Mediation in Peacekeeping Missions

James A. Wall, Jr.  
University of Missouri-Columbia  
Middlebush – UMC  
Columbia, MO 65211-6100  
573-882-4561  
wallja@missouri.edu

Daniel Druckman  
Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution  
George Mason University  
Fairfax, VA 22030  
703-993-3655  
ddruckma@gmu.edu

Running Head: Peacekeeping Mediation

Key words: mediation, peacekeeping
Abstract

This study investigates mediation in peacekeeping missions and the role of three factors -- dispute severity, time pressure and the peacekeeper's rank -- in that process. An initial set of interviews indicated that peacekeepers mediate a wide range of both severe and non-severe disputes with a variety of techniques. A second round of interviews suggested which techniques were viable for the peacekeepers' utilization. Information from the interviews combined with propositions from image theory suggested a set of hypotheses concerning the effects of dispute severity, time pressure and peacekeeper's rank. An experimental test of these hypotheses revealed that dispute severity had a strong effect upon the peacekeeper's choice of techniques. Time pressure did not influence technique selection; nor did it interact with dispute severity. And rank had a moderate effect on technique choice. Following a reporting of these results, we discuss the value of using information from peacekeepers to develop and refine theories of mediation.
Mediation in Peacekeeping Missions

Post cold-war studies of peacekeeping have seen a shift in emphasis from a focus on the use of force to accomplish mission objectives to considerations of the use of conflict resolution approaches. (1) This shift is due, at least in part, to the prevalence of virulent internal conflict in most regions of the world. These conflicts have splintered nations, ravaged societal institutions and often extended across traditional national borders. In this context, peacekeepers are asked not only to reduce the violence and contain the conflict, but also to help in restoring or building political and economic institutions. Such peacebuilding functions pose new challenges for peacekeepers and for many non-governmental organizations. They are in closer contact with civilian populations and are, thus, more likely to be managing a variety of local, interpersonal and intergroup conflicts.

These developments add peacemaking and peacebuilding functions to the peacekeeper's repertoire. As a result, there is a need to incorporate a larger array of skills in training programs. This need was recognized early by Fetherston (1994) in her study of United Nations peacekeeping. It was recognized also in a U.S. National Research Council report on organizational performance (Druckman et al. 1997). Drawing from the literatures on third party-roles and interventions, these latter authors proposed frameworks for training and suggested approaches for acquiring and maintaining the contact skills (versus combat skills) needed to function effectively in the new roles. While recognizing the importance of these contact skills, few training programs designed in the mid to late 1990s for peacekeeping missions included them. (See Druckman et al. 1997, for an analysis of 79 programs world-wide.) Rather, most programs have emphasized training in combat skills. Although some progress has been made in re-orienting training programs for both military peacekeepers (Last 2000) and non-governmental peacebuilders (Aall 2000), we currently know
little about the extent to which contact skills are used on the ground in missions, why they are used, and with what impact. Further, we have not developed a theoretical approach that can inform trainers and mission planners about appropriate techniques for different kinds of conflict situations. An attempt is made in this article to begin to address some of these concerns.

In this study, we examine the use of mediation in peacekeeping. The study is implemented in a stage-like manner. We begin by addressing the practical questions of the extent to which peacekeepers mediate and the approaches used by them in these roles. By informing us about the prevalence of the activity, these peacekeeper interviews provide a basis for the next stages of the research. We then turn to theory development, considering the factors that influence the way mediation is practiced on the ground. Drawing on both the results of our preliminary interviews with U.S. and Canadian peacekeepers and on the relevant theory and research on mediation, we identify three variables hypothesized to influence choice of mediation technique. These factors -- severity of dispute, time pressure and peacekeeper's rank -- are hypothesized to influence the peacekeepers' choice of techniques. These hypotheses are subsequently evaluated by an experiment in which the first two factors are embedded in a conflict episode presented to officers and NCOs (non-commissioned officers).

By interweaving theories and data from interviews, we attempt to explain peacekeepers' behavior in their role as mediators. Sources for the theories and related research are provided in conjunction with the sequential development of hypotheses. This approach to theory construction is also a basis for further research, as discussed in a final section of the paper.

Stage 1: Preliminary Interviews

There is very little documentation of the day-to-day activities of peacekeepers. The only available evidence comes from a study by Last and Eyre (1995) of incidents involving Canadian peacekeepers in Bosnia and Croatia from November 1993 to April 1994. Fifty of the incidents
surveyed were relevant to the distinction between contact and combat activities. Contact activities were shown to be more prevalent with increasing rank. More of these activities were experienced by officers and fewer by enlisted soldiers and non-commissioned officers: Officers reported about twice as many contact activities in the Bosnian operation and about three times as many in the Croatian mission. The most frequent contact experiences reported were working with interpreters, negotiating with civilian police or belligerents, and interacting with local civilians. More than half the officers reported negotiating with civilian leaders of one or another faction; a much smaller percentage of the enlisted group reported having these experiences. Similarly about half of the officers reported having mediation experiences compared with only about 15% of the enlisted group.

These results provide evidence that peacekeepers engage in conflict resolution activities, and that the frequency of these experiences varies with rank. However, the study does not indicate specifically what kinds of techniques were used or how often any particular approach was chosen. For this reason, we began by conducting interviews aimed at eliciting information about the frequency and content of mediation activities as well as the types of conflicts in which the interventions occurred.

