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Peace in The Neighborhood: A Challenge to Policing – Defining Peace

Dr. David Gonzalez, Jr.
School of Business & Professional Studies
Brandman University
Irvine, CA 92618
USA
dgonzal7@brandman.edu

Dr. Patricia M. Shields
Department of Political Science
Texas State University
San Marcos, TX 78666
ps07@txstate.edu

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Abstract

The policing literature has not critically examined a core concept – peace. This paper is an initial step to address this omission. We borrow from recent scholarship in security studies, which is currently re-evaluating its working concept of peace. *Negative peace* or the absence of war (or violence) dominates military studies and policing. This concept focuses on the short run and fails to take into account the relational nature of peace. We argue that the limits of negative peace can be addressed with a robust notion of *positive peace* (which focuses on relationships, social justice, and emphasizes the long run). We introduce the notion of organisational ambidexterity, a concept borrowed from business and military studies, to explore how policing can incorporate notions of positive and negative peace into its discourse and practice.

Peace in The Neighborhood: A Challenge to Policing – Defining Peace

David Gonzalez and Patricia Shields

Introduction

The profession of policing in the United States co-administers a complex system to meet one of government's chief responsibilities. Recently, the police have undergone significant scrutiny and as some have indicated in research, remarkable levels of negative sentiment (Shjarback, Pyrooz, Wolfe, & Decker, 2017). There is a seemingly broken relationship between the police and some of the communities it serves, or at least a wedge in the perspectives each have regarding important aspects of policing and public safety (Stepler, 2017). Critics point to immediate concerns and also take a long view citing underlying causes of police-community tensions. We believe Martin Luther King's insight "Without justice there can be no peace," is apt here (Floyd, 2016). We argue that the theory and practice of policing is missing an explicit concept of peace. This is problematic because "peace in the community" should be a policing goal.

Peace is also a concept fundamental to security studies. Scholars there are recognizing how problems with the conceptualization of peace – particularly its focus on the short run – is fraught with underlying absurdities. They call for new ways to incorporate peace into international security and military studies (Diehl, 2016, Diehl, 2016a, Goertz, Diehl and Balas, 2016, Shields, 2017). We borrow from this literature and the larger peace research literature to show how both theory and practice would be improved if an explicit exploration of peace was incorporated into the ideas and actions of policing.

We start by showing how the concept of peace is intrinsically connected to the profession of policing. Second, we examine the historical context, which influences the contemporary notion of peace in policing. Third, calls for a reconceptualization of peace within the National Security environment are explored, and, forth, linked to related policing contexts. Differences between long and short-term conceptualizations of peace can lead to seeming contradictions. Fifth, we introduce the

concept of organizational ambidexterity as a way to resolve the seeming contradictions (Shields and Travis, 2017; Soeters, 2008). Finally, we develop a research agenda for the further exploration of peace and policing.

The notion of peace in criminal justice is hidden in plain sight¹. For example, most policing organizations in the United States are charged with the responsibility of *keeping the peace*, and enforcing criminal laws. Individuals responsible for keeping the peace are known as *peace officers*. Yet, if one looks at the realms of peace officer training and development, peace officer authority and powers, peace officer functions and behaviors, and peace officer-public relations a well-defined concept of “peace” is missing from both the professional, and academic discourse.² Thus, an examination of peace as a concept within policing and police administration is valid on its face.

Peace officers are required to maintain or reestablish order, stop criminal behavior³, pursue known and unknown suspects in criminal investigations, and to serve as frontline protectors of communities from harm in its various forms. These requirements and expectations require external responsibility to be bestowed and accepted, and it is the oath of office (after legally prescribed training) that makes a particular person a peace officer vested with the authorities and duties located in law.

