

UN Peacekeeping and Critical Security Studies¹

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Since the 2000s, concerns about the lack of theoretical developments in the peacekeeping literature have mostly been raised by critical scholars. On the one hand, Paris denounced the “cult of policy relevance” that led to neglect the “macrotheoretical questions about the nature and significance of these operations for our understanding of international politics” (2000: 44). On the other hand, critical theory assumes that theory is never politically neutral and that scholars should “be self-consciously theoretical and ask basic questions about what we are looking at and why, and what is excluded when we look at something in a particular way” (Bellamy, Williams and Griffin, 2010: 20). A critical approach to UN peacekeeping would then question the values and representations that inform peacekeeping and the political order that peacekeeping interventions shape, promote or sustain.

Critical security studies (CSS) can be narrowly defined as gathering post-positivist analysis focused on human security and emancipation (Buzan and Hansen, 2009: 36). However, in a broader sense, CSS refers to a “reflexive field” (Salter, 2013: 1) that covers a variety of approaches ranging from critical theory to poststructuralism. It encompasses contrasting conceptions of security but that share the “assumption that security threats and insecurities are not simply objects to be studied or problems to be solved, but the product of social and political practices” (Aradau et al., 2015: 1). Applied to UN peacekeeping, CSS aims to understand how peacekeeping works in practice and its political and social implications. It questions agency and takes into account non-traditional security issues.

For almost two decades, there has been a growing interest in emerging issues in peacekeeping such as health, gender, or child soldiers. Yet, the process that expands UN peacekeeping practices remains under-theorised within the peacekeeping literature, as well as within CSS. This chapter relies on CSS theoretical and methodological tools to study the specific case of the rise of environmental practices in UN peacekeeping. Since the 2000s, UN peacekeeping missions have been increasingly confronted with environmental challenges, especially as a consequence of their own expansion. This chapter explores the multiple transformations that resulted from growing environmental concerns. Not only does it discuss the impact of peacekeeping activities on the environment as an unintended consequence of the UN intervention, but it questions the discourses and power dynamics within the UN system that create the conditions for such an ecological impact. Drawing on the concepts of securitisation and environmentalisation, the chapter shows how peacekeeping has been framed as relevant to environmental policies, while contributing to a broader process of securitisation of the environment.

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Critical Security Studies and International Relations

CSS includes a broad range of approaches that this chapter alone cannot fully cover. Instead, it suggests different directions to address the main themes and questions raised within CSS. From a chronological perspective, critical thinking in security studies is often dated to the 1980s as a reaction to the International Relations (IR) approaches that dominated the Cold War period (Baldwin, 1997). Various genealogies of CSS trace the development and evolution of this growing sub-field (Krause and Williams, 1997; C.A.S.E, 2006; Buzan and Hansen, 2009). In his account of the “contested concept of security”, Smith identifies two main streams in the initial critical writing on security (2005: 40-42).² First, the work by Krause and Williams established the distinction between broadening and deepening security (1996; 1997) and brought a “theoretically inclusive” approach around “a shared dissatisfaction with orthodox security studies and a disillusionment with the agenda of mainstream security studies after the end of the cold war” (Smith, 2006: 41-42). Secondly, the Welsh School focused on a more defined approach to CSS with a clear focus on emancipation. Yet these two streams cannot sum up the “large repertoire of issues and approaches” that CSS incorporates today (Mandelbaum et al., 2016: 133) and that can fit into this definition suggested by Booth in 2005:

Critical security studies is an issue-area study, developed within the academic discipline of international politics, concerned with the pursuit of critical knowledge about security in world politics. Security is conceived comprehensively, embracing theories and practices at multiple levels of society, from the individual to the whole human species. ‘Critical’ implies a perspective that seeks to stand outside prevailing structures, processes, ideologies, and orthodoxies while recognizing that all conceptualizations of security derive from particular political/theoretical positions; critical perspectives do not make a claim to objective truth but rather seek to provide deeper understandings of prevailing attitudes and behavior with a view to developing more promising ideas by which to overcome structural and contingent human wrongs (2005: 15-16).

