The task of building peace to prevent the recurrence of a conflict has become an inevitable role of UN peacekeeping operation today. As this task increasingly occurs in low-intensity conflicts in populated areas, relations and interactions between peacekeepers and civil communities become significant. Peacebuilding cannot achieve any level of success unless it is directly relevant to the communal needs and aspirations of the local. Building an alliance for peace in civil communities is vital not only for strengthening civil community-peacekeeper relations but also for fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility in the minds of the local community as a whole. By way of examining the Indian military’s peacebuilding experience this study shows that the complex, sensitive and volatile nature of today’s peacebuilding operational environments have necessitated a need to develop a community-centred approach to UN peacebuilding. To this end, it argues that the employment of suitable field strategies and tactics as part of a community-centred approach to peacebuilding can help the realisation of a community-peacekeeper partnership that may be operationalised overtime. The study concludes by making a few observations relating to the type of skills and outlook that are required by uniformed peacekeepers in order to function effectively in peacebuilding activities.

Keywords: India, civil-military relations, community relations, consent management, peacebuilding, United Nations, intrastate conflicts

As modern day conflicts increasingly assume a civilian character, the need for uniformed peacekeepers to operate alongside its civilian counterparts is a reality. United Nations peacekeeping operations of today are complex, multidimensional and broad in nature to the extent that they aim to achieve a long-term goal of preventing the recurrence of conflict within national boundaries. In his 1992 Agenda for Peace the former UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali defines peacebuilding as an ‘action to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict’¹. To some extent, peacebuilding is identified as an extended activity of peacekeeping, which ‘has to be invented and re-invented everyday so as to respond to the new needs and challenges’ threatening global peace and security². Thus, in addition to its traditional military role of keeping the peace in unmapped labyrinths of war-torn civil societies, UN peacekeeping operations have absorbed a variety of new peacebuilding roles such as election monitoring, provision of humanitarian aid, demobilisation, reintegration of civil society and nation building exercises. In so doing, UN peacekeepers are required to function effectively alongside a growing presence of non-military actors such as electoral advisors, human rights officers, civilian personnel and police officers, private sectors, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and civilian police in the field.

Studies on civil-military relations in UN peacekeeping operations are vast, but narrow in focus. A major focus has been an examination of the tensions that exist between UN peacekeepers
and their civilian counterparts, and how relationships may be improved. Gourlay examines the causes for the growing divergence in civil-military operating methods in UN peacekeeping operations, and argues that the cultural orientations of the two organisations are so different that make them less than compatible\(^3\). Pugh compares the effectiveness of civilian agencies vis-à-vis military peacekeepers in carrying out the broad mandates of UN peace operations in some of the complex emergencies\(^4\). De Coning argues that civil-military coordination can contribute positively towards UN peacebuilding process provided the energy, goodwill and resources of the military can be positively channelled in the co-function of civilian and military cooperation\(^5\). In undertaking a research study sponsored by the United Nations, Lamptey advances arguments for strengthening partnership-building efforts between UN peacekeeping missions and local civil society organisations, and argues that the former represents a central pillar for sustaining peace in war-torn civil societies\(^6\). For these commentators, the ‘civil’ in the civil-military relations refers primarily to the various civil agencies participating in UN peacekeeping operations.

This study expands on the notion of ‘civil’ to include civil communities as a critical actor in intrastate UN peacebuilding processes for four reasons. First, there is a growing recognition among policymakers and scholars for the need to secure community partnerships for sustainable peace\(^7\). The UN Millennium Assembly held in September 2000 marked an important turning point when the UN asserted the need to reform UN peacekeeping by way of adopting a ‘people-centred’ approach to conflict resolution\(^8\). The value of civil community participation in UN peacebuilding activities cannot be under-estimated. For peacekeeping operations to move beyond mere political settlement into domains of peacebuilding processes, which involve tasks such as democratic elections, reintegration of civil society and nation building programs, local participation becomes extremely important. Iribarnegaray argues that ‘there needs to be a facilitation of indigenous activism such that local capacities are stimulated and enhanced, enabling local populations to ultimately claim ownership of the processes of reconstruction on all fronts, political, social and economic’\(^9\).

Second, the presence of peacekeepers must be tolerated and accepted by local population in order for the latter to be in a position to extend their cooperation to peacekeepers\(^10\). For most part of the UN operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II), the reactions of locals had been extremely negative. For example, Australian peacekeepers who had initially served under the US-led operation in Baidoa were reported being scoffed at and provoked by locals\(^11\). Dobbie argues that ‘any peacekeeping force must seek to establish a genuine depth of consent which takes into account the whole community’s view’\(^12\). Third, the unpredictability of political leaders and difficulty of achieving their consent have often pushed peacekeepers to strategically turn to civil communities for cooperation. Political leaders do not always have the best interests of their communities at heart and are not necessarily representative\(^13\). It is argued that in a civil conflict it is better to work with the civil community than to try to establish neutrality among different political factions\(^14\). The latter may be difficult because of the multiplicity of these factions and the chances of being perceived by one of them as less neutral is very high. Fourth, local populations can be of some assistance in overcoming some of the immediate obstacles to peacebuilding processes in peacekeeping operations. For example, their help might be
needed in the identification of ‘rogue’ elements, such as bandits and looters that can affect the success of an operation\textsuperscript{15}. In the Australian-led mission to East-Timor in 1999, peacekeepers relied heavily on village communities to identify the pro-Jakarta militias in jungle hideouts and distant villages.