¹ A key word search completed in major practitioner and academic research databases included: “peace in policing,” “peace officer,” “policing and peace,” “law enforcement and peace,” “communities, peace and police,” “police-community relations and peace,” in publication years 1940-2018 resulted in one article entitled *Police Officers as Peace Officers: A Philosophical and Theoretical Examination of Policing from a Peacemaking Approach* (Bush & Dodson, 2014) located in the *Journal of Theoretical and Philosophical Criminology*. While there are some shared ideas on peace between Bush & Dodson’s and our own, our focus is not theoretical, but practice-based for swift consideration. We maintain that the discourse on peace is lacking in the professional and academic realms.

² Also consider Patrick Sharkey’s (2018) *Uneasy Peace: The Great Crime Decline, the Renewal of City Life, and the Next War on Violence*. While “peace” is in the title, it is never defined and not in the index. Rather, its meaning is implied, and linked to nonviolence or crime reduction.

What is Peace?

Peace is a complex and enduring concept. Twenty-five years after the end of World War II Japanese scholar Takeshi Ishida (1969) identifies enduring concepts of peace across cultures. *Santi* (Indian—to maintain a tranquil mindset including during conflict and suffering), *ahimsa* (Indian—to kill no living creature), *al-Islam* (Arabic—to be in alignment with the will of Allah), *heiwa* (Japanese—aligning oneself to social order and common good), *eirene* (Greek—prosperity and order), *Shalom*, (Hebrew - prosperity and a sense of wholeness arising from righteousness and justice) are examples. These concepts revolve around sometimes conflicting objectives of harmony in the community and social justice. These objectives can sometimes be at cross purposes. For example, society may be willing to sacrifice justice to ensure harmony, which can lead to a police state. On the other hand, injustice is often a rationale for violence (the opposite of peace) (Ishida, 1969).

Contemporary scholarship around peace is generally traced to John Galtung in the 1960's. There he created the distinction between negative and positive peace. “*Negative Peace* ... is the absence of violence, absence of war – and *positive peace* ... is the integration of human society” (Italics added) (Galtung, 1964, 2). Negative peace is the easiest to understand and measure. Clearly, police departments and CJ organizations at all levels already monitor trends in negative peace. Reductions in the homicide or violent crime rate would signal more peace (negative peace). Traditional policing practices support negative peace in a city (Murray, 2005; Auten, 1981).⁴ Negative peace also dominates the conceptualization and practical application in the Army and other military organizations (Diehl, 2016a, Shields, 2017). We maintain it does this implicitly in policing too. When a city tracks

⁴ While Murray (2005) and Auten (1981) do not directly discuss negative peace, they do associate traditional policing with para-militarism, which is more closely aligned with a focus on reducing violent crime and negative peace.

crime rates and measures success through falling crime rates (or a low target) it is using the logic of negative peace.

The multifaceted notion of positive peace, on the other hand, is concerned with the kind of society we aspire to. It incorporates justice, order, and the quality of relationships⁵ within a broad spectrum of societal segments (young/old, rich/poor, immigrants/citizens, minority/majority, men/women, police/community etc.). Anderson Royce (2004, p. 103) sees positive peace as a “condition in which individuals, families, groups, communities, and/or nations experience low levels of violence and engage in mutually harmonious relationships.” The Institute for Economics and Peace defines positive peace as “the attitudes, institutions and structures which create and sustain peaceful societies” (IEP, 2015, 4). Jane Addams depicts positive peace as a process, which builds the fabric of a community “by emphasizing relationships... these positive relationships [are built] by working on practical problems, engaging people widely with sympathetic understanding while recognizing that progress is measure by the welfare of the vulnerable” (Shields and Soeters, 2017, p. 331)⁶. Fischer (2009, 175) defines positive peace as “an unfolding worldwide process, which nurtures human life and promotes social justice.” Galtung expanded his definition noting structural positive peace substitutes “freedom for repression and equity for exploitation,” and then reinforces them with dialogue (Galtung 1996, 32).