In the first stage, thirty-four soldiers (all males) who had engaged in peacekeeping operations were interviewed. Seven of these were U.S. civil affairs officers and NCOs (non-commissioned officers) who had recently returned from peacekeeping duty in Bosnia; twenty-seven were Canadian officers who had completed peacekeeping duties in Bosnia or other U.N. theaters. (2)

In each interview, we asked the peacekeeper if he could recall a dispute he mediated while on peacekeeping duty. Each could do so; therefore, we asked him to describe the dispute and to
list -- in order -- the steps he took in his mediation. The delineated disputes as well as the

When we closely examined the mediation techniques used by the peacekeepers (Table 1) we found they were quite similar to those used by mediators in community disputes (e.g., Kim et al. 1993; Wall and Callister 1999). Specifically, we found that the peacekeepers met separately with disputants, gathered information, stated one side's case to the other, made threats, and so on. In addition to these techniques, some were found to be unique or specialized to peacekeeping. Examples include setting up security for one's own forces, calling on higher authority (commanders) to report the dispute or to ask for directions from commanders, and monitoring the situation, that is, showing a presence and observing rather than taking action.

Insert Table 1 about here

Having found strong evidence that the peacekeepers in our sample do mediate -- all 34 of the interviewees could recall their personal mediation of a dispute -- and obtaining an overview of the techniques they used, we examined the types of disputes they had mediated. The listing in Table 2 indicates that the disputes covered a wide variety of issues and varied significantly in their severity. With regard to severity, some of the disputes -- such as electricity supplies, election processes, and political representations -- were relatively mild, while others -- such as fire fights, missing civilians and hostage taking -- were quite severe. For both types -- severe and not severe -- the peacekeepers found themselves as mediators.

Insert Table 2 about here
Peacekeeping Mediation

Having obtained evidence that peacekeepers mediate, identified their mediation techniques, and delineated the types of disputes in which mediation occurred, we began to develop a theory that could identify some factors that may influence the peacekeepers' choice of techniques.

In doing so, we drew insights principally from image theory. This is a decision-making framework which holds that decision makers use their store of knowledge, referred to as images, to sort among their potential actions (Beach 1997). In their selection, decision makers first compare these potential actions to their knowledge base and screen out actions that are incompatible with that base. Subsequently, the surviving actions are evaluated, according to certain criteria, and the choice of an appropriate action(s) is made. Applying this theory to the peacekeepers' selection of techniques, we concluded that peacekeepers, as other decision makers, use their store of knowledge (i.e., images) to screen out incompatible mediation techniques. From the surviving techniques, they subsequently choose which techniques will be used.

As can be noted in this concise overview of image theory, the selection process begins with a pre-choice screening of the techniques. Such a screening is consistent with a well-known model of mediation (Carnevale 1986) which indicates that mediators will decide which techniques are feasible and which are not. This strategic choice model then posits that the infeasible techniques are screened out (see also Carnevale and Pruitt, 1992). Given the importance of screening, it is worthwhile to examine the relevant factors within it.

Peacekeepers' Screening

According to image theory, the stores of knowledge or images which influence the screening are threefold (Beach 1997):

- value images: principles, values, morals and ethics
- trajectory images: the agenda of goals that are to be achieved
- strategic images: the means or plan for accomplishing the goals
Each of these images -- individually or in combination -- is used by peacekeepers to screen out incompatible mediation techniques. For example, if a peacekeeper's trajectory image or goal is to cool disputants' anger, he is apt to rule out joint meetings, exchanges of opinions and criticism. Once they have screened out the techniques that are incompatible with their images -- value, trajectory and strategic -- peacekeepers attempt to choose the best techniques from the survivors.

**Peacekeepers’ Choices**

According to image theory, decision makers/peacekeepers tend to choose techniques that are familiar. They also prefer clear techniques to ambiguous ones; simple approaches to complex ones; and economical options to costly ones. However, various factors can move them toward a preference for more demanding and costly approaches. One factor is task significance. If the task is not significant, in terms of the stakes for success, peacekeepers are apt to choose techniques -- individually and in groups -- that are familiar, clear, simple and economical. However, if the task is significant, in terms of the consequences for success, peacekeepers feel pressure to be correct rather than to take the easier, more economical path (McAllister, Mitchell and Beach 1979). As a consequence, they are more willing, than for an insignificant task, to choose techniques that are unfamiliar, ambiguous, complex and costly.

For similar reasons, other factors may lead them to prefer more complex techniques. Highly visible mediations whose outcome is not reversible increase the pressure for success, leading decision makers to choose more complex, less economical techniques (Christensen-Szalanski 1978; Waller and Mitchell 1984). These factors would seem to be present in many encounters experienced by peacekeepers, suggesting that they will often resort to the more complex approaches to mediation.

In contrast, there may be mitigating circumstances that pull peacekeepers in the opposite direction, toward simpler, clear, and economical approaches. One of these circumstances is time pressure. When peacekeepers face a deadline, they will probably prefer familiar, clear, simple and
Peacekeeping Mediation

This is due largely to the realization that they have little time to consider techniques that are unfamiliar, complex, and costly. This is similar to the effects on negotiation of time pressure. Numerous studies have shown that negotiators rush to sub-optimal (and often simpler) agreement when faced with a deadline. (See Druckman 1994, for a review of these studies.) Other mitigating circumstances include the peacekeeper's emotional state at the moment and his or her appraisal of the competence of the disputants to solve the conflict themselves. High frustration or anger and trust in the disputants would seem to lead peacekeepers to prefer the simpler techniques even when the task is significant.

