<CT>Military Cultures and Force Employment in Peace Operations</CT>

<CA>Chiara Ruffa</CA>

<RRH>C. Ruffa</RRH>

<AB>*Although hundreds of thousands of soldiers from different national contingents are deployed every year in multinational peace operations, no previous study has examined differences in peacekeeping practices along national lines. This paper first documents systematical differences in the way national contingents behave during peace operations in their respective area of operation. In a second step, it argues that these differences in behavior are largely consistent with the most important traits of each army's military culture. Based on extensive fieldwork conducted between 2007 and 2014 in Lebanon and Afghanistan, the paper shows how, within each mission, Italian soldiers prioritized humanitarian activities, while French engaged in more patrolling activities, despite being deployed under similar conditions. These variations in behavior are consistent with the way in which French and Italian soldiers perceive the mission and context in which they deployed. And both the differences in behavior and perception are in line with the respective armies' military cultures. This paper contributes to the debate on the role of ideational factors in international politics, and in particular to the ongoing discussion on strategic and military cultures.*<AB>

The international community invests enormous resources in international peace operations: there are presently more than 250,000 soldiers from approximately 120 countries deployed internationally in 36 peace missions, with the aim of establishing, keeping, and building peace.[1] The larger missions bring together more than 50 different national contingents,

[1] Peace operations are the broad category of military or civilian interventions by third states or a group of states meant to keep, build, and maintain peace, enforce temporary governance, conduct limited combat operations for the sake of security, and prevent the outbreak of conflict. These interventions operate with the consent of the host state and/or a UN Security Council Resolution. They can be led by the UN, by regional

<CFN>Chiara Ruffa is senior lecturer at the Swedish Defense University and a research associate at Uppsala University.</CFN

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operating simultaneously in their respective areas of operation. Across the spectrum of peace operations' types, mandates usually include a wide array of activities, from providing protection for the local population, to delivering humanitarian aid, and patrolling and securing the assigned area of operation.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, anecdotal evidence suggests significant behavioral variations between the different national military units that serve together in foreign missions. Deployed in the same mission and under the same mandate, some national contingents seem to prioritize combat-related activities, while others seem to emphasize the humanitarian aspects of the mandate. For instance, in 2010, *Time Magazine* reported that the Taliban were resurgent in areas that US forces had pacified before handing control to Polish forces a year earlier. Allegedly, in the words of a US officer, Americans "had to return to take charge, he said, because the Poles are just kind of hanging around."[2] From their own perspective, in contrast, the Poles were less offensive and trying to secure the area by more peaceful means.[3] Similarly, in Afghanistan in 2009, the *Times* reported that Italian troops were bribing the Taliban to ensure stability in their area of operation. When French troops later assumed responsibility for part of the area under the same NATO mandate, they refrained from bribery and were attacked.[4] Why do some military contingents prioritize humanitarian activities, and

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organizations, by ad hoc coalitions, or even by states acting unilaterally, provided the consent condition is met.

William J. Durch, *Peace and Stability Operations: Challenges and Opportunities for the Next U.S. Administration* (Henry L. Stimson Center, 2008), http://www.globalproblems-globalsolutions-files.org/unf_website/PDF/2008_durch_peacekeeping.pdf.

[2] Jason Motlagh, "For U.S. Troops in Afghanistan, Coalition Forces Are Mixed Blessing," *Time*, 8 December 2010, http://content.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,2035859,00.html.

[3] Julian Borger, "Afghanistan Diary: Poles Apart from the Americans' Aggression," *Guardian*, 6 March 2009, https://www.theguardian.com/world/blog/2009/mar/06/polish-troops-afghanistan-ghazni.

[4] Tom Coghlan, "French Troops Were Killed after Italy Hushed up 'Bribes' to Taleban," *Times*, 15

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others operational activities, when deployed under very similar conditions?

No previous study has systematically examined differences in peacekeeping practices in multinational missions and what might explain them.[5] The first aim of the paper is to systematically document variations in how soldiers from different national peacekeeping contingents behave on the tactical level, where the same mandate is implemented in the field across all groups.[6] Building on the work by Stephen Biddle, I refer to this tactical level behavior as "force employment."[7] The second aim is to take a first step to explaining why these observed differences arise. I collected systematic evidence on the behavior of French and Italian troops deployed for the NATO mission in Afghanistan and the UN mission in Lebanon. Within each mission, French and Italian soldiers were deployed under very similar conditions and threat levels, with similar amounts of troops, equipment and vehicles, and under identical mandates. Yet, in both missions, they displayed consistent and systematic variations in behavior. The French troops prioritized operational activities, such as extensive

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October 2009, https://web.archive.org/web/20100106004351/http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/Afghanistan/article6875376.ece.

[5] Lisa Hultman, Jacob Kathman, and Megan Shannon, in "United Nations Peacekeeping and Civilian Protection in Civil War," *American Journal of Political Science* 57, no. 4 (October 2013): 875–91, distinguish between military, police, and military observation missions but not across national contingents. Stephen M. Saideman and David P. Auerswald, in "Comparing Caveats: Understanding the Sources of National Restrictions upon NATO's Mission in Afghanistan," *International Studies Quarterly* 56, no. 1 (March 2012): 67–84 have documented important variations in the caveats of contributing countries in the NATO mission in Afghanistan but they do not look at the actual behavior of soldiers on the tactical level, that is, soldiers' ways of putting caveats in practice and interpreting the mandate.

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[6] It falls outside the scope of this paper to explore whether this has an impact on success.