These long-run perspectives such as social justice can be in tension with an immediate goal of ending or reducing violence. Negative peace is a short run concept whereas positive peace incorporates the long term. These two distinct conceptualizations are both valuable for policing. Negative peace,

⁵ In national security, state-to-state relationships are key.

⁶ For more information on Jane Addams’s concept of peace see Addams, (1902, 1907, 1922, 1930); Addams, Balch, and Hamilton, (1915); Hamington, (2009); and Shields (2017a and 2016).

however, is the dominate conceptualization in policing, security policy and military strategy (Diehl, 2016, 2016a, Goertz, Diehl, and Balas, 2016, Shields, 2017).⁷

Historical Roots

The origins of negative peace's dominance are easy to trace. Historically, the line between soldier and police were blurred or perhaps joined. Auten (1981) referred to this as the paramilitary origin of policing. For example, garrisons within a city state defended the city from invaders, dealt with gangs and suppressed riots. This was a brutal stasis where slaves, women and non-citizens were often threatened by systemic violence mandated by kings or Caesar (i.e., Pax Romana). In a world where slaves were commonplace, paramilitary organizations were free to use any means necessary to ensure order (and safety for its elite). This was a narrowly defined definition which, repressed the rights of men and women in occupied territories but was indeed the absence of war/violent crime for the Roman elite (Highum and Sorensen, 2016). Concerns and constraints about human rights and social justice were millennia away. Peace, in Western society, was experienced as the order that accompanied the end of a war and often included repressive control of minorities sanctioned by a powerful, authoritarian leader.

Modern policing traces its origin to the Metropolitan Police Act of 1829, introduced by Sir Robert Peel in England. Prior to the Peelian reform there were no formal police organizations. The 1829 law explicitly established a police force in London, from which the US borrowed significantly. Among the features brought to policing by Peelian Reform was the police agency as para-military structure (Auten, 1981). The Peelian paramilitary structure is consistent with a negative conception of peace. For example, Peelian Principle #9 indicates that a community will know that its

⁷ Shields and Soeters (2017) also call for public administration to examine the concept of peace and how it might be applied to PA.

police force is efficient by the absence of crime and disorder, and that the observable evidence of police operations, tactics, and activity is not the evidence of efficient policing (Lentz and Chaires, 2007).

Prior to the Peelian reforms, there were no formal policing organizations. Nacent forms of organized police organizations (watches) weren't brought together until the 1830's to 1840's in the United States (Gains, Kappeler and Vaughn, 1999). Another wave of reform, which coincided with the awakening of public administration as a field, focused on problems of corruption and crony capitalism. Police department staffing was based on political ties rather than merit. Reformers such as Theodore Roosevelt, also looked to the military for models (i.e., expectations about physical fitness) (Berman, 1987). Police reform emphasized effectiveness, efficiency, continuous updating of technology and a paramilitary organization and culture. This became the progenitor of "traditional" policing (Murray, 2005).

Police organizations reflect the culture and politics of a community. Keeping the peace, in the rural South during the 1930s often included maintaining order within a larger racist and sexist power structure. This kind of system is held in place by rigid belief systems. One might say that a negative peace could be observed and a larger positive peace was absent. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s insight that without justice there could be no peace was born within this context. We perhaps can still observe this legacy in incidents like those in Ferguson MO (Culhane, Bowman, and Schwertz, 2016).

Over the eras of policing in the United States and since Peelian reform of 1829, ideas about peace appears to tacitly rely on the absence of a phenomenon (in this case criminal behavior). Police organizations monitor how well they are "keeping the [negative] peace" by recording reported crimes, number and kinds of arrests by the police, and dispositions of criminal cases in courts. While this negative conception is indeed helpful, clearly a community wants less violence, the absence of something does not necessarily mean the presence of another thing; in this specific case, the presence of positive peace.

The prevalence of the negative concept is evident in a number of ways, and observations of police organizational operations and culture are among them. Police departments notably function in the para-military style. To be sure, the para-military structure and Peelian Principles in whole have help construct a Police Profession and seemingly seamless blanket of justice administration in the United States. Bound by ideals and values of duty, respect, refusal to accept denial or defeat, justice, esprit de corps, service, protection of the innocent. The public has benefitted from a para-military police profession⁸.