As we compared this theory development with our interview data, it seemed evident that the peacekeepers' goals (trajectory images) and the means for accomplishing them (strategic images) would be influenced to a large extent by their orders. As is the case with any soldiers, peacekeepers must pursue the mission laid out by their commanders, and they must accomplish this mission according to dictated operating procedures. Given the importance of orders for setting the peacekeepers' trajectory and strategic images, it is likely that the orders serve to screen their choice of mediation techniques. Thus, it seemed prudent to investigate the orders given peacekeepers regarding their control of disputes.

Stage 2: Another Round of Interviews

To learn about the orders given to peacekeepers, we interviewed 16 U.S. Army captains and majors who had recently returned from missions in Bosnia and had commanded troops there. Four types of questions were asked: What were their responsibilities in Bosnia?, What kinds of disputes did they mediate?, What were the operating orders for U.S. troops serving in Bosnia?, and What was the logic for these orders? Interviewees were encouraged to elaborate on their responses to these questions. The average time for an interview was forty-five minutes. The interviewees' reports were quite consistent and can be summarized as follows. Peacekeepers in Bosnia operate
under roughly five general orders, the first three covering the goals and the last two, the strategies for achieving them.

1. Peacekeepers are to control violence and prevent injury to civilians. The logic here is that peacekeepers, as soldiers, are trained for this mission and can use the appropriate techniques -- even hard force -- to accomplish this goal.

2. They are to maintain their own security. While peacekeepers are to control violence and prevent harm to civilians in their theater, they are to minimize risks to their own troops.

3. They are to be -- and appear to be -- neutral in all dealings with civilians. Specifically they are not to use force against one side of a dispute or to reward civilians in any way, because such acts would be seen as biased by the other side.

4. Consistent with the above order, peacekeepers are under orders not to assist civilians personally with their disputes and are not to become involved in the disputes in any way. To do so risks the perception of being (or appearing to be) biased toward a side. Further, U.S. peacekeepers are not trained for this mission; other groups such as non-governmental organizations have been provided with this training and can be called upon when needed.

5. Likewise, peacekeepers are not to solve civilians' problems. They may facilitate civilian problem solving but they may not solve the problems themselves. For example, they may transport Serb and Croat mine removers to a field where mines are to be removed, but they may not do the job themselves. The logic supporting this order is that U.S. peacekeepers are not trained as problem solvers. More importantly, if peacekeepers were to solve civilian problems, the civilians would become overly reliant on the peacekeepers.
Peacekeepers' Screening

As we incorporated these orders into our theory building, it was necessary to modify the image theory descriptions. While image theory indicates that decision makers' images are used to screen options out of the feasible set, we found the peacekeepers' trajectory images (goals) and strategic images (means to the goals) not only screen techniques from the feasible set; they also prescribe that some techniques be included in the set. Specifically, the first order -- to control violence -- indicates that monitoring, force, threats, a call to relax, and quoting laws (e.g., the Dayton Accords) are to be included in the feasible set. And the second order -- to maintain security -- requires that "call higher" and "set security" techniques be in the set.

As for the techniques screened out of the peacekeepers' feasible set, those of stating one side's point of view to the other, calls to apologize, calls for empathy, having a drink with one side and praising one side to the other are proscribed by the third order, which instructs the peacekeeper to be and appear to be neutral. And, the fourth order -- no personal assistance -- eliminates the "peacekeeper assists" technique and prescribes the inclusion of the "third party assist" technique. The final order -- not to problem solve personally -- seems to eliminate the techniques of arguing for concessions, citing dependency, educate/advise, analyzing the disputants and the peacekeeper's provision of data.

In sum, the screening of the techniques by the operating orders leaves approximately 14 mediation techniques in the peacekeeper's available set; these are listed here and are bolded in Table 1.

- separate disputants
- meet separately
- meet together with disputants
- listen to a disputants' side
- gather information
- have third party assist
Factors in Peacekeepers' Choices

Having tentatively determined the feasible set of mediation techniques -- the “survivors" in image theory terms -- the subsequent question is: What factors determine the peacekeepers’ choice, or use of, particular techniques in this set? Recall we previously suggested that peacekeepers use simple and economical approaches unless various factors shift them toward more complex and costly options.

One such factor is the severity of the dispute which the peacekeepers must handle. Bercovitch and Jackson (2001) showed that the use of mediation techniques in general is related to conflict severity. Mediation was used in conflicts with more than 10,000 fatalities while negotiation (without mediation) was used in conflicts with fewer than 500 fatalities. Given these findings, it seems reasonable to expect that mediation techniques are more likely to be used in more severe conflicts. However, Bercovitch and Jackson coded only whether mediation or negotiation was used in each dispute in their data set. We go further in this study by unpacking mediation, that is, distinguishing among a variety of types of techniques that may be used by a third party. If the dispute is severe, peacekeepers are placed under pressure to be correct and thereby will use more complex and costly approaches. This being the case, we hypothesize that peacekeepers will use more mediation techniques (i.e., a more complex and costly approach) in the severe disputes than in non-severe ones (Hypothesis 1).
The next question is: Which particular techniques will peacekeepers use more frequently in severe as compared to non-severe disputes? Image theory suggests that the techniques chosen will be those in the peacekeepers' feasible set as listed above. Therefore, we hypothesize that peacekeepers, on average, will use more of these techniques in severe (compared to non-severe) disputes (Hypothesis 2). However, some modifications are suggested in the list of techniques likely to be used.