[7] Stephen Biddle, *Military Power: Explaining Victory and Defeat in Modern Battle* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004).

patrolling or training of the local armed forces, and displayed high force-protection levels. The Italian troops focused on humanitarian activities, such as implementing development projects and distributing toys to children, displayed low levels of force protection and did much less patrolling than the French. These traits were consistent across missions, notwithstanding the profound differences in mandate requirements between Afghanistan and Lebanon. Rationalist theories would not expect these behavioral differences to be so systematic and persistent, given the similar constraints.[8] I argue that military culture, the core set of beliefs, norms, attitudes, and values that is shared by members of a national army and guides its perception and decisions about strategy, operations, and tactics, is an essential and undervalued concept for explaining variations in military behavior in a peace operation.[9]

[8] I mainly refer to the two dominant rationalist explanations of military behavior, neorealism and organizational politics. See: Barry R. Posen, *The Sources of Military Doctrine: France, Britain and Germany between the World Wars* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1984); Graham T. Allison, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown and Company, 1971); Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1979). For a similar assessment of rationalist explanations, see Theo Farrell, "Transnational Norms and Military Development: Constructing Ireland's Professional Army," *European Journal of International Relations* 7, no. 1 (March 2001): 66.

[9] My definition of military culture is in line with the ones used by Elizabeth Kier, *Imagining War: French and British Military Doctrine between the Wars* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997); Jeffrey W. Legro, *Cooperation under Fire: Anglo-German Restraint during World War II* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995); Andrew M. Bell, "Military Culture and the Sources of Battlefield Restraint: Examining the Ugandan Civil Wars," *Security Studies,* 25, no. 3 (July–September 2016): 488–518. I argue that military culture develops at the service level, and I focus specifically on the army military culture. Some scholars focus on military culture as it is elaborated by high-level officials at the chief of staff level, while others focus on the branch: Elizabeth Kier, "Culture and Military Doctrine: France between the Wars," *International Security* 19, no. 4 (Spring 1995): 65–93; Stepher Peter Rosen, *Winning the Next War: Innovation and the Modern Military* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991). Authors that have focused on the unit level are, among others,

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Military culture has its roots in the early formative moments of an army, but gets modified and adapts to new and specific domestic conditions, a process that I describe in broad strokes for the French and Italian cases. Before World War II, the French military culture was strongly based on assertiveness, while the Italian one evolved around the belief of Italian soldiers as good people. After a similarly uneven military record in both World Wars, and with the disbandment of both armies in the aftermath of World War II, the different domestic conditions in the 1950s and 60s resulted in a partial transformation of the core tenets of military cultures in Italy and France. In France, the disbandment of the officer corps in 1960–61 and Charles De Gaulle's forceful reaction to it (re-)introduced a strong element of obedience and an overemphasis on executing orders to the letter into the inherited assertiveness culture. In Italy, in contrast, the army tried to overcome the consequences of its strong collusion with the fascist dictatorship by gaining legitimacy through humanitarian activities. The contemporary French military culture is thus one of controlled assertiveness, whereas the Italian one is based on the belief of being good humanitarian soldiers. Military culture thus adapted to new conditions and its new versions eventually became inertial and deeply ingrained via processes of socialization.

Military culture influences military behavior by directly affecting soldiers' perceptions of the context of operations, most notably, the way they perceive their enemy, the nature of

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Donna Winslow, *The Canadian Airborne Regiment in Somalia: A Socio-Cultural Inquiry* (Ottawa: Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 1997); Anthony King, *The Transformation of European Armed Forces: From the Rhine to Afghanistan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Craig M. Cameron, *American Samurai: Myth, Imagination, and the Conduct of Battle in the First Marine Division 1941–1951* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Legro, *Cooperation Under Fire*. For a systematic treatment of French and Italian within unit variations in Lebanon and Afghanistan, see Chiara Ruffa, *Imagining War and Keeping Peace? Military Cultures in Peace Operations* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania University Press, forthcoming, 2017).

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the mission, standards of appropriate behavior, and threat levels. When soldiers deploy in an operation, their military culture, with its preexisting beliefs, norms, attitudes, and values, accompanies them and heavily shapes their interpretation of the surrounding context, restricts the range of actions they will consider to be available and viable, and thus influences their ultimate behavior. While important, factors traditionally considered to be influenced by military culture and that should affect military behavior, such as doctrines, standard operating procedures (SOPs), and training do not seem to be able to account, by themselves, for the observed variations in the cases under study.[10]

The case analysis draws on more than 150 interviews, sixty questionnaires, historical material and six months of field observation in Lebanon and Afghanistan, triangulated with other primary and secondary sources (namely doctrines, training manuals, and post-operation reports) as well as several sessions conducted with the units after their return to their home countries.[11]

Several other factors could explain differences in soldier behavior at the domestic, strategic, operational, and tactical level. Through the research design, I control for matériel (number of troops, equipment, and vehicles) and some mission-specific factors (threat level, mandate, and areas of operations). At the end of the paper, I discuss three complementary factors (doctrines, SOPs, and training) and five remaining relevant alternatives to my cultural argument: mission-specific explanations (HQ directives and leadership) and domestic-

[10] These are the three complementary explanations that I discuss at length in the section "Complementary and Competing Explanations," 29–33.

[11] I have made my empirical material available for inspection by other researchers in an attempt to enhance the transparency of qualitative research. Evidently, this does not preclude differences in the interpretation of the available material. Data has been made available at the US Army Heritage and Education repository, conditional upon ethical and security considerations.

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political explanations (governmental mandates, previous operations, and organizational interests). Overall, alternative explanations do not seem to be able to account systematically for the observed variations in force employment.

