



Transactions and Interactions: Everyday Life in the Peacekeeping Economy

Kathleen M. Jennings & Morten Bøås

To cite this article: Kathleen M. Jennings & Morten Bøås (2015) Transactions and Interactions: Everyday Life in the Peacekeeping Economy, *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, 9:3, 281-295, DOI: [10.1080/17502977.2015.1070022](https://doi.org/10.1080/17502977.2015.1070022)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/17502977.2015.1070022>



Published online: 14 Aug 2015.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 3716



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)



Citing articles: 29 View citing articles [↗](#)

SERVICE, SEX, AND SECURITY: EVERYDAY LIFE IN THE PEACEKEEPING ECONOMY

Transactions and Interactions: Everyday Life in the Peacekeeping Economy

Kathleen M. Jennings and Morten Bøås

This article introduces and justifies the concept of the peacekeeping economy. The peacekeeping economy refers to economic activity that either would not occur, or would occur at a much lower scale and pay-rate, without the international presence. In particular, the concern is with the formal and informal economic activity that directly links the international presence with the local individual. The approach thus foregrounds empirical research that relies on sources missing from most work on peacekeeping and peacebuilding, such as sex workers; domestic workers; security guards; drivers; service workers; others in the informal sector; subcontracted workers; and UN national staff—in addition to international personnel and local elites. The article argues that this approach allows certain aspects of peacekeeping missions to be observed that would not otherwise be seen: the practice and politics of the ‘everyday life’ of those involved in a peacekeeping mission, and those living with and alongside these missions. The article also introduces the various contributions to this special issue in light of some of the most pertinent themes and issues raised by the peacekeeping economy approach.

Keywords peacekeeping economy; peacekeeping; political economy; Africa; gender

Defining the Peacekeeping Economy Approach: Advantages and Limitations

Peacekeeping is difficult, and being a peacekeeper is not easy either. The romantic notion of grateful locals welcoming the white-helmeted (but really blue-bereted) peacekeepers has long since worn thin. Instead, the daily life of most peacekeepers consists of long working hours, routine tasks, stifling bureaucracy, loneliness and homesickness, and the relative isolation of the bunkered compound. Increasingly, the local environment is seen as too dangerous to freely move about in (Jennings 2014; Duffield 2010; Autesserre 2014a), while the local people that peacekeepers have supposedly come to serve are kept at arm's

length, separated from peacekeepers by such means as walls and fortifications, private security guards, and high prices at exclusive venues. For peacekeepers, the result is often boredom and cabin fever—for many, only relieved by (over) indulgence at the bars, clubs, beach resorts, and restaurants that cater to peacekeepers, other international personnel, and local elites.

As difficult and challenging as the life of a peacekeeper may be, however, the life of most locals living in the midst of a large-scale peacekeeping mission is even more precarious. Not only must they live with the consequences of the conflict that brought the peacekeeping operation to their door in the first place, they also need to figure out what the mission, and resultant peacekeeping and peacebuilding activities, means to and for them. The restoration of security is, of course, crucially important to local residents. However, it is misguided to expect local responses to missions to be uniformly positive or unambiguous, especially considering that ‘everyday’ (criminal, domestic, and sexual) violence may actually increase in the aftermath of armed conflict, notwithstanding the presence of a peacekeeping mission.¹ Instead, for many there is confusion and frustration that can lead to outbursts of anger, as when people feel that the peacekeeping mission is not having the desired effect on their lives and prospects. There is also outright amusement, as the locals observe what, to them, seem like strange foreigners trying to navigate a new environment.

There are many ways to conceptualize this encounter between the international and the local, the peacekeepers and the ‘peace-kept’. One potentially fruitful path of enquiry is to look at these meetings and encounters through the lenses of what we refer to as the ‘peacekeeping economy’.² In this introduction to this special issue on peacekeeping economies, we will define what we mean by the peacekeeping economy, discuss the concept’s analytical advantages and limitations, and sketch some of the issues, themes and questions raised by the concept and addressed in the contributions.

The peacekeeping economy starts from the observation that peacekeepers (and international peacebuilding personnel writ large) live in the same place as local residents, but do not live in the same world. The peacekeeping world is air-conditioned, clean, and well-guarded; it consists of decent housing, generous pay, access to vehicles, domestic help, and, usually, a robust (if limited) social life that revolves around patronizing expensive restaurants, hotels, bars, and clubs. These establishments and activities—that which is needed to allow peacekeeping and peacekeepers to function—comprise the peacekeeping economy. Specifically, the concept refers to economic activity that either would not occur, or would occur at a much lower scale and pay-rate, without the international presence. It includes jobs available to local staff in United Nations offices or the nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) that accompany the UN presence (occasionally professional but usually administrative, manual, or unskilled, as well as subcontracted work such as maintenance and security); unskilled and mainly informal work that locals do for individual internationals (such as cleaning, cooking, and guarding); jobs in establishments and businesses that cater primarily to internationals; and participation in the sex industry. Within the local landscape,

therefore, the peacekeeping economy encompasses everyone from the white-collar professional to those engaged in the informal, and occasionally illicit, work of providing service, sex, and security to international personnel. This working definition thus includes those whose livelihoods depend on the presence of a large cadre of international personnel, but are not directly employed or sub-contracted by any organization.