The place of the blue-bereted ‘peace soldier’ in UN peacebuilding processes has been also a source of debate in the literature for three reasons\textsuperscript{16}. Since the primary purpose of the armed forces is the preparation and conduct of war, the traditional military outlook is one that trains soldiers to use ‘regulated violence to accomplish [set] objectives’\textsuperscript{17}. This type of training over time produces soldiers who develop a macho military outlook, which gives prominence to muscular might and a ‘quick pull of the trigger’ approach to managing conflicts. Although UN peacekeepers are deployed as a non-threatening third-party force, several of the UN peacekeeping operations launched since the 1990s have assumed a ‘Rambo’ style character\textsuperscript{18}. One example points to the muscle-up approach adopted by the US-led forces, as part of UNITAF, in Somalia. The extent to which military peacekeepers are prepared to functionally readjust their outlook to carry out peacebuilding activities matters.

A second reason relates to the differing civil-military cultures. According to Dandeker and Gow, ‘culture comprises a set of ideas and symbols that provide a definition of the world for a group or organisation and guides for action’\textsuperscript{19}. The top-down, rigid and command focussed military culture raises questions about its ability to interface effectively with civilians who are less hierarchical and more consultative and participatory in nature\textsuperscript{20}. It is for this reason that Pugh gives primary importance to civilian personnel and organisation which are seen to be more aligned with and in sync with the actions and sentiments of civil community and organisations in UN peace missions\textsuperscript{21}.

The third point relates to the kinds of men peacekeepers are perceived to be in UN peacekeeping operations. Though female peacekeepers constitute a tiny proportion of an overall peacekeeping force, the emerging dominant views of peacekeeper masculinity have been summed up by the two extremes, as sketched here by Sanghera et.al as follows: ‘On the one hand, peacekeepers continue to be informally represented as humanitarian warriors whose skills and attributes speak to shifts in hegemonic military masculinity where the caring dimension is played-up. On the other empirically informed dimensions, peacekeepers are akin to soldiers of old, frequenting brothels - or worse - in their exercise of gender power\textsuperscript{22}. Further, the atrocities of peacekeepers who were responsible for murder in Somalia and sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) of children in Haiti, Cote d'Ivore, and Southern Sudan have led some scholars questioning the ability of peacekeepers to participate in UN peacebuilding processes\textsuperscript{23}.

UN peacebuilding, however, is multifaceted which requires the involvement of a variety of actors. Views about the extent to which the military should be involved in UN peacebuilding processes vary. To some, the role of peacekeepers should be limited to providing a foundation for peacebuilding, but fundamentally peacebuilding should be the primary task of national governments and their populations\textsuperscript{24}. To other scholars, the military is a critical agent of peacebuilding\textsuperscript{25}. Two arguments are advanced here to emphasise that the role of peacekeepers in peacebuilding processes cannot be
neglected. First, since there is no agreement on the timing of peacebuilding in peacekeeping operations, the embracing of peacebuilding tasks by peacekeepers is unavoidable. Peacebuilding activities may occur at different points. Once a violent conflict has started to slow down peacebuilding processes may be set in motion to manage the immediate consequences of the conflict through a variety of programmes such as a demobilisation, humanitarian assistance and maintenance of civil law and order and minor reconstruction efforts – this period is referred to as the stabilisation phase of UN peacebuilding. Another view relates to the consolidation phase of peacebuilding. This phase, which is aimed at fostering reconciliation and nation-building, occurs in a post-conflict setting where the conflict is perceived to have been contained. Since these phases are neither time bound nor have absolute boundaries, it is highly impossible to draw clear lines that separate the traditional function of keeping the peace from the wider peacekeeping functions involving peacebuilding activities.

A second argument relates to the reality that peacebuilding success depends on the establishment of a secure operational environment. This protective role can be provided only by the military, which carries out a variety of military related tasks such as monitoring ceasefires, controlling militia activity, and decommissioning of weapons. The aim is to create a secure environment which helps to facilitate the short-term and long-term aims of peacebuilding. The harsh reality is that in many areas, tenuous security conditions prevent civilian agencies from establishing a presence. In some instances they are deliberately targeted by insurgent groups in an effort to prevent them from gaining a foothold and becoming effective in assisting the local populace. In such harsh environments of peacebuilding the role of the military becomes a necessity.