Classification of the different schools of thought constitutes another way of approaching CSS. Each textbook provides its own typology dividing the diverging approaches thematically or along different ontological, epistemological and methodological divides (Buzan and Hansen, 2009; Peoples and Vaughan-Williams, 2010; Shepherd, 2013; Balzacq, 2016). For instance, Balzacq distinguishes four main categories: (i) critical theory including the Frankfurt School and work on human security; (ii) constructivism with a specific focus on the securitisation theory; (iii) poststructuralism and Foucauldian approaches revolving around the concepts of genealogy, governmentality and biopolitics; and (iv) feminism that encompasses diverse theoretical and epistemological approaches (2016). Buzan and Hansen differentiate perspectives in international security studies along epistemological distinctions (objective, subjective or discursive conception of security) and divergence on the main referent object (states, communities, human beings, etc.), the division between internal and external security, the considered sectors (military and/or non-military) and the view on security politics (2009: 37). These lines of separation lead to eight categories relevant to a broad definition of CSS: Critical Constructivism,

² In this chapter, Smith relies on a narrow definition of CSS that he distinguishes from feminist security studies, poststructuralist security studies and human security approaches.

the Copenhagen school, Critical Security Studies, Feminist Security Studies, Human Security, Peace Research, Post-colonial Security Studies and Poststructuralist Security Studies (Buzan and Hansen, 2009: 37).

Studies gathered under the CSS umbrella also share a set of specific central research questions. First and foremost, CSS questions the definition of security itself. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the widening debate challenged the narrow focus on military threats and national security advocating for an expansion across different sectors (broadening) and different referent objects (deepening) (Huysmans, 1998: 227). The Copenhagen School developed the securitisation theory as part of this new security studies agenda (Buzan et al., 1998). For Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde, “[t]he exact definition and criteria of securitisation is constituted by the intersubjective establishment of an existential threat with a saliency sufficient to have substantial political effects” (1998: 25). This definition refers to security as a social construction based on political elites labelling an issue a threat to survival, through a speech act, and making it recognised as such (Wæver, 1995). Despite the success of the securitisation concept and the large body of work inspired by the Copenhagen School, multiple criticisms were raised against the sole focus on discourse (Balzacq, 2011) and “the limitations of securitization theory as a ‘critical theory’” (Aradau, 2018: 303). Huysmans, for instance, shows that the expansion of security studies did not actually question “the meaning – or more technically, the signifying work – of the noun ‘security’ itself” (1998: 226). He further advocates for a security studies agenda based on a “thick signifier approach, which focuses on the wider order of meaning which ‘security’ articulates” (1998: 226). Hansen also contradicts the Copenhagen School by exposing “the striking absence of gender” and the “security as silence” that the speech act framework cannot capture (2000: 286-287). In a similar vein, McDonald denounces the securitisation conceptual framework for being too narrow and suggests considering the broader construction of security (2008). Going further, postcolonial security studies, despite disparate perspectives, challenge the Western-centric biases of security studies, including in CSS (Barkawi and Laffey, 2006), and denounce “the inability of CSS to recognize its own particularity and ethnocentrism” (Peoples and Vaughan-Williams, 2010: 47).

CSS does not only question the meaning of security but enquires about whose security and who is enacting security. The work of Bigo (2002) and the PARIS school – Political Anthropological Research for International Sociology – on security professionals sheds light on “the study of everyday (in)securitization processes and practices” (Bigo and McCluskey, 2018: 1). CSS encompasses studies that look at security actors, security practices and security material and visual objects while questioning their political effects on populations (C.A.S.E., 2006; Balzacq et al., 2010). For instance, critical scholars have extensively explored the ‘war on terror’ denouncing the *dispositif* of counter-terrorism policies, illiberal practices and surveillance technologies established in democratic countries (Bigo and Tsoukala, 2008). In the case of migration, CSS also points to the process of othering while deconstructing discourse on security threats that allow for discriminatory policies and a “governmentality of unease” (Bigo, 2002). While numerous studies expanded the scope to new security issues such as identity, migration,

health and the environment, CSS sees a continuous development of innovative analytical frameworks that reflect upon the connection between security and other key concepts such as risk, resilience and exception, to name a few, in constant dialogue with other sub-fields such as Science and Technology Studies (STS) or popular culture studies.

In the last ten years, CSS has been concerned with its methodological commitments (Salter and Multu, 2013; Aradau et al., 2015) and its relations to the political (Mandelbaum et al., 2016; Haggmann et al., 2018). Even though what being critical means has been under much debate recently, Austin et al. (2019: 3) suggest reinvigorating CSS by returning to the everyday of exercising critique. While this chapter only provides a fragmented and limited account of this diverse sub-field, CSS will always gather research with contrasting views on the ontology and epistemology of security, or as Aradau puts it “critical approaches to (in)security do not subscribe to a school or a theory but focus on transversal conceptual and methodological work across established disciplinary boundaries” (2018: 300).

