of a Civilian-Military Training Development Forum*, KAIPTC, Accra, 6 – 9 September 2004. The full text of this report is available at www.kaiptc.org.

54 Sharma, K. K. (2004) op. cit.

Nations Peacekeepers”.⁵⁵ The content of SGTm 5 B presents a basic introduction and background of the concept of culture and provides a simple understanding of how culture impacts on cross-cultural relations within the peacekeeping context. A total of ninety minutes is recommended for delivering the syllabus on culture. Although SGTm 5 B suffices for a general introduction into cultural concepts, the module scratches merely the surface of the cultural dimension and is not adequate for addressing the various cultural complexities peacekeepers face in their daily interactions. Consequently it remains to be seen if the development of Level-2 will follow a more comprehensive approach to addressing the varieties of cultural relations within mission realities. As Level 2 training aims at mid-level leaders, a more complex module on culture would be important.

Unlike the Level-1 and Level-2 training modules, Level-3 is not intended to become a course or training activity, but is rather conceived as a *‘library of modules’* that will be presented through a mentoring scheme, as “the focus for senior management should not be on training, but on management skills and implementation”.⁵⁶ Although Level 3 is still under development, the key themes or topics for this level of training have been identified as: Cooperation, Coordination, Communication (including Cross-Cultural Communication), and Consensus; and Crisis Management. Level-3 training would therefore provide an ideal opportunity to expand the cultural understanding of UN mission leaders, and to develop a high-level training module that could ultimately inform the lower levels of training in cultural awareness.

Indeed, the recent record of UN missions in Africa indicates that the ability to manage diversity (in decision making and in relation to the mission) should be included as an integral part of the highest level of UN training. UN missions are deployed to assist with transitions from war to peace, where competency in change-management is a key requirement for the civilian mission leadership. As Kersten observes, managing different publics requires “multicultural literacy” and thus the ability to “hear and engage in a [variety] of discourses that may be radically different from our own”.⁵⁷

Interest in the theory and practice of “cultural sensitivity training”, and its place in international relations, has grown in importance in the aftermath of the Iraq war and occupation. Preparation for operations in Iraq after the defeat and capture of Saddam Hussein featured a variety of “cultural training” methods - from exercises in simulated Iraqi urban environments, through distribution of primers on Islamic religious practice and beliefs to soldiers of all ranks. The results of these initiatives have been limited at best, and the challenge of transforming knowledge about local culture into effective action for assuring understanding between peace-keepers and local populations has not been met. According to a US Marine Corps General: “... *We never do a good job of cultural intelligence, of understanding what makes people tick, what their structure is, where authority lies, what is different about their values and their way of doing business. Cultural bias limits our ability to understand what is going on around us and often prevents commanders from making informed decisions*”.⁵⁸

Within the context of UN and regional peacekeeping operations, a recent training workshop at the Kofi Annan Centre reached broad agreement that cultural awareness training is essential for all levels of mission staff but also pointed out that “a little knowledge is dangerous”. In other words, there may be a case for inculcating a much deeper level of cultural understanding among senior mission

55 For more information please refer to <http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/training/sgtm/sgtm.htm>

56 Interview with a senior TES official, Accra, 12 October, 2004.

57 Kersten, A. (200/239) *Diversity Management. Dialogue, Dialectics and Diversion*, in: Journal of Organisational Change Management, Vol. 13, No. 3.

58 The Military Linguist and Cultural Study; Available at <http://wrc.lingnet.org/culture.htm>, [Date of Access: 30.10.2004].

managers and political staff. The task may be one of research and education, rather than training, but the need was clearly identified for such understanding by senior mission managers involved in the state-building phase of peace operations.⁵⁹

However, UN thinking at this stage is that the senior management of UN missions do not need profound knowledge of cultural contexts and historic backgrounds of particular host communities, but rather they have to be in a position to take direct actions against human rights violations and misconduct by peacekeepers. As explained by the TES project leader, “you do not need to know what a human rights violation is, you only need to know what steps to take”.⁶⁰ This is rather surprising, given the humanitarian imperative to launch missions in the first place, and centrality of protecting and promoting human rights in all contemporary mission mandates.

The *Brahimi Report* specifically stressed “the importance of training military, police and other civilian personnel on human rights issues and on the relevant provisions of international humanitarian law”. The Panel also emphasized the role of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in enhancing the effectiveness of peace operations through, *inter-alia*, the organization of “human rights training for all personnel in peace operations, including the law and order components”.