While image theory adequately posits the effect of dispute severity upon the aforementioned techniques, it requires some assistance for predicting an effect of severity on two techniques, “set security” and “monitor”. One useful source for insights comes from a body of work referred to as a control systems model (Lord and Hanges 1987). This is an equilibrium theory that posits a motive to reduce discrepancies between current and desired states. The basic model describes a cybernetic process, containing six steps in an adjustment toward an equilibrium state: (a) an individual, group, organization or other system has a standard or goal, (b) this standard is compared to a current state, (c) if a discrepancy is detected, (d) this then leads to attempts to reduce it (e.g., through the use of particular mediation techniques), (e) these techniques are used to bring the current state closer to the desired state or standard, and (f) the current state is compared again to the standard and the cycle is reinitiated.

When applied to mediation, this model suggests a high use of the “set security” technique in severe disputes. In using this technique, peacekeepers will compare their goal -- troop security -- to the current state, a risk to troops. This will lead to a discrepancy-reduction action of “setting security” which is intended to bring the current state in line with the goal/standard. Since no (or only a small) discrepancy is likely to be detected in the nonsevere dispute, the peacekeeper is less apt to set security. This reasoning leads to Hypothesis 3: Peacekeepers will more frequently use the “set security” techniques in severe (versus non-severe) disputes.
Peacekeeping Mediation

Turning to the “monitor” technique (that is, to observe the dispute rather to take action) we find that control theory also suggests an hypothesis. The reasoning is that in non-severe disputes, the peacekeeper will compare the current situation to his standard and find no discrepancy. Therefore, he will not take steps to correct a discrepancy; rather, he will monitor the dispute to see if a discrepancy arises in the future. By contrast, in a severe dispute he will take actions rather than maintain a monitoring regimen. Hypothesis 4, therefore, is: The “monitor” technique will be used more frequently in disputes that are not severe (versus severe).

Having hypothesized effects for severity of the dispute, we turn to a second factor noted in the interviews, time pressure on the peacekeeper. When there is no time pressure, the differences, just hypothesized, are expected to hold, namely peacekeepers are expected to be more assertive in the severe versus the non-severe disputes.

By contrast, whenever there is time pressure, the predicted differences decrease or do not occur. The logic here is that peacekeepers who manage severe disputes under a time-constraint may wish to use more techniques, but the time constraint limits their freedom to do so. This approach will not differ significantly from that used by the peacekeepers who manage non-severe disputes under time pressure. In this latter case, the number of techniques utilized will be low because the peacekeeper concludes the dispute does not deserve an extensive effort on his part. Thus, time pressure serves to mask the difference in approaches to mediation between severe and non-severe disputes. (3) This reasoning underpins Hypothesis 5: The effects for the severe (versus non-severe) disputes will be greater when there is no time pressure (versus when there is time pressure).

As we noted above, our interviews involved officers and enlisted soldiers (NCOs). This raised the question of whether or not there will be an effect due to rank. Results reported by Last and Eyre (1995) indicated that officers had more contact experience in general, and more
negotiation and mediation experience in particular, than enlisted soldiers. However, their data did not specify the kinds of mediation approaches used by the officers versus NCOs. When we considered possible differences between ranks, we concluded that officers and NCOs would have the same techniques in their feasible set, because they operate under the same orders. Any differences that occur in the use of these techniques would seem to be a function of role responsibilities. Some techniques are likely to be associated with command responsibilities of officers; others may reflect implementation responsibilities of enlisted soldiers, including NCOs. For example, the officers are more likely to request assistance from third parties, to encourage monitoring of the situation, and to advise on rules and laws. Enlisted soldiers may be more likely to set up security, and implement procedures such as gathering information, meeting together, and calling for the disputants to relax or take a break. The choice of these techniques would seem not to be influenced by either the severity of the dispute or time pressure. And both ranks could be expected to use more techniques in severe disputes under low time pressure.

This reasoning suggests a final hypothesis (Hypothesis 6): In the mediation of disputes, there will be differences in choice of technique due to rank.

Stage 3: Effects of Dispute Severity, Time Pressure, and Rank

In order to investigate peacekeeper mediation further and to test the effects of conflict severity, time constraints, and rank we interviewed a group of NCOs and officers from a U.S. Army brigade that had recently returned from peacekeeping duties in Bosnia.

Interviewees

The sample included all NCOs (n=58) and officers (n=21) who were currently stationed at the military bases where the interviews took place. A total of 79 interviews were conducted for this stage of the study. The NCOs were primarily E-5s through E-8s who had commanded 10-20 soldiers on peacekeeping patrols. The officers included the three battalion commanders (lieutenant
colonels) and other officers from the rank of first lieutenant to major. The average age of the respondents was 31; all were male with an average education of two years beyond high school. With regard to their peacekeeping duties, they averaged 7.5 months in Bosnia and led an average of 75 patrols. Most of the officers and NCOs reported having mediation experiences while on patrol, with an average of 3.1 mediations per peacekeeper.

