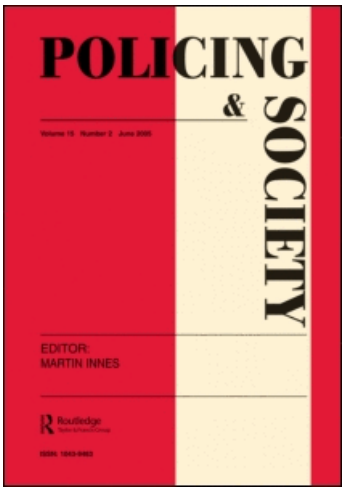

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Benoît Dupont [a]; Samuel Tanner [a]
[a] International Centre for Comparative Criminology, University of Montreal, Canada

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Not always a happy ending: the organisational challenges of deploying and reintegrating civilian police peacekeepers (a Canadian perspective)

Benoît Dupont* and Samuel Tanner

International Centre for Comparative Criminology, University of Montreal, Canada

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The deployment of civilian police in UN peacekeeping operations represents a significant commitment for many police organisations, especially in decentralised political systems such as Canada where municipal and provincial police services are involved. While these missions attract large numbers of highly motivated officers, their selection, deployment and return are fraught with organisational challenges that are underestimated or ignored by the contributing agencies. In this paper, we will examine these challenges as they are experienced and resolved by three large Canadian police organisations, through a number of qualitative interviews conducted with former police peacekeepers and their managers. We argue in this paper that the deployment and reintegration stages of a police peacekeeping mission should be included in the assessment of its success, and that unless contributing police organisations find ways to improve the experience of their returning officers, the sustainability of UN police peacekeeping deployments could become problematic.

Keywords: Canada; CIVPOL; human resources management; organisational challenges; police peacekeeping

Introduction

Unlike most contributions on civilian police peace operations (also known as CIVPOL), this paper does not focus on the impact these missions have on the post-conflict societies where they are conducted (Gregory 1996, Sysmanidis 1997, Oakley *et al.* 1998, Murray 2003) – or their lack thereof. Nor will it conclude on a list of suggestions for improvements that could make police contingents more effective at peace building (Call and Barnett 2000, Bayley 2001, Latham 2001, Perito 2004). We will also leave the psychological impact on police peacekeepers of participating to missions whose outcomes are ambiguous to others (Drodge and Roy-Cyr 2003). Instead, we have chosen to explore another facet of the CIVPOL story: the selection and preparation process of police officers that temporarily leave their jobs in stable societies to undertake often challenging tasks in post-conflict environments (Chappell and Evans 1998), and the subsequent overall failure of contributing organisations to fully take advantage of the skills and experience their returning officers have acquired in the process. From this perspective, we conceptualise CIVPOL peacekeeping missions through a much broader temporal and organisational window than the one defined by its purely operational component, which

*Corresponding author. Email: Benoit.dupont@umontreal.ca

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usually falls under the responsibility of the UN. Instead, we envisage CIVPOL operations as a continuum made up of three phases.

The first phase consists of the mobilisation of the public – and sometimes private – organisations in contributing countries to provide suitable police officers to the UN. The second phase involves the deployment and management by the UN of CIVPOL contingents in receiving countries. Finally, the last phase (which in our opinion has not attracted enough interest so far) relates to the reintegration of police peacekeepers by their main employer. The emphasis placed on the operational phase can certainly be explained by the numerous specific challenges associated with the promotion and maintenance of the rule of law in post-conflict settings (Holm and Espen 2000). However, from a sustainability point of view, we believe that the initial and the final stages are crucial elements that need to be incorporated into the overall assessment of CIVPOL operations. The mobilisation stage determines to a large extent the quality of police officers who are made available to CIVPOL missions, while the reintegration phase provides an opportunity for contributing organisations to benefit from the experience and skills gained by their officers. It is also closely monitored by returning officers' colleagues who are considering volunteering for future CIVPOL operations, in order to determine the level of support the organisation is providing and the impact such deployments have on career paths. Agreeing to contribute police officers to CIVPOL operations represents a significant commitment for police organisations whose resources are usually already stretched thin. Therefore, beyond altruistic motives, one would expect that organisations that are unable to embed the mobilisation and reintegration phases into their routine processes will be less likely in the long run to maintain their CIVPOL commitment, seeing it as a costly distraction (Donais 2004).