Peace in Security Studies

A 2014 study in the *Journal of Peace Research* demonstrated the dominance of negative peace in the larger peace and conflict specialty. In a meta-study of contemporary articles on peace, Gelditsch, Nordkvelle & Strand (2014) demonstrate the unintended consequences of using the negative definition of peace in contemporary scholarship. In “Peace Research: Just the Study of War?” the authors suggest that the simple peace/war dichotomy that operationalized peace, had inadvertently turned peace into the mirror image of war. Making the study of peace the study of war. Paul Diehl (2016, 2016a) former president of the International Studies Organization, is the most persistent critic of the dominance of negative peace in security studies. He argues that the short run time horizon associated with negative peace focuses attention on the short term, undermining long term strategy. President George W. Bush’s short lived “Mission Accomplished” during the Iraq War illustrated the problems of celebrating negative peace.

Negative peace also ignores the importance of relationships in forging peace. Peace is not something one does alone. In security studies, conflict can occur between countries and between

⁸ Campbell and Campbell (2009) is an excellent source examining the ways military and police are evolving toward each other. The Small War security environment and the need for expeditionary forces also contribute to the blending. See, Shields, (2011); Menaker et al, (2010); Chews, (2014); Shields and Soeters (2013) and Neutenboom and Soeters, (2017).

groups within nations. Nations are also in conflict with terrorist groups. Diehl (2016) notes that ignoring the relationship basis of peace and conflict brings absurdities to the international context. The US is not at war (at peace) with either North Korea or Canada. Obviously, we treat these state-to-state relationships very differently. From a CJ perspective, a focus on crime rates divert attentions away from community relationships. In the Army War College Journal *Parameters*, Shields (2017) argues that the negative definition of peace fits neatly into our natural tendency to frame threats in absolute terms (friend/enemy, victory/defeat, good/evil). Absolute thinking makes it difficult to form or to change damaged relationships undermining the cooperative potential of human nature (Hamington, 2009, 106).

The absolutist thinking pattern applies to police. In the extreme, the criminal is wrong, dangerous, even evil. Politicians exploit this impulse calling for a “War on Crime” and the importance of being “tough on crime”. The “War on Drugs”, for example, painted users in stark criminal terms, making it difficult for policy makers to consider the medical aspects of the problem. This rigid frame of reference may be effective at generating political support but it can also undermine the peace in the neighborhood. This mindset borrows dichotomies from the military like friend/enemy, victory/defeat, and war/peace, which oversimplify the complex nature of criminal justice administration. A one-size-fits-all definition of peace is ill suited for the complex, multifaceted, postmodern policing environment. By signaling a terminal point, negative peace shifts focus away from the hard work of putting programs and institutional structures in place that can identify and repair fractured relationships as well as nurture resilient and just institutions.

We ask a lot of police officers. Men and women are attracted to the profession, which like the soldier, requires strength, courage, valor, and self-sacrifice. Some popular notions of peace may be seemingly at odds with the above beloved values. The term peace can also be associated with appeasement, disloyalty, anti-war sentiment and cowardice. Why would a soldier or police officer seriously identify with this concept? This tension can reinforce an us-versus-them mindset, and

negative stereotyping, on both sides if absolutist thinking dominates. The likely possibility that the community and police share long-term goals can be lost when inflexible belief systems thrive.⁹

We posit that the prevailing concept of peace is one crafted through necessity, inheritance, and under the influence of the developing conventional wisdom, and is negative in nature (the absence of crime means the presence of peace) consistent with Peelian Principle #9 (the test of police efficiency is the absence of crime and disorder, not the visible evidence of police action). The negative conception of peace in policing, upon which peace officers execute their work and police administrators administer allows for helpful measurements such as the homicide rate, number of arrests, convictions, inmates maintained in a jail without escape, the number of probationers successfully completing an ordered program, and others, but where is the conversation and evidence of the presence of peace as in justice or a right relationship?

