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Louise Weibull

Stockholm, November 2012
To my mother
List of essays

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Weibull, L. (2011) La gestion des émotions dans les opérations en faveur de la paix, in *L’Année Sociologique*. (For the original version of this article, see appendix I. Essay I in the thesis is an English version, Emotion management in military Peace Support Operations)

*Essay II*

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* Second author.

** First author.
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1. INTRODUCTION

In a highly personal account, *Brödre i blodet* ('Blood brothers') (2011), second lieutenant Emil Johansen, officer in the Norwegian army, tells of his memories from serving in Afghanistan. One passage illustrates how, after an enemy encounter, he plays a song on the vehicle loudspeakers, and notes how the love ballad successfully calms down a group of combat soldiers high on adrenaline and testosterone (p. 152). While most of us probably would not expect soldiers to cool off from a highly stressful event to the sound of Mariah Carey, this situation reminds us of one of this thesis’ central points, namely that if we underestimate the role of emotions in military work, our attention is obscured from the range of incidents where emotions, by necessity, need to be managed, and from the ways soldiers use to manage them.

Along this line of argument, the aim of this thesis is to broaden and re-appraise the current view on emotions in Peace Support Operations (PSO),¹ by applying a sociological lens and an emotion management perspective (Hochschild, 1979, 1983; Bolton, 2000a, 2005; Bolton & Boyd, 2003) to soldiers’ work and living conditions abroad. Thus, we see instances requiring soldiers to maintain poise and adapt their emotional expressions to match what is appropriate in various situations emerging as both abundant and multifaceted. This has not been fully recognized, either as an immediate demand in operational theatres or as an emotional cost with possible long term consequences. One likely reason is that many of the espoused values held within the Swedish Armed Forces are connected to connotations of ‘real’ military tasks, i.e. combat (Dunivin, 1994; Winslow, 2000). The more missions abroad involve warlike encounters, the more concern for the emotional load on soldiers, and especially for those suffering from PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder). However natural this is, it still means that the emotional load on the majority of soldiers will largely remain unnoticed and receive much less attention. Thus, one contribution of this thesis, pointing to the extensive demands for emotion management even in low-intensity conflict areas (here Kosovo and Liberia), is to fill an existing knowledge gap concerning missions abroad in general. This is based on the assumption that to grasp the full extent of the emotional load in today’s conflict ‘hot spots’, attention must also be paid to these less dramatic emotional demands that certainly exist regardless of mission area. Starting from an emotion sociology perspective also means adopting a broader focus than more clinical approaches as to the possible sources behind emotional demands in international missions, as this perspective lays heavy emphasis on organizational and environmental influences.

¹ Peace Support Operations (PSO) is an umbrella term for different sorts of operations encompassing peacemaking, peacekeeping, peace enforcement, peace-building, conflict prevention and state building. In the proceedings, this term will be used to signify both low and high-intensity conflict areas. The first case specifically concerns Kosovo and Liberia whilst the second refers to Afghanistan.
By investigating the demands for emotion management in missions abroad, the study contributes to two academic fields, that of military sociology and emotion sociology. Whilst military sociology has thus far not considered the management of emotions in the sense discussed here, a new empirical field, peace support operations, is introduced in emotion sociology research, with the application of this discipline’s central concepts. The findings of this thesis can thus be seen as the result of bringing together two disciplines with important but different insights into the area under study. However, even if the study presents a dual contribution herein, the main objective of the thesis is to promote wider attention to the emotional demands made on soldiers deployed abroad amongst military authorities and practitioners.

Today, participation in multinational operations abroad is one of the main tasks for the Swedish Armed Forces (SAF). It is therefore essential that our knowledge of the work conditions in these operations is continuously deepened and updated, not least with regard to the emotional costs associated with these engagements. Connected to this is the conviction that such emotional demands are especially relevant in the military context. In no other work situation is managing or neglecting to manage emotions as consequential and challenging for both personal safety and task accomplishment, and in no other work situation are the emotional costs associated with the tasks more extreme. The fact that the responsibility for dealing with this often lies with the most junior soldiers, many of whom have no former mission experience, only emphasises the above.

Against this background, with a main focus on low-intensity conflict areas, the two aims central to this thesis are: to highlight the external demands for emotion management as inherent in soldiers’ work, and to illustrate how the soldiers manage these demands.

The remainder of this introductory chapter presents the research area and its assumed contributions in more detail. Two main arguments are put forward. The first states that the emotional load on soldiers serving in low-intensity conflict areas has chiefly remained unnoticed by both military authorities and in previous literature. The second argument, further emphasized here, is that insights from studies conducted in these types of operational theatres, i.e. operations that today are both rare and comparatively below ‘the radar’ of both the media and the research community, can fill a knowledge gap with relevance beyond these mission contexts.

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2 One of the few systematic qualitative studies on emotions and military work has been conducted by the Israeli anthropologist, Eyal Ben-Ari (1998). His ethnography, Mastering soldiers, is a longitudinal study of soldiering work in the Israeli Defence Forces. Unlike the Swedish soldiers under study here, these soldiers have served under a draft and operated in war-like situations.
Emotion management demands in low-intensity conflict areas - an overlooked area

The Swedish Armed Forces have considerable experience of participation in different missions abroad. Over the last 50 years they have been involved in 120 international missions in some 60 countries, and more than 100 000 Swedish men and women have served. However, from the beginning of the 1990s, the nature of these operations has changed dramatically from participants principally acting as observers of events and monitoring signed peace agreements to their potentially using force in order to 'protect, help, and save' primarily the civilian population. Nevertheless, although the SAF has long-term experience of international engagements, having been trained mainly for invasion and national territorial defence, the impact on soldiers from 'Military operations other than war' (MOOTW) has been underestimated. One reason behind this, that will be further discussed below, is that even if most European defence forces are involved in PSO, war-fighting is still the defining activity of military organizations (see also Dunivin, 1994; Winslow, 2000; Ydén, 2005).

With Swedish troops' presence in increasingly intense and warlike operations such as those in Afghanistan, a closer follow up of veterans' health and well-being has been initiated by the Ministry of Defence and many measures are now under implementation in cooperation with the rest of the Nordic countries. The findings of this study underline the importance of this and also indicate in agreement with Schok (2009) that it is high time to look beyond the worst-case impacts of international operations such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Military operations abroad have also other emotional consequences, which, regardless of their rating on a stress-scale, may impact the individual soldier’s future well-being for a long time.

To date, Swedish troops appear to have been able to uphold a good international reputation and there has been, in comparison with many other countries, little loss of life. This may be one reason for Sweden being relatively slow to initiate research in the field of international operations, a criticism that some researchers made as early as in the 1960s, and that was repeatedly referred to in the following thirty years (Andersson, 2001, p. 86). The result is that the main bulk of studies on Swedish troops’ experiences abroad have been presented during the last ten to fifteen years (Johansson, 1997, 2001; Andersson, 2001; Wallenius, 2001; Blomgren & Johansson, 2004; Michel, 2005; Blomgren, 2006; Tillberg et al., 2008; Nilsson, 2011; Isberg & Tillberg, 2011; Granberg, forthcoming).

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3 http://www.forsvarsmakten.se/sv/Internationella-insatser/Avslutadeinsatser/
4 An often quoted Swiss officer, General Däniker, was the first to suggest these as the core values for the professional role in Peace Support Operations.
5 See Försvardepartementet (Ministry of Defence), National Public Inquiries (SOU), SOU 2008:91, 2 October 2008
6 See Försvardepartementet (Ministry of Defence), Report, 21 September 2011
Even if this literature does contribute to a better understanding of Swedish missions abroad, it is, compared to this study, most often focused on other aspects of the service (leadership, individual resources, cognitive learning), and mainly takes its point of departure from disciplines such as psychology and educational science. While the emotional side of international service is in no way missing herein, the demands for emotion management stemming from formal and informal ‘feeling rules’ have not been illuminated in any detail.

Nevertheless, in soldiers’ diaries emotions are highly evident. The passage below is taken from the diary of a Swedish squad leader who reflected over what actually happened during the Bosnian war when his seriously undermanned unit was tasked over the course of three demanding weeks to defend what had previously been a hospital, but which was nothing more than a bombed-out shell of a building inhabited by some patients and a couple of nurses:

> With dulled senses and cynical through lack of sleep, the working conditions and the constant threat from the outside, we gradually became zombies experiencing almost no emotion. This wasn’t always very aesthetic, or ethically pleasing to the eye, but it was an unconscious first line of defence, protecting us from our surroundings, and perhaps above all from ourselves. (Karlsson, 2004, p. 195).

Indeed, few would deny that international missions involve a certain amount of emotional burdening on participants, and there is rich international evidence (Schok, 2009; Forbes et al., 2011; Hosek et al., 2011) that participating in war and high-intensity missions like those in Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan may cause severe psychological problems for many soldiers. Studies in the USA have shown that about 5% of American soldiers fill the criteria for PTSD, and when a diagnosis of depression is included, the proportion goes up to almost 20% (Tanielian & Jaycox, 2008). While soldiers serving in peace support operations do not experience as many life-threatening events as war veterans, scholars now claim that these operations have their own, specific stressors (Schok, 2009), often summarized as lack of control (see also Britt & Adler, 2003). This implies that even if soldiers serving in PSO are less often in mortal danger, they may be exposed to other highly stressful instances like humiliations and the risk of occasional sudden attacks. Mandates and policies also highly circumscribe their work situation, something that may also involve standing by and witnessing civilians’ suffering without having a right to intervene (Schok, 2009, p. 15). Kunda’s (2006) comment that the organizational self in certain work contexts is ‘an active and artful construction, a performance, a tightrope walk, a balancing act of organizational reality claims’ (p. 216) seems highly accurate for PSO.
One main theme in this thesis is that the distinction between high and low-intensity conflict areas is not applicable when dealing with emotion management demands. This argument does not imply that these demands are seen as identical irrespective of mission area, but the presumption is that they differ more in degree than in kind. The traditional focus on worst-case scenarios and PTSD is not enough to grasp the whole range of emotion management demands that emanate from the specific character of PSO (see also Schok, 2009).

As mentioned above, this thesis mainly refers to service in two so-called low-intensity mission areas, Kosovo and Liberia. The engagement in Kosovo has successively been reduced from approximately 800 soldiers in the first contingent in 1999 to currently around 70 soldiers serving in the 25th contingent, and in the case of Liberia, all Swedish troops have been withdrawn since 2006.

Nevertheless, the previously mentioned demands for emotion management focused in this study are also likely to prevail in high-intensity conflict areas, even if naturally more frequent and pronounced in some positions than in others. Arguably, overriding problems from these theatres must involve taking care of the most severe consequences of stress and worst-case scenarios. Findings from low-intensity conflict areas could nevertheless assist to widen the perspective so that attention will also be given to the less dramatic emotion management demands that certainly exist regardless of mission context. This proposition is made with reference to what Danermark et al. (2002) call a theoretical generalization, meaning that if fundamental and constituent properties are inherent in the structure of a certain phenomenon, there is also high expectancy for similar empirical findings.

Examples of common traits that motivate a theoretical generalization of a similar emotional load in both low- and high-intensity conflict areas are, for instance, that emotion management is something that is mainly required in contacts with other people, usually involving face-to-face contact. In low-intensity theatres, where the work-situation is often described as ‘constabulary’ (i.e. police-like in nature), it is generally assumed that soldiers recurrently deal directly with ‘human nature’ to a much higher degree than in high-intensity theatres (see also Van Maanen & Kunda, 1989, p. 52). Today, the largest deployment of Swedish soldiers is in Afghanistan, where the soldiers frequently engage with different kinds of civilian and military actors at many levels. This means that similar demands for emotion management regulation prevail here, the main difference being that this context offers a much more pressing security situation. Another generic aspect of

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Brian Selmeski (2007) gives some examples of possible encounters in theatres: comrades (one’s own unit), sister services, allies, adversaries (who may take the form of conventional forces or unconventional forces (e.g. guerrillas/special operations forces)) or irregular forces (e.g.
missions abroad that underlines why these demands are present regardless of conflict area, is that since both place and course of events can change very suddenly, you are in the business of the unexpected and hardly ever know for certain what to anticipate. That this type of situation requires both creativity and extensive emotion management skills goes without saying.

All in all, the point made here is that external demands for emotion management are constituent properties inherent in every PSO. Findings from low-intensity conflict areas can therefore have relevance beyond these empirical fields. The objective of this thesis to investigate and highlight the thus far highly underestimated emotion management requirements in low-intensity peace support operations is therefore well motivated.

The thesis comprises six chapters. The first is the above introduction where I have argued that emotion management demands in low-intensity mission areas have chiefly remained unnoticed and that central aspects of these demands have relevance irrespective of mission context. The second chapter introduces the thesis’ central theoretical concepts and motivates their relevance for the research area under study. Chapter three focuses on the possible reasons behind the Swedish Armed Forces’ scant interest in emotion management requirements, while chapter four describes the research design. Chapter five is an introduction to and a summary of the four essays. The sixth and last chapter summarizes the study’s conclusions in relation to the thesis’ main aims and briefly outlines some of its implications. This chapter ends with a summary of the thesis in Swedish.
2. EMOTIONS IN THEORY AND IN MISSIONS ABROAD

The main aim of the chapter is to briefly present the theoretical abode of this thesis, emotion sociology, and some of its main concepts: emotion, emotion management and feeling rules and further, to present more closely the choice behind the theoretical points of departure. Another aim is to show that being ignorant of demands for emotion management and the ways soldiers adjust to and handle these multifaceted requirements also means a knowledge gap concerning one of the distinctive features of today’s missions abroad. The chapter ends with some reflections on the fact that the soldiers under study also seemed quite willing to manage their emotions in accordance with organizational objectives.

Towards a sociology of emotions

‘Emotions are the stuff of life and for people without emotions there is no reason to live’ states the Norwegian sociologist Jon Elster (1999, p. 403). Nevertheless, his compatriot, philosopher Arne Naess commented that same year that emotions as a subject held an alarmingly weak position within universities and colleges (Dahlgren & Starrin, 2004, p. 9). Although concern for emotion was present in early sociology (see for instance Cooley, 1902), the study of emotions from a sociological perspective did not emerge as a distinctive subfield until the 1970s (Fineman, 2000; Shilling, 2002; Turner & Stets, 2006). However, from the middle of this decade something of a renaissance for emotion sociology began, at least in the USA. This was also the time when Arlie Russell Hochschild (1979, 1983), repeatedly referred to herein, published her seminal analyses of emotion management regulation in both private and professional life.

Even if the development differed in different countries, the situation changed not much more than ten years after Arne Naess’s pessimistic remark, and in the wake of an ‘emotional turn’ (Kleres, 2009) within many academic fields, emotion studies are no longer an overlooked dimension. Its development within organizational theory is a good illustration of this trend, whereby previous focus on rationality and cognition has been completed with emotion perspectives. Bolton & Boyd (2003) conclude that emotions have now ceased to be an unimportant by-product of organizational life, and have become increasingly recognized as a vital and necessary part of an organization.

Management literature has been especially optimistic about how successful emotion management regulation can be used in leadership and how charismatic leaders can
motivate their followers to embark on the goals and values of the organization. The manipulative force behind this has also led to criticism from many scholars (see for example Alvesson, 2002; Bolton, 2005; Kunda, 2006). The central ideas behind the concepts emotion, feeling rules, and emotion management and their application in this thesis, will now be more closely described.

**Emotion, emotion management and feeling rules**

That emotions have an impact on our behavioural response to situational cues is a widespread notion. Wharton (2009) suggests that although sociological interest in emotion takes a variety of forms, a fundamental concern is to understand how emotions are regulated by culture and social structure and how emotional regulation affects individuals, groups, and organizations (p. 148). *Emotion* in this dissertation refers to ‘ineffable feelings of the self-referential sort that index or signal our current involvements and evaluations. It is what an actor experiences or, at least, claims to experience in regard to the performances he or she brings off in the social world’ (Van Maanen & Kunda, 1989, p. 53). The accuracy of this definition here stems from its emphasis of emotions as something from which our current involvements can be inferred, at the same time as it stresses that these involvements are presented to us in social situations. This definition can also be said to border on Hochschild’s (1983) view, where feeling and emotion are seen as something like a sixth sense from which we discover our own viewpoint of the world. In the same vein, Archer (2000) sees emotions as important ‘commentaries on human concerns’.

The concept of rules has frequently been used to analyse organisational life. From bureaucratic rules to ‘social regulative rules’ there is the recognition that rules are not hard ‘social facts’ but are the result of continual interpretation and negotiation which produces an ever-shifting framework for action (Bolton, 2005). The term ‘feeling rules’ is used to talk about how emotions are conducted. Feeling rules are those socially shared norms that influence how we act, feel or try to feel in a given social situation. When people shape and manage their feelings, it is consequently done within certain constraints. These ideas emerged notably in writings by Emile Durkheim (1858-1917), but are even more central to Erving Goffman (1922-1982), a pioneer within emotion sociology. The central assumptions behind feeling rules state that people in all human interaction adjust to norms (feeling rules) regarding emotional expressivity and that these rules are firmly

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8 Bass’s writings on transformational leadership especially stress the emotional element (see for instance Bass & Riggio, 2006).

9 Goffman (1963) sees the rules pertaining to this area of conduct as situational properties. Codes derived therefrom are to be distinguished from other moral codes regulating other aspects of life (even if these sometimes apply at the same time as the situational code): for example, codes of honor, regulating relationships; codes of law, regulating economic and political matters; and codes of ethics, regulating professional life (p. 24).
embedded in the societal context, something that underlines how they often differ according to culture, gender and social class. From this follows that the appropriateness of a feeling is not something that could be inferred by examining the feeling in itself, but only in comparison with the implicit rules that frame our social interaction. Since these rules are mainly tacit knowledge, they are essentially presented to us by the reaction from our surroundings when a rule is broken. In our working life, Bolton (2005) comments that even if feeling rules are only one dimension of organisational life combined with policies, hierarchies, contracts, divisions of labour and status positions, feeling rules will have an impact on all these other dimensions. Moreover, feeling rules may be negotiated and changed and new feeling rules created, but feeling rules also stand over and above organisational actors informing and shaping the emotional life of an organisation.

If feeling rules establish a sense of entitlement or obligation and provide a guide to the outlook of our emotional exchanges, emotion management is the adjustment we make when we ‘actively try to change a pre-existing emotional state’ (Hochschild, 1983, p. 229). Even if it is widely acknowledged that corporate norms regulate human behaviour in professional life (Kanter, 1977; Jackall, 1988; Van Maanen & Kunda, 1989; Kunda, 2006), Hochschild takes this notion one step further and introduces the term ‘emotional labour’ to describe emotion management with a ‘profit motive slipped under it’ (1983, p. 119). With departure in studies in the service sector, she highlights how emotional expressions aimed at making favourable impression on clients often mean that personal feelings need to be used instrumentally.

In essence, emotion management ‘work’ means adjusting either a facial or bodily emotional expression or changing emotions ‘within’. One important difference in this perspective, compared to, for instance, stress management theories, is that emotion management concerns adjustment of feelings in a broader span, from interpretation of the situation and control of spontaneous emotions to holding back emotions and also changing one’s own emotions as well as the emotions of others (Hochschild, 1979, 1983). For her and most scholars within this field, employees have few direct ways of dodging the organizationally prescribed feeling rules, and adapting accordingly amounts to considerable emotion work for the individual. However, Sharon Bolton (2005), another scholar repeatedly referred to here, asserts that professionals such as lawyers and doctors usually avoid the emotional costs coupled to frequent emotion management by distancing themselves from too much engagement in their clients. A more detailed discussion on

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10 For the individual, this means that every social encounter contains an element of risk, but the social order of interaction is there to minimize the risk and to make sure that the treatment of others is done with ‘ritual care’ (Goffman, 1967, p. 39; Bolton, 2005).

11 The use of the word ‘work’ to describe the management of emotion underlines that it is something that is actively done to feelings.
Hochschild’s and Bolton’s respective emotion management theories will now be presented.\(^{12}\)

Emotion management and the four essays

The aim of this section is to give a background to the theoretical framework chosen for essays I, III & IV, while in essay II, the emotion management demands reside in the subtext.

Amy Wharton (2009) concludes in an overview that the central concept in Hochschild’s influential work, *The Managed Heart* (1983), ‘emotional labour’, has inspired an outpouring of research and made spectacular impact on sociological understanding of workers and jobs in a wide range of organizations. Two major streams of research are outlined for this classic term in the emotion sociology field. The first includes studies of interactive work. The research here focuses more directly on emotions and their management by workers, where the concept ‘emotional labour’ is seen as a vehicle for the understanding of the organization, structure and social relations of, predominantly, service jobs. The other approach is instead focused on the individuals’ efforts to express and regulate emotions and the consequences of these efforts.

Although this thesis contains elements of both these applications described by Wharton (2009),\(^ {13}\) instead of Hochschild’s (1983) emotional labour theory, the development of this theory made by Bolton (2005) was mainly chosen for analyzing the incessant requirements for emotion management during service abroad. As will be seen, elements of Hochschild’s emotion management theory as a more general concept are applied in essay IV, while the analysis in essay I, the essay that most fully outlines the thesis’ main arguments, refers to Bolton’s (2005) development of Hochschild’s theory, first presented in Bolton (2000a) and Bolton & Boyd (2003). A typology that is further described in Bolton’s *Emotion Management in the Workplace* (2005) has been a great inspiration for this thesis’ analysis.

Bolton and Boyd (2003) suggest that instead of Hochschild’s view that one concept (i.e. emotional labour) captures all emotion management demands at work, organizational actors are able to draw on different sets of feeling rules according to context and their

\(^{12}\) None of these scholars see adjustments to institutionalized feeling rules as a potential expression of a sincere emotion (i.e. a real emotion, spontaneous or managed, not an empty expression). For a further discussion on emotion and authenticity in their respective works, see Salmela & Mayer (2009, p. 135-140).

\(^{13}\) Essay I, and to some extent essay II, bears affinity with the first category of interactive work studies, whilst essay III and IV focus on the consequences of these demands and organizational members’ efforts and emotion management work.
individual motivations to do so, for reasons such as legitimacy, conformity, instrumentality and/or empathy (p. 295). This is the main argument for why the typology further developed by Bolton is especially well suited to reflect distinctive facets of Swedish soldiers’ service in PSO, as it offers a more multifaceted framework outlining both organizational, professional, and social feeling rules’ impact on the employee’s motivation, professional identity, and performance. This comment will now be developed somewhat more closely.

As previously mentioned, Hochschild’s emotional labour concept has been popular among researchers studying a wide range of occupational groups (even if Hochschild herself claims that her theory is meant to be applicable to service workers in the private sector). On the other hand, Bolton’s (2005) typology also applies to professional groups within both public and private sectors. Moreover, her writings include examples of how professional and semi-professional groups in organizations may handle emotional demands in a different way than workers in the service sector.

Further, Hochschild’s (1983) thesis on the uniformly negative impact of emotion management for individuals is a point that has come to be questioned. Bolton (2000b, 2005) sees this view as too one-sided and negative and asserts that voluntary subjection to emotion management can also occur, as well as a personal desire to ‘do good’, i.e. when people voluntarily engage in supportive relationships at the work place, something that may also be a source of professional satisfaction for the employee. This point is especially relevant here since the group under study consists of voluntary, highly motivated soldiers, whose narratives give evidence of personal satisfaction in ‘doing good’, which is frequently integral to their motivation for serving abroad.

Moreover, Bolton’s criticism involves Hochschild’s division of the emotion management performed in the private sphere (‘emotion work’), and that performed within the realms of paid labour, a division that neglects the fact that actors also bring their ‘private’ selves into the work place and consequently also engage in emotion management in relation to colleagues (Bolton, 2005). Even if Hochschild mentions the possibility of ‘emotion management as a gift’, her focus is not on ways in which people at work engage with others emotionally that are not directly tied into the formal job requirements (Bolton, 2005). Considering that living conditions for soldiers abroad often means 2-4 of them

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14 With reference to, among others, Bolton & Boyd (2003), this point is somewhat lax in Hochschild (2009), where she too recognizes that emotional labourers can take pride in doing this work well (p. 114).

15 Hochschild goes on to reinforce this view in her later work (1990, p. 118).

16 In an invited commentary in International Journal of Work Organisation and Emotion (2009), she somewhat clarifies her point with regard to this division. Hochschild here takes the example of the truck driver that may feel friendly toward fellow drivers and hear out his boss’s bad family news, or the plumber who relates to customers and co-workers in a way that requires minimal relational skills. The important difference is that relating to others in these occupations is seldom the centerpiece of the job description (p. 119).
share accommodation in containers only big enough for the beds, and that borders between work and free time are most fluid in this context, the division made in Hochschild’s emotional labour theory must be looked upon as less applicable in this context. It goes without saying that requirements for social adjustment to colleagues on missions abroad are quite extreme compared to most other jobs, where there are more distinct work-free zones for privacy and recreation.

Another point of special interest for this thesis and the context of the expeditionary service is stressed by Bolton & Boyd (2003) and Bolton (2005), namely that previous research has had a tendency to overlook possible conflict or contradiction between different emotion demands within the same organization. The presence of this aspect of emotion management demands in peace support operations will be illustrated in the essays below.

That the employer has the privilege of applying his interpretation of events is another central aspect of Hochschild’s definition of emotional labour. It is the employer who decides the appropriate emotional expression and who also checks that instructions are followed. In the case of the military operations described here, however, commanders can hardly prescribe any of this in advance, and the leadership doctrine of mission command (MC) is partly applied to compensate for this. Mission command means that the commanders state objectives and guidelines for execution and follow up the results, but give relative freedom in terms of actual execution, something that places greater responsibility on how tasks are dealt with at lower hierarchical command.

In summary, the section above has aimed to give a more detailed description of the theoretical frameworks chosen for this thesis and to describe the reasons for why Bolton’s emotion management theory can be seen to be very relevant to the context under study, and even more so than the more influential emotional labour theory developed by Hochschild (1983). The application of emotion sociology’s central theoretical concepts in military sociology and the context of peace support operations will now be discussed.

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17 For an example of a scholar writing in defence of Bolton’s comprehensive critique of Hochschild’s emotional labour concept, see Brook (2009).
Emotions and military sociology

Generally speaking, emotions have not been a central focus in military sociology, and the main theoretical concepts of this thesis, feeling rules and emotion management, even less so. One contributing reason may be that military practice has received scant focus within military sociology (Ydén, 2008, p. 31). Nevertheless, some studies indirectly address emotions in writings on military leadership, discipline, cohesion, morale and esprit de corps.¹⁸ Eyal Ben-Ari (1998) notes that members of military organizations are open to cultural management of feelings and sentiments on two levels. Obviously, feelings are managed and monitored in a manner that will allow soldiers to perform and achieve military tasks (essentially to accomplish combinations of destruction, domination and defence), but the regulation of emotionality is also carried out in so far as it is administered in the process. Accordingly, on one level, feelings are mobilized toward the achievement of tasks (that is, in motivating soldiers); at another level they are regulated within the tasks themselves (p. 108).

One example of an indirect study of collective emotion management in the Swedish Armed Forces is military sociologist Klas Borell’s (2004) dissertation, Disciplinära strategier (Disciplinary strategies). Borell argues that the SAF have induced soldiers to enhance operational effectiveness through two different disciplinary strategies. The first, a classic chain of command, is called a mechanical disciplinary strategy advocating conformity of collective action, whilst the other, an organic disciplinary strategy is based on the ideals of Mission Command (MC) and the self-monitored group (see also Janowitz, 1965, p. 41-48). Another example is Goffman’s (1961b) writings on total institutions, views that have been frequently adapted by military sociologists when defining military life and its means of socialization and where control and discipline of soldiers’ mental, emotional and physical dispositions are key issues. However, the emotional organization outlined in the following is different from Goffman’s original ideas, since it consists of highly motivated volunteers operating abroad.

Operations abroad are inherently characterized by a high degree of unpredictability and the planning of actions in these is often synonymous with ‘organizing doubt’¹⁹ (Kramer, 2004). The operations are also often spread out geographically, often requiring soldiers to face difficult dilemmas and make their own adequate decisions.²⁰ Even if formal rules and regulations may still be bountiful and conformity and attention to detail may be praised, preparing for the unknown means that the traditional, mechanical control and chain of

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¹⁸ All credit to Eyal Ben-Ari for this comment.
¹⁹ The combat situation is naturally also a situation characterized by unpredictability. For further comments on this topic, see for example Janowitz (1965, p. 42); Abrahamsson (2008, p. 151).
²⁰ It should be noted, however, that although MC stresses the importance of initiative, it places a firm top-down fence around the self-organizing activities that are considered to be acceptable (Kramer, 2004, p. 213).
command must by necessity be transformed into the more organic, value-oriented leadership doctrine, Mission Command (Borell, 2004), used today in all the Swedish Armed Forces’ educational programmes, both at home and abroad. The Swedish military sociologist who most thoroughly answers to the purpose of outlining distinctive features of emotional expressions in both war and peace support operations is Bengt Abrahamsson (2008), whose ideas are reflected below.

Emotion management demands in Peace Support Operations

Military organizations are perhaps not the first thing one would associate with emotions. What you see in parades and ceremonies is most often a disciplined, rigid group of people, with solemn neutral faces and in conforming dress. Most often, emotional control and discipline are also portrayed in popular culture as some of the hallmarks of the military organization. On the battlefield, however, the situation is very different, with strong and unbridled emotions such as courage, fright, horror, rage, and fury seen as natural characteristics of the battle (Abrahamsson, 2008). In peace support operations the proposed emotional expressions are often quite the opposite. Showing strong emotions in these contexts may be both counterproductive and highly inappropriate, the ultimate reasons behind these deployments being quite different from most angles, i.e. object, aim, methods, and means. You have no specific enemy to fight – rather there are competing groups and former warring factions (FWF) that must be prevented from creating instability or anarchy. Fundamentally, your position as a third party should be upheld, implying that you stay impartial to avoid being accused of favouring any of the conflicting parties. The use of or threat of using force must be kept to a minimum, as must uncontrolled emotions which can cause uneasiness and hostility among those whose ‘hearts and minds’ you try to win. ‘Angry soldiers are poor peacekeepers’ (Abrahamsson, 2008, p. 149).

As an operational soldier in a PSO context, there are consequently many tacit feeling rules to adhere to. You must be able to adjust your facial and bodily expression of emotions in a way that serves the military task and the situation at hand. For example, you should not display fear when patrolling a village by foot, even if you know that the identification of friend or foe is very difficult. Neither should you display apprehension or weakness in front of a possible aggressor, nor openly venture your personal wishes, for instance, to give support to civilians in need. What you are supposed to do is to stay firm, fair and friendly or in other ways behave in a manner that may also change other people’s feelings in a positive direction for the task. It goes without saying that this often involves considerable emotion management work.
The most important formal rules are likely those that regulate when to use force and against whom (i.e. Rules of Engagement, ROE). These rules are usually very detailed, even if there are often changes over the course of a tour. When it comes to individual conduct, however, what you have are essentially general recommendations. Foreseeing and regulating in any detail the correct behaviour in most situations is of course impossible, so these important decisions must be more or less improvised by the soldiers themselves. One scenario illustrates how creativity and a considerable amount of emotion management helped a group of Swedish soldiers to get out of a precarious situation in the Balkans. The Swedes, who were serving with the Swedish peacekeeping force in Bosnia, were stopped at a temporary checkpoint set up by Bosniak soldiers. When about 20 other soldiers belonging to an elite ‘Muslim’ unit arrived, the situation became tense. What the Swedes did, with the help of their interpreter, was to offer coffee and buns, explaining that this was what you did when meeting neighbours back home. At first the soldiers were bewildered, but after some hesitation the offer was accepted, the weather and other generalities were discussed and eventually the Swedes were able to turn back (Tillberg et al., 2008, p. 81f).