What distinguishes the mobilisation and the reintegration phases from on the ground efforts is the intense level of inter- and intra-organisational negotiations going on between police units that frequently contest one others' rationalities and motives, despite the collaborative ties that bind them. In order to assess the extent to which these contests and negotiations determine the outcome of the mobilisation and reintegration phases, we focused on Canada – a country that has made regular contributions to CIVPOL operations since its inception.

With an average of 125 officers contributed between 1989 and 2005 (International Peacekeeping Branch (IPB) 2005), Canada hardly ranks among the countries providing the largest contingents, which include Jordan (909 officers in 2006–2007), Pakistan (813), Bangladesh (776) or even Nepal with 514 police (Department of Peace Keeping Operation (DPKO) 2007, p. 19). However, the quality of its officers and the skills they bring to CIVPOL operations (such as some officers' capacity to work in both English and French) makes Canada a valued contributor. Its 'distributed' staffing model involves a mix of officers temporarily seconded from more than 30 federal, provincial and municipal police services. By contrast, the USA 'devolved' model delegates the selection of recruits with prior police experience to a private contractor (Bronson 2002, Perito 2004), whereas the Australian 'integrated' model relies on a standing unit of 500 officers (the International Deployment Group or IDG) available at short notice (Peake and Studdard 2005).

This article will examine what happens in Canada before and after the CIVPOL deployment *per se*, and how the different organisations involved coordinate their efforts and resources (whilst at the same managing their constraints) in order to meet

Canada's commitment. We will also question the gap between the resources invested in this process and the benefits contributing police organisations derive from their participation in UN peacekeeping efforts. Our article is based on empirical data consisting of semi-directed interviews with 22 police officers from three different organisations. Our sample is composed of four higher-level managers, and 18 mid-level managers and rank and file officers who had participated (or were about to) in one or more CIVPOL operations. The three organisations that agreed to participate in this project represent a diversity of perspectives that include the federal police Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), as well as one provincial and one municipal police service.[1] We also interviewed the head of Canadian Police Experts Overseas (CANPOL),[2] a non-governmental organisation that maintains a roster of more than 500 recently retired police and security sector volunteers who can be called upon by the Canadian government to supplement the pool of police expertise. These interviews were conducted from October 2004 to May 2006 and included questions that addressed the experience of the respondents before, during and after their deployment.

This article is organised in three sections. The first section delineates the Canadian model of CIVPOL participation, outlining the various responsibilities that structure government and police organisations at the federal and local levels. The second section examines the inter-organisational negotiations that are conducted between these actors and the specific rationalities that inform these negotiations. The final section analyses the intra-organisational challenges that are faced by officers on their departure and return.

The Canadian model: a distributed structure of responsibilities

In order to understand the intense negotiations that characterise the deployment of Canadian police peacekeepers, the distribution of roles and responsibilities between a range of government and law enforcement agencies must be outlined. Three levels of responsibility must be delineated with regard to the Canadian context: (1) the federal government; (2) the federal police (also known as the RCMP); and (3) local police forces.

The federal government

The whole process of deploying Canadian police officers to post-conflict peace operations begins with a request addressed by a multilateral organisation, such as the UN or the European Community, to the Foreign Affairs and International Trade Ministry (FAC). FAC appoints a special committee called the Canadian Police Agreement (CPA). This permanent entity is composed of senior public servants from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), Public Safety Canada (PSC) and the RCMP. CPA's mandate is threefold. First, it must assess the request made by the multilateral organisation, and consider its feasibility. Second, it coordinates the different partners' involvement, and designs the policy framework and guidelines for a police contingent (selection and preparation). Finally, because the participating police officers' salaries are covered by the multilateral organisation, the CPA manages the funds allocation between the Federal government, CIDA and

the RCMP. As mentioned in the introduction, some peacekeepers may also be selected by FAC through the non-governmental organisation, CANPOL.

The RCMP

As soon as the FAC has decided to participate in a CIVPOL mission, the whole organisational responsibility to form and train the police contingent rests on the RCMP's shoulders. To that end, structural changes were made to the RCMP organisation in 1996, with the creation of the IPB. Its mandate is to organise the selection of Canadian police peacekeepers. It is responsible for the administration of pre-deployment medical and psychological tests, as well as pre-deployment training. The IPB is also responsible for emotional and logistical support to deployed officers. Due to its upstream consultation role and downstream executive responsibility, the RCMP is a strategic and central actor in this process.