As UN peacebuilding increasingly takes place in low-intensity conflicts in populated areas, relations and interactions between peacekeepers and civil communities become significant. The establishment of a community-peacekeeper partnership helps to build relations through which peacekeepers may be better placed to foster a sense of local ownership and responsibility in the minds of the civil community as a whole. The success of building sustainable peace in war-torn civil societies partly depends, on the extent to which this local ownership and responsibility are realised. However, establishing community-peacekeeper partnership in complex theatres, where behaviours and actions are predominantly shaped by uncontrollable subjective elements such as perceptions, attitudes, and socio-psychological factors, is a challenge in itself. The question, therefore, arises as to how such a partnership may be established?

To build a sustainable and long lasting peace in complex operational theatres peacekeepers will need to do more than being seen to just carry out the expanded mandates of the United Nations. To this end, the article contends that the employment of suitable field strategies and tactics as part of a community-centred approach to peacebuilding can help the realisation of a community-peacekeeper partnership that may be operationalised overtime. The first section of this article examines the operational environment in which a partnership with local populations will need to be established. The second section develops a theoretical framework for a community-centred approach to UN peacebuilding. The third section provides a study of India’s peacebuilding experience to assess the strength of its partnership with civil communities in UN peacekeeping operations. The study
concludes by making a few observations relating to the type of skills and outlook required by uniformed peacekeepers in order to maintain a strong and effective community partnership in UN peacebuilding activities.

The ‘Rough’ Operational Environment

The shift in armed conflicts from interstate to intrastate has significantly altered the operational theatres in which UN peacekeepers are deployed. Modern day conflicts produce operational environments that are highly militarised, but also shaped by strong human and subjective elements such as perceptions, attitudes, cognition, psychological elements and personal experiences. Nordstrom argues that ‘to understand [civil] conflict and solution [of today] is to delve into the complexities of human experience [and behaviour]’. In other words, one must look beyond the physical challenges in order to build peace effectively in today’s complex operational environments.

The subjective human dimensions are not exclusive to intrastate conflicts but the level and intensity of these factors affecting conflicts vary. In interstate conflicts these subjective factors largely play a role at the leadership level where main decisions are made. Since the state controls the actions and reactions of the respective military in war, the operational environment can be quite predictable once the differences between leaders are resolved. In intrastate conflicts however, the operational environment poses a bigger challenge to peacekeepers not only because of the presence of many actors in the field but also because each group’s actions and behaviour are controlled by their individual subjective aspects. Thus, the degree to which these subjective dimensions shape operational environments is much higher in intrastate conflicts than in interstate wars. It is for this reason that this study uses the term ‘rough’ to differentiate the operational environments of intrastate conflicts from interstate wars.

The actions, reactions and general behaviour of fighting groups in the ‘rough’ operational environments can be difficult to manage and control for a number of reasons. First, the subjective forces increase as the ‘conflict escalates into an overtly violent stage, and subsequently, the perception of the ‘other’ is stereotyped and eventually viewed as ‘non-human’. Second, different fighting groups may have ‘differential valuing of interests and needs’. In other words, warring groups may have different priorities attached to a particular issue or need. In such situations, perceptions, attitudes and values held by locals and fighting groups in the conflict may shape their own behaviour and responses vis-à-vis other parties. Fetherston notes that ‘perceptions (which are made up of individuals’ experiences, values, cultures, emotions, psychology) of issues and the reactions of the ‘other’ (including the mediator) matter and are also changed by the process of the conflict’. Negative perceptions and misperceptions, obviously result in resistance by locals and warring factions and an escalation of conflict and aggression.
Third, the local communities’ bitter experiences of everyday situations in a conflict further intensity the subjective forces\(^\text{34}\). Civil conflicts which represent the worst manifestations of domestic and human violence breed a totally different culture of violence\(^\text{35}\). Fighters often use the civilian population as targets to assert and express their dissatisfaction. The calculated use of rape, acts of genocide and ethnic cleansing in many modern day conflicts such as in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Rwanda, Kosovo, Sierra Leone and East Timor all reflect the plight of civilians caught in a civil war. In such ‘dirty’ wars, violence has been the dominant means through which most warring groups operate.

When local communities experience rape, physical brutality or ethnic cleansing as terror tactics the impact on the lives of people is severe. The psycho-social scars which penetrate the minds of the victims are so intense that they not only “last long beyond the ‘physical fact of brutality’ but it may [even] take about 15-20 years for the problem to surface”\(^\text{36}\). The everyday experiences of torture and physical brutality also shape perceptions which can, in turn, affect the way civil communities behave, relate and react to one another and towards the peacekeepers sent to ‘help’ them. Given the importance of civil communities in peacebuilding, these behaviours and more importantly the psychological factors that shape them must be considered carefully.