The paper makes a theoretical and a policy contribution. Theoretically, and in line with recent scholarship, I reintroduce military culture as an important factor explaining the variation in military behavior, building on the "third generation" of strategic culture studies.[12] The paper tries to advance the culturalist debate in security studies in two ways. First, it adds to existing empirical contributions about military cultures by suggesting a plausible causal mechanism of how military culture influences military behavior via individual-level perceptions about the context soldiers are embedded in. The existing literature has

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[12] The initiators and most prominent "third generation" scholars working on strategic and military culture include: Kier, *Imagining War*; Alastair Iain Johnston, *Cultural Realism: Strategic Military Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995); Legro, *Cooperation Under Fire*; John S. Duffield, "Political Culture and State Behavior: Why Germany Confounds Neorealism," *International Organization* 53, no. 4 (October 1999): 765–803; Peter J. Katzenstein, ed., *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996); Peter J. Katzenstein, *Cultural Norms and National Security: Police and Military in Postwar Japan* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996); Theo Farrell, "Culture and Military Power," *Review of International Studies* 24, no. 3 (July 1998): 407–16. For a comprehensive discussion and overview of the three generations of studies on strategic and military culture, see John S. Duffield et al., "Isms and Schisms: Culturalism versus Realism in Security Studies," *International Security* 24, no. 1 (Summer 1999): 156–80; Alastair Iain Johnston, "Thinking about Strategic Culture," *International Security* 19, no. 4 (Spring 1995): 32–64. For a critical view: Michael C. Desch, "Culture Clash: Assessing the Importance of Ideas in Security Studies," *International Security* 23, no. 1 (Summer 1998): 141–70. For an alternative view: Colin S. Gray, "Strategic Culture as Context: The First Generation of Theory Strikes Back," *Review of International Studies* 25, no. 1 (January 1999): 49–69; Stuart Poore, "What Is the Context? A Reply to the Gray-Johnston Debate on Strategic Culture," *Review of International Studies* 29, no. 2 (April 2003): 279–84.

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overwhelmingly focused on how military culture influences doctrines, inadvertent escalation, or norms of restraint—factors that are crucial to understand military behavior at the tactical level—but few studies have focused on understanding how military culture influences military behavior or have explored the causal mechanisms leading to it.[13] This paper makes a first step in this direction by showing how military culture is consistent with individual-level perceptions in the contexts of operations and soldiers' interpretations of the mission, and how these are in line with military behavior, in ways that are partly independent from doctrines, training, and SOPs.

Second, the paper engages with the debate about the sources of military culture and provides a preliminary contribution by suggesting how military culture is not the often-depicted monolithic and overdetermined variable. Military culture is constituted by beliefs, attitudes, values, and norms that are at their core long lasting and deeply ingrained but that also get modified and can adapt to new domestic conditions. The modified military culture that emerges after specific changes in domestic conditions—in my cases in the aftermath of World War II—is internalized in its new form by the members of the organization.[14] In addition to this, by studying the determinants of military behavior, which is considered to strongly influence military effectiveness, this paper fills an important gap in the security studies and the peacekeeping literatures.[15] In terms of policy, a better understanding of troop behavior could enhance coordination between actors on the ground and help identify which

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[13] Bell, "Military Culture and the Sources of Battlefield Restraint," 517.

[14] Few studies have explored the sources of military culture, which has been recognized as an important gap in the literature. See Kier, *Imagining War*, "Conclusions"; Bell, "Military Culture and the Sources of Battlefield Restraint," 517

[15] Biddle, *Military Power*; Christopher Dandeker and James Gow, "" *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 10, no. 2 (September 1999): 58–79.

national contingents are more adapted to specific kinds of operations between armies serving together in multinational operations. That could lead to better tailoring of missions to their objectives, and ultimately, contribute to a more secure and peaceful global order.

This article has six parts. First, I outline the core argument, place it in the context of the existing literature, and discuss research design and strategies of data collection. Second, I present how the French and Italian military cultures, as we know them today, emerged modified from two distinct domestic contexts. Third and fourth, I delve into the country case studies, exploring how the units perceived their contexts in Lebanon and Afghanistan respectively in accordance with their military culture, and the influence this had on their behavior. Fifth, I discuss complementary and competing explanations. Finally, the article draws conclusions and policy implications.

<1>The Impact of Military Culture on Force Employment</1>

<2>Force Employment</2>

As a dependent variable in this paper, I borrow Biddle's concept of "force employment," that is, the specific ways armies employ their material resources on the tactical level.[16] Biddle's concept of force employment was originally intended for the study of conventional warfare; here, I expand it to capture the broader range of military activities undertaken in peace operations, which may include patrolling, humanitarian work, and responding to enemy fire. I operationalize force employment along four dimensions which cover the totality of activities carried out by soldiers in multinational peace operations, namely: patrols (frequency, timing, and level of armaments), interaction with local military forces, interaction with civilians, including through engagement in humanitarian and development work (CIMIC), and extent of force protection. While behavioral differences between national militaries in war have been

[16] Stephen Biddle, "Military Power: A Reply," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 28, no. 3 (June 2005), 453–69; Biddle, *Military Power*, 2.