The RCMP's selection criteria are prescribed by both the UN's CIVPOL branch (the DPKO) and the FAC. These criteria, for example, require that candidates should be clear of any criminal record; pass medical and psychological tests successfully; and have at least seven years of experience as a police officer. Candidates must show that they are above-average practitioners and that they can adapt easily to new environments. Candidate training is mostly determined by the mission's mandate as established by the UN. The length of a CIVPOL mission is nine months. Yet in some cases the mission may be extended to 12 months. These responsibilities make the RCMP the most powerful actor in the entire deployment process. Huge amounts of time, equipment and human resources are spent to form, train and deploy Canadian police peacekeeping contingents.

Local police forces

Although, it is the largest Canadian police service with more than 26,000 employees, the RCMP is not capable of staffing every single Canadian police contingent deployed at any given time. Unlike the Australian Federal Police, the RCMP does not have a permanent unit dedicated to CIVPOL missions. Consequently, it must rely on key partners, namely provincial, regional and municipal police services that provide additional officers. In this paper, we will focus on two local police services that contribute to Canadian CIVPOL contingents. One is a provincial police department of 5000 officers, and the other is a large municipal police department of 4000.

The provincial police service's first participation to peace operations started in 1995. Two additional contingents were then provided in 1996 and 1997. It suspended its participation until 2004, mostly for financial reasons. By that time, and following the decision to resume its contribution to peace operations, the service established a unit dedicated to the management of its CIVPOL related operations in 2003, which is mainly responsible for the selection of police officers to be recommended to the RCMP.

The municipal police department's involvement in peacekeeping operations also started in 1995. Since then, police officers have been participating in CIVPOL missions without interruption. The department has also undergone structural changes and created an 'external missions division' within its administrative branch.

Among other responsibilities, this division manages the selection of volunteers who will be recommended to the RCMP. The selection process is based on voluntary participation, and candidates apply individually to new missions. In both local police services, volunteers attend information meetings related to upcoming missions. They are mandatory for police officers working in the municipal police department, and are organised in partnership with the RCMP. Former peacekeepers from the organisation also participate and provide relevant information to their colleagues about major issues they were confronted with once in the field (contacts with the local population, climate issues, and conditions of work abroad). Each organisation is free to set its own selection criteria, as long as they fit the minimum federal requirements.

Inter-institutional negotiations and the collision of contested rationalities

In the previous section, we focused on the organisational and structural features linked to the deployment of Canadian police officers in peacekeeping operations. We considered each level of responsibility separately in order to illustrate the decision making and implementation chronology for each new mission. However, the various organisations involved in this joint effort do not share the same incentives, nor do they unconditionally accept the current distribution of power. While some occupy a central and 'comfortable' position, others are very limited in the control they have over their involvement. To borrow Espeland's (1998) terminology, each participating organisation brings to this collective endeavour a 'rationality' that is often 'contested' by its partners. This section examines the rationalities of three contributing police organisations and focuses more specifically on the different incentives that justify their participation in CIVPOL operations. Since this type of international activity adds significant constraints – namely the selection and training of personnel – on already severely understaffed police organisations, why is it that they choose to participate in these missions and send some of their best employees to remote areas for extended periods of time? In order to understand the rationality behind this apparent paradox, we will proceed sequentially and examine how each of the three police organisations perceived its involvement, and positioned itself with regard to the two others.

RCMP's first choice

Based on the organisational and structural description above, it is obvious that the RCMP holds a strategic role in the whole process of deploying Canadian police officers abroad. The RCMP defines its own requirements, norms and guidelines – as long as they comply with the UN criteria. Since local police services are participating under the RCMP umbrella, they have no other choice but to adopt the same set of norms. Several incentives can explain the RCMP's decision to participate in such missions. They mainly revolve around four crucial issues: helping other countries to rebuild their democratic institutions; promoting international responsibility and solidarity; countering insecurity surges; and promoting Canada abroad:

> As representative of the Canadian government, we are here [. . .] to help people rebuild a democratic government with its democratic institutions. I think that as a developed