Critical Security Studies and UN Peacekeeping

Pugh opens his 2004 article on peacekeeping and critical theory with the following words: “Theorists of International Relations have paid little attention to how and why ‘peacekeeping’, ‘peace support operations’ and related ‘humanitarian’ relief missions are significant in sustaining a particular representation of global governance norms” (2004: 39). Drawing on the work of Cox and Duffield, he then deconstructs peace operations that “can be considered as forms of riot control directed against the unruly parts of the world to uphold the liberal peace” (2004: 41). This critical take on peacekeeping echoes a growing literature in CSS which challenges our understanding of peace operations in world politics. While peacekeeping has not been extensively explored in CSS, scholarship in peace operations increasingly rely on critical approaches to question the world representations that inform and shape UN peacekeeping.

First, some scholars propose a critical assessment of a specific peacekeeping dimension without expressly invoking critical theory. For instance, Tardy (2011) critically discusses the concept of robust peacekeeping questioning its meaning in the broader context of contemporary peace operations politics. His article does not explicitly draw on critical theory but provides insights on the two main questions that critical theorists examine: “1. What theories, values, ideologies, interests and identities shape the way we understand peace operations, and whose theories, values, ideologies, interests and identities are best served through the current practices of peace operations? 2. What theories and practices of peace operations are most likely to advance human emancipation and how might such advances be achieved?” (Bellamy, Williams and Griffin, 2010: 28). Likewise, the work that explores non-traditional peacekeeping issues draws on the deepening debate in CSS to question the role of UN peacekeepers in the fight against HIV/Aids (Bratt, 2002), to advance gender in peacekeeping research (Olsson and Gizelis, 2014), or to assess the influence of child soldiers in UN peacekeeping (Bakaki and Hinkkainen,

2016). These studies extend the peacekeeping research agenda to much broader questions in contemporary politics while echoing analytical developments in CSS.

Secondly, several studies challenge mainstream understanding of peace operations through a critical security framework. Among these, two main trends emerge, one engaging the politics of UN peacekeeping; the other one questioning the everyday of peace operations. While traditional studies on UN peace operations have always been interested in the reasons behind member states' engagement, a critical take on this involvement also includes discursive dimensions. In other words, a critical approach intends "to reflect on the discourse within which theories and practices of peacekeeping, conflict resolution and peacebuilding are formed and reformed" (Fetherston, 2000: 191). For instance, drawing on a constructivist approach, Booth Walling deconstructs narratives and storytelling in the UN Security Council to understand the likelihood of a UN humanitarian intervention (2013). Critical discourse analysis also informs on the rationale behind a specific country's engagement and the myths that frame peacekeeping narratives. Relying on feminist and critical theorists, Whitworth questions the Canadian engagement by analysing the discourse around the image of Canada as peacekeeper. She shows that "an analysis of Canada's reputation as a country committed to the ideals of peacekeeping, and the way in which many features of that reputation were seriously challenged by the murders of Somali citizens by Canadian soldiers, leads us to question the constitution and effects of militarized masculinities" (2005: 102). Member states' engagement also results from the allocation of roles and responsibilities within the peacekeeping system. Revisiting the institutional debate about the UN system, Cunliffe shows that not only "political risks are unevenly distributed throughout the UN structure and skewed in favour of wealthier and more powerful states" but "it is an organizational trait that is reproduced by the political interests it serves" (2009: 324). In other words, the division of labour within the UN peacekeeping system should be critically discussed beyond traditional explanations related to institutional functionalist arrangements and path dependency.

