

Proselytizing as Spoiling from Within? Comparing Proselytizing by UN Peacekeepers in the Sudan and the DR Congo

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This article studies comparatively two cases of proselytizing peacekeepers. It examines whether and to which extent proselytization occurs, if it can be considered a form of spoiling from within the UN mission, what it means for the peace process, and how it can be addressed. The first case study deals with the UNMIS peacekeeping force in Abyei, Sudan, between 2006 and 2007. The second concerns MONUSCO in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) from 2005 to 2012. Both peacekeeping forces have been unable to ensure overall protection and establish peace. This has reinforced local dissatisfaction with (perceived) proselytizing by some Blue Helmets, and contributed to the contentious micro-politics of peacekeeping. The latter is closely linked to the divisive issue of which types of social and political change peacekeepers can promote to foster peace, which types they cannot, and how to distinguish them. Testing the “intention assumption” of Trettin and Junk in this special issue, this article analyzes the intentions of proselytizing peacekeepers to identify a fourth form of spoiling from within: “pushing particularized universalisms.”

Introduction

After the Cold War, peacekeeping operations generally became more ambitious. They shifted from traditional peacekeeping, which focused on creating security and political space for the conflict parties so that diplomats could hammer out a political settlement, to new forms of peacekeeping that explicitly attempt to achieve political and social change to sustainably end armed conflict and promote development. These forms follow international standards and norms, ranging from protection of civilians to democratization and good governance, and pay attention to such cross-cutting issues as the environment and gender. Hence, several UN peacekeeping operations attempt to promote, or even impose, social and political change. This brings up the questions of what types of social and political change a UN mission can promote and whether it does so legitimately and effectively by contributing to either peace or conflict.

In this context, this article examines a rarely studied peacekeeping phenomenon: proselytizing Blue Helmets. To proselytize simply means to convert or attempt to convert someone from one religion to another.² This article examines two African cases where soldiers tried to convert local people from one creed to another. In Abyei, Sudan, Zambian Blue Helmets promoted their evangelical church. In South Kivu, in the eastern DRC, some Pakistani soldiers promoted Islam. This proselytization is part of a broader trend. According to the U.S. National Intelligence Council,

1. We would like to thank Wilhelm Damberg, Bill DeMars, Leon Gordenker, Peter Schumann, Julian Junk, and Frederik Trettin, as well as the anonymous reviewers, for their suggestions and comments on earlier versions of this article.

2. Cf. <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/proselytize>.

Africa is at the center of many proselytizing efforts worldwide: the Catholic Church has made Africa a priority while Pentecostal and Evangelical Christian movements spend millions of dollars on recruiting [...] Africans. Iran has also devoted substantial efforts to fostering its religious and political views in Africa. Finally, Saudi Arabia has spent large amounts of money to export its exclusionary Wahhabi tradition (National Intelligence Council 2005:14).

This article explores empirically if and how peacekeepers proselytize, how this is perceived locally, and what reactions it elicits. The question arises whether or not such proselytizing can be seen as internal spoiling as studied in this special issue. Proselytization by Blue Helmets can negate UN policy and harm the organization's legitimacy and effectiveness by either undermining or blurring their official mandate to protect civilians and promote peace. Proselytization implies selective protection to specific population groups, in particular converts and other co-religionists, which hampers peacekeeping impartiality and independence. In conflicts, where religious identities already play a role or where new religious cleavages and conflicts are created over time, proselytization also violates neutrality.

The article consists of six parts. First, we briefly assess UN policies relevant to proselytization in peacekeeping. The second part discusses the main methodological issues in this research. Third, we present the case studies on Sudan and eastern DRC. Each case begins with background information on the protracted conflict and peacekeeping. Next, we discuss whether—and if so, to what extent—peacekeepers were involved in proselytizing and how this influenced the micro-politics of peacekeeping and the concomitant peace process. The fourth section examines to what extent proselytizing can be seen as a form of internal spoiling. The penultimate section asks whether and how this can be addressed. In the conclusion, we reflect upon the methodological, theoretical, and practical aspects of the study of the micro-politics of internal spoiling.

UN Policies and Proselytization

Early debates in the UN about its charter and human rights drew attention to the questions of value systems and beliefs. Over time, several debates, for example on the role of the Vatican in population policies (Dijkzeul 1997:166) or “Eastern Confucian” versus “Western” political systems and values proved contentious (Mahbubani 1993), because they touched on not just religious beliefs but also on fraught issues of political and social change and the division of power within the UN System.

Therefore, it is not surprising that there is no formal UN policy on proselytization, although several official documents suggest proselytization is not condoned. Article 100 of the UN Charter states:

In the performance of their duties the Secretary-General and the staff shall not seek or receive instructions from any government or from any other authority external to the Organization. They shall refrain from any action, which might reflect on their position as international officials responsible only to the Organization.

Somewhat similarly, the Code of Conduct for Blue Helmets (Art. 2) urges: “Respect the law of the land of the host country, the local culture, traditions, customs and practices.” Most explicitly, the Staff Regulations (Art. 1.2, ST/SGB/2012/) state:

While staff members' personal views and convictions, including their political and religious convictions, remain inviolable, staff members shall ensure that those views and convictions do not adversely affect their official duties or the interests of the United Nations. They shall conduct themselves at all times in a manner befitting their status as international civil servants and shall not engage in any activity that is incompatible with the proper discharge of their duties with the United Nations. They shall avoid any action and, in particular, any kind of public pronouncement that may adversely reflect on their status, or on the integrity, independence and impartiality that are required by that status.

In other words, the charter, code, and staff regulations call for a professional commitment to the general mission of UN peacekeeping, as well as to the specific UN mission. In principle, this means both on and off duty avoiding any affiliation or activity that might compromise or overshadow the mission itself. Although the spirit of these UN rules prohibits proselytization, they still leave wiggle room for staff to argue their proselytization does not adversely reflect on their work. Hence, current policy is incomplete and unclear.³ Moreover, it is bound up with controversy over which political and social change UN peacekeepers should and can promote. This raises questions about whether proselytization may be seen as spoiling from within and what its impact is on the armed conflict the peacekeepers are supposed to stem.

The Challenge of Studying Proselytizing

Collecting empirical data on various phenomena of spoiling poses a methodological challenge. On the one hand, spoiling is often hidden. On the other hand, attempts to define behavior as spoiling bring up questions of legitimacy and effectiveness, because the accompanying normative judgments are subjective. One person's spoiler may be another's hero. Due to different interests and normative judgments, the degree to which individuals are prepared to volunteer information may vary. In a similar vein, people may not always talk openly about proselytization.

Normative judgments on proselytization also differ among religions. Zoroastrianism, for example, does not accept converts; its adherents will not proselytize. Christianity makes a strong distinction between society and church, and proselytization is mainly considered a task of church specialists (e.g., missionaries). Islam generally does not employ such a strong distinction, but inviting people to the religion is considered a virtuous activity. As a consequence, all members of the *Umma*⁴ can take the initiative to convert people, in particular by the example of living their faith. Muslims will, therefore, rarely use the concept of proselytization. We use the term proselytization in this article, because the Congolese, Sudanese, and some UN staff members mentioned it. Hence, it functions as a common concept for both case-studies.