**Design**

The study entailed a 2 x 2 x 2 factorial design with two levels of dispute severity (severe versus non-severe) two levels of time pressure (time pressure versus no time pressure) and rank (NCOs versus officers). The dependent variables were the number of the mediation techniques (Table 1) employed by the peacekeepers.

**Procedure**

In individual interviews, we asked each NCO and officer to describe his duties in Bosnia, to recall the number of patrols he had led while assigned to the peacekeeping mission, and the number of disputes he had mediated. Subsequently, each peacekeeper was asked to read a version of the following conflict episode.

During peacekeeping missions problems can occur, which are caused by differences of opinion or interests within your unit, between your unit and others, or between local parties. A situation, which you possibly experienced during your mission follows. Please, try to imagine yourself in this situation.

You are the commander of a unit and responsible to maintain order in a part of Bosnia-Herzegovina. On a patrol with 10 men you arrive in the village of Vajdevana in the mountains near Mostar. The inhabitants of this village are Muslims and Croats. You hear there is a problem. In Vajdevana there is a conflict over the use of water. The Muslims live mostly in the upper part of the village. The well is situated in this part. The water
supply of the whole village depends on this well. The Muslims are now building a water-
tube to their fields, without consulting the Croats which is against old agreements. A group
of Croats has gone to the construction site. Muslims and Croats are standing there now.

After he had read the case, each peacekeeper was asked to report -- in his own words -- the steps he
would take to handle the conflict. The steps mentioned by the peacekeeper were recorded in order
by the interviewer. Finally, the peacekeeper was asked to indicate the realism of the scenario by
selecting one of five categories: (a) Very realistic. I or my colleagues have seen this kind of
situation; (b) Realistic. I have not seen this myself but can imagine this happening; (c) I have no
idea; (d) Unrealistic. This is not likely to happen; and (e) Absurd. These things don't happen.

**Independent Variables: Dispute Severity, Time Pressure, and Rank**

To manipulate dispute severity in this case, one of the two following sentences was
included at the end. In the severe condition it read: "The situation is very severe. Both groups are
angry and are yelling at each other. Threats are being made and there seem to be some weapons in
both groups." In the non-severe condition, the sentence was: "The situation seems to be calm.
Both groups want their way but don't seem to be angry. People are talking within their groups but
are not yelling threats."

The last sentence in the case contained the time-pressure manipulation. For the time-
pressure condition the sentence read: "Time is getting short because it is getting dark. You realize
controlling the interaction between the two groups in the dark would be difficult." By contrast, in
the no time-pressure condition it was: "It's early in the day and you have plenty of time to deal
with the issue."

Turning to the rank of the peacekeepers, as noted previously, 58 soldiers were NCOs
(sergeants) and 21 were officers from the rank of first lieutenant to lieutenant colonel. The NCOs
were asked to relate what steps they would take in the case. Since the officers commanded NCOs
who were in charge of small units, they were asked to assume they were in radio contact with an NCO in their unit who reported the delineated dispute. Then they were asked to describe the directions they would give to this sergeant.

**Dependent Variable: Peacekeepers' Techniques**

The peacekeepers’ responses were recorded in writing by the interviewer. Subsequently, two raters read the reports of the steps taken by the soldiers to mediate the dispute. The raters independently scored all the mediation techniques using the categories outlined in Table 1.

The classification system was a modification of the one supplied by Pruitt and his colleagues (1989). It had been developed, refined, and implemented by his teams while studying U.S. community mediation. To their original techniques we added several new categories (e.g., call higher), based upon the information gathered in our first interviews. Across the interviews, the coders rated 595 techniques; they agreed on the category assignment for 567, an inter-rater reliability of 94%. In the few cases where differences occurred, the raters conferred in order to arrive at a mutually acceptable categorization.

**Results**

The scenario presented to the peacekeepers was judged by them to be quite realistic. Their average evaluation was 1.5 (between very realistic and realistic) on the five-step scale described above. Thus, the situation was viewed as being similar to those often encountered in the field by these peacekeepers. We turn now to the effects of the independent variables.

**Dispute severity**. With regard to severity, we found that peacekeepers used more techniques in the severe dispute condition (M = 9.3) than in the non-severe dispute condition (M = 3.2), $F(1,73) = 133.02, p < .001$. This difference supports Hypothesis 1.

Turning to the specific techniques used, recall it was predicted (Hypothesis 2) that peacekeepers in the severe dispute condition would rely more heavily on the techniques in the
feasible set (bolded techniques in Table 1) than would peacekeepers in the non-severe condition.

As indicated in Table 3, this hypothesis was supported for most of these techniques. Note first that the techniques were frequently used by the peacekeepers in the severe dispute condition; this usage indicates they were not screened out of their feasible set. Second, observe that peacekeepers used these techniques more frequently in the severe dispute condition. Specifically, peacekeepers asked to respond to the severe dispute (compared to those in the non-severe dispute condition) indicated they were more apt to separate the disputants, $F(1,73) = 20.40, p < .001$, to meet separately with them, $F(1,73) = 45.14, p < .001$, to meet together with them, $F(1,73) = 16.22 p < .001$, to gather information, $F(1,73) = 29.98, p < .001$, to urge the disputants to relax, $F(1,73) = 6.03, p < .02$, to call for third party assistance, $F(1,73) = 6.67, p < .01$, and to rely on force, $F(1,73) = 6.11, p < .02$. These results provide strong support for Hypothesis 2. However, although the means were in the expected direction for three other techniques, break-time, threaten, and listen to a disputant’s side, the differences between these means did not reach significance.