**A ‘Community-Centred’ Approach to UN Peacebuilding**

Despite being in usage for more than several decades, peacebuilding has been a contentious subject on several fronts. First, there is no single agreed-upon definition of peacebuilding\(^\text{37}\). This is because some view peacebuilding as a function of peacekeeping operations, while others treat the two as separate activities\(^\text{38}\). Second, there are also debates about the goals that peacebuilding should aim to achieve. Diehl and Balas contend that the concept of peacebuilding may embrace different perspectives, but they mostly share the common goal of preventing a return to violence\(^\text{39}\). Fetherston, however, argues that peacebuilding must aim to address the root causes of a conflict with a long-term view of resolving them rather than managing conflicts through preventive mechanisms\(^\text{40}\). It is argued that short-term aims of conflict abatement and settlement only produce ‘negative’ peace\(^\text{41}\). It refers to a situation where settlement is reached based on a compromise where the powerful may benefit more than the weak, and the latter may still be discontented with the outcome\(^\text{42}\). Most traditional peace missions were carried out with the aim of achieving this ‘negative’ peace which is synonymous with the absence of war\(^\text{43}\). However, the management of civil conflicts cannot be limited to the achievement of ‘negative’ peace. This is because there is always a risk of resumption of hostilities if parties are not satisfied with the old deals. One example is Angola where the peace process, which started in 1994, was pursued in a climate of pervasive pessimism\(^\text{44}\). Although a settlement was reached in 1997, the problem re-surfaced a year later. The UN was faced with the difficulty of re-working old problems and forced to withdraw from Angola in 1999. This shows the limitation of ‘negative’ pace.
Alternatively, ‘positive’ peace involves having some kind of vision towards the establishment of long-lasting sustainable peace. As Fetherston notes, ‘positive’ peace is something quite difficult to define clearly. Unlike ‘negative’ peace which brings negotiations to a halt through a settlement and does not move beyond that phase, ‘positive’ peace is a proactive process and is tied to the process of addressing the fundamental causes of civil conflicts. It brings a sense of hope and confidence that the actual causes of the distress and civil war will be tackled in the long-run. Of course a short-term settlement is essential for moving in this direction in the first place. The role of UNTAC in Cambodia and UNTAG in Namibia are examples of having successfully moved from ‘negative’ peace to achieving a resolution.

Debates on the best way to operationalise non-violent conflict resolution mechanisms have dominated the literature. While the UN has been acknowledging the need for more comprehensive and longer-lasting approaches to peacebuilding, it has been essentially basing its approach on liberalism as a model to producing ‘positive’ peace. This model, which relies on democratic institutions and a free market economy to address the underlying causes of conflict, aims to build or strengthen governmental institutions in host countries by way of consolidating, or ‘locking in’, political and economic reforms. There has been, however, already much criticism by some commentators that such reforms are being undertaken to the extent that peacebuilding operations are viewed as a ‘form of Western or liberal imperialism’. Pugh, for example, criticises the state-building functions of peacebuilding as part of a larger ‘hegemonic’ agenda of dominant power brokers whose aims are to extend western ideological values and norms in non-western societies. Similarly, Chandler characterises liberal peacebuilding as a process of colonising the ‘other’. Paris critiques these commentators for having ‘gone too far’ in describing liberal peacebuilding as being exploitative or imperialist. For Paris, the liberal model for peacebuilding should be saved, but then its focus must be on one that develops and transforms institutions before transitioning to a liberal democratic civil society.

Although such debates may be useful to inform international policymakers and thinkers, this essay argues that it is important to move beyond liberal peacebuilding approaches, which has its focus only at the national level. The July 2000 report on a major study, undertaken by an expert-panel led by Lakhdar Brahimi a former Algerian Foreign Minister, highlighted that contemporary UN peacekeeping operations ‘should be given the capacity to make a demonstrable difference in the lives of the people in their mission areas’. The endeavour may impose unmanageable constraints on the UN's limited resources, but it is worth noting that the UN was already envisioning at that time the kind of ‘peace’ that focused on population’s priorities and imminent needs. In his study, Roberts advances the concept of ‘popular peace’ with a view to making peacebuilding processes more relevant and legitimate to the people. Building peace on the ground in complex operational theatres is quite different to thinking about approaches to reforming the state’s apparatus for sustainable peace. To establish a ‘positive’ peace therefore, peacebuilding must look beyond just efforts to repair the economic and political institutional structures of a collapsed society. To this end, this paper advances a community-centred approach to peacebuilding which is underpinned by two key theories.
The first centres on Burton’s ‘needs’ theory, which argues for the development of appropriate conflict resolution mechanisms from a broader sociological perspective. This theory argues that in intrastate conflicts the sources of tension are found not in the traditional sphere of competition for scarce resources such as territory and other environmental factors (for example, the water dispute between India and Bangladesh) but in the ‘frustration of compelling needs’. People fight within a country because they are in need of something. At one level, internal conflicts are caused by the deprivation of basic human needs such as food, water, medical facilities and also psycho-social needs like security, political identity, leadership and power. At another level, the need to protect the cultural and societal values that bind the identities of individuals in an ethnic and communal setting may also be a cause for prolonged violence and domestic dispute. This has subsequently led to labelling most intrastate wars as ‘protracted social conflicts’ (Burton 1990 and Azar 1990).