Even if proselytization by some peacekeepers can be demonstrated, it is still hard to discover how it actually takes place and to establish causal chains. When individual soldiers proselytize, it may not be possible to identify them and they may operate in various ways. When proselytization is organized more broadly, the actual degree of institutionalization may vary. It may be a social activity for peacekeepers that, for example, during their religious holidays they occasionally contribute to a "good cause," or it may be a planned activity. It may also be considered a "natural" or "morally right" thing to do and taken for granted as a justified religious expression and a crucial way of helping others. Yet, an invitation to religious services or celebrations does not necessarily constitute proselytization. Identifying proselytization depends on the ability to detect a continuous pattern of additional efforts, including constructing religious buildings, handing out gifts, and other explicit attempts to convert people.⁵

People at the receiving end of proselytization efforts may hold different judgments on it. In much religious and secular thought, conversion is seen as a crucial personal choice, which defines identity, loyalties, and worldviews. Especially in poor and insecure countries, however, people may convert for more pragmatic reasons, such as safety, food, material benefits, access to jobs, education, or people, and opportunities to migrate. Depending on

3. In the summer of 2012, staff members of DPKO in New York discussed proselytization informally. At the time of writing this article, it was not yet clear whether this would lead to official UN policy.

4. *Umma* or *Ummah* is Arabic for country or nation. It is commonly used to indicate the community of all Islamic people.

5. Continuous efforts and resources poured into proselytization by peacekeepers constitute violations of impartiality and a lack of professionalism. When proselytization, or any other activity or affiliation that is ancillary to the UN mission itself, reaches a certain scale, it may also compromise the neutrality of the mission. This becomes even more contentious when some goals of the mission are failing to be achieved.

the depth of conversion, proselytizers may be seen as benefactors or as simply providing economic and social opportunities.

Reactions by people who do not convert may vary from disinterest to protest or even violence. Proselytizers may be seen as people who impose themselves, who abuse the needs of other people, bring in different cultures, or are just difficult to fathom. When peacekeepers provide alms or food during religious celebrations, the difference with regular peacekeeping, humanitarian, or development activities may not be clear. Similarly, their religious habits, ceremonies, and rituals may not be understood. Aid by Blue Helmets may then not be perceived as a neutral humanitarian activity but as a way to “win souls.”⁶ As a result, “winning hearts-and-minds,” for instance through Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) activities, may lead to further confusion.⁷ All this is compounded by the different cultural frames of reference of interveners and the local population.

Ultimately, local perceptions of proselytization may or may not be justified by the actual behavior of the peacekeepers. Moreover, perception as a concept does not refer to some “objective reality” but to the subjective interpretation of events and allows for cultural and personal differences. Yet, people act on the basis of their perceptions, which include the perceived legitimacy and effectiveness of peacekeeping (Dijkzeul and Wakenge 2010:1141–2). Usually, local people perceive “actors” in peacekeeping operations as more or less the same, belonging to one big operation. Distinctions among parts of the operation are hard to make (Joachim and Schneiker, forthcoming). Hence, collected data on perceptions cannot be taken at face value and information obtained from different actors should be compared and cross-checked carefully.⁸ Data collection should ideally take place with longitudinal field observations and data collection methods should be triangulated.

Based on initial data collection (cf. Glaser and Strauss 1967), we defined and used five indicators for detecting and analyzing proselytizing in peacekeeping: 1) *direct support* to religious institutions and proselytization efforts, 2) *differential treatment* of converted and unconverted local staff members, 3) *provision of material benefits*, such as food, fuel, and gifts, 4) *growth in the number of converts*, and, finally, 5) *reactions* by the UN Mission staff and local actors.⁹ None of these indicators individually prove that conversion takes place. Rather, they need to take place together regularly and be sustained over time.¹⁰ Ideally, there should be proof of an official policy or a program for conversion. However, as such a policy could increase resistance toward proselytization, it is unlikely that such a policy will be openly advertised, if it exists at all. Moreover, proselytization may also take place as a

6. Among the Blue Helmets, we focus on the protection forces and support elements (who belong to a contingent) and not on (multinational) military observers.

7. The conceptualization of CIMIC varies from the UN to NATO and from contingent to contingent. OCHA provides CIMIC courses to enhance a joint understanding of CIMIC, which it does not see as winning hearts-and-minds but rather as providing security and helping with quick impact projects (QIPs) in consultation with humanitarians and local communities.

8. As perceptions of proselytization are not objective facts but (can) also reflect the ideas and beliefs of the person who perceives, we paid careful attention to the quality of our data. In particular, we only included information we could either cross-check in separate interviews or through observation and documentation. We did not include the many personal remarks about proselytization that we could not corroborate. Moreover, both case-studies were checked by international staff members who worked for the UN Missions.

9. Points 1 and 3, if they are done on a large and organized scale over a sustained period of time, at the least, raise the question of the integrity and impartiality of UN peacekeepers. At the most, they compromise the peacekeeping mission by violating neutrality and pitting social groups against each other. Point 2 deals with a lack of professionalism, directly undermining the loyalty and commitment of mission staff by importing an ancillary basis of loyalty into the bureaucracy of the mission. These three points violate UN peacekeeping neutrality towards different population groups over time, as in the potential scenario of the “Nigerization” of the DRC (see below). In the context of failing states, UN peacekeeping missions whose effectiveness is uneven, and fall short in their protection mission, violations of impartiality amount to offering UN protection to only some populations. In such contexts, provision of any kinds of resources often amounts to selective protection by “steadying the position” of a societal group. This is a (potential) spoiler scenario by directly undermining the effectiveness and legitimacy of the UN, and seriously threatening its neutrality, if not yet directly violating it.

10. Indeed, one anonymous reviewer remarked that support for building mosques alone does not count as an indication of proselytization: “The U.S. has been building mosques in Afghanistan and Iraq—does this mean that the U.S. is proselytizing? There is a lot of writing on the controversies this entails over whether the U.S. is engaged in a new ‘religious establishment’ in these places. . . . (In some places, the U.S. feels the need to say it is building ‘Islamic cultural centers’ instead of mosques, reflecting uncertainty over whether it should be doing this).”

regular activity that is culturally condoned but not officially promoted.¹¹ At the same time, it is important to check whether other local or international actors also engage in proselytization, because they may then also bear responsibility for some of the proselytization activities and their effects.

Data collection for both cases differed. In the Abyei case, the main challenge was that relatively little information was available, as many of the people involved had moved on and the relevant internal UN documentation is not publicly accessible.¹² Hence, we looked for historical data and interviewed local people and UN staff using a snowball methodology.

