Imagining War and Keeping Peace? European Military Cultures in a non-ESDP Peacekeeping Operation: the case of UNIFIL

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1. Introduction

On the 25th of August 2006, the Council of the European Union decided to deploy at least 7,000 European soldiers as the central core of the renewed United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). Operating under a new mandate derived from the United Nations Security Council resolution 1701, 14 European armies thus provide today the bulk of a multinational peacekeeping mission of 27 contingents in total. Italy, France and Spain have committed the largest resources, sending respectively about 2,700, 1,700 and 1,100 soldiers.¹ The current Force Commander is Italian, with an Italian and a Spanish area command, while France has sent the

¹ The European armies deployed in Southern Lebanon are: Belgium, Cyprus, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal and Spain. The number of troops I have indicated are on average since the first deployment in September 2006. The precise number changes at each turn over and the official data available on it are updated every 6 months. For more information on that, see: http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/contributors/2008/feb08_3.pdf
heaviest technology with its Quick Reaction Force.

Given this strong presence of European forces, and the European-dominated leadership of the mission, it might seem puzzling that the European Union did not intervene within an ESDP peace operation but under the UN flag, particularly because the EU has acquired a certain peacekeeping experience with five ESDP (European Security and Defence Policy) military operations launched so far. The reasons for this have been several: the decision making within the Council of the European Union, the established presence of the UN mission in the country for more than 25 years, as well as specific pressures coming from the two countries signing the cease-fire agreement and consenting to the renewed peacekeeping mission.¹²

My work starts from this unique characteristic of the UNIFIL mission, namely the strong dominance of European troops, acting not within a common European (ESDP) institutional framework but largely separated along national lines in different parts of the deployment area, to analyse the strategic-tactical differences among European peacekeeping contingents.³ More particularly, I ask the following questions: how are the European armies acting within a non-ESDP peacekeeping mission? Are they showing similar patterns, which enhance their work in the field, or differences persist?

In answering these questions, I make use of surveys and interviews I conducted in November and December 2007 with three UNIFIL contingents: the French and the Italian, and, as shadow comparison, a non-Western contingent, the Korean. I argue that military culture is the main determinant of force employment and that cultural differences can help explain military behaviour in a peacekeeping mission.

Military culture is a concept that summarises the non-material determinants of military behaviour on the ground. More in particular, I contend that the way in which each army’s military cultures are shifted can explain why they behave in a certain way in the field. Thus I challenge the material argument, that resources are the main determinants of the force employment in a peacekeeping mission, and argue that culture shapes action without having causal autonomy. In this sense, by focusing on the agents (military organizations) as subjects instead of concentrating only on the variables (e.g. military culture), I can look at what “the cases actually do”.⁴ For these reasons, this paper would like to be a small empirical contribution to the constructivist debate in International Relations (IR).

The paper is organized as follows: first, I introduce my case by giving some background information on UNIFIL and how I have collected and assessed my data; second, I advance my

argument based on the notion of force employment and I focus on differences and similarities of the military behavior of the armies considered; third, I explain military behaviour by conceptualizing military culture and assessing it empirically; finally I draw some conclusions.

2. Setting the scene: the mission environment and research method

In this section, I first give some background information about the United Nations Interim Force (UNIFIL) in Lebanon, the mandate and the rules of engagement of the mission; then I describe the context and my cases.

2.1 UNIFIL

Originally, UNIFIL (commonly known as UNIFIL 1) was created by the Security Council in 1978 to « confirm Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon, restore international peace and security and assist the Lebanese Government in restoring its effective authority in the area ». The Israeli withdrawal was completed in 2000. Following the war between Hezbollah and Israel, that affected Lebanon and Northern Israel, the Council enhanced the Force and decided that in addition to the original mandate, it would, among other things, « monitor the cessation of hostilities; accompany and support the Lebanese armed forces as they deploy throughout the south of Lebanon; and extend its assistance to help ensure humanitarian access to civilian populations and the voluntary and safe return of displaced persons ».

The European presence has increased notably with the strengthened UNIFIL mission after the war between Hezbollah and Israel. But differently from what the media tend to argue, this operation is not more robust in terms of mandate. The mission remains a very traditional one,

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6 United Nations Security Council Resolution 1701 (2006) According to the Security Council resolutions 425 (1978) and 426 (1978) of 19 March 1978, UNIFIL was established to: Confirm the withdrawal of Israeli forces from southern Lebanon; Restore international peace and security; Assist the Government of Lebanon in ensuring the return of its effective authority in the area. According to Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) of 11 August 2006, UNIFIL, in addition to carrying out its mandate under resolutions 425 and 426, shall: Monitor the cessation of hostilities; Accompany and support the Lebanese armed forces as they deploy throughout the South, including along the Blue Line, as Israel withdraws its armed forces from Lebanon; Coordinate its activities referred to in the preceding paragraph (above) with the Government of Lebanon and the Government of Israel; Extend its assistance to help ensure humanitarian access to civilian populations and the voluntary and safe return of displaced persons; Assist the Lebanese armed forces in taking steps towards the establishment between the Blue Line and the Litani river of an free of any armed personnel, assets and weapons other than those of the Government of Lebanon and of UNIFIL deployed in this area; Assist the Government of Lebanon, at its request, in securing its borders and other entry points to prevent the entry in Lebanon without its consent of arms or related materiel. By this resolution, the Council also authorized UNIFIL to take all necessary action in areas of deployment of its forces and as it deems within its capabilities, to ensure that its area of operations is not utilized for hostile activities of any kind; to resist attempts by forceful means to prevent it from discharging its duties under the mandate of the Security Council; and to protect United Nations personnel, facilities, installations and equipment, ensure the security and freedom of movement of United Nations personnel, humanitarian workers and, without prejudice to the responsibility of the Government of Lebanon, to protect civilians under imminent threat of physical violence.
7 See for example www.dailystar.com/lebanon
acting under chapter VI of the United Nations Chart, entitled to the « Pacific Settlement of Disputes ». The legal basis for the UN peacekeepers deployed are mainly three: one is the UNSC (United Nations Security Council Resolution) 1701 approved in the August 2006 and the other two are the two previous resolutions launching UNIFIL 1. The mission has been launched with the consent of the host State, Lebanon, and the agreement of Israel, therefore it has a broad international legitimacy. The use of force is allowed in a very limited number of cases: self-defense, to protect humanitarian workers or civilians under imminent threat. As of 31 July 2007, 13,264 troops are deployed coming from 27 different countries, supported by 279 international civilian and 452 local civilian staff.8 Not all the contingents present are assigned an area of deployment. Some, such as the Chinese or the Polish, are present with demining or logistic units and are deployed at the headquarters. Others small contingents, such as the Qatari or the Slovenian are deployed under the operational control of other contingents.9

2.2 Lebanon

The UN mission operates in the Southern part of Lebanon, between the Litani River and the Blue Line that was occupied by Israel until 2000. The political situation in the country is extremely fragile particularly since the assassination of the former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri, the 14th February 2005 which paved the way to more than twenty assassinations, among others: three members of Parliament (Gemayel, Eido, Ghanem), journalists, the deputy chief of the Lebanese Army (El Hajj) and the senior military of Hezbollah (Mugnyiah). For security reasons, the members of Parliament are all gathered at the Phoenicia Hotel in Beirut and their movements are very restricted. Moreover, since November 2007, the Lebanese parliament is not able to elect a new President and the pro-Western majority led by Saad Hariri (the son of the assassinated President) and the pro-Syrian opposition cannot find an agreement on the election procedures on the designated President, the Chief of the Army Michel Suleiman. At the time of writing, no agreement on his election had been found and the presidential election had been postponed for the 17th time.