To achieve ‘positive’ peace in protracted social conflicts, Burton offers both short-term methodologies and a long-term focus that deals with issues of common good, political interests and ideologies. Burton calls this ‘provention’, which is defined as ‘[t]he means of deducing from an adequate explanation of the phenomenon of conflict, including its human dimensions, not merely the conditions that create an environment of conflict, and the structural changes required to remove it, but more importantly, the promotion of conditions that create cooperative relationships’.

This sociological approach to peacebuilding, however, as argued by Fetherston is limited in that it is ‘disconnected from the social spaces inhabited by people, including war zones’. Peacebuilding approaches must target not only the issues but also the context in which these issues emerge. Lederach’s reconciliation theory, which focuses on relational aspects, offers a theoretical framework for this. Lederach takes Burton’s ‘need’s theory’ one step forward by advancing the argument that peacebuilding must go beyond the resolution of issues to transforming relationships in civil communities. The development of suitable strategies and tactics for peacebuilding activities therefore, must focus on the restoration and rebuilding of relationships at different levels (top, middle and grassroots), with a long-term goal of transforming societies. Lederach contends that although the middle range of leadership is the strategic link that holds the potential for establishing relationships at all levels, the ‘important ideas and practical efforts do emerge from the grassroots’.

What are these ideas and practical efforts that have been employed by peacekeepers at the grassroots level? It is argued that peacekeepers on the ground today need to rely on the ‘soft’ aspects of military science to shape the subjective elements of complex operational environments in such a way that enables them to transform relationships and generate cooperative behaviour and positive reactions. Peacekeepers need to engage themselves with the local population and effect change at the grassroots level. This process of engagement by peacekeepers with civil communities is described as forging ‘partnerships’ for peace in today’s UN peacekeeping operations.
‘Indian’ Peacebuilding Experiences: An Assessment

Donning the blue helmet for more than five decades, India has been singled out as having one of the longest and most consistent records of participation in UN peacekeeping operations. India has participated in 43 out of the 63 UN peacekeeping operations established since the inception of the UN\textsuperscript{62}. More than 100,000 Indian troops, Military Observers and Civilian Police Officers have participated in UN peace operations in various troubled spots across the globe\textsuperscript{63}. Of course, to say India’s generous contributions are driven by more than just international goodwill is not an overstatement. Serving the needs of other states by contributing troops to UN peacekeeping operations enables India to pursue its own interests. New Delhi’s pro-active foreign policy agenda is driven by politico-strategic interests, such as realizing its ambitions for ‘great power’ recognition in a globalizing world and a strong desire of being considered as a favourable candidate for a permanent seat on the Security Council\textsuperscript{64}. Notwithstanding this, India has a proven track record of functioning in a way that has enabled Indian troops to win the ‘hearts and minds’ of civil communities including, leaders of warring factions in some of the unprecedented and complex operational theatres. India’s peacebuilding experience in several UN peacekeeping operations in Africa is a case in point.

To most policy makers the UN peacekeeping operation in Somalia (1992 – 1994) was a debacle, however to India it was a grand success\textsuperscript{65}. The Indian brigade, as part of UNOSOM II, had a primary responsibility of providing humanitarian relief to people caught in the intense warring zones. It had operational responsibilities for one-third of Somalia, an area of 1 730 000 square kilometers, the largest ever controlled by any contingent\textsuperscript{66}. India’s entry in Somalia as part of UNOSOM II came at a time when internal fighting was at its peak. The impact of violent conflicts resulting in massacres, terror tactics such as rape, extortion and physical brutality have had a major psychological impact on local populations. The painful experience of being physically abused by male uniformed military rebels made uniformed military peacekeepers unpopular even though they are there to help. Research by Medica’s psychological-team indicated that raped women mostly feel uncomfortable and unable to have any sort of relationship with men\textsuperscript{67}. The research indicated that even women who had not suffered direct physical abuse from men tend to alienate themselves from the ‘masculine culture that seemed to be particularly implicated in the barbarism’\textsuperscript{68}. It was against the backdrop of a growing mistrust and psychological distress that the Indian contingent was required to carry out peacekeeping duties as part of the UNOSOM II.