The peacekeeping economy approach foregrounds empirical research that relies on sources missing from most work on peacekeeping and peacebuilding, such as sex workers; domestic workers; security guards; drivers; service workers; others in the informal sector; subcontracted workers; and UN national staff—in addition to international personnel and local elites (Jennings 2013, 2014). It is primarily about people: a human-focused approach to political economy that, while retaining a concern for the activities and impact of international structures and organizations, centres on individuals and the relationships between them (see also Bøås 2015). International participants in the peacekeeping economy also include peacebuilders and other foreign development or diplomatic personnel; despite its name, the peacekeeping economy is not enjoyed by peacekeepers alone. What the concept is *not* intended to capture is the macro-economic effects of peacebuilding activities, such as direct budget support to host governments or bilateral or multi-donor trust fund aid flows. Our concern is the formal and informal economic activity that directly links the international presence with the local individual.

The peacekeeping economy approach does not purport to explain everything about peacekeeping and its success or failure. However, we argue, and the articles in this special issue will show, that this approach allows us to observe certain aspects of peacekeeping missions that we otherwise would not see: the practice and politics of ‘everyday life’ of those involved in a peacekeeping mission, and those living with and alongside these missions (see also de Certeau 1984). We argue that this kind of observation of the everyday is important for two reasons. First, these encounters—which, in keeping with the transient, transactional environment that characterizes peacekeeping missions, basically constitute an ongoing series of microeconomic arrangements—are generally the only real contact that most peacekeepers have with ‘the locals’, and vice versa (see also Veit and Schlichte 2012). Secondly, and following logically from the first point, the fact that other kinds of connections and encounters between internationals and locals are so sparse implies that these microeconomic arrangements will also, to a large extent, influence how peacekeepers and locals think about each other. This is likely to have some consequences concerning how the mission works (or does not work) with local counterparts and stakeholders, broadly defined, in its normal operations, as well as how the mission is perceived by those counterparts and stakeholders (see for example Jennings 2015). In short, using the peacekeeping economy approach to identify and examine certain everyday practices of the mission and its peacekeepers helps to illuminate the way that peacekeeping is currently done, and some of the ramifications that this has for peacekeepers and locals alike.

The cases investigated in the contributions to this issue are all from Africa: Liberia, Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau,³ the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and South Sudan. This case selection should not be taken to imply that the peacekeeping economy is only an African phenomenon, even if peacekeeping itself is more prevalent in Africa than elsewhere: nine of the 16 current UN-led peacekeeping missions are on the African continent. We do not claim that the peacekeeping economy is universal in its form and specifics; there are bound to be differences between missions and mission areas. However, we contend that important similarities can be identified with other missions in and outside Africa.

These similarities relate in particular to the way that internationals' 'everyday' is regulated and transacted in and through peacekeeping missions and economies, which manifests most obviously in the insular environment in which peacekeepers and other international personnel live, and the limited nature of most peacekeeper interaction with locals.⁴ This aspect of the peacekeeping economy is, in fact, evident in other contexts, including non-peacekeeping conflict environments such as Iraq (Chandrasekaran 2006) and Afghanistan⁵ (Ferris-Rotman 2014), and non-peacekeeping development environments (see for example Mosse 2011; Fechter and Hindman 2011). Similarly, various types of service and security provision that involve engagement with locals and the local economy are present also in peacekeeping missions outside of Africa, and in non-peacekeeping missions such as those mentioned above. Obviously, there are differences between, for example, Kabul in Afghanistan and Monrovia (Liberia), Kinshasa and Goma (DR Congo), Bissau (Guinea-Bissau) and Juba (South Sudan)—including cultural frames and norms that affect how the peacekeeping economy evolves and functions, and varying levels of security and restrictions on freedom of movement for internationals (especially at night-time). These have particular effects on the entertainment infrastructure targeting peacekeepers and related staff: thus, open consumption of alcohol and a highly visible sex trade is not tolerated in Kabul, as they are (if grudgingly) in the African cities discussed in this issue, and movement is more restricted, leading to different patterns of social life for internationals and wealthy locals. But this does not mean that an economy similar to our peacekeeping economy is not present in Afghanistan (or other non-peacekeeping missions), only that its form and evident contours are different.