The Institute of Economics and Peace (2012, 23) has constructed a peace index for urban areas. It uses peace indicators such as the homicide rate, violent crime rate, incarceration rate and the rate of police employees per 100,000 citizens (Institute for Economics and Peace, 2012)¹⁰. Three of the four variables (homicide, violent crime and incarceration) are clear negative peace indicators.

Moving into this question, it is important to note that the aim of this paper is not to argue that a negative conception of peace is somehow wrong or incorrect, but it is to note that there is an important component missing; one that asks what is the peace that peace officers are named for and what should be the conception of peace claimed by the profession.

⁹ American Nobel Peace Prize winner, Jane Addams recognized this problem in *Newer Ideals of Peace*.⁹ She argues dedication to peace can also involve self-sacrifice, tenacity, and courage without diminishing the valor of the soldier. Addams emphasized that promoting peace often took courage. Particularly during war, peace advocates can be viewed as traitors or as warped and twisted sentimentalists (Shields, 2017a)

¹⁰ Baltimore, Miami, New Orleans and Detroit were at the bottom of the list (least peaceful) while the most peaceful urban areas included Cambridge, Edison-New Brunswick, Seattle and Minneapolis-St. Paul. (IEP, 2012, 23-24).

Positive Peace

Perhaps part of addressing the questions and frustrations in today's police-community relations includes discourse in positive peace. A conception that is a constellation of possibilities versus a strict or predominant adherence to the idea that the absence of crime demonstrates the existence of peace, because a society is still left with the question of 'what is then peace?' Galtung (1969) notes that peace as a concept is a process and one that is temporal in its nature. This understanding should remind both practitioners and academics that peace is a moving target at best, and that there is opportunity in the discourse on peace among practitioners, academics, and the community served both within the spheres and between.

Positive visions of peace are expansive and include concepts and values such as justice, lateral progress, democracy, sympathy, cooperation, effectiveness, engagement, freedom, order, harmony, and collaboration. Positive peace can also have religious origins and overtones, such as "blessed are the peacemakers" (Matthew 5:9). There are many passionate and inconsistent voices examining the nature of positive peace. These disparities make it more challenging to see the practical value of positive peace. On the other hand, positive peace fits well with the goals of community policing. Here police organizations consciously try to build relationships with the community it serves (Miller, Hess and Orthmann, 2011).

The Institute of Economics and Peace has for many years produced an index of peace, which ranked countries level of peace. This index was filled with negative peace indicators. Recently the IEP has recognized the importance of positive peace and developed a new positive peace index. The index contains indicators such as a well-functioning government, and acceptance of the rights of others, and equitable distribution of resources (IEP, 2015).

To distinguish positive peace as unique, some activists and scholars include “just” as a modifier (Williams & Caldwell, 2006). In Spanish, the word *justapaz* recognizes the role of justice as a pillar of sustained peace (Lederach 2017). The focus on justice also shifts attention to the welfare of the most vulnerable. This metric, also called lateral progress, has the potential to get at the root of many causes of conflict, which can lead to community disintegration (Addams, 1907, Hamington, 2009).

Jane Addams includes perplexity and sympathetic understanding as a key component of a just peace process. Sympathetic understanding, or the willingness to imagine how to experience the world as another would, is a way to overcome the rigid, stereotyped belief systems that nurture conflict and undermine cooperation. She posits perplexity as an alternative to rigid moralisms. Perplexity suspends judgment and allows the questioning of personal belief systems without abandoning them, which cultivates sympathetic understanding (Addams, 1902). “Perplexity and sympathetic understanding do not mean adopting the position of an adversary; rather, they open space for productive dialogue, relationship building, and creative problem-solving” (Shields, 2017).