Traditionally, since the New National pact (1989) the President is a Maronite whereas the Prime Minister is a Sunni and the speaker of the Parliament a Shiia. This does not mirror the actual demographic balance in the country where the Schia and the Sunni are the majority of the population (58%) and the Christians and Druzes less than 40%.10 One can add to this scenario, various other factors of instability: the chronical instability of the Palestinian refugees camps, the always tense situation at the Israeli border where, despite the presence of the UNIFIL mission, there

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8 Statistics for international and local civilians are as of 31 July 2007, see http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/missions/unifil/facts.html
9 In the map in the subparagraph 2.3, please find the assignment of the area of deployment to each country in all the Area of Operations (AO).
10 See statistics CIA Worldfacts and also www.lemonde.fr
are frequent violations of the UNSC Resolution 1701 with frequent Israel overflights and the unclear situation of the disarmament or riarmament of various factions, Hezbollah included. The international pressure is of course very high with the US having asked France officials to follow consultations, with Spain and Italy (together with France) representatives visiting Beirut regularly, with Syria and Iran very much involved.

2.3 Methodology

In this paper, I focus on the mission UNIFIL II that deployed after the signature of the cease fire agreement in September 2006. I concentrate on the Sector West and among the various armies deployed I have selected the French (FrenchBatt), the Italian (ItalBatt 1 and 2) and the Southern Korean (RokBatt) battalions. All the three contingents I focus on report to the Sector West Command (based in Tibnin) and indirectly on the Headquarter (based in Naqoura).

I combine the ethnographic and the political science approach, and thus mix different methods of data analysis. I have collected all the data during two months of fieldwork between November and December 2007.

The section on force employment relies upon a combination of my account as participative observer during military activities and individual qualitative interviews with soldiers. The participative observation was conducted on patrolling, CIMIC (Civil Military Cooperation) and force protection. The individual interviews deal with the daily practice of peacekeepers in the area, what they are asked to do, what is the relationship with the various actors present in the area.

The section dealing with the explanation of military behaviour relies mainly upon the questionnaires. They revolve around: military’s understanding of crucial concepts, such as “victory”, “enemy” or “threat”; their perception of stability and change within their military organization; their training, their understanding of mandate and rules of engagement.

About 90 soldiers of the three different armies, the Headquarter and the Command have been involved. For each battalion, a balance between non-commissioned officers and officers has been respected. During the interviews, higher-ranking soldiers were never present in order not to bias the interviews. I have also circulated anonymous questionnaires so has to collect genuine responses about beliefs and perception of the organization. Furthermore, by comparing and contrasting different military cultures (European and non Western), I circumvent the risk of not recognizing military culture: in this way variations should emerge more clearly.

These data were complemented by about 50 context interviews with NGOs practitioners (Intersos, Terre des Hommes, COSVI), UN officials working for the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations and other agencies (UNDP, ILO, ICRC, UNHCR). All the other people
involved in the research have been: intellectuals, Hezbollah and Amal members (the main military and political organizations in the South) as well as ordinary members of the Lebanese public.

3. On acting and how the agent shapes the action

This section is divided into two parts: first, I conceptualize force employment and how it can be applied to peacekeeping. Second, I look at the practice of force employment of three different armies in UNIFIL.

3.1 Conceptualizing Force Employment

The classical debate on military power sees as the two main determinants of success in battle numerical preponderance and technology but it never looks at how military organizations actually behave in field. Particularly, building upon Biddle’s critique of the weak foundations of the literature that rest on the importance of capability, I show that numerical preponderance and technology have to be augmented by force employment variables, reflecting the way in which forces actually behave on the ground.11

In the classical debate on military power, numerical preponderance refers to the importance of a larger population, more industrialized economies and greater military expenditure as necessary conditions for victory in battle.12

Apart from preponderance, it has been argued that technology also influences capability.13 O’Hanlon and Singer’s, for example, argue for the need for the augmentation of numerical capacities for intervention for humanitarian and peace purposes. Their main point is that a minimal investment and some change in military resources and force structure is enough to achieve better global capabilities. According to them, the number of deployable forces should be calculated based on the size and the topography of the country.14

13 The debate takes place between two schools: the systemic and the dyadic. The best-known view of the systemic approach is the “offence-defence theory”, which means that technology plays the crucial role in assessing the relative ease of attack and defence. This perspective played a role in IR theory, explaining, for example, international security dynamics13 and also a policy role in arms control negotiation or military restructuring in Bosnia. The second school argues that the effects of technology are mainly dyadic, which means that if there is a technological edge between two actors, the one who has this superiority will prevail, regardless of which of the two attacks or defends. M. O’Hanlon and P. W. Singer, « The humanitarian Transformation : Expanding Global Intervention Capacity », Survival, 46(1), Spring 2004, pp. 77-100
14 Similarly, the same core assumptions are shared by Gompert, on the capability to protect; by Giegerich and Wallace on European forces and by O’Hanlon and Daulder on the efficiency aspects.
Yet, despite the focus of the policy-debate on the two classical determinants of military power, numerical preponderance and technology, these do not satisfactorily explain the actual military behaviour. In summary, this strand of literature focuses on macro aspects and neglects of the more practical aspects of force employment. Even if mentioned as a determinant of military power, explicit theories on it typically exclude force employment. Force employment is underdeveloped in the strategic studies literature.

Building upon Biddle’s argument, I contend that a more sophisticated concept of military power is needed to make sense of the key dilemmas of peace operations as well. Force employment in peace operations is usually left out by both policy advisers and scholars, despite being an intuitive and plausible intervening variable.

Surprisingly, although he does not define it explicitly, Biddle relies on force employment determinants in the modern system. He vaguely refers to non-materials factors such as tactics, doctrine, skills, morale and leadership. On this point he received harsh criticism in the debate on his work in The Journal of Strategic Studies. Freedman, one of his critics, sees the lack of a theory on force employment as a missed opportunity for Biddle. In line with this I contend that a conceptual definition of force employment and what it does mean for peace operations is crucial.

Building upon McMurry’s work, by force employment, I mean the way in which the military technology and troops are deployed on the field. Applying it to peace operations, I mean by force employment the way in which peacekeepers actually work in the field and how they accomplish the goals and sub-goals of the missions (such as humanitarian relief, disarmament of combatants, securitization of an area and so on).