However, while it makes little sense to distinguish between peacekeepers and peacebuilders as individual users or beneficiaries of peacekeeping economies—in other words, in terms of everyday microeconomic transactions—there can be a significant difference between peacekeeping missions and peacebuilding in terms of macroeconomic impact in host communities. This is because of certain systemic features of peacekeeping that, while not exercising direct control over the peacekeeping economy, strongly shape its form and disposition, and thus differentiate it from peacebuilding or non-peacekeeping conflict or development environments. These systemic features include: missions' centralized procurement procedures and lack of programmatic funding, which mean that most peacekeeping expenditures happen outside of mission areas, in turn making peacekeepers' individual

spending and modes of consumption even more important to the host community's economy; restrictive security regulations such as the security perimeter zone, that shape the geography of the peace-kept city; the fact that most peacekeeping missions are non-family-accompanied, which affects the sex and age distribution of civilian peacekeepers and influences the entertainment infrastructure that develops in these environments; and other UN rules delimiting permissible social contact between peacekeepers and locals—including a regulation that problematizes even non-transactional, consensual sexual relationships between peacekeepers and locals, and various restrictions on peacekeeper movement—that cumulatively create strong professional incentives for peacekeepers to limit their off-duty interactions with locals. Significantly, these systemic aspects do not just distinguish peacekeeping economies from similar phenomena in other, non-peacekeeping, environments. They also enable a fundamental assertion to be made about the existence of peacekeeping economies as adjuncts to peacekeeping missions, across mission lines, and about the central characteristics of these peacekeeping economies.

There are no arguments without critiques; and indeed, Rolandsen's contribution argues that South Sudan is a case where any economic impact of the peacekeeping mission is dwarfed by the oil economy and petrodollars (Rolandsen 2015), thus diminishing both the economic and social significance of a South Sudanese peacekeeping economy. In addition to the dominance of the oil economy, he points to the bunker mentality of peacekeepers in South Sudan—which is taken to unusual lengths (and even more so after the outbreak of the most recent conflict)—to help explain why the mission has had little impact on Juba and other cities, and concludes that '[t]his economic and mission self-sufficiency makes sense from a narrow perspective of security and efficiency ... [but] a consequence of peacekeepers staying aloof and disengaged is their irrelevance and alienation'. Rolandsen thus makes a connection between mission effectiveness and everyday interaction (or lack thereof) between peacekeepers and locals: the fact that opportunities for everyday transactions or relations between peacekeepers and locals are even more constrained than elsewhere helps account not just for the meagre reach of the peacekeeping economy, but also for the broader disengagement of UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). Finally, while Rolandsen's article adds a different economic context to the discussion of the peacekeeping economy, it also discloses the value of focusing on the everyday: it is important not because of the scale of the activity, but because of its mundane regularity, and the routines and relationships it contains.

The Peacekeeping Economy, 'Local Ownership' and the 'Everyday Turn' in Critical Studies

Since the late 1990s, considerable attention has been given to the issue of how peacekeeping missions relate, or should relate, to local populations and local contexts.⁶ The idea of 'local ownership' of peacekeeping and peacebuilding activities

initially started out as an attempt to improve the efficiency and output of missions.⁷ However, the emphasis on the local has evolved from being primarily practical, instrumental, and results-oriented—the local as just another tool in international actors’ ‘toolkit’—to becoming the catalyst and locus of wide-ranging critiques of peacekeeping and peacebuilding, focusing on local agency, resistance, subversion, and co-optation. Our approach to the peacekeeping economy rests within this critique. Our goal, however, is not to use ‘the local’ as a means to analytically reorient or deconstruct the liberal peace (see e.g. Richmond 2011), but is rather more modest. Instead, we argue the case for a middle-range approach to empirical inquiry and theory-building, which foregrounds the nexus between the local and the international in the everyday.

In *Peaceland*, Séverine Autesserre (2014a) analyses international interveners’ everyday lives and work in order to construct an argument about why international peacebuilding efforts rarely achieve what they set out to. She examines peacebuilders’ standard practices, shared personal and social habits, and dominant narratives in order to explain the existence and persistence of ‘strong boundaries’ between interveners and the host population (Autesserre 2014a, 6). The segregated, closed world of the interveners is the eponymous Peaceland; and while the modes of operation, habits, and narratives that demarcate and characterize Peaceland enable interveners to function in these difficult environments, they also, Autesserre argues, ‘generate unintended results that decrease the effectiveness of international peace efforts’ (2014a, 249). In particular, ‘the interveners’ lack of local embeddedness’ and ‘dearth of local knowledge’ (2014a, 250), combined with the lack of local ownership caused by interveners’ dominant modes of operation, prevent the creation and implementation of context-specific, locally supported or initiated peacebuilding interventions. Instead, interveners base programming and decision making on ‘dominant narratives ... [that] routinely paint oversimplified and, at times, biased pictures of local conditions. They also shape responses that are often ineffective and may potentially aggravate the very problems that interveners are trying to solve’ (2014a, 250). The Peaceland that Autesserre describes overlaps in important ways with the peacekeeping economy (see also Jennings, 2014, 2015); the habits, narratives, and practices that she scrutinizes among internationals are familiar and recur in many forms throughout the contributions to this issue. As such, the contributions here can be read parallel to Autesserre’s analysis, particularly Henry and Kohl’s articles (Henry 2015 and Kohl 2015), which focus primarily on the experiences of international peacekeepers and peacebuilders.