This encounter highlights how a range of displays and emotion management acts may be required when managing emotions in order to successfully manipulate other people’s feelings. This tallies with a central theme in Goffman’s writings, suggesting that social interaction implies that people, like actors on a stage, play different roles and that the greater the complexity involved in an encounter, the larger the repertoire of roles required to manage the situation. Taking the theatre scene as a reference point and metaphor, Goffman sees people as social actors who are highly flexible and capable of moral commitment, and whose activities take place within multiple and layered frameworks of action (Goffman, 1967; Bolton, 2005).

Tom Blix (2007) who has interviewed Norwegian soldiers about their expectations and experiences of service in Afghanistan, found Goffman’s (1961a) role theory very useful. However, socialization to the different roles as soldier, squad member, and professional often has historical roots whereby soldiers have undergone a long socialization process through which they acquire ‘the social knowledge and skills necessary to assume an organizational role’ (Arkin & Dobrofsky, 1978, p. 157). Nonetheless, this soldier role does not always meet the demands and challenges of a foreign, ambiguous, and uncertain theatre. Blix argues that the Defence Forces have a serious responsibility as the providers of role development for young men who find themselves in an environment of power where arms and violence are the tools of the trade (p. 8). Previous research also tells us that re-learning and downplaying of the warrior identification is difficult for some groups of soldiers and also undesirable for others (Miller, 1997; Tripodi, 2001, 2003; Sion, 2006).
According to Janowitz (1965), the goal of military authority, in ideal terms, is to create stable and purposeful involvement at each level in the hierarchy of ranks (p. 44). The next section briefly discusses possible reasons for Swedish soldiers’ willingness to adjust to both formal and informal feeling rules, also to a point of self-imposed normative control (Taylor & Bain, 1999; Raz, 2002; Kunda, 2006). Importantly though, even if there are many possible reasons for these voluntary adjustments, this certainly does not mean that the emotion management work coupled to the fulfilment of these demands is negligible.

**Emotion management and normative control**

At the time of the data collection, the Swedish Armed Forces had not yet transformed into a professional force, which is why the mission units mainly consisted of highly motivated former conscripts, the majority of whom were civilians who had volunteered for six months of service abroad. The interviews reflect an amalgam of motives, in which a combination of humanitarian and self-realization motives dominate. With this in mind, it is interesting to reflect upon the Swedish soldiers’ use of the word ‘baccis’ during international operations. In soldier lingo, the term generally applies to situations and ‘cushy’ tasks that can be defined as non-important and ‘nicer than necessary’, and leading to small benefits in general. One soldier deployed to Kosovo expressed his idea of a ‘baccis trip’ in the following way:

> I really don’t know (where it comes from), but it is very common down there, baccis. It’s when you potter and hang around without doing anything special really. You might go and shop at another camp, and it has nothing to do with your service.

On expeditionary service, baccis is consequently used as a sort of gentle insult, ensuring that an appropriate status-division is recognized between ‘real’ and ‘non’ work. Bolton (2005) suggests that the closest group you work with is the most effective in signalling emotion management demands, as is the group of people with whom you spend most of your time. In an organization, the very existence of an informal term such as ‘baccis’ indicates the strength of the work ethos in itself, signalling the tacit feeling rule that you should always perform your best. The use of such terminology can also be seen as a form

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21 For further writings on normative control in today’s missions abroad, see Nørgaard & Holsting (2006).
22 From the 1st of July 2010 Sweden entered a new human resource management system with contracted soldiers.
23 The original Arabic term ‘Bakshis’, refers to “a relatively small amount of money given for service rendered” (http://www.thefreedictionary.com/bakshis), and the phrase has been circulating in the expeditionary force since the 1950s (Agrell, 2000).
of social control and an internal regulator, guaranteeing an acceptable level of performance without the need to report violation of standards. However, the most important thing here is that use of the term ‘baccis’ illustrates how soldiers are not only willing to submit themselves to the organisational and professional feeling rules (Bolton, 2005) at hand, but also to breach social feeling rules to correct and regulate other people’s performances. Moreover, it illustrates that the borders between formal and informal feeling rules are sometimes more illusory than actual. For the Swedish soldiers, the fact that they often mentioned other nations’ more relaxed attitude to work performance as a source of frustration with these countries is further discussed in essay II.

The above shows some resemblance to Willis’s (1977, see also Collinson, 1992) portrayal of how the central culture among young male factory workers revolved around gaining informal control over the work process. Moreover, it also reflects observations made by Ben-Ari (1998), who asserts that the military does not just train men or dispose them to think and act in a certain manner once they are civilians. To be successful, ideologies must appeal to and activate pre-existing cultural understandings that are themselves compelling (p. 117). Willis’s study revealed how the character of tedious and low-skilled factory work was re-framed into male heroic confrontations with (hard) tasks, with the aim of shifting the focus away from the fact that you had to submit to such tasks to the strength it took to endure them (p. 150). Hard physical labour was further connected to a socially superior masculinity while the symbolic value of intellectual work was bound to a socially inferior femininity (p. 149). That service in an expeditionary force similarly invokes wider

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24A complementary emotion sociological perspective that may explain soldiers’ wish to serve abroad is Randall Collins’ (1981, 2004) theory on emotions, power, and status, focusing on how social interaction in micro-situations can be described as interactional ritual chains, in which emotions are highly constitutive. Emotional energy is produced by every experience of successfully negotiating a membership ritual and the more powerful the group within which one successfully negotiates ritual solidarity, the greater the emotional confidence one receives from it. Moreover, the interaction in itself serves as a machine for intensifying emotion and for generating new emotional tones and solidarities (1981, p. 1001). Collins’ concept ‘emotional energy’ bears affinity with the Hebrew concept of ‘gibush’, a well-recognized pillar of military cohesion in the Israeli Defence Force (IDF) (Ben-Ari, 1998). The gibush metaphor, translated as ‘crystallization’, implies that the internal strength and solidarity of both the individual and the group flow from the unifying sense of belonging, of being securely together ‘in place’, whereas the social ideal of gibush involves an emphasis on joint endeavours, on cooperation and shared sentiments, on solidarity and a sense of togetherness (p. 98). For further reading on the topic of emotions, power, and status, see also Kemper (1978). Central to Kemper’s integrated relational model is the notion that the dimensions power and status are either in abundance or deficit in any relationship, and that social interaction should be understood in this light. The model moreover connects specific physiological processes to certain experiences of power and status and is described by Barbalet (2002) as ‘a beautiful way of linking biology and sociology in an entirely non-reductive way’ (p. 3).
cultural understandings about manhood can be inferred from the fact that constructions of masculinity are often mentioned as highly constitutive of army culture (see Herbert, 1998; Winslow, 2000; Winslow & Dunn, 2002).

In the above it has been suggested that the strong normative feature of peace support operations, a self-organizing leadership doctrine, Mission Command, and connections made between hard work and constructions of masculinity likely contribute to Swedish soldiers’ willingness to manage their emotions in accordance with organizational objectives. Another influential factor might be the recruitment situation per se, where great numbers of soldiers compete for available slots in contingents to be deployed abroad. Nevertheless, even if soldiers quite willingly submit themselves to normative control (Kunda, 2006), this does not mean that submissiveness applies to every aspect of the service. Bolton (2005) stresses how the notion of ‘rules’ should not make us assume the existence of rule-bound behaviour, a point that will be further illustrated in the essays. A humorous discourse of anonymous workplace signs also reflects that soldiers have various complaints and concerns during their service abroad (see essay III).
3. EMOTION DEMANDS BOTH OVERLOOKED AND UNDERESTIMATED

This chapter discusses why even though emotion management demands are a recurrent facet of soldiers’ work in peace support operations, they are not noticed as such by the Swedish Armed Forces.

Elster (1999) claims that cultural influence on our view on emotions is mainly shown in three ways: I) in the labelling of emotions, II) in the evaluation of emotions, and III) in the determination of those behaviours that tend to trigger specific emotions (p. 412). This schematic understanding may be used as a background to the fact that while all human interaction involves some form of ‘feeling work’ (Hochschild, 1979, 1983) this is most often a disregarded fact. The aim of this chapter is to illustrate some central notions that can be said to have characterized the Swedish Armed Forces’ reasoning in terms of demands for emotion management abroad. The presentation also highlights the relatively low status that has been and still is ascribed to the role of the peacekeeper in many countries. After many years of socialization that combat is the military’s core task, it follows quite naturally that soldiers mainly identify themselves with the ‘warrior’. Even if the latter is not very pronounced among the Swedish soldiers under study (see also Hedlund, 2011), a similar tendency, sometimes expressed ironically, can be observed here too (see essay III).

Four reasons are here suggested as the main contributors to the scant interest from military authorities in emotion management requirements during peace support operations, and especially those in low-intensity conflict areas. The first reason is that soldiers’ emotion management skills have been taken for granted. The second reason is coupled with the prevalent view that emotions can easily be taken care of, a view that is here labelled ‘hydraulic’. This means that even if emotions are generated on one occasion, they can be locked up and let out somewhere else (i.e. in debriefing sessions or in after-action reviews). The third reason is the view of emotions as irrational and the very opposite of sense, a notion that has gained credence in the military world, and is strongly linked to the presumed demands on soldiers in combat and conventional war. The fourth and last suggested reason why management of the broad range of feelings precipitated during service abroad has remained unnoticed has to do with the soldiers themselves. Since soldiers’ espoused values have been geared towards combat skills, this group is little inclined to initiate a feedback loop to headquarters where a more accurate image of the character of the demands for emotion management in theatre is presented.

Before describing the above propositions in more detail, at least one overarching development that has influenced all these aspects should be mentioned.
The paradigmatic shift of military tasks from defending Sweden in Sweden to international engagements has been a slow turn that has also had consequences for soldiers’ training before deployments abroad (see also Ydén & Hasselblad, 2010). In his forthcoming dissertation, Granberg describes how missions abroad were long regarded as being on the very periphery of the hegemonic machinery set on defending Swedish territory despite the fact that commissions abroad at the time yearly engaged more than 3,000 individuals. Consequently, until the end of the 1990s, regularly employed staff’s participation in these missions was mainly regarded as a deviation and temporary excursion from core activities organized around the training of conscripts in combat skills and the defence of Swedish territory. In a similar vein, recognition was not given career wise to officers who did serve abroad (Ydén, 2005, p. 92). The internal downplaying of the importance of international missions has had the result that the Swedish Armed Forces have not developed any professionalization process around the only real military experience that has been available (Ibid, p. 92). This in turn contributed to overlooking and delaying the analysis of the new tasks abroad and the demands connected to them. (For a comprehensive account of the reform from territorial defence to operational readiness see Haldén, 2007).

One further illustration of the difference today and only ten years ago can be found when comparing the Swedish Armed Forces’ Military strategic doctrine from 2002 and 2011 respectively. It is striking how the objective in the first doctrine is to act in situations that can predominantly be classified as conventional warfare, while in the latter this has been modified to also include operational abilities on the opposite side of the spectrum, i.e. peace-building, conflict prevention and state building. How the conditions above might have influenced the underestimation of the emotional load in today’s missions abroad will be outlined in more detail below.

Emotion management skills are taken for granted

A widespread expectation in Sweden is that recruitment can solve almost everything. Through successful recruitment it would be possible to find soldiers with natural aptitude and skills to also master extensive demands for emotion management. The magnitude of these demands is reflected in a keynote speech made by Brigadier General Karl Engelbrektsson, Force Commander of the soon-to-be Nordic Battle Group of 2008, at the Annual National Conference Folk och Försvar (Society and Defence) in 2007. The ideal soldier is described as a ‘woolly jumper softie and mother-in-law’s dream who can switch to handling weapons and killing in a matter of seconds’ (my translation). Engelbrektsson

25 Military strategic doctrines state the military’s objectives and specify the means and methods that will be used to achieve these goals.
is well aware that the fulfilment of these demands must also be focused upon in training and that the problem is how. Yet any awareness of this in the pre-deployment training for the soldiers under study here was not identified. The rhetoric of assumed competences amongst Swedish soldiers can also be found on SAF’s homepage in statements conveying the sentiment that the organization ‘trusts’ young men and women to have an ‘inner moral compass’ to meet the challenges in theatre, for instance in encounters with traumatized civilians.\(^{26}\) Arguably, trusting a person’s ability to manage a job is at the same time part-abdication from the responsibility to follow up whether the presumed match is working or not, and at whose expense.

Emotions can be stored and ‘let out’

The Swedish Armed Forces’ view on emotion management demands can also be described as a hydraulic model of behaviour. This view suggests that feelings evolve in certain (stressful) situations, after which they can be stored and vented in other contexts (i.e. debriefing and after-action reviews). Putting aside very mechanical thinking in handling emotional difficulties, there seems to be no scientific evidence that debriefing will function in the promised ways. British researchers (see Thomas et al., 2006) comment that this is one reason why the British Army, for example, has ceased this practice.\(^{27}\) However, the purpose here is not to specifically judge the utility of these methods, as this has been done elsewhere (see Michel, 2005, p. 14-17, for a review).

We can only conclude that from a military point of view it is important that soldiers’ feelings are vented immediately in theatre, to prevent them from being an obstacle to operational performance. On return to Sweden, similar debriefing sessions take place twice, firstly, as part of the immediate home-coming program and then at the compulsory reunion six-months later. Most of these sessions are conducted on squad level and the discussion chairman is often a civilian who lacks personal experience of service abroad. Moreover, apart from the problem involved in letting feelings out in formalized settings, the group situation may hamper soldiers’ inclinations to express themselves. In theatre, concerns about the impact on future peer assessment, as well as group norms can interfere. Essay III in this thesis illustrates, for example, that there certainly are emotions, also of quite a serious character, that are not easily expressed in group sessions, but concealed in humorous messages and complaints and spread through anonymous channels. One central difference between the hydraulic perspective and the anonymous

\(^{26}\) http://www.forsvarsmakten.se/sv/Om-Forsvarsmakten/uppdrag
\(^{27}\) For a detailed account on the British Army’s present approach; Trauma Risk Management (TRiM), see Greenberg et al. (2008).
release of emotions as described in essay III, is that the latter involves more of an irregular and gradual release and is a spontaneous activity initiated by soldiers, while the debriefing sessions are part of standing procedures and hence governed by command.

The importance attributed to the hydraulic view also stands in contrast with bearing ideas put forward in this thesis from another perspective. Whilst in the first case, the soldiers’ release of feelings is seen as unconducive to work and something that must be removed, the alternative perspective presented in this thesis states that emotion management demands stem from the immediate social and professional situational requirements and hence cannot be negotiated away. Since emotions are part of all human interaction they can never by their nature be subversive to the objectives of military operations, a point that is also connected to the next reason to be presented.

Emotions are irrational and an obstacle to operational effectiveness

Long before Jane Austen (1811) created agony for Elinor and her sisters in her famous novel, *Sense and sensibility*, the dichotomy between these concepts had been firmly established. Different époques have favoured one before the other. During the Enlightenment, reason was seen as superior, whilst feelings were heralded during the Romantic period. The legacy of a distinction between emotion and sense is also often mentioned as one of the reasons for why emotions have traditionally been given the stepmother treatment in the social sciences (Hochschild, 1983; Ashforth & Humphrey, 1995; Fineman, 2000; Barbalet, 2001; Dahlgren & Starrin, 2004; Bolton, 2005), and likewise in a military context. Moreover, since masculinity and femininity are the cultural creations of a gender hierarchy linked to one another in a relationship of complementarity and opposition (Delphy, 2002, p. 56), the negative view of emotions in the context under study here is in all likelihood reinforced by the connection traditionally made between women and characteristics such as irrationality, subjectivity and chaos (Lutz, 2007, p. 20).

Hochschild (1983) summons two common barriers into any serious inquiry on the matter of feelings. The first is the practice among social scientists of ignoring it or subsuming it under other categories, and the second is the acceptance of several ideas about emotion that confuse any discussion of it. One example of the latter is the strong connection between emotion and irrationality here discussed. Hochschild comments that a man who feels fear at the sight of a rattlesnake moving toward him may run to safety and hence act rationally. Were he not afraid, he might not run, which, in the absence of other forms of protection, would be irrational (p. 214). From this example we can conclude that emotions can never be accused of propelling irrational behaviour per se.  

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For a discussion of how emotions are in fact ‘rational’, see Sayer (2011).
Few commanders would contest that emotions have effects on operational effectiveness but the impact has mostly been seen as negative (Janis, 1949; Ben-Ari, 1998; Horn, 2004). Even if Abrahamsson (2008), as mentioned previously, describes the venting of strong emotions as a characteristic of conventional wars, emotions have for the most part been regarded as a disruptive and irrational factor.\(^{29}\) The main reason is likely that when soldiers experience fear and horror, it can lead to passiveness and in the worst case, paralysis or other irrational behaviours that cannot be foreseen in the tactical planning (Horn, 2004). Because emotions may impede the performance of military tasks, they must be overcome, channelled and above all controlled. When the Israeli researcher Eyal Ben-Ari (1998) talks about passiveness without paralysis, he claims that this is in fact what we often mean by emotion control in combat (p. 45), something that also indirectly explains the strong figurative link made in the military context between emotional control, rationality and survival.

Ben-Ari refers to interviews with soldiers who had either served during Israel’s invasion of Lebanon or participated in post-invasion military operations in the southern part of that country. A platoon commander explains how he successively wiped away his emotions during one of these battles:

> During the first time there was a feeling between dread and tautness for combat, for the ‘real thing’. But the minute it happens, you become an automaton, and it expresses itself in the cancellation of emotions….During the skirmishes you are a soldier and that’s it. It’s amazing….There’s nothing emotional about the situation. You shoot, even without thinking about self defence. It is a natural mechanism that works like an electric switch….During the activity (skirmish) one of my soldiers got killed. I looked at him and continued to attack. It didn’t do anything to me – no emotional reaction. I acted properly and continued to shoot. On the one hand, it’s completely irrational; and, on the other hand, it’s absolutely rational...

(Ben-Ari, 1998, p. 64)

Above, emotion control, in the sense of being unaffected by emotion, is figuratively linked to the ugly duties in war (i.e. to fight down the enemy), the likely reason why soldiers are inclined to interpret the behaviour of killing as rational when set in a war context vacuumed of emotion. The quotation is in line with Bolton’s (2005) description of how classic writers within organization theory (for example Weber, Taylor and Fayol) saw the organizational actor as an unfeeling automaton, who blindly behaves according to corporate regulations within the formal organization. If emotions are mentioned at all, they are supposed to be ‘excluded’, ‘controlled’, ‘subordinated’ and, at all costs, ‘avoided’.

\(^{29}\) See also Holmes (1985) and Katz’s (1990) work on military drill that reveal how emotions are regarded as obstacles to military performance due to connotations of a lack of emotional control with uncontrolled behavior.
It is easy to agree with Bolton’s comment that such a narrow view, which so devoutly believes in its ability to control all aspects of organizational life, also makes it impossible to understand anything but the formal aspect of organizational life (p. 18f). When dominating images like these are superimposed on soldiers’ work, emotion control becomes the only act, a view that differs from that taken here of a range of emotion management demands in missions abroad.

Soldiers’ espoused values are geared towards combat skills

As previously described, the Swedish Armed Forces kept for long time a modus operandi geared towards conventional war and territorial defence. Combat skills were consequently at the core of conscripts’ training and mindset. Granberg (forthcoming), having investigated the character of Swedish soldiers’ preparations for missions abroad, comments that these from the 1990s and onwards, have been orientated towards combat skills. These were also assumed to be required among the Swedish units deployed to the Balkans (Henricsson, 1998; Karlsson, 2004). The underlying cause was the assumption that if you can manage the worst (i.e. combat) you can manage the rest (i.e. peacekeeping). An often quoted remark from former U.N. Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld can be seen as underlining something of the same: ‘Peacekeeping is not a job for a soldier, but only a soldier can do it’. Peacekeeping is also often described as an inherently ambiguous process (Segal, Segal & Eyre, 1992; Britt, 1998; Winslow, 2000). There is a long and ongoing debate in the literature on peace support operations with regard to this dilemma, and preparations for these operations have often been criticized for having many gaps (Bleumink et al., 2003) or for being blatantly misleading (Sion, 2006).

The contingents under study in this thesis are no exceptions to the above. Even if these units were deployed to conflict areas with low threat levels, the soldiers’ preparations were predominantly geared towards combat skills. This was also something that most soldiers seemed to have no objections to. One reason was of course that they were actually positioned in an area that was potentially violent and unsafe and where a cautious attitude based on ‘you never know’ had to be adopted. Another might be that combat equals status, connected to a system of differentiation (Zugbach, 1988), where power and prestige are unevenly distributed amongst the arms, and technical and support arms are in a subordinate position to the battlefield arms. As a result, more prestige devolves upon

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30 The implementation of soft knowledge can also meet with resistance, especially in units in which members strongly identify themselves as warriors, usually most characteristic for all voluntary forces (AVF) (Tripodi, 2003).

31 According to Janowitz (1965), the military exhibits extreme status sensitivity, a concern that can be traced not only to the hierarchical organizations of the armed forces but also to the relatively low
members of units seen as more central to the job of soldiering (p. 171). The soldiers’ appreciation, at least in theory, for TIC (troops in contact), is moreover often described as the only way you can actually test your skills. The point here is that soldiers generally do not mind combat training and would perhaps sometimes like their commission to be more challenging than it actually is (see also Sion, 2006). As a consequence, this can make them less inclined to express demands generated from other sources than combat-like events, no matter how strong.

In summary, the above presentation has outlined some possible reasons for why the management of emotion demands have so far been both overlooked and underestimated by Swedish military authorities and consequently also hidden from insight by the soldiers themselves. The presentation suggests that the Swedish Armed Forces and the military at large have often viewed emotions either as something that soldiers can easily manage and that can be ‘vented’, or as something irrational that soldiers preferably should prevent themselves from being overcome by in connection with combat or other traumas. A development that has likely influenced the soldiers’ notions of these demands is that the pre-deployment training connected to missions abroad has predominantly been oriented towards combat skills. Even if the latter is still needed as a last resort, even in peace support missions, the argument put forward here is that if ‘troops in contact’ are to remain the main focus, this will block important knowledge about other sources of emotion demands on missions abroad and the management of these by the soldiers.

Concluding remarks and a summary of the thesis’ contributions

Alvesson & Empson (2008) urge scholars to have the ambition to say something of larger relevance than their own data (see also Alvesson & Kärreman, 2011). All scholars should ask themselves if their work has any merit in terms of innovation or simply regards social behaviour from a new aspect that they render a new name. In a narrow sense, the basic findings of this study reveal nothing new. Organizations have always been sites where people engage with their emotions. What is exceptional is that in the contingents studied here, where social interaction is key, there is very little talk about emotions and their management.

In a similar vein, Ydén (2008) comments that there is an absence of discourse within the Swedish Armed Forces about the subject of death and killing (p. 77, 136) and that the prospect of casualties is not discussed at any length in military program-based training (2005, p. 77), also with reference to an article in Officerstidningen 2006/6 and reports of a major receiving internal criticism for trying to include awareness of these facets of war in the officers’ training.

prestige of the organization in the eyes of civilians, and that conditions the conception that the military profession holds of itself (p. 39-40).
There are two connected observations in this thesis that contribute to the military practice. The first proposes that both emotion demands and emotional costs are inherent facets of mission life irrespective of mission area. From this follows that a distinction between high- and low-intensity conflict areas is not applicable when dealing with emotion management demands. Secondly, the thesis challenges well-established notions of the character of the emotion management requirements. Instead of seeing emotions as something that should preferably be controlled, avoided and/or otherwise disposed of, continuous emotion management work is viewed here as a prerequisite and at the core of soldiers’ work and living experience abroad. Hence, in contrast to a view stating that the successful soldier is someone with control in the sense that he ‘lacks’ feeling towards what he is doing, this thesis argues that soldiers’ emotion work when choosing, modelling, managing, and displaying the ‘right’ emotional expression is what it takes to get the job done.

As previously mentioned in the introduction, the thesis’ scholarly contributions are of essentially two kinds. Firstly, a more comprehensive perspective on emotion management demands is presented to the military sociological literature, and secondly, since there has been no previous analysis of military missions in the emotion sociological literature it introduces a new empirical field to this discipline.
4. RESEARCH DESIGN

In this section, I outline how the data collection and research design has enabled me to address the research questions and come to the conclusions presented.

As has been made clear, the main objective of this thesis is to highlight how external demands for emotion management are reflected in soldiers’ experiences and perceptions of service abroad. The approach used to address this question is a qualitative one. Following Van Maanen (1983), the term ‘qualitative’ is often used as an umbrella term covering an array of interpretative techniques which seek to describe, decode, translate or otherwise try to catch the meaning, not the frequency, of certain more or less naturally occurring phenomena in the social world (p. 9). Lindlof & Taylor (2002) describe that ethnographers will basically turn to any method that will help them to achieve success. The comment is a valid description of the multi-method design used for the data collection in this thesis, including repeated interviews, photographs, image/text-analysis and observation.

In the sense that I have observed, described, interpreted and explained something within the frame of a new context (Danermark, et al, 2002, p. 90f), this process can, as a whole, be described as abductive and a re-contextualisation. The actual work process has also been highly iterative in nature, with a steady pendulum between theory and data. Bryman’s (2004) notion that a research process often can be described as containing both deductive and inductive tendencies is also an applicable description here, even if the procedures differ in outlook for the four essays. The deductive element in the procedure can be said to dominate, with the exception of essay IV, which is comparatively more inductive in kind.

Scope and demarcations

Research on emotions in the military field have generally been conducted within a framework of psychology, but then often hidden under concepts such as affect, emotional intelligence and leadership. In Hochschild’s (1983) view, social psychologists believe that to ‘avoid discussing feeling in order to focus ever more intently and narrowly on cognition, increases the scientific character of their work’ (p. 211). Whether this is true or not cannot be assessed here. It is sufficient to note that, while recognizing the importance of psychological research within fields like stress, coping and resilience, the analysis made here starts from another end, using sociological perspectives to examine possible sources behind the emotional load on deployed soldiers.
Rather than focus on the soldiers’ personality and individual make-up, this thesis focuses on factors that are external to the individual, such as organizational rules, work-task requirements and ‘social traffic rules of interaction’ (Goffman, 1961a; 1967, p. 45, 91) that demand their emotion management regulation. Even if it is almost impossible to firmly uphold these dividing lines as individuals are different and their differences may interfere with the way the organizational and social impacts are portrayed, the search for a complementary image is of great importance. So rather than advocating that this perspective is freed from individual influence, the main argument from a sociological perspective on soldiers’ emotional load is that such a perspective is almost non-existent in Swedish research. The main exception is Bengt Abrahamsson (2008) who is also repeatedly referred to in this text.

Research questions

The two main research questions that have guided this thesis are the following:

- What are the external demands for emotion management in so called low-intensity peace support operations?
- How do the soldiers manage these demands?

It is thereby understood that the aim of the thesis is twofold. Firstly, it aims to highlight how emotion management is inherent in soldiers’ work and constantly put to use in PSO. The central argument here states that feeling rules emanate from organizational, operational and social conditions and that the PSO structure, like in most other organizations, is also an arena of mixed and sometimes conflicting emotions. The second aim of the thesis relates to how the soldiers manage these demands. More specifically, the objective here is to illustrate that soldiers handling these requirements chiefly require ‘emotional juggling and synthesizing’ (Goffman, 1961a, p. 39).

The sample

The commission from the Swedish Armed Forces33 was to examine soldiers’ perception of their pre-deployment training with regard to ‘social-cultural factors’ and to provide recommendations on how this preparation could be improved.34 Units to be deployed to

33 The empirical research was conducted within the framework of two different research projects financed by the SAF. However only Essay II was specifically written for one of these projects.
34 This study was mainly conducted with a colleague, Erik Hedlund, at the Swedish National Defence College. (See also footnote 39).
Kosovo and Liberia were chosen for the data collection, and a group of 24 soldiers volunteered for the interviews.\textsuperscript{35}

The soldiers, who were all male infantry soldiers\textsuperscript{36} aged between 21 and 36, were interviewed three times: during pre-deployment training, about five months into the deployment and six months after their return to Sweden. Roughly a quarter had served on one or more previous missions. Each interview lasted between 45 and 90 minutes and was recorded and transcribed in detail. In addition to this, numerous informal conversations took place when visiting the camps for the second round of interviews. Five additional interviews with Swedish soldiers and two group interviews with six locally employed Liberians were also conducted at Camp Clara in Liberia. The aim of this was to somewhat compensate for the lack of interviews with female service members and civilians in the selected sample.

Our initial project-plan also contained interviews with soldiers deployed to Afghanistan and to undertake the second round of interviews at the Swedish camp Northern Lights. Due to security measures however, this request was not granted by the Headquarters. The two semi-structured interviews with officers serving in Afghanistan presented as part of the sample in essay I and III, were instead conducted within another research-project on support to military families (Weibull, 2009). These interviews followed the same structure (before, during\textsuperscript{37} and after service) as those of the main informants deployed to Kosovo and Liberia. The question of interest was the informants’ description of their work situation in theatre. Moreover, another group of soldiers who had previously served in Afghanistan have been valuable sources of information in the work with essay III, which describes and compares humorous discourses in low- and high-intensity conflict areas.\textsuperscript{38}

A contingent deployed abroad involves many positions and participants with different backgrounds, competences and expectations. Among the main group of informants participating in this study, two different groups can schematically be mentioned. One group consisted of men aged between 23-28. Some were recruited on the grounds of having good marks and assessments from their national service, others for having a civilian work competence that was in demand. None of these soldiers had previously lived outside Sweden and few had prior experience from longer travels. Back home, they usually lived in smaller towns or municipalities and common occupations included mechanic, guard, truck driver, concrete caster etc., several having completed extensive

\textsuperscript{35} Twelve of the informants were deployed to Liberia and twelve to Kosovo.

\textsuperscript{36} One was a regular officer, one was an officer in the reserves, and the others were former conscripts who had passed a two-month preparatory course.

\textsuperscript{37} These interviews were conducted during ‘leave’ periods in Sweden.

\textsuperscript{38} These soldiers mainly worked at a garrison in the south of Sweden where I was engaged in another research project (Berggren et al., 2011). Two other soldiers studied at the Swedish National Defence College.
vocational training programs. With regard to the occupations that waited for them on return, these were often considered quite tedious and boring. In other words, serving in the expeditionary unit represented a welcomed break with routine and a temporary adventure. While serving abroad, these soldiers usually held positions as infantry soldiers, signallers or as mechanics within the maintenance units. In the other group, which included both former conscripts and officers, the average age was a little higher – between 24-36. Soldiers served as squad or platoon leaders or held higher ranked specialist positions. Many of these soldiers had either finished or started university studies within different disciplines. One had a Masters in political science whilst others had attended university courses in topics related to peace and conflict studies, East European studies or anthropology. Quite often, time spent abroad was seen as a sabbatical from present educational plans rather than a break from an ordinary work situation. Compared with the previous group, these soldiers had a more cosmopolitan orientation, could well see themselves working abroad and looked upon the service as a good qualification to put on their CVs.

Employed methods, interviews, image/text analysis and observation will be described in more detail in the next section, followed by a discussion of the study’s ethical considerations.