CSS also addresses UN peacekeeping politics by focusing on the political order that peacekeeping operations maintain. Indeed, while Barnett and Finnemore (2004) capture the ideational foundations of peace operations, other studies focus on the political and economic models that peace operations export and sustain. Pugh's (2004) work fits in this category: it questions the role of peacekeeping in the global political economy criticising the ethical discourse justifying the humanitarian intervention. Echoing Duffield's work on humanitarianism, he argues that peace operations intend to promote a neoliberal economic order while being "value laden in reproducing, or attempting to reproduce, the state system and liberal norms of domestic governance" (ibid.: 54). Paris and Zanotti further develop this argument by focusing on the role of peace missions in the diffusion of liberal democracy. On the one hand, Paris argues that international peacebuilding missions "have attempted to 'transplant' the values and institutions of the liberal democratic core into the domestic affairs of peripheral host states", while urging students to pay attention to "the role that peace operations play in the diffusion of norms and institutional models from one part of the international system to another"

(2002: 638). On the other hand, Zanotti relies on a Foucauldian approach to contend that “international interventions have become an aspect of an international disciplinary regime that took shape in response to the unpredictability of threats” (2006: 151). Based on the case of Haiti and Croatia, she shows how UN peacekeeping imposes democracy through institutional disciplinarity and governmentalisation (2006) and how the importation of political models fosters disorder and dependence (2008). Several postcolonial and feminist theorists also investigate the international system that peacekeeping helps create and/or sustain. For instance, Pratt challenges the “particular configuration of gender, race, and sexuality” reproduced in the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on “Women, Peace and Security” (2013: 772). She argues that “rather than challenging or dismantling the dominant practices and discourses of international security, 1325 enables the ‘international community’ to harness women’s agency in the reproduction of racial–sexual hierarchies of power that are mobilized in the production of post-9/11 security discourses and practices” (Pratt, 2013: 773). By questioning the political project that shape peacekeeping operations, CSS questions taken-for-granted values that justify UN peacekeeping interventions and influence their daily enactment.

A second trend of research within the critical work on peacekeeping precisely looks at the everyday practices of peacekeeping, building on CSS, but also mainstream constructivism, practice theory, international political economy, and critical geography. Considering the broader community of “international peacebuilders”, Autesserre draws on Bourdieu and the practice turn in IR to study how “interveners interact with local stakeholders, construct knowledge on their areas of deployment, ensure their safety, and go about their jobs on a daily basis” (2014: 54). Relying on the concepts of practices, habits and narratives, she shows the significance of daily activities in the reproduction and persistence of specific modes of action and how the values that shape international interventions are concretely “created, sustained, and reinforced – or challenged – on the ground” (2014: 9). This approach echoes the work on peacekeepers’ everyday lives. Drawing on Bourdieu’s notion of capital, Henry explores the ways UN peacekeepers talk about their own experiences of living and working as a peacekeeper (2015). She shows the entanglement between economic dimensions and gendered effects and argues that “peacekeepers are continually dependent on militarized (especially embodied) resources (or forms of capital), and that this is both a cause and consequence of the everyday contradictions and paradoxes that they experience” (2015: 374). While privileging the everyday experiences, her article also contributes to broader debates within the critical literature on peacekeeping that investigates “the often invisible effects of socio-spatial and imperial power as it is played out in the form of humanitarian intervention, international aid and peacekeeping” (2015: 374). Drawing on human and critical geography, several scholars have addressed the spatial dimensions of peacekeeping daily practices and performances. Pointing out critical approaches that “often omit empirical explorations in favour of overarching assertions”, Higate and Henry, for instance, intend to provide “a nuanced insight into how blue-helmet security practices are seen, and in turn how these (usually) taken-for-granted practices contribute towards perceptions of security” by exploring the everyday security through its “embodied, spatial and

performative dimensions” (2010: 33). Drawing on everyday urban geopolitics, Lemay-Hébert studies the “securitization of the everyday in Haiti” by analysing the security mapping performed by the UN peacekeeping mission to regulate the everyday of UN expats in Port-au-Prince (2018). He demonstrates how securitisation practices contribute to social segregation between peacekeepers and the local population and thus increase resistance by local actors (ibid.). Critical scholars in peacekeeping studies have been particularly concerned with local reactions to UN peacekeeping interventions (Pouliny, 2006) and local resistance (Mac Ginty, 2011), especially in the face of sex and disease scandals (Lemay-Hébert, 2014). Peacekeepers’ “sexual arrangements” have also been critically studied by exploring the gendering of peacekeeping economies (Jennings, 2014: 313) that further develops the feminist work on militarised masculinities and peacekeeping (Whitworth, 2005). These studies of the everyday practices of UN peacekeeping usually rely on ethnographic fieldwork, where researcher positionality is often overlooked (Henry et al., 2009). In line with the continuous methodological discussions in CSS, Henry et al. (2009: 469) advocate for a reflexive consideration of the role of the peacekeeping researcher and challenge “those conducting research to acknowledge that social inquiry is itself a political act”. The following part presents an in-depth case study to highlight the relevance of CSS theoretical and methodological tools in the study of peacekeeping.