In conclusion, two aspects need to be precised. First, there can be various types of force employment. Military power can refer to many different contexts. Military forces after all do many things: defending the national territory, invading other states, fighting against terrorism, coercing, countering insurgency, keeping peace, showing the flag, maintaining domestic order. Biddle

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15 Of course this has impact on the success of the mission as well. For example, controlling for other factors, despite the constant augmentation in resources and troops the NATO mission in Afghanistan does not seem to be able to stop the killing. As O’Hanlon and Singer acknowledge, even when huge peacekeeping forces are deployable, the units are often slow and cumbersome to deploy, poorly trained, lacking in motivation. Yet, even in front of an ineffectice force, their solutions focus mainly on augmenting resources and number of troops. This the main vision also in the press. See for example, Stefano Battistini « Così i talebani preparano il grande attacco di primavera. Missioni ombra all’Italia », Corriere della Sera, Sabato 24 febbraio 2007, p. 15. « Ci sono gli uomini, ci vorrebbero i mezzi ». But also Carlo Jean « Servono più truppe per non cadere nella trappola », La Stampa, 30 Marzo 2007, B. Giegerich and W. Wallace, « Not such a soft power : the External Deployment of European Forces », Survival, 46 (2), Summer 2004, pp. 163-182


18 He tries to explain why, between two different Confederate Armies during the American Civil War (from Northern Virginia and from Tennessee), one was so successful and the other so often defeated. McMurry explains it mainly by the role exercised by its leaders, officers, general officers and enlisted men. R. McMurry, Two Great Rebel Armies, Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press. 1989 There was something beyond their personalities and their higher level of pre-war military education, training and experience that made the subordinate leaders of the eastern army better military commanders in R. McMurry, Two Great Rebel Armies, Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press. 1989 p.117

19 “Proficiency in one or even several does not imply proficiency in them all: good defenders of national territory can make poor peacekeepers” in S. Biddle, Military Power, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2004, p.5
focuses strictly on mid-high intensity conflicts but he does not deal at all with peacekeeping operations. I focus on military peacekeeping operations.

Second, an aspect neglected by Biddle is the fact that in the case of peace operations the deployment is usually multilateral. These armies usually have very different characteristics. “Many armies will try to adapt their methods to changing technologies and numerical balances, but not all adapt the same way or at the same pace”. This is an obvious problem for my work which I aim to address by focusing on each military organization.

After having conceptualized force employment, I now to the actual cases of force employment.

3.2 Three agents: the French, the Italian and the Korean battalions in UNIFIL

I now turn to the agents I want to study and on what they do in practice and how they assess their action.21

For ease of analysis I subdivide the section into four main pillars of activities: force protection, CIMIC (Civil-Military Coordination), operational activities and command and control functions. By force protection, I refer to all the activities concerned with army’s own security and safeness; by CIMIC I mean all the activities aimed at creating a good relationship between the army and local actors, both the civilian population and international and humanitarian organizations working in their area of deployment, the goal remain military and it is not humanitarian stricto sensu even if it can engage in humanitarian actions. By operational activities I refer to all the actions undertaken which are aimed to the accomplishment of the mandate, such as observation, patrolling, information collection. By command and control activities, I designate all the activities launched by the Headquarter aimed at uniformize, amalgamate and correct the action of all the armies present in each area of deployment.

It is important to note that this distinction is analytical and it only partially corresponds to reality. In practice, all this set of activities tends to be mixed. For example, the activity of contact patrolling- meaning patrolling lightly armed and getting in touch with the local population- can serve both operational activities and CIMIC purposes. Nevertheless, the distinction among these four categories is roughly correspondent to the practice. For each category I compare the actual force employment of the three armies and how they perceive it.

21 My assumption here is that they tell me about how they are actually behaving in practice. For this purpose: anonymity has been guaranteed when required and their higher-rank officials were never present during the interviews.
I proceed as follows: for each category, I compare and contrast the practices and the perception of the French and the Italian armies making some references to the Korean contingent as shadow comparison.

3.2.1 Force Protection

All the activities related to force protection are seminal in each military base in the area of deployment. Force protection deals with the security of the base and the protection of all the soldiers belonging to the base in the area of operations. This includes the organization of the checkpoints in and out, the maintenance of weapons, man and material and preparation of the technology that is used by the soldiers in operational activities as well as very daily bureaucratic activities. For example, a soldier of the Italian battalion in Marake explains his duties in this way: «I deal with the management of the means of transport we have within the company and their functioning». A Korean officer is in charge of the main gate and he leads the mortar unit. Another Italian soldier tells about his very administrative activities. «In the morning, the activities of raising the flag take place, and then I control who is in and who is out of the base». In general, the soldiers who are in charge of force protection tend to go very rarely out of the base. In the time period concerned, the United Nations Headquarter in Naqoura had established a security code level «yellow»: this means a medium level of alert and protection of the force.

Yet, even if the types of activities undertaken do not vary greatly, the intensity and the degree of force protection varies greatly. Different military organizations perceive and interpret the UN rule differently. In order to show that, I look at the degree force protection of the military bases, as well as, at the level of threat perception of the soldiers.

The Italian Army does not allocate many resources in force protection: it is easy to pass the checkpoint at the entrance; the bases of ItalBatt 1 and ItalBatt 2 do not have permanent walls and ItalBatt 2 is not built in a strategic position. The reason for this can be a very low threat perception. «Sincerely here very very low, almost zero, here I travel around I talk to the majors, to the mouchtar, as far as I see it (the threat) is almost non existant» At my question on their threat perception between 0 (low risk) and 10 (high risk), twentyone soldiers out of thirty have replied in a range between 0 and 5, considering this mission much lighter and less stressing than others, such as Iraq and Afghanistan. But not all prefer this one. On one side it is much better because elsewhere

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22 «Io mi occupo della gestione dei mezzi quindi funzionamento dei lince, mezzi che abbiamo noi in dotazione come compagnia», Sergeant, ItalBatt 1, Marake, 25-11-2007
23 Officer, RokBatt, Tyre, 6-12-2007
25 Sinceramente scarsissima, quasi zero a giro molto, parlo molto con la gente parlo molto con i sindaci con i mouchtar per quelloche vedo io è quasi nulla, Sergeant, Italbatt 1, Marake, 25-11-2007
« you were more tensed, much more exhausted by the type of threat ».26 On the other hand, this mission can be very boring.27

The French soldiers in their base at Tiri are very concerned with force protection: they have recently embarked in new restructuring works to enlarge the base and securitize it, the fortifications around the base are made up of reinforced concrete. The base is on a well-protected top of a hill. French soldiers have a higher threat perception compared to the Italians. « We have not had particular problems for one year, (...) nevertheless we stay vigilant (...) we know that even if it stays calm we have always to be vigilant in order to avoid the worst ».28 The average response about threat assessment between 0 and 10 has been 7.