Methods

The interviews

The interviews were semi-structured respondent interviews that were conducted separately with the main informants. According to Lindlof & Taylor (2002, p. 178f), respondent interviews are those in which a researcher asks the interviewees about their own experiences. The questionnaires allowed for follow-up questions. In the first round of interviews taking place in the last week of the pre-deployment training, the areas of investigation covered background factors and the soldiers’ general expectations of the service and their own role in this. These interviews also included specific questions on the content of the pre-deployment training and the soldiers’ notions of the ‘ideal peacekeeper’ and their knowledge and perceptions of their military co-partners. In the second round of interviews conducted in theatre, the focus was first and foremost on what the soldiers did ‘at work’, their image of mission life at large, and how they perceived contacts with various parties in theatre: ex-combatants, civilians, co-operating military units, and local

39 At Camp Clara in Liberia our Dutch colleague interviewed representatives from the Irish army. I interviewed locally employed Liberians in two group-interviews. Approximately half of the interviews with the main informants deployed to Kosovo and Liberia were conducted by me, and the remainder by my research colleague Erik Hedlund. When the Kosovo units returned home, we were also once assisted by our research colleague, Aida Alvinius.
employees. In line with one of the aims behind visiting the camps, we also asked how their experiences of demands for skills and knowledge could be implemented in the pre-deployment training, both generally and especially with regard to socio-cultural factors. Questions on Swedish soldiers’ work-ethos and peacekeeping skills were added, along with their reflections on the approaching post-deployment period.

In the last round of interviews conducted six months after their return to Sweden, the soldiers were asked similar questions about how their experiences could be used for future training, their impressions of contacts with various parties and mission life in general. Moreover, this round included questions on the soldiers’ feelings and adjustments made in connection with returning home.

Observations and interviews as ‘blitz fieldwork’

The visits made to Kosovo and Liberia can be described as blitz fieldwork (Gellner & Hirsch, 2001) rather than a traditional ethnographic study. The main reason was that our access to the field was restricted to the military desk-officer’s estimation of the time needed for conducting the interviews. Altogether we spent two weeks in Liberia and Kosovo, respectively. During the visits to the camps, and apart from conducting the interviews, we participated in soldiers’ daily activities, i.e. took part in meetings, patrols, briefings and engaged in conversations with regard to ‘everything that was going on’.

The emotion management perspective on soldiers’ work caught my attention in what can only be described as a process. As early as during the first round of interviews conducted before deployment it was revealed that the cooperation between Swedish and Irish units in Liberia was not without its complications. The connection made between a strained cross-cultural military cooperation and an emotion sociological perspective did not seem to be distant, as one of this discipline’s central concepts, feeling rules, are tacit rules deeply embedded in societal and cultural contexts and that influence our notions of ‘the other’. The excerpt below from a book produced by the British War Office, aimed at preemptively bridging possible strains between British and French troops during World War II, also reveal that these types of tensions are no novelty:

40 The person being point of contact for the respective theatres.
The French are our friends. The Germans are our enemies and the enemies of France. Remember that the Germans individually often behaved well in France. We have to behave better. (...) Don’t criticize the French Army’s defeat of 1940. Many Frenchmen are convinced that they had a fine but insufficiently equipped army, not very well led. Many others are themselves critical of the French Army of 1940, but they, too, will resent their own criticism coming from a foreigner. Don’t get into arguments about religion or politics. If a Frenchman raises one of the points which have strained Anglo-French relations since 1940, drop the matter. There are two sides of every question, but you don’t want to take either.

_Instructions for British service men in France_ (1944, p. 43f)

When visiting the camp sites, during the second round of interviews, the emotion management aspects of overseas service gradually became a parallel focal interest. Apart from the strained military cross-cultural cooperation, I started to see the contours of a work organization where a large set of both informal and formal feeling rules permeated both living and working conditions. Yet, although I was learning more about the emotional dimensions of the special circumstances that adds up to ‘mission life’, these visits did not make room for conducting more structured observation studies of soldiers’ emotion management practices. My interest was awakened, but the analysis was only started. What these weeks offered, in addition to the more formal interview sessions, was above all an opportunity to observe everyday military life in action and, even if naturally to a very limited extent, get a feeling for its ‘real’ conditions. These observations were noted in field diaries and as digital voice-memos.

At the camp we usually slept in containers, as did the others, with the exception of a few nights in Liberia, when we slept in a tent. During one of the weeks in Liberia, we were also joined by a Dutch colleague, Joseph Soeters, co-writer of essay II.

**Image and text analysis**

A number of work-place signs manufactured by Swedish soldiers and put up at Swedish military compounds in Kosovo, Liberia and Afghanistan are the focus of a special analysis. Their placement, outlook and messages are described and illustrated in essay III.
Ethical considerations

As study participants were selected for us by the Army Tactical Command, the ‘voluntary’ nature of their participation might be a truth with modification. In a hierarchical organization like the military, people can interpret almost everything as an order, which is why voluntary participation should always be questioned. There are naturally many possible reasons for people consenting to be interviewed, for example, they may want relief from more tedious work tasks, and the insecurities of the informed consent in this context need to be emphasised. One of the soldiers also asked if participation was compulsory and after being reassured to the contrary, he chose to participate. Other soldiers made the same choice, once we had stressed the voluntary aspect and thoroughly explained general ethical guidelines. The fact that our research was financed by the Swedish Armed Forces likely also influenced soldiers’ willingness to participate.

Conducting emotion research

Conducting research with an emotion-sociological lens not just in the military world, but in general, deserves some further comment. Firstly, we must consider Fineman’s (2003) caution that our feelings are often ambiguous or ambivalent and impossible to identify with any degree of clarity. Another complicating factor when studying a group of mainly male, young soldiers is the previously described traditional coupling of emotions with irrationality and femininity (Lutz, 2007, p. 20). Moreover, if we accept the psychoanalytical reality, this informs us that we often do not know what feelings are impelling us, partly because they are unconscious and partly because we build elaborate defences so that we do not have to acknowledge them (Fineman, 2003, p. 53).

In Mastering soldiers, and with regard to his own research, Ben-Ari (1998) reflects that some knowledge is more habitual and easily put into words than other. Put slightly differently, some knowledge is under continuous and voluntary control, while other knowledge is less available for introspection and articulation (p. 141). The accuracy of this comment in the context studied here is wide in the sense that even if soldiers constantly engage in emotion management acts, they do not reflect upon it. Asking them straightforward questions on the topic would have been akin to having them confirm the existence of a completely new way of looking at their work. To avoid this manufactured effect, and the risk of forcing my observations on to theirs, I have instead focused on the situational cues.

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41 This meant that we were able to indicate the categories of people we wanted to interview but had no influence on individual interviewee selection.
in their narratives that indicate vast demands for emotion management in the rule-bound and constraining nature of mission life at large, the content of their work tasks, their views on encounters and the behaviours of others etc. Two exceptions, when specific questions were asked about soldiers’ emotion management, were in connection with their homecoming and in follow-up questions if the soldiers themselves did touch upon incidents highlighting these demands.

Further, another indirect research method of emotion management employed in this thesis is an analysis of a collection of unofficial workplace signs put up by soldiers at Swedish military compounds in Kosovo, Liberia and Afghanistan (see essay III).

Both closeness and distance in contacts

The fact that I do not have a military background has likely been both an advantage and an obstacle. My (at the time) six-year experience of working as a researcher at the Swedish National Defence College gave me both direct and indirect knowledge of the field, but compared to colleagues who were former regular officers, my knowledge was naturally less detailed. Helpful to me, nonetheless, was my year of fieldwork experience with the Swedish Police anti-terrorist unit (Weibull, 2002). Differences apart, these uniformed professions have many common traits and for my own understanding of the prerequisites of soldiers’ work, especially in Kosovo, the importance of this prior experience could not be underestimated. It may also have worked to my advantage in terms of soldiers’ acceptance of me, as this police unit is highly regarded in SAF, even though this fact may not have actually been remembered from our conversations and my self-presentation.

Many researchers have found it hard to get study access to the military field. Brazilian military anthropologist, Celso Castro (2010) comments that he and his research colleagues are often subjected to classification as either ‘friends’ or ‘enemies’ of the military, a classification likely generated from the ideal combat situation in which there must be no doubt regarding the classification of the person with whom one interacts. Compared to these researchers’ experience, I was probably seen neither as friend nor foe. This is not to say that there was no ambition on both sides to maintain balance between distance and closeness, and that our interaction was not surrounded by certain expectations from both sides.

During my time at the camps, my conscious strategy was to always mark my belonging to the civilian world. How much the soldiers actually reflected upon my origin might be a relevant question, but cannot be answered here. From my former studies and contacts with military personnel, however, one could make something like a qualified guess.
Due to the character of the researched area, having our study commissioned by the Armed Forces was a prerequisite for our access to the field. However, it would be an overstatement to suggest that soldiers regarded all visitors approved by Headquarters as welcome and legitimate. Especially in Kosovo, soldiers often complained about the numbers of various dignitaries, from high-ranking officers to media actors and politicians who came visiting, and internally referred to this as ‘war tourism’. That Camp Victoria in Kosovo was used more or less as a team-building destination for project groups at Headquarters was another widespread criticism. In our case, and apart from having official authorization, it might have been an advantage that we worked at the Swedish National Defence College, and thereby could be held separate from the stereotypical views military personnel often ascribe researchers from civilian academies. It was obvious though, that the time frames were far too limited to ascertain our social status in relation to the experiences described by Castro (2010).

By the time of our first meeting in Sweden during the last week of the pre-deployment training, none of us had been to Liberia (with the exception of two soldiers who had done a reconnaissance tour one week before). Some soldiers had previously done tours of service in Kosovo, but the majority of us did not know what to expect in theatre, and we shared a fragmentary image of the circumstances in Liberia and Kosovo. Arriving in theatre a few months later, however, we received a different reception, the soldiers teaching us willingly and explaining in detail how everything worked: rules, regulations and providing useful insights on mission life and the camp. Some seemed to think it was actually quite nice to exchange a few words and engage in more intimate discussions over and above that expected by polite social norms. Seeing each other again made a big difference and our visits and interviews might also in some cases have served as a welcome break from boredom and routine. For some, almost anything seemed to be more interesting than vegetating in idleness. Besides the interviews, we also passed time together over lunches, evening teas, in the mess or simply when waiting for something to happen.

Serving on international missions as a civilian means going ‘out together and home alone’. The last interview conducted back in Sweden revealed that many missed their military comrades and adjustment to civilian life had not been entirely smooth for everyone. This meeting also meant that we could share our impressions of Liberia and Kosovo, although ours were naturally much shallower. Nevertheless, knowing that we had been in the field may have helped the soldiers feel confident about answering even quite sensitive questions. Questions about expeditionary service, the theatre and homecoming were also easier for us to ask once the whole span of activity had passed and transition had been made from civilian to soldier and back again, all within the course of a

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42 The units mainly consisted of former conscripts, the majority of whom were civilians who had volunteered for six months of service.
year (see also Hannerz, 2001). The measures taken in the analysis of the four essays will be further described below.

Interpretation, coding and generalization

Chronologically, essay II was written first and refers to a case study depicting the cooperation between Swedish and Irish troops in a Quick Reaction Force in Liberia. This essay primarily focuses on the soldiers’ need for adjustment in contacts with cooperating military units – an aspect that presents itself as a flagrant example of emotion management demands. (This study’s placement as number two in the thesis’ disposition is based on the assumption that it is more convenient for the reader to start with an essay that outlines the aims and theoretical perspectives concurrent with the thesis as a whole).

The analysis in essay II was conducted in line with what Alvesson & SkÖldberg (1994) would call a classic data-construction of data, where pluralism and diversity in the interpretations are taken into account, but where the researcher more or less takes the reality presented in the informants’ narratives for ‘what it is’ (p. 333). This procedure differs in character from the work with essays I, III and IV, that can be said to correspond with what Alvesson & SkÖldberg (1994) call interpretation. The main difference is that the researcher here analyzes data on an aggregate level, something that also implies searching for a radically different image of reality and considering whether certain interpretations are allowed to dominate or are conspicuously absent. As previously mentioned, the result of this process was to draw my attention to the emotion management aspects of soldiers’ work, hitherto absent in former literature,43 and to apply an emotion sociological perspective to the remaining essays.

In the analysis of essay I, there are deductive tendencies in so far as Bolton’s (2005) typology was applied to the soldiers’ narratives. The essay that most clearly illustrates how the research process contained traits of both inductive and deductive tendencies is essay III on ‘applied’ workplace humour and anonymous outlets of emotion management demands. The idea of studying the informal side of PSO from the perspective of humour came to me when I noticed the signs put up on public display at Camp Clara in Liberia and Camp Victoria in Kosovo, but was then somehow forgotten. During my work with

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43 The third and last object-level of interpretation in Alvesson & SkÖldberg’s (1994) disposition over modes of data analysis is called the critical interpretation. The researcher here engages in even more profound reflections over dominating aspects of the interpretations made. This may, for instance, involve considering how and if the establishment of potential forms of authority can be problematized, besides being open to other representations, interpretations and conclusions (p. 333). In my analysis this level is however not found relevant.
essay II, I then wrote this memo\(^{44}\) with no special intention apart from the fact that it seemed important for a general understanding of subterranean military life:

The parodic image you sometimes get of the operational soldiers (‘the totally empty thousand yard stare’) and jokes about operational soldiers leaving their brains at the main supply in exchange for their gear are communicated by the mechanics, who serve their vehicles. Between these groups there seems to be a not uncomplicated relation of dependency that comes through in conversations about the other units. Similar statements were found in the survey with Eva – I guess it’s a universal. The mechanics wrote, “As usual, the soldiers think that we are on some kind of vacation”. However, there are obvious differences that may be part of the background behind these statements, since the mechanics have a relatively peaceful and quiet work situation with regulated working hours, while the soldiers can be out on long-range patrols for 14 days. Of course there is always something left to do at the camp, but the operators experience more features of Spartan jungle life, bad food, early risings and less comfort (humid tents).

Reading this about a year later I was reminded of the signs signalling boosting and status-enhancement that I had photographed in the camps. After doing some reading on humorous literature I went through my photographs again and started to scan interviews and field notes for segments that had the humour discourse in focus (i.e. display of work ethos and ‘professionalism’, protest and banter between units, status negotiations etc.). I also made inquiries of similar message postings at camps in Afghanistan and initiated informal conversations with soldiers who had previously served in Afghanistan whilst participating in another research project, focusing on a company in the Nordic Battle Group (see Berggren et al., 2011).

Finally, in essay IV on PDD, we see the deductive character as least prominent. The focus here is the soldiers’ thoughts and feelings related to their return to Sweden. Questions concerning this were asked on two occasions, in relation to expectations in interview no 2, and in relation to experience in interview no 3, six months after returning home. How the soldiers expressed themselves regarding the homecoming and different forms of unfamiliarity related to this, as well as when comparing mission life with life at home, is here summarized in the term Post-Deployment Disorientation.

The coding process for one of these dimensions of PDD will now be described in more detail. As illustrated below, an open-coding process (Miles & Huberman, 1994) was employed.

\(^{44}\) Memo writing is a system of note-taking of either empirical or theoretical kind. The idea is that the writer should feel free and uncensored in the early stages of the research process, making notes of a broad kind to be analysed later (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).
The coding process – one example

Codes can be described as linkages between the data and the categories posited by the researcher (Danermark, et al. 2002; Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). A common beginning of formal analysis, when the analyst performs coding before knowing what the final categories will be, is called ‘open coding’ (Miles & Huberman, 1994), often described as a creative act (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). In addition to their role as aids to category formation, codes can also have a more mechanical role as tools for sorting, retrieving, linking and displaying data. However, most often, only coded text will be used in the full analysis mode, a circumstance that makes the authors liken codes to markers of the islands, archipelagos and other land masses of meaningful data from the surrounding sea of raw, uncoded data (p. 216). It is hard to mention open coding without commenting on the processes used in Grounded Theory, GT (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Although my initial analysis has been made in a manner similar to the one used in GT, I have stuck to more contextualization of codes, which is not intended in a grounded theory approach.

The coding process for one of the dimensions of PDD, Personal growth, can roughly be described in the following way: Personal growth consisted of two categories. Examples of open codes that made up one of these categories, personal development, were: ‘challenge’, ‘growth’, ‘self-confidence’ and ‘know yourself’. To illustrate, the excerpt below was coded both as ‘know yourself’ and ‘self-confidence’.

And personally – yes – I’ve learned a lot – about myself, about how I work in groups and other really useful stuff, particularly if I’m going to stay in the military as a leader. Then a lot has happened purely on the social side at home. I feel that I’m more secure as a person – I mean, I know that I’ve gained greater personal insight in a way that has given me a better picture of who I am and who I want to be. And it’s given me more self-confidence – so I feel I’ve gained quite a lot from the mission in quite a few areas.

For my further analysis, I have been inspired by Danermark et al. (2002), who propose that the object in science is not primarily to find empirical regularities, but structures and mechanisms in which we can find the foundation for the fairly stable and lasting (but not unchangeable) character of nature as well as of social reality (p. 89). Based on these researchers’ views of a theoretical (transfactual) generalization, I have in essay IV argued that my general concept of PDD could be expected whenever people return from a work situation with similar premises.

Danermark et al. (2002) explain the two different meanings of generalization in the following way: either we regard it in the sense of a generally occurring empirical phenomenon (as is often the case within GT, with its broad, grounded approach) or we look upon generalization in the sense of fundamental/constituent properties and structures. For instance, the universal concept of ‘women’ as an empirical category
includes all people of a specific gender, whilst ‘the elderly’ refers to all people who have
ditched an age (p. 78). With regard to the central concept of essay IV, PDD, the
empirical sample is limited and it cannot be argued that the dimensions of Post-
Deployment Disorientation addressed here generally occur in PSO or even in those
categorized as low-intensity conflicts. However, with departure from a theoretical
generalization, it can be argued that in circumstances similar to the situations described in
the essay, there will also be a tendency for development of PDD.
5. THE FOUR ESSAYS IN SUMMARY

This section is a closer presentation of the four essays, that in more detail outlines this study’s main argument, i.e. that the emotion management aspect is ever present in soldiers’ work, and furthermore accompanies soldiers on return. In table 1, the purpose, method and main results of each paper are outlined in an overview. Here, the essays’ various empirical and theoretical engagements are also schematically presented in order to help the sorting of their respective similarities and differences.
Table 1. Overview of the four essays

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Method and mission area</th>
<th>Main result (key words)</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Essay IV</strong></td>
<td>To introduce the concept of Post-deployment disorientation (PDD) on return from peace support operations that were, from a military perspective, uneventful conflict areas</td>
<td>Expressions of change and unfamiliarity.</td>
<td>Interview. Expressions of change and unfamiliarity: Hochschild (1979, 1983).</td>
</tr>
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Essay I - Emotion management in military Peace Support Operations

Background

The essay’s focus is the emotional demands on soldiers serving in military peace support operations, demands that are hard-edged in several aspects compared with work in most civilian organizations. Compared to previous research in the field often outgoing from a psychological perspective and focusing, for example, on individuals’ capacity for managing stress and control of emotions, the main focus here is to problematize the external demands on soldiers, i.e. what participation in missions abroad ‘asks’ of them in terms of emotion management and adaptation.

Aim

The essay aims to investigate the multifaceted demands for emotion management in PSO. With departure in emotion sociology, data has been analyzed with reference to a typology on workplace emotion elaborated by Bolton (2005). The typology focuses on the presence of organizational, professional and social feeling rules in organizations and offers a multifaceted framework, highlighting how these rules influence employees’ motivation, professional identity and performance.

Method

The empirical material referred to here is a qualitative interview study conducted by the author and a research colleague in 2006/2007. The data were collected through semi-structured, individual interviews and, to a limited extent, participant observation in the mission areas of Liberia and Kosovo. The informants are mainly a group of 26 individuals who were interviewed three times: during pre-deployment training, about five months into the deployment, and six months after their return home. Data analysis has been conducted using open coding, in line with Miles and Huberman (1994).

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45 This essay was first published in the French journal L’Année sociologique 2011 and titled ‘La gestion des émotions dans les opérations en faveur de la paix’.

46 Twelve of the informants were deployed to Liberia, twelve to Kosovo and two to Afghanistan. The last group participated in a project on family support to military families (Weibull, 2009).
Results

Even if work in peace support operations is more complex, dangerous and ‘tight’ in time in relation to most occupations referred to by Bolton (2005), her exemplifications of the various sources of feeling rules and their consequences for different organizational groups and positions offer many parallels to service in the expeditionary force. The service entails the adoption of a number of rigorous organizational and professional feeling rules formulated on different levels nationally and internationally that put great demands on personal appearance during work and off duty. Not only must the soldiers be able to manage their emotions in a range of situations that are hard to foresee, their feeling displays need to cover a wider span, where instant changes between displays may also be required. All in all, the essay illustrates how international missions are settings where both control and management of emotions in specific directions are expected, demanded and employed.

The essay also describes how operational service is circumscribed by a large number of strict rules for behaviour that have an inherent dubiousness to them, but that should still be encompassed within realms of the device, ‘firm, fair and friendly’. Within this spectrum, soldiers serving in PSO should be able to communicate that they are serious without using violence, manage to neutralize aggression, create confidence in the possibility of offering protection, adhere to rules of engagement and be able to negotiate themselves out of difficult situations. It does not seem too presumptuous to suggest that emotion management is even more pronounced in these types of operations than in civilian life, since here such emotion management may save your life.

Importantly, this essay also shows that the demands for emotion management involve social interaction with both Swedish and international colleagues, coupled with the presence of social feeling rules. Cohesion is also very actively sought after, and much time is devoted to its development during the military pre-deployment training. Goldthorpe et al. (1969) suggest that a sense of comradeship appears to be more prevalent in sectors involving considerable physical risk (for example the mining industry) due to the nature of the work. However, although bonding with the closest peer-group is part of the organizational imperative, the downside of these feeling rules is seldom articulated. In this context, the bond with peers is also dubious. While you are very close to your comrades, you are also formally assessed by them, something that might have an impact on how much you want to share your inner feelings.

47 With the possible exception of the police. With regard to emotion management in police work, Jackall (2000) comments that patrolling the streets requires attributes and habits of mind completely different from those instituted and valued in the bureaucratized system. In his view, only long experience teaches police (though some officers never master the skills) how to read the streets (...), and how and when to act decisively, with force if necessary (p. 231).

48 For writings on bullying and violence at work, see for instance Bolton (2005) and Fineman (2003).

49 See also Bloch (2002) on emotion management in relation to peers in academia.
Moreover, social feeling rules are involved in relations with the local civilians. Tasks like information gathering (common amongst operators) demands that, like in most social encounters (Goffman, 1967), you bring something to the table yourself, that you are able to come across as reliable, i.e. able to create an emotional state of trust within the other party. However, even if being friendly is more or less a given, you should never be personal, and always remain on your guard. There may be glimpses of genuine meetings with the civilian population but there are also many obstacles, not least for security reasons.

Contribution

The essay’s most important contribution is that it sheds a more comprehensive light on the multifaceted emotional demands on soldiers serving in military peace support operations. The fact that soldiers recurrently engage in a wide span of emotion management acts is seen as a constitutive property of the PSO structure, and highly central to ‘getting the job done’. Moreover, the application of Bolton’s (2005) typology highlights how not only a wide range of emotional displays need to be regulated in theatre, but also that these requirements sometimes involve conflicting organizational, professional and social feeling rules.
Essay II - Swedish-Irish cooperation in Liberia

Background

The Brazilian anthropologist, Celso Castro (2010), suggests that the military institution possesses a high degree of cosmopolitism through which military men from different countries may share many elements that are common to their profession (see also Ben-Ari & Elron, 2001). This essay does not dispute the existence of such elements, but its focus on the bi-national cooperation between Swedish and Irish troops in Liberia reflects how social, cultural and structural differences may bring serious friction to the cooperation and that these tensions easily magnify over time. Despite the fact that the Quick Reaction Force, to which both contingents belonged, had received much praise for its efforts, cooperation and integration had been far from perfect and not without complications. Cultural frictions had already emerged by the time the first Swedish contingent arrived years before and the road that separated the two contingents’ part of the camp had also become a social barrier (Sjöblom, 2005). Smooth international military cooperation is also said to be quite uncommon. Soeters et al. (2008), claims how, in these constellations, it is difficult enough to reach even the minimum level of efficiency required for international cooperation, let alone exceed it (p. 199). In effect, it is not unusual for such conflicts to result in both parties seeking minimal contact with each other and dividing patrols and other duties which were originally intended for sharing (see also Soeters & Manigart, 2008).

Aim

The aim of the essay was to analyse this case of military cooperation in order to improve Swedish soldiers’ pre-deployment training in terms of sociocultural factors. More specifically, it also illustrates how perceptions of the Irish developed and spread within the Swedish contingent before and during the mission, and how these perceptions were formed over time. The essay also briefly sketches how the Swedes were regarded by the Irish and locally employed Liberians.

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Method

The empirical material referred to here is a qualitative interview study conducted by the author and two research colleagues in 2006/2007. The data was collected through semi-structured, individual interviews and, to a limited extent, participant observation in the mission area. The main informants were twelve soldiers, who were interviewed three times: firstly during pre-deployment training, secondly five months into the deployment and finally, six months after their return home. On our first visit to Camp Clara, five additional Swedish soldiers were interviewed and during our second visit, twelve Irish personnel and six local employees were interviewed. All in all, 35 interviews were conducted. The respondents were men and women between 21 and 45 years of age.

Results

Before even setting foot on Liberian soil, many Swedish soldiers had formed a fairly negative image of what signified Irish troops, information basically gleaned from previously deployed units and an unofficial Swedish internet forum during the pre-deployment training. In general, the Irish were thought of as having a sloppy attitude towards work, but more seriously they were rumoured to be drinkers and troublemakers who also slipped away from camp to visit prostitutes, something that was strictly forbidden. Once established at the camp and when interviewed the second time, the Swedish soldiers’ perceptions of the Irish basically remained unchanged, although new areas of friction were added during the six months that the units shared camp. Most of these perceptions were negative. A positive exception was that, although the Swedes saw the Irish soldiers as people who might otherwise be unemployed or in prison, they could still regard them as very competent professional soldiers. Moreover, Irish soldiers were considered to be very sociable and easy to get along with, despite also being seen as disorderly and overly enjoying drinking. One conclusion is that these contradictory views indicate that Swedish perceptions of the Irish were partly based on prejudice and stereotypical opinions.

Another set of inquiries concerned the locally employed Liberians’ view of Swedish and Irish troops as employers. The result was in favour of the Irish, who were considered more sociable and flexible. Since the Irish did not care too much about rules, they had better contact with the locally employed Liberians. Unlike the Swedes, the Irish would, for example, give away money and sweets to children and adults who gathered at the camp gate and they would regularly allow locally employed civilians to take food from the camp, without the gate pass required by the rules and regulations. The Irish did not see themselves as rule-breakers in the true sense of the word; they felt that certain actions, which were contrary to rules and regulations, showed a conscious, positive flexibility and
empathy. In a group interview, the locally employed civilians disappointingly commented on the Swedes’ lack of sympathy and flexibility.

In essence, the Swedes’ perceptions of the Irish before the mission remained more or less unchanged after six months of sharing a compound. The reasons for this may be structural and cultural differences as exemplified above, but also a general lack of meeting places, which meant that the Swedes and the Irish had no real opportunity to deepen their knowledge and understanding of each other.

Contribution

This case study operates within a well-researched field, where it merely confirms previous recommendations (vom Hagen et al., 2003, 2006; Soeters et al., 2008), stressing for instance that preparation for joint operations needs to be preceded by a constructive dialogue between partner nations about both operational and ethical issues. By the time of the study, the Swedish Armed Forces had not implemented a functioning, formalized procedure for a continuous follow-up of lessons learned from previous missions, although noticeable domains of friction were present at Camp Clara. The essay closes by raising the question of how cooperation between Swedes and personnel from a country where the cultural, social, and educational differences are even greater would work.

When applying an emotion management perspective (Bolton, 2005) to these encounters, it may be stated that the Swedish soldiers were upset because they felt that the Irish did not adhere to organizational or professional feeling rules. Although mostly engaging in parallel tasks, the Swedes were provoked by what they thought was low morale in Irish units, who seemed genuinely disinterested in ‘taking that extra step’, that the Swedes would willingly take. The Irish soldiers’ lack of enthusiasm for ‘rising to the occasion’ might be explained by structural differences, something that some Swedish soldiers also reflected upon. While Swedes volunteer for international service in competition with hundreds of other applicants and want to get as much as possible out of their six months abroad, Irish soldiers are professionals and regularly obliged to deploy during both longer and shorter tours of service. However, the most serious friction between the two nations was that Swedes considered the Irish to be far too flexible with regard to rules and regulations, and especially in regard to ethics. It goes without saying that experiencing these differences more or less on a daily basis and simultaneously trying to stick to expected codes of conduct requires considerable emotion management. Such demands here led to an active avoidance of confrontation.
Essay III - ‘Don’t fight the blue elephant’

Background

Humour is a complex facet of human behaviour. It was during a fieldtrip to Camp Clara in Liberia that the first author noticed how soldiers in the expeditionary force were engaged in jest that manifested itself in anonymous workplace signs and posters put up on public display. Significantly, the signs communicated something different to the ordinary ‘I hate Mondays/love Fridays’ ethos you often find in many workplaces, in the sense that the messages implied paying tribute to a discourse where ‘work is taken seriously’. It was also obvious that these messages belonged to what Mulkay (1988) terms ‘applied humour’, i.e. humour with an intentional message meant for more than entertainment. In a rigorously ordered hierarchical organization like the military, these presumably innocent free spaces for expression are especially important, as joking practices can target quite serious organizational matters that often cannot be expressed in other ways.

Aim

The essay’s aim is an analytical comparison of humorous discourses found on workplace signs in two military contexts: high- and low-intensity conflict areas respectively. The analytical focus is on workplace signs manufactured by the military grassroots, i.e. operational soldiers and support units. Moreover, the jocular culture in focus illustrates the existence of a humorous discourse that outlives each individual’s six months of service, targeting organizational ideals and practices communicated by both the UN and the Swedish Armed Forces.

Method

The data primarily consists of a collection of anonymous workplace signs put up by Swedish soldiers during peace support operations in Liberia (Camp Clara), Kosovo (Camp Victoria) and Afghanistan (The Provincial Office of Sheberghan) between 2006 and 2010. In Liberia and Kosovo, these signs were noticed during visits; in Afghanistan, they refer to soldiers’ personal photos. Data also refers to findings of a longitudinal interview-study, where 26 soldiers were interviewed three times: during pre-deployment

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training, about five months into the deployment (in total six months), and six months after their return to Sweden. Twelve of the informants were deployed to Liberia, twelve to Kosovo, and two to Afghanistan. Three were officers while the others were former conscripts who had volunteered for international service. The research questions did not focus specifically on humour, centring more broadly on experiences of the theatre and of contacts with various parties. In addition, a number of informal conversations with soldiers and officers who have served abroad have constituted important sources of information. One such talk was recorded, otherwise, notes were hand-written. However, informal conversations with soldiers and officers deployed to Afghanistan contained questions about signs and humour.

Results

The findings suggest that humorous exchanges on missions abroad are omnipresent and at the core of the military practice. In a context as challenging as these theatres, humour serves as a space for release from various stresses. Moreover, the article compares signs found in two types of military contexts (high- and low-intensity conflict areas), and the findings show that differences in the nature of operations i.e. threat level and duties, are reflected in the messages’ content. Further, humorous exchanges during overseas missions are seen as something that provides the scope for relieving various stresses arising from disillusions, and from being subordinated to rules, policies and designed roles, but also where barbed ideas inappropriate for ‘serious’ communication are vented (Fine, 1988). In more detail, it is argued that since the missions in Liberia and Kosovo were conducted where the threat level of military activities was comparatively low, the humorous discourse came to revolve around idealized identities and status negotiations (see Gabriel, 1995). This can also be interpreted as a search for confirmation that your work is necessary, important, and appreciated by others. Another conclusion is that the humour exchanges in both Liberia and Kosovo are ways for personnel in maintenance positions to re-frame low-status work and display self-promotion in a socially acceptable manner. While the humour discourse still resides within the frames of the established norms and feeling rules, it comes forward as a moderately successful dignity-shaping strategy.