UN Peacekeeping and the Environment

The cholera outbreak brought to Haiti in 2010 as a consequence of wastewater mismanagement in one of the UN peacekeeping mission’s camps drew attention to the material footprint of UN peace operations. It raised questions about peacekeepers’ pre-deployment health checks and their waste management practices, even though the environmental policy setting guidelines and standards, which were supposed to prevent environmental mismanagement, were already adopted in 2009. Since the 2000s, multiple transformations resulted from growing environmental concerns in UN peacekeeping. Yet, the literature on emerging issues in peace missions has rarely paid attention to the role of environmental issues in peacekeeping. Based on data generated through content analysis of UN publications, interviews³ and participant observation,⁴ I explore how environmental concerns are integrated in UN peacekeeping operations. While engaging with the debate on broadening security studies, I draw on CSS to study heterogenous emerging elements – standards, practices, expertise, equipment management, etc. – which expand peacekeeping activities to a new field of action. I examine the integration of environmental concerns in UN peacekeeping practices through the concept of environmentalisation and argue that not only peacekeeping is slowly framed as part of the environmental realm, environmentalisation also contributes to the securitisation of the environment.⁵

³ Research participants asked to remain anonymous, but dates and locations will be indicated.

⁴ Three-months of ethnographic research within the Policy, Evaluation and Training Division (DPET), a shared entity between the Departments of peacekeeping operations (DPKO) and of field support (DFS) in charge of developing and disseminating policies, doctrine, standardised training and of evaluating mandate implementation (New York, 17 October 2012-1 February 2013).

⁵ This chapter summarises results published in Maertens, 2019; Maertens and Shoshan, 2018; Maertens, 2016.

UN Peacekeeping as an Environmental Concern

Despite growing interest in emerging issues in peace operations, the process that broadens and widens UN peacekeeping practices remains under-theorised within the peacekeeping literature, as well as within CSS. The literature encompassed under the notion of “environmental peacebuilding” questions both the influence of environmental issues on conflict and the role of environmental cooperation in facilitating peace (Swain and Öjendal, 2018), but does not fully address UN peacekeepers’ environmental footprint. The environmental impacts of UN peacekeeping have however captured the attention of practitioners and think tank experts (UNEP, 2012; Liljedahl et al., n.d.; Liljedahl and Waleij, 2014) who mostly focus on assessing unintended consequences of peacekeeping on the environment. I further explore UN peacekeepers’ environmental practices drawing on the concepts of securitisation and environmentalisation.

Securitisation theories have inspired much work on the construction of the environment as a security issue (Trombetta, 2008; Floyd, 2010; McDonald, 2011). First, the Copenhagen School designates the environment as one of five sectors of security, where they highlight the superposition of two independent agendas: the political and the scientific agenda (Buzan et al., 1998). They conclude that despite a number of securitising moves, the environment is more politicised than securitised. This conclusion has been challenged by Floyd (2010) and Trombetta (2011) who both demonstrate the success of several securitising moves. In parallel to the literature on the securitisation of the environment in CSS, a concept in sociology can also capture the relation between the environment and security: environmentalisation. Studies have shown that environmental issues can be socially constructed, through a process of environmentalisation: “The term can be used to designate both the adoption of a generic environmental discourse by different social groups, as well as the concrete incorporation of environmental justifications to legitimate institutional, political and scientific practices.” (Acselrad, 2010: 103). The environmentalisation of security aims to establish security activities as part of the environmental protection norms, policies and mandates. Security actors also integrate new logics of action inspired from traditional environmental policies, such as preventive actions and non-confrontational responses. Securitisation is therefore not the only concept relevant to question the process that bridges environmental and security fields.⁶ Yet, work on the process of environmentalisation has been rather sparse in CSS, which has largely focused on the securitisation of the environment.

Drawing on the concept of environmentalisation is useful to understand the inclusion of environmental concerns and practices in UN peacekeeping. I consider environmentalisation as a slow assembling process that emerges from heterogenous and mundane elements. In the case of UN peacekeeping, the environment is integrated through emerging practices – standards, expertise,

⁶ See also the work of Oels on the climatisation of security (2012).

equipment management, etc. – that framed peacekeeping as part of the environmental field. Yet, a sole focus on environmentalisation does not tell the whole story, since environmentalising moves are intrinsically linked with efforts to securitise the environment. The key is then to explore how environmentalisation and securitisation reinforce each other. It means considering not only the power of attraction of the security frame, but also reversed processes, where security practices, actors and discourses are framed in another domain's terms.