However, some of the contributions also diverge from Autesserre’s and others’ work by foregrounding the voices, experiences, and perspectives of locals enmeshed in peacekeeping economies, rather than (as is typical) focusing solely on internationals (see on internationals, Fechter and Hindman 2011; Mosse 2011; Duffield 2010; Smirl 2008; Sending 2010; Higate and Henry 2009; Mac Ginty 2013; Autesserre 2014b; Veit and Schlichte 2012; Goetze and Bliesemann de Guevara 2012, 2014). For example, Oldenburg uses the novel analytical lens of love and intimacy to examine how young men and women in Goma navigate

the peacekeeping economy—which she conceptualizes as a ‘market of intervention’—and to what effect (Oldenburg 2015). She argues that ‘the presence and long-term intervention of peacekeeping and other international actors entails that ideas and perceptions on gender relationships are not only (asymmetrically) exchanged, but integrally entangled’. Jennings, meanwhile, focuses on a select group of local and expatriate actors Jennings (2015)—national hires, expatriate businesspeople, fixers, and service workers—in order to make visible an array of connections, activities, motivations, and understandings that cumulatively help explain some of the reactions that peacekeeping provokes locally, and to construct an argument about ‘peacekeeping-as-enterprise’; while Edu-Afful and Aning examine the hierarchies of inclusion and exclusion that peacekeeping economies help generate and reinforce in local communities (Edu-Afful and Aning 2015). These contributions thereby attempt to ‘localize’ the notion of the everyday in peacekeeping and peacebuilding, which has heretofore primarily produced insights relating to the experiences of international personnel. Thus, a key difference between the analytical perspective used in this special issue, compared to Autesserre’s *Peaceland* project and related inquiries, is a dedication to an analytical lens that foregrounds the interaction effects between locals and peacekeepers, and draws on non-traditional or under-examined local sources.

The Geography of the Peacekeeping Economy

Walking in the ‘peace-kept’ city, two things quickly become obvious. The first is that most internationals do not walk, preferring—indeed, for security reasons, often forced into—the comfort and isolation of their branded sports utility vehicles. The second discovery is that the peacekeeping mission has produced an infrastructure to which both internationals and locals must relate. Parts of the city are essentially a world apart, transformed by means of road blocks, security walls, barbed wire, bollards, and gates, bunkered and segregated from the bustle around them. One obvious point of reference is UN Drive in Monrovia, and the adjunct Mamba Point area. Here the streets are cleaner than elsewhere in Monrovia, tourist knick-knacks are for sale in overpriced sidewalk kiosks, and there are fewer locals than normal walking and driving in the streets. Walking from busy Broad Street to UN Drive takes less than ten minutes, but it almost feels like traversing to another country—a sanitized version of Monrovia and Liberia. This main peacekeeping hub of the city is a universe of its own, but it is also connected through certain roads and passages to smaller ‘island universes’ elsewhere in the city, in the form of select bars, restaurants, hotels, and beaches (see also Duffield 2010; Smirl 2015).

Peacekeepers live, work, and socialize in a fairly contained radius, and it is in this area that the peacekeeping economy is mostly found. The geography of the peacekeeping economy is thus a limited one, in which the main hub is connected through designated safe passages to smaller hubs in carefully vetted areas of the town. In Monrovia, this is the architecture of UN Drive and Mamba Point as the

main hub, connecting through certain routes to smaller recreational and residential hubs such as Congo Point, Golden Beach, and the Angler, and extending to Tinkers Beach on the airport road. More adventurous peacekeepers might dare to visit Tides in Hansen, close to Waterside Market. The geography of the peacekeeping economy is determined in part by the preferences of peacekeepers themselves. But at a more fundamental level, it is set by the mission's internal security service, which demarcates the area of Monrovia (known as the security perimeter zone) in which peacekeepers are allowed to live and move; and by local and expatriate entrepreneurs and investors, who buy or lease valuable city-centre real estate that they then transform into the upmarket apartments, compounds, office suites, and entertainment venues desired by international clientele.

Yet the geography of the peacekeeping economy is not just about physical infrastructure and architecture; it is also mapped onto private lives and intimate spaces. For example, Kohl develops the notion of 'uncommitted spaces' in the peacebuilding economy of Guinea-Bissau (Kohl 2015), showing how these facilitate 'the offstage meeting of internationals on an equal basis, but hardly provides a similar forum for locals to meet and discuss issues with internationals'. These uncommitted spaces do not 'belong' to any one organization or network, but that does not mean that they are inclusive. To the contrary, they are frequented mainly by specific groups of internationals—African peacebuilders are seldom visitors, and women are hugely outnumbered—and primarily expedite the exchange of already-agreed norms, discourses, and patterns of explanation: what Kohl terms 'peacebuilding mindsets'. The customer base and disposition of these 'uncommitted spaces' is evident in the name the locals use for them: *branco*, meaning 'white'. Using the concepts of uncommitted spaces and peacebuilding mindsets, Kohl argues that the peacebuilding economy 'does not exist in a vacuum, but rather exercises influence over how a given country and its inhabitants are (pre-)conceived, and how peacebuilding projects are framed and implemented'. In other words, who the peacekeeper/builder becomes is significantly mediated by who they talk to, socialize with, and learn from; and if the reference group is exclusive and possessed of similar views and interests, then the international's views about the people s/he is supposed to assist becomes closed and circular—what goes around, comes around.