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considered by the military and security studies literatures, there has never been a thorough study of how systematically and persistently these variations occur.[17] Furthermore, neither the peace operations nor the security studies literatures have studied behavioral variations within multinational missions.[18] The closest is the work of Stephen M. Saideman and David P. Auerswald, which examined variations in the caveats— the restrictions regulating under what conditions soldiers can use force—of different national contributors to the NATO mission in Afghanistan, but did not study behavioral variations when soldiers implement their mandates and abide by their caveats.[19]

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<2>Military Culture</2>

This paper contends that military culture is an important factor that influences variations in force employment. I define military culture as the core set of beliefs, attitudes, norms, and values that become deeply embedded at the national army level. This conception of military culture is in line with that of the third generation of military culture scholars, who see military culture and behavior as distinct and causally related factors.[20] It adds to the debate about the

[17] Exceptions are: King, *The Transformation of European Armed Forces*; Allan R. Millett and Murray Williamson, eds., *Military Effectiveness*, vols. 1–3 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

[18] Exceptions are: Ann M. Fitz-Gerald, "Multinational Land Force Interoperability: Meeting the Challenge of Difference Backgrounds in Chapter VI Peace Support Operations," *Journal of Conflict Studies* 23, no. 1 (Spring 2003): 60–85; Joseph L. Soeters, "Value Orientations in Military Academies: A Thirteen Country Study," *Armed Forces & Society* 24, no. 1 (October 1997): 7–32; Joseph Soeters et al., "Turkish–Dutch Encounters in Peace Operations," *International Peacekeeping* 11, no. 2 (June 2004): 354–68; Joseph L. Soeters and Jan Van der Meulen, eds., *Cultural Diversity in the Armed Forces: An International Comparison* (London: Routledge, 2007).

[19] Saideman and Auerswald, "Comparing Caveats."

[20] Johnston, "Thinking about Strategic Culture."

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ideational turn in IR, and in particular the culturalist one, in two ways.[21] First, it explores the causal mechanism through which military culture influences behavior. Even though the constructivist approach has become more empirical in recent years, few scholars have explored the mechanisms through which culture affects military behavior. Military culture accompanies units to the field. This culture guides the way a unit perceives the context it operates in, which in turn, guides the choices made by it in the field, within the freedom of maneuver that exists after mandate, material conditions, and objective threat levels are accounted for. My research shows that different national units deployed in the same context interpret their enemy, the nature of their mission, standards of appropriate behavior, and threat levels differently. Empirically, there is a strong consistency between military cultures, soldiers' perceptions once deployed, and their behavior. Training, SOPs and doctrines are

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[21] For the distinction between culturalist and normativist see Theo Farrell, "Constructivist Security Studies: Portrait of A Research Program," *International Studies Review* 4, no. 1 (Spring 2002): 49–72. Theories on military culture have their roots in constructivism. See Martha Finnemore, *The Purpose of Intervention: Changing Beliefs about the Use of Force* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003); Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999). For recent assessments of constructivist contributions, see: Emanuel Adler, "Constructivism and International Relations," in *Handbook of International Relations*, ed. Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse, and Beth A. Simmons (London: Sage, 2013), 112–44; James D. Fearon and Alexander Wendt, "Rationalism v. Constructivism: A Skeptical View," in *Handbook of International Relations*, ed. Carlsnaes, Risse, and Simmons, 53–72; Gabi Schlag, Julian Junk, and Christopher Daase, eds., *Transformations of Security Studies: Dialogues, Diversity and Discipline* (London: Routledge, 2015); Christopher P. Twomey, "Lacunae in the Study of Culture in International Security," *Contemporary Security Policy* 29, no. 2 (August 2008): 338–57; Bell, "Military Culture and the Sources of Battlefield Restraint"; Alan Bloomfield, "Time to Move On: Reconceptualizing the Strategic Culture Debate," *Contemporary Security Policy* 33, no. 3 (October 2012): 437–61; David G. Haglund, "'Let's Call the Whole Thing Off'? Security Culture as Strategic Culture," *Contemporary Security Policy* 32, no. 3 (December 2011): 494–516.

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unable to account for all of these variations by themselves. The causal mechanism proposed here is also one way to move beyond the Colin S. Gray–Alastair Iain Johnston debate and take a step forward towards theorizing cultural influence on military behavior.[22]

Second, this paper counters the tendency to treat military culture as a monolithic variable.[23] By doing so, it goes beyond the existing literature by trying to point at where military culture comes from, and by describing how it emerged within its respective domestic context.[24] Military culture is constituted by inertial and deeply ingrained beliefs that can, however, evolve over time as the meaning and the understanding of these fundamental cultural tenets adapt to new specific domestic contexts. This opens a new interesting avenue in terms of what constitutes military culture in the first place as well as how different components of military culture interact and are synthesized into a specific configuration of military culture. Understanding how culture adapts to modified domestic conditions is a first step to avoid the overdeterminism of some studies about military and strategic cultures.[25]

<2>Research Design and Methods</2>

I employ a controlled case comparison in order to test the explanatory power of military culture vis-à-vis other explanations, studying two national military units (French and Italian) serving together in international peace operations. I selected units deployed in the two most dissimilar kinds of ongoing peace operations to test whether behavioral variations are

[22] Poore, "What Is the Context?"; Gray, "Strategic Culture as Context"; Johnston, "Strategic Cultures Revisited."

[23] This has been identified as an important problem by both the classical debate in the 1990s: Johnston, "Thinking about Strategic Culture." And more recently, Bell, "Military Culture and the Sources of Battlefield Restraint"; Adler, "Constructivism and International Relations," 135

[24] Kier, *Imagining War*, "Conclusions."

[25] Colin S. Gray, *Nuclear Strategy and National Style* (Lanham, MD: Hamilton Press, 1986); Gray, "Strategic Culture as Context."

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systematic across different types of operations. Finding that the culturalist explanation applies similarly in these most different of contexts would increase its external validity.[26]

I selected the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL II) and the NATO mission in Afghanistan (ISAF), two missions lying at the most extreme ends of the peace operation spectrum.[27] UNIFIL II is a traditional peacekeeping operation with the objective of supervising the 2006 ceasefire between Israel and Hezbollah and supporting the Lebanese Armed Forces to create "an area free of any armed personnel, assets and weapons other than those of the Government of Lebanon."[28] In contrast, the ISAF mission is a security and stability operation in which international security forces may launch enforcement "operations for the restoration and maintenance of order and stability" and engage in reconstruction activities.[29] ISAF's threat level is significantly higher than UNIFIL's, and ISAF's mandate provides a greater ability for military units to use force. One would expect that the high threat levels and stringent NATO procedures in Afghanistan should lead to convergence between units because it should reduce the margins of maneuver for units at the tactical level, increase force protection levels (highly standardized through NATO), but make less likely those

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[26] For example, one might expect military culture to matter more in a traditional peacekeeping operation where the threat level is relatively low and the standard operating procedures leave a wider margin of maneuver for military units.