The Indian contingent had a very different agenda in its area of responsibility, Baidoa. It focussed intensely on combining the often conflicting roles of coercive disarmament and humanitarian relief to the civilian population\textsuperscript{69}. This was undertaken by way of adopting a ‘soft’ people-centred approach with a view to addressing some of the subjective aspects of the conflict in Somalia. The main aim was to alter negative perceptions and create a favourable environment which would enable them to encourage cooperative behaviour among locals. These negative sentiments were tackled by fostering social contacts with the locals through cultural exchanges such as joint performance by a popular local singing group called Allardi and the Sappers band from India, rebuilding of mosques and
screening Indian movies in a ‘make-shift theatre’\textsuperscript{70}. These efforts helped the Indian military peacekeepers to interface with local populations and at the same time gradually transform their negative perceptions and relationships. The Indian contingent also established and administered an orphanage (named Bonkay Orphanage) to attend to the hundreds of orphans who were left homeless as a result of the civil war. A major hospital was also established to treat an average of 400 patients a day\textsuperscript{71}. With the participation of female medicos more Somali women were willing to come for treatment.

India’s success in Somalia can be measured qualitatively through the views expressed by various actors. The locals praised Indian troops for their remarkable role in converting a war-torn area into one of peace and hope, as follows: ‘we admire the Indians for their human touch. Prior to their arrival, we used to have constant clan fights. But they taught us how to love each other. Love and harmony will be in our mind to remember the Indians’\textsuperscript{72}. In Somalia Indian soldiers were even seen as family members. One village civilian elder in Baidoa claimed that ‘Indian soldiers are like my sons. They are free to live here’\textsuperscript{73}. The Indian contingent in Somalia was strongly perceived to be ‘understandable to the locals’\textsuperscript{74}. India’s role in the UN peace operation in Somalia gained the admiration of even General Farah Aideed, a leader of the opposing warring faction in the Somali civil conflict and branded by the West as the “enemy”, stated the following: ‘On behalf of the Somali National Alliance, the Somali people and on my own behalf, I would like to congratulate and praise the Indian troops for their good start in restoring peace’\textsuperscript{75}. India has also received praises from the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia, Mr James Victor Gbeho who commented on the ‘excellent performance and superb role played by the Indian contingent in the peacekeeping efforts of UNOSOM II’\textsuperscript{76}. In a letter to the Indian government, he praised the Indian force commander for his mature guidance and exemplary leadership\textsuperscript{77}.

India’s ‘soft’ military approach can also be seen in its experience in the UN peacekeeping operation in Rwanda, UNAMIR (1993 – 1994). At the time of its deployment, UNAMIR came under intense fire by the International community which strongly criticised the limitations of its rules of engagement that prevented UNAMIR from intervening during the Rwandan genocide\textsuperscript{78}. As part of UNAMIR, India’s role was to help secure the security of refugees. But the 100-days killing and massacre created a sense of fear among locals who were resisting to come in contact with anyone in the war zones\textsuperscript{79}. To be able to interface with local communities Indian peacekeepers engaged vigorously in a number of self-initiated community work such as building roads, digging tube wells for fresh water, building schools and establishing places of worship. These efforts, which made a difference to the presence of the Indian peacekeepers in the field, gained the admiration of the force commander of UN Peace operation in Rwanda, Canadian General Tousignant who expressed his appreciation of India’s role as follows: ‘You brought to UNAMIR, to the United Nations, to Rwanda a sense of pride… You came in and you demonstrated what it is to be a god soldier and you brought respectability to the mission. You brought also a sense of professionalism in everything that we have to do for the Rwandese … You are probably one of the best soldiers in the world at this time’\textsuperscript{80}.
The Civil war in Angola is recorded as the longest-running conflict in modern African history. Following the signing of the Lusaka peace accord, the UN launched UNAVEM III in 1995. As part of this peacekeeping force, the Indian Army was involved in a number of peacebuilding activities including, for the first time, the detection and removal of landmines. Indian peacekeepers aimed to deter the locals from engaging in further violent activities by providing opportunities for alternative lifestyles. The Indian contingent launched micro-credit programmes such as the establishment and running of a vocational training camp for Angolans. The training was provided by the Indian military and local men were trained in several skilled areas including carpentry. This, in some ways was expected to provide employment opportunities for local men who have been largely pre-occupied with fighting. In recognition of India’s reputation of being able to manage a strong presence in the field, the Security Advisor to the UN Secretary General noted the following during the deployment of peace forces to the UN operation in Angola: “I wish all six battalions in Angola could be from India.”

India’s peacebuilding experiences in Africa point to a number of observations. First, India’s peacebuilding style is largely targeted at the micro-level, but it is a level at which the building of ‘positive’ peace must occur. The Indian military claims that ‘popular support, building a framework of confidence, trust and cooperation, and patiently conducting negotiations are all activities foundational to the success of modern day UN peacekeeping operations.’ Second, the need to establish a strong presence in the field has been a priority of the Indian peacekeeping forces. In the words of an Indian military officer, ‘as peacekeepers our presence in the field must be perceived by the locals and civil communities in such a way that it restores faith and confidence in the operation.’ How parties and local populations perceive the presence of a peacekeeping force makes a huge difference for peacekeepers to be able to facilitate constructive and positive dialogue. Although the peacekeeper is an outsider, this peacekeeper will need to be seen to be having a genuine interest in ‘building’ sustainable peace for the community.