Meanwhile, Henry's article dissects how 'peacekeepers talk about peacekeeping experiences as forms of labouring' in which 'they strive to accumulate and deploy forms of martial or military capital through everyday practices' (Henry 2015). Following peacekeepers into their homes, offices, and ceremonies, she focuses on the paradoxes that peacekeepers experience, and how 'the contradictory experiences of professionalism and patriotism, endurance and enjoyment, and the feminine and masculine proliferate in their everyday labouring practices, and provide the rationale for the continued investment in martiality as a resource'. Interestingly, her examination of peacekeepers' everyday lives, concerns and motivations reveals that the peacekeeping economy is not so dichotomous as it might seem, with the international consumer being catered to by the local labourer or service provider. Instead, peacekeepers'

frequently expressed worries over their personal economy, and aspirations to secure a better life for themselves and their families through their participation in peacekeeping, actually work to dissolve some of the differences between the peacekeepers and the peace-kept in the peacekeeping economy.

Mobility and Agency in the Gendered Peacekeeping Economy

Locals and peacekeepers alike benefit from the peacekeeping economy. On the local level, the distribution of peacekeeping economy beneficiaries resembles a pyramid, with the elites, middle class (including UN national hires, consultants, and other professionals), and most foreign investors and businesspeople clustered within a narrow range at the top, and the larger service worker/lower-income group dispersed along the broad lower section. This lopsided economic effect is largely a function of who has the capital, knowledge, networks, and capacity to cater to internationals—especially in the early phases of the mission—and, as Kohl’s contribution shows, is self-reinforcing insofar as internationals’ time and money tend to circulate (and recirculate) in the same orbit, on both the institutional and individual levels.

Edu-Afful and Aning thus describe hierarchies of inclusion and exclusion in the peacekeeping economy (Edu-Afful and Aning 2015), arguing that ‘the peacekeeping economy “system” is set up to continue to reward those who already have the most’. This is particularly problematic in the countries of the Mano River Union, since some of the greatest beneficiaries of the peacekeeping economy are among those most responsible for fuelling or continuing the precipitating conflict. Thus, instead of contributing to the establishment of a liberal and transparent economy—as a modern international peace intervention is supposed to do—it rather seems to have the opposite effect. Due to the specific needs of the intervention itself, an economy is created that, they argue, consolidates the top of the triangle by locking those in a privileged position at the onset of the mission into a position of entrenched privilege for as long as the mission exists, and most likely also thereafter. While the lower end of the peacekeeping economy triangle (including the service workers and other lower income earners) seems quite fluid, with people able to leverage their skills, connections, and luck to improve their situation (see below), there is, according to Edu-Afful and Aning’s argument, little chance for mobility between the bottom and top ranges. The hierarchies of inclusion and exclusion that Edu-Afful and Aning identify are, we contend, one of the most significant and unintended consequences of peacekeeping and peacekeeping economies, and need to be explored in further depth in light of the obvious policy implications: namely, that this lock-in effect may also contribute to locking into the solution of the conflict some of the forces that created the conflict in the first place, thereby possibly laying the foundation for future instability.

Edu-Afful and Aning further explore the gendered dimensions of the peacekeeping economy, arguing that women derive the most benefits from the formal and informal employment opportunities it makes available—even if they do not

often penetrate the uppermost tier of peacekeeping economy beneficiaries (i.e. positions of ownership or control). This is both because many of the jobs fall in the realm of what is typically considered ‘women’s work’, but also because, among the larger group of lower income earners, ‘the men who seem to be succeeding in the peacekeeping economy are those who are prepared to drop their pride for the purpose of survival’. Among their sources, this is not a trade-off that many men are keen to make.

Yet, as noted above, people can act tactically in order to increase their ‘luck’ and chances to benefit from the peacekeeping economy. This is clear in Oldenburg’s piece, in which she explores the agency of three young women that she describes as ‘smart girls, bandits and adventurers’. In a somewhat similar vein to Edu-Afful and Aning, she argues that ‘gendered access to [Goma’s] market of intervention privileges young women, particularly in the realm of intimate relations, and has consequences for gendered identities and images of gender roles’. To these women, ‘sex means much more than youthful experimentation. It becomes an active attempt to overcome socioeconomic limitations and engage in practices of consumerism, to demonstrate one’s own belonging to modernity and increase one’s own prestige in society’. Having intimate relationships with internationals or other wealthy men in Goma’s market of intervention is a means of providing for oneself and one’s family, but it is not (or not solely) about ‘survival sex’ and the images of deprivation and victimhood that the term conjures. Instead, she contends, ‘politics of intimacy and imaginations of love are not only a matter of survival or subsistence, but also a means of consumption and aspiring modernity’. The flipside of these women’s tactics, however, is the extent to which they are dependent on not being cast aside by the men they are intimate with; and the ambivalence, if not outright hostility, that their actions provoke among less-favoured men.