Yet, compared to the Italian and the French battalions, the Korean Army is extremely attentive to force protection and it has a much higher threat perception. The base is in a very secured location that almost control the entire area of deployment. The Koreans have installed one of the most technological surveillance systems: “there are cameras around our camps and then these are very specific cameras. Even at night you can recognize any movement from five kilometers away all around the base, because it records temperature of things moving (...) no other UNIFIL contingent has (this)”.29 As this Korean soldier underlines: “the threat is really higher than in Korea; there we are well protected, even if we have our visible enemy at the other side of the border, we think it is safe because we can protect ourselves”. And also: «The threat is very ambiguous. A common threat is not existing, you can only inch on the contingent threat, linked to the environment ».30

It is interesting to explore the percentage of activities spent in force protection and in other operational activities. In general, force protection covers most of the activities of the three contingents, but mainly the one of the Koreans. For example, a Korean soldier reminds that « We should always be ready he would like to say the 60% to force protection but it is a personal opinion given his position and rank ».31 This importance given to force protection is pushed even further by many NGOs that keep repeating that the militaries “are here to protect themselves and they are the first that will go away in case of troubles”.32

In conclusion, there seems to be substantial differences among the three armies not in terms of fortification activities carried out but in term of intensity of protection.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Force Protection</th>
<th>French Batt</th>
<th>Ital Batt</th>
<th>Rok Batt</th>
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26 “Eri molto più teso più provato dal tipo di minaccia proprio che era diverso”, Major, ItalBatt 1, Marake, 25-11-2007
27 “E’ molto noioso, stiamo sempre nelle nostre basi”, Shama, 5-12-2007
28 “Comment vous percez la menace aujourd’hui ici à 0 à 10 ? Ça m’est difficile d’ évaluer… tout ce que c’est c’est que actuellement dans notre zone de responsabilité on n’a pas de…on n’a pas eu des problemes particuliers depuis un an, on n’a pas eu des atteintes particuliers à l’encontre de nous, mais on reste vigilants, tous les militaires français qui sont ici ont fait plusieurs operations externes donc ils savent que meme si le calme regne il faut toujours rester vigilant pour eviter le pire », Captain 1, FrenchBatt 1, At Tiri, 25-11-2007
29 Major 1, RokBatt, Tyre, 6-12-2007
30 Major 1, RokBatt, Tyre, 6-12-2007
31 Non-Commissioned Officer, RokBatt, Tyre, 6-12-2007
32 “Sono qui per proteggersi se stessi e sono i primi ad adanzarse in caso di problemi”, NGO practitioner, Tyre, 15-11-2007
Table 1: Force Protection in the French, Italian and Korean armies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kind of Activities</th>
<th>French</th>
<th>Italian</th>
<th>Korean</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fortification of the base (wall, checkpoints, surveillance system)</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Force Protection/All the other activities</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
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3.2.2 CIMIC

The civil military cooperation in Southern Lebanon plays an extremely important role.

The activities undertaken are many and very diverse. First, all contingents, also the poorest, in each area of deployment are involved in activities of medical care. In each village, they usually organize one day of medical care per week. Another very important activity is the veterinary care that has been launched by the Indians under the UNIFIL 1 mandate before spreading to all the «rich» contingents as well: the French, the Italian and the Spanish. The veterinary care is greatly appreciated by the locals, who are mainly cattle tenders and often animals get blessed by mines and cluster bombs. Talking about the veterinary care, a non-commissioned solder said «the last time (...) he went to visit some sheeps and a bee swarm». The three contingents are in touch with the municipalities to deal with the most pressing problems, namely electricity provision and waste issues. All the three armies carry out the activities named above in their respective area of operations. Yet, differences persist.

The Italians also started language Italian classes. At present no other language classes are held by other contingents. According to the Italian teacher: «they really like to study foreign languages, they hope one day to come and work in Italy or to work for UNIFIL». At the same time it is worth knowing that UNIFIL Headquarter is organizing English classes in order to upgrade the English level of its contingents, among other the Italian, the French and the Spanish. The Italians are very much involved into mine risk education.

The Korean CIMIC agents teach Tai-ku-ndo in the Korean area of deployment. During the Medal Parade held in the Korean base in December 2007, they gave a special demonstration of that.

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33 "Si si qua a marrake, le ultime due volte che c’ho parlato, era andato a visitare delle pecore di dei pastori e l’ultima volta delle api”, Marshall, ItalBatt 1, Marake, 25-11-2007
34 « sto svolgendo lezioni di italiano in una scuola a bourgeshamali, insegnamo l’italiano alle persone in genere perché non sono solo bambini vanno dagli 11 ai 40 anni Perché questo interesse da parte loro a imparare l’italiano ? Da quanto mi hanno detto beh alcuni perché gli piace proprio studiare, ad alcuni piace proprio studiare ingue nuove ho delle studentesse che conoscono già 4 lingue e quindi hanno voglia di imparare altre lingue altri invece perché sperano un domani di venire a lavorare anche in Italia o di avere a che fare cmq con le forze unifil quindi sperano di imparare l’italiano », Marshall, ItalBatt 1, Marake, 25-11-2007
35 Senior Political Advisor, UNIFIL, Naqoura, 13-12-2007
The French are very involved into support to schools and demining. « We gave them an informatic room; therefore we gave them the computers, the access to the internet, a generator ».36 The French are also distributing special engines for olive pressings in a joint project with the French Embassy.

CIMIC agents are obliged to wear weapons very discreetly. But paradoxically, for three armies, CIMIC agents are always escorted by heavily armed patrol teams, wearing at least a combat jacket. As an Italian soldier recalls: « we went out every day, in the morning from 9 am to 1 pm, it depends from how many visits there were ».37 The soldier remained outside waiting and he socialized with the people: « mainly children came, they asked for presents or something, but also old people, any type of person came ».38 The soldier, who was waiting outside the visit room, had many contacts with the local population but he did not have an interpreter to talk to them. Nobody of the three armies’ patrolling teams speaks Arabic or are accompanied by an interpreter which is reserved for the CIMIC agents. As a consequence, this limits the interactions between the local population and the contingents.

The type of means of transport chosen for the CIMIC activities has opened up to a long debate about the opportunity of patrolling with tanks, as I will explain in the following paragraph. Here differences are noticeable. The Korean and the Italian do not make use of tanks. The Koreans usually “use a small vehicle a jeep or a small van ».39 As an Italian soldier says, “many children, he tells, are afraid when they see the armoured vehicles and they try to explain them that the reason of their presence is helping the population.40 Differently the French, “we build upon the resolution, therefore we come here also with heavy means, such as the Lesclaires».41 As a matter of fact, one of the goals of the CIMIC is also to make the presence of tanks accepted.