For the eastern DRC case, longitudinal field research was possible and operationalization and data collection were more elaborate. We noticed in 2007 that mosques were being built in villages that had none before. A Catholic priest in Kalehe indicated that Pakistani peacekeepers took the lead in building them and attempted to proselytize local people. We collected further information and encountered rumors about Pakistani proselytizing. As it is difficult to get access to the Pakistani soldiers, we initially relied heavily on information provided by local Congolese. Data was collected from 2007 to 2012 in Bukavu,¹³ Kabare (Miti, Kavumu), Kalehe (Bunyakiri, Kalehe Centre), Walungu, Uvira (Ruzizi plain), Shabunda, and Baraka-Fizi. In the areas of Walungu, Kabare, Kalehe, Mwenga, and Shabunda, Christianity dominates, whereas, especially in Fizi and Uvira, Muslims have been a minority since pre-colonial times. Our main forms of data collection were:

1. Semi-structured interviews with imams or sheikhs,¹⁴ other people with an official responsible function at the mosques, other people at the mosques, and recent converts about proselytizing strategies and funding for the construction or repair of mosques;
2. Semi-structured interviews with local priests, parish members, and protestant ministers;
3. Semi-structured interviews and documentation (e.g., letters) from people who work within MONUSCO and/or with the Pakistani peacekeepers;
4. Photographs of mosques and the occasional billboards or other signs with information on their construction and funding partners; and
5. Mapping of mosques, taking into account the period when they were built and their location, specifically whether these mosques were located in areas where Pakistani peacekeepers were present.

We selected our cases on the basis of their similarities; both regions have suffered from structural and armed violence, state collapse, and protracted crises, which led to the establishment of UN peacekeeping missions. In both cases, the UN missions foster political and social change in order to achieve peace but have so far not been very successful in reaching this goal. Our aim was to show the main similarities in the context of both cases in order to highlight the differences in proselytization by (some) peacekeepers, as well as their influence on the conflicts.

Two Case Studies

To foster comparison, the two case studies are set up in a similar fashion. After providing brief background information on the region and the UN peacekeeping mission, we describe whether and how the peacekeepers proselytized. Each case ends with an analysis of the five indicators. This section concludes with a comparative analysis of both cases, including the ensuing micro-politics of fostering peace inside and outside the mission walls. In this sense, we view humanitarian crises as an arena in which different actors promote their own political

11. In the latter case, it becomes important to demonstrate why such a culture exists.

12. Two former staff members referred to internal UN Mission reports, but we could not obtain them.

13. The main mosque in Bukavu was built in 1974.

14. Sheikh refers to a person who teaches about Islamic practices, interprets the Quran, and is considered a religious authority. An Imam leads daily prayer sessions.

agendas (Hilhorst and Serano, 2010: S183-S201; Hilhorst and Jansen, 2010: 123–156). Some of these agendas are completely or partially hidden, others are overt.

Case 1: Zambian Peacekeepers in Abyei (Sudan)

BACKGROUND

Civil war raged in Sudan for most of its independence, which it achieved in 1956. The north and south had been administrated rather separately in colonial times. After independence, continuing tensions, including religious ones, sparked violence and humanitarian crises in the north and south.¹⁵ In 2003, conflicts in Darfur, the western part of Sudan, also escalated and caused a severe humanitarian crisis.

After long negotiations, the government of Sudan and the southern Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) signed the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) that officially ended the civil conflict in January 2005. It stated that the south would be administrated by southerners and planned the referendum on independence held in 2011.¹⁶

Subsequently, Security Council Resolution 1590 established the UN Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS). Its main tasks were to support the implementation of the CPA, to provide humanitarian assistance and protection, and to promote human rights. In 2007–08, the peacekeeping force in Darfur and the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS), established in 2004, became part of the combined UN/AU mission in Darfur (UNAMID) (CIC 2008). All three peacekeeping forces struggled with the intransigence of the Khartoum government, deep ethnic and religious tensions, unaccountable rebels, huge logistical problems, and incomplete international support.

For UNMIS, a Zambian battalion led by a colonel was placed in Abyei (sector 6). The population of Abyei consists mainly of Misseriya Arabs, who are Muslim, and Dinka, who are animists or Roman Catholics. Whether Abyei is part of the north or south has been disputed at least since the start of the last century (Johnson 2008; International Crisis Group 2007), and it continues to be a flashpoint between Sudan and South Sudan.

ZAMBIAN PEACEKEEPERS' PROSELYTIZING

In early 2006, UN officials received information from local staff members that Zambian peacekeepers were promoting their brand of evangelism. They had constructed a makeshift church close to the UN compound and invited local people to their services, which were also attended by others from UNMIS and humanitarian organizations operating in the region, some of them faith based. Local staff found a manual on how to convert people to Christianity in a joint UN printer.¹⁷ International UN staff realized that a member of the Zambian contingent had printed the manual.

These proselytizing efforts raised eyebrows locally, and people within the UN mission staff criticized them. A few also worried it could lead to criticism by the Khartoum government.¹⁸ The acting head of office and his team decided to stop it “on the basis of two considerations: First, this was not part of our mandate; second, having one UN component—the military in this case—preach Christianity in an environment, which was [. . .] divided along ethnic and religious lines would amount to the UN taking sides [. . .] [we] would have done the same if the proselytization [had been] undertaken by a Muslim group within the UN.” They went on

15. As the north is predominantly Islamic and the south mainly Christian and Animist, religious tensions played an important role in the conflict. Yet, religion was definitely not the only issue. It was often instrumentalized for political and economic purposes by the elites in the north and the south.

16. South Sudan became independent on 9 July 2011, but the final status of Abyei was left open.

17. One respondent stated: “We were living in tents and had to share computers and printers.”

18. According to one respondent: “The National Security Services were aware of what was happening. However, this [. . .] was never raised in any of the regular meetings of the UN with Foreign Affairs in Khartoum [. . .] in 2006. Yet, the Sudanese government made this an issue in Darfur.”

to say: “We used common sense” and interpreted UN policy as “peacekeepers could carry out their own services but that local people should not be influenced.”

The acting head of office asked the Zambian section commander to stop the proselytization. He added, “The UN is here to bring peace and not to incite conflict.” The Zambians were actually surprised by this criticism, because they felt they were doing the right thing, and it had not occurred to them that this could be seen as a problem. The section commander promised to take measures. However, some “joint services continued for both UNMIS and local residents.”¹⁹

ANALYSIS

This was a small case of proselytization, which was dealt with swiftly. The makeshift church, the invitations to the joint services, the document found in the joint printer, as well as the reaction by the Zambian section commander, all indicated *direct support* for proselytization efforts. Senior UN staff believed in their response they had applied common sense: faith-based activities were not part of their mandate. Their *reaction* was indeed in line with the independence and impartiality of the UN staff regulations.