A Slow Transformation from Blue to Green

The environment came under UN peacekeepers' scrutiny from the 1990s and growingly in the 2000s, with the deployment of new, large-scale operations in e.g. Darfur (2004-present), Haiti (2004-present), and Sudan/South Sudan (2005-present). From short-term operations with reduced staff numbers, the UN developed into "very large structures" that are put in place in countries without basic infrastructure, necessary in particular for waste management.⁷ As the organisation's image was in jeopardy in the event of poor management of its environmental impacts, the institution has progressively integrated environmental concerns in standards, guidelines and mandates.

With the mission in Mali in 2013, a UN peacekeeping operation received for the first time a direct mandate to address the environmental consequences of its activities.⁸ This mandate followed a general trend: faced with the proliferation of environmental field concerns, the Departments of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and of Field Support (DFS)⁹ have taken on a series of measures to mitigate their environmental impact. While the UN Secretary-General prompted all UN organisations to reduce their ecological footprint,¹⁰ in 2009, DPKO and DFS signed the *Environmental Policy for UN Field Missions* (internal document).¹¹ Concentrating on the practices and behaviours of UN peacekeepers, more so than on technology and equipment, the policy deals with multiple topics: solid and hazardous waste, energy, water and wastewater management, wild animals and plants, and cultural and historic sites. According to the organisation, the policy both aims to reduce environmental impacts and to improve the health and safety of UN staff and local communities. Since 2015, environmental management has become a priority for DFS. That year, it adopted a Waste Management Policy for UN Field Missions and, at the beginning of 2016, a team dedicated to the environment was created in the executive office of the Under-Secretary-General at the head of DFS. An environmental strategy was then developed and officially released in November 2016.¹² It aspires to the following vision: "responsible missions that achieve maximum efficiency in their use of natural resources and operate at a minimum risk to people, societies and ecosystems; contributing to a positive impact on these whenever

⁷ Interview with an official from DFS, New York, February 2013.

⁸ Security Council Resolution, *S/RES/2100*.

⁹ DPKO has since been renamed DPO (Department of Peace Operations) and DFS is now DOS (Department of Operational Support).

¹⁰ Interview with an official from DFS (Logistics Support Division), New York, February 2013.

¹¹ Participant observation within DPKO and DFS.

¹² UN Field Support, *DFS Environment Strategy. Executive Summary*, 2017: 1.

possible”.¹³ These heterogeneous elements – official policies, resolutions, technical guidelines, etc. – slowly modify UN peacekeeping. On the one hand, they consider peacekeeping activities as being environmental issues that require “environmental management” through “an environmental policy” and “an environment strategy” – in short – environmentalisation. On the other hand, by bringing the environment on the Security Council’s agenda, it participates in a broader discourse on the environment as a security issue – securitisation.

The transformation of UN peacekeeping practices is also supported by the development of a specific expertise and of networks of experts. In parallel with the creation of an environmental policy, DFS has appointed environmental officers, in charge of the environmental footprint of UN peacekeeping operations and of broader awareness raising on the environment in peacekeeping. While they demonstrate almost symbolically that the UN takes the environmental impact of its operations into consideration, they also facilitate the implementation of environmental projects in the field: they promote environmental activities to be conducted by the missions, oversee environmental assessments and organise training and awareness raising campaigns for the field personnel.¹⁴ With these environmental officers, the traditional boundaries of expertise become blurred: these experts contribute to raising awareness both on the ecological footprint of the missions (environmentalisation) and on the role of the environment in conflicts where peacekeepers intervene (securitisation).

Environmental training activities and material are also slowly emerging. For example, based on its report *Greening the Blue Helmets*, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) developed an online training course on the environment and peacekeeping,¹⁵ which brings together different dimensions: it integrates questions of ecological footprint and issues related to the role of natural resources in conflicts and peacebuilding. Similarly, the lesson dedicated to “Environment and Natural Resources” in the 2017 Core Pre-deployment Training Materials (CPTMs), available in the UN Peacekeeping Resource Hub,¹⁶ includes elements on both issues – ecological impact and environmental causes of conflicts.¹⁷ The development of training environmental materials relies on heterogeneous actors (member states’ ministries of defence, DPKO/DFS, individual environmental experts from UNEP) and around multiple devices (formal training session, informal awareness raising seminars, online training, etc.)