Building on previous experience in this area, and in keeping with UN policy to promote standardization of training for peace operations’ personnel, OHCHR has developed a training package as a tool to facilitate the incorporation of human rights into peacekeeping training both at the national and mission levels. The overall aim of the training package is to “equip military personnel of peace operations with the knowledge, skills and attitude necessary to make them active players in promoting and protecting human rights in keeping with the mission mandate.”⁶¹ Although the finalisation of the training package with fifteen modules is still in process, a draft of the modules is already available. The preliminary draft of Module 15 on conduct (and misconduct) presents a more explicit and case related approach to issues concerning sexual abuse and general human rights violations by military peacekeepers than present DPKO standardised training modules. International standards on human rights are directly related to the individual peacekeeper, whose duty is regarded not only as the observation of international human right standards in post-conflict setting, but also the protection and promotion of these standards. Module 15 deals with the Conduct of Peacekeepers and more specifically with Preventing and Responding to Human Rights Misconduct by Peacekeepers, including sexual misconduct and disciplinary measures.

Importantly, Module 8 deals with the *Human Rights of Women in Peace Operations*. It emphasizes the fact that gender roles vary according to social and cultural contexts, including power distribution structures; and that they may be affected by factors such as ethnicity and class. Accordingly, gender roles may vary between the culture and society peacekeepers come from and the peace operation’s host country, and within the same country and culture over time. The module also highlights the fact that there can be no “cultural” excuse for abuses, and that States have an obligation to condemn

59 [Report of a Civilian-Military Training Development Forum](#), op cit.

60 Interview with a senior TES official, Accra, 12 October, 2004.

61 OHCHR Training Package on Human Rights for Military Personnel.

violence against women and should not invoke any custom, tradition or religious consideration to avoid their obligation with respect to its elimination.⁶²

While great strides have been made in the development of an excellent human rights training package by OHCHR, working in close collaboration with DPKO and other partners, there is still room for improvement of the cultural component of this training and indeed for all peacekeeping training that targets the issue of cultural diversity. Part of the challenge is a policy one – getting decision makers to accept the need for enhanced cultural training at all levels – but there is also much room for improvement on the implementation of training packages and modules where such training has been incorporated into national and regional curricula.

CULTURAL TRAINING METHODOLOGY

Linking theory, attitudes and behaviour

Typically, cultural awareness training lies at one or the other of two extremes: either it is too academic, with no provision for concrete application; or it is too purely factual, providing only a “shopping list” of cultural facts, knowledge of which will presumably prevent only the most catastrophic cultural indiscretions. Heightening the awareness and sensitivity of peacekeepers to issues of diversity and culture should not be merely a process of traditional classroom teaching, but also a process whereby participants can start to uncover their own hidden cultural assumptions and biases and gain practical competencies in intercultural communication and the management of multicultural contexts. Nevertheless, a certain level of theoretical understanding is essential. Participants at the KAIPTC training development forum felt that training should go beyond sensitization and respect for local customs and traditions, to include an element of the history and politics of the host nation, as well as to address organizational cultural differences among mission components that may militate against unity of effort if not handled in a competent manner.⁶³ On the other hand, there is also a pressing need for practical training in competencies, as pure cultural awareness is not enough.

Training should combine knowledge, skills and awareness to create a range of intercultural competencies, which may be linked through practical training to a regular exchange of experiences. While local agencies of the host country are often not involved in cultural awareness training, there is obvious benefit to be gained by their involvement in the training process (if possible prior to and during deployment).

Limits of standardisation

Although the TES brief emphasises the need for standardisation of peacekeeping training, there are limits to a standardised and generic approach to modules dealing with culture. Meaningful cultural awareness training must necessarily be ‘culturally specific’ to the relevant cultures that are required to work together towards a desired end-state. Much can be taught in a generic fashion about

62 See [Article 4 of the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women](#) General Assembly Resolution 48/104 of 20 December 1993. Available at

[http://www.unhcr.ch/huridocda/huridoca.nsf/\(Symbol\)/A.RES.48.104.En?Opendocument](http://www.unhcr.ch/huridocda/huridoca.nsf/(Symbol)/A.RES.48.104.En?Opendocument)

63 [Report of a Civilian-Military Training Development Forum](#), op cit.

differences in military, civilian and corporate cultures, but the blend of nations and organisations in any particular mission is bound to vary from any other. And the host nation traditions, beliefs, habits of communication etc. will obviously be very different from one mission to the next.