In comparison, the mission in Afghanistan had a very different premise and was operating in a near war-like situation. This, it is argued, is also reflected in the humorous discourse and the more acute need for letting off steam as ‘emotional survival’. Likewise, it is suggested that the oppositional tone displayed in the messages targeting the Headquarters’ way of handling things is a direct consequence of the pressed situation on the ground. Compared to the signs in Liberia and Kosovo, the ‘butt’ (Davies, 1998) of which were mostly horizontal (i.e. peers on the same hierarchical level), the sign in Afghanistan that
proclaims a ‘core-value free zone, ban on feminazism, gay lobby and political correctness without permission’ has two butts – one in the military hierarchy and one in the patriarchal gender hierarchy.

Many studies have indicated that the integration of women into the Swedish military has been very slow (Sundevall, 2011) both compared to civilian working life and other defence forces, and previous research has also revealed a high frequency of sexual harassment (Berggren, 2002). With regard to the sign advocating a ‘core-value free zone’, we can merely conclude that the interpretation of its message has different possibilities. Either, it is an example of sexism and a continuing macho culture, here concealed under the cover of anonymity. Alternatively, it is a way of making a humorous comment about the much discussed core-values program, and the authorities’ way of rubbing in of what ‘everyone already knows’.

All in all, the essay concludes that it would be too presumptuous to argue that a number of signs put up in military camps offer substantial relief from the various discomforts exemplified in the essay. However, these messages have likely strengthened cohesion amongst units, something that indirectly may have made them better equipped to deal with realities like unfulfilled expectations, boredom and delusion. It has previously been suggested that soldiers who are allowed to complain and criticize the conditions of their service may also thereby gain a feeling of control over their lives (see for example Ben-Ari and Sion, 2005, p. 659 and Mulkay, 1988 on humour generally). In accordance with the terminology used by Bolton (2005), humour has one more important function with regard to the managing of emotions in organizations, namely that it widens the space for ‘being human’. Whether or not this can also include the possible signs of prejudices towards women and homosexuals found in Afghanistan is however questioned.

Contribution

We have not been able to find any prior analysis of workplace signs. The essay illustrates that the use of this comparatively unorthodox approach to investigate emotion management demands in missions abroad adds value compared to other methods. One reason is that messages put on posters and signs with anonymity as a shield may reflect conditions that are of a sensitive nature and should supposedly not be spontaneously raised in an interview. Moreover, even if ethnographies often stress the importance of humour in military work, research that specifically focuses on humour in the military context is unusual, and even more so the approach taken here of analyzing humorous exchanges in two different kinds of military contexts; high- and low-intensity conflict areas.
Essay IV - Post-deployment disorientation

Background

It is well known that exposure to threats and, in a worst-case scenario, to the risk of serious injury or loss of life, is extremely stressful for the individual (see Janis, 1949; Horn, 2004; Van den Berg & Soeters, 2009). Moreover, the fact that symptoms like Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) can be found in the wake of service, especially after service in high-intensity operations, is also widely acknowledged by military authorities and the research community alike (Cozza, 2005; Michel, 2005). However, little qualitative research has been conducted to understand how soldiers who have served in low-intensity missions orient themselves on return to civilian life after being symbolically transported from the familiar to the unfamiliar world of the operational theatre during the course of a year.

Eyal Ben-Ari (1998) poses questions regarding how the rather constant and systematic cultivation of emotional attitudes that takes place within the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) affects individuals’ civilian lives after completed military service. His argument states that the power of the Israeli military lies not solely in that they are preparing soldiers for combat but, importantly, in that they inculcate in men certain emotional stances to the world that might migrate to individuals’ civilian lives (p. 108-111). Although the Swedish soldiers under study have by no means been subjected to either training or combat experiences comparable to soldiers in IDF, and the emotional remains discussed here are of a both positive and negative kind, the findings touch the very core of Ben-Ari’s argument. Even here the soldiers’ narratives give rich examples of how experiences made in the military world serve as emotional reference points also on return to civilian life.

Aim

The aim of the essay is to introduce the concept of Post-deployment disorientation (PDD), which illustrates how, for many soldiers, adjustment to life as a civilian on return from service in low-intensity conflict areas, is a process that requires extensive emotion management. This is achieved by applying Hochschild’s (1979, 1983) emotion management theory to soldiers’ narratives, highlighting demands for emotion management in both societal and personal interfaces on return. PDD is introduced in order to grasp these expressions of unfamiliarity and the concept also aims to distinguish the area under study from more clinical stress syndromes (i.e. PTSD). Importantly

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52 The essay, Post-Deployment Disorientation: The emotional remains of uneventful peace support operations was published in Res militaris (European Journal of Military Studies).

53 The length of service for conscripts in IDF is three years.
however, PDD should not be understood as a diagnosis but as a suggestion for a term reserved for a more everyday sense of disorientation that the majority of Swedish soldiers serving abroad likely are confronted with on return, even if their service has militarily been quite uneventful.

Method

The empirical material referred to here is a qualitative interview study conducted by the author and a research colleague in 2006/2007. The data was collected through semi-structured, individual interviews and, to a limited extent, participant observation in the mission areas. The informants were mainly a group of 24 individuals who were interviewed three times: during pre-deployment training, about five months into the deployment, and six months after their return home.

Results

The essay illustrates that participation even in quite uneventful missions abroad can cast far-reaching emotional shadows on the soldiers’ return home, causing them to feel both cognitively and emotionally changed and disorientated. The findings challenge the official understanding that these types of conflict areas produce little if any emotional ‘remains’.

PDD is seen as constituting three main dimensions. First, there are emotional remains stemming from a reality check when encountering conditions outside former frames of reference, in this context referring first and foremost to the civilians’ situation in the mission areas. The second dimension behind PDD summarizes notions of expeditionary service abroad as a greenhouse for personal growth. While this naturally implies something positive, it may also lead to social disorientation on return in that you no longer share the same outlook as your friends. Some soldiers also re-furnish their circle of friends towards their military pals – the only ones who really understand. The third dimension of disorientation portrayed here refers to the impression of having lived in a pocket in time, where the amalgam of both intense operations and more tedious work tasks has also made room for self-reflection. Notions in this dimension were organized around quite vague metaphors, such as mission time having special qualities and that time spent abroad counted for more than its nominative value. The central differences between this dimension and personal growth, is that whilst the latter refer to feelings of a personal development in relation to others, the former refers to feelings of a disorientating time-lapse, where time has either stood still back home or in the conflict area.
Contribution

The essay contributes to the literature on peace support operations with a complementary view of what it means, in emotional terms, to return from service in low-intensity conflict areas. A new theoretical concept, PDD, is coined and introduced to stress the difference between the disorientation under study and more clinical psychological stress syndromes. In essence, it is argued that PDD often invokes new outlooks on life as well as affecting navigation in the social world. Moreover, it is argued that although the general view among soldiers is that service abroad is a unique, rewarding and cherished experience, we need to further recognize that this is an accomplishment that also has other transformative properties.
6. CONCLUDING REMARKS

In conventional war, emotional control is often regarded as the paramount emotion management demand. The main argument of this thesis is that for peace support operations, this is too narrow a conclusion. These missions differ considerably in character, where emotional control is only one facet of a wide range of emotion management acts. Even if this thesis deals mainly with two low-intensity conflict areas, the assumption is that the multi-faceted emotional demands found here are as common in high-intensity conflict areas, differing in strength and degree rather than in kind. Certain ‘emotional remains’ also accompany soldiers on return to Sweden, regardless of whether or not their tour of service, in military terms, was quite uneventful.

When summarizing the results presented above in relation to the main aim of the thesis, two overall propositions have been made. The first implies that insight into the presence and character of feeling rules and emotion management in the expeditionary service is seen as one of the main pillars, perhaps the most central one, for an understanding of the emotional load on soldiers, regardless of which labels are attached to the respective mission area.

With regard to the second aim that focuses on how soldiers manage these demands, the findings illustrate that although these requirements can be characterized as both multi-faceted and a constant, the study broadly confirms accounts of the multi-talented emotional actor described by Bolton (2005), who is quite capable of handling contradiction while negotiating feeling rules. According to Bolton, a magnitude of emotional investment is the reason why organizational actors are mostly capable of acting out everything from a sincere appearance to sincere role-playing. In a mission context, these propositions however imply that such investments are made with both effort and substantial emotional costs.

Implications

One of this thesis’ strengths is that it provides rich empirical support for the argument made that considerable emotion management is connected to service in low-intensity conflict areas, and it presents reasons for why these demands have relevance also beyond these contexts. Among its limitations are that only certain facets of the service have been discussed in detail, and that a perspective that addresses the impact on the soldiers’ total situation is missing. Additionally, although the study has a longitudinal perspective, the
last round of interviews was conducted six months after the soldiers’ homecoming. It would naturally have been interesting to conduct a more long-term follow up. Moreover, due to the composition of the sample, it has not been possible to discuss gender constructions in the military and that female soldiers likely experience a different and even more pronounced emotional load.

Looking ahead, several fields can be outlined for further research into the demands on soldiers for emotion management: firstly, the findings point to the importance of developing a more refined conceptualization of the emotional load than has been possible to investigate here. Another important field for further examination is the way in which soldiers cope with emotion management demands, for instance, by creating an emotive distance towards too much emotional involvement, as illustrated in essay IV. Last but not least, it is important to examine whether a perceived sense of meaningfulness in relation to one’s work has any significance (see Schok, 2009), a factor that has only been granted a cursory look in this thesis.

Svensk sammanfattning

Över 100 000 svenskar har sedan andra världskrigets slut deltagit i militära uppdrag utomlands. Efterhand har dessa uppdrag blivit allt mer krävande för deltagarna, från att i huvudsak ha inneburit att observera skeenden i olika konfliktområden till att aktivt ingripa i pågående konflikter, i syfte att stabilisera situationen och inte minst skydda civilbefolkningen. Mycket har också gjorts vad gäller att materiellt, utbildnings- och rekryteringsmässigt anpassa det svenska försvaret till de nya uppgifterna. Vad som inte uppmärksammats lika mycket är att deltagande i vad som sammanfattningsvis brukar benämnas fredsfrämjande operationer, innebär ett ’arbete’ också på det känslomässiga planet. Än mindre har detta uppmärksammats om operationerna utförts i ett militärt sett ’lägintensivt’ och relativt händelsefattigt konfliktområde.

Att deltagande i krig och krigsliknande situationer kan medföra utveckling av allvarliga psykiska störningar som t.ex. post-traumatisk stress (PTSD) är både väl känt och uppmärksammat. Flera forskare (se t.ex. Schok, 2009) hävdar dock att det ensidiga fokus som traditionellt funnits på denna typ av känslomässiga effekter inte är tillräckligt och att fredsfrämjande missioner har tillkommande påfrestningar, om än ofta med mindre allvarliga konsekvenser. Att äse civilbefolkningens lidande samtidigt som man saknar mandat att ingripa kan här tjäna som exempel. Utöver att hantera egna känslor måste man också kunna hantera och indirekt styra andra människors känslor som t.ex. att dämpa aggressivitet eller oro hos civilbefolkningen. Till detta kan läggas att kunna verka i möten och kontakter med en mängd olika, och inte alltid välvilliga, parter i missionsområdet,
samt vara ett socialt stöd inom den egna enheten inför och efter svåra uppgifter och upplevelser.

Vad gäller s.k. lägintensiva missioner antas dock ovanstående krav närmast per definition vara både mindre frekventa och utpräglade, och därmed också något som soldaterna med lättet klarar att hantera. De forskningsfrågor som väglett denna avhandling har mot denna bakgrund formulerats på följande sätt:

- Vilka krav på emotionsstyrning finns i s.k. lägintensiva fredsfrämjande operationer?

- Hur klarar soldaterna att hantera dessa krav?

Teoretiska inspirationskällor har främst varit ett antal emotionssociologiskt orienteerade forskare som studerat krav på känslostyrning (emotion management) i det civila arbetslivet. En av dessa är den amerikanska sociologen Arlie Russell Hochschild, vars numera klassiska teorier kring ’emotional labour’ inom serviceyrken utvecklades under 80-talet. Ån mer centralt i avhandlingen är dock den vidareutveckling av Hochschilds tankegångar som gjorts av den engelska sociologen Sharon Bolton och som tillsammans med Carol Boyd (2003) utvecklat en typologi över krav på känslostyrning i organisationer och beskrivet dess konsekvenser för anställdas engagemang, motivation och inställning till arbetet. Inte minst intressant är deras resonemang kring hur professionella grupper som t.ex. läkare och advokater medveten skapar en distans till sina klienter för att undvika alltför starkt känslomässigt engagemang, något som det också finns exempel på bland deltagarna i denna studie. Tilläggas kan att både Hochschild och Bolton inspirerats av Erving Goffmans rollteori. Hans arbeten genomsyras av det grundläggande människliga dilemmat att vilja vara ’oss själva’ inom den sociala ordningens normativa begränsningar.

Det empiriska materialet utgörs väsentligen av intervjuer med 26 stycken soldater, huvuddelen frivilliga före detta värvpliktiga som genomgått en förberedande utbildning om cirka två månader inför deras tjänstgöring i Liberia och Kosovo åren 2006-2007. Intervjuernas längd varierade mellan 45 och 90 min och genomfördes vid tre olika tillfällen; under slutskedet av den missionsförberedande utbildningen, på plats i missionsområdena samt ca sex månader efter hemkomsten. Besöken i missionsområdena gav viktiga insikter om uppgifternas karaktär och förhållanden på plats och möjliggjorde också många informella samtal. Syftet med denna studie som finansierades av Försvarsmakten, var dock i första hand pedagogiskt, nämligen att utröna sociala och kulturella inflytelser på verksamheten i missionsområdena, inte minst på samverkan med

54 Två informanter som tjänstgjorde i Afghanistan under 2008 ingår i undersökning gruppen för essä I och III. Dessa intervjuades före, under och efter sin tjänstgöring inom ramen för ett projekt som rörde stöd till utlandsstyrkans familjer (Weibull, 2009).
andra nationers militära enheter. Dessa erfarenheter var sedan tänkta att ingå i den framtida missionsutbildningen.

Mängden information från intervjuer av denna längd och omfattning möjliggör inte sällan en analys utifrån flera teoretiska perspektiv. Även om den rapport som följde på studien (essä II) inte alls nämner företeelser som känsloregler och emotionsstyrning, vilka utgör centrala begrepp i avhandlingen, så är detta likväl väl exemplifierat i de svenska soldaternas bild av samverkan med irlandsk trupp i Liberia. För att travestera emotionssociologen Erving Goffman (1961a) skulle man då kunna säga att det som gjorts till huvudfokus i denna avhandling är i relation till det ursprungliga syftet med intervjuerna att finna i ’sprickorna’ (p. 320).

Resultaten visar tydligt att tjänstgöring i utlandsstyrkan innefattar långt fler krav än kognitiv förmåga och teknisk och professionell skicklighet. Man måste också kunna behärsa alla de känslor som följer av att man befinner sig i ett främmande land och under starkt reglerade och ofta riskfyllda förhållanden. Ett övergripande argument i avhandlingen är att förmågan att uppfvia ’rätt’ känslouttryck och därmed förändra både egna och andras känslor i mötet med exempelvis riskfyllda situationer, fattigdom och en ledande lokalbefolkning är något som mer eller mindre förväntas av soldaten. Resultatet visar dock att speciellt kravet på snabba växlingar mellan olika känslouttryck upplevs som svårt och sägs vara något som vissa aldrig lär sig. Andra kan oroa av att för evigt förlora kontakten med genuina känslor som empati mm. En slutsats som dras i denna avhandling är således att många soldater kan uppleva ansenlig känslomässig påfrestning även under relativt lugna och väl inarbetade missioner men att indelningen i låg- respektive högintensiva missioner, och de antaganden kring stress och belastning som förknippas med dessa, gjort att uppmärksamheten på de emotionella kraven i sk. låg-intensiva missioner eftersatts.

Att kraven på emotionsstyrning i den militära kontext som här beskrivs vida överstiger motsvarande krav inom civila yrkesgrupper behöver knappast sägas. En stor skillnad jämfört med civila förhållanden är också att regler för uppträdande inte kan specificeras för alla de situationer som kan uppträdna, utan mycket måste överlämnas till soldaternas egen bedömning, initiativ och uppfinningsriktedom. Det gäller också att kunna välja vilket känslouttryck som är det mest lämpliga i en viss situation och var betoningen skall ligga.

Svaret på frågan hur soldaterna hanterar alla de institutionella, professionella och sociala krav och normer som följer med tjänstgöringen exemplifieras på många ställen i avhandlingen. Generellt sett förefaller man ha klarat av anpassningen relativt bra, där det faktum att det finns en vilja att anpassa sig, att göra ett bra jobb och att ’göra skillnad’ sannolikt har en positiv inverkan. Detta undantar dock inte att flera sade sig tvivla på nytan med den egna insatsen och missionen som sådan. I essä II beskrivs också hur samverkan med irlandska styrkor i Liberia påverkades negativt av både omfattande
ryktesspridning och skilda värderingar, påfrestningar som löstes genom att man begränsade samverkan till ett minimum.

Alla irriationsmoment och påfrestningar lämpar sig dock inte att öppet tala om, utan uttrycks då på andra sätt. I essä III analyseras innehållet i de anonyma, humoristiskt präglade kommentarer som återfanns på anslag i arbetslokaler och på gemensamma platser. Det dessa reflekerade var olika gruppers missnöje med t.ex. arbetsuppgifter, statusskillnader och allmänt sett en frustration över upplevda missförhållanden inom både FN och Försvarsmakten. I likhet med många beskrivningar från fabriksgolvet erbjuder den militära kontexten således stora möjligheter till en ’profanisering’ av arbetet, där beskrivningar av gravallvarlig verksamhet emellanåt får en dragning åt galghumor.

Sist men inte minst beskrivs i essä IV att upplevelserna under missionens gång för många påverkar känslolägen och förhållningssätt även efter hemkomsten, påfrestningar som här sammanfattas ibegreppet Post-Deployment Disorientation (PDD), (ung. Missionsrelaterad disorientering). För vissa innebär detta att man aktivt söker återanpassa sig till vänner och familj och samhället i stort medan andra väljer att bryta med delar av vänkretsen vars värderingar och intressen man inte längre delar. Även om missionstiden av de allra flesta omtalas i positiva termer så är det helt klart att denna också har sitt pris både under och efter avslutad tjänstgöring.

Den rekommendation till Försvarsmakten som sammanfattningsvis följer av resultaten i denna avhandling är att initiera en mer allsidig forskning kring emotionella krav under utlandsmissioner och dess konsekvenser. Denna bör då inkludera även andra grupper, som exempelvis kvinnor, stabspersonal och högre befäl. Mer insikter bör också eftersträvas vad gäller hemkommande soldaters situation, vilket stöd dessa kan tänkas behöva på både kort och lång sikt och oavsett vilken typ av mission man deltagit i.
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Officerstidningen, 2006/6.

Essay I
Emotion management in military Peace Support Operations*

*A French version, La gestion des émotions dans les opérations en faveur de la paix, was published in L’Année sociologique 2011. See appendix I.

Louise Weibull

INTRODUCTION

The main aim of this article is to portray the multifaceted sources behind emotion\(^1\) management in Peace Support Operations (PSO)\(^2\) with reference to interviews conducted with Swedish troops serving primarily in Kosovo and Liberia. At the time of the data collection, these countries were so called ‘low-intensity-conflict’ areas. These are conflict areas that receive comparatively modest attention from military authorities, mass media or defence researchers. One argument put forward in this article is that the emotional demands are considerable, even on this type of mission, and that the need for emotional management in PSO should therefore generally follow other demarcations than the formal military divisions of high and low intensity conflicts.

The data analysis in this article draws specifically on theories within the field of emotion sociology and the writings of Erving Goffman, Arlie Russell Hochschild and Sharon Bolton. Both Hochschild and Bolton refer repeatedly to Erving Goffman (1922-1982), a pioneer within the field. Goffman is best known for his theories suggesting that people in their daily lives naturally strive to formulate identities. Taking the theatre scene as a reference point and metaphor, he sees people as social actors who are highly flexible and capable of moral commitment, and whose activities take place within multiple and layered frameworks of action (Goffman, 1967). Within these frameworks, Goffman sees

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\(^1\) Emotion here means ‘ineffable feelings of the self-referential sort that index or signal our current involvements and evaluations. It is what an actor experiences or, at least, claims to experience in regard to the performances he or she brings off in the social world’ (Van Maanen & Kunda, 1989:53).

\(^2\) Peace Support Operations (PSO) is an umbrella term for different sorts of operations encompassing peacemaking, peacekeeping, peace enforcement, peace-building, conflict prevention and state building.
people as jugglers who shift from one performance of ‘face-work’ to another, sometimes matching feeling and face with situation and at other times merely maintaining face but, importantly, consistently keeping an element of self present. Central to both Hochschild and Bolton is Goffman’s assumption of different sets of ‘feeling rules’ in order to match feeling and ‘face’ with situation. Even if feeling rules are only one dimension of organisational life combined with policies, hierarchies, contracts, divisions of labour and status positions, feeling rules will have an impact on all these other dimensions (Bolton, 2005). A typology of work place emotion, elaborated by Bolton (2005) is here seen as a valuable analytical framework when analysing types and extensions of feeling rules in missions abroad and the demands for emotion management connected to these rules. Although sprung from data in civilian settings, this typology is helpful in highlighting in more detail the genesis of the emotion load on soldiers and officers and the effort it takes to show the ‘right’ emotional display in different situations. Nevertheless, the findings here also point to several differences when applying the typology in the PSO context. Not only is the emotional load here more extreme, but Bolton’s assumption that professionals adjust comparatively more smoothly to organisational feeling rules seems to be inaccurate. Moreover, the opportunities for release and relaxation (which Bolton summarizes as ‘spaces for being human’) are more conditioned in this environment.

Many defence researchers also find PSO more demanding than traditional war, often described as a consequence of the changed nature of peace operations during the past 15-20 years. According to Kramer (2004:22), for example, life in ‘normal wars’ is at least clear insofar as there is an identifiable enemy, whereas PSO units are often deployed as a neutral third party and are supposed to use a minimum of force. In this context, emotions have a very different role compared with traditional wars. In the latter, emotions like courage, fright, horror, rage and fury are looked upon as a natural characteristic of the battle (Abrahamsson, 2008:149) whereas in PSO (often referred to as ‘military operations other than war’: MOOTW) the restraint and downplay of emotions has become a diplomatic asset. Abrahamsson summarizes this difference in predicating that ‘angry soldiers are poor peacekeepers’. New psychological concepts are also being coined, and the ‘peacekeeping syndrome’ has become something of a catch-all term for the accumulated stress soldiers feel by constantly holding back their emotions. All in all, it could be argued that even if strong emotions have always been a part of war and conflict, the need for restraining, hiding and managing emotions in certain directions is much bigger in PSO than in traditional war. However, the same authors point out that soldiers’ ability to manage these new emotional demands is often taken for granted by the military authorities and is therefore often overlooked in soldiers’ preparations for these missions (see also Tripodi, 2001; Klep & Winslow, 1999).

The Swedish Armed Forces have considerable experience of participation in different missions abroad. Over the last 50 years they have been involved in 120 international
missions in some 60 countries, and approximately 115,000 Swedish men and women have served. However, from the beginning of the 1990s, the nature of these operations has changed dramatically, from participants principally acting as observers of events and monitoring signed peace agreements to their using or threatening to use force in order to ‘protect, help, and save’ first and foremost the civilian population. A number of Swedish studies have been conducted in order to survey the experiences from these missions (see for example Andersson, 2001; Johansson, 2001; Wallenius, 2001; Blomgren, 2006; Tillberg et al., 2008; Hedlund, Weibull & Soeters, 2008). Even if emotional stress and strain are dealt with in a number of these studies, their aim is broader and embraces many more aspects of service, unlike this study, which focuses more directly on emotion management. Nevertheless, they provide very valuable background knowledge and some authors are repeatedly referred to in this study.

**THEORY**

Few scholars with an interest in sociological perspectives on emotions and organisations would neglect commenting on the pioneer work by Arlie Russell Hochschild from 1983, *The managed heart – Commercialization of human feeling*. Building on Goffman’s concept of ‘feeling rules’ (1967), Hochschild introduced the terms ‘emotional labor’ and ‘emotion work’, since then classic but also much debated concepts in the field. Of these concepts, the one of most interest here, ‘emotional labor’, is defined by Hochschild as ‘the management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display’ (1983:7).

Hochschild’s initial theory has since been applied and further developed in studies of a wide range of occupational groups. Examples include ward assistants in hospitals (Olsson, 2008), nurses (Bolton, 2000), midwives (Hunter, 2001) and police officers (Fischbach, 2003). Concurrent with more areas for application of Hochschild’s theory there has also been criticism, such as of her thesis on the uniformly negative impact of the management of feelings in the workplace, which has come to be questioned. Bolton (2000, 2005) sees this as a too one-sided, negative view, arguing that voluntary subjection to emotion management and a personal desire to ‘do good’ (emotion management ‘as a gift’), may also be a source of professional satisfaction for the employee (2000:581). Another area of critique involves Hochschild’s division of the emotion management performed in our private sphere (‘emotion work’), and that performed within the realms of paid labour. This division, according to some scholars, neglects the fact that actors bring their ‘private’ selves into the work place and consequently also engage in emotion management in

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1 An often quoted Swiss officer, General Däniker, was the first to suggest this to be the core values for the professional role in PSO.
regard to colleagues. Of special interest for the military field under study here is Bolton’s claim that previous research has had a tendency to overlook any conflict or contradiction between different emotion demands within the same organisations (2005:2).

Bolton’s typology of work place emotion

Building first and foremost on Hochschild’s (1983) concept of ‘emotional labor’, and Goffman’s claim regarding the existence of ‘multiple selves’ (Goffman, 1967), Bolton has introduced a more elaborate theoretical framework and a typology of work place emotion. The typology broadly identifies four categories of feeling rules in organizations.

In Bolton’s view, in those parts of the organization that are strongly goal-oriented, Commercial, Professional and Organizational feeling rules are the most important while in other parts of the organization Social feeling rules may be paramount. However, the main aim of the model is to show the breadth of emotional management demands within one and the same organization and to portray employees as multi-skilled emotional actors who can operate across the whole range of emotions and also switch between the required expressions within the course of a working day. In Bolton’s typology, emotion management demands are of different kinds (Pecuniary, Prescriptive, Presentational and Philanthropic) and the feeling rules connected to each of these is supposed to have a differentiated impact on the employee’s motivation, work identity and work performance. For the purpose of this article, the feeling rules connected to the Prescriptive, Presentational and Philanthropic dimensions of emotion management are of specific interest.

Table 1. A typology of work place emotion (adjusted from Bolton, 2005)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feeling rules</th>
<th>Prescriptive</th>
<th>Presentational</th>
<th>Philanthropic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>Social</td>
<td>Social</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational</td>
<td>Altruism</td>
<td>Ontological</td>
<td>Gift</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status</td>
<td>Security</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instrumental</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Organisational feeling rules are an important part of the organisation’s ‘corporate culture’ (Van Maanen & Kunda, 1989). The abiding hope of management is often that, through various integrating mechanisms such as team-working, quality initiatives, and collective mission statements, employees will internalize company values, often described by critical
writers as the ultimate form of control (Bolton, 2005:96), or ‘culture dopes’ (Giddens, 1979). Professional feeling rules relate to the set of implicit feeling rules present in all professional jobs in order to maintain a certain demeanour, and are an essential part of any professional role. It is widely recognized, that the latter can function as a ‘mask’ where the role protects the self from the emotional demands in the job. Professionals can also be so attached to their professional image (and its associated benefits) that the adjustment to both professional and organizational feeling rules comes quite easily compared to other groups (Bolton, 2005:122).

The Presentational and Philanthropic emotion management dimensions in the typology refer to the existence of social feeling rules. They serve as a stabilization factor in the organization, and are often connected to sub-cultures, cliques or informal working-groups. They usually accommodate more free ‘space’ for emotional expressions such as bonding and affection but also for misbehaviour and resistance. The freedom to ‘give that little extra’ here comes under the category of philanthropic emotion management. However, the rigours of organisational life often do not permit this ‘gift’ being offered as an everyday occurrence. What Bolton and several other researchers agree on is that whatever social space occupational groups may occupy, they fulfil the need for human contact, a sense of ontological security and attachment to a collective identity (Bolton, 2005:147; Giddens, 1984; Ackroyd & Thompson, 1999; Durkheim, 1897).

The reasoning above has vast relevance for the military context presented here. Officers and military professionals have from the day of recruitment undergone a long socialization process by which they acquire ‘the social knowledge and skills necessary to assume an organizational role’ (Arkin & Dobrofsky, 1978:157, Van Maanen & Schein, 1979; Ben-Ari, 1998). As will be illustrated in the following section, organizational and professional feelings rules are abundant when serving in the expeditionary force, but adjustment to them is also challenged in different ways.

**METHOD**

Central to the empirical material referred to here is a qualitative interview study conducted by the author and a research colleague in 2006/2007. The data was collected through semi-structured, individual interviews and, to a limited extent, participant observation in the mission areas of Liberia and Kosovo.\(^2\) Besides the interviews, the author took part in patrols, briefings, meals etc. The research questions did not focus specifically on emotion management, but centred more broadly on the experiences of contacts with various parties. However, in the soldiers’ narratives, the emotion

\(^2\) Parts of the results have previously been published in the chapter ‘Swedish-Irish cooperation in Liberia’ in Military Cooperation in Multinational Peace Operations (Soeters & Mannigart (Eds.), 2008).
managemen aspects of these contacts were obvious, particularly in regard to contacts
with civilians, their own unit and, to some extent, other countries’ military contingents.

The informants are mainly a group of 26 individuals\(^3\) who were interviewed three
times: during pre-deployment training, about five months into the deployment, and six
months after their return home. They were all men – male infantry soldiers\(^4\) aged between
21-36. Selection for interview was conducted by Army Tactical Command Headquarters
and roughly a quarter of those interviewed had served on at least one mission before.
Each interview lasted between 45 and 90 minutes and was recorded and transcribed. Data
analysis has been conducted using open coding, in line with Miles and Huberman (1994).

FINDINGS

Prescriptive emotion management in Peace Support Operations

The argument made in the following is that both formal and informal demands for
emotional regulation are abundant in the military context, and that soldiers are expected
to display a wide range of ‘appropriate feelings’ in situations characterised by great
uncertainty. Central is the notion that the organisation’s prescriptive professional conduct
is not always equivalent to the soldiers’ and officers’ notion of ‘professional’ conduct.
When seeing the multifaceted demands for emotional regulation through the lens of
Bolton’s (2005) typology, both overlaps and the sometimes conflicting nature of
organisational and professional feeling rules unfold.

Organizational feeling rules

Few institutions have been as attached to terms such as order, obedience, and
discipline as the military, an image that has been repeatedly reinforced within military
sociological research, popular culture and the media. Historically, this total institution
(Goffman, 1961b) also regulated soldiers’ behaviour and manners outside the garrison,
something that was considered key in transforming the men into ‘whole soldiers’ (Arkin
& Dobrofsky, 1978; Borell, 2004). In this section, examples are forthcoming of how old
rules are supplemented, softened and, in some cases, strengthened in the PSO context.