> country, we have a responsibility towards the international community to take part in such missions. As I mentioned, since 1989 the Canadian police is involved in such missions. Since that moment, we have earned a lot of credibility in the eyes of many people around the world. Then I know that Foreign Affairs and other departments want the Canadian flag to be put up. (RCMP-01)

> If we consider Haiti for example, it takes four hours by plane to get to [Canada], where an important Haitian community lives. We saw that when the UN withdrew (UNMIH: 1993–1996) from Haiti, the country fell into chaos. It became a place where crime was high as well as a drug trafficking hub, generating negative impacts on both the United States and Canada [. . .] Thus, it is crucial to bring stability to that area to counter such negative impacts. Criminality is now a global phenomenon. (RCMP-02)

Since peace operations are associated with high levels of symbolic capital (Dupont 2006), sending police officers serves as a highly rewarding gesture that ultimately brings credibility to contributing organisations. As such, the more a police department provides police officers, the more prestige it will build up. Accordingly, strategies are being developed by each organisation to maintain or improve their status. Still, the struggle is biased from the beginning due to the strategic position held by the RCMP:

> [. . .] For missions such as Bosnia-Herzegovina, the RCMP won't even call us [. . .]. They know they will be able to fill in the ranks with their own staff. Even if they are short of staff, they will do that so as to keep the upper hand . . . At the present moment, they represent 33% of the [Canadian] staff around the world. They want to take over, but to keep control, you need staff. (MP-01)

> The [RCMP] pretends there is no competition, but if they could, they would fill 100% of the positions with their own staff. We would even not be here, that is for sure. Yet, they don't have our experience in urban environments [. . .] There is a kind of friendly competition, everyone wants to be present as much as possible . . . When you take part in a mission, it is a reward [. . .]. (MP-01)

As a consequence, the RCMP plays a hegemonic role, which is not only the result of its coordinating responsibilities, but also manifests itself through staffing strategies that reserve the most desirable positions to its own personnel. Our interviews show that local police organisations – not to mention CANPOL – are called upon only when the RCMP is unable to fulfil a CIVPOL commitment by itself, and some of the most prestigious missions are exclusively staffed by RCMP personnel, even if it strains the home organisation.

The international ambitions of a provincial police service

Two different strategies were observed amongst the local police organisations we investigated. The first one is linked with national politics, and the possibility that one part of the country will one day separate from Canada. A consequence of that separation would be that the provincial police would instantly become a national police. In that eventuality, the provincial organisation needs to develop a presence on the international policing scene. As such, contributing to police peacekeeping operations is definitely perceived as relevant experience by the department's managers.

The financial dimension should not be underestimated when it comes to understanding the incentives or disincentives of sending police officers abroad. If most of the individual participants are motivated by reasons other than money, very few officers would be allowed to participate if their salary had to be paid by their department alone. On that specific issue, a senior police officer acknowledged that before a financial agreement had been signed between the three institutional levels – the UN, the federal and provincial governments, the provincial police never provided more than two or three police officers for such missions. This agreement compensates contributing police departments so that they may hire temporary staff to fill in for deployed officers, and do not experience shortages as a result. The extension of this agreement to the provincial police slightly modified the balance of inter-institutional arrangements between the different police partners:

> Without insisting too much on the frictions it generated, one could notice that [the municipal police department] was taking a lot of room [in peace missions]. It was related to the fact that the money allocated by the United Nations for our salaries was not transferred to us. Therefore, we could not afford to send many people [. . .] Now we send a group of 25–30 people and we have control, and we can exercise very, very direct power [on decisions related to the mission]. (PP-06)

Police organisations do not systematically compete with each others. Sometimes, alliances are forged when there is a perception that organisational values converge:

> Our [provincial police service] is more similar to the RCMP than to the [municipal police service] in the sense that we both work in rural and remote areas [. . .] We work in the same environment; we are used to similar things. The RCMP has different ethical rules than any municipal police department [. . .] The provincial police force and the RCMP have more in common. (PP-06)

Another provincial police manager (PP-07) also acknowledged the presence of competition between the different police departments, mostly due to the limited number of high-ranking positions left by the RCMP. Moreover, PP-07 points out that the competition becomes even more palpable in the context of French speaking missions, when all possible partners come from the same province. Yet, the provincial police and municipal police forces routinely negotiate the distribution of positions, and as soon as the contingents are formed, a true solidarity emerges between the officers sent to Ottawa for training.