The International Peace Research Institute, Oslo (PRIO) is engaged in a project that will potentially provide generic teaching materials whilst also accommodating the need for specificity in cultural training. The teaching materials produced through the project, dubbed *Preparing for Peace*, will not seek to produce a manifest of ethical rules, based on primary values of respect, recognition, etc. Rather, the project will formulate cultural awareness as an imperative for “connecting the dots” – in other words it will look to culture as a way of understanding how the different elements of society and its institutions cohere. Rather than teaching norms and values, the aim is to provide a template for understanding the norms and values, both in theory and practice, of any particular host country. It is hoped that this will surmount the traditional challenge of providing universal norms to culturally heterogeneous peace-keeping personnel.⁶⁴

Understanding one’s own culture

Training in diversity should not only teach peacekeeping personnel about others, it should also encourage peacekeepers to explain and display their own culture and the good that comes with it to others. This aspect (understanding of one’s own cultural context) is addressed, for example, in the pre-deployment training of Ghanaian troops: “Rather than just training our people in cultural awareness skills, we also carry our culture to the host country, through carrying out cultural dances and inviting other local groups to show us their traditions”.⁶⁵

The aim of cultural awareness is always the understanding of ‘self’ and ‘other’ relations. In the regional context at least, the use of local and traditional concepts of own cultural understanding might increase sensitivity to and the depth of learning about ‘other’ cultures and the positioning of the own culture in the mission area. At present, training modules on culture and diversity reflect a predominant Western discourse of cultural meaning and understanding. Most modules make use of the ‘iceberg model’ to explain culture and even examples of culture shock are taken mainly from within the Western discourse of symbolism and meaning.

The inclusion of proverbs to explain cultural contexts is hardly the norm. This is unfortunate, as particular symbolism in Africa and the use of proverbs can be used as integral parts for learning and understanding hidden thought patterns and local understandings of the world. Within the West African context for example not only traditional dances, but also symbolism (e.g.: Adinkra symbolism)⁶⁶ and the use of proverbs can be integral parts of learning and understanding unconscious thought patterns and local understandings of the world.

Although Adinkra symbolism has an aesthetic function, it has a very practical use for communicating specific messages and can thus reveal important insights in a non-verbal way. As

64 A research and training project focusing on cultural understanding in peace-keeping operations is under development by the International Research Institute in Oslo. The project is to be implemented in collaboration with the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs; the Pell Centre for International Relations and Public Policy (Salve Regina University); the Watson Institute for International Studies (Brown University); the Norwegian Ministry of Defence; and the United States Naval War College.

65 Quote from conversation with Flt. Lt. M. Awuh on 7th October 2004 at the KAIPTC.

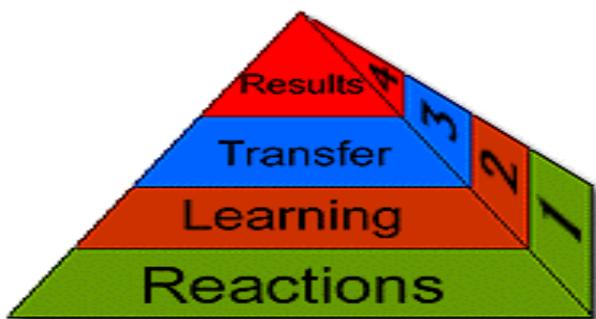
66 Adinkra symbolism is a visual representation of social thought, that relates to the history, philosophy and religious beliefs of the Akan peoples of Ghana and Côte d’Ivoire.

almost every Adinkra symbol illustrates a proverb, these symbols not only provide an insight into a philosophical and historical tradition, but they can also serve as moral rules of conduct. As Opoku points out “often a proverb, cited at an appropriate time during an argument, can settle the dispute instantly, for the proverbs are believed to have been handed down by the ancestors and predecessors.”⁶⁷ The use of proverbs and symbolism also provides an example of how training can become more adventurous and specific to the particular culture of the trainees. Overall what can be learned from the use of traditional symbolism and proverbs is that a critical understanding of one’s own world view and global positioning is vital before an attempt can be made to understand others.

Evaluation and feedback

It is fairly easy to administer tests and quizzes to determine the level of assimilation of theoretical knowledge, but the evaluation of non-mechanical skills and competencies tends to present a perennial challenge to peacekeeping trainers. Within the context of peacekeeping the role of evaluation should occupy at least two functions: 1) provide information on the impact of cultural diversity training and 2) supply data that can be fed back to the further development of training, which would then enable a continuous re-evaluation of training material.

The Kirkpatrick evaluation model provides a potentially effective methodology for evaluating the development of practical competencies.⁶⁸ Training based on this model would allow for assessing the effectiveness of training in four successive phases (see image below), enabling a continuous adjustment of ongoing training activities.