Third, India’s peacebuilding style is underpinned by a strong emphasis on establishing community relations developed through the employment of appropriate field strategies and tactics such as social and cultural activities, and the use of Civil Affairs (CA). The idea of the military being involved in civil affairs (CA) is not new – traditionally national militaries have been used for constructive purposes in ‘home front’ civil affairs. CA is about ‘winning the hearts and minds’ of the locals, and it is an important strategy for helping peacebuilding processes to be perceived as moving towards achieving ‘positive’ peace. CA provide peacekeepers with an opportunity to interface with local population, for the central objectives of military peacekeepers is not gaining immediate solutions to the pressing situations but first and foremost building trust that can be utilised over time. Further, CA can be used as a means to communicate the importance of peace to local populations. As representatives of the international community, UN peacekeepers are entrusted with the crucial and difficult task of ensuring that people understand the value of engaging in non-violence and divert their energies to building a peaceful society. Such values cannot be automatically transferred by simply engaging in civic interactions and expecting people to understand them. The strategy of CA therefore, encourages cooperation through the use of incentives.
Fourth, it is clear that the Indian military has shown significant level of flexibility in embracing civilian oriented activities – a major advantage in UN peacebuilding. Although military and civilian rule is traditionally separated in India, the Indian military has been playing a major role in the state-building activities of its own country\textsuperscript{88}. Whether this has had an impact in shaping the Indian military peacebuilding philosophy and outlook is unclear, but the military’s exposure to civilian-oriented activities has been a major advantage in building peace under the aegis of the UN in other parts of the world. Fifth, the Indian military has demonstrated an attitudinal reorientation in conducting modern day peacekeeping operations. The Indian military views force as not only a means, as opposed to an end, but also as a means with little use in peacekeeping operations. As one Indian military officer notes: ‘muscular might doesn’t have to be on the use of trigger alone’\textsuperscript{89}. Rather, peace and security in peacekeeping operations can also be achieved through mutual and cultural exchanges\textsuperscript{90}. The long-term goal of such exchanges is to develop trust that may help to create a positive environment which allows peacekeepers to carry out the broader peacebuilding tasks.

Being one of the traditional peacekeepers with vast field experiences, India is in an admirable position of taking a ‘lead’ in strategically maximising its field experiences to shape new thinking about peace operations\textsuperscript{91}. Such opportunities are in fact emerging as the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon appointed a retired Indian Army Lieutenant General to a high level panel, led by Jose Ramos-Horta who is a Nobel Peace Prize winner and former president of Timor-Leste, to undertake a comprehensive assessment of UN Peacekeeping operations including, the needs of future missions\textsuperscript{92}.

**Concluding Remarks**

Appropriate field strategies and tactics may help to create a sense of physical closeness between peacekeepers and local populations, but the affiliation itself depends greatly on how interactions take place at this level. A number of key variables may shape the nature of these interactions.

‘Contact’ Skills

Military peacekeepers must have appropriate contact skills to be able to interface effectively with local communities. It has been argued that ‘a weak peacekeeping force may resort to inappropriate violence, but strong forces with inappropriate [contact] skills may also be a problem’\textsuperscript{93}. Contact skills can take the form of verbal or non-verbal messages. In the process of human communication, one can generally make use of information from their senses through three preferences namely visual, sound and kinaesthetic (touch, taste, smell, feelings)\textsuperscript{94}. Hence, contacts with people can be established by verbal communication and non-verbal communication. Messages conveyed verbally are important in a negotiation process. Peacekeepers transmit their intentions verbally, which is a common communicative stimuli. This type of communication can be useful in enhancing inter-personal and social relations between the civil and military spheres. This is because it provides an opportunity for the peacekeeper to clearly state their aims and intentions, reinforced by
their roles in the theatre. Since language and thought are closely connected, it could in some ways help locals understand the purpose of the peacekeepers, who are there to build the peace. Contact skills are a necessity for carrying out all types of functions in a peacekeeping operation - even for carrying out patrolling functions to monitor and control space and movements of locals.

Non-verbal cues also give information about intentions and emotional responses. In other words, non-verbal communication is relational. They convey messages about thoughts, which are difficult to find expressions in verbal messages. In some cases non-verbal cues can have a greater impact because they convey messages easily, quickly and with increased comprehension. In cross-cultural contexts non-verbal cues can replace verbal messages through gestures and non-verbal expressions. They are dominant in the communication process and are part of the civil society at all times. The non-verbal communicative cues include greeting local population with a handshake which may make a difference in the relationship because it helps the receiver understand the feelings of the peacekeepers. Physical contacts cues are arguably an effective form of non-verbal communication because they are very revealing and hence increase comprehension. It is said that ‘touch is a bonding gesture’.