-------------------------------------

With regard to the use of the "set security" technique, it was used more heavily in the severe condition, $F(1,73) = 6.97, p < .01$. This finding supports Hypothesis 3. And, the monitoring technique was used more often in the non-severe dispute condition, $F(1,73) = 8.16, p < .01$. This supports Hypothesis 4.

**Time pressure.** No significant interaction effects were obtained for the time pressure manipulation. Thus, Hypothesis 5 is rejected in favor of the null hypothesis. Nor were any main effects obtained for this variable. The number of techniques chosen and the choice of particular techniques were not influenced by time pressure. At the conclusion of the interviews, we asked
peacekeepers who were in the time pressure condition if the approaching darkness was a
consideration in choosing mediation techniques. Some noted that it was. Others opined that their
troops were trained to operate effectively at night and had night-vision equipment; therefore, the
darkness was not a factor. Still others held that darkness favored dispute resolution. One soldier
put it most eloquently: “Snow, rain and darkness are a peacekeeper's best friend. When they come,
the disputants go home.” Thus, for a number of the peacekeepers darkness was not viewed as time
pressure. This is discussed further below.

Rank. With regard to rank, a number of main effects were obtained, which provided modest
support for Hypothesis 6. The officers called for more threats (M = .14 for officers versus M = .02
for NCOs; F(1,73) = 3.64, p < .05) and for more monitoring of the situation (M = .24 for officers
versus M = .16 for NCOs; F(1,73) = 9.84, p < .003). Another difference due to rank is that NCOs
indicated that they would set up security for their troops more often than did the officers (M = .47
for NCOs versus M = .14 for officers; F(1,73) = 5.76, p < .02). Additional clarification for this
finding came from post-interview discussions with some officers. Security is of paramount
importance to U.S. peacekeepers; therefore, NCOs are under strict standing orders to establish and
maintain security for their troops. This being the case, many officers probably assumed that the
NCO he was communicating with over the radio had established security prior to reporting the
dispute. This activity was seen by these officers as being part of the NCO’s job responsibilities.

Rank interacted with dispute severity for only one technique, meeting together with the
disputants, F(1,73) = 9.47, p < .003. Specifically, officers were more affected by the dispute
severity, more often calling for a meeting in the severe (M = 1.08) versus the nonsevere (M = .11)
condition. By contrast, the average number of meetings for the NCOs was about the same in the
severe (M = .60) and the non-severe (M = .46) conditions. Finally, rank did not interact with time
pressure to affect the choice of any mediation techniques.
Peacekeeping Mediation

Discussion

The findings obtained in this study indicate that many U.S. peacekeepers, both officers and NCOs, perform mediation functions while on duty. In our first round of interviews (stage 1), all 34 of the peacekeepers reported that they mediated disputes. In the second round (stage 2), 10 of the 16 peacekeepers mediated (63%); the average number of mediations per peacekeeper was 10.2. And, in the third-stage interviews, 43 of the 79 peacekeepers (55%) interviewed reported having had a mediation experience, with an average of 3.1 mediations across the sample. These results support the earlier findings for Canadian peacekeepers reported by Last and Eyre (1995). They found that about 50% of the officers and NCOs in their sample had mediation or conciliation experiences. (A larger percentage reported having negotiating experiences.) Thus, we can conclude that a relatively large number of peacekeepers mediate; the next question concerns how the mediations are implemented.

The interviews provided information about specific techniques used in the reported mediations. This information became a basis for the development of a theory of decision-making in mediation. Specifically, we wanted to know how the peacekeepers chose from among a wide variety of techniques or procedures in implementing the role as mediator. The strategic choice model developed by Carnevale (1986; also Carnevale and Pruitt 1992) was useful. That model posits that mediators develop procedural options, screen them for relevance to the situation, and then use the surviving techniques. However, the model does not identify the specific techniques likely to be chosen in particular mediation situations. Further delineation of the process of choosing techniques comes from other sources of theory.

One of these sources suggests that the screening process is influenced by three types of mediator images -- value, trajectory, and strategic (Beach 1997). In general, the screening process is biased in favor of techniques that are familiar, clear, simple, and economical. These preferences
change, however, under conditions that orient mediators toward being correct rather than economical. Significant tasks, visible mediations, and non-reversible outcomes are some of these conditions. But, when the context of peacekeeping is taken into account, it is necessary to modify the theory.

Unlike mediators in other domains, peacekeepers are constrained by orders. Our second-round interviews gave us a handle on the operating orders, including goals and strategies for accomplishing them, that guide their activities in the field. These orders led us to conclude that some techniques, suggested by image theory, would not be feasible. These considerations, then, resulted in a modified list of 14 techniques (or “survivors”) posited as being available to the peacekeepers in the role as mediator. The next question addressed by this study concerned the factors that might influence the mediator’s choice of particular techniques from this list.

The theory development to this point in the study identified a short list of available techniques. Additional information from the interviews combined with other theoretical ideas and findings from recent studies of mediation provided clues to some factors that may influence the choices. Three factors are severity of dispute, time pressure, and rank.