Building upon the interviews, CIMIC activities are also a way of “advertising” national characteristics. « It remains for sure something good as for what Italy is doing for them ; beside of staying here for other reasons, through aid the idea of the “italian” remains better »42 Yet, it is much more the case for Korean and Italy then for France. In fact, this French Captain underlines how: “among our priorities there are these civil-military actions, it is the 1701 resolution that requires that and then if this is mirrored with the population even better ».43

36 « On a a ´ aidé une ´ ecole en leur a fourni une salle informatique donc on leurs a fourni les ordinateur, l’ access à internet, un generateur », Tenent 1, FrenchBatt, At Tiri, 25-11-2007
38 « Venivano soprattutto bambini che chiedevano qualcosa dei regali di qualcosa, ma anche anziani persone anziane qualsiasi tipo di persona veniva », Maresciallo, ItalBatt 1, Marake, 25-11-2007
39 Korean officer, RokBatt, Tyre, 6-12-2007
40 « magari perché porti una divina e sei nella loro terra magari possono pensare che stai qua per qualche altra cosa », Marshall, ItalBatt 1, Marake, 25-11-2006
41 «La 1701 c’est une FINUL reinforcée donc on vient égalemant avec de l’armement lourd avec des Charle Claire », Captain 1, FrenchBatt, At Tiri, 6-12-2007
42 «Si perché sicuramente rimane qualcosa di buono in quello che sta facendo l’italia per loro oltre a stare qui per altre cose con gli aiuti rimane meglio l’idea dell’italiano», Sergent, 25-11-2007
43 « En priorité on met ses actions civilo-militaire parce c’est la 1701 nous le demande et après si ça se traduit avec la population tant mieux eh », Captain 1, FrenchBatt, At Tiri, 6-12-2007
The cooperation and coordination between civil and military components does not focus only on the relationship with the locals. Traditionally, CIMIC activities should involve also humanitarian actors and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). NGOs have very diverse approaches in the area: some pursue clearly a development approach; others are more urgency-based. In Southern Lebanon, joint activities have not been launched between NGOs and armies, even if various attempts have been made. According to their perception, the relationship with humanitarian organization remains fuzzy. Most of the cases, they declare never to have met humanitarian organizations, despite the fact that “in other contexts, such as Kosovo, there was a very good cooperation”\(^4\) The French, the Italian and the Korean never launched joint projects with NGOs. Yet, the three approaches are very different. The French seem to consider NGOs as part of the landscape: they should act “without substituting the Lebanese government or NGOs”.\(^4\) The Koreans do not have any knowledge about their presence, whereas the Italian have started some preliminary talks with the Italian Cooperation and their tendency is to do the same kind of projects.

The Italian CIMIC agents at the level of battalion are not obliged to receive any specific education on CIMIC. This is what they clearly admit. « No, absolutely (...) in Iraq, we had the task to guarantee the security in the compound (...) luckily in that case I found my self escorting the Col. B. that dealt with reconstruction, basically I went around with him for five months and I did CIMIC in brackets also in the other mission ».\(^4\) The rules on that seems not to be too strict « I had to attend a course in Montelivenza where the CIMIC South Regiment is but I could not for lack of time ».\(47\) Differently, French and Korean CIMIC agents are specifically trained for that.

Women are very much involved into CIMIC activities in the three battalions. All the three have at least one female CIMIC agent per unit and female CIMIC agents are asked to deal with women in a very traditional Schia society. Interestingly, in the three cases, they are not part of the battalion deployed but of external units.

In conclusion, the CIMIC is undertaken in a very different way in the contingent.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CIMIC</th>
<th>FrenchBatt</th>
<th>ItalBatt</th>
<th>RokBatt</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Activities</td>
<td>=</td>
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<tr>
<td>Specific Activities</td>
<td>Olive pressing</td>
<td>Italian classes</td>
<td>Taikundo</td>
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<tr>
<td>Means on transport</td>
<td>Tanks</td>
<td>Armoured Vehicles</td>
<td>Armoured Vehicles</td>
</tr>
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</table>

\(^4\) « sans pour autant se substituer au gouvernement libanais ou aux ONG qui sont ici », Captain 1, FrenchBatt, At Tiri, 5-12-2006.
\(^4\) “No assolutamente (...) in Iraq, noi avevamo il compito di garantire la sicurezza del compund (...) fortunatamente in quel caso mi sono trovato a supportare con delle scorte il tenente colonnello X che faceva l’SSR una cellula che si occupava della ricostruzione, fondamentalmente sono stato in giro con lui per 5 mesi quindi tra virgolette ho fatto cimic anche nell’altra missione », “No assolutamente (...) in Iraq, noi avevamo il compito di garantire la sicurezza del compund (...) fortunatamente in quel caso mi sono trovato a supportare con delle scorte il tenente colonnello Borsa che faceva l’SSR una cellula che si occupava della ricostruzione, fondamentalmente sono stato in giro per lui per 5 mesi quindi tra virgolette ho fatto cimic anche nell’altra missione s’Ten. 2, ItalBAtt, 25-11-2007.
\(^47\) “ No, non co l’ho fatto perché era previsto che partecipassi a un corso a Montelivenza dove c’è il CIMIC south regiment per carenza di tempo », Ten. 2, ItalBatt, Marake, 25-11-2006
National Proudness | (AV) | (AV)
---|---|---
No (it is our mandate) | Yes | Yes
Cooperation with NGOs | No | Talks for joint project | No
Training for CIMIC agents | yes | no | yes

Table 2: CIMIC in the French, Italian and Korean armies

3.2.3 Operational Activities

The main aim of operational activities is the control of the territory. For the three battalions, the area of deployment has been divided into various subsectors and one company has been assigned to each subsector. The main activities are the cooperation with the Lebanese Armed Force (LAF) and the patrolling and observation along the Blue Line and the Litani River.

Concerning the relationship with the LAF, as an Italian soldier explains: « We do not train the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) that already exist, we usually cooperate, they are supposed to have the control on the territory we do joint activities with them » This means doing joint checkpoints on the Litani river or joint patrolling. « We do checkpoints mainly to cooperate with them and then they in particular have to control trades of illegal material between Northern and Southern Lebanon ». As the Korean Major let us know about other sort of activities: “I am in the unit of the joint operational system with the LAF, I am in charge of some coordination, we have discussion and some sport exchange”. The French and the Italian are overall satisfied by the cooperation with LAF. Differently, the Korean soldiers do not judge the cooperation with LAF very positively. “Differences in terms of weapon system and training are not a problem; the problem is the difference in mind and conception”.

Concerning the observation part, they go “to the observation post and they search in the area whether there are some mines or explosive (…) we control certain points from the Northern Area to the South here we have certain points, we observe the Litani river, we pinpoint the area everyday”.

48 “Ho circa 11 municipalità con cui ho diversi scambi incontri, per sapere almeno magari le loro problematiche sapere se hanno problemi con i campi profughi », Captain, ItalBatt 1, Marake, 25-11-2007
49 « In qualche modo, diciamo che qua noi non addestriamo, al massimo cooperiamo con le forze libanesi che esistono, hanno un controllo del territorio noi facciamo attività congiunte con loro », Marshall, ItalBatt 1, Shamaa, 23-11-2007
50 « Facciamo dei checkpoints innanzitutto per cooperare con l’esercito libanese e poi loro in particolare hanno il compito di controllare eventuali commerci tra il nord e il sud del Libano eventuali scambi di materiale illegale armi o altri tipi di materiale », Sergent, ItalBatt, Marake, 25-11-2005
51 Captain, RokBatt, Tyre, 6-12-2007
52 Captain, RokBatt, Tyre, 6-12-2007
53 Marshal, RokBatt, Tyre, 6-12-2007
The zone control has a strong patrolling component in the villages in each area of deployment and the patrol team along the blue line (10 km in the French area of deployment). Patrolling activities are on average 27 every day both mainly at night. The reason for that can be found in the words of a French Captain: "because at night all cats are gray".54

In addition to this, there is the work of support to the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF): UN contingents help the LAF to well place themselves in the south and then controlling that in the Area of Operations there are no other armed group apart from the LAF and UN soldiers.