The African concept of *ubuntu*, or humanity toward others is also a fruitful way to conceptualize peace. South African apartheid (1948–91), a brutal system of institutional racial segregation was harshly condemned throughout the world. Almost astonishingly, South Africa ended apartheid without a violent, civil war. Statesmen such as P. W. Botha, F.W. de Klerk, Nelson Mandela, and Desmond Tutu led a transformation in institutions and attitudes. Nelson Mandela notes if you want to make peace with your enemy, you have to work with your enemy. Then he becomes your partner (Mandela, 1994). The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, South (TRC) was a forum for enemies to become partners. This commission relied on the concept of Ubuntu (Tutu, 2004).

“Ubuntu is very difficult to render into a Western language . . . you are generous, you are hospitable, you are friendly and caring and compassionate. You share what you have. “A person is a person through other persons. . . . A person with ubuntu is affirming of others, does not feel threatened that others are able and good, for he or she has a proper self-assurance that comes from knowing that

he or she belongs in a greater whole and is diminished when others are humiliated or diminished, when others are tortured or oppressed” (Tutu, 2004, 25-26).” The radically relational ubuntu asserts that individuals should be aware of the interests of others. In addition, a person’s humanity depends on how well they relate to others. This notion of peace may be one of the most effective at capturing the way to make long run change. It is, however, somewhat incompatible with police organizations, which wear uniforms, bond with each other and sometimes separate themselves from the larger community. Their jobs also demand that they approach many dangerous situations with caution and their training teaches them how to use violence to ensure order and safety in the community.

One could almost argue that the police should only concern themselves with enforcing laws and maintaining order. Larger issues such as social justice should be addressed at a different level of government and at the ballot box. Still, the police, as a prominent face of a democratic government (be it city, county or school district) can reinforce and enhance a sense of justice or injustice by their behavior. They can also help tie the community together or exacerbate cleavages. There is a reason they are called “Peace Officers” and not “Order Officers.”

Ambidexterity

We have shown that the contemporary profession of policing faces a number of contradictory demands or goals, many of which deal with conflicts between long and short term such as order and justice. We borrow the concept of ambidexterity from business and the military to suggest a way to deal with the contradictions.

O’Reilly and Tushman (2004) brought widespread recognition to the concept of ambidexterity in a *Harvard Business Review* article “The Ambidextrous Organization.”¹¹ They examined the twin challenges of attending to routine matters or *exploiting* the current business environment and *exploring*

¹¹ Tushman, Anderson and O’Reilly (1997) are the first to apply or draw attention to the concept of ambidexterity to organization theory in the field and practice of business.

to ensure future success. They asked, how do managers ensure current stability and prepare for the inevitability of future change? Their research showed that manager's often encounter difficulties as they to attend to exploitation and exploration simultaneously. Typically, a manager's attention is focused on pressing daily activities leaving little time for contemplating future promises and pitfalls. This widespread management inability to accomplish these two seemingly contradictory challenges can result in firms ill prepared for the future or neglecting their current customers. To remedy this persistent problem, O'Reilly and Tushman (2004) introduce the concept of *ambidexterity* as a way to resolve the dilemmas raised by the present/future choices facing managers. Their study reveals that organizations, which attended to both functions in separate divisions, which report to a single supervisor, are more successful. These firms are called *ambidextrous*.

The concept of organizational ambidexterity is drawn from everyday experience. "Like piano players and percussionists who need to be equally skillful with their right and left hand and soccer players who try to develop their 'weak' leg, organizations nowadays need to be ambidextrous; good at dealing with contradictory demands at the same time" (Soeters, 2008).

Military organizations often face seemingly contradictory demands. Joseph Soeters (2008 p. 109) applies "ambidexterity" as a way for military organizations to cope with the contradictions, which emerged from a post-cold war/post-9-11 security environment.¹² These missions depend on cooperation and collaboration across international militaries and an array of civilian organizations. Organizational cultures can play a huge role in this context.