DPKO and DFS also collect and disseminate “success stories”, “best practices” and “lessons learned” on the missions’ environmental practices. While a reforestation campaign implemented by the Blue Helmets was systematically mentioned throughout my investigation, DFS published a four-page document in November 2017 which lists a series of “environmental good practices” under each pillar of the environmental strategy: participation in “clean-up” events, energy efficiency and renewable

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Participant observation within DPKO and DFS. See: <https://unitar.org/ptp/gbh>, retrieved on April 22, 2019.

¹⁶ See: <http://research.un.org/revisedcptm2017>, retrieved on June 29, 2018.

¹⁷ UN DPKO-DFS, CPTM Version 2017, “Lesson 3.5: Environment and Natural Resources”.

resources, solid waste reduction, wastewater treatment, etc.¹⁸ These “success stories” show the emergence of environmental practices implemented by peacekeepers which aim both at minimising the risks of environmental damage and at proactively protecting the environment or reducing on-going degradation. The “lessons learned” and “best practices” act as both guides for the action of the organisation as well as legitimisation tools for environmental management. However, environmental practices are not systematically disseminated between missions but spread in a more mundane way, through the circulation of UN personnel, discussions in the working groups, the mainstreaming campaigns organised in missions, the commitment of key individuals and the diffusion of illustrative examples and relevant documents, by UN communication tools and social medias.

When addressing their environmental impacts, military actors first focus on their equipment. In the case of UN peacekeeping missions, issues around equipment and procurement are unevenly addressed because of the heterogeneity of the operations: they are not equipped with the same budget, do not consist of the same troops, and do not take place in similar local circumstances. Yet politics of outsourcing and procurement constitute a major obstacle to more eco-friendly UN peace missions.

The Politics of Green Peacekeeping

The case of the environment engages with two of the questions raised in the critical work on peacekeeping. First, it relates to the relationships with local actors. Secondly, it illustrates the politics of governance in UN peacekeeping.

The reasons for the UN peacekeeping operations’ interest in their ecological impacts are somewhat different from those of regular armies. While national armies can have long-term prospects, UN peacekeeping operations are primarily clusters of different units and troops from many countries. The main source of concern is the reputation of the organisation and its relationship with local populations. UN peacekeeping operations must deal with criticism from host countries:¹⁹ they are criticised locally either for their waste management or for their use of resources, like water and wood in Darfur.²⁰ The cholera outbreak in Haiti due to poor wastewater management by MINUSTAH precisely illustrates the way the environmental footprint of the mission influences the relationship between the UN and the local population and, as a result, the implementation of the mandate. In its 2012 report, UNEP highlights the “negative perception of UN peacekeeping troops within the local population” which “led to violent demonstrations against them” (2012: 8). Rather than a specific form of liberal governance, environmental concerns have emerged in relation to criticisms targeting peacekeepers’ practices. In a way, the degradation of the environment proceeds as an unintended consequence of the missions’ mundane activities. The focus on the ecological footprint of peacekeeping activities therefore

¹⁸ UN Field Support, *Environmental Good Practice*, 2017.

¹⁹ Interview with an official from DFS (Logistics Support Division), New York, January 2013.

²⁰ Interview with an official from DFS, New York, February 2013.

responds to a dual need for legitimation in regards to local populations and for security reasons: the environmental degradation affects their reception by host communities *and* can be a source of tensions.

Yet, the environmental case also reveals the power dynamics within the UN system that create the conditions for such an ecological impact. As shown by Cunliffe, there is an uneven distribution of responsibilities between different members states at the expense of those “least able to bear them” (2009: 323). In the case of the cholera epidemic in Haiti, one could argue that the outbreak resulted not only from wastewater mismanagement but also from the UN system which allowed to send peacekeepers – from Nepal – carrying the bacteria. It is both an environmental and health issue that is a consequence of the uneven distribution of responsibilities between UN members states. These inequalities also concern procurement issues. While troops from developing countries might be unable to purchase more sustainable equipment,²¹ some member states, mostly developing countries and Russia, are strongly opposed to environmental standards for contingent-owned equipment, especially under the UN material reimbursement system and the procurement principles for selecting vendors. If contracts incorporate strict environmental standards, the international market may offer more attractive prices and some governments would then protest that their national companies are not competitive enough to meet these standards.²² For example, Russia refused environmental standards for mission equipment in order to protect its market, being a major supplier for the air transport.²³ In that context, the Security Council members could only agree on a press statement rather than on a legally binding resolution when addressing the environmental management of peacekeeping operations in December 2017.²⁴