The impulse animating Oldenburg’s ‘smart girls, bandits and adventurers’—the imperative to benefit while they can, however they can—also recurs in Jennings’ piece. She describes a ‘get while the getting is good’ attitude amongst locals enmeshed in the peacekeeping economy, stating that this is a logical response to the exceptional situation created by the presence of a peacekeeping mission. Yet while ‘get while the getting is good’ is advantageous for some, it does not produce wider benefits in terms of infrastructure or services for the population at large. This insight leads to the further contention that,

[w]here peacekeeping economies flourish, they are as visible and tangible to local citizens as anything else done by peacekeeping missions—maybe even more so. It is thus unsurprising that, when people look around them and see money flowing and where it flows, they conclude that... peacekeeping is not that different after all: it is all about the money.

Jennings terms this ‘peacekeeping-as-enterprise’, and argues that local resentment and ambivalence towards the international presence exists at least in part because ‘people see peacekeeping-as-enterprise as replacing, or at least predatory of, other and more widely beneficial ways of doing peacekeeping’. In other

words, the transactional character of the peacekeeping economy; the activities and behaviour of international personnel living in it; and the tactics used by local actors and entrepreneurs looking to take advantage of it all contribute to cynicism among locals towards the peacekeeping mission, which in turn creates a problem of legitimacy for the mission.

Henry also highlights the significance of tactics, specifically in terms of how ‘peacekeepers continually invest in their acquired martial forms of embodied capital in order to justify their continued (preferential) existence within the “peacekeeping-industrial complex”’. For instance, she uses the example of the medal parade ceremony to show how peacekeepers straddle the roles of warrior and citizen: enacting their idealized, sanitized ‘martial and national identities’ enables them ‘to find and maintain international employment and to continue to accumulate financial rewards’. Yet she also examines how many peacekeepers immerse themselves in domestic duties such as cleaning, cooking, and pest control. In these circumstances, she argues, peacekeepers

used the gendered and domestic economies within which they were embedded in order to present themselves as ‘better than the local women at cleaning’ and as defenceless individuals in a ‘backward’ land of pests, vampire insects and urban ineptitude. Here peacekeepers often deflected gendered comments by tactically positioning themselves as hailing from superior lands and cultures. In their perspective, their unconventional domestic skills were key to their continued employment within the mission.

Henry’s approach thus shows how peacekeepers tactically narrate themselves into multiple social, cultural, and moral economies in order to justify their own motivations and presence in the mission.

Closing Remarks

Our approach to the peacekeeping economy does not purport to explain everything about peacekeeping and its successes or failures. This is not an attempt to construct a new grand theory about international peacekeeping and affiliated global structures. Our approach is based on concern for people and local economies, and what actually happens when peacekeepers meet the locals. Due to the organization of modern peacekeeping, this does not happen very often. Conversely, most of the time peacekeepers are effectively separated from those they are supposed to protect. Accordingly, we argue that, even if some of the phenomena and questions we are concerned with may seem mundane, they are nevertheless important—because these jobs and services constitute one of the few meeting points between locals and peacekeepers.

This is also the reason we believe our approach to the peacekeeping economy is important: it foregrounds a detailed ethnographic approach to local political economies, allowing us to see what we otherwise would not. Take the hierarchies of inclusion and exclusion that Edu-Afful and Aning identify in their contribution,

and how the very *modus operandi* of the peacekeeping intervention locks those in a position of privilege at the onset of the mission into a similar position of privilege in the emerging peacekeeping economy. This is unintended, but the consequences are potentially significant, and the ramifications are so far little problematized. Thus, applying a perspective that focuses on the practice and politics of the everyday life of peacekeeping, including the transactional encounters between locals and the peacekeepers, can contribute to much-needed insight about larger questions concerning peace, stability, and possibly future conflict—even if they do not explain them.

The locals that come to inhabit a peacekeeping economy attempt to attach themselves to this economy to survive, but also to become mobile and modern. As Oldenburg's and Jennings' contributions show, they aim to benefit while they can, however they can, and to 'get while the getting is good'. The lives of these people constitute social dramas; and reading life in peacekeeping economies in this way stresses that the narrative is inhabited by people, by individuals who mobilize, navigate, and negotiate not just to survive, but to improve their livelihood opportunities (see also Bøås 2015). It is good that peacekeeping economies offer such possibilities. Yet what all the articles in this special issue show (although in different ways and to different degrees), is that peacekeeping economies keep many people in a constant mode of tactical agency that is narrow and opportunistic, 'exercised to cope with the concrete, immediate conditions of their lives in order to maximize the circumstance created by their environment' (Honwana 2006, 71), and constrained by the gendered spaces and hierarchies that the peacekeeping economy creates and reiterates. In the lived experiences of many locals, this—rather than lofty mandates referring to peace, stability, democracy, transparency, good governance, human rights, restoration of state authority, and gender equality—is more defining of the peacekeeping mission.

Thus, our concept of the peacekeeping economy is about the everyday—all the small things that we do not see until we start digging deep. As such, it is a plea for a middle-range approach to empirical inquires and theory-building, one that is anchored in ethnographic methods and that takes account of, but also looks beyond, global structures and constraints in order to foreground the everyday ordinary life of both locals and internationals in peacekeeping sites.