Kirkpatrick’s model starts with Phase I (Reactions), where the initial reaction of trainees after the training is collected in the form of a questionnaire or verbal feed-back. As this evaluation happens immediately after the training it is also referred to as a ‘smiley sheet’, because the general evaluation in this phase is predominantly positive. The second phase (Learning) starts after a certain period of time, to find out whether trainees were able to increase their knowledge and can apply what they learned to their daily work. Phase III (Transfer) involves questioning the supervisor or somebody who is measuring the output of a contingent, if the trainee has improved his skills or attitudes through transferring the training content to his or her particular working environment. The last phase (Results) measures overall results and outputs resulting from the training.

67 Opoku, K. A. (1978) *West African Traditional Religion*, Legon, Ghana.

68 Kirkpatrick, D.L. (1994) *Evaluating Training Programs: The Four Levels*. Berrett-Koehler, San Francisco.

Although Kirkpatrick's model enables an evaluation of non-mechanical skills and competencies, the chronological evaluation process is at present not common practice within the UN training areas. Nevertheless, the model presents an effective methodology for enabling a continuous adjustment of ongoing training activities, as well as providing a performance indication for peacekeepers over a certain period of time.

CONCLUSION

Culture in peace-keeping operations is ordinarily understood as *instrumental*, as a tool that can be used to achieve one's ends. Instead of being regarded as the background or pre-condition of communication, cooperation and co-existence, cultural understanding tends to be used as a reinforcement of the distinction between "us" and "them", instead of a common ground. Consequently the challenge lies not only within developing effective training modules on cultural diversity, but also within developing long-term training strategies on cultural diversity.

It has been argued that mere sensitisation and information gathering about a region's historic, cultural and religious background are not sufficient training for peacekeepers. Unless training leads peacekeepers towards questioning how their behaviour, role and cultural concepts impact on their perception of the peacekeeping context as well as on their reception by the host community, the internalised cultural structures, or *habitus*⁶⁹ peacekeepers bring to the field are not critically addressed and thus go unchallenged. Ultimately, cultural awareness cannot be inculcated in one course or module of instruction; it has to be incorporated within the overall selection and training process of peacekeepers if it is to have any lasting effects on the behaviour and actions of peacekeepers in the future.

There is clearly a significant need for both academic understanding and practical training materials and methodologies on cultural awareness in peace operations. Moreover, unless cultural diversity becomes integrated into the institutional culture of the UN and thus becomes part of any training for all levels of peacekeeping personnel, the conception of new training modules is not going to change present cultural and political dynamics in the peacekeeping realm.

However, there are limits to what can be achieved through training, education and codes of conduct. The UN Code of Conduct has proved insufficient to guarantee that peacekeepers will uphold the standards of decent behaviour that are expected of them in the mission area. The Code of Conduct is perceived by many soldiers as being implemented from above, and thus as an 'UN thing' rather than an internalised code for peacekeepers to live by. Changing such attitudes is an enormous challenge. Attitudes, like culture, are acquired through a lengthy process of socialization which begins in the cradle and ends at the grave. While the early socialisation experiences of the pre-teen child are held to be most important in shaping adult values, attitudes and behaviours, there are a number of socialization agents that have a very powerful impact beyond the formative years. Prime among these, for those who serve, is the military.

⁶⁹ *Habitus* is a term that was coined by the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu; to describe "our cultural unconscious" that determines our actions and perceptions of the world. Bourdieu, P. (1989/18) *Social Space and Symbolic Power*, in: *Sociological Theory* No. 7: 14–25.

While the challenge of fielding culturally aware peacekeepers who uphold and promote human rights applies to all mission components, it is arguably the most difficult to meet in the context of the military – simply because of the pervasiveness of military culture. On the other hand the military, of all components, dedicates more time and resources to training than any other. Thus new strategies and techniques for cultural training may best be pioneered in institutions that provide training for military peacekeepers, or for a mixture of military, police and civilian peacekeepers.

Yet the military also has a finite amount of time and capacity to absorb new training demands and initiatives. It is therefore suggested that maximum effect may be achieved through concentration of effort, by using the extant OHCHR training package on human rights as a vehicle for pioneering and refining new and more effective cultural training methodologies, in a cultural awareness and human rights module that may later be adopted for use in other peacekeeping training courses. The linkage between cultural and human rights training is a logical one. Whilst this paper has pointed to the limits of standardisation in cultural training, it is also true that there is indeed a universal culture that needs to be embraced by all peacekeepers – a culture characterised by respect for and a desire to protect and promote human rights in all aspects of the mission.

Given the primary role of most armies, and the centrality of combat effectiveness to this role, it would be futile to attempt to transform military units into “culturally sensitive” organisations. However, if the military begins in earnest to teach respect for human rights, we shall have a first step in place towards positive behavioural modification that will bridge the gap between international human rights instruments and national compliance, and towards ensuring at least minimum standards of culturally acceptable behaviour.