A striking feature of a military milieu compared to most civilian jobs, is the degree of
de-personalisation. Wearing similar uniforms and addressing people by their surnames,

\(^3\) Twelve of the soldiers were deployed to Liberia, twelve to Kosovo and two to Afghanistan.
\(^4\) Three were officers and the remainder were former conscripts who had volunteered for international
service and passed a two-month preparatory course.
you end up being nothing but a representative of the organisational body. In peace support operations, a correct overall manner and behaviour has an important signal-value. One soldier deployed to Kosovo reflected:

A soldier isn’t a person in his/her own right in that sense, but rather an outward face of the Swedish Armed Forces. In other words, dressed in green, personal weapon strapped across their chest, and bloody well-mannered.

In PSO, de-personalisation is also reinforced by the fact that there is scarcely any distinction between work and free time. You are almost always on duty, or you must at least be prepared to be called up at any time. Moreover, there is hardly any private space. At the camps the author visited, Camp Clara in Liberia and Camp Victoria in Kosovo, 2-4 people lived in one container, typically only big enough for the beds. The only way to get some privacy was to take a shower or lock yourself in the toilet. It goes without saying that the social adjustment to colleagues is extreme compared to most other jobs, where there are more distinct work-free zones for privacy and recreation.

Coupled to the above is the high degree of social control that soldiers are subjected to. They are always ‘visible’ and expected to set a good example. Many of your actions, even on a micro-level, might also impact greatly on a political level. This is a well-known fact among the soldiers, something often referred to as the demand for ‘the strategic corporal’. All in all, there is high pressure on the individual, who is also constantly reminded that getting it wrong, for example at a checkpoint or in contact with ex-combatants, can have considerable political and strategic consequences.

However, in service abroad, elements of old practices are being repackaged. Formal rules and regulations may still be bountiful and conformity and attention to detail may be praised, but there are changes in the organisation’s modus operandi. Operations abroad are inherently characterized by a high degree of unpredictability, and planning of actions in this environment is often synonymous with ‘organizing doubt’ (Kramer, 2004). To meet these challenges, the traditional, mechanic control and chain of command we know from ‘conventional wars’ has been transformed into a more organic, value-oriented leadership doctrine (Borell, 2004; Nørgaard & Holsting, 2006). What soldiers with experience of PSO see as decisive aspects of military professionalism in these arenas are partly new demands: to act decisively, to use your imagination, to be inventive, to stay aware and play out your role (Tillberg et al., 2008:13).

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5 The expression was first coined in Gen Charles C. Krulak’s article from January 1999, 'The Strategic Corporal: Leadership in the Three Block War', *Marines Magazine*.  

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Firm, fair and friendly

Serving in PSO involves adjusting to rules and regulations on different levels. The most overarching rules are Rules of engagement (ROE) which determine when, where, how, and against whom force can be used. For the purpose of this article, the UN motto for military personnel regulating conduct in social encounters is seen as even more interesting. The motto can be summarized as ‘Firm, fair and friendly’, and it goes without saying that these directions have a considerable emotion management element attached to them, as well as requiring a wide range of emotional displays. Firmness, especially in the beginning, is necessary in order to be taken seriously in contacts with opponents, during negotiations, when searching cars, ordering a crowd to move etc. Being fair can mean several things: from paying respect in all social encounters to staying neutral and not favouring any group or party. Being friendly in contact with civilians is more or less a given. The ideal image referred to in the discourse of politicians and high-ranking military officers is of a soldier behaving in a way that wins the peoples’ ‘hearts and minds’.

In the following section, an abbreviated description of a recurrent gun search in Kosovo is re-told. The procedure indicates another necessary emotion management capacity: that soldiers are able to switch between different emotional displays at short notice. In Goffman’s words, this involves operating with the skills of a ‘juggler and synthesizer’ where the emotional juggler fulfils one function while he is apparently engaged in another (1961a:139).

The intelligence service may have given you an idea about what to expect, but you will never know for sure if the encounter will be with criminals who have no intention of shedding light on their lucrative businesses, or an ordinary family getting on with their lives. After storming in, especially if nothing was found and there are no hostilities, you start apologising for the inconvenience and now have to try to calm the occupants of the house and gain their trust, since ideally, this type of operation should lead to further information gathering. You also take careful notes of what you just destroyed so compensation can be claimed later for any damage caused by ripping up floorboards or searching areas of the house. To avoid unnecessary soiling of inside areas, you put on your plastic blue shoe covers, included in the Swedish soldier’s equipment (originally used in hospital wards on rainy days).

A soldier deployed to Kosovo explains that the role could also involve acting like ‘child minders’:

If there are kids around where we have to go in, of course it’s a bit frightening. There have been times when we had to take care of the children, perhaps take them to the wagon, see if they were feeling alright and give them a teddy-bear.
The main point highlighted here again is that many encounters in Peace Support Operations cannot be pre-emptively covered with detailed orders or instructions. What higher echelons and commanders can provide are rules and overall codes of conduct. As will be discussed in more detail below, the ‘translation’ of these general guidelines to the real scenarios puts considerable pressure on the individual in terms of flexibility, choice, skill and imagination. However, the emotional ‘juggling’ (Goffman, 1961a; Bolton, 2001) in PSO, and especially the switch from friendly to firm, has been judged as particularly difficult for Swedish units as a national cultural stereotype (Dandeker, 1999:64; Sjöstrand, 2006:75). A squad leader deployed to Kosovo explains:

Many find it very difficult to manage this change of tempo from… sitting and drinking coffee with an old man or family and discussing their problems and finding out if we can help them with anything – generally taking an interest in them – to then having to man a checkpoint and search cars. In the latter situation we have to exhibit a tougher side, show that we’re the ones who decide, dominate, and that we are in charge of the situation.

When asked what was the most problematic, the domination in itself or the switching, the answer echoed that both initially could be considered difficult:

I found I had problems with that in the beginning, but then I learnt pretty quickly to adapt and manage the change of tempo. But I know that a lot of guys didn’t, perhaps not a lot, but a few anyway. / And well, yes, some were bad at both. But, generally speaking, I think it’s fair to say that many Swedes are very friendly people…and we find it difficult to switch to being firm when necessary – we just carry on being friendly.

Apart from the ability to display firmness and domination, the necessary de-escalation of emotions after a warlike encounter requires emotion management. Subsequent to the rallies in the village of Caglavica in Kosovo in 2004,6 many of the officers witnessed the aggression that they, and perhaps even more so the soldiers, felt afterwards towards the Albanians. This was largely generated from the frustration felt after staying ‘firm’ while being violently attacked over a long period of time, without adhering to their instinct to defend themselves forcefully (Blomgren, 2006:97).

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6 The situation referred to is an event in Kosovo in March 2004 when some hundreds of Swedish soldiers, and a small number of soldiers from other nations, managed to prevent about 13,000 Albanians from crossing a bridge and burning Serbian houses (Blomgren, 2006).
Professional feeling rules

‘You have to fake it till you make it’

Following Bolton (2005), the impression of a professional is one who actively engages in prescriptive emotion management and appears willing to internalize the professional feeling rules in order to meet the expectations of the employer, the colleagues and the public (p. 123). It was indicated in the interviews that finding one’s feet and professional role did not come easy to everyone and that PSO involves a certain amount of dissimulation.

A phrase used in the Swedish Armed Forces that indicates a fair amount of ‘face work’ (Goffman, 1955) and ‘masking’ is ‘tjänstemin 1a’, meaning the ‘on-duty face’ or non-emotional ‘stony-faced’ demeanour used to emphasise your ‘serious and professional’ conduct. The phrase is also commonly used ironically to refer to the façade one might put on in certain situations. An officer describes this as something young soldiers in particular must make use of: “You have to fake it till you make it – that’s what it’s all about”, meaning you have to look like you are in control until you reach the point when you actually are.

An expected code of conduct like professional emotional coolness is generally seen as a must in the expeditionary force. A Swedish squad commander, deployed to one of the first Swedish missions in Kosovo, describes how he and his unit were confronted with extreme misery and harsh conditions in encounters with civilians who were struggling to survive the winter. Sometimes, he could not stop tears from welling up in his eyes, and clearly recalls the advice he was given by an older soldier with experience of a number of previous missions: ‘If you don’t learn to toughen up you won’t be able to cope with all the misery in the end’. He admits to having struggled a great deal with this himself: ‘I had to wrestle with this for the whole mission because I didn’t want to lose part of myself to a professional role. Just imagine if I lost my capacity for genuine empathy and compassion forever.’ A point being stressed by Van Maanen (1979) is that in showing calmness and being dispassionate in the face of human misery (although managing one’s emotions is crucial to successful role performance), such self-control raises questions as to what feelings are one’s own and what feelings go with the job. A Swedish officer deployed to Afghanistan, describes his own ‘change’ during the operational tour, and the accumulated stress he felt when trying to maintain the appropriate ‘filter’: 
I’ve thought a bit about my personality and I think I became decidedly more set in my ways as the tour progressed…more provocative, more dogmatic and I wanted to make my feelings known because I thought they were all completely stupid. It was a real culture clash…/ There are some really bad people there, by our standards there are…/ But all the time you have to apply a political-correctness filter, because if you don’t, things can really fall apart…

Nevertheless, it is not only contact with civilians that calls for emotion management and challenges soldiers’ expectations, coping abilities and professionalism. Ideally, cooperation with other countries’ troops will stand for an exchange of experiences and stimulation, but in reality these contacts are often infused with tensions (see also Vom Hagen et al., 2003; Hedlund, Weibull & Soeters, 2008; Sjöstrand, 2006:123). The source is often the ‘others’ ethical and moral attitudes, their conduct towards the civilian population, breaches of regulations, drinking habits and rumours of association with prostitutes.

As an officer, you also have a certain code of conduct and ethics coupled to your profession. However, in theatre you regularly find yourself in situations where you are not supposed to interfere, for instance in a street fight or when witnessing a situation of violent abuse. Times like these are taxing on an individual’s values and on the inculcation of the profession’s most important ethical rules – to protect, help and save. A Swedish officer describes how, on a mission to Liberia, he witnessed Ghanaian and Nigerian soldiers’ behaviour towards civilians during a riot:

The countermeasures taken by the units responsible for the area involved opening fire on everyone who had or might have had a weapon. Others were severely beaten up…. / One of their specialities was to force the Liberians to jump up and down like frogs as they hit them.

(Tillberg et al., 2008: 67)

To summarise in the PSO context, the borders between formal rules and regulations and organisational and professional feeling rules are often a complicated story for the individual soldier, and perhaps even more so for officers since they are responsible for not only monitoring their own feelings but also those of the soldiers (on the emotion management of others, also see Thoits, 1996).
Presentational and philanthropic emotion management in PSO

In this section it is argued that social feeling rules infuse most aspects of work and living conditions in PSO and that the management of feelings in relation to both peers and civilians is multifaceted. Bolton’s typology here offers insights into how work performance and motivation are influenced by personal expectations and a search for ontological security (Giddens, 1991). In interaction with colleagues, the need for emotional regulation is extensive, but close comradeship and social support is offered in return. The complexity is further heightened by the fact that your peers are also the assessors of your professional performance. In contact with civilians, social feelings rules can be duplicitous and spontaneous expressions withheld or restricted.

Social feeling rules

Bonding and dependencies

Social feeling rules often serve as a stabilisation factor in the organisation but also tend to develop tensions, cliques and sub-cultures (Bolton, 2005). This is all true in the military field, and different aspects of the inner social life of military units have been portrayed in numerous films and popular culture. Phenomena like bonding and strong cohesion have traditionally been looked upon as prerequisites for a well functioning group, even if there is also a growing awareness of the risk of negative side-effects like ‘groupthink’ (Janis, 1971). In missions abroad, the special conditions of both living and working together can be said to add to the importance of examining social feeling rules. On the one hand, close comradeship is the basis of the special ‘mission life’, and one of the reasons why people apply. Belongingness and a ‘union of sympathy’ (Dornbush, 1955; Arkin & Dobrofsky, 1978) grows from performing tasks together, and strong inter-dependency arises from the shared experiences of potential risks. A consequence of the latter is that units operating out in the field are generally more closely knit than support companies working inside the camp. Competition between squads, companies and units commonly arises, and is also reinforced in ‘battles’ of various kinds like sports events and banter. When serving abroad, the division between the ‘in-group’ and ‘out-group’ are even more accentuated, as dependency on ‘one’s own’, is greater than back home. A squad leader deployed to Kosovo reflected on how the delineation between ‘us and them’ could even influence the willingness to help one another:
If another company comes and asks if they can borrow a vehicle, then we kind’ve go, “well we need it”. If another squad from our platoon comes and asks us then we say “of course”… so it depends who’s asking… If they come from another platoon, it’s a bit iffy, but we say yes most of the time. You prioritise your squad, then the platoon, then the company.

On the other hand, the high degree of inter-dependency calls for almost constant emotional regulation. You are expected to lock away your personal feelings and adapt to the rules of the group. There is also a line of talk aimed at ‘keeping colleagues in line’, which means that, as a rookie you have to, at least initially, take insults, light-hearted banter and jokes on the chin from more experienced colleagues. The situation for the newcomer conforms to Gennep’s (1909) classic theory on rites of passage. A previous survey including peacekeepers deployed to Kosovo showed that anxieties were common before deployment in regard to not living up to professional expectations (Larsson, 2007). In the same vein, soldiers in this study expressed hopes that they would ‘fit in to this special life’, that colleagues would ‘like them’ and ‘think of them as hard-working and doing a good job’. It was also stressed how important it is in this context to be ‘social’, not to ‘be a loner’, and to ‘bring something to the table’. This might have been reinforced by the fact that these newcomers didn’t know much about the situation in theatre: ‘We didn’t really know much about what it was like. Actually, it was like starting a new life’.

Bolton (2005) suggests that the closest group is where emotional control probably is the most effective, for it is stage-managed by those with whom members must spend most of their time. During a mission, however, the social feeling rules are only one of several instances for control. It is true that the group represents your closest comrades but they will also evaluate your professional performance. From them you will receive continuous feedback through weekly ‘hot seat’ sessions, in which everything from professional issues to the problem of someone’s stinking feet are vented. This procedure also has a more formal counterpart in the graded report on professionalism and conduct that both officers and soldiers receive by the end of the mission. The multi-source assessment tool based on peer evaluation is taken very seriously, as the grades will have a significant impact on soldiers’ chances for further deployments and, for officers, their future military career.

‘Doing good’ with impediments

In contrast to the situation in many other societies, Swedish troops are supposed to find peace support operations quite compatible with their military ethos (Dandeker, 1999: 64) and so far these troops also seem to enjoy a good international reputation. The
soldier’s motives for signing up are often a mixture of many things (money, adventure, comradeship, a ‘sabbatical’ etc.) but in general, the motive of doing ‘good in the world’ is also a sincere aspiration. This objective seemed to have been easier to fulfil in Liberia than in Kosovo. The Liberians were viewed as ‘friendly’, ‘happy’ (despite what they had gone through), whereas the image of people in Kosovo was more negative. There, people seemed to hold on to ‘old grudges’, having a ‘hidden agenda’, and meetings were more often coloured with questions about funds for this and that, decisions that the soldiers could not influence. These pre-conditions made the grounds for a genuine meeting on equal grounds less likely. However, you could also say that there was a hidden agenda behind the soldiers’ behaviour, as an important aim of the interaction with civilians was information gathering. Nevertheless, many soldiers expressed mixed feelings in connection with the fact that more genuine meetings with ‘the others’ were seldom realized.

An environment of contradictions

Serving abroad in the expeditionary service involves being part of many strange arrangements. For Sweden it implies that you ‘borrow’ a piece of land in a foreign country and turn it into a miniature Sweden, furnished by IKEA and staffed by personnel who serve under Swedish laws but are immune to the laws of the host country. Absurdities as a consequence of this set up are not unusual. For example, in some theatres of operation, Swedish environmental standards may be adhered to inside the camp, even if doing so is all in vain. Waste might be sorted for recycling inside, but then just ends up being burned at a rubbish dump by a local entrepreneur.

Altruistically motivated actions could also be hindered by different rules and regulations. In Liberia, many soldiers were upset with the order of things in regard to the civilians and their needs. Some soldiers questioned the mission altogether and accused the operation of ‘neo-colonialism’. The dissent concerned the circumstances under which the local employees were hired and paid (low wage), and the un-modern tools they had to use (for example scythes for cutting the grass). More provocative though was that large amounts of leftover food from the kitchen were thrown away every day in a country where poverty prevailed. From higher command this was motivated for security reasons (the risk of having hundreds of begging people blocking the main gates) and also because the food might be unfit for consumption after some hours in the humid climate. Nevertheless, this did not change the fact that individual soldiers were questioning the

*In Goffman’s terms, the presence of a ‘hidden agenda’ is a violation of unwritten traffic rules of social interaction (1967).
credibility of the operation as such, and alternative interpretations (re-framing) of what ‘the real task’ in Liberia was were forthcoming. Another example is that the last contingent in Liberia 2006 had orders to destroy some hundred mosquito nets since it was strictly forbidden to give away Swedish Armed Forces material. From the military’s perspective, the mandate was crystal clear, and humanitarian aid was not part of it. However, in interviews and informal conversations, soldiers admitted to breaking the rules, giving away as much as they could get away with during the last weeks of deployment, when there was no risk of being sent home.

On motivation and emotional costs

Applying for service in the expeditionary force is quite an attractive choice for many young Swedish men and (some) women. The most popular choice is usually the first mission in a new conflict area, when conditions are harsh (Sjöstrand, 2006). Even if there is often a mixture of motives behind an individual application, the wish to ‘make a difference’ and make a personal contribution is widespread. This motivation is perhaps especially strong within Swedish units, where the majority are civilians, who, after completed national service, volunteer for six months abroad. As previously inferred, however, the realities of practical arrangements, policies and restriction of movement in theatre frequently challenge applicants’ preconceptions of a self-image as ‘helpers’. Even if some can overcome these disappointments quite well, for example, by toughening themselves up or in other ways resigning themselves to the conditions in question, there is almost always an emotional cost to be paid. The possibility of a personal ‘change’ is commented on in the following way by a soldier deployed to Liberia:

Something happens. The ones who have been out there, they say that this is what they generally hear when they come home, that they’ve changed. / In both positive and negative respects, but you’re not the same person when you come home from a mission.

The experience of change over time when confronted with realities also corresponds well with findings from a study conducted by Blix (2007) on Norwegian soldiers deployed to Afghanistan. Blix describes how the Norwegian soldiers’ initial idealistic motives began to rust over time. While still wanting to uphold their image as ‘helpers’, the soldiers described being dragged into delusion, in which negative attitudes towards civilians began to arise. Even if the transition of adapting to ‘the new’ situation was neither fast nor easy for anyone, the general picture from both this and the Norwegian study is that in retrospect, the positive aspects outweigh the negative ones and willingness to go out again is strong. In agreement with Blix’s findings (2007), strong group cohesion, personal impressions of being ‘there’ and the experience of many exotic things contribute to the
soldiers summarising their view on the work of the contingent and their own contribution as fairly good.

In summary, the social feeling rules soldiers must adjust to in PSO are of many different kinds and are often more complicated than those referred to in former research. To start with, relations to peers are somewhat unclear in this context. Although soldiers are very dependent on and close to comrades, they are also formally assessed by them, something that might impact on how much an individual actually shares their inner feelings. Moreover, it is rare that the soldiers’ expectations and hopes for genuine meetings with the local population, unhampered by mistrust, hidden agendas or safety precautions, are fulfilled.

CONCLUSION

Being a member of an organisation has a big impact on the individual. This article has focused on the emotional load on participants in military peace support operations (PSO) and the multifaceted demands for emotion management in this environment, demands that are hard-edged in several aspects compared with work in most civilian organisations. The findings refer first and foremost to interviews with soldiers deployed to Liberia and Kosovo. With departure in emotion sociology, the data has been analysed with reference to a typology on work place emotion elaborated by Bolton (2005). This typology offers a multifaceted framework highlighting how the existence of organisational, professional and social ‘feeling rules’ results in various demands for emotion management and how this influences the employee’s motivation, professional identity and performance.

Even if work in PSO is more complex, dangerous and ‘tight’ in time in regard to most occupations referred to by Bolton, her reasoning, exemplifications and observations offer many parallels to work on missions abroad. It should also be noted that Bolton provides a wider and changed perspective on emotions as being reliant solely on the individual’s make up and personality to focusing on emotions as reliant on factors that are external to the individual. Feeling rules do not only apply to the demands from one’s own organisation but are generated in contacts with various parties in the operational theatre. Moreover, these rules and prescriptions might stand in contradiction to an individual’s own codes of conduct as a professional and a peacekeeper.

On an aggregated level, these conflicting demands of feeling rules can be illustrated by Emmanuel Kant’s concepts of ‘duty ethics’ and ‘consequence ethics’. Soldiers’ narratives indicate many examples of situations where the prescribed rules for actions were not in accordance with what they saw as morally right; they wanted to let their feelings be known, but had to act politically correctly. Another sort of dilemma stems from not being
able to follow the spontaneous feeling of ‘taking from those who have and giving to those who do not’ due to security reasons or formal rules. In some cases this resulted in soldiers being disobedient, giving away things regardless and justifying their actions. In Bolton’s terminology, ‘spaces for being human’ are often restricted in the PSO context.

Another reflection concerns the fact that Liberia and Kosovo were ‘low-intensity-conflict areas’ at the time of data collection. Nevertheless, the findings reveal that emotional regulation and the need for management of feelings were considerable, and probably largely akin to that needed when serving in ‘high-intensity-conflict areas’. Consequently, the official distinction between high- and low-conflict-intensity areas can, in terms of the demands for emotion management, be seen as an arbitrary one, an argument that can only be confirmed by further research. However, it seems true that this type of labelling deflects interest in a more detailed knowledge of the personal cost incurred in ‘low-intensity conflict areas’ and also in the often witnessed personal ‘change’ that accompanies it.

Even if the situations and examples of emotion management here are restricted in number, they hopefully show that these topics deserve further exploration. More research is also needed to address the emotion management of other groups in theatre such as female soldiers and officers, civilians, staff, high commanders etc. A further exploration is also needed into the somewhat complex relationship with colleagues, as both assessors of performance, possible generators of emotional management and providers of social support.
Bibliography


Essay II
Swedish-Irish cooperation in Liberia*

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Erik Hedlund, Louise Weibull and Joseph Soeters

INTRODUCTION

Today international commitments have become the core of operations conducted by the Swedish Armed Forces (SAF), and Swedish military units, in cooperation with military forces from other nations, are increasingly active in international, peace-promoting and humanitarian tasks.¹

Therefore, the ability to cooperate successfully, in the widely varying social and cultural environments in which Swedish troops may be committed, places increasing demands on knowledge and awareness within the field of cultural competence and cooperation (Andersson 2001; Blomgren and Johansson 2005; Blomgren 2007; Johansson 2001; Hagen et al. 2003, 2006; Klep and Winslow 1999; Berggren 2005). Cooperation in Military Operations Other Than War (MOOTW) not only involves military units, but also, to an increasing degree, police forces, NGOs, civil authorities and the civilian population (Gareis et al. 2003; Blomgren and Johansson 2005; Callaghan and Schönborr 2004). Despite the fact that politicians,² military officers, and researchers have repeatedly stressed the importance of an improvement in social and cultural awareness, this field of

¹ At present there are about 1,000 Swedish men and women in some 15 locations around the world involved in peace promotion and security tasks; the ambition is to double this number.
² The former Defence Minister, Ms Leni Björklund, emphasised the importance for Swedish officers on international missions to be able to “understand and interpret their operational environment” and that subjects such as “the arts, history, the science of religion and cultural anthropology” should perhaps be included in officer training (www.folkochforsvar.se/files/RK%202006/Leni%20Bjorklund0600117pdf.).
study has not yet become a priority issue for the Swedish Armed Forces. In order to better prepare Swedish officers and soldiers for future missions - apart from appropriate training - there needs to be more research focusing on Swedish experience in various operational theatres.

This chapter aims to analyse the social and cultural strains between Swedish and Irish troops in a Quick Reaction Force in Liberia. More specifically, we want to illustrate (a) how perceptions of the Irish developed and spread within the Swedish contingent, before and during the mission, (b) how these perceptions changed over time, and (c) how Swedes were regarded by the Irish and locally employed Liberians.

BACKGROUND

In September 2003, after 14 years of bloody civil war that claimed between 150,000 and 200,000 human lives, the UN Security Council decided to establish a multinational peacekeeping force, the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL). UNMIL's task was to support the ceasefire agreement and the peace process and to protect the civilian population and UN personnel. The 15,000 - strong force that came from countries such as Pakistan, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Bangladesh, Ireland, and Sweden was also tasked with beginning the disarmament process and assisting in national security reforms, including national police training and the formation of a new, restructured military.

The first Swedish deployment to Liberia was in February 2004 (LA01). The Swedes became part of an integrated Quick Reaction Force (QRF) with Ireland as the lead nation. The QRF did not have its own Area of Responsibility, and its task was basically, at short notice, to provide support to other UN forces anywhere in the country, in the event of violent upheaval and attacks by insurgents. Another task, exclusively for this mission, was guaranteeing safety and public order during the trial of Charles Taylor in Freetown, Sierra Leone.

The Swedish contribution was a 230-strong, fully equipped, mechanised infantry company, while the Irish contribution was a reduced mechanised infantry battalion of about 430 personnel. Both had their own support, maintenance, and administrative

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3 In pre-deployment training, carried out eight weeks before deployment, personnel are given very limited information on the specific cultural conditions in the mission area, but no information whatsoever about the nations they will cooperate with.

4 This case study is part of a larger research project, completed by Erik Hedlund and Louise Weibull, including both the 5th Swedish Liberia force (LA05) and the 14th Kosovo force (KS14). The research issues that this study aims to address are: (1) What perceptions do Swedish troops have of military partners and local actors before their tour of duty? (2) Do these perceptions change during and after the mission - and, if so, how and why? (3) How are Swedes regarded by other nations in overseas operational forces and by local actors?

5 The DDRR-process; Demobilisation, Disarmament, Rehabilitation, and Reintegration.
personnel. Since Ireland was the lead nation, the Commanding Officer (CO) of the complete contingent was Irish. It was not until the middle of the second deployment (LA02) that Sweden provided the Second-in-Command (2IC) of the contingent; according to Swedes, this did much to improve Swedish-Irish cooperation.

The Battalion was deployed on a headland just north of Monrovia close to the once luxury hotel, Hotel Africa, with beautiful views over the sea. Although the Battalion was physically integrated in a shared camp, a small road divided the national contingents’ respective areas. In addition, there was almost complete separation of tasks, except for the HQ and planning sections, a common communications centre, and some medical facilities. Each country had its own guard and patrol duties, maintenance section and also its own logistic facilities in terms of food, accommodation and leisure time (welfare). The camp bar was run solely by the Irish and the only shop on camp was run by the Swedes. There were significant differences in the standard of accommodation, vehicles, and equipment. The Irish lived in air-conditioned tents, while Swedes lived in air-conditioned containers with dehumidifiers. Swedish vehicles and equipment were much more modern and in better condition than Irish vehicles and equipment.

Despite the fact that the QRF has received much praise for its efforts (Almén and Sörensen 2007), cooperation and integration between the Swedish and the Irish have not been perfect and without their complications. As early as the first Swedish mission, cultural friction emerged and the road between the two contingents became more social than physical (Sjöblom 2005). The Swedes felt that the Irish kept a much more hierarchical distance between soldiers, NCOs, and officers. Irish commanders often made decisions themselves, without consulting subordinates. The Swedish military doctrine of “auftragstaktik” (mission command) (Vogelaar and Kramer 2004), which places greater responsibility for how tasks are dealt with at a lower operational level, was not socially or culturally interoperable with the more hierarchical structure of the Irish. There were also basic differences in ideas on what constitutes a task and how it should be completed. If Swedes are generally encouraged to use their own initiative, it is not the case among Irish. The Swedes also felt that the Irish had less restrictive rules and norms concerning alcohol consumption, socialising with the local population, and visiting prostitutes.

In general, Swedes had a relatively negative view of Irish behaviour. A later study - of the third mission in Liberia (LA03) - (Weibull and Johansson 2006) showed that Swedish perceptions of the Irish, acquired during the first mission, were basically unchanged, i.e. Swedish perceptions of the Irish were still largely negative. Almost half of the Swedish respondents (46 per cent) said that they had experienced conflict with Irish personnel, while approximately one third (34 per cent) did not share this experience. Individual appointments seem to have played a role here; e.g. it appears that everyone in the Battalion staff experienced conflict with the Irish, whereas figures for the maintenance unit were much lower - about a quarter (26 per cent) and in the infantry company just over a half (52 per cent). The study also contained questions about Swedes’ perceptions
of cooperation with the Irish in general: 11 per cent were very positive and 7 percent very negative. The majority of answers, however, were in the middle of the scale, with almost equal numbers saying they were either fairly positive or fairly negative (42 per cent and 40 per cent respectively).

When Swedes were asked which factors they considered to have the greatest influence on the climate of cooperation in multinational units (Weibull and Johansson 2006), respondents cited good language ability and a common position and policies concerning relationships with the civilian population; i.e. areas emphasising communication and a common view on ethical issues. As far as language ability was concerned, Swedes generally considered themselves to be quite good. A few mentioned that the Irish accent was occasionally difficult to understand. Others even had a tendency to think they were better than the Irish (“sometimes the Irish aren’t very good at ordinary school English!”).6

DATA

Semi-structured, individual interviews and, to a limited extent, participatory observation (Gellner and Hirsch 2001) were mainly used to collect data for this study. Twelve people in the Swedish group (ten privates, one reserve officer, one officer), selected by our point of contact during pre-deployment training, were the project’s main respondents; they were interviewed three times: first, during pre-deployment training, second, five months into the deployment (August 2006) and finally, six months after their return home (May 2007).7 On our first visit to Camp Clara, five additional Swedish respondents were interviewed, including the Second-in-Command (2IC) of the contingent and the Press Officer. During our second visit (October 2006) 12 Irish personnel (ten privates, one NCO and one officer) and six local employees were interviewed. A total of 35 interviews were conducted. Each interview lasted about 45 minutes to 1½ hours; all interviews were recorded and transcribed. The respondents were men and women between 21 and 45 years of age. The interviews of locally employed Liberians took the form of two group interviews. All Swedes and locally employed Liberians were interviewed by the Swedish co-authors. Irish personnel were interviewed by the Dutch co-author, the aim being to

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6 Previous studies have confirmed that, in an international context, language knowledge plays a lesser role in deciding which countries people prefer to work with, when compared with shared moral values. In the field of Nordic cooperation, the lack of language knowledge among Finns is sometimes mentioned. However, this has not reduced the will and ability of Swedes to work with Finns. On the contrary, Finland is considered to be a country that people would particularly like to work with, a view borne out by Swedish experience in Kosovo (Weibull and Johansson 2006). Results from a comparative survey of officers from nine countries (Boene 2001) showed that Swedes gave a relatively high rating to cooperation problems arising from ethical differences.

7 One respondent returned home early and was replaced by someone holding the same appointment.
allow them to feel that they could talk freely about the Swedish. The two one-week visits to Liberia also allowed us to gather data via informal conversations and to get a better picture of the working conditions and the physical environment.

RESULTS

The emergence and spread of perceptions

During the pre-deployment training, which lasted approximately two months, there was almost no formal information given about the lessons learned from previous missions in Liberia. Despite this, there was a widespread and common image of the Irish, which indicates extensive informal learning. In some cases this informal learning seems to have started as early as basic military training and come from unit officers who had served on previous missions. For those who were particularly interested, information about the Irish could be obtained from an unofficial, independent website. This website, which was available for the duration of the Liberian missions, included a discussion forum where experiences from Liberia were discussed - including opinions about the Irish. However, the most influential informal learning channel was the pre-deployment training. Here, respondents testify to an extensive transfer of informal information and knowledge. For younger soldiers in such a situation, the most important and most respected sources were soldiers with previous service abroad, especially in Liberia.