The objective of patrolling remains fuzzy for the three armies. When it is operational it can also aim at collecting information but without the permission of taking pictures. In this sense, this type of activity can easily be confused with the CIMIC, as this Korean official does: « we have three types of CIMIC: first, control of weapons here, second the support to LAF Lebanese Armed Forces and third an activity with many people, we provide many stuff, computers, classes, renovating the schools, renovating children parks and the donation »55

Another relevant issue deals with which means are used for patrolling. The French are the only ones also using tanks, and not just armoured vehicles. « We do patrolling with armoured vehicles, they can be light or heavy (...) we are under chapter VI and not under chapter VII, the parties agree that everything will go on quietly but we are authorized to react in case of self defence and in order to react we have to be armed from the start ».56 « Yes they complained at the beginning. (...) we realize very quickly that patrolling with our tanks at two o'clock in the morning for the people was neither great nor discrete ».57 « Therefore we rapidly changed the route of the vehicles because if we have to patrol because we are obliged to do that with tanks well we use route that are not disturbing for the population and if we can patrol with other armoured vehicles but not tanks we try to prefer light armoured vehicles »58

The reasons why they want to keep using the tanks is mainly due to the fact that the message they send it much more meaningful with a tank instead of a civilian vehicle.59 The Italian and the Koreans have abandoned tanks and use only wheels.

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54 « parce que la nuit tous les chats sont gris », Capt. 1, FrenchBatt, At Tiri, 6-12-2007
55 Major 1, RokBatt, Tyre, 6-12-2007
56 « on fait des patrouilles avec des véhicules blindés, ça peut être avec de véhicules blindés légères mais également avec des moyens lourds et oui évidemment on est armé parce que on a... on n’est pas sous chapitre sept, on est sous chapitre six les parties s’entendent pour que tout se passe bien mais on est autorisé à reagir en cas de légitime defense et pour pouvoir reagir en cas de légitime defense il faut qu’on soit armé au départ », Capt. 1, FrenchBatt, At Tiri, 25-11-2007
57 « Ah oui oui ils se sont plaint au début. (...) on s’est rendu compte très rapidement que avec nos blindé les chenilles patrouiller à deux du matin avec deschenilles pour la population franchement c’est pas top c’est pas discret », Capt. 1, FrenchBatt, At Tiri, 25-11-2007
58 « donc on a très rapidement amenagé l’itinéraire de véhicules parce que si on doit faire de patrouilles en chenilles parce que on est obligé de le faire et bien on utilise des itinéraires qui ne derangent pas la population et euh si non on peut le faire autrement que par chenilles on privilegie les blindés à roues », Capt. 1, FrenchBatt, At Tiri, 25-11-2007
59 «Non non parce que vous savez aussi bien que moi que il y a de l’affichette et quand on s’affiche avec un véhicule civil et quand l’on met à coté un Charlie Claire le message n’est pas le meme il est très clairement un attention si vous depassez les regles et bah nous sommes en mesure de reagir c’est notre mission c’est la mission qui nous est donnee par la 1701 c’est pas nous qu’on l’inventons », Capt. 1, FrenchBatt, At Tiri, 25-11-2007
In conclusion, apart from the issue on the means of transport to be used for patrolling, the French and the Italian seems to have a similar approach.

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<th>FrenchBatt</th>
<th>ItalBatt</th>
<th>RokBatt</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cooperation with LAF</td>
<td>Ok</td>
<td>Ok</td>
<td>Bad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation</td>
<td>=</td>
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<td>Patrolling</td>
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<td>Goals</td>
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<tr>
<td>Means</td>
<td>Tanks</td>
<td>AV (Armoured Vehicles)</td>
<td>AV</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Operational Activities in the French, Italian and Korean armies

3.2.4 Command and Control

The level of the command and control is political-strategical; nevertheless, I have asked questions about the command and control also to non-commissioned soldiers.

The command and control structures play a substantive role on the tactical level in UNIFIL compared to other missions. The main reason for this is that in all areas of deployment, each contingent shares the same mandate and the same rules of engagement, which is not at all the case for other more enforcing missions. The Force Commander circulates directives in order to modify certain behaviours. One of his concerns is to guarantee a degree of homogeneity among the different areas. For example, he issued the directive on contact patrolling asking the contingents to patrol in the villages not heavily armed and preferably wearing very discreetly its weapons.

Another one was about the use of tanks in villages. Many villages complained because the tanks destroyed the road and were very noisy, particularly during night patrolling.

Frenchbatt and Italbatt 2 have other UN troops under their operational control: respectively the Qatari company (about 250 soldiers), deployed just next to the French base; and the Slovenian company deployed with ItalBatt 2 area of operations. The main task of these two companies is to help the respective contingents in the zone control. The decision of placing a company under a contingent’s control is made by the Headquarter and not necessarily well accepted: « Naqoura has decided to attach to us a contingent from Qatar ».60

At the tactical level, as in any military structure, the hierarchical structure is understood to be extremely important: every contingent should comply with it. It is to be reminded that very exceptionally for a UN mission, UNIFIL has a Force Commander that is at the same times Special Representative of the UN Secretary General: this means that he is at the same time political and

60 « et ban, naqoura a décidé de mettre avec nous, de mettre en place un contingent qataris », Tenent, FrenchBatt, At Tiri, 25-11-2007
military head of mission. An Italian officer explains “Our presence is for sure a political presence, for us, the military, it is not easy: we can never intervene at first we have to wait until when the political authorities decide”.[61] This is perceived as «atypical as function of the military, let us say so… according to me the Italian soldier is good in that ».[62]

In general, the question about the opportunity of a certain command and control structures are not perceived as asked at the right level. Particularly the French and the Italian consider it a very confidential question. « This is not a very fair question, I am just a soldier, I do not think about the opportunity ». [63] The French did not accept these questions neither for the individual interviews nor for the anonymous questionnaires. Differently the Koreans do not have problems discussing about that. « The Force Commander is Italian, the Sector West as well but this is a UN mission so the Force Commander should be rotated among other countries’ commanders, because here there are around 28 members in UNIFIL ».[64]

Both with the Command and with the Headquarter the contact is daily and constant: « in order to coordinate our actions we are obliged to work together everyday ».[65] Contacts work with the radio and the radar system with Sector West HQ and Naqoura.

Despite the fact that in normal national structure the chain seems to be longer here the different cultures both at the headquarters and the way in which orders are actually received seem to slow the process. A Korean Captain compares the hierarchical structures of UNIFIL and the Korean Army. « First of all the line of command is rather short, shorter than Korea and it takes a little time so it can be very efficient. Here there are so many differences between cultures, so the shorter is the better».[66]

In conclusion, the hierarchical structure is crucial, much more than in other more enforcing missions, because at the lower level there is not a great margin of manoeuvre. At the same time the command and control structures do not seem to play a very homogeneizing role both in terms of behaviour in each area of deployment and in terms of requilibrating plan concerning CIMIC.