[27] The peace operation spectrum, ranging from traditional peacekeeping (with very limited possibility for using force) to peace enforcement (where soldiers are allowed to use force not only for self-defense but also for establishing security conditions), is well established in the literature on military operations. See Brian Federking and Paul F. Diehl, eds., *The Politics of Global Governance: International Organizations in an Interdependent World* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2010).

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[28] United Nations Security Council Resolution 1701/2006.

[29] James T. Quinlivan, "Force Requirements in Stability Operations," *Parameters* 25, no. 4 (Winter 1995): 59–69.

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activities that are less standardized, such as CIMIC, reducing behavioral differences between the national militaries. These considerations make Afghanistan a hard case, and again increase the external validity of the culturalist argument if it is found to apply.

I selected one French and one Italian unit in both the Lebanon and Afghanistan missions.[30] These units are similar with respect to a number of characteristics that could account for variations in behavior. The two units were deployed with similar material resources, under identical mandates, and in areas with comparable threat levels. Also, during the period I studied, according to my interviewees, rules of engagement did not differ substantially and the caveats imposed were the same.[31] In both Lebanon and Afghanistan, detailed written information about material resources and mandate were relatively easy to access and the interviewees confirmed the similarity of the material resources, the identical mandates, and rules of engagement (ROEs). For instance, in Lebanon, UN officials were at a loss to explain the differences in their behavior: "[F]rankly speaking, I do not understand why they behave so differently: they operate under the same mandate and they have very similar vehicles."[32] Similarly French, Italian, and NATO personnel interviewed in Afghanistan agreed that French and Italian troops displayed roughly the same number of weapons and

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[30] The 1st Fusilier Regiment from Epinal (French) and 132nd Regiment belonging to the Ariete Brigade (Italian) in Lebanon (UNIFIL II), and the 8th Marine Parachute Infantry battalion (French) and the 9th Alpini battalion (Italian) in Afghanistan (ISAF). I studied the units in Lebanon between July and December 2007, and those in Afghanistan from May to November 2008. I conducted several post-deployment follow-up research sessions with the four units until March 2012.

[31] This contrasts partly with Saidemann and Auerswald's assessment of French and Italian caveats, considered "strict" for the Italian and "medium" for the French. Saideman and Auerswald, "Comparing Caveats," 72

[32] HQ-7, Naqoura, December 2007, Lebanon.

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vehicles, and used the same amount of munitions.[33]

Both in Lebanon and in Afghanistan, the French and Italian areas of operation (AOs) displayed similar threat levels. In Lebanon, the two units operated in areas of similar size, they were deployed under the same regional command (Regional Command West), and faced similar kinds of threats: the Italian contingent was in charge of supervising the Litani River, and the French the Blue Line at the border with Israel to make sure that no hostile activity was being carried out. With respect to these factors in Lebanon, all UN officials agreed: "French and Italian units have a very similar threat level in their area of operation: some Hezbollah activity, a division line to supervise, yes, similar[,] very similar."[34] A Lebanese local said: "[I]t is weird, with my family we live close by both areas[,] and you wonder why they behave so differently, Hezbollah is all over and Israel could attack at anytime anywhere too so why doing things so differently?".[35]

Also in Afghanistan, French and Italian contingents shared the same command (Regional Command Capital), the surface area was similar, and the Italian contingents had to deal with two problematic valleys, the Chahar Asyab and Musay, while the French were in charge of the Khaki Jabar and Surobi (handed over by the Italian contingent on 3 August 2008).[36] In the Afghan case, the similarity of threat levels might seem somewhat more difficult to argue. Prima facie, in the period of observation (May–December 2008) the number of casualties was different: the French experienced three attacks (thirty-six casualties), while

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[33] O-1 and NCO-3, Italian unit, Camp Invicta, Kabul, October 2009; O-1 and NCS-3, French unit, Camp Warehouse, Kabul, December 2009.

[34] HO-6, Beirut, Lebanon, November 2009; UNHQCIV-6, Beirut, Lebanon, October 2007; L-3, Tyre, Lebanon, August 2009.

[35] L-5, Tyre, Lebanon, August 2009.

[36] O-4 and NCS-1, French unit, Camp Warehouse, Kabul, December 2009, also confirmed by Florence Aubenas, "Afghanistan: Les Morts de La Vallée d'Uzbeen," *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 28 August 2008.

the Italians suffered only one. At a closer look, however, thirty-four out of those thirty-six casualties were suffered in the ambush in the Surobi Valley on July 2008, an area that the Italian contingent had just handed over to the French. The other two attacks against the French, and the one against the Italians, were all caused by improvised explosive devices (IEDs).[37] According to some sources, the incident in the Surobi Valley was a consequence of the different ways in which French and Italian operated, a warning by the Taliban to the French. For others, it was a rather usual way for the Taliban in that area to manifest their presence to contingents newly deployed.[38] An attack had occurred also against the Italian contingent in February 2008, after they had just taken control of their area, killing an Italian officer.[39] Either way, the deadly attack against the French confirms the validity of my results about different kinds of force employment but does not diminish the similarity of the threat level because there was no variation in behavior among French soldiers before and after the attack in Surobi. In addition to this, on a longer time horizon, both before and after, the difference was insignificant as the French and Italian areas of operation were subject to a similar number of attacks and suffered a similar amount of casualties.[40] Finally, all officers interviewed within the multinational HQs in Kabul agreed that French and Italian areas of

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[37] Jerome Starkey, "War in Afghanistan: The Battle of Surobi," *Independent*, 20 August 2008, http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/war-in-afghanistan-the-battle-of-surobi-902902.html. See also GED Point Dataset v.1.1-2011, Sundberg, Ralph, Mathilda Lindgren and Ausra Padskocimaite, 2010, "UCDP GED Codebook version 1.0-2011," Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University

[38] Florence Aubenas, "Afghanistan: Les Morts de La Vallée d'Uzbeen."