Simultaneously, some staff members already felt concerned that UNMIS “was trying to engineer social and political change” to foster peace, which would not necessarily be accepted locally. They worried about which types of social and political change were acceptable and which were not. Importantly, the peacekeepers did receive considerable local criticism for the lack of protection and the slow return of displaced people in Abyei but not for proselytization.²⁰ In 2012, most people we interviewed were actually surprised to hear this proselytization had taken place. However, joint services continued for some time and respondents also mentioned more recent proselytization efforts in the south, for example by Kenyan and Egyptian Blue Helmets.²¹

Case 2: MONUC/MONUSCO in the DRC

BACKGROUND

The conflicts in the eastern DR Congo have caused the deadliest humanitarian crisis since the end of the Second World War (Dijkzeul 2010).²² The crisis or, more appropriately, a continuously evolving network of crises has often been referred to as “Africa’s First World War,” because at one stage eight African countries and many international and transnational actors were involved. In response, the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) was active in the country from 1999 to 2010, and it was then renamed Mission of the United Nations Organization for the Stabilization of the DR Congo (MONUSCO) (UNSC 2010). The new name stressed the importance attached to stabilization and civilian protection. However, subsequent military campaigns against various rebel groups faltered. Moreover, the 2011 reelection of President Kabila was marred by fraud and violence, which reflected the government’s increasing authoritarianism. In 2012 and 2013, large-scale violence erupted once again in North Kivu and the UN mission has taken on more enforcement tasks, but this has not led to a higher degree of stabilization.²³

MONUSCO is not popular with the local population. After so many years, it has not succeeded in providing protection and achieving peace. Some contingents have been involved in corruption and sex-abuse scandals, which runs counter to their mandate and to UN rules

19. The quotes in this section are based on interviews with people from Abyei and UN officials.

20. Since this case-study presented hard proof of proselytization and quick action by UN mission staff, the indicators “differential treatment,” “provision of benefits,” and “growth in the number of converts” are less relevant than in the DRC case-study.

21. The quotes in this section are based on interviews with UN officials.

22. A study by the International Rescue Committee (IRC) estimated an excess mortality of 5.4 million people from 1998 to 2007 (Coghlan et al. 2008).

23. The recent defeat of the M23 rebel movement by the Congolese armed forces and the UN military is a rare exception. Many other rebel movements are still active in the eastern DRC.

(Beigbeder forthcoming). In May 2012, a mob marched on the MONUSCO base in Bunyakiri, South Kivu, after an overnight rebel attack that reportedly killed thirty-six people. “The residents said the troops ‘did nothing to defend’ the village against the attack” and protested against their inaction. Hiding in the crowd, Mai Mai rebels opened fire at the peacekeepers, who, to prevent carnage, did not return fire. At least eleven Pakistani troops suffered serious injuries (The Telegraph 2012; see also UNSC 2012). In this incident, lack of impartiality led to a breach of UN neutrality.

PAKISTANI PEACEKEEPERS’ PROSELYTIZING

In addition to actual peacekeeping, the Pakistani soldiers undertake activities, often as part of CIMIC, but also paid for by themselves, such as the (re-)construction of markets, schools, soccer fields, and games to win hearts and minds. Additionally, they employ local Congolese, and help with the construction of mosques in South Kivu. Their activities are watched closely on a local level. On the one hand, local people hope their lives can be improved. On the other, as they are dissatisfied with the lack of peacekeeping success, they frequently do not trust the intentions of the peacekeepers. This section analyzes the five indicators to study the Pakistani peacekeepers and the spread of Islam.

Direct support to construct or repair mosques and proselytization efforts takes various forms. For example, a mosque at Bulambika (a town in Bunyakiri) was completed in 2011. According to the Imam, a Pakistani officer employed the same masons at a MONUC/MONUSCO camp. Another Pakistani commander provided wood for the construction of the mosque. The local Muslims could not finance its construction on their own. Moreover, Pakistani peacekeepers organize Koran training in their MONUC/MONUSCO camps, as in Sange, where very young children converted and scholarships were promised for the study of the Koran abroad in Burundi or Egypt. When limited local knowledge of Arabic seemed to constrain the growth of the number of converts, Pakistani soldiers in Kavumu invited young Congolese intellectuals capable of assimilating the Koran for Arabic courses in 2011. In addition, some mosques were inaugurated by MONUSCO peacekeepers, for example in Panzi. Usually, the peacekeepers also provide local Muslims with food and gifts during their religious holidays. Another small, but highly symbolic aspect, is the regular calls to prayer at the camp bordering MONUSCO headquarters in Bukavu.²⁴ The latter two aspects are examples of regular religious activities. However, the local population interprets them as support for Islam.

Picture 1: Commemorative Tile at the Panzi Mosque



24. This is an Egyptian camp, but this distinction is often lost on the local population.

Table 1 summarizes the work on mosques in the area we studied from 2005 (the time of arrival of the Pakistani peacekeepers) to 2012, when we stopped our data collection.

Table 1: Mosques Built and Renovated in South-Kivu (January 2005–March 2012)²⁵

AREA/ CITY	Name of Village/ Neighborhoods <i>(Mosques funded by other donors in italics. These are discussed in the analysis.)</i>					
	Mosques Con- structed	No.	Mosques Repaired	No.	Land Purchased	No.
Fizi			Baraka (2007)	1		
Kabare	Miti (2009), Mululu (2010), Katana (2010)	3	Mudaka, Kashenyi (2009)	2		
<i>Kalehe</i>	Bunyakiri, Hombo-Sud Nyabibwe, Minova Irangi, Kitshanga, Kar- asi, Chebumba, Maibano, Ziralo (2006-2012)	11	Kalehe-Cen- tre, (2007), Hombo-Nord (2010)	2		
<i>Mwenga</i>	Mwenga-centre (2010)	1				
<i>Shabunda</i>	Kigulube	1	Shabunda- Centre	1		
<i>Uvira</i>	Rusabage, Musenyi, Nyak- abere, Runingu, Rutanga, <i>Kiliba</i> , Kabulimbu, <i>Luberizi</i> (2006–2012)	8	Kiliba- ONDES, Lu- vungi, <i>Katogo- ta</i> , Bwegera, Bwiza <i>Ru- tanga</i> (1–2)	7	<i>Kigurwe, Nd- unda, Kigoma, Rugeje, Mu- tarule</i>	5
Walungu	Burhale (2009), Walungu-centre, <i>Kaziba</i> (2011)	3	Kamanyola	1		
Bukavu	Panzi (2009)	1	Karhale and the centre Islamique (Quartier Industriel)	2		
TOTAL		28		16	5	5

25. The mosques that were repaired or improved were constructed before the Pakistanis arrived. Examples of these repairs are new roofing, construction of sanitary equipment, cementing walls, and caulking.