Environmentalisation of Peacekeeping and Securitisation of the Environment

Despite the resistance of some member states, the environmentalisation of peacekeeping activities is a “work-in-progress” that we should pay attention to. For the UN officials met during my investigation, the environment is perceived at the cross-roads between low politics, often related to technical regulations, and high politics, with policies considered of the utmost importance. Therefore, integrating environmental concerns into UN peacekeeping can have underestimated political implications, that go beyond the missions’ ecological footprint.

For example, staff from the mission in Darfur was invited to an awareness meeting organised by UNEP. The speaker explained that the bricks used to build the mission camp, bought from the local population in order to promote both the local economy and women’s employment, had required cooking over a wood fire, which contributed to deforestation of the area. Starting from the very tangible aspect of the ecological impact of the operation, he then made the link between the deforestation caused by the demand for bricks, desertification, and the conflict in the region.²⁵ By advising on the operational

²¹ Interview with an official from DFS (Logistics Support Division), New York, January 2013.

²² Ibid.

²³ Participant observation within DPKO and DFS.

²⁴ UN Security Council, *Press Statement on Environmental Management of Peacekeeping Operations*, 2017.

²⁵ Participant observation within DPKO and DFS.

challenge – environmentalisation of peacekeeping – he communicated on a more comprehensive link between the environment and security – securitisation of the environment. The same strategy was used in UNEP 2012 report, which is divided into two parts. The first part deals with the ecological footprint of UN peace operations – environmentalisation – while the second part discusses natural resources, conflicts and peacekeeping – securitisation.

Two main factors explain this combination. On the one hand, the day-to-day management of peacekeeping bases has concrete consequences for the mission’s substantive work, situating the environment at the interface between low and high politics.²⁶ On the other hand, environmentalisation constitutes a bypass strategy to broadly link the environment to peacekeeping and justify the intervention of environmental actors within the field of peacekeeping while securing governments’ approval. Indeed, to publish on the environmental dimensions of conflicts, UNEP had to include the ecological footprint of peacekeeping missions.²⁷ The lesson dedicated to “Environment and Natural Resources” in the 2017 CPTM follows the same assembling strategy: while explaining to peacekeepers that “the environment affects you, and you affect the environment” and that “the UN commits to reducing its environmental impact”, it also asserts, in the same introduction, that “the root causes of many conflicts are environment and natural resources”.²⁸ As a result, the environmentalisation of peacekeeping helped to securitise the environment.

Conclusion

After discussing the development of CSS, this chapter draws on a few examples to present the contributions of critical approaches in peacekeeping research. The in-depth case study on the integration of environmental concerns in UN peacekeeping practices then illustrates these contributions. First, it shows how CSS sheds light on activities overlooked in the literature and study the complex ways through which peacekeeping practices are expanding to new fields of action. It takes seriously the mundanity and the day-to-day role of environmental issues in peacekeepers’ activities. Secondly, while questioning the dominance of CSS in terms of securitisation, this case challenges the security framing by proposing to look at the reversed process. Through the concept of environmentalisation, it shows how security, and in this case peacekeeping practices, can also be shaped by other domains of international politics. By developing an alternative framework to capture the process that connects security to the environment, it applies CSS’s commitment to transversality and interdisciplinary dialogue. And thirdly, a critical approach to the integration of environmental practices in UN peacekeeping is politically relevant. Environmental mismanagement in peacekeeping can have dramatic outcomes such as the cholera outbreak in Haiti attests. Like any kind of practices which notoriously affect local populations, environmental conduct in peacekeeping missions deserves our attention, despite its emerging dimension.

²⁶ Interview with an official from DFS (Logistics Support Division), New York, February 2013.

²⁷ Participant observation within DPKO and DFS.

²⁸ UN DPKO-DFS, CPTM Version 2017, “Lesson 3.5: Environment and Natural Resources”, 1.

In sum, CSS helps to capture emerging and heterogeneous elements while exposing the power relationships that frame and shape contemporary peacekeeping practices.

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