[39] Romain Rosso, "Comment l'Italie Contrôlait La Vallée d'Uzbin En Afghanistan," *L'Express*, 15 October 2009, http://www.lexpress.fr/actualite/monde/comment-l-italie-controlait-la-vallee-d-uzbin-en-afghanistan_794782.html.

[40] Afghan NGO Safety Office weekly reports 2008–2010.

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operations were similar.[41] However, despite the overwhelming similarities, units in Afghanistan displayed remarkable variations in their behavior, a fact even more puzzling under a NATO mandate, which usually sets stronger constraints than a UN mandate. The table <TI> first mention Table 1 </TI>below summarizes the similarities and provides the figures.[42]

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TABLE 1

COMPARABILITY OF CASES

	UNIFIL II (Lebanon)		ISAF (Afghanistan)	
	French	Italian	French	Italian
Material resources:				
Troop numbers	2100	2100	2500	2500
Equipment / Vehicles	15-17 heavy tanks (somewhat heavier tanks than Italian troops) 35 AMX (light armoured vehicles) Comparable levels of other equipment	15-17 heavy tanks 35 AMX (light armoured vehicles) Comparable levels of other equipment	Heavy tanks Pick up trucks Light vehicles Comparable levels of other equipment	Heavy tanks Light vehicles (Lince) Comparable levels of other equipment
Threat Level:				
Area of operation	Sector West	Sector West	Regional Command Capital in Kabul	Regional Command Capital in Kabul

[41] NATOHQ-3; NATOHQ-4; NATOHQ-5, Kabul, Afghanistan, July 2008 and November 2008.

[42] Certain details about the amount of weapons and type of material released to the author have been kept confidential for security reasons.

Difficulty of the area of operation	Potential Hezbollah rearming Violations along the Israeli border	Potential Hezbollah rearming Violations along the Litani river	Stabilizing the Surobi Valley	Stabilizing the Mosay Valley
Mandate:				
	UN Security Council Resolution 1701/2006 - Monitoring the cessation of hostilities - Providing humanitarian relief - Force to be used only in self-defence or under imminent threat	UN Security Council Resolution 1701/2006 - Monitoring the cessation of hostilities - Providing humanitarian relief - Force to be used only in self-defence or under imminent threat	NATO mandate - Establishing minimal security conditions in the Area of Operation - Identical rules of engagement	NATO mandate - Establishing minimal security conditions in the Area of Operation - Identical rules of engagement
Rules of Engagement:				
	Identical	Identical	Identical* *Note how they were identical in the Regional Command Capital between 2008-2012. I am referring to an Area of Operation different from Saideman and Auerswald	Identical*

<2>Strategy of Data Collection</2>

This research combines qualitative in-depth interviews, field observation, questionnaires, and primary and secondary source material.[43] I assessed my explanatory variable, military culture,

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[43] Each interview and questionnaires was administered to a different soldier as Appendix 2 and 3 substantiate.

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through historical analysis and secondary literature, combined with observation, questionnaires, and interviews. The dependent variable, force employment, was assessed via interviews, observation, and military reports.

Observation was conducted between 2007 and 2009 by living for several weeks with each unit on base in Lebanon and Afghanistan and accompanying patrols and CIMIC activities. For the interviews, I selected thirty soldiers per unit, and ensured the sample was balanced among officers, noncommissioned officers, and soldiers, and among activities undertaken, which included logistics, force protection, CIMIC, and operational activities. Thirty-five to ninety-minute interviews explored soldiers' everyday lives and activities, their perceptions, and understanding of the context via open-ended questions. To ensure robust data, I used only behavioral patterns that could be observed from interviews with at least three soldiers of different ranks and triangulated with my own observations and those obtained through secondary interviews with humanitarian workers, UN staff, and the local population about the French and Italian units deployed in their area of operation.

Questionnaires were distributed following the logic of randomized stratification, whereby I stratified by rank and then randomized within each (adhering quotas of officers and soldiers). The questionnaires, forty-five (thirty with the units under study) in Lebanon and forty-two (thirty with the units under study) in Afghanistan, gave respondents multiple prespecified choices and room to elaborate on their answers. Though the rather small sample size has limits for generalizability, the careful sample selection, qualitative approach, and robust triangulation to ensure that results were consistent across several sources enhances the validity of my findings.

<1>French and Italian Military Cultures</1>

To begin testing the argument on empirics, this section examines variation in the independent variable: military culture. I identify the central elements of current French and Italian army

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cultures as they emerged from specific domestic conditions.