Soeters (2008) applied the ambidexterity concept by examining seemingly intractable dualism and showing how the concept of ambidexterity helps resolve them. Take for example a pair of concepts known as *bonding* and *bridging*, which can be illustrated through a common experiential

¹² Ambidexterity was also developed in deWaard & Soeters (2007), Shields and Travis (2017) and Shields & Soeters (2017)

reference – traveling. If a person is traveling alone she must rely on the help of people along the way to successfully navigate her journey. She must be able to *bridge* language and cultural differences. On the other hand, if a person is traveling in with a group, he would spend most of his time in interaction with his traveling companions establishing and reinforcing strong ties – or *bond*.

Sociologist Mark Granovetter (1983) introduced bridging and bonding to the sociology literature. Bonding is associated with tight knit communities. In contrast bridging is placed in a cosmopolitan setting where people have fewer friends but more acquaintances and use ‘weak ties’ to get things done. Granovetter (1983) considered bonding and bridging as a mutually exclusive fixed dichotomy.

Traditional militaries are structured to reinforce bonding or unit cohesion (Siebold, 2011).¹³ Central to combat cohesion is the ability of the troops to develop strong ties. Strong bonding “implies that servicemen do not want to have anything to do with people outside their own unit” (Soeters 2008, p. 115). This is logical when the enemy is clear. It is problematic when dealing with allies in peace operations outside the unit. Ideally a combat unit takes orders and responds in predictable ways. In traditional settings combat units are not supposed to demonstrate innovative ideas. Groups who are filled with strong ties generally have “limited cognitive flexibility” and are “less receptive to innovative ideas” and new ways of thinking (Soeters 2008, 113).

Similar strong ties apply to police organizations, which cultivate a unified identity. Police officers watch each other’s back on the job and off (Blue Wall). It helps them survive dangerous situations and gives additional meaning to their work.

Strong internal cohesion is less functional during a crisis situation absent a clear friend-and-foe relationship, which is the case in peacekeeping operations. In this instance the ability to “bridge” or

¹³ For more information on military cohesion see Siebold et al (2016); Bierman and Kelty (2017); Bury, (2017) and Hart and Landcaster (2017).

form weak ties across national militaries and between civilian and military organizations becomes a necessity. Bridging enables cooperation and collaboration across national and civil/military boundaries. (Soeters, 2008, 115). The need to bridge, however, does not take away the importance of internal military cohesion. Again, police organizations face similar situations when they interact with the community. They are better able to protect the community and navigate its many pitfalls if there is trust between police officers/police organizations and community members/community organizations. Soeters (2008) uses ambidexterity as a means of dealing with this seemingly inherent contradiction. Peacekeeping operations are very similar to police functions. They occur as the fighting ends and the job of reconstructing a workable society begins. Ideally in the long run enemies become friends. This is a dangerous situation and one where Ubuntu might be particularly helpful.

Both bonding and bridging are required during multinational peacekeeping operations. “Under those circumstances, the pattern of bonding without bridging clearly does not work as well” (Soeters 2008, 115). Bonding and bridging appear to be more or less mutually exclusive behaviors. Groups and people strongly gravitate toward one or the other. Contemporary military organizations need to be able to do both. Soeters (2008) demonstrates that bonding and bridging need not be mutually exclusive. Organizational ambidexterity is introduced to show how and why. Ambidexterity provides a way for military organizations to bond and bridge. Like the soccer player who needs to use both legs equally skillfully, peacekeepers need to be talkers and shooters. They need to combine bridging and bonding. So how do military (or police) organizations develop the weak leg – Soeters proposes structural and contextual ambidexterity.