The revenue generating rationale of a municipal police force

Although the deployment protocol exposed in the first section explicitly states that municipal police services cannot participate in a peace mission unless they do so at the request and under the authority of the RCMP, the respondents we interviewed in a large municipal police organisation mentioned alternative strategies that were used to get around it. However, such strategies were not without risks, and inter-organisational tensions could increase when discovered:

> 99.9% of the time, we are contacted by the RCMP [. . .] However, once, through a contact here, and in spite of the current mission, the [country name] embassy came and asked us directly for help. They needed our expertise in crowd control and order maintenance. We decided to send several police officers but, in the end, the RCMP took over because they found out, they felt offended and it violated the protocol. Even the

> federal government intervened [. . .]. Despite all of that, our officers remained in the mission. (MP-01)

In spite of political, ethical or symbolic reasons that may come into play upon deciding to participate in international peace operations, the same respondent acknowledges that money is definitely an important incentive:

> [The motivation] is also budgetary, we cannot hide it. When we send an experienced police officer, the RCMP reimburses his salary. In the meantime, we hire someone [less qualified] for the duration of his deployment. We make huge savings, even if we always replace our personnel. You send a $70,000 policeman and you hire a $30,000 substitute. You save a lot of money, it is worth it. (MP-01)

Pushing his rationale further, the manager explains that sending police officers abroad fits perfectly with his marketing objectives, which involves finding governmental or corporate customers willing to purchase his organisation's services. Like in other businesses, competition comes into play:

> I have a profitability threshold. I want at least 10 people away per year to be worth it [. . .] I don't want any competition. The competition is not related to individual positions, but rather to the number of positions available. But the RCMP decides, and when there is an English speaking missions starting, other police departments are also involved: the Ontario Provincial Police, Calgary, Halifax, Edmonton [. . .]. (MP-01)

Despite very open references to financial incentives, the municipal police organisation also expected to derive a certain amount of prestige from its involvement in peacekeeping operations. The department has also expressed concern regarding the potential mismanagement of its police officers during the deployment, and the possible skills decay that may result:

> Once in the designated country, they are some hitches [. . .] In Guatemala, we had five police officers who were very badly assigned. Two of them were secretaries and they had to answer the phone, and three were drivers. This is nonsense, I told them that I wasn't sending policemen that I have to pay CAD 100,000 a year to be drivers or receptionists. I want them to be police officers and to help local police, to help prevent crime [. . .] I should not tell that, but our policemen will not complain about it because they are comfortable there while it is snowing in Canada. For the police organisation, it is important because we want to develop experiences. (MP-01)

As we can see, the incentives and benefits that each organisation expects to derive from its contribution to CIVPOL operations vary greatly, and they directly influence the negotiations that regulate interactions between the agencies involved. But rationalities are not only contested at the inter-organisational level. Within each of the three police services we surveyed, there was a lack of consensus on the desirability of sending experienced and well-trained personnel abroad, even if the moral imperative to do so was hardly questioned.

Intra-institutional paradoxes: competition and indifference

Although, local police organisations are financially compensated by the federal government to cover the costs associated to their contribution to CIVPOL missions, they still invest a lot of time and energy to make sure that only the most suitable

candidates are selected. It is therefore, surprising to witness the apparent lack of interest with which returning police peacekeepers are met at the organisational level, considering the care and efforts that characterise the pre-deployment phase.

Selecting police peacekeepers: the poacher's dilemma

If the attractiveness of CIVPOL operations among police officers means that there is rarely a lack of volunteers, contributing police organisations are faced with several challenges linked to the selection and replacement of departing officers. The first challenge concerns the competition that this process generates inside the organisation to secure the best officers, especially in the specialist areas. Usually, the units responsible for the management of CIVPOL commitments are staffed with a limited number of managerial and administrative positions. As a result, they can be perceived by other police units as 'poachers' of strategic resources, especially when they recruit among specialists such as serious crime investigators or Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) team members:

> When I need someone for Rwanda, a police officer with experience in investigations, homicides or even war crimes, I go to the homicide section. And we all know how it works in homicide: the officers are involved in long running projects [. . .], and they have to go to court [. . .] All I want is to send the best policeman there is, but I poach on his boss' territory, who doesn't want his man to leave. This is where my role starts [. . .] But it really turns out to be a problem when a unit loses its best officers, its specialised personnel. (MP-04)