<2>French Army Culture</2>

After World War II, French military culture maintained its most important historical value, assertiveness, but tempered it with the emerging belief that the army had to be silently obedient to civilian control. Since the mid-nineteenth century, assertiveness was most important component of the French military culture.[44] The French military culture was and still is strongly connected to the concept of resolve—summarized by the motto "we are going to go for it" [*on va y aller*]—and the perpetuation of the heroic historical myth of the French fury [*furia francese]*.[45] The underlying idea—which is unanimous in the literature—has been that French soldiers have been able to be combat-oriented when needed and "whatever happens[,] they are going to manage," thanks to the "French resourcefulness" [*débrouillardise à la française*] and to their ability to fight fearlessly and with spirit of sacrifice.[46]

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[44] Christophe Tran Van Can, *Journal D'un Soldat Français En Afghanistan*, (Paris: Plon, 2011); Marisol Touraine, "La Représentation de L'adversaire Dans La Politique Extérieure Française Depuis 1981," *Revue Française de Science Politique* 43, no. 5 (October 1993): 807–22; Antoine Prost, "Les Représentations de La Guerre Dans La Culture Française de L'entre-Deux-Guerres," *Vingtième Siècle, Revue D'histoire* 41 (January–March 1994): 23–31; Jacques Frémeaux, *Intervention et Humanisme: Le Style Des Armées Françaises En Afrique Au XIXème Siècle* (Paris: Economica, 2006); Michel Goya, *La Chair et L'acier : L'armée Française et L'invention de La Guerre Moderne (1914-1918)* (Paris: Tallandier, 2004).

[45] GEN-2, Paris, France, May 2014. Sylvain Tesson, Thomas Goisque, and Bertrand De Miollis, *Haute Tension: Des Chasseurs Alpins En Afghanistan* (Paris: Gallimard, 2009).

[46]Bastien Irondelle and Olivier Schmitt, "France," in *Strategic Cultures in Europe: Security and Defence Policies Across the Continent*, ed. Heiko Biehl, Bastian Giegerich, and Alexandra Jonas (Vienna: Peter Lang, 2013).; O-1, Frenchbatt, Camp Warehouse, November 2008. Other sources from historical, doctrinal and sociological points of view confirm this: Jean-Claude Mallet, *General Loup Francart et Évolutions de La Doctrine Militaire Française* (Paris: CDES, 2001); Commandement de la doctrine et de l'enseignement militaire supérieur de l'armée de terre (CDES), "L'action Des Forces Terrestres Au Contact Des Réalités: Une Nouvelle

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Despite the uneven French military record, in the aftermath of World War II, both the army and French politicians celebrated the assertiveness and the few meaningful victories of the army during the war, particularly the memory of the epic deeds by General Philippe Leclerc's Second Armored Division leading the Allied tanks into Paris in August 1944 or the triumphal progress of Marshall Jean de Lattre de Tassigny in the Vosges in the Fall of 1944.[47] But already in the early 1950s, to most of the French army officer corps "the general patterns of French military performance seemed inglorious, ignominious, and shamefully unsuccessful" and it was made up of "broken dreams and shattered illusions."[48] Such widespread feeling grew during the two decolonization wars in Indochina and Algeria where mistrust towards the Republic emerged. First, "in the steaming jungles of the Far East, the French army officers' loyalty to the Republic slowly but inexorably evaporated."[49] A dangerous narrative emerged, which never acknowledged the mistakes committed by the French army in Indochina: bad generalship, mistaken doctrine, and ineffective operational and tactical methods. Within the army, "misfortune or downright bad luck, or desertion of the civilian leaders 8,000 miles aways in Paris" were instead provided as the main reasons for defeat, which contributed to the creation of a disconnect between soldiers and civilian

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[47] Michel Goya, *La Chair et L'acier*: Millett and Williamson, *Military Effectiveness*.

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[48] Ibid., 81–82.

[49] Martin S. Alexander and Philip C. F. Bankwitz, "From Politiques en Képi to Military Technocrats: De Gaulle and the Recovery of the French Army after Indochina and Algeria," in *The Aftermath of Defeat: Societies, Armed Forces, and the Challenge of Recovery*, ed. George J. Andreopoulos and Harold E. Selesky (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994), 80–102.

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decision makers.[50] The events in Suez in November 1956—when the "*magouilles politiques*" put a stop to the advance of French special forces—also gave raise to the army's persuasion that the decision makers "were responsible for robbing it of victory.[51] Meanwhile the war in Algeria escalated and several deployed key officers in the French army "became progressively estranged from the government in Paris."[52]

After De Gaulle's return to power in May 1958, several subversive plots by French officers followed, culminating in the *putsch* attempt in Algiers in 21–24 April 1961. De Gaulle's reaction was forceful: not only did he sentence to death or life-long jail the conspirators, but also argued in a television appearance for a return to a regime of strong civilian control over the army.[53] In the 1960s, De Gaulle's Fifth Republic was determined to "erect a civilian regime whose authority would be incontrovertible in the eyes of not only the people but also the military."[54] New men were promoted to guide the French army back to discipline, a sense of duty, and a new Eurocentric mission.[55] Not only the norm of civilian control was reestablished. The French army became again the "*grande muette*" in which the officers corps should keep relatively quiet. This new constraint—fundamentally imposed from the outside—was internalized and moderated the previously existing assertiveness belief.

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[50] Alexander and Bankwitz, "From Politiques En Képi to Military Technocrats," 83.

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[51] Ibid., 84. Michel L. Martin, *Warriors to Managers: The French Military Establishment since 1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1981).

[52] Ibid., 90. Henri Mendras, *La Seconde Revolution Francaise, 1965–1984* (Paris: Gallimard, 1988).

[53] Eric Rousell, *De Gaulle* (Paris: Gallimard, 2008).

[54] Ibid., 97

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[55] Niagalé Bagayoko-Penone, "L'européanisation Des Militaires Français. Socialisation Institutionnelle et Culture Stratégique," *Revue Française de Science Politique* 56, no. 1 (February 2006): 49–77; Irondelle and Schmitt, "France".