The importance of dispute severity as an influence on choosing to use mediation is evident from the findings reported by Bercovitch and Jackson (2001) as well as from our preliminary interviews. However, neither of these sources of information provides insight into the specific techniques used in more or less severe disputes. Image theory was shown to be more specific, leading to hypotheses about the number and types of techniques likely to be used. Further clarification for choice of techniques came from another body of work, referred to as control system models. Based on the idea of reducing discrepancies between a current state and a goal, this model suggests further hypotheses regarding the use of the techniques “set security” (used more often in
severe disputes) and “monitoring” (used more often in non-severe disputes). Each of these hypotheses was supported by the experimental findings obtained in the third stage of the study.

This study illustrates the value of using data in theory development and moving between inductive and deductive approaches to hypothesis formulation. Responses elicited from the preliminary interviews informed us about the peacekeeping context within which mediation occurred. In particular, we learned about how orders constrain peacekeepers’ behavior, leading to the development of a feasible set of techniques. The interviews also alerted us to the importance of dispute severity and time pressures as influences on choices. Although this information was necessary, it was not sufficient. Theoretical sources provided the basis for more specific hypotheses about relationships between the factors (as independent variables) and choices (as dependent variables). It is the combination of inducing factors from interviews and deducing the way they influence specific choices from theories that makes this study an important contribution to the literature on mediation and related third-party techniques. Continuing with this approach to theory development, we generated another hypothesis concerning the effects of time pressure on choice of techniques.

While dispute severity produced a strong effect, the hypothesized interaction between dispute severity and time pressure did not occur. Rather, the dispute-severity manipulation influenced the peacekeepers’ choices the same way in both the high and low time-pressure conditions. One explanation is that the manipulation did not work. As we noted above, many peacekeepers thought that impending darkness (used to define the high time pressure condition) would not create pressure for a quick resolution. These interviewees’ perceptions of time pressure did not correspond to the intended impact of the manipulation on perceptions. This check on the manipulation suggests that time pressure should be created in a different way. For example, instead
of impending darkness, peacekeepers may be informed of a change in orders directing them to quickly leave for another location or conflict.

Another explanation is that the theory is incorrect. High time pressure may enhance the effects of severe conflicts by making those conflicts seem even more severe. Thus, the difference between severe and non-severe disputes may be larger when time pressures are greater. Our hypothesis suggests that time pressure attenuates the effects of dispute severity; the alternative posits additive effects of the combination of severity and time pressure. These competing hypotheses remain to be explored with other manipulations of time pressure. (See also note 4 for more on this issue.)

As for the effect of rank, differences occurred between the officers and NCOs in our sample on four of the 14 techniques. The officers chose two techniques more often and one less often than the NCOs. And, they met together with disputants more often when the dispute was severe than when it was not severe.

An explanation for the differences is that they reflect role obligations. NCOs may request or wait for guidance from officers regarding the direction to take in the mediation; they are unlikely to issue threats or monitor the situation without guidance. On the other hand, there is no need to request or wait for orders that direct them to set security. NCOs may regard this activity as being part of their job, as noted in the informal discussions we had with several officers. This technique may be used routinely in severe disputes (see the results for the third hypothesis). Of interest is the question why there were no differences on some of the other techniques which may either be associated with roles (call higher) or reflect the distinction between active (force, separate disputants) and passive (listen, gather information) approaches. An answer awaits further research, a subject that we now turn to in concluding the article.
Peacekeeping Mediation

This is the first experimental investigation of mediation behavior in peacekeeping missions. The results suggest that this is likely to be a productive line of research. In addition to sampling peacekeepers in other types of missions and from other countries, exploring the effects of alternative ways of defining the variables would be interesting. As we noted above, a clearer distinction between high and low time pressure may produce the hypothesized interaction between time constraints and dispute severity. Further, comparison of alternative definitions of dispute severity, in terms of *stakes* for the disputants (importance of the conflict) versus *risks* to the disputants and peacekeepers (potential for fatalities or injuries), may reveal some differences in mediation approach. And, a definition of role in terms of *functions* rather than *position* may provide clarification for the differences in the extent to which some techniques are used.

Broadening the research further, we suggest exploring other kinds of conflict-management roles including those more related to situations where the peacekeeper becomes a party to the dispute and must negotiate in that role. On the dependent variable side, the techniques can be distinguished in terms of a focus on the distributive or integrative aspects of the issues (see Diehl et al. 1998). The goal images of peacekeepers may lead them to prefer strategies that move the conflict toward either settlement (compromise) or resolution (integrative solutions). These images may well be influenced by the independent variables manipulated in this study.