Acknowledgements

The authors wish to thank all of the authors who contributed to this special issue, for their excellent and thorough work. We also wish to thank Florian P. Kühn, Nicolas Lemay-Hébert, and two anonymous reviewers for their insightful comments.

Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

Funding

This article, and many of the articles in this special issue, were funded by the Research Council of Norway, PovPeace project, grant number 207757.

Notes on Contributors

Kathleen M. Jennings is a researcher at the Fafo Institute for Applied International Studies in Oslo. Her work concerns UN peacekeeping and peacebuilding issues, with a particular focus on gender and African security. She has previously published in *Security Dialogue*, *International Peacekeeping*, and *Global Governance*, among others. (kmj@fafo.no)

Morten Bøås is Research Professor at the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI) in Oslo. He has written extensively on issues of conflict, post-conflict, land, and autochthony in Africa, on regions and regionalization, and on multilateral institutions and development. His most recent books are *The Political Economy of Conflict Economies—Miners, Merchants and Warriors in African Borderlands* (Routledge, 2015) and *Politics of Origin in Africa: Autochthony, Citizenship and Conflict* (co-authored with Kevin Dunn; Zed, 2013). (mbo@nupi.no)

Notes

1 On local responses to peacekeeping missions, see e.g. Pouligny (2006); Zanotti (2011); Cockburn and Hubic (2002); Mac Ginty (2011). On post-conflict violence, see e.g. Suhrke and Berdal (2012); Meintjes, Pillay, and Turshen (2001); Pankhurst (2008).

2 On the peacekeeping economy, see also Jennings (2013, 2014); Aning and Edu-Afful (2013). For important early work on the concept, see Higate and Henry (2004).

3 Guinea-Bissau does not host a peacekeeping mission, but it does have a relatively large peacebuilding presence. In his contribution, Kohl is similarly examining the kinds of formal and informal economic activities and relations created in and around the peacebuilding presence. He does not therefore focus on peacebuilding issues that we have excluded from our understanding of the peacekeeping economy, such as direct budget support.

4 On the mission in Kosovo, see Goetze and Bliesemann de Guevara (2012); on peacekeeping or peacebuilding missions in DRC, Burundi, Cyprus, Israel and the Palestinian Territories, South Sudan, and Timor-Leste, see Autesserre (2014a); on Timor Leste, see Richmond and Franks (2008).

5 In Afghanistan, the UN has a political but not a peacekeeping mission, and NATO activities are/have been more focused on warfare and counter-insurgency than peacekeeping.

6 For an overview of the trend towards local ownership in peacekeeping literature and practice, see von Billerbeck (2009); see also Mac Ginty and Richmond (2013).

7 In this, it follows in the footsteps of the development sector, which embraced 'local ownership' earlier—as one of a long line of development trends aimed at improving outcomes that include focusing on the informal sector, sustainability, and 'good governance'.

References

- Aning, Emmanuel Kwesi, and Fiifi Edu-Afful. 2013. "Unintended Impacts and the Gendered Consequences of Peacekeeping Economies in Liberia." *International Peacekeeping* 20 (1): 17-32.
- Autesserre, Séverine. 2014a. *Peaceland: Conflict Resolution and the Everyday Politics of International Intervention*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Autesserre, Séverine. 2014b. "Going Micro: Emerging and Future Peacekeeping Research." *International Peacekeeping* 21 (4): 492-500. doi:10.1080/13533312.2014.950884
- Bøås, Morten. 2015. *The Political Economy of Conflict Economies—Miners, Merchants and Warriors in African Borderlands*. London: Routledge.
- Chandrasekaran, Rajiv. 2006. *Imperial Life in the Emerald City: Inside Iraq's Green Zone*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Cockburn, Cynthia, and Meliha Hubic. 2002. "Gender and the Peacekeeping Military: A View from Bosnian Women's Organizations." In *The Postwar Moment: Militarities, Masculinities, and International Peacekeeping*, edited by Cynthia Cockburn and Dubravka Zarkov, 103-121. London: Lawrence & Wishart.
- De Certeau, Michel. 1984. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Duffield, Mark. 2010. "Risk-Management and the Fortified Aid Compound: Everyday Life in Post-Interventionary Society." *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 4 (4): 453-474.
- Edu-Afful, Fiifi, and Kwesi Aning. 2015. "Peacekeeping Economies in a Sub-Regional Context: The Paradigmatic Cases of Liberia, Sierra Leone and Côte d'Ivoire." *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 9 (3). doi:10.1080/17502977.2015.1070020
- Fechter, Anne-Meike, and Heather Hindman, eds. 2011. *Inside the Everyday Lives of Development Workers: The Challenges and Futures of Aidland*. Boulder: Kumarian Press.
- Ferris-Rotman, Amie. 2014. "Shattered Idyll in Kabul." *Politico Magazine* (online). Accessed January 24. <http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2014/01/kabul-afghanistan-taliban-attack-broken-idyll-102576.html#.VSZID5Mprqv>
- Goetze, Catherine, and Berit Bliesemann de Guevara. 2012. "The 'Statebuilding Habitus'." In *Statebuilding and State Formation: The Political Sociology of Intervention*, edited by Berit Bliesemann de Guevara, 198-213. London: Routledge.
- Goetze, Catherine, and Berit Bliesemann de Guevara. 2014. "Cosmopolitanism and the Culture of Peacebuilding." *Review of International Studies* 40 (4): 771-802.
- Henry, Marsha G. 2015. "Parades, Parties and Pests: Contradictions of Everyday Life in Peacekeeping Economies." *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 9 (3). doi:10.1080/17502977.2015.1070021
- Higate, Paul, and Marsha Henry. 2004. "Engendering (In)security in Peace Support Operations." *Security Dialogue* 34 (4): 481-498.
- Higate, Paul, and Marsha Henry. 2009. *Insecure Spaces: Peacekeeping, Power and Performance in Haiti, Kosovo and Liberia*. London: Zed.
- Honwana, Alcinda. 2006. *Child Soldiers in Africa*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Jennings, Kathleen M. 2013. "Peacekeeping as Bypassing: A Political Economy of 'Blue Helmet Havens'." Paper presented at the annual conference of the International Studies Association, San Francisco, April 3-6.
- Jennings, Kathleen M. 2014. "Service, Sex and Security: Gendered Peacekeeping Economies in Liberia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo." *Security Dialogue* 45 (4): 1-18.
- Jennings, Kathleen M. 2015. "Life in a 'Peace-kept' City: Encounters with the Peacekeeping Economy." *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 9 (3). doi:10.1080/17502977.2015.1054659