Meeting places

At platoon level and below the main meeting places for daily job-related contacts with the Irish were the shared communications centre and the vehicle repair unit. There was no real operational cooperation except for a few long-range patrols. During their spare time, the social contacts between Swedes and Irish were effectively non-existent because there were no natural meeting places in the camp. The camp pub, which was run by the Irish, was only frequented by a few Swedes and they tended to sit at a table by themselves in the outer areas of the premises. The Irish sat in larger groups, talking noisily in order to make themselves heard above the crowd and the background music. The Swedes described a sense of not feeling welcome, not feeling at home, and not being comfortable in the noisy, raucous atmosphere. The bar was more like an Irish party or carnival than a place for Swedes and Irish to meet and socialise with each other.

In other words, the lack of meeting places meant that the Swedes and the Irish had no opportunity to deepen their knowledge and understanding of each other.
Perceptions of the Irish

Before the mission

Before the mission had even started, the Irish were generally viewed as being disorderly and rowdy. However, some Swedes had more moderate opinions, differentiating between different battalions\(^8\) and acknowledging individual differences among the Irish as a group. That said, there was a general and widely shared opinion that the Irish were inclined to start a party and drink alcohol as soon as the opportunity presented itself.

The guys who were down there before us, they were rowdy – troublemakers. They say that certain Irishmen are damned good and some are bad, it depends at bit on who they send out there too. They hit the bottle a lot more, the only thing they did in their spare time was to drink an awful lot.

The Irish were also said to have visited prostitutes, despite the fact that this was forbidden.

Even though the general view of the Irish was negative and emphasised perceived deficiencies in many areas, there was general recognition of their professional ability to carry out their military tasks: “Everyone I have met has been very professional; many of them have been on international operations before.”

During the mission

Swedish perceptions of the Irish before the mission remained more or less unchanged after six months of living in the same camp. However, during the mission new issues emerged, which indicated social and cultural differences between the Swedes and the Irish. According to Swedes, Irish soldiers generally seemed to be less well educated, working-class and potential criminals, who basically had to choose between joining up, being unemployed or going to prison: “on the other hand, they are people who would either have been in jail or been unemployed”. This compares with the Swedes who had all completed high school. Many had completed extensive vocational-training programmes or had started or completed university or college education.

Swedish officers and soldiers are recruited for positions based on their skills and interests. According to Swedes, this contrasted with the Irish situation, where the skills and interests of ordinary soldiers are not taken into account; they are simply posted into

\(^8\) The Swedish and Irish units rotated at different times.
vacant positions: “Nobody has looked into what skills they might have from civilian life and what they would like to do. They’re just put into a position.” This, combined with the fact that many of the Irish were professional soldiers who had been ordered to deploy, contributed towards a comparatively lower degree of motivation, will and ambition to do a good job.

So, you see, they’re not volunteers - so both their morale and their will to be here is not as great and the obvious result is as you might expect - they would rather stay in camp than go out and complete an assignment.

Swedes, on the other hand, saw themselves as being extremely motivated because they wanted to experience as much adventure as possible during their six-month mission.

Nor were the Irish regarded as organising their activities with the same degree of advance planning as the Swedes; instead they seemed to take things as they came, which, according to Swedish views, led to a certain amount of disorder and chaos. This laissez-faire mentality differed considerably from the Swedish model.

I think they deal with assignments as things come up, which in itself isn’t the wrong kind of attitude, because there are examples where units with that approach have managed much better when things go to pot. But this is typical of the things that we’ve reacted against here - things that are very difficult for Swedes to understand.

In addition to comments on the Irish laissez-faire mentality, another constantly recurring topic of conversation among Swedes was - in their view - the lack of hygiene procedures among the Irish. “Well, take a look in their canteen, you can go in there and compare the level of hygiene in their compound and ours. All right, it works, but not much more than that.” The Swedes were obviously proud of their hygiene procedures, which included washing their hands with soap and water, then disinfecting them with “alcogel” before and after meals and after going to the toilet. Swedes were also very proud of their higher standard of accommodation, living condition, and their much better organised part of the camp. The stricter order of things in the Swedish part of the camp led the Irish to call it “Little Germany”.

However, if there was one thing about the Irish that irritated Swedes more than anything else, it was their attitude towards rules and regulations.

Well, we follow the rules fairly stringently, the Irish don’t. The Irish have a tighter set of rules, but they don’t seem to care too much about following them. They don’t give a damn about how violations are dealt with.
The Irish did not see themselves as rule-breakers in the true sense of the words; they felt that certain actions, which were contrary to rules and regulations, showed a conscious, positive flexibility and empathy. Unlike Swedes, they would, for example, give away money and sweets to children and adults who gathered at the camp gate; they would regularly allow locally employed civilians to take food from the camp, without the gate pass required by the rules and regulations. Even the locally employed civilians commented on the Swedes’ lack of sympathy and flexibility, when compared to the Irish.

When we are working, it saddens us to see Swedes throwing away food and burning things that we are badly in need of. But, if you don't have a gate pass, the Swedes won’t let you out. We realise they have their orders. The Irish are different, they’re more flexible. We can take food and other things out, we don’t need a gate pass. Tell them to change their policy. If the Irish can, the Swedes must be able to as well. They’re so restrictive. A rule is not a bible.

On the other hand, Swedish policy was to keep strictly to rules and regulations, so as not to encourage corruption and also to maintain security in the gate area. For them, as far as gifts were concerned, it was the job of aid organisations such as the Red Cross which dealt with humanitarian activities.

Two other breaches of regulations that irritated Swedes were, firstly, that the Irish definitely did not keep to the regulation “three-can rule” concerning alcohol consumption and, secondly, that they were rumoured to slip away from camp to visit prostitutes. Swedes would joke that, as far as the Irish were concerned, the “three-can rule” meant three cans at a time. However, some respondents showed a certain degree of understanding for the fact that the Irish applied some rules (e.g. those governing alcohol consumption) differently from the Swedes.

A lot of it lies in that fact that it’s their job. This is normal; it’s what happens in everyday life, like. So therefore they don’t think this thing with alcohol is a big deal. They’ve got a lot more spare time down here in camp. They only get to go home once a year, while we can go home three times in seven, eight months. They can have time off for one week in camp and I can understand if they go to their pub three evenings a week. So I can understand if they go on a binge here a bit more, while we can go home and do it.

As far as visiting prostitutes is concerned, it has been difficult to find first-hand information to confirm that such visits took place. However, rumours that such visits had taken place during earlier missions were rife.⁹ Swedes, on the other hand, distanced

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⁹ Swedish contingent commanders stated that only a few individuals were guilty of visiting prostitutes.
themselves completely from anything having to do with prostitution: “and then, you know, they visited prostitutes. That’s something that’s blacklisted - both in Swedish rules and regulations and in the mentality. So that feels really very strange.”

The Irish saw themselves as being very sociable and easy to get on with; they had the “gift of the gab”, something acknowledged by both Swedes and locally employed Liberians. “The Irish are more relaxed when they talk to the Liberians. The Irish soldiers are very sociable.” In interviews, locally employed personnel said that Swedes ought to be more flexible, more sociable and show more interest in talking to them, if only to gain access to important information.

Communication is important. For example, if I’ve got something I want to say, maybe I won’t say it because we can’t communicate. Liberia is a friendly country. If they go to a more hostile country, they're going to have to learn to be more flexible with civilian employees. It’s the only way things will work. If I don’t want to talk to you, I won’t. Then you lose access to information. I have lots of information that might be useful to them, but they don’t ask.

Locally employed Liberians also described Swedes as being somewhat awkward and socially shy: “Swedes aren’t so keen to be friends. You can see in their faces that they want to be friends, but they don’t quite know what to do.” Another cultural difference mentioned was the importance and influence of religion on relationships between Irish men and women in camp: “They’re Catholics so then there’ll be a bit of a difference in how they associate with girls and that. They don’t talk to them, they’re not allowed to be billeted with the girls; they’re a bit stricter that way.” However, we saw no evidence of this. On the contrary, during our two visits to Camp Clara Irish men and women socialised regularly together in the pub.

From the preceding, it is clear that Swedes had a lot of negative opinions about the Irish. Interestingly enough, however, the reverse was not true: from interviews with Irish respondents, it appeared that they did not have the same problems with Swedes. On the contrary, they thought the Swedes were good soldiers, good guys, and that there were little or no problems in Swedish-Irish cooperation. They also openly admitted that they envied the Swedes for their better equipment and living and working accommodation (“our government could learn from that”). In other words, the problem seems to have been predominantly a one-way - on the Swedish side - rather than a two-way problem.

To summarise our findings we can say that Swedish soldiers’ perceptions of the Irish before the mission basically remained unchanged during the mission, although new

10 If someone has the “gift of the gab”, it means that he speaks in a persuasive and interesting way.
aspects were added during the six months that they shared camp. Most of these perceptions can also be seen as negative. A positive exception was that, although Swedes saw Irish soldiers as people who might otherwise be unemployed and/or potentially criminal, they were still regarded as being relatively competent as professional soldiers. Another was that the Irish were considered very sociable and easy to get along with, despite the fact that they were also seen to be disorderly and to overly enjoy drinking. These partly contradictory views indicate that Swedish perceptions of the Irish were largely based on prejudice and stereotypical opinions.

Some of the more obvious cultural differences between Swedes and Irishmen in the results of this study were ethical issues such as attitudes towards alcohol, prostitution, and flexibility (or otherwise) when it comes to following rules. There were also other obvious differences in aspects of hygiene, working and living conditions, motivation and attitude to work performance, and differences in social competence.

DISCUSSION

How can we understand and explain the primarily negative Swedish perceptions of the Irish? It is obvious that these perceptions were mainly stereotypical (Allport 1954) and were created and spread through informal learning (socialisation) before the mission, in particular during pre-deployment training and especially from veterans with previous service abroad. According to Säljö (2000) and Lave and Wenger (1991), the creation and transfer of perceptions in an informal, cultural, and communicative process can be described as a form of “word-of-mouth” learning. The force of this learning process was strengthened because the Swedish Armed Forces have not implemented any formal procedures for the continuous evaluation of lessons learned from previous Swedish-Irish cooperation. Instead, the perceptions and preconceptions, which developed among soldiers and junior officers during the first mission in Liberia, became institutionalised and remained largely intact. This phenomenon was also observed in a study of the German-Netherlands Brigade in Kabul (Hagen et al. 2003). When this perception of “them and us” has been established, it becomes very difficult to change. This remained true despite the fact that a majority of respondents described how they actively tried to take information they received about operations in Liberia “with a pinch of salt” and deferred forming an opinion of their own until they arrived in the theatre.

One reason for the creation of negative perceptions before deployment, their remaining intact and, to a certain extent, becoming even more unfavourable, may be that there were

11 Compared to other non-western nations, the Irish were considered to be a crack unit.
12 It was also among lower-ranking Dutch officers that the most negative attitudes towards Germans were found and spread in the German-Netherlands Brigade in Kabul (Hagen et al. 2003).
no continuous, extensive, and planned integration efforts in line with recommendations derived from the contact hypothesis (Allport 1954). The Swedish and the Irish effectively lived separate but parallel lives in the camp. Such a situation provides an ideal condition for a division into “in-group” and “out-group”. Furthermore, there is often a tendency for the “in-group” to overestimate their own performance, while underestimating the performance of the “out-group” (Festinger 1962; Merton 1968). The initial negative perceptions and the lack of contact could also be factors contributing to the fact that they did not evolve according to the so-called “acculturation curve” (Hofstede and Hofstede 2005), but instead, strengthened during the course of the mission.

An additional factor which could have played a role is the strong polarisation that can arise in binational constellations (Earley and Mosakowski 2000; Söderberg and Wedell-Wedellsborg 2005). Binationality is the worst of all compositions when compared with near homogeneity or heterogeneity. If the two parties are culturally similar, there is a particular tendency to emphasise individual and distinctive characteristics and identity a phenomenon that Ignatieff (1998), inspired by Sigmund Freud, described as the “narcissism of minor difference”.

During our two visits to Camp Clara, it was not difficult to see that the Irish consumed more alcohol than the Swedes, who hardly visited the noisy pub and, when they were there, kept to the prescribed “three-can rule”. For the Irish, the bar was something of an oasis, where the rules that prevailed were those of the carnival, a clearly demarcated place to let off steam and behave in a way not permitted by everyday social conventions (Da Matta and Green 1983; Da Matta 1991; Bakhtin 1984).

The main reason for the Swedes being irritated by the Irishmen’s drinking sessions did not seem to be the fact that the Irish tended to drink considerable amounts of alcohol - well beyond the “three-can rule”; even Swedes are known to drink a bit too much for example when on holiday in such places as the Canary Islands and Mallorca. Nor was the main cause of Swedish irritation security-related. It was rather linked to concepts of the workplace and professional ethics. Swedes firmly believe that work and alcohol do not mix. This is not the case for the Irish, who come from a culture where one often goes to the pub for a pint at lunchtime.

Another area of contention, which is also linked to moral values, was prostitution. It has not been possible to prove that the Irish visited prostitutes to any great extent. However, according to rumours, there was a “heck of a lot” of coming and going through

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13 One part of the current research project (not yet published) deals with Swedish self-perception; here it is clear that Swedes have a very positive image of themselves when compared to their perception of the Irish.

14 This might be seen as a “near-neighbour phenomenon”, meaning that neighbours who live close to each other, but without close contact, tend to fabricate and interpret each other’s activities negatively.

15 Of particular interest is the very positive Swedish view of the Irishmen they cooperate with in Kosovo; this has become clear in the part of the study that involves a group of Swedes in KFOR (not yet published). The situation in Kosovo is generally much more multinational.
the main gate at night, especially during earlier missions. As is the case with alcohol, Sweden has chosen an alternative path on the issue of prostitution, compared with other countries in Europe. This path includes, for example, a recent law criminalising clients, but not prostitutes. So, Swedes have a different approach to prostitution, which in all probability had a negative influence on their perceptions of the Irish. Or as a Swedish general said: “The Irish have no problem with prostitution, but they do with abortion; whereas the Swedish accept abortion, but not prostitution.” The Swedes were also very proud of how tidy and well-organised their area of the camp was compared with the Irish area and often made fun of the obvious differences. They often pointed out the Irish lack of hygiene when it came to meal times and using the toilet and suggested that the minor epidemics of eye inflammation on the Irish side could have been a result of inadequate hygiene. The differences in living standards, organisation, and hygiene between the Swedes and the Irish could possibly have been a manifestation of different national, cultural, and historical characteristics. One distinguishing factor between the two countries is that Sweden, since at least the 1960s, has been a country characterised by the modern ideal and the need for order and cleanliness (Gaunt and Löfgren 1984) in a way not reflected in Ireland. Not so many decades ago, Ireland was a relatively poor country where many families lived in cramped and, by Swedish standards, not particularly hygienic conditions.

The Irish and Liberians - and Swedes themselves - testified to Swedish shyness and difficulty in making contact and small talk with strangers in an easy, natural manner. This is an observation that often comes up among Swedish ethnologists (Daun 2005; Arnstberg 1989). For example, Daun states that Swedes’ social insecurity manifests itself in their becoming tense and anxious before they meet strangers. This insecurity could explain why Swedes tended to keep a certain distance and never got to know the Irish or the Liberians particularly well. They kept to themselves, the safe and the familiar (Gullestad 2002).

Apart from the explanations and causal connections outlined above, there are two additional aspects that we would like to highlight for future studies. The first aspect concerns the fact that Swedes both were, and considered themselves to be, well-educated and belonging to a well-established middle class, while the Irish were described more as working-class “ruffians“ with all that this implies in terms of behaviour and interests (Bourdieu 1984). In other words, it is likely that part of the explanation for the differences in behaviour between the Swedes and the Irish is linked to social-class differences.

The second aspect concerns differing conditions and principles in terms of the organisation of work between a professional army and a temporary force consisting of

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16 It should be noted that this sort of contact with the local population was contrary to both Swedish and Irish regulations.
volunteers and civilian men and women. Swedish soldiers volunteer for international service and there is stiff competition for the available slots. They are in the theatre of operations normally for a six-month period and during this period they want to get as much as possible out of the six months. The mission is a break in their everyday life and takes on the nature of an adventure. On the other hand, the Irish, as professionals, are regularly obliged to deploy on international missions and probably have a more routine outlook on such missions. As long-term professional soldiers, they have perhaps less inclination to constantly perform to the best of their ability. On many occasions moderation may be good enough. In other words, within the Swedish-Irish camp, the motivation, expectations, and willingness to produce maximum performance during the mission were quite different. Furthermore, the Swedes had more leave periods when they could go home, party and meet friends and loved ones, while the Irish had fewer leave periods and opportunities to leave camp. Instead, they spent almost all of their free time in the camp. All in all, these different circumstances probably had quite a significant impact on people’s motivation and attitude towards work and free time.

CONCLUSION

In spite of everything, the Swedes thought that they and the Irish had a great deal in common.\(^{17}\) However, despite this view, there were noticeable domains of cultural friction at Camp Clara. This raises the question: How would cooperation work between Swedes and personnel from a country where the cultural, social, and educational differences were even greater? The QRF in Liberia never faced any particularly threatening situations and it would have been interesting to see how Swedish-Irish cooperation would have worked on really demanding operational tasks. However, in preparation for future international operations, there seems to be a real need to open a dialogue with partner nations about ethical issues, operational approaches, policies, and HR issues in order to achieve some sort of harmony. It would also be a good idea to establish procedures for feedback and the continuous evaluation of experiences gained from cooperation with other nations.

\(^{17}\) One Swedish soldier said: “They’re about the same as us. The difference isn’t enormous; we’re Westerners after all.”
References


Essay III
”Don’t fight the blue elephant”*

Humorous signs as protests and conductors of negotiations in Swedish Peace Support Operations

* Submitted to *Humor: International Journal of Humor Research*

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1. INTRODUCTION

Although Peace Support Operations (PSOs) are serious matters, Debretts’ (Fox 2004:372) description of a typical English wedding as ”a minefield for the socially insecure, and a logistical nightmare for the organisers” and, for good measure, ”a source of inter-family tension” illuminates some of the recurrent challenges of multinational military peace support operations that are indirectly in focus in this paper.

It was during a fieldtrip to the Swedish Camp Clara in Liberia that the first author initially noticed how soldiers of the expeditionary force were engaged in a joking culture manifested in workplace signs and posters that are on public display. Also of significance regarding the signs was the fact that they exuded something different to the run-of-the-mill ”I hate Mondays/love Fridays” ethos that one finds in many workplaces in the sense that they paid tribute to a discourse where work is taken seriously.

Apart from the meta-humor in parodying one of the military world’s dominant discourses of public communication, it was obvious that these messages were meant to provide more than just pure entertainment. To use Mulkay’s (1988: 217) words, humor was used to license various kinds of ”serious interactional work”, referred to as ”applied humor” by Mulkay, in contrast to the term ”pure” humor which is reserved for more momentous entertainment. The purpose of this article is to analyze the messages
communicated in these signs, when comparing signs found in high- and low-intensity conflict areas, respectively. Although spontaneous jokes, banter, and witticisms between colleagues doubtlessly play a very important role in soldiers’ day-to-day lives, the scope of this paper is limited to humor that aims to make a point about this world.

A point made by Ben-Ari and Sion (2005) in one of the few prior studies specifically focusing on humour in military settings is that a self-reflective commentary is ever present in military life. While ethnographic works recognize humor as a phenomenon that abounds in military life (Ben-Ari and Sion 2005; Hockey 1986; King 2004; Zugbach 1988), and while scholars of the armed forces have long noted the importance of studying the informal side of military units as valuable entry points into issues like leadership, small group behavior, and combat performance, the study of humor has received scant scholarly attention (Ben-Ari and Sion 2005:656). The focus on humor in military settings is not, however, justified purely by the fact that it is an under-researched field. In a formal and rigorously-ordered hierarchical organization like the military, arguably innocent ”free” spaces are especially important insofar as joking practices can target rather serious organizational matters-of-fact that often cannot be expressed in other ways. Applied humor in a relatively strict, formalized community such as the military is thus especially interesting.

Before introducing some theoretical points of departure, we give a short description of the operational context of Peace Support Operations and the soldiers’ motivation for being there.

1.2. Soldiers’ motivation and the ambiguous framework of overseas missions

Sweden’s Armed Forces have been very successful in marketing the expeditionary force as a place to be if you want to contribute to a better world and ”have what it takes”. Soldiers are mainly highly-motivated former conscripts volunteering for six months service abroad. Although young people who decide to serve are motivated by a complex amalgam of many things (comradeship, extra money, a sabbatical, an adventure etc.), doing good in the world is a sincere aspiration for many.

From interviews, it was clear that working hard, being professional, doing good, and making a difference were all part of the soldiers’ expectations based on a mixture of subjective intentions, official information, and rumors. However, in reality, this image often became problematic. For one thing, service abroad, by its very nature, is highly circumscribed and a number of rules regulate the soldiers’ actions regarding organizational and professional conduct.
Further, the sorts of conflicts justifying the presence of international troops in the first place are most often very complex. Additionally, an aspect that can be phrased in terms of it being almost impossible to measure the success of these operations, as long as it is not a complete failure, is of little help. Doubts about whether or not a personal contribution has really been made to the big picture were also supplemented by calling into question these commissions as a whole. The aphorism used in the title of this article, "Don’t fight the blue elephant", is perhaps more than anything an illustration of this vote of no confidence. What might seem like nothing more than a fanciful and odd expression is, to the insider, a barbed critique of the inefficiency and bureaucratic fallbacks of the organization with whom you serve, and whose highly significant symbol, the blue helmet, you wear.

1.3. Research aim

As mentioned previously, the purpose of this article is to compare unofficial humorous signs found in two types of military contexts (high- and low-intensity conflict areas). The case outlined in what follows suggests that the humorous exchanges reflect different characters of the mission contexts, in which it serves as a cathartic release from various stressors and tensions insofar as the shift from a "serious mode" to the "humorous" one permits greater freedom of expression (Mulkay 1988). An underlying assumption is that, behind these creative signs, rather serious clues to the concerns of the group are unfolding whereby the security situation and nature of the duties conducted in the mission areas has a certain importance. In more detail, we argue that, since the missions in Liberia and Kosovo were conducted under a UN mandate in two so called low-intensity conflict areas, where the expected threat level for military activities is considered comparatively low, the humorous discourse reflects idealized identities and status negotiations which, on a more profound level, can also be interpreted as seeking confirmation of your work as necessary, important, and appreciated by others. In contrast, the NATO-led mission in Afghanistan was set in a high-intensity conflict area and warlike situation. Against this background, we suggest that the humorous discourse here reflects a more acute need to let off steam to survive emotionally. Likewise, it is suggested that the oppositional tone displayed in the humor targeting the Headquarters is a direct consequence of the hard-pressed situation on the ground.
Organizational life bubbling with humor is nothing new. In that regard, military organizations are no exception. This article makes two contributions to previous literature; first, signs humorously commenting on workplace conditions have not, to our knowledge, been analyzed before. Surely, instances have been recorded of signs made by employees (e.g. Webb and Palmer 1998:621-22), but these have been used as empirical illustrations rather than analyzed. In other contexts, sign humor has been analyzed, e.g. the role of humor on commercial billboards (Hufana 2010), hurricane graffiti painted on houses (Alderman and Ward 2008:10-12), church marquees (Bell et al. 2011), *latrina* graffiti (Bartholome and Snyder 2004), and of course political cartoons (McGuirk 2008; Rodriguez and Collinson 1995). Second, although several ethnographies testifying to the overall high value attached to khaki humor (Ben-Ari 1998; Ben-Ari and Sion 2005; Elkin 1946; Hockey 1986; Simons 1997; Zugbach 1988), these accounts do not compare different types of military contexts. Since researchers studying the military, with few but important exceptions, overlook the humor perspective’s potential, existing literature with a direct focus on humor in military settings is scarce. Consequently, references herein are often made to civilian rather than other military contexts. The remains of this review will cursory introduce a number of facets of humor presented from the military world, to be combined with literature on civilian occupational groups and workplaces.

Anthony King (2004), who did fieldwork with the UK Royal Marines, claims that, although apparently superfluous, humor is extremely important for the operational effectiveness of these soldiers. One reason for this is undoubtedly the specific nature of their work; King describes how one of the qualities of operational humor is that it seems to reduce the magnitude of difficulty in the imagination of the individual – something that ultimately helps individuals to face danger (p. 23). Humour acting as a useful tool for channeling discomfort in civilian life is well documented (Ackroyd and Thompson 1999; Bolton and Houlihan 2009). How military life becomes more endurable with a lining of humor is another important quality described by King (2004) and Hockey (1986) in the form of cheerfulness in the face of adversity (see also Simons 1997). Indeed, there are rich examples of how soldiers use humor to channel their frustrations in stressful and sometimes hostile environments and, since much traditional military work is chiefly a mixture of repetition, stress, and waiting, neither can the importance of humor for passing the time be overrated in military life. In addition, similar to descriptions of life on the factory floor, military groups often use profanities to describe most aspects of their work in terms of gallows humour. One example of this is Swedish soldiers serving in Afghanistan playing ”IED bingo” (bingo with Improvised Explosive Devices) during minesweeping.
Likewise, the literature on humor outside of the military community is a testament to its many and varied qualities (for a review, see Bolton and Houlihan 2009). It can support processes of in-group out-group differentiation while resistance to management control is also facilitated (Ackroyd and Thompson 1999; Bolton 2005). For the individual, it can be a means of self-protection (Holmes 2000) or self-assertion (Willis 1977). Its inherent powers can, furthermore, be used vertically (Coser 1960), horizontally, or on members and groups of the same status (Vinton 1989). The fact that it contains positive qualities for group cohesion will be further described in what follows (see also Fine 1988; Fine and de Soucey 2005; Roy 1960; Strömberg and Karlsson 2009). In civilian settings, Holmes (2000) and Ackroyd and Crowdy (1992) also provide insights into the darker side of humor as a harsh and destructive tool for bullying and harassment at the hands of colleagues. One subtler form of this, often found in military communities, includes teasing and banter with people who make mistakes. Since one of the specific traits setting military institutions apart from most civilian occupations is that individual members ultimately risk personal injury or death in combat, it is perhaps not surprising that the tradition of “rubbing the noses of those making mistakes in it” for a considerable period of time, in word and deed, seems to be more the rule than the exception.

King (2004) describes how, in the UK Royal Marines, humor highlights membership and emphasizes the solidarity of the group, thus fostering the social cohesion critical to operational effectiveness. Well aware of these prerequisites, the marines have even incorporated humor into their training, something that allows individual members to occasionally step out of formal roles of authority. Rose Laub Coser (1960), in an often cited study of mental hospital staff, gives valuable insights into the social function of humor. One of her central notions is the equalizing qualities of humor as a means of reducing social tensions. Humor being especially suited to bridging the fissures that tend to result from the status system and the division of labor within formal organizations is a point also made by Goffman (1959:21) and Mulkay (1988).

One study specifically focusing on humor in a military setting is Eyal Ben-Ari and Liora Sion’s (2005) fieldwork among two battalions of Israeli Defense Force (IDF) reserves. Like King (2004), the authors suggest that humor, despite persistent inequalities and differences between soldiers, was a signifier of the cohesion of the units. Hence, regardless of disparities among troops in terms of occupation, rank, and informal standing, and the strong ongoing undercurrent of constant competition regarding dominance and submission, the role of humor in this context was integrative in the sense that it incorporated and created a shared universe of meaning. Another observation was that humor in military settings may also serve as a means of relatively safely releasing hostile and competitive feelings. Overall, humor in the IDF context seemed to have the capacity, as previously described by Coser (1960), to dramatize, in functional terms, the violation of norms while simultaneously reaffirming them.
It has already been accounted for that joking is ideally suited to camouflaged serious communication. It is, however, widely debated whether or not humor has any transformational powers, with the evidently meaningless character of much organizational humor often leading to the conclusion that humorous discourse, whilst creating some temporary discomforts for those who are its targets, is a futile form of resistance (Mulkay 1988). Others ascribe humor, even though its resistance may be covert and it has a seemingly innocent nature, with the potential to be a negotiator and re-definer of reality (Linstead 1985). Ackroyd and Thompson (1999: 105, 116) give more recognition to the fact that jokes can resonate and play on the contradictions and paradoxes that organizational life is full of, and that this is something that causes humor and joking to be an overlooked expression of radicalism (see also Collinson 1992). King (2004) makes the point that humor allows the natural order to be questioned and changed if necessary. Applied humor, in particular, builds on identified weaknesses and creates ambiguity. In blurring and obfuscating power relationships, the status quo is upset in subtle ways whereby unsettled interpretative loose ends can be picked up time and time again (Bolton 2005: 144).

Another widely acknowledged facet of humorous discourse is that it often reflects incidents and instances where incongruity exists between what a person or group expects and what is actually the case (Clouse and Spurgeon 1995; Coser 1960; Fine 1984; Mulkay 1988). As Mulkay (1988:219) claims, we can merely conclude that it is precisely these qualities that seem to make it superior, as a means of expression, to ordinary, serious discourse, premised as it is on an implicit denial of the fact that we live in a world of multiple meanings and multiple realities.

3. METHOD AND PROCEDURE

The data consist of a collection of workplace signs put up by Swedish troops during PSOs in Liberia (Camp Clara), Kosovo (Camp Victoria), and Afghanistan (The Provincial Office of Sheberghan) between 2006 and 2010. In Liberia and Kosovo, these signs were noticed by the first author during visits; with regard to Afghanistan, they refer to interviews and soldiers’ personal photos. Engaging in satirical graffiti is not, however, unique to Swedish soldiers as figure 1, made by an Irish soldier, illustrates.
Official signs with an often restrictive and prohibitive imperative are paramount in the military world. Considering the fact that military camps are showered with them, it is not surprising, perhaps, that expressive behavior takes this form. The manner of putting up personalized versions containing humor is also a tradition that has some legacy in the history of the Swedish expeditionary force. The basic rule for these sign types seems to be that you take your designated name and try to make a point with it. For example, in Liberia, the platoon whose call sign is ”Alpha Romeo” put a flag with the name of that make of car outside their quarters.

The signs under study here are, however, of a different nature insofar as they have a message going beyond that type of display. Since the interpretation of the reason, target, and motive of these messages is in focus, the signs are primarily interpreted against the backdrop of the circumstances of the specific mission. Of all the encountered signs, the messages that could be sorted under the category of ”applied humor” are presented.

In the three mission areas, the trend of pointed public messages seems to have been more common in Liberia than in Afghanistan or Kosovo. Although the focus of the study was the fifth and final Liberia mission, it has been confirmed that signs formed a part of camp decorations early on. One explanation for this might be that the Kosovo mission was the 14th, inculcating a more institutionalized work environment compared with the
pioneer spirit of the contingent deployed to Liberia. In Afghanistan, on the other hand, where signs are generally less common, one explanation could be the more serious and warlike situation. As one officer explained, "when somebody wants to kill you, you have less time for fun".

Apart from soldiers giving their explanation and interpretation of certain signs, they have been analyzed in the light of findings from a longitudinal interview study. The informants selected for interview consisted of a group of 26 individuals, all men – infantry soldiers aged between 21 and 36, who were interviewed three times, i.e. during pre-deployment training, about five months into deployment (six months in total), and six months after their return to Sweden. Twelve of the informants were deployed to Liberia, twelve to Kosovo, and two to Afghanistan. Three were officers while the others were former conscripts who had volunteered for international service.