4. Explaining differences in military behaviour: the role of military culture

After having shown what are the main difference in force employment of three UN troops in Southern Lebanon, I argue that military culture is the main determinant of force employment and it

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[64] Sergent, RokBatt, Tyre, 6-12-2007
[65] Il faut pour coordonner nos actions on est obligé de travailler ensemble donc tout les jours
[66] Major 1, RokBatt, Tyre, 5-12-2007
helps explaining differences in military behaviour. I process as follows: first, I conceptualize military culture, then I explain how it can assessed empirically and then I show that it can explain military behaviour.

4.1 Conceptualizing military culture

What can determine force employment? Biddle refers vaguely to nonmaterial factors such as “doctrines, skill, morale or leadership”\(^6\). McMurry implies by that something beyond leadership and doctrines. I argue that this “something beyond” is military culture.

Similarly to MacMillan and Cassidy, Legro argues that military culture is “assessed according to the ideas and beliefs on how to wage war that characterize a particular military bureaucracy”\(^6\). I rely on this definition for the purpose of this research.

There are two reasons for arguing that military culture is the main determinant for force employment: one from the academic debate and one from empirical findings.

First, it is well established by the literature from Swidler onward that culture influences actions by shaping a repertoire or tool kit of habits, skills, and styles from which people construct strategies of actions leaving aside the view according to which culture influences actions providing the values towards which action is oriented\(^6\). This is particularly true for military organizations, which like other “total” institutions, function on the basis of shared beliefs and a strong sense of hierarchy. Military cultures are particularly strong because of the closed-career principle at their core. New members are recruited and indoctrinated around the core mission of the corps: in this way cultural continuity is assured. Military organizations’ career promotion is based on a very limited external veto and no real external competition. “Thus, their cultures are institutionalized by the military and internalized by its professional”\(^7\). Cassidy’s and Kier’s works singled out the relevance of this approach explaining military actions and suggest that this is a promising path to follow\(^7\).

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Second, turning to the empirical argument, many actors involved in peacekeeping operations denounced the importance of cultural factors for the military behaviour in the field. I just mention some. General Loi, at the head of the Italian troops during the mission UNOSOM I, spelt out the relevance of military cultural differences to explain the different use of force made by different contingents towards crowds of non combatants where rebels where hiding during various operations in Mogadishu between May and August 1993. Similarly, General Mbaye, working for the Economic Community of West African States and Col. Keita, High Official of the Malian Army and from 2005 working for the United Nations, underline the impact of cultural differences in the force employment in the different African peacekeeping operations they took part. Also Gen. Dallaire recalling his experience with the UN mission during the genocide underlines the difference among the various armies deploying under the UN flag.

I contend that other determinants of force employment are already comprised in the notion of military culture. For example, leader selection is also a matter of culture: “soldiers and officers who excel at peacekeeping duties would have to be given a chance at promotion to the top ranks as people who excel at war-fighting”. Equally, military doctrines depend on culture as well.

Since military cultures “tend to change slowly” it is not likely to see any substantial change alone. Moreover, given the inertia of military cultures, they might become a more important limiting factor for military actions in a time where the challenges of peacekeeping missions become ever more diverse. At the same time, military culture is not a catchall concept. I follow Kier’s remark of being very attentive tracing the boundaries of military culture. In this direction, I draw upon Neumann and Heikka and I look at culture as interplay between discourse and practice (as in Figure 1 taken from their work).
It is better to assess its relations to other determinants of force employment, such as doctrines, considered as discourse, and training and actual military behaviour, considered as practice. In this way, I can spell out how to study the military culture of a military organization. In my work I look at military doctrine as an important indicator and I assess military culture from the shift of military doctrine (discourse). In general, the recurrent absence of specific training programs on peacekeeping missions has proved to have an impact on the behaviour of the military. The military culture is mirrored in the shift between the training and the actual force employment on the field (practice). For the purpose of my work, I am going to use training and doctrines to assess military culture.

4.2 Assessing culture empirically

I contend that culture can be assessed empirically. Detecting culture and its effects requires something more and other than an attempt to isolate culture as a variable. This is the reason why I combine literature on strategic and organizational culture with a practice oriented approach drawing from anthropology.

Organizational theorists use content analysis and quantitative methods to report the culture of an organization, I do not consider it the best way to study my question. As underlined also by Kier, in order to assess the characteristics of the military culture, “most analysts use an interpretive or ethnographic approach”. A qualitative analysis paying particular attention to the role of the practice can give a better insight of these characteristics. This is why I combine interviews and questionnaires with an anthropological tool of enquiry: participative observation. Traditionally anthropologists have not given enough attention to the state or formal politics, focusing on small often face-to-face communities. As a matter of fact, cultures “becomes embedded at the most basic level, as in the manner of moving and talking, practices of naming, house-building practices and kinship patterns”

In order to assess culture, it is important not to overestimate its role but to observe what happens in practice in the field, bearing clearly in mind what culture is and is not.

Culture is: what has become naturalized, obvious and unquestionable within an organization. More precisely military culture is: all sets of beliefs and ideas about war and peace,

threat, conventional security operations, victory and enemy. It is also: how the army perceives its evolution and how it builds its own identity; the shift in the practice (how they actually understand the rules of engagement) from the discourse (military doctrines and UN mandate); the shift in the practice from the type of training they received. Culture is not an individual behavior but only a set of rules for collective actions.

Military culture does not have causal autonomy. Therefore, I do not argue that culture causes necessarily action but I am going to show that a culture with certain characteristics makes a certain force employment possible, if not probable. This is because how a social reality is constituted also shapes action. In this sense, I build a constitutive argument by looking at how they perceive their practice and tell about it.

In sum, by showing variations among different armies, I argue that the way in which each army’s military cultures are changing can explain why they behave in a certain way in the field. There could be other potential competing explanations for the determinant of force employment, such as the leadership or the command and control structure. I do not underestimate them, but displaying my argument I will show that these are not convincing.

4.3 Explaining the behaviour: cultural differences

In the previous paragraph, I have shown the main differences between the French, the Italian and the Korean armies’ behaviours in the field and their perceptions of their force employment. As far as possible I have tried to separate the behaviour to be explained and the beliefs that are doing the explaining. It is not possible to separate them completely because how the militaries assess their actions affect the way in which they actually behave. At the same time, it is important to try to keep them separate in order to prove that military culture has an explanatory power. This is the aim of this final paragraph.

I show now how different behaviours on the ground can be explained by different military cultures as conceptualized in the first paragraph. My assessment is very practical and it makes use of a very narrow and defined notion of military culture. At the same time, I do not simply argue that different military cultures “cause” different behaviours. Differently, I argue that different cultural changes from traditional military operations to peacekeeping missions trigger different behaviours in the field.

In order to do so I make use of the questionnaires I have circulated among the three different armies, complemented by individual qualitative interviews. For my purpose, this tool of enquiry has many advantages. First, it is anonymous, so that it should mirror soldiers’ genuine beliefs. Second, most of the answers to the questions are semi-structured so that to allow each individual to add his own preferences. Four questions out of 23 are free. It has been completed by a population of 15-20 people for each contingent with a careful proportionality between officials, underofficials and troops. The unique assumption of this enquiry is that within each military organization there is a degree of homogeneity and that a random population mirror the organization’s belief. This is well established and shared by military studies’ as well as organizational culture literature.82

The questionnaires together with the fragments of interviews I am using here revolve around beliefs and identity of each military organization.