Of the total forty-four mosques mapped in the research area, twenty-eight (62 percent) were built between 2005 and 2012. Sixteen mosques that were built before the Pakistani peacekeepers arrived were repaired between 2005 and 2012 with their material, financial, and human support. For instance, the peacekeepers volunteered as masons on several construction sites. The purchase of land and construction of new mosques often took place in areas where no mosques existed and virtually no Muslims were living. These include Kigulube, Karasi, Maibano (*moyen plateau* of Kalehe), and in the Panzi neighborhood in Bukavu. One local leader remarked: “Without MONUSCO, there would be no Muslims in this area.”²⁶ In the Ruzizi plain and the Kalehe area, Pakistani peacekeepers also funded the purchase of land for mosques. The rehabilitation of Muslim infrastructure, the increase of mosques in villages, and the distribution of food (see below) is perceived by many local Congolese as a strategy to advance Islam, even where it was barely present. One sheikh stated, “Those who convert to Islam will continue to go to the mosque; it becomes a habit that creates the system.”²⁷

Nevertheless, we also found that many other actors fund the repair and construction of mosques. Cinja, a trader from Bukavu, provided funding for the mosque of Kaziba, a Mrs. Kulsum did so for the mosques of Katogota, and the Islamic League of Bujumbura (Burundi) for both mosques in Rutanga. Some billboards at construction sites provided further information. A billboard at a mosque in Luberizi mentioned the Jinnah Foundation and COMICO (*Communauté Islamique en RD Congo*), the national Congolese Muslim association, as partners.²⁸ The Jinnah Foundation is a Pakistani foundation that mainly supports schools.²⁹ A billboard in Kiliba (Uvira) indicated that the International Islamic Charitable Organization (IICO), a Kuwaiti organization, was financing the construction of a mosque. It works with another organization in the DRC, namely the *Association Islamique de l’Est de Congo*. In other words, the Pakistanis are not the sole actors supporting mosques, many other Congolese and international actors also do this.³⁰ Still, their arrival coincided with the increase in the number and repairs of mosques. Moreover, their presence and activities as Blue Helmets are frequently noticed within and outside the mosques.

Personnel issues, in particular *differential treatment* of Muslim and non-Muslim staff, also play an important role in local perceptions of the Pakistani peacekeepers and their (potential) proselytization. Many Congolese complain about the way the Pakistanis treat non-Muslims, in particular, people who work at their bases. Local people complain regularly that those who convert to Islam obtain long-term positions with MONUC/MONUSCO or that they obtain better wages and receive additional gifts (the latter is also said to be the case for day-laborers). Similarly, several language interpreters complained about preferential treatment of Muslim colleagues and felt pressure to convert to enhance their job security.³¹ In a related vein, in Pakistani camps, Congolese staff are regularly invited to take part in Islamic prayers and some of these staff members feel pressured to do so. Several non-Muslim staff members of MONUSCO also reported “some non-Muslim MONUSCO-employees have been accused of not being up to their tasks and would have been fired by the Pakistanis had it not been for the objectivity of other UN officials.” One respondent stated that every second question by a member of new Pakistani troops is whether “we are Muslim or not.”³² Finally,

26. Interview, Bukavu, 10 March 2012.

27. Interview with a sheikh at Kavumu, 15 March 2012.

28. Leinweber (2012) describes how the Muslim community in the DRC has become more assertive and has been able to provide more public goods in recent years. In particular, the number of Muslim schools has increased.

29. Although Blue Helmets often collaborate with specific NGOs from their home country, we could not establish any linkages between the Jinnah Foundation and the Pakistani contingents.

30. Evangelical churches actually proselytize more than international and local Muslim organizations. However, the fact that other actors engage in micro-politics on the same social divides is not a warrant for UN passivity. UN mission management can and must engage in micro-politics to *defend its mandate*, including threats from within its own ranks.

31. Letters of the interpreters to their MONUC superiors in 2005 and 2007.

32. The quotes in this and the next section are based on interviews with local Congolese and UN officials.

in a few cases, members of the Pakistani forces refused to eat with or share utensils with non-Muslim staff and asked why Congolese do not clean themselves like they [Muslims] do. The degree to which this has a religious connotation could not be established. Such local complaints are hard to verify, but they contribute to religious tensions. Negative perceptions of such a lack of respect and proselytizing tend to reinforce each other.

In terms of food rations, fuel, gifts and other *material benefis*, local respondents noted the peacekeepers sold items from their rations, such as canned food and chocolate, which local Congolese call either “food of MONUSCO” or “MONUC biscuit.” In some villages where Pakistani peacekeepers are located, the allocation of food and “food for work” has become institutionalized. The peacekeepers sometimes invite local people to work for food and sometimes they hand it out. In the same vein, jobs such as weeding or picking up litter in or around the Pakistani camps are entrusted to young converts who sometimes receive clothes. When a former teacher of a protestant school in Sange (Kyamate Institute) converted to Islam, he subsequently became responsible for the recruitment of new Muslims in Sange. According to several respondents, these Muslims help the Pakistanis sell consumption articles, mostly food, which was part of their weekly rations, and sometimes fuel. Some of the income from these sales is invested in the construction of mosques. Finally, one local MONUSCO employee reported that in Kigulube (a remote area in eastern Shabunda), a Pakistani officer sold three fuel drums (200 liters) originally intended for generating electricity for a total of \$1,050 USD between January and February 2012. This money was supposedly used to purchase a piece of land and construct a local mosque. The sheeting used for the roof was transported with UN-helicopters from Bukavu. Other UN officials did not know about this and thought these were used to construct the camp for the Pakistani soldiers.³³

This study points to three sources of funding. First, one source indeed comes from Pakistani peacekeepers. As stated, they donate money and goods, and they provide work. They usually do not provide their funds directly to the Imams but buy construction materials, which they transport to sites where mosques are built. We came across three cases of Pakistani officers directly providing support to new believers or mosques on an individual basis. Second, some local respondents suspected the existence of an “Islamic fund” that finances the construction works, but we did not find any evidence of such a fund. As described above, there are also many other local and international initiatives that support the mosques. A third source is the use of MONUSCO transport and rations, such as food and fuel as mentioned in the Kigulube example. In sum, there is no hard data on the extent to which proselytization depends on 1) personal sources (e.g., rations), 2) diverted mission assets, and 3) personal gifts and gifts as part of religious duties and festivities. In addition, it is difficult for many Congolese to understand how these sources of funding relate to the execution of CIMIC and quick impact projects, as well as official food aid.

With respect to the *growth in numbers of converted people*, two local mosques collected data on the growth of their Muslim congregations in their respective neighborhoods, Kadutu and Karhale in Bukavu.³⁴ In Kadutu, the number of Muslims grew from 368 in 2000 to 900 in 2011. In Karhale, it grew from 293 in 2000 to 709 in 2011.

Information from outside Bukavu showed a relatively rapid growth in numbers starting from a very small basis. This growth in numbers of converts is related to support for building mosques. In Kalehe-centre, the number of believers grew from 18 at the start of construction of the Mosque (2006) to ninety in 2009. In 2012, the number of Muslims in several villages east of Bunyakiri (i.e., Karasi, Kambegeti, Cibumba, Kambali, and Hombo) was increasing rapidly. In 2000, there were no or almost no Muslims in these villages. In the village of Bulambika the number of faithful increased from fifty-six in 2005 to almost three hundred in

33. Corruption takes away resources from either the UN or the local economy, and it violates the protection mandate by victimizing the local population.