To be considered for the selection process, volunteers must first obtain their superior's permission. Some managers are very reluctant to free up some of their best officers, either because the organisation lacks the resources to fill the temporarily vacant position, or due to the belief among older managers that CIVPOL operations are nothing more than subsidised holidays:

> [When you return] they have to assign you to the position you had before you left. But the reality is that when you occupy certain positions, they just don't want you to go on a mission. In some units, if you go on a mission, you are not valued anymore when you come back. In some other units, they will tell you that if you want to go on a mission, you shouldn't even think about applying [for transfer], because they [. . .] do not want to lose their personnel for a 9-months period. (MP-09)

> Even today, often people will say: 'Hey, here is [name of respondent, in charge of CIVPOL deployment], the department's travel agent'. (MP-05)

> Some people wondered: 'What is the purpose to send people abroad when the police lack personnel?' This is a recurring comment. (PP-01)

In some instances, the unions also represent a constraining factor, since they require that CIVPOL management units give priority to older staff, even though they usually fail the rigorous medical and physical tests. The selection process varies from one organisation to another, but it is not uncommon to see a police service supplement the UN and RCMP minimum requirements with its own criteria, in order to ensure the success of the secondment. Once police officers have demonstrated that they meet all the professional, medical, discipline-related requirements, they undergo in-depth interviews in order to assess their motivation,

coping skills when confronted with stressful and uncertain situations, general capacity to adapt to new settings and unfamiliar environments and the suitability of their family arrangements for long-term deployments. Clearly, police officers who volunteer for CIVPOL deployments undergo stringent selection procedures that indicate how serious the two local police organisations we studied are about them, despite the intra-organisational frictions and service-delivery perturbations caused by such contributions. In this context, one would expect contributing organisations to offset their temporary inconvenience by maximising the delayed benefits that derive from welcoming back officers with increased skills and experience.

Reintegrating police peacekeepers: missed opportunities

Adjusting back to a normal personal and professional life is not always a smooth process: some peacekeepers suffer from post traumatic stress disorder, leave their spouse or have to deal with problems of substance abuse. The police organisations we surveyed were very much aware of these potential difficulties. They offer the services of psychologists in order to facilitate the transition and try to monitor the performance of returning officers in order to detect behavioural problems. Still, most of the returning officers we interviewed were convinced that their CIVPOL experiences had made them better police practitioners. Some of them developed strong management skills and learned how to work in uncertain and culturally diverse environments. Others felt they had become more autonomous and flexible, and believed they were able to better structure their workload as a result. Another benefit frequently mentioned by our respondents was the informal benchmarking and knowledge transfers occurring between police peacekeepers from different countries (mainly developed countries):

> I think that for a police officer who leaves for his first mission, the perspective to be exposed to the world is huge. From the moment he arrives, he will meet new colleagues. His eyes open through exchanges with German or Swedish colleagues. Everyone has his own experience and ways of doing things that are all effective in they own way. Being in contact with so many different people is like attending a big school. (MP-04)

> The experience is not limited to the fact that you go abroad. You also meet people in your contingent. Police officers from all over Canada, you listen to them and you can assess how it works in their job, in their work environment, and compare with your own. (MP-07)

CIVPOL missions also provided interesting opportunities for social networking with colleagues from other departments within Canada or abroad (who might facilitate access to criminal intelligence in future cases) or with community leaders whose own networks extend to immigrant communities in Canada.

However, most of these increased skills and competencies were mentioned as personal gains that would remain virtually ignored by their organisation. They were pleased to find a generally supportive reception among their colleagues and managers, but they were confounded – and even frustrated – by how little was being done to take advantage of their experience at an organisational level.