The research questions did not focus specifically on humor, centering more broadly on experiences of theatre and of contacts with various parties. In addition, a number of informal conversations with soldiers and officers who have served abroad have constituted important sources of information. One such talk was recorded; otherwise, notes were hand-written. However, informal conversations with soldiers and officers deployed to Afghanistan contained questions about signs and humor.

4. FINDINGS

The central argument presented suggests that the level of operational intensity is reflected in the content of humorous signs. The first part of the findings addresses the data from the two low-intensity conflict areas, Kosovo and Liberia, while part two concerns the high-intensity operational context of Afghanistan. A low-intensity conflict area usually indicates that quite some time has passed since the conflicting parties were involved in actual hostilities, or at least that the development is moving steadily away from such hostilities. It is here argued that the humorous discourse reflects the soldiers’ notions of professionalism and a more profound search for confirmation of their work in terms of being real, respected, and of value to others. Although the humorous discourse does not appear to have the purpose of really challenging concrete circumstances, the expressions do seem to have modest bargaining powers within the social structure. In the second case, which focuses workplace signs encountered at Swedish military compounds in Afghanistan, characterized as a high-intensity conflict area and close to being a warzone, it is suggested that frustrations of another type arise when organizational values are projected against the backdrop of the actual situation.
4.1. Low-intensity conflict areas

4.1.1. The hardworking "elite soldier"

When the infantry soldiers in Liberia returned to camp after being out on patrol, you could regularly hear Dolly Parton’s *9 to 5* coming from the outside amplifier systems of their vehicles. Naturally, this could be seen purely as an amusing ritual, a tradition without any deeper meaning. However, it fits well with the heralded soldier identity of being "green collar", of being hardworking men slaving away with heavy duties and equipment.

Outside the wall of their sleeping area, made up of containers, a huge sign, a remake of a poster, was hanging where the backdrop was a picture from the very popular TV series *Band of Brothers*, highly acclaimed for its accuracy (Figure 2). The baseline story centers on a group of elite parachute regiment soldiers during World War II, ‘E-company’ (*Easy Company*), of the U.S. 101st Airborne Division who landed in Normandy and fought there until the end of the war. Over this picture, a new message has been printed: *Hotel Bravo*, with the digits on each side representing the soldiers’ identification numbers.

*Figure 2 “Hotel Bravo” (photo by author)*

In this context, the sign plays with the dubious meaning of "Hotel" when comparing the container with a traditional hotel; however, "Hotel Bravo" was also the unit’s radio call-sign. Several different motives are plausible when interpreting the intended message
behind these signs and banners. Peace Support Operations are surrounded by expectations regarding hard work, potential danger, and tight group relations. The soldiers who are undoubtedly the closest to these images in reality are those working outside the camp when they are patrolling streets, searching cars and houses for weapons or drugs (this task only occurred in Kosovo), or on long-range patrols (this task only occurred in Liberia, and for reconnaissance). As the situation in Liberia and Kosovo was quite calm at this time, the sign may be seen in terms of compensating for an unfulfilled warrior identity and engagement in "real" military tasks. Since those interviewed also questioned the usefulness of their contribution, the self-aggrandizing signs are also likely to have a slightly ironic undertone while also constituting a mark of dissimilarity to other units within the same company, in line with the spirit of competition that permeates subterranean military life in general.

One sign from Kosovo – which in some respects was an even more uneventful mission area at the time of the study – connects with the previous interpretation of an idealized warrior identity (Figure 3). Under the parole "Desire for danger", the unit displays here self-distance to its keenness to get a piece of the action. The point is further illustrated by the soldier in the middle juggling with hand grenades while his eyes are covered by a hood.

*Figure 3 “Desire for danger” (photo John Karlsson)*
In the soldiers’ quarters at Camp Clara, there was also a more serious message on the fridge door in the container sleeping areas: "Fridge temporarily closed. Will re-open for next war"; notions indicating a rather laconic view of the future of Liberia and an anticipated circle of conflict. During interviews, disillusionment was also coexistent whereby soldiers expressed doubts regarding the utility of some of the duties they were carrying out. One officer deployed to Liberia explained; “I know for a fact that the intelligence collected by the liaison officers and the infantry soldiers just ends up at the local UN headquarters in a box. It leads nowhere and has absolutely no impact whatsoever. It’s just a bit of nonsense to keep people busy.”

The humorous discourse under study did not, however, only reflect idealized identities and rusty illusions; as we shall see below, messages promoting dignified professionalism were also forthcoming.

4.1.2. Dreams of cream as a symbol for professionalism

The first thing you notice when approaching the canteen kitchen at Camp Clara is a big white sign (Figure 4), with only one word on it in black ink. The word is grädde which is the Swedish word for cream. Being able to use butter and cream is what most cooks regard to be the key to good cooking, which is why the sign simply indicates what the cooks want most. The UN supply of dairy products was, however, very limited. The main obstacle was heat and the constant high humidity making it impossible to cook with cream if the food had to be kept warm for some time before consumption. Even though the troops at Camp Clara were well aware that a certain lack of excellence was to be expected, and that the food did not always taste like it does back home, this did not seem to have been enough for the cooks.
However, the sign on the wall signifies several possibilities. One interpretation is that this is a way of anticipating critique in a humorous form, whereby announcing the circumstances will serve as a combined excuse and reminder. It is not just the cooks’ general level of ambition in their pots and pans that is at stake, however; the kitchen staff are well aware that, under the relatively restricted and primitive conditions in which people work and live during their deployment, meals become very important. Not being able to show their ambition, will, and competence in the best possible way can then also be seen as an obstacle to their professionalism. The importance of this was emphasized by the fact that the cooks were said to personally have brought in “luxury” cooking items, e.g. béarnaise sauce powder, when returning from leave in Sweden.

4.1.3. "There is no dirty work”

As in most organizations, there is something of a tacit understanding in the Swedish Armed Forces with regard to which positions render status. Translated into the context of the expeditionary force, the symbolic divide in the lower ranks is between those who work outside and those who work inside the camp, i.e. infantry soldiers vs. support units (see also Ben-Ari and Sion 2005; Zugbach 1988). The latter, whose tasks are restricted to the camp, are generally looked upon as having drawn the shortest straw in this competition; even before deployment, some of these soldiers, during interviews, described how they were planning to take on additional tasks just to be able to leave the camp to see the operational theatre, but also to get in touch, perhaps, with the kind of work that counts.

Of the support functions, the mechanical engineers company can be described as a unit with a medium status position. When the cohesion of the contingent was discussed, it was indicated during interviews and talks that there had been, at least initially, some
minor friction between the mechanical engineers and the infantry (sometimes ironically referred to as "the real warriors" by the mechanical engineers). As previously indicated, in a low-intensity conflict area like Liberia, a warrior is something of a contradiction in terms in a peacekeeping force. During interviews, there emerged a sort of defense against what was felt to be disrespect on the part of others. The role of the logistics company, as providers of all kinds of support from fuel to electricity, is a somewhat special case as a fulcrum for all other activities. It is often far away from real action but everybody agrees that stamina is required to work there and that making something as complex as a military camp fire on all cylinders is something that deserves respect. The logistics company, however, has a status that is somewhat uncertain, at least initially. In line with American General Omar Bradley’s famous quote: "Amateurs talk strategy. Professionals talk logistics", the interviews reflected the fact that the soldiers who worked there were aware that it is hard to question the impact of successful logistics on the endurance of any military operation; “They’ll find out soon enough quite clearly…..If they don’t get food or clothing or fuel, they can get stuck there.”

Outside the bungalow, where this company in Liberia had its office, there was a carefully taped note stuck on a plastic garden table with the following Russian saying: "There is no such thing as dirty work. It is only your conscience that is dirty." Even if this reminder is worth almost everyone’s consideration, in this context it is more likely to represent a protest against the low-status image of some of their duties whereby the groups’ professionalism is advocated while self-distance is displayed. Another sign on their door read: Ego duco vos habetis scietiam nos vincimus, a slightly misspelt version of a Latin quotation which, according to the soldiers, translates as: "I lead you to success through knowledge".

4.1.4. "No is also service"

Even if the logistics company was displaying role-distance through humor directed at some of their tasks, its status was considerably higher than the staff of the main stores, unquestionably lowest in the support proletariat, exceeding only the locally-employed Liberians in charge of washing and cleaning. Neither is work in the main supply store very gratifying, for several reasons. You are the messenger who has to act as a lightning conductor for all the frustration and anger caused by delayed shipments from Sweden. There are stories of how some equipment arrived at exactly the same time as the contingent was packing to return home. It goes without saying that it takes a lot of emotional management to stay service-minded vis-à-vis things that you can neither control nor foresee. Another rather unpopular task is keeping track of things that people have lost. In order to take the edge off an anticipated criticism, two notes were put up on the wall of the main supply store at camp Clara. One stated "No is also service" and the other "If it’s so important, why didn’t you come yesterday?". The message behind these humorous
and sarcastically-formulated remarks is likely to be the staff’s way of displaying authority and role-distance and further bolstering respect for their work, without being openly aggressive towards their ”customers”.

We have argued that humor is a vehicle that presents and reinforces values, assumptions, and conceptions of status. The following section concerns Afghanistan – a high-intensity conflict area – where the security situation differs significantly from the mission contexts referred to above. Compared to Kosovo and Liberia, neither statuses, warrior identities nor the negotiated order are the main concerns reflected in the signs found in Afghanistan. Characteristic of these messages is, rather, that they are objects of consensual agreement connected with the allocation of resources and righteous but hackneyed decrees issued by headquarters.

4.2. High-intensity conflict area

Swedish Armed Forces have been engaged in Afghanistan for about ten years; over time, circumstances have become increasingly challenging. The situation on the ground is also not easy to grasp or control, or to accept in all its facets, a point illustrated in the soldiers’ nickname ”Absurdistan”. Further, as in any organization, conflict may arise when individuals are caught between the imperatives of the management literature and the demands of the actual work situation. One interpretation of the signs below indicates that, when various policies are confronted by harsh realities, these are sometimes experienced as illustrations of how to ”strain at a gnat and swallow a camel”.

4.2.1. ”Perhaps the Phantom can help us?“

The first example presented concerns an officer who started his situation report briefing with a PowerPoint slide where the famous Lee Walker cartoon The Phantom was reading ”a message” from the local PRT (provincial reconstruction team) which said:

Dear Phantom,  
Could you please fix things west of MeS. We are busy in Baghlan.  

PS Remember COIN DS.

Interpretation of the message needs some contextualization. The PRT in Mazar-e-Sharif (MeS) is part of Regional Command North – RC(N), where Germany is the leading nation. Apart from being responsible for an area four times the size of Kosovo, the Swedish units occasionally assist German ISAF forces in Baghlan and elsewhere. This province has lots of insurgent activity, but the same can also be said of the Swedish area
west of MeS, characterized as rather hopeless in soldiers’ narratives. When confronted with insurmountable endeavors, what is there to do? Well, maybe the Phantom can help out. The postscript ”Remember COIN”, on the other hand, alludes to the fact that the operational policy of ”COunter INsurgency” (COIN), as it was employed at the time by Swedish units, is a rather tired buzzword. In essence, this means that the responsibility for maintaining security should be assumed by national authorities after a period of collaboration and mentorship i.e. that all military undertakings should be carried out in collaboration with ANA (the Afghan National Army) and, in some cases, ANP (the Afghan National Police). Even though COIN is a catchphrase that summarizes an ideal and an intention that most soldiers wholeheartedly support, it is not always easy, in reality and for various reasons, to implement, not least due to security measures.

4.2.2. Humor and core values

Early on in the history of the expeditionary force, a few scandalous events took place. In order to do something and regain the public’s trust, a large survey was undertaken within the SAF in general, with the purpose of finding out whether there also was an ”attitude problem” within the ranks. A huge educational program was then launched in 2006 by a private consulting firm in order to promote a modern and open defense force, characterized by core values such as tolerance, equality, and respect. The project was called ÖRA (the Swedish word for ear). This acronym stands for ”openness” (Ö), ”results” (R) and ”accountability” (A). The baseline was that, regardless of gender and sexual orientation, the workplace should be a place where people were treated respectfully. So, for example, a ban on pornography in overseas garrisons and living quarters was put in place, and more tolerance towards bisexuals, transsexuals, and homosexuals within the ranks was advocated. The cost of the ÖRA package grew astronomically to 10.1 million Euros, simultaneous to a massive downsizing of the SAF. The necessity of an investment of this size was hotly debated, especially since the message being communicated was regarded as nothing more than common sense by many soldiers and officers. Several minor forms of resistance were also noted. When people wanted to speak more freely (i.e. less politically correctly), they invented a sign for a ”core value timeout”, forming the timeout sign used by coaches in the sporting world, or by simply holding one hand in a V-sign over the ear before speaking.

A version of this ÖRA protest was also visible, in the form of a printed message, in at least three different places in Afghanistan. One of these was the Swedish Provincial Office in Sheberghan, a small town west of Mazar e Sharif, where approximately 30-40 Swedes worked and lived. One day, someone put up a plywood sign, measuring 60 x 40 cm, featuring blue capital letters in an ”army style font”, and containing the text ”core-
value-free area” (in Swedish), outside the entrance to the camp. The sign was there for a couple of weeks without any action being taken, until a visiting high-ranking officer "pulled the plug”. It then disappeared for a while but reappeared again fairly soon afterwards, this time saluting newcomers on the main road just outside the city. A more elaborate version (Figure 5) was encountered at another compound.

Figure 5 “Core-value-free area” (photo by anonymous Swedish officer)

In translation, the sign says:

STOP
CORE-VALUE-FREE AREA
THERE IS A BAN
on feminazism, the gay lobby, and political correctness without prior permission
According to law (2007:XXX)
The ban will remain in operation until notification to the contrary
SWEDEN’S ARMED FORCES

The protest against the core values program can be seen as having other, more serious grounds for criticism than finances or the program’s assumed resemblance to common sense. In a threatening and warlike environment, where it was just going to be a matter of time before the Swedish troops would also be taking casualties, various costly soft issues and ”completely obvious” codes of conduct were seen as the wrong focus and further down the wish list than, for instance, the promised MEDEVAC helicopters. Clearly,
though, overall reactions to the core-values project also testify to the fact that soft issues connected with femininity and homosexuality are still found to be quite provocative in this setting, as well as more or less in permanent opposition to what is perceived to be important in military work.

From conversations and interviews, it was clear that the sign was not so much about disassociation from the core values as such, but more about the project becoming a symbolic scapegoat for frustrations of various sorts. It was also suggested by soldiers that hanging the signs outside the city walls was targeting the Afghans’ core values. Another officer explains the cumulative emotional load he was experiencing:

My fuse was getting shorter and shorter and my opinion of people was steadily worsening, all because my awareness increased in step with the amount of time I spent with those idiots down there. There are some really bad people there – by our standards there are. The Provincial Governor was into selling arms and weapons and drug smuggling, really corrupt, which all goes totally against our values. There I was as a secularized Swede and a part of the democratic tradition, judging their actions to be completely wrong, more or less. But, all the time, you have to apply the political correctness filter, because if you don’t, things can really fall apart...

In Sheberghan, another interesting sign-episode occurred. Over a period of several years, the Swedish contingent, strictly contrary to repeated orders, standards, and regulations, kept a dog there. The dog was called Isaf (named after the entire Afghanistan mission) and was ”the most loved and spoilt dog in Asia” (Figure 6). Isaf was described as a marvelous caretaker of various psychological needs in a forgotten corner of the world, but he was also an excellent watchdog. For several years, he spent his life outdoors in a small compound. Over the entrance to his elaborate and insulated kennel, the sign ”Isaf HQ” could be read. Inside, somebody had pinned up a picture of a female dog (Figure 7), a nod to the ban on pornography.
Afghanistan is not an easy country to travel in, with chances of spontaneous visits being low. However, rumors of Isaf’s existence at last reached headquarters in Stockholm, where numerous orders were issued that the dog had to be removed. Since Swedish forces rotate on a six-monthly basis, over the years, a number of people must have been engaged in ”saving Isaf” and covering up his existence. While some claim he was never
hidden away, others recall stories about how he just ”vanished” at inspection times. Finally, the pressure from HQ was too much so the unit gave Isaf to a private American contractor, where he later died a natural death. When looking at this event more closely, it is, by Swedish standards, a rather extraordinary form of obstructing and violating both orders and regulations. The circumstances under which Isaf was kept, his name, the name of his house, and the ”pin-up” also illustrate the often-stressed connection between humour and disobedience (Ackroyd and Thompson 1999; Collinson 1992).

4.3. Audiences and butts

When interpreting the signs under study, questions regarding their imagined audiences and butts (Davis 1998) are naturally of interest. Here, we would suggest that the signs are usually made with the horizontal in-group of peers in mind. That is, if the purpose of the signs were to seriously challenge the overall rules of the game, they would presumably not have been posted in places exclusively visible to an audience of peers. An important exception from the signs that have peers as their butt is the sexist and homophobic sign from Afghanistan regarding core values (sign 5). Usually, the butt of humor is also regarded as a single individual or group. In this case, however, there are two butts – one belonging to the military hierarchy and one belonging to the patriarchal gender hierarchy. The sign is, on the one hand, directed upwards towards the Headquarters’ core value campaign and, on the other, downwards from the male towards the female position.

Apart from an argument stating that the presented signs’ messages origin from the soldiers’ sense-making of their situation in two fundamentally different kinds of military operations, we have suggested that the humorous discourse in focus is a free space of expression and a way of ”letting off steam” (Fine 1988) from various emotional management demands. To some readers, it may perhaps seem presumptuous to argue that a number of signs put up in military camps offer any substantial relief from the previously described experiences. However, it seems accurate to claim that the humor discourse under study has certain beneficial aspects. For one thing, the signs offer a rare space for ”being human” (Bolton 2005) wherein soldiers, to some degree, can gain control of their lives by being allowed to complain and criticize the conditions of their service (see also Ben-Ari and Sion 2005:659; Mulkay 1988). Taking part, whether in the passive audience or as an active manufacturer, in a humor discourse aimed at sense making and/or undermining various targets in a milieu as stressful as an operational theatre is likely to be an activity of a cathartic nature, regardless of whether the target of criticism is in blissful ignorance or not.
5. CONCLUSION

This paper concerns a certain fashion for humorous pranks in the Swedish expeditionary force, above all as expressed in the form of workplace signs posted at various locations in military camps in Liberia, Kosovo, and Afghanistan between 2006 and 2010. Signs humorously commenting on workplace conditions have not, to our knowledge, been analyzed before.

Common to the signs is the fact that their messages correspond to Mulkay’s (1988) concept of applied humor, i.e. they are examples of humor making a point about the world. Like most humorous discourse, the signs reflect the concerns of the group, but the central argument presented here suggests that their content above all is mirroring differences in the nature of operations; i.e. threat-level and duties conducted in the respective mission areas.

In contrast to previous research on humor in military settings, the aim of the article is to compare humorous exchanges found in two types of military contexts; high- and low-intensity conflict areas. Our analysis suggests that the signs found in the last category, Kosovo and Liberia, where the expected threat level for military activities is considered comparatively low, the humorous discourse reflects idealized identities and status negotiations which, on a more profound level, can also be interpreted as seeking confirmation of your work as necessary, important, and appreciated by others. An example is the sign "Fridge temporarily closed. Will re-open for next war" found on a fridge in the soldiers recreation area.

From other signs and rituals in Liberia, it was also clear that the infantry soldiers experienced ambiguities in their role-performances. Even if the re-make of the Band of brothers-poster on the outside wall of their sleeping container had an ironical twist, it can alternatively be seen as the soldiers’ way of compensating for the fact that they after a preparatory training focused on combat-skills and worst-case scenarios, were part of a quick-reaction force that was not once called into action.

The high-intensity conflict area is represented by signs from Swedish compounds in Afghanistan. Here, the humorous discourse reflects a more acute need to let off steam to survive emotionally. Role-ambiguities seem to be less of a problem among these units, who operated under warlike ramifications. The oppositional tone displayed in the humor targeting the Headquarters is a direct consequence of the hard-pressed situation on the ground. In addition, the sign inviting assistance from the Phantom, reflects feelings of hopelessness in an insurmountable situation. Likewise the postscript ”Remember COIN”, reflects an ideal that in reality and for various reasons is often hard to implement, not least due to security measures.
In sum, it has hopefully been illustrated above that humorous comments in signs (and in general), should not be neglected as valuable clues to workplace conditions can be gained from analyzing their content. The accuracy of the point for the military contexts under study is depicted in a quote by Anna Simons (1997: 139), who conducted fieldwork among US Special Forces, humor is ”one of the unsung talents most good soldiers must have”. All in all, the findings of this article suggest nothing less.
6. BIBLIOGRAPHY


Post-Deployment Disorientation*

The Emotional Remains of Uneventful Peace Support Operations

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Louise Weibull

Military units are often engaged in areas where the security situation is tense. Indeed, unstable and uncertain local conditions are often the very reason for deployment in the first place. It is a well-known fact that exposure to threats (and in a worst-case scenario, to the risks of serious injury or loss of life) is extremely stressful for the individual (Janis, 1949; Horn, 2004; Van den Berg & Soeters, 2009). Moreover, the fact that symptoms like Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) can be found in the wake of service in high-intensity operations is also widely acknowledged by military authorities and the research community alike (Cozza, 2005; Michel, 2005). However, little qualitative research has been conducted to understand how soldiers who have served in low-intensity missions orient themselves on return to civilian life.

The underlying causes for such apparent lack of interest are likely to be multiple. Firstly, it might be assumed that the emotional remains¹ from low intensity missions have few if any consequences for the individual. Secondly, even if the phenomenon of change is commonly known to soldiers with mission experience, it is invisible in terms of statistics. The emotion work (Hochschild, 1979, 1983) that may follow resilience from these types of deployments is most often an internal individual process, hidden to outsiders, with the possible exception of close friends and relatives. Thirdly, many of the espoused values held within the Swedish Armed Forces are connected to connotations of real military tasks, i.e. combat (Dunivin, 1994, p.533; Winslow, 2000). As a consequence, the more missions abroad involve warlike encounters, as is currently the case in

¹ The term ‘remains’ refers in this context to the total emotional impact of service abroad.
Afghanistan, the more concern for the emotional load on soldiers and their wellbeing. Even if this progression seems quite natural, this focus may also imply that soldiers may be less inclined to seek help after service in low-intensity missions and that they also take for granted their own ability to manage possible problems. As will be discussed, the question is further complicated by the fact that the experiences gained abroad may be seen by the soldiers as both involuntary changes and voluntary re-orientations.

With reference to a qualitative study of 24 soldiers deployed to Kosovo and Liberia, this article seeks to extend previous empirical research on Peace Support Operations\(^2\) in two ways. Firstly, it shows that deep-running emotional affectedness is a ubiquitous experience regardless of mission area. More specifically, it is argued that the phenomenon of feeling changed and somewhat lost on return may also present itself after a tour of service that has been, from a military perspective, uneventful. Secondly, the article makes a theoretical contribution by introducing the concept of Post-Deployment Disorientation (PDD). Disorientation in general terms usually refers to a state of confusion, where one loses a sense of time and place. A definition that is close to the topic of this article is one for which disorientation is seen as a ‘loss of the sense of familiarity with one’s surroundings (time, place, and person)’, or ‘loss of one’s bearings’.\(^3\)

More specifically, Post-Deployment Disorientation (PDD) in this context refers to a situation that soldiers are often confronted with on return, expressed in terms of a personal change, a change of outlook and of perspectives. As will be further outlined, the tours of service referred to here did not include major traumas or threat to individual security, a matter that serves to underline the argument that the military perspective on uneventful missions is, in terms of emotional remains, misleading when taking into account the emotional costs also involved in participation in these types of missions. In order to emphasize that PDD symptoms refer to feelings which are most often less severe than clinical stress syndromes (i.e. PTSD), the milder term disorientation has been chosen. Nevertheless, the baseline is that the emotional impacts of international missions should not be underestimated, irrespective of mission. Although the PDD concept has its origin in experiences formed during military deployments, it seems likely that it may also be applicable to civilian personnel deployed in conflict areas.\(^4\)

While it is well-known that many Swedish soldiers have been exposed to various emotionally challenging events when taking part in Peace Support Operations,\(^5\) it was first

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\(^2\) Peace Support Operations (PSO) is an umbrella term for different sorts of operations encompassing peacemaking, peacekeeping, peace enforcement, peace-building, conflict prevention and state building.

\(^3\) See: [http://www.definition-of.net/disorientation](http://www.definition-of.net/disorientation).

\(^4\) For instance among NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations) and IOs (International Organizations) personnel, war correspondents, police officers etc.

\(^5\) See for example Lars Karlsson’s (2004) description of his service in Bosnia-Hercegovina in the early nineties.
and foremost after the sudden riot in the Kosovar village of Caglavica in 2004\(^6\) that the debate concerning the experiences of Swedish troops serving abroad took off. The development in Afghanistan towards a gradually more warlike situation has also resulted in more focus on veterans’ wellbeing on their return, not least due to the fact that for the first time in fifty years Swedish soldiers had been killed in action. The Swedish Armed Forces’ increased attention to the wellbeing of returning soldiers is indeed a positive development. However, it is fair to say that, up until now, there has been only modest interest from military representatives and the academic society into the emotional experiences of soldiers serving under less traumatic conditions, although these individuals make up a much greater number.

Another argument for a changed focus is the specific character of peace support operations. Some scholars referred to in a Dutch report (Schok, 2009) point to the difference between war and peacekeeping, suggesting that the previously relatively one-sided focus on PTSD should be complemented with focus on support measures for other forms of ill-health among participants, even though these are of a less pronounced type. Their main argument is that peacekeeping operations have additional elements that create considerable stress. These elements are summarized as lack of control and involve, for example, witnessing violence against civilians whilst being prevented by mission mandate to intervene, being subjected to humiliation and occasional sudden attacks, and having to master the impulses that in other contexts would seem natural (see also Bartone et al., 1998; Thomas et al., 2006).

In line with the reasoning above, a growing body of literature has lately shown that soldiers serving abroad may experience, not PTSD, but consequences of cumulative stress (Michel, 2005), often described as originating from ‘cultural stress’ (Azari et al., 2010), challenged ethics (Tripodi & Wolfendale, 2011), stress from strained multinational military cooperation (Elron et al., 2003; Moelker et al., 2007; Hedlund et al., 2008) and from constantly maneuvering in the unexpected (Weibull & Dandeker, 1999; Kramer, 2004). That missions abroad bring new experiences for Swedish soldiers, for better or for worse, is also illustrated in other Swedish reports (see for example Johansson, 1997, 2001; Andersson, 2001; Wallenius, 2001; Tillberg et al., 2008) although, and especially when it comes to the transformative properties of service in low-intensity conflict areas, in more general terms.

The importance of the above areas of research should not be underestimated and in fact confirm some of the stressors experienced by the soldiers herein referred to. Nevertheless, the kind of disorientation in this study does not seem to primarily relate to cumulative stress, and can rather be said to be a departure from a question raised in a

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\(^6\) This refers to the protection of the Serbian population of Caglavica on March 17th 2004, from the attack of an Albanian crowd, a crowd that vastly outnumbered the KFOR (Kosovo Force) troops.
recent article on British reserves, where Dandeker et al. (2011) conclude that the readjustment and reintegration processes for reservists (a group that share many characteristics with the Swedish soldiers) are not well understood, and that more research is needed into those individual psychological changes which occur around the significant life experiences attendant to overseas operations (p.12 sq).

CARRYING OUT UNEVENTFUL PEACEKEEPING MISSIONS

The main objective of this essay is to show how experiences when coming home from missions abroad may imply confrontations between two contrasting realities, causing a phase of disorientation and a need for re-adjustment. Even if the focal interest here is to explain the reasons for and the consequences of the form of disorientation inherent in the PDD concept, a cursory introduction to the conflict areas and the soldiers’ tasks herein is appropriate.

Mission areas and tasks

The term low-intensity conflict areas usually indicates that quite some time has passed since the conflicting parties were involved in actual hostilities, or at least that the development is moving steadily away from such hostilities. The first Swedish contingent arrived in Kosovo in October 1999 and the contingent under study arrived seven years later (2006). Their tasks included regular patrols near minority enclaves, putting up check points, escorting minority groups, protecting memorial monuments such as monasteries, information gathering and the distribution of donations including food, clothes and school supplies. In other words, the Kosovo force was basically engaged in constabulary tasks (i.e. police work).

The soldiers in the Quick Reaction Force (QRF) in Liberia arrived in 2006, two years after the first Swedish contingent. Their task was to support the ceasefire agreement, the peace process, and to protect the civilian population and UN personnel. The QRF did not have a special area of operations but were to operate all over the country if necessary. Compared with the contingent deployed to Kosovo, this force had a more traditional military mandate that did not include humanitarian work. Apart from being temporarily

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7 One major difference between the British reservists and the Swedish soldiers is that the former group has served in mission areas that can be characterized as high-intensity (i.e. Iraq and Afghanistan).
8 However, both the KFOR and UNMIL missions operated under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, meaning that one is entitled to use force not only in self-defence but also when an opponent shows hostile intent.
stationed in Freetown, Sierra Leone as reinforcement at the time for Liberia’s ex-president Charles Taylor’s trial of war crimes, the force was never used in accordance with its primary task, i.e. to provide support to other UN forces anywhere in the country at short notice in the event of violent upheaval or attacks by some of the former warring factions (FWF). Consequently, the soldiers mostly did reconnaissance patrols, maintenance or waited inside the camp. All in all, the soldiers under study here thus served in two conflict areas where the security situation was low-key, and where there were no reports of personal injuries or threats towards the contingents. Moreover, both contingents were fairly positively acknowledged by the civilian population\textsuperscript{10} and none of the informants report having experienced any incidents that made them see a personal need for support on return.

A seeming contradiction then is that even if the soldiers also regard these missions as uneventful, their narratives on return are rich in accounts of how service without ‘ado’ may still bring about feelings of disorientation on return. For some, these feelings are connected to a re-evaluation of what actually matters in their future life, for others it is the struggle with re-adjustment to the familiar. How soldiers’ impressions and feelings of being changed on return is expressed and experienced has so far not been the focus for more systematic analysis. Although the first contingent deployed to an area is always interesting to scrutinize, it is less so for missions like the ones herein referred to, where most routines are settled and inherited, and the environment is known and assumed to be safe. Hence, a closer look into the emotional remains from this type of mission can hopefully add something of general interest.

\section*{RESEARCH DESIGN AND PROCEEDINGS}

The data refers to an interview study conducted by the author and a research colleague in 2006/2007.\textsuperscript{11} The informants selected for interview were a group of 24 individuals\textsuperscript{12} who were interviewed three times: during pre-deployment training, after about five months into the deployment (in total six months), and six months after their return to Sweden. They were all men – male infantry soldiers\textsuperscript{13} aged 21-36. Roughly a quarter of those interviewed had served in one or more previous missions. The selection for interview was conducted by Army Tactical Command Headquarters, meaning that we were able to indicate the categories of people we wanted to interview but had no

\textsuperscript{10} For a discussion on the impact of a less positive relationship, see, for example, Dutch experiences in the Balkans (Sion, 2008).
\textsuperscript{11} Parts of the results have been published earlier in Military Cooperation in Multinational Peace Operations (Hedlund et al., 2008) and in L’Année sociologique (Weibull, 2011).
\textsuperscript{12} Twelve of the informants were deployed to Liberia and twelve to Kosovo.
\textsuperscript{13} One was a regular officer and the others were former conscripts who had passed a two-month preparatory course.
influence on individual interviewee selection. Five additional interviews were conducted in order to compensate for the lack of interviews with female service members and civilians in the units, along with a number of informal conversations. Each interview lasted between 45 and 90 minutes and was recorded and transcribed in detail.