34. Information on the number of converted people was collected from imams and sheikhs at the mosques.

2010. In Mululu, a district of Kavumu (formerly without a mosque), the number of Muslim families has increased from thirty in 2009 to sixty-five in 2012, when the mosque was built. Similarly, in Sange (where there were only two mosques in Rutanga) and in the surrounding areas, four new mosques were built (Rusabage, Musenyi, Nyakabere, and Rutanga), and the number of Muslim families increased from 135 to nearly 230 in March 2012. Moreover, in the international press (Malekera 2009), as well as locally, there are indications these peacekeepers converted Congolese with some success.³⁵

Our fifth indicator concerns the *responses by local and UN actors* to the proselytization efforts, namely by MONUSCO itself, local churches and mosques, and, finally, the national government.

- a) Within MONUSCO itself: Alfa Sow from Senegal, *Chef de Bureau* of MONUC, convened a meeting in 2008 with the Pakistani General Shujaat Ali Khan and his battalion's commanders in south Kivu (Kavumu, Walungu, and Uvira) concerning local complaints that the Pakistanis put spreading Islam ahead of peacekeeping. Shujaat rejected this complaint. He argued they were simply helping needy Muslims. Since this meeting, some respondents indicated that the Pakistanis have approached other religious groups. For example, they also donated food to Catholics and protestants during Christmas and Easter. And they helped renovate some Christian buildings, including the church of Kavumu. Some Pakistani peacekeepers have since then attended Christian activities such as Sunday mass in Catholic parishes in Ihusi-Kalehe and Bukavu (*Paroisse* Nguba). Nevertheless, one international MONUSCO employee replied:

Sixty percent of the international professional (excluding UNVs) staff is from Sahelian countries or Muslim parts of West-Africa. They don't bother. Congolese staff don't bother because they are there mostly for the money, and they take [proselytization] for granted. Only some, on an individual basis, mainly with a European/Caucasian background [. . .] criticize it. In any case, MONUSCO's internal Conduct and Discipline Section is not ready to act because it is afraid to offend the troop-providing countries.

Interestingly, the annual replacement of Pakistani troops does not stop the proselytizing. They generally continue with constructing mosques. Some imams and sheikhs stated the growth in number of new believers depends on the financial capacity of each military unit. The higher its capacity, the higher the number of Muslims becomes. For, instance, at the mosque in Kashenyi (north Kavumu) the number of converted fell when PAKBATT 7, which seemed very engaged in proselytizing, left the area in early 2011. With a change of troops, the financial means and methods applied change slightly. It seems the proselytization by the Pakistani is based more on cultural norms within their army than on an official policy or method.

- b) Within local churches: Initially, local reactions to the Pakistani peacekeepers were restrained. As churches (for example, the priests of the Kavumu parish) witnessed the peacekeepers caring for the poor, unemployed, and malnourished, they assumed the "lost sheep" would return once the Pakistanis left. Over time, however, discontent has grown, and priests and protestant ministers have begun to preach that "people should pay attention to the brief transitory period of the mosques."³⁶ As a result, protestants and Catholics have begun to address this issue in workshops, sessions, and sermons. These workshops followed an incident in Walungu between Muslims and Catholics in late 2010. Muslims, with support from the Pakistani peacekeepers, were constructing a new mosque. The *Mwami* (traditional leader) of the Ngweshe-community, Ndatabaya Weza III, supported by local priests, protested against the construction of a mosque and

35. See the interdiocesan session report of the evangelization agents of the former Kivu province (Dioceses of Bukavu, Beni-Butembo, Goma, Kasongo, Kindu, and Uvira), which dealt with Islam and occultism (Bukavu, May 8-14, 2011).

36. Interview with a member of the *Centre Interdiocésain de Pastorale, Catéchèse et Liturgie* (CIPCL), Bukavu, April 2012.

requested the immediate clearance of the construction site. The Muslims, including the peacekeepers, cleared the site. Some Congolese fear this might be an example of the risk of *Nigérianization*—a local reference to the religious violence in Nigeria.³⁷ Put differently, this risk points to a present phenomenon that may threaten UN neutrality in the future.³⁸

Catholic evangelization agents held an interdiocesan session on both Islam and occultism in Bukavu (8–14 May 2011). In his opening address, Bishop Maroy, the Archbishop of Bukavu, urged Christians to be “vigilant against the danger of Islam and the occult that pose a major challenge to the evangelical mission of the Church.” The final report of the workshop concluded that “Islam is expanding its appeal and raises questions on catechetical, pastoral, and even liturgical methods.”³⁹ In sum, church officials are becoming more critical and protest more fiercely against peacekeeper proselytization.

- c) Within mosques: As could be expected, within mosques the activities of the Pakistanis were perceived positively overall. Several imams, sheikhs, and visitors of the mosques talked openly about their appreciation for the support they received from them. Ironically, in Fizi, members of COMICO complained they had not benefited enough from the presence of Muslim peacekeepers. They noticed that others, including new converts, had received more support.
- d) The Congolese government: Local Christian leaders looked increasingly to the Congolese state to stop the proselytizing. Yet, Islam is an official religion in the DRC and the Kabila government lacks the capacity (or interest) to stop peacekeepers from proselytizing and deviating from their mandate.

ANALYSIS

It is clear that the number of mosques and the number of believers is increasing from a very small base. As the overall population of Bukavu has grown rapidly in the last two decades, partly as a consequence of internal displacement, it is not certain whether this increase in the number of converts implies a growth in relative numbers compared to the overall population. Lack of sound demographic data is a general problem in the DRC. Nevertheless, as the number of converted believers has also increased rapidly in rural areas outside Bukavu, including areas where IDPs come from and where no mosques existed before, conversion has become a growing trend. In addition, people at the mosques regularly provided us information about the support they had received from the peacekeepers. For some Congolese, the Pakistanis have become *marchands de rêve* (dream merchants) as they provide food,⁴⁰ work opportunities, and the possibility to move to wealthier Islamic countries. As the DRC faces chronic unemployment and food crises, these favors attract new converts. Similarly, Congolese working at MONUSCO are afraid to lose their jobs when they disagree openly with the Pakistani activities.⁴¹ The proselytization activities of the peacekeepers are broad and manifold, and have continued over such a long period that they illustrate a pattern of support for spreading Islam in south Kivu.

37. One priest has called for an interfaith dialogue (Awazi 2011).

38. But these activities are already violations of independence and impartiality, and can in principle be disciplined on this basis.

39. See fn. 35.

40. The fact that local Congolese dubbed the term “MONUC biscuit” indicates that food hand-outs or sales of rations occur regularly.

41. Although there are many complaints about the way peacekeepers treat non-Muslim staff members, such complaints also surface frequently regarding the treatment of local staff by humanitarian NGOs. In general, outsiders that can be a potential source of income are very carefully observed, and they may not be aware of the hopes invested in them (and the concomitant disappointments). In the dire economic situation in the DRC, it is almost inevitable that these kinds of problems occur. Despite many complaints, we cannot say with certainty that these peacekeepers behave either more or less professionally than the NGOs in the DRC (cf. Büscher & Vlassenroot, 2010).