More generally, this study is an example of how theory can be developed and evaluated in the context of practice. The practice served to inform the theories by taking into account the constraints imposed on peacekeepers. The hierarchic organizational setting in which they operate makes them respond to orders that influence the choice of some techniques. The interviews enabled us to define a feasible set from which choices were made. These choices were influenced both by variables suggested by general theory (dispute severity) and by context (rank). These findings contribute to further development of the theory of mediation. They also contribute to its practice.
Mediation is part of the conflict-management functions performed by many peacekeepers. This realization reinforces the call for training in contact skills for officers and NCOs (Druckman et al., 1997). Although improved mediation may not lead directly to conflict resolution or transformation, as Fetherston (2000) argues, it can reduce casualties by preventing an escalation of disputes and set the stage for interventions aimed at improving relationships between the disputing parties by reducing tensions.
References


Table 1

Peacekeepers' Mediation Techniques

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technique</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Meet separately</strong></td>
<td>Peacekeeper meets with disputant separately</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Listen to disputant's side</strong></td>
<td>Peacekeeper has disputants state their points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argue for concessions</td>
<td>Peacekeeper argues for or proposes a specific concession or agreement point or negotiates a compromise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gather information</strong></td>
<td>Peacekeeper collects or asks for information from the disputants or others and does research to obtain information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educate/Advise</td>
<td>Peacekeeper educates, persuades, or advises on disputant as to how he or she should think or act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Have third party assist</strong></td>
<td>Peacekeeper offers or gets third party's assistance for the disputants or the peacekeeper. Also gathers information or advice from third party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State other's point of view</td>
<td>Peacekeeper presents or argues other disputant's point of view and asks a disputant to see the other disputant's point of view</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Meet together with disputants</strong></td>
<td>Peacekeeper meets together with disputants or puts them together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apologize</td>
<td>Peacekeeper has one disputant apologize or acknowledge his or her faults</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peacekeeper assists</td>
<td>Peacekeeper personally offers or gives assistance and takes a specific action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relax</strong></td>
<td>Peacekeeper makes specific statements to calm the disputants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Breaktime</strong></td>
<td>Peacekeeper stops the quarreling and has disputant rest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peacekeeper's data</td>
<td>Peacekeeper provides objective data about the dispute or the environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Threaten</strong></td>
<td>Any threat from the peacekeeper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criticize</td>
<td>Peacekeeper criticizes a disputant's person, attitude, and behavior or uses a specific label (e.g., “you are rude”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call for empathy</td>
<td>Peacekeeper enhances the other disputant or calls for respect of the other; peacekeeper puts a positive face on the other disputant, noting he or she is a good person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cite dependency</td>
<td>Peacekeeper expresses similarities or interdependence in disputants’ goals, fates, and needs (includes mentioning personal costs of disagreement and benefits of agreement)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have drink with disputants</td>
<td>Peacekeeper has a drink with the disputants prior to agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyze the disputants</td>
<td>Peacekeeper analyzes disputants and grasps each disputant’s characteristics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example</td>
<td>Peacekeeper cites example or similar case</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Praise disputants</td>
<td>Peacekeeper praises (“strokes”) the disputant who is being addressed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quote law or rule</strong></td>
<td>Peacekeeper quotes a specific law or rule that is relevant to the dispute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written agreement</td>
<td>Peacekeeper has disputants sign a quasi-legal written agreement governing their future behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separate disputants</td>
<td>Peacekeeper separates the disputants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Call higher authority</strong></td>
<td>Peacekeeper communicates with his headquarters to report information or as for advice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set Security</td>
<td>The peacekeeper takes steps to establish security for himself or his troops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Force</td>
<td>The peacekeeper uses coercive force in some manner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitor</td>
<td>Peacekeeper observes the disputants, their interaction or factors in the environment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2

Disputes Mediated by Peacekeepers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dispute Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If civilians can cross through a checkpoint</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harboring a war criminal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disruption of water supply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One sect wants to enter another's area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resettlement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School construction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Troop movements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civilian movements on one-way road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firefights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Election processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position of observation posts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hostages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cease-fire violations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illegal search and seizure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supply/interruption of electricity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing civilians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political representation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 3

Use of Techniques in Severe versus Non-severe Disputes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technique</th>
<th>Average Use(^a) in Severe Condition</th>
<th>Average Use in Non-severe Condition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gather information</td>
<td>1.71</td>
<td>.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meet separately</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have third party assist</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td>.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meet together</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td>.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call higher</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set security</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separate</td>
<td>.48</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Force</td>
<td>.33</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitor</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relax</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educate/Advise</td>
<td>.26</td>
<td>.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breaktime</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threat</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argue for concessions</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listen to other disputant's side</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\) Average use per dispute = number of times a technique was used, divided by the number of disputes.
Endnotes

1. Until recently, peacekeeping has been regarded as an approach to conflict management, conflict containment, or conflict suppression with little concern for the issues that gave rise to the dispute (Fetherson 2000; Ramsbotham and Woodhouse 2000).

2. These skills include understanding the difference between the roles of primary and third party and between the approaches of distributive and integrative bargaining, analyzing the situation (including the role of culture), developing a strategy and implementing specific tactics or maneuvers, and knowing when to exit.

3. The authors wish to express their appreciation to David Last for conducting interviews with the Canadian officers. Thanks also to all the interviewed officers and NCOs who gave generously of their time and experience.

4. A different hypothesis is suggested by the results of bargaining experiments. These studies suggest an interaction between time pressure and severity of dispute. The strongest effects for time pressure were found in studies where time was relatively short and payoffs for reaching agreements were high (e.g., Smith et al., 1982). Weaker effects were obtained in studies where time was longer (in both high and low time pressure conditions) and where subjects were not competing directly against their opponents for payoffs (e.g., Yukl et al., 1976). An implication of this difference is that time pressure has a stronger effect on negotiating behavior in more severe (more competitive, higher payoffs) disputes. The difference between high and low time pressure may be accentuated in severe conflicts and attenuated in non-severe conflicts. This hypothesis remains to be explored in the context of mediation as well as mediation in peacekeeping missions.