As such, the data I am using here do not deal at all with the practice of peacekeeping in Southern Lebanon. Differently they focus on their identity, their beliefs and understanding of their role. In this sense, among others, I address the following questions: whether the skills required to do peacekeeping are different if compared to the traditional ones, whether they perceive a change within the organizations and in the leadership selection and what the signals for this change are, who the enemies of UNIFIL are and what a victory (whether there would be one) of the mission would mean. Since I build upon a concept of culture as interplay between doctrine and practice, I also look at what are the main documents they are referring to in practice and how they trained for the mission.

First, I spell out how the three contingents understand their role compared to traditional security operations. Among traditional security operations, they mainly took part to operations aimed at maintaining public security and offering assistance to victims of national disasters.

82 E. Kier, Imagining War, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1997
Compared to the operations they took part into in the national country, the three armies tend to think either that peacekeeping requires the same kind of capacities as traditional operations or that peacekeeping requires more combat capacities.
Skills required in peacekeeping

Comparison with Traditional Security Ops

More specifically, the Korean army tends to think that the skills required are the same whereas the French and the Italian believe that in peacekeeping more combat capacities are required. Nevertheless, the French and the Italians do not agree at all the role that the army should have today. According to the French and the majority of Koreans understand the role of their armies today as being deeply involved in peacekeeping. Differently, the Italians still understand the role of peacekeeping as being the core role of the army today together with traditional security operations and peace enforcement operations. The French belief about more combat capacities needed for peacekeeping can explain the need to patrol with tanks and being ready in case of problems. The Italian understanding of the role of the army today explains the very low threat assessment, compared to other more enforcing and ‘dangerous’ missions (such as Irak). This also can also account for the tension that emerged within the Italian army: « in order to integrate with the population I think so (not patrolling with tanks), but for security reasons it would be better to use them ».  

83 "per integrarsi con la popolazione secondo me sì, però per sicurezza meglio usarli, però per integrarli con la popolazione meglio di sì", Marshall, ItalBatt, Marake, 26-11-2007
All the three armies perceive strongly the changing role of the military organizations. At the question: “Is there a change in your army today” they all replied affirmatively. This change is perceived to occur in the last ten years for the French and the Italian; in the last five years according to the Korean. This aspect can partially explain the fact that the Korean army behaves within its area of deployment with all the precautions of not having any experience in abroad operations. The Korean army has been involved in outside operations for the last four years.

The French, the Italian and the Korean battalions have identified various indicators for the change within their armies. The French and the Italians mainly underline the increasing number of peacekeeping interventions. For the Italians also the cooperation among armies is a signal of this
change. This answer can explain the Italian and French perception of not being novice in the job of peacekeepers. It can also tell about their perception that peacekeeping is one of the new and more promising new aspects of contemporary armies.

Interestingly, also selection criteria change in the army. Unanimously, the interviewees recognize that leadership selection is changing together with its army. A leader in the army today is for sure who is able to lead. According to the French and the Italians also who is able to mediate is a leader of their army today. Since the answer on the leadership is consistent with the answer to the overall change in the army, it is reasonable to argue that military culture already include most leadership dynamics. Therefore, the leadership does not seem to have a good explanatory power.

Concerning the training all the militaries involved know about the training and they consider it being crucial for their behaviour in the field. The French system is based on a 16 months-long
cycle: two-three months before leaving on mission with intensive training, then the period in Lebanon and finally four months of retraining. The Koreans and the Italians do receive their training starting from about two months before the mission but they do not do any retraining. This can explain why the Italians, for example, used to very enforcing mission, feel disoriented within this new calmer mission.

Concerning the documents they prefer to look at, all in all, the three armies focus on the UN resolution and rules of engagement at first. Only the Koreans and the French make reference to national documents, such as the White Paper on Defence or the respective national military doctrines. The Italians do not even mention national documents. This variation can probably also explain the differences in terms of interpretation of rules of engagement and under what conditions to shoot.

In conclusion, I refer to two key concepts of military studies: enemy and victory. Are the three armies still using these very traditional strategic concepts to interpret peacekeeping? In order to explore this question I combined the questionnaire to the Italian and the Korean battalion with some interviews with the French. The reason for this is that I have not been allowed to ask these questions to the French; they were considered to be too delicate. The French and the Italians do not consider having an enemy, whereas the Koreans do. We have no enemy in our area of deployment, we do not reason like this” 84. This can explain the Koreans’ very high threat perception.

84 “On n’a pas d’ennemi designé dans notre zone on raisonne pas comme ça”, Tenent, FrenchBatt, At Tiri, 17-12-2007
5. Conclusions

To sum up, the French, the Italian and the Korean battalions behave very differently in the field. This cannot be linked to a disparity in resources (the three are very rich armies). What seems to explain the variations is what I have conceptualized as military culture: the way they actually interpret the doctrines and rules of engagement, the way in which they apply their training, the way in which they assess conventional military terms. Concerning operational activities the French army is completely different from the Italian and the Korean battalion. In the French army, the main characteristics of a conventional army persist, notwithstanding the different context (peacekeeping): the control of the territory and the protection of the force is still the main task to accomplish. This is probably because the French army has been involved in low-intensity operations since the army’s intervention in Indochina and Algeria. Differently, the Italian army is more focused in displaying its involvement in CIMIC activities than in operational one; whereas the Korean army seems to be much more attentive to the threat management and the force protection. Despite some commonalities, seminal diversities remain and these mainly mirror the different type of shift from traditional security tasks to peacekeeping/humanitarian operations. All in all and also compared to a non Western army, the tactical differences between two European armies remain important and a European tactical culture does not seem to emerge.

These preliminary findings have also one methodological, one theoretical and one practical implications.
First, I contend it is much more appropriate to talk about cases than units of analysis. In fact, as Abbott points out, the units of analysis are supposed to be homogeneous whereas my agents (military organizations) are actors with substantial complexity.\(^8\)\(^5\)

Second, I have tried to let the agents act and then see whether a certain military culture could make a certain military behaviour more probable. A certain military culture, as assessed by the agents itself,\(^8\)\(^6\) seems to be able to create the conditions for a certain behaviour and it explains variations among armies as well. As such, the notion of causality used here is loose and it challenges Kier’s understanding of military culture as having causal autonomy. Kier argues that cultures have independent causal role in the formation of preferences. By isolating the causal role, she isolates artificially variables and this enables her to show that armies’ culture changed very little. In order to solve my problem, my empirical analysis has shown that: first, the causal role cannot be isolated but it is also constitutive of the agent (and its action); second, by focusing on the agent, I do not concentrate on whether the variable (culture) changes little in order to isolate an effect but I simply look at under what ‘cultural’ conditions, the cases tend to act in a certain way in practice.

Third, these findings have also a very practical relevance. Explaining force employment can shed some lights in understanding under what conditions military organizations can be effective in peacekeeping and in developing an explanation of the impact of peacekeeping without focusing only on resources and numbers of troops.

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\(^5\)This is another seminal difference from Kier’s approach. She never touches upon how culture is viewed and this exactly what I ask in my questionnaires.
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