Part of the local perception is that the Pakistanis have a policy to advance Islam.⁴² Yet, the intensity of the Pakistani activities differs from year to year, and individual peacekeepers also seem to take their own initiatives. The meeting Alfa Sow convened and the more inclusive reaction by the Pakistani peacekeepers afterward also suggests an official policy does not exist. It seems that advancing Islam is more part of the soldiers' culture.

When the Pakistani contingent arrived, the local population initially considered them positively. Nowadays, Congolese regularly complain about the lack of interaction with or respect by the Pakistani peacekeepers. They also feel frustrated with the ongoing violence, the lack of protection, and they complain about the role of the Pakistani peacekeepers in proselytization. As indicated above, several priests indicated they were upset by the Pakistani. Churches, as well as a *Mwami* (traditional leader) in Walungu, are now increasingly working against proselytization and the construction of mosques. Although the Pakistani peacekeepers play a role in proselytization, they are, contrary to local rumors, not solely responsible for the growing number of converts. The growth of Islam is partly an indigenous development, partly a consequence of international funding, and only partly a result from the Pakistani peacekeepers' activities. It is difficult for the Congolese to determine how this proselytization is funded. Most believe that peacekeepers are responsible for funding the mosques and the rise in conversions.⁴³ This is in line with the local perception that MONUSCO as a whole is responsible for proselytization. In sum, whereas the five indicators together point to a sustained pattern, with differences from contingent to contingent and over time, this proselytization is culturally condoned within Pakistani society and its army, but not as part of a formal policy. Yet, it increasingly causes religious tensions.

Comparative Analysis

This section assesses the ways in which proselytization differs in the two case studies and how this influenced the micro-politics of the reactions that ensued. Comparing both case studies shows important differences in the ways in which proselytization was organized and the micro-politics of the responses to it. In Abyei, proselytization was quickly identified, it was clear which contingent was responsible, and how it proselytized, so that senior mission staff could take swift action. As a consequence, proselytization was constrained and did not receive much local attention.

Importantly, the UN head of office did not act in the name of anti-proselytization as such. Senior mission management felt that such activity was ancillary to its mandate. It would amount to favouring certain population groups (which could be violating impartiality or neutrality or both, depending on both scale and the local reaction). The latter is important in the particular context of the religious divisions (which coincide with what in Sudan counts as an "ethnic" division) and also in the dispute over the status of Abyei.

In the eastern DRC, proselytization varies from contingent to contingent and over time. UN Mission management has discussed the role of the Pakistani in the spread of Islam, but it has taken no decisive action against it, and the number of converts and local resistance continuous to grow.

To explain this difference between both cases, it is important to take other actors and cultural aspects into account. In the Congolese case, the Pakistani peacekeepers actively converted people, but they were not the only actor doing so. Moreover, it was not always clear how the proselytization was funded, and which activities were part of their regular peacekeeping tasks and which were individual or group activities. As mentioned, converting people was more a cultural phenomenon than the result of a formal policy. The continuity of the efforts seems to be based on the one hand on their own religious beliefs, in particular that

42. Similarly, rumors are growing that Egyptian Blue Helmets are also proselytizing.

43. One local MONUSCO employee suggested that contacts with local Muslims constituted the most effective way for the Pakistani peacekeepers to develop local information networks on security.

inviting people to become Muslim is highly valued for all Muslims, but it is not necessarily carried out in a strongly institutionalized manner, as more often happens in Christian churches. On the other hand, it is the role of the Pakistani army to protect and defend the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. The army played a central role in the foundation of the Pakistani state. Especially since the 1977 coup d'état by General Zia-ul-Haq, a religious conservative, it has strongly promoted the further Islamicization of state-institutions in Pakistan (Rashid 2008:33–37). That its peacekeepers follow this culture in Africa is not surprising. As a result, proselytizing by the Pakistani peacekeepers was not based on a clear policy, which made it more difficult to describe and prove. For UN Mission management, it is then also more difficult to address such weakly institutionalized proselytizing in a large geographic area. In contrast, in Abyei, Christian proselytization was already more institutionalized in a small area, with a manual, a specially constructed makeshift church, and hierarchical relationships within the contingent more explicitly supporting proselytization. In other words, there was hard evidence. Usually, the five indicators will need to be studied over time to see whether sustained attempts to convert people are made.

Despite differences in the degree of institutionalization, scale, including temporal scale, of proselytization efforts also matters: the DRC case shows more proselytization over a longer period of time than Abyei. This constitutes ongoing violations of impartiality in the context of failing the official mandate of protection and promoting peace. Thus, it undermines the neutrality of the peacekeeping forces over time and leads to greater religious tensions in the future.

Comparing the two cases shows that any actions that have the effect of counteracting or compromising the mission can be opposed by UN managers in the name of the UN rules and defending the mission's mandate. UN mission management does not need to be passive; when it actively promotes impartiality and neutrality to all population groups,⁴⁴ it actually follows its mandate and enhances the legitimacy and effectiveness of the UN mission.⁴⁵

In the end, the two case studies show a paradox. Whereas Sudan had a history of religious conflict, the quick reaction kept the potential negative consequences in check. However, in the DRC, which has a history of religious tolerance, prolonged proselytization is leading to greater tensions. This raises the question how and to which extent proselytization can be seen as a form of internal spoiling?

Proselytization as Spoiling from Within?

The article by Trettin and Junk in this issue defines bureaucratic spoilers as

individuals or a small group of actors that as staff members of the peace operation's organizational structure consciously counteract the successful implementation of a peace operation by undermining the efficiency and effectiveness of the mission, consequently working against the interests of the organization.

It describes three forms of bureaucratic spoiling: dissent-shirking, obstruction, and sabotage.

Trettin and Junk cite Brecht (1937:48), who argued the phenomenon of sabotage by individuals in bad faith is more frequent than is understood. Yet, in both case studies, Blue Helmets felt they acted "in good faith" in both meanings of the term: with good intentions and according to their religion. They were initially surprised by complaints about proselytization or denied them. The issue of acting in good faith needs to be explored in terms of legitimacy and effectiveness, because, as indicated, the UN policies did leave some wiggle room. Nevertheless, the peacekeeper's behavior is not as neutral or impartial as the UN staff regulations prescribe.

Importantly, the intentions of the soldiers differ significantly from the other three forms of spoiling because, based on cultural norms in their home country and army units, the soldiers

44. In a similar vein, humanitarian organizations are also more effective and legitimate when they actively promote the humanitarian principles on all sides of the conflict (Vlassenroet, et al. 2010).

45. Note that in the DRC case, neutrality towards the population does not imply neutrality toward the warring factions. As stated, MONUSCO currently has a mandate that incorporates enforcement against insurgent groups.

argue their behavior is right. Hence, they take for granted a particular interpretation of what is a universal good for them: their faith.