Part of the research design can be described as ‘blitz fieldwork’ (Gellner & Hirsch, 2001), meaning that the two researchers spent two, one-week periods in Kosovo and Liberia respectively. The focus here is on the second and the last rounds of interviews which contained specific questions regarding the homecoming. For the purpose of this essay, only segments reflecting how impressions in theatre have brought about a disorientation on return have been abstracted, coded and presented.

POST-DEPLOYMENT DISORIENTATION IN THE LOOKING-GLASS

Participation in military missions abroad is an experience for life, regardless of specific events. During their deployment, the soldiers in our study were asked questions about their expectations of coming home and their experiences of the same six months after returning. How they expressed themselves regarding their homecoming and their mission life compared to life in Sweden is here summarized in the term Post-Deployment Disorientation, and the emotion work (Hochschild, 1979, 1983) connected to their readjustments will be presented and further discussed.

In order to bridge the gap between the present and the past and give a better understanding of which experiences cause disorientation an introduction to examples of situations in the conflict areas requiring emotion work will be presented. As the name indicates, however, the PDD concept specifically focuses on soldiers’ experiences on return to Sweden when being gradually acclimatized to a civilian ‘reality’. Whilst the official understanding is that service in low-intensity mission areas produces little if any emotional remains, the PDD concept underlines that soldiers are deeply emotionally and cognitively affected by these experiences.

Feeling rules in theory and practice

Military sociologists recurrently refer to Van Gennep’s (1909) concept ‘rite of passage’, when portraying the transition between the military and civilian world, indicating a successive emotional adjustment and adaption to various emotion rules and logics over time. The present analysis adopts an emotion management theory developed by Arlie Russell Hochschild (1979, 1983). Central here is the concept of feeling rules, i.e. socially shared norms that influence how we want and try to feel in given social relations. This
line of reasoning was introduced by Émile Durkheim (1915), and further developed by Erving Goffman (1967), a pioneer within emotion sociology. Since feeling rules are deeply rooted in societal and cultural norms, the appropriateness of a feeling is thus not something that could be inferred by examining the feeling in itself, but in the comparison between the implicit rules that frame all situations of human interaction. In order to meet the requirements from these rules, we engage in emotion management work, adjusting either our facial and bodily display or our actual emotions within. People then evaluate ‘what’s going on’ based on the extent to which our inner cues (what I feel) and outer cues (what others think of a situation) say the same thing (Hochschild, 1983, p. 256). Importantly, the emotion management perspective concerns feelings of the whole span, from giving vent to a particular emotion to holding back emotions and also changing the emotions of other (ibid, 1979, p.561).

The adjustment to organizational, professional and social feeling rules (Bolton, 2005) during service abroad has been previously outlined in more detail (Weibull, 2011). However, the main interest here is to show that the PDD concept highlights the existence of feeling rules when also applied to soldiers’ adjustments to civilian life on return.

Possible moderators of emotional demands

Many scholars have been interested in possible moderators of emotion management at work (see for instance Kunda, 2006, chap. 5 ; Bolton, 2005 ; and for peacekeeping missions specifically, Moldjord et al., 2003). Hochshchild (1983) suggests that one strategy could be to limit the identification with work or consciously, conceptually, try to make a difference between the ‘self’ and the ‘self at work’. Another strategy is that you simply accept that you play a part at work and the rules and regulations that come with the territory. However, Hochshchild is quite pessimistic about a successful outcome of this endeavor, and does not believe that employees can really dodge the demands of the organization. Others, like Bolton & Boyd (2003), describe that this is in fact a strategy that most professional groups employ in order to avoid too much engagement and emotional impact from work. The relevance of these assumptions will now briefly be discussed with regard to the mission contexts under study.

For one thing, Swedish soldiers are highly motivated volunteers and former conscripts, i.e. not professionals in a traditional sense. Their tour of service is six months, during which soldiers expect to take part in something adventurous but also to work hard. This commitment, often combined with an expressed altruistic motivation, frequently creates a situation where not having enough tasks is more often a reason for complaint than the opposite. It may be suggested that soldiers’ high morale and altruistic motivations make them especially vulnerable to conflicting emotional demands. However, if the mission
goes by without anything extraordinary happening, there is likely room for both reflection on and relaxation from the clear-cut self at work role and, as we will also see, from notions of one's own contribution to the mission at large. Narratives will also show that various strategies are employed to handle their emotional engagement, from the trespassing of formal rules to rationalizations as a shield towards too much involvement, especially in connection with civilians’ needs. That some soldiers also referred to a professional stance towards their role and the necessity to harden themselves to do a good job would nevertheless indicate that the strategies suggested by both Hochschild and Bolton & Boyd are partly applicable.

DISORIENTATION AND ITS EMOTIONAL EXPRESSIONS

A presentation of the experiences of disorientation is summarized below under three main dimensions. The first, Reality Check, highlights those new commitments and feelings aroused after having left the 1-world bubble and encountering civilian poverty. This wake-up call is mostly regarded as positive and some soldiers had already expressed hopes pre-deployment that the mission would bring about a sounder perspective on return. Nevertheless, these perspectives contribute to feelings of disorientation, when the world back home is seen as utterly protected. The second dimension, Personal Growth, reflects the fact that expeditionary service is generally seen as a greenhouse for personal development. Although this is most often regarded as very positive, it can also be a cause of social disorientation on return, when the individual is unable to share this development with friends. The third dimension, A Pocket in Time, refers to the impact of having lived in an environment where the contrast between intense operations and more tedious work tasks has made possible unusual self-reflection. Expressions herein often referred to a metaphor of a time with special qualities. Although the soldiers are, in principal, always on duty, they often have much time for thinking during transportation and waiting around the camp. Having time for reflection, in a broader and deeper sense, is likely one distinctive feature differentiating high and low-intensity missions. We will now look at how the premise of the operational context interferes with the soldiers’ emotion work on their return, the reasons behind PDD being outlined in more detail.
A reality check

This dimension aims to illustrate how encounters with the civilian situation have affected the soldiers in several ways. On their return to Sweden, having been re-introduced to the comforts and affluence of a western lifestyle, soldiers expressed how their experiences had made them more humble. The change of outlook also spurred feelings of moral indignation in situations highlighting disparate frames of reference. This is in accordance with Crang’s (1998) reasoning that people interpret different places from particular social positions and for particular social reasons. That Swedish troops are abroad to help civilians is a well-known part of the official rhetoric, and soldiers’ accounts also testify to how partaking in these missions brings a sense of purpose and importance to individual identity (Britt, 2003). In Peace Support Operations (PSO) at large, it is nevertheless well documented (Klep & Winslow, 1999; Tripodi, 2006; Blix, 2007; Thomas et al., 2006) that altruistically motivated soldiers often get caught in a crossfire of personal expectations and operational realities when mission prerequisites restrict the opportunity to do good. The participants under study experienced no exception to this rule and their narratives gave rich accounts of how the service had affected them emotionally.

By omission or commission, in thought, word, or deed, members in any strong corporate culture, explicitly or tacitly choose a stance toward what is attributed to them (Kunda, 2006, p.213sq). Interviews here reflect how the soldiers also came to different conclusions. As mentioned previously, there was a difference between the two theatres concerning the character of the contact with the local population. Whilst the mission in Kosovo contained recurrent social patrols and humanitarian work, the mandate in Liberia did not involve any of this although the soldiers met and engaged with civilians during long-range patrols for reconnaissance or when patrolling the streets of Monrovia. However, the ongoing humanitarian projects aimed at easing the civilian situation in Kosovo partly seemed to moderate feelings of unease. In Liberia, where the giving of gifts to civilians was strictly forbidden, many soldiers, especially during the end of the tour, simply trespassed formal rules or found alternative ways of giving, like paying ‘ridiculous money’ for souvenirs outside the main gate. Worth noting, regardless of mission context, is that soldiers in both groups expressed feelings of dissatisfaction with the limitations of their respective work situation on return. Examples of conflicting feelings that invited moderating reasoning were also forthcoming. One narrative stated that the professional soldier role requires a certain amount of dissimulation and that it is important not to go too far down this empathy track so that you prevent feeling too bad about yourself and can function in your role. Presenting an organizational self as distinct from one’s authentic self seemed to at least partially mediate feelings of unease (see also Hochschild, 1983; Kunda, 2006; Bolton, 2005):
You see people who have nothing. They only have the clothes on their back and nothing else – it really puts things in perspective. But you can't stop living your life in Sweden just because of that – you have to get on with your life anyway.

Sure, maybe there were things you saw down there that weren't so pleasant to see all the time, poor people who can't afford anything but a horse and cart and stuff. But at the same time I can't spend all my time thinking about that, otherwise I'd start feeling bad myself. (...) I mean, of course, you feel bad for them, but I can't spend all day sharing their suffering. It's also about being professional. It's almost like being a social worker. Work is one thing – but when you go home, you have to be able to let it go.

In Liberia, where the mandate was intended to prevent soldiers from engaging practically in the civilian situation, the emotion management from obeying these orders was moderated by reasoning, for example, that humanitarian organizations were in charge of these tasks and that this solution was preferred in terms of both security and fairness. Moreover, it would constitute a systemic error if everybody just gave things away instead of stimulating local initiative. Nevertheless, it was obvious that soldiers’ emotion management needs were substantial when they strove to meet their mixed feelings with reasonable answers. There is some evidence that this could also be worked on intellectually:

So you're in a bit of a dilemma. A hungry Liberian or not (...). And when you dump rubbish and you see people running out of the forest and beginning to dig through it, of course you feel uncomfortable. And of course, we must somehow build up a picture and a reasonable explanation – so we understand why we have the directives we have.

With regard to soldiers’ feelings on return to Sweden, one common PDD denominator was reduced tolerance for ‘problems of the privileged’. On the one hand this might sound like a positive and natural development but on the other hand it also entailed occasional negative reactions. Also reflected was the experience of not caring for the same thing as your friends, or being able to take their problems seriously, requiring emotion management and a constant reminder that the perception of a problem is always relative:

One's own understanding of the problems in-country was also different. People could complain about the price of milk going up or anything. People's problems depend on what they themselves have experienced and what their world looks like. When you find yourself in the everyday civilian world, then – the problem that me and my girlfriend are arguing about, that's a big problem for us. But when you come from the outside, from such a world – you think “how the hell can you argue about who should wash the dishes”. It's simply washing the dishes – what's the problem? It's just not worth it... Of course your perspectives change.
Last time I was home on leave I travelled between Stockholm and Västerås. Something had gone wrong with the ticket system, so a lot of people were booked in the same seat. People got so worked up on the train that in the end I just couldn't contain myself – it was only an hour's journey. I said let the old and pregnant have a seat – the rest of us can stand and I went on to say that I live in a country that hasn't had electricity for 16 years, doesn't have running water or sewage – and you stand here and argue about not being able to sit on a train (...). But at the same time I do get on my high horse from time to time and think people have relatively small problems, but perhaps for them it was the biggest thing that happened to them that month so...

Some soldiers also expressed feelings of obligation to remember, and with few exceptions, their accounts included statements of how service had made them more humble and that social bonds on return had gained importance. The almost universal impact of being put face to face with civilians in need deserves a little more comment. Aside from the fact that this was the first time many soldiers were put in this position, their reactions may perhaps be interpreted as less stigmatized feelings, which are considered ‘human’ and well-tuned with prevalent societal feeling rules at large (Hochschild, 1979, 1983; Scheff, 2009). Moreover, it might also be suggested that by openly recognizing the emotional impacts from these encounters, soldiers may feel that they are paying retroactive emotional dues (see also Goffman, 1967, 1969) to civilians.

The soldiers’ motives for taking part were often expressed in terms of a desire to experience new things and make a contribution. As previously mentioned, some expressed hopes already before deployment that the time abroad would change them in a beneficial way, something that would indicate that the new outlook discussed here can also be seen as a consequence of personal expectations:

Hopefully you can distance yourself from things a little. The small things won't seem so bad when you get home – problems such as making the bed and the like...

Nevertheless, the last round of interviews revealed that there were regrets that this new awareness was likely to be just a phase:

Yes – most of all, money means less to me than it used to... I’ve always been a real family person, but that feeling has only got stronger. I realized that it really is more important to have good friends, how happy you should be about that. So that’s what I’ve brought back with me. But, sad to say, I suspect this will probably quickly fade away.
You get a completely different view of things, but then you know that after 6 months at home, you're back there yourself. You'll never be exactly the same as you were before, but you'll still stand there annoyed that there are only 500 Kronor notes in an ATM.

The above illustrates how the confrontation with a gross difference in standards of living between the soldiers at home and the civilians abroad have formed the basis for new perspectives that were mostly regarded as a sound wake-up call. However, these new priorities and commitments may also be a source of disorientation, reflected in a vast need for emotion management in both private and societal interfaces. The fact that experiences gained abroad can also be viewed as personal development which causes the individual to feel alienated from the context he once left is dealt with next.

Personal growth

In this section it is argued that participation in missions abroad involves many task-driven responsibilities and adjustments and that most soldiers, in fulfilling these, emerge more self-assured. Nevertheless, on their return, this experience can lead to feelings of social disorientation, which may make it hard to re-connect and find common ground with friends.

Mission life is generally described as a very special lifestyle, evoking strong and polar feelings, i.e. that soldiers really appreciate it or cannot bear it. From one perspective, it is a comfortable life – most practicalities are taken care of: your meals are served regularly and there are even employed staff to do your laundry. Since you receive recurrent orders in regard to your whereabouts at different hours, with the exception of job requirements, you don't need to plan for tomorrow. From another perspective, mission service also imbues a sense of being a 'means to an end', and is considered a valuable experience to have gained. The main reason is that these operations can be very serious undertakings and are certainly not an excuse for a vacation. Even if the security situation in theatre is judged as stable, you should always be prepared for the worst and make no mistakes.14

Soldiers also entertain notions of service abroad as a personal trial that rests on responsibilities from work tasks requiring decisiveness, physical strength and the skills to handle a weapon, but also the need for standing up for yourself and solving anything from routine tasks to unforeseen encounters. The handling of institutionalized giving and receiving of feedback through peer assessment can also be challenging, although not in the same way. Over and above these work responsibilities, soldiers spend most of their time in the company of other soldiers, which in practice means that while deployed they

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14 For instance in March 2004, heavy riots started out of the blue in the Kosovar village of Caglavica.
are thoroughly embedded in different social contexts throughout their waking hours. The requirements of vast social adaptation and the forced responsibilities of performed tasks means that mission service will inevitably cause the individual to become aware of his strengths and weaknesses:

In the time between starting our training and coming home, which could have been 6-8 months, there were always individuals who you'd notice had developed enormously in terms of their personality, self-confidence and stuff like that.

I've learned a lot about group psychology and about myself. How to handle boredom, for example, and patience, which I found that I didn't have much of – and had previously denied. You found many parts of yourself that you hadn't really seen before.

I've learned a lot about myself and how I work in groups which is really useful (...). I feel that I have become more secure as a person, that I know myself, I have become more self-aware in a way that I have a better picture of who I am and who I want to be.

However, and perhaps needless to say, mission life can hardly be described as an existence with only positive personal outcomes and a place where no one feels isolated. With regard to the previously mentioned peer evaluation, multi-source feedback by superiors, peers and subordinates is taken very seriously, and contrasts sharply with the peer-review process of tacitly traded monthly scores as described in a study by McKinlay & Taylor (1996). A more rigorous procedure in the military is not surprising as the grades will have a significant impact on soldiers’ chances of further deployment, and for officers, the future of their military careers. Below, a squad leader describes his disappointment upon receiving a personal evaluation from his own unit at the end of a mission:

So instead of talking to me – and I could have perhaps improved things they weren’t happy about – they decided to wait until it was time for the evaluation…(...) we didn’t really part on good terms…most of them were actually really good but it felt like they hadn’t all been honest (…) something had been fermenting under the surface (…). Yes, a knife in your back I suppose you could call it, a bit like that.

For the majority, however, the time abroad is generally regarded as a positive personal journey with very strong emotional undertones. On their return, however, soldiers’ personal development may mean they have difficulty in finding common ground with friends when talking about their experiences abroad. That people in Sweden also knew very little about the mission environments was indicated by the fact that almost all the

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15 This is also confirmed in a recent investigation published by the Swedish Ministry of Defence (http://www.regeringen.se/content/1/c6/17/60/69/c860b8c0.pdf) where veterans from the Nordic countries and Baltic States claim how an increased self-knowledge is one positive outcome of service abroad.
soldiers had been asked if they had killed someone. Even if this question was not always a serious one, and could perhaps alternatively be seen as crude male-bonding small talk rather than an assumption, some soldiers were clearly annoyed by the home front’s ignorance of the actual state of affairs in theatre. They also expressed disappointment with the fact that people neither understood their situation nor seemed to be especially interested after the first polite exchanges. Difficulties like these often awoke feelings of a certain alienation and formed the basis for arguments for new social choices that in practice meant that some circles of friends were re-furnished:

I think coming home’s been pretty tough, on one hand you have so much that you might like to tell people, but on the other, you know – and I have learned – that people aren’t interested. People can’t take it in because it’s so far beyond their frames of reference. Then you feel a bit excluded.

And this has affected my social life, so I don’t socialize with as many friends as I used to. Some I’ve lost contact with. [...] Not that I had close contact with them before, the ones I had good contact with are still there to some extent. But those who I had less contact with, I’ve simply chosen to ignore.

Previously they were the only ones who counted, but now I feel I exclude some friends from a life that I’m no longer a part of. I feel more certain about what I think and feel about things, and they – my old friends – can’t give me some of the things that my friends from Kosovo can. Because they don’t understand. It’s completely impossible for them to understand.

Another group worked hard to re-engage contacts with old friends and this group also seemed to have more tolerance for the fact that people back home had moved on. Regardless of the context, it seems accurate to state that the return to Sweden for almost everyone is a process infused with ambiguity. Countdowns start from early on and high hopes and aspirations are directed towards the point where your ‘real life’ starts anew. However, after the first weeks of meeting near and dear, sleeping in your own bed and, not least importantly, being allowed some free, personal space, there often seems to be at least a temporary backlash:

Right now, I’m looking forward to the end of the mission so I can get back to real life. I know now that I’ll feel bad when I get home, but you have to go home to get back into the real world.

The first two weeks are great fun but you’ve got used to a life over the last six or eight months with your mates and their informal rules - and then suddenly you’ve got to fit in with life at home – and you may have been through things that people at home don’t understand (...).

It also became apparent to most soldiers on their return that real life is not something just waiting there for you to jump back into. On the contrary, vast emotion management
(Hochschild, 1979, 1983) was required when reworking and refining the quality of friendship bonds:

You have to get back in ‘sync’ and you have to rediscover your friends. It takes a few months to really regain the close contact you had before going away. So it’s quite a lot of work, but this is a plus point – socializing with friends is not a problem, but you have to work at it to get things back to where they were when you went away. So it costs a bit too.

You come home a bit like a stranger – that’s the way it is – it’s something you have to try and catch up with.

People live their lives and I’ll try to get back in there again: it takes a while before you get back into the social swing of things. On the surface it doesn’t seem so – I mean, if you look at it from the outside you wouldn’t notice it – it’s something you feel, when you’re home on leave and people say they’ve met so and so. People tell you and you understand, but somehow you haven’t been involved in the same way.

The reasoning above illustrates how service abroad is often an undertaking which tests your skills in a wide-ranging sense. As a result, many come out on the other side as more self-assured and personally developed. This fact, positive as it may seem, might nevertheless be an obstacle in the re-establishment of social bonds on return, and likely the toughest challenge to soldiers reorienting themselves with their old lives. Not everyone is inclined to re-integrate, however, as service is also highlighted as a platform from which soldiers socially move on, for example, by prioritizing mission-friends on return.

A pocket in time

Of the three main dimensions of PDD, two (A Reality Check, and Personal Growth) have previously been discussed in more detail. This section concerns the third and last dimension, A Pocket in Time, illustrating how life abroad is often perceived as set in non-linear time, separate from the real world. This notion is characterized by the rare logic of speed and interval, where stressful moments are followed by ‘KTR activities’ (Keep Time Running). Narratives also reflect how the unusual amount of time available for self-reflection stimulates consideration of ‘big questions’. A pocket in time is thus well-characterized by the overarching statement that ‘time is experienced in relation to context rather than to the even ticking of a clock’ (Elsrud, 1998, p.330).

The above refers to the impact from living in a time frame with unusual properties. It refers to the impact of the sum of all the things that happen during intense work settings, as well as what happens in-between, i.e. the experience of long hours between operations
making room for existential contemplation. In characterizing the missions’ attractiveness and why some people repeatedly go back,\textsuperscript{16} one soldier referred to service as being ‘spirited by the mountain’. Being an amateur climber, he explained his own experience of conquering the mountain over and over again for very unclear reasons. Thomas Mann’s (1927) famous novel *The Magic Mountain* seems to be a well-found point of reference in illustrating the character of the service. The storyline describes the main character Castorp’s spiritual journey when, quite unexpectedly, he ends up staying for several years in the reclusive world of a sanatorium in the Swiss mountains. The asylum turns out to be a separate world and, in a similar way, the soldiers’ narratives reflect their sense of living in another time and space:

In civilian life you live a life in parallel with everyone else – then when you do service overseas, everyone else's life continues, while I take a step to one side and live a life 'in green'. Everybody else's life moves on socially – there are new things going on, new constellations. Then, when I come back, I'm back in the same box that I was in the day I left or joined up…

As the one who’s been away, I find myself in a new world – yet, at the same time, I think that time has stood still for everyone at home.\textsuperscript{17}

Another thematic undercurrent of Mann’s novel that has much bearing for low-intensity mission life is the repetitive character of the service and the abundance of slow hours. Mann’s novel describes a very special atmosphere where every day is just like the next in a seemingly endless succession, and where the repetitive character of the rigorous habits surrounding meals and treatments turns into a therapeutic experience that makes patients ripe for existential brooding. By the end of the story, the main character eventually returns to the (mundane) world outside, although it is understood that he has developed spiritually, chiefly by not living in the horizontal experience of time that people generally have.\textsuperscript{18} In a similar vein, soldiers’ narratives testify to the tedious character of some of the work tasks with its accompanying monotony and boredom (Hancock, 2009), and how this paved the way for self-reflection:

Sometimes it's very boring, depending on your duties. If you're sitting in a watchtower for three hours on your own keeping an eye on an ammunition store that's exploded, then you're glad of the distraction of a dog walking by.

You actually learn a lot about yourself. You have a lot of time to think – what the hell do I want? What am I doing? What do I appreciate in other people? You appreciate your time at home much more. As a whole the

\textsuperscript{16} It is also commonly known that repeated deployments can function as a form of escapism from problems and difficult relationships at home. For a closer discussion of this phenomena, see ‘The Time Bind. When Work Becomes Home and Home Becomes Work’ (Hochschild, 1997).

\textsuperscript{17} Joe Haldeman’s sci-fi novel *The Forever War* illustrates this phenomenon, building on the author’s experiences from the Vietnam war.

\textsuperscript{18} For a discussion of linear and circular time, see Elsrud, 1998.
mission has been a very positive experience for me, even though sometimes I find it difficult to see the direct benefit of what I'm doing down here.

Notions of time spent abroad counting for more than the time back home were also forthcoming:

You develop a lot in nine months – in a way that is different from what you might have done at home. Some people trundle along and it's another nine uneventful months. For me, it's been a very special nine months. This means that these nine months feel a lot more than they would have done at home. The way you change here in nine months may have taken three years at home.

I've changed quite a lot. I was 20 years old the first time I went. I felt that I matured quickly and felt old among my civilian friends... Yes, that's the way it felt. I felt old. I was 20, but felt like I was 25. People sat and talked about going to Ibiza and partying and bla bla bla, but... I don't know, it didn't seem to have the same attraction.

Moreover, there is a sense that working life back in Sweden is a less 'authentic' world:

It felt like I'd returned from reality to some imaginary world – a world where you didn't really do anything of any benefit to anyone. And it felt a bit boring.

Höpfl & Linstead (1997) view organizations as places where, in learning what to do, we also learn what to feel about it and about the people and organizations we do it for. This is not manifest as a mental response to what we are instructed, but as a visceral response to a bodily experience. The emotional patterning of organizations will thus have two dimensions, neither of which is entirely separable from the other: learning to feel and feeling to learn (p. 8). In a similar vein, the interviews also reflected the perception that the reasons for feeling changed on return did not (primarily) stem from the geographical movement or the tasks conducted, but from the experiences of a number of emotional reactions to the environment. For those who had been on a mission before, a certain familiarity with the feelings involved can be noticed, but nevertheless an adjustment phase is needed:

I've heard people say – “I never thought I'd be changed by coming here; I've heard that others have changed but I never thought I would. But now it's happened and I'm not quite sure who I am anymore”. Having been here before I've felt exactly the same thing, but this time I know better... Not just because if you go for a second time, you don't change, rather you change a little bit more. It's not just about completing a task or getting from A to B – it's more about emotions – what goes on in your head and how you react to different things.
To some extent I think this matters... Time is minimized and it somehow slows down. Then I don't think it matters if you go on a hundred missions or five – some rehabilitation time is needed afterwards – and this time can't be reduced to zero.

There's a little confusion and some adjustments have to be made – you somehow have to make sure your head's screwed on the right way. But mostly you can do this yourself, but you do notice that there are differences.

To sum up, this section aims to illustrate how notions of PDD on return are structured around metaphors of having lived in an environment with special and contrasting properties. The consequences of this were quite vaguely expressed by the soldiers as feelings of disorientation that contained notions of how the unusual amount of time available for reflection prompted them to put themselves and the world back home in perspective, and to experience an overall sense of disorientation arising from feelings of having been speed-changed.

Concluding remarks

The aim of this article is to contribute to a complementary view of what it means, in emotional terms, to serve in low-intensity conflict areas. It thereby challenges a seemingly well-established presumption that the execution of ‘traditional’ military tasks (i.e. combat) or exposure to similar traumatic situations is the only legitimate reason for feeling deeply emotionally affected. What this study illustrates is that participation in quite uneventful missions abroad can also cast far-reaching emotional shadows on the soldiers’ return, causing them to feel both cognitively and emotionally changed.

This is not to say that the emotional reactions are of the same kind as those known from riskier and higher-intensity missions. To emphasize the difference between the feelings illustrated here and more severe post deployment stress syndromes, the term Post-Deployment Disorientation (PDD) has been introduced. PDD is caused by the transformative properties of the operational theatres, here seen as constituting three main dimensions. First, there are emotional remains stemming from a reality-check when encountering conditions outside former frames of reference, here referring first and foremost to the civilians’ situation in the mission areas. From one perspective, this might leave a sound, and even desired change of outlook in terms of prior values and priorities, but the existence of disparate reference points may also be the prompt for vast emotion management (Hochschild, 1979, 1983) on return. The second dimension behind PDD summarizes notions of expeditionary service abroad as a greenhouse for personal growth. The work tasks require decisiveness, physical strength and skills in weapon handling but also a need for individuals to stand up for themselves. In other words, the way tasks and
living conditions are organized makes them aware of their strengths and weaknesses, something that on the one hand is regarded as positive, but on the other hand can form the basis for social disorientation on return. The third dimension of disorientation portrayed here refers to the impression of having lived in a pocket in time, where the amalgam of both intense operations and more tedious work-tasks has made room for self-reflection. Notions in this dimension were organized around quite vague metaphors such as mission time having special qualities, that time spent abroad counted for more than its nominal value, and that you felt speed-changed on return.

Whilst some soldiers spoke of quite profound feelings of ontological insecurity (Giddens, 1991), others had not recognized any personal change, which in turn was ascribed to a matter of personality and psychological stability. Still, this was more of an exception, compared with the much more common statement that everyone did change comparatively more than if they had stayed at home, a view that was especially put forward by soldiers with previous mission experience. The link some soldiers made between no change and psychological stability may also be seen as an adjustment to the assumption put forward above, namely that the legitimacy of affectedness on return is connected to the mission’s character and how it is defined in military terms.

Against this background, it seems accurate to state that Post-Deployment Disorientation (PDD) is a recurrent empirical phenomenon, the facets of which can be expected whenever people return from a work situation with similar premises. The application of the concept is thus neither restricted to Swedish soldiers nor arguably something exclusive to participation in military Peace Support Operations. Outside the military world, the concept is likely to be just as relevant amongst people deployed in NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations), IOs (International Organizations), etc. These presumptions may demand some further comment. The broadening of the PDD concept’s application to other groups here amounts to a theoretical (transfactual) generalization (Danermark et al., 2002). The authors describe the existence of two different meanings of generalization – either in the sense of a generally occurring empirical phenomenon/ event or in the sense of fundamental/ constituent properties and structures. For instance, the universal concept of ‘women’ as an empirical category includes all people of a specific gender, whilst ‘the elderly’ refers to all people who have reached a certain age. With regard to this study, we can reason that the empirical sample is limited and it cannot be argued that the dimensions of PDD addressed generally occur in Peace Support Operations or even in those characterized as low-intensity conflicts. However, on the basis of a theoretical generalization, it can be argued that in circumstances similar to the situations described above, there will also be a tendency for the development of PDD.

The PDD concept derives from Hochschild’s (1979, 1983) emotion management theory, a perspective that highlights the encapsulation of emotions in a complex set of culturally and socially grounded feeling rules. This theory explains how soldiers not only
transit between the premises of the military and the civilian world during the course of a year, but also between different sets of emotion rules and ‘regimes’ (see also Wettergren, 2010). Something that sets the soldiers apart from other work communities previously described is their societal discourse on return. It was not uncommon for returning soldiers when facing community outside of their closest circle, to be held accountable for their choice to deploy. This contrasts with the essentially positive public perception of the work of NGOs and IOs. Experiences like these are likely to further reinforce bonds with mission-friends with whom one shares a common history and receives both moral and emotional support (Bolton, 2005). Future research should not only consider a more long-term investigation than made possible here, but also include a closer analysis of the total contexts soldiers return to (i.e. both the private and the societal context).

There are other reasons why further focus on this topic is worthwhile. On 1st July 2010, Sweden put an end to conscription and entered a new human resource management system with contracted soldiers. This means that 6 900 regularly employed soldiers will be supplemented with 9 200 part-time contracted soldiers. Their contracts will imply a six-to-eight-year engagement, during which they will partake in three exercise periods of three weeks each. Additionally, they can be deployed on one to two missions abroad for 9 months of pre-training and deployment. For the remaining time, they will work and live as civilians. In the new system, a substantial number of temporarily employed soldiers will thus on a regular basis depart from and re-assimilate into civilian life, i.e. undergo sequential transitions that may expose them to PDD.

While some soldiers may be in need of professional help in dealing with PDD, this is not the main emphasis here. Instead, the article has hopefully outlined the contours of a deep-going emotional and cognitive impact, challenging the official view that coming home from a tour of service where ‘nothing’ has happened has close to zero-impact.

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19 See www.forsvarsmakten.se/upload/dokumentfiler/Budgetunderlag/Budgetunderlag%202011/Bilaga_1_FM_BU_11.pdf.
21 All personnel arguably share challenges in connection with this transition, regardless of whether they are former conscripts, contracted soldiers or regular officers. However, the context on return for reservists and ‘civilian’ soldiers is often very different to that of regular officers, who continue to serve with the same people they have deployed with. Returning to a military context is naturally no guarantee that you will either be able to talk about your experiences with your colleagues or receive any active support. The main point here is to recognize the difference between working with people who at least know what service is about and people in a civilian context who do not share this experience (see also Dandeker et al., 2011).
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