- Kohl, Christoph. 2015. "Diverging Expectations and Perceptions of Peacebuilding? Local Owners and External Actors' Interactions in Guinea-Bissau's Security Sector Reforms." *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 9 (3). doi:10.1080/17502977.2015.1070023
- Mac Ginty, Roger. 2011. *International Peacebuilding and Local Resistance: Hybrid Forms of Peace*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Mac Ginty, Roger. 2013. "Introduction: The Transcripts of Peace: Public, Hidden or Non-Obvious?" *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 7 (4): 423-430. doi:10.1080/17502977.2012.727535
- Mac Ginty, Roger, and Oliver P. Richmond. 2013. "The Local Turn in Peace Building: A Critical Agenda for Peace." *Third World Quarterly* 34 (5): 763-783.
- Meintjes, Sheila, Anu Pillay, and Meredith Turshen, eds. 2001. *The Aftermath: Women in Post-Conflict Transformation*. London: Zed.
- Mosse, David, ed. 2011. *Adventures in Aidland: The Anthropology of Professionals in International Development*. New York: Berghahn Books.
- Oldenburg, Silke. 2015. "The Politics of Love and Intimacy in Goma, Eastern DR Congo: Perspectives on the Market of Intervention as Contact Zone." *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 9 (3). doi:10.1080/17502977.2015.1054660
- Pankhurst, Donna. 2008. "Gendered Peace." In *Whose Peace?: Critical Perspectives on the Political Economy of Peacebuilding*, edited by Michael Pugh, Neil Cooper, and Mandy Turner, 30-46. Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Poulligny, Béatrice. 2006. *Peace Operations Seen from Below: UN Missions and Local People*. Bloomfield, a: Kumarian Press.
- Richmond, Oliver. 2011. *A Post-Liberal Peace*. London: Routledge.
- Richmond, Oliver, and Jason Franks. 2008. "Liberal Peacebuilding in Timor Leste: The Emperor's New Clothes?" *International Peacekeeping* 15 (2): 185-200.
- Rolandsen, Øystein H. 2015. "Small and Far Between: Peacekeeping Economies in South Sudan." *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 9 (3). doi:10.1080/17502977.2015.1070024
- Sending, Ole Jacob. 2010. *Professionalization of Peace Operations: Causes, Dynamics and Effects*. Oslo: Norwegian Institute of International Affairs.
- Smirl, Lisa. 2008. "Building the Other, Constructing Ourselves: Spatial Dimensions of International Humanitarian Response." *International Political Sociology* 2: 236-253.
- Smirl, Lisa. 2015. *Spaces of Aid: How Cars, Compounds and Hotels Shape Humanitarianism*. London: Zed.
- Suhrke, Astri, and Mats Berdal, eds. 2012. *The Peace In-Between: Post-war Violence and Peacebuilding*. London: Routledge.
- Veit, Alex, and Klaus Schlichte. 2012. "Three Arenas: The Conflictive Logic of External Statebuilding." In *Statebuilding and State-Formation: The Political Sociology of Intervention*, edited by Berit Bliesemann de Guevara, 167-181. London: Routledge.
- Von Billerbeck, Sarah B. K. 2009. "Whose Peace? Local Ownership and UN Peacebuilding." Paper presented at conference "The Future of Statebuilding: Ethics, Power and Responsibility in International Relations," University of Westminster, October 9-11.
- Zanotti, Laura. 2011. *Governing Disorder: UN Peace Operations, International Security, and Democratization in the Post-Cold War Era*. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press.