For those who agree with the importance of conversion, the soldiers are doing excellent work. Indeed, if the whole population would convert at once, proselytization would not be a problem. Only for those who do not consider themselves as co-religionists is it a potential threat or a negative result of peacekeeping. These people judge proselytization efforts indeed as similar to sabotage or obstruction.

Crucially, peacekeeping carries the stamp of approval of the Security Council, which represents another universal value—or at least an aspiration that transcends the particularistic interests of either individual member-states or warring parties—to represent the “world community.” In this sense, two universal aspirations collide when peacekeepers proselytize.⁴⁶

Although the legitimacy of making a choice between these two universal aspirations is ultimately in the eye of the beholder, proselytization hampers the legitimacy and effectiveness of peacekeepers. This is especially troublesome, because it takes place with peacekeeping missions, UNMIS and MONUSCO, barely able to improve protection and security.

Regardless of how one judges the intentions—or universal aspirations—of the peacekeepers, their proselytization is enabled by the power and wealth differentials between them and the local population. Any actions, consciously intended or taken for granted, that have the effect of counteracting or compromising the mission can be opposed by UN managers in the name of professionalism and defending the mandate. Certain behaviors constitute “taking sides” or violations of impartiality regardless of the intentions or religious beliefs of the peacekeepers. In Abyei, swift action prevented problems at first, but the problem has recurred several times since then. At the moment, UN managers in the DRC have acquiesced in selective protection in the context of failure of the UN protection mandate, which combines with growing tensions among communities and Christian churches. In this respect, one can question whether the UN or both regions need more tensions than they already face. Peacekeepers’ proselytization constitutes internal spoiling, because it “adversely reflects on their status” as peacekeepers, and “on the integrity, independence and impartiality that are required by that status.” It may also amount to taking sides.

In summary, although we acknowledge the good intentions of the soldiers engaging in proselytizing, if we judge it from their perspective, this is a form of spoiling. As it differs from the three forms mentioned earlier, we name it “pushing particularized universalisms.” This constitutes a form of spoiling, where the normative judgments on the legitimacy of “spoiler,” “recipient,” and “context” can differ considerably, but the behavior is not part of the official mandate. It presents a diversion of organizational resources, gives rise to unnecessary local tensions or even violence against peacekeepers, violates impartiality, neutrality, and independence, and compromises the legitimacy and effectiveness of peacekeeping.

Proselytizing peacekeepers may not be a well-known phenomenon, but “pushing particularized universalisms,” which can also cause tensions within mission walls, is a useful addition to the three spoiling mechanisms mentioned above. As the next section shows, it can partially be countered at the policy level.

Policy Responses

Proselytization is related to three larger policy issues: 1) To which extent can and do peacekeepers transfer customs, values, and beliefs in exchange for “security and protection”? Religion is one dimension, political convictions another. 2) To which extent does this transfer foster or impede the success of peacekeeping operations? If peacekeepers should promote gender norms and democratic values, why not religious ones also? The difference is not always clear cut. For example, traditional gender roles may be seen as part of a religiously sanctioned

46. As Wallerstein contends, “There is nothing so ethnocentric, so particularistic, as the claim of universalism” (Wallerstein 2006:40). See also Abu Sada (2012:191).

order, 3) How to establish the degree of success of peacekeeping operations in terms of the peace process? In multidimensional peacekeeping it is often unclear how to measure success because mandates contain several broad tasks (democratization, security, etc.), change (e.g., mission creep including new enforcement and stabilization tasks), or lack clear goals. When peacekeeping mandates are the result of a divided Security Council, the implementation of the mandate will reflect a lack of policy clarity.

Policy measures to address peacekeepers' proselytization will frequently lack success due to these three broader issues. Of course, UN policy on proselytization can be further developed, disseminated more broadly, and there should be transparent oversight mechanisms, including an official complaint procedure and disciplinary sanctions (e.g., a Conduct and Discipline Section or specialized officials). In addition, listening and cultural awareness, training, and monitoring help address the power differential between peacekeepers and the local population. More generally, peacekeepers should listen better to the population to enhance their accountability (Oxfam 2010).

A stronger policy response to pushing particularized universalisms emphasizes the process of establishing UN legitimacy. UN missions are legitimate, because they have been negotiated through a UN system that attempts to maximize the degree of political consultation and agreement in the "international community." Religious communities have access to that negotiation process, on their own and through national governments. Peacekeepers volunteer and national militaries send peacekeepers to successfully achieve those negotiated missions. After this process has been completed, everyone concerned has a right to demand professional dedication to the general norms of peacekeeping and to the particular goals of the mission.

Policy implementation at the field level, however, will remain challenging. Mission leadership must actively manage impartiality and independence towards all population groups and be continuously aware of the underlying policy issues in running a multi-cultural, multi-religious operation in a conflict environment where religion is or can become a divisive issue.

Conclusion

This article assessed two cases of proselytization by peacekeepers in Africa. Some respondents pointed out that it happens more frequently. Proselytizing peacekeepers require more theoretical reflection and empirical research on their spread, financing, and the concomitant micro-politics within and outside the mission walls. This article makes methodological, theoretical, and practical contributions to the debates on spoiling.

Methodologically, research on the micro-politics of spoiling, which is often hidden, is difficult. In this study, the geographical spread of the peacekeepers and religious institutions, as well as insecurity, also hampered observation and gaining access to the various actors involved. Moreover, local perceptions are not always based on facts, but they influence attitudes toward peacekeepers and co-determine their impact. Consequently, this type of research requires both longitudinal and ethnographic field research to understand both the behavior of the peacekeepers and of local perceptions, including rumors, over time. Thus, both actual behavior and perceptions could be empirically compared and assessed. When different norms collide, or more specifically particularized universalities clash, their actual consequences for the peace process can then be analyzed in greater detail.

Theoretically, this article identifies a fourth form of spoiling: "pushing particularized universalisms." Two aspirations towards universality—UN decision-making and religion—can in principle be justified in terms of legitimacy and effectiveness but only from different perspectives. These perspectives cannot be reduced to each other or to a commensurable minimum standard, so the possibility of tensions and conflict remains. Nevertheless, given the huge security and protection problems and the possibility of introducing new tensions in conflict-ridden societies—e.g., Nigerization—peacekeepers should focus first and foremost on fulfilling their mandate and refrain from proselytization. Their goal should be

to impartially protect the whole population, be independent of religious funding, and prevent further societal tensions.

From a practical standpoint, it would be ideal if UN policy on proselytization, as well as the formulation of peacekeeping mandates could be formulated more clearly. The processual legitimacy of UN decision making can be stressed in this respect. However, mission leadership of a multicultural peacekeeping operation faces huge challenges in actively promoting mandated political and social change, while stemming “unmandated” change. As the difference between the two is not always immediately clear to the peacekeepers on the ground, spoiling from within is likely to recur and hamper the peace process.

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