It is a form of ‘approach behaviour’ that reinforces the involvement of the peacekeepers in the affairs of the civil communities.

**Personal Attributes**

Second, the success of peacekeepers in establishing strong community relations and carrying out civil affairs depends on their ability to mix the acquired skills with a variety of personal attributes. Given that peacekeepers are deployed as third-party mediators they need to possess critical qualities to carry out that role effectively. Boulie suggests that successful mediators are empathetic, non-judgemental, patient, persuasive, optimistic, persistent, trustworthy, intelligent, creative, flexible and that they also have a good sense of humour and common sense. Empathy in mediation is important for building understanding between mediators and the parties, that is, ‘as an instrument, empathy is employed strategically by the negotiator for the better understanding of the wants and needs …. To uncover where there is room to manoeuvre, to help tailor arguments to change minds, and to enhance the ability to influence.

The importance of personal attributes for peacebuilding has been acknowledged in several works. Bowling and Hoffman identify several reasons why personal characteristics are so crucial in a conflict resolution process. First, personal attributes which are seen as “useful metaphors” can have a direct impact on the mediation process and the outcome of the mediations. For example, ‘the ability of the mediators to reach a genuine resolution is derived not so much from a particular set of words but instead an array of personal qualities’ that help to create a favourable environment for the process to take place. Second, ‘notwithstanding impartiality and neutrality, mediators are inevitably engaged in creating source of strength in subtly influencing the behaviour of the parties. Indeed, peacekeepers require some form of ‘personal power’ or ‘force of personality’, as opposed to asserting power over another to establish a strong presence (not physical but in terms of personal qualities) in the
mediation process. Hence, peacekeepers can no longer create a positive influence by merely displaying traditional military ‘machoness’ but must embrace a new personal outlook.

*Selecting the right ‘man’ for the job*

Another key variable is the selection of military personnel for peacebuilding operations. Identifying soldiers with the ability to demonstrate the required skills and the possession of personal attributes is crucial for participation in peacebuilding processes. Soldiers need to have the right sort of attitude which can be shaped by the factors that motivate them to participate in UN peace operations. In a study, three different categories of soldiers were identified: paleomodern, modern and postmodern. A paleomodern soldier has traditional motivations such as nationalistic feelings, and the aspirations to strengthen the integrity and image of his or her country at the global level. A modern soldier is one who has a utilitarian commitment to earn money and to gain an education. Finally, postmodern motivations are based on the desire for adventure and to gain some personal experience. A further survey of Italian peacekeepers in Somalia found that soldiers with paleomodern motivations comprised 33 per cent and those with post-modern motivations about 53 per cent. Hence, it was concluded that a new generation of post-moderns who are willing to participate in UN peace operations for personal adventure was emerging. However, the post-modern Italian soldiers who participated in the UN peace operation in Somalia appeared to have the most negative attitudes. In fact, Italian soldiers demonstrated a general lack of discipline and poorer personal conduct, and have been accused of torturing civilians and engaging in illegal activities such as black marketeering.

Although the UN has published an instruction manual entitled Guidelines for Troop-Contributors, there are no standard selection criteria for troop contributors to apply in selecting the right type of military personnel to UN peace missions. Troop contributing nations seldom take some of the basic criteria seriously. A study on the UN peace mission to Cambodia showed that some members of the UN civilian police ‘spoke neither of the two languages specified – English or French – still less Khemer, while other lacked the six years of community policing experience and driver’s license that the UN had stipulated as minimum requirements. Other contributing nations like Finland, Denmark and Norway have taken further steps from the basic criteria and have adopted a rigorous selection process for military peacekeepers. Finland has outlined some additional conditions that soldiers must meet to be considered for overseas deployment under the aegis of the UN. These criteria require that soldiers must be between 20 – 35 years of age; have received above average marks for the conscription service tests; have a good citizen reputation; be fit in terms of both physical and mental health; have proven language skills; and to have successfully completed pre-deployment training. Norway and Denmark have also moved away from their traditional recruitment process based on volunteers to establish a well-trained standby force.

As peacekeepers their most important work is among the people in local communities. Peacekeepers must know how to operate and what field strategies to be employed on the ground. While training plays a key role in bringing about a shift in the outlooks of peacekeepers, it must be designed in a way that enables peacekeepers to understand the importance of securing community...
partnership in the complex and ‘rough’ operational zones. However valuable it may be to focus on technical and traditional military issues, peacekeeper training that fails to touch on the ‘soft’ aspects of military science and cultivate a ‘soft’ warrior outlook could significantly undermine peacebuilding processes in UN peacekeeping operations.

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Notes

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