The renewed military culture with a stronger emphasis on obedience became apparent in the subsequent operations, where soldiers' behavior had to be characterized by something I call "controlled assertiveness." That soldiers should be subordinate in a democratic regime of civilian control should not come as a surprise per se, nor that they use force in a controlled way. However, after the forceful reaction of De Gaulle, the French soldiers moderated their assertiveness with a particular commitment to subordination, and overemphasis and overreflection on managing violence; not exceeding in the use of force and sticking strictly to the mandate. As a consequence, French soldiers became more careful and tried to use their assertiveness in a controlled way, mainly for domestic reasons. This had important consequences for French soldiers in most operations they were involved in going forward. Military reports and soldiers' diaries suggest that when French soldiers deployed, for instance in Lebanon during the Multinational Force in 1982–84 or in the former Yugoslavia in the '90s, they were more assertive than other military organizations but also more careful at following their mandate.[56] Along these lines, interviews with French troops in Lebanon and Afghanistan confirmed that controlled assertiveness was recurring, deeply ingrained, and internalized across the ranks: soldiers in both units consistently emphasized their assertive fighting spirit, but also the importance of following the mandate by the letter, as in by not exceeding in CIMIC and taking training of the LAF very seriously.[57]

<1>Italian Military Culture: Good Humanitarians</1>

The most prominent value for the Italian military culture is that Italian soldiers are good humanitarians.[58] This results from the merger of the preexisting and widely held belief of

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[56]Les sentinelles de l'agora, "Incidences des opérations de paix sur l'emploi de l'Armée française," *Défense nationale et sécurité collective* 4 (April 2007): 56–66; Jacques Frémeaux, *Intervention et Humanisme*.

[57] GEN-3, GEN-4 Paris, France, April 2014.

[58] Giuseppe Caforio, "Militärische UN-Einsätze: Italienische Erfahrungen," in *Friedensengel Im*

Italian troops as good people with a more recently internalized attitude of reconquering a lost legitimacy after traumatic events at the end of World War II. For reasons that still remain partly unknown, Italian troops came to consider themselves ineffective soldiers but good people [lit. *brava gente*] during World War I and the colonial campaigns.[59] The good soldier belief spread quickly and became an important identification marker throughout World War II and afterwards.[60] But the events starting in 1943 were a radical rupture with the past, which set strong constraints over the preexisting army military culture. After the armistice signed with the Allies in September 1943, the Italian armed forces were left without orders. Some soldiers joined the resistance, others continued fighting alongside the Germans, while still more joined the Allies.[61] Most soldiers involved in the war perceived the armistice as a traumatizing and confusing event, including those who were not at the front. For the army in

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[59] On the (in)effectiveness of the Italian army, see Murray and Millett, *Military Effectiveness*.

[60] Angelo Del Boca, *Italiani, Brava Gente?* (Roma: Neri Pozza, 2005). Nicola Labanca, “Le Armi Della Repubblica: Dalla Liberazione a Oggi,” in *Gli Italiani in Guerra. Conflitti, Identità, Memorie Dal Risorgimento Ai Nostri Giorni*, ed. Mario Isnenghi (Torino: Utet, 2009); Gian Enrico Rusconi, “Guerra E Intervento Umanitario : L’Italia Alla Ricerca Di Una Nuova Affidabilità Internazionale,” in *Storia d’Italia, Annali 18, Guerra E Pace*, ed. Walter Barberis (Turin: Einaudi, 2002), 797–838; Claudio Fogu, “Italiani Brava Gente: The Legacy of Fascist Historical Culture on Italian Politics of Memory,” in *The Politics of Memory in Postwar Europe*, ed. Richard N. Lebow, Wulg Kansteiner, and Claudio Fogu (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 147–76; Fabrizio Battistelli, *Soldati: Sociologia Dei Militari Italiani Nell’era Del Peacekeeping* (Milan: Angeli, 1996).

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[61] Lucia Ceci, ed., *La Resistenza Dei Militari* (Roma: Biblink Editori, 2006); Elena Aga Rossi, *Una Nazione Allo Sbando : L’armistizio Italiano Del Settembre 1943* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1993).

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particular, it was a terrible defeat because the organization failed to fulfill its main task. As one can still read in the official version of the Italian Army history, "obliged to the armistice, the Army was terribly defeated on September 8."[62] The armistice also created an irreconcilable disconnect between the military and the rest of society.[63] Italy was a "disbanded nation" [literally *nazione allo sbando*], and a civil war ensued between partisans fighting the liberation war against the German troops that had occupied northern Italy and former Fascist leaders.[64] The widespread idea was that "the military had let down its own people."[65] Together, the legacy of a lost war, the strong collusion of the armed forces with the fascist dictatorship, and a solid convergence between the Christian Democrats and the Communist Party mainly based on the shared value of pacifism and antimilitarism, triggered a profound mistrust of the military.[66]

In the postwar reconstruction effort, the army was left on the side and completely lost its legitimacy.[67] "The most profound reshaping of the relations between state, society and the armed forces in the history of unified Italy" took place in the immediate post-World War II era.[68] During the Cold War, while Italy was pursuing rather actively a so-called chair

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[62] "Storia Ufficiale dell'esercito italiano," 1983 http://esercito.difesa.it/root/wai/wai_storia.asp

[63] Leopoldo Nuti, *L'esercito Italiano Nel Secondo Dopo Guerra, 1945-1950: La Sua Ricostruzione e L'assistenza Militare Alleata* (Roma: Ufficio Storico, Stato Maggiore dell'Esercito, 1989).

[64] Aga Rossi, *Una Nazione Allo Sbando*.

[65] Nicola Labanca, ed., *L'istituzione Militare in Italia: Politica E Società* (Milan: Unicopli, 2002); Idem., "Le Armi Della Repubblica."

[66] Chiara Ruffa and Pascal Vennesson, "Fighting and Helping? A