A majority of respondents indicated that their organisation seemed to limit its assessment of a mission's success to the maintenance of a good reputation on the international stage and the recovery of the costs involved. They regretted that no

organisational attempt was made to systematically learn from returning peacekeepers how they could individually or collectively improve police work in Canada:

> You come back with more experience and I don't think they [the police service] take advantage of it. There is no opportunity for us to provide feedback: 'What did you learn over there and how could it help us?' (MP-02)

> I have not seen any initiative from my organisation or from the RCMP [. . .] to try to gather pieces of information related to our experience. What do we get from the experience our members have gained? They just don't care [. . .] We don't really feel our organisation is willing to take something out of it. (MP-03)

Another strong indicator of this indifference was the fact that promotion procedures sometimes failed to take stock of the CIVPOL experience. During their deployment, police peacekeepers are assigned by the UN to positions that may or may not correspond to their rank and qualifications at home. In several instances, peacekeepers assumed much more responsibility during their deployment than they would have at home:

> I was in [country name] and I almost was the detachment's head. There were 25 people. When I came back, I returned to my patrol car, with my radio, working for someone who had 25 people under his command. I did not have the responsibility or the prestige attached to the position anymore. It sounds arrogant, but still, the chief of the Pakistani battalion called me 'mister', and I could sit at his table and his troops would cook something for us. And here, if you take 62 minutes for your lunch instead of 60, they will blame you. You come back in the system. From that perspective, it was irritating. (MP-05)

It is not uncommon for those who are unable to adjust to a slower pace, and who are not offered new challenges by their organisation, to develop a general boredom that results either in their resignation or in withdrawal from their work:

> When you come back, your job may seem boring, very, very ordinary and boring. What I consider the most difficult here is the fact that it is not very demanding compared to what we do on mission, where we can be confronted with extreme criminal behaviours that are rare here [. . .] When you come back, you feel that you don't do that much here. There are two extremes: people apply for other positions or resign. (PP-06)

> I understand that the context is not the same, but I tell you that the motivation at work at the beginning was limited. My mind was on something else, but it gets better and better. Still, there is always a part of me that will remain [on the mission]. (MP-03)

From these statements, it would seem that the reintegration is experienced by many police peacekeepers as an anticlimax. The emotional and professional investment they made in the mission is followed by a period of disenchantment that can be partly attributed to their organisation's lack of follow-up. Considering the care taken to screen and train volunteers and the costs involved, the outcomes associated with the organisation's incapacity to offer returning officers opportunities commensurate with their experience is disappointing. Instead of feeling welcome and valued, these high achievers become estranged from their workplace.

Conclusion

Although our focus in the last section was an analysis of the most problematic aspects of the reintegration phase, our intent is not to over-dramatise the experience

of police peacekeepers when they return home. Many end up much more disillusioned with the UN bureaucracy and its notorious mismanagement of peace operations than with their own organisation. In fact, some of our respondents claimed that their deployment had made them more philosophic about their work environment in Canada. They felt lucky to be members of well-resourced organisations whose management was supportive, and were quick to admit that they were more reluctant to complain after having experienced extremely chaotic situations.

Nevertheless, we maintain our assessment of a fundamental discrepancy between the considerable upstream investments made at the mobilisation stage, and the limited downstream yield (or even the losses) that are observed at the reintegration stage. Managers in each organisation's unit responsible for CIVPOL operations were very much aware of this paradox and deplored it. However, there was little they believed that could be done to solve it. The number of officers involved in police peacekeeping deployments represents less than half a percent of the total workforce for a large metropolitan or provincial police service at any given time, and this is clearly insufficient to alter existing internal policies. Moreover, contributing police organisations are eager to promote their participation to CIVPOL missions externally, as a demonstration of their good global citizenship. But even if such activities are valued from a public relations perspective, the professional prestige that former police peacekeepers command cannot match the aura attached to serious crime investigators or tactical unit members in the police informal hierarchy.

Does it matter in the long run for CIVPOL operations? In our opinion, it does. Eventually, organisations whose internal support for returning peacekeepers is found lacking will have more difficulty attracting high calibre recruits that have a chance of making a difference in post-conflict societies. Facilitating the 'metabolism' of police peacekeepers' experiences would certainly increase their satisfaction and improve their retention rates, while making the organisation more responsive to its environments and more creative in its responses. It would also enhance the support of colleagues, such as the police brotherhood, which definitely matters for police officers facing health or psychological issues related to their experience in peace operations. This could, for example, involve programmes that provide better planning for the reintegration of returning officers, increased opportunities for officers to formally share their knowledge with colleagues, or assignment policies that take advantage of the skills and needs of former CIVPOL officers. These measures would solidify the organisation's commitment to future CIVPOL operations and guarantee their sustainability by aligning the interests of the former with the goals of the latter.

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Notes

1. Respondents respectively identified as PP and MP officers.
2. http://www.canpol.ca/.

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