Structural ambidexterity can be observed in the architecture of the organization and would include two types of special units. The first would rely on “bonding” and focuses on “war-fighting, terrorist hunting and other activities that imply the use of violence” (121). These are activities with a short-term time horizon. The second unit’s task such as peacekeeping, civil-military cooperation, humanitarian relief and nation building would employ bridging (activities with a long-term time

horizon). *Contextual ambidexterity*, on the other hand, means individuals, particularly those at the top, should be skilled at both bonding and bridging meaning and should be generalists. “They need to have a broad view of their work, being culturally intelligent as well as being alert to opportunities and challenges beyond the confines of their jobs. They need to act like brokers, always looking to build internal and external linkages, and if needed they have to be comfortable wearing more than one ‘hat’. Most of all they need to be able to immediately switch from communicating and negotiating to the actual repelling and use of violence” (Soeters, 2008, 122).

Shields and Soeters (2017) apply the notion of ambidexterity to challenge of defining and achieving peace (Shields & Soeters, 2015). Peacekeeping missions are tasked with moving a society from an emphasis on reducing violence (negative peace) to one where a functioning, just community is a working reality (positive peace). Note that this is not a continuum where negative peace is at one end and positive peace on the other. This transition can be halting and uneven. During these turbulent transitions, soldiers need to use ways of thinking and skills that are seemingly contradictory. They may need to be “shooters” and “talkers.” Shields and Soeters (2015) use ambidexterity as a way to reconcile some of the contradictions imbedded in the uneven process of moving from an emphasis not reducing violence to building just communities, which thrive and have the continued capacity to thrive.¹⁴

Shields and Travis (2017) further applied ambidexterity to military organizations. They note that “traditional combat units take orders and respond in predictable ways; they are not supposed to demonstrate innovative ideas. Likewise, groups formed with strong ties generally have “limited cognitive flexibility” and are “less receptive to innovative ideas” (p. 113). These fundamentals of ambidexterity explain why units must develop the ability to learn and adapt, especially in the context of effective multinational operations.

¹⁴ They can also use an expeditionary mindset (Shields, 2011, Meneker et al, 2006).

Cohesion is less functional during crisis and absent without clear friend-and-foe relationships. In these instances, the ability to bridge—collaborate with civilian and military organizations—becomes a necessity. This need, however, does not reduce the importance of internal military cohesion; in fact, “bonding and bridging are required during multinational non-Article 5 crisis-response operations. . . . Under those circumstances, the pattern of bonding without bridging clearly does not work as well” (Shields and Travis, 2017). So, there is an inherent contradiction: bonding and bridging appear to be more or less mutually exclusive, yet groups and people strongly gravitate toward one connection or the other. Contemporary military organizations (and police organizations) dealing with diverse cultures in the uncertain environment need to be able to do both. Ambidexterity is a useful concept to make sense of the seemingly contradictory functions. Once again, clearly police organizations can take a cue from military studies. Police organizations encourage police to bond – to look after each other, to trust each other in dangerous situations. They also need to bridge and connect with the community they serve.

To move a society from the sphere of negative peace to positive peace during turbulent transitions such as those accompanying peacekeeping operations, soldiers must use seemingly contradictory thinking and skills. In the pragmatic sense, ambidexterity helps a soldier to reconcile some of the contradictions, such as the need to be a shooter and a talker, imbedded in the uneven process of moving from negative to positive peace (Shields and Soeters, 2017).

Conclusion

This commentary is not about providing answers but calling attention to an omission in the CJ/policing discourse and literature. Where is “peace” in this discourse? What, given the many dimensions of peace does it mean for policing? We find lessons from the national security and military study fields, which have been exploring similar questions. This inquiry revealed a dominance of negative peace, which has resulted in an overemphasis on the short run and ignores relational aspects of peace and conflict. We argue there is also an implicit dominance of negative peace in policing. On the other hand, community policing resonates with positive peace. We would like the implicit or

hidden plain sight use of peace in policing to be more explicit. We believe the concept of peace deserves a closer and more critical look in policing studies. We also argue that concepts like ambidexterity are useful tools to do this. Finally, positive peace needs to be more fully integrated into policing strategy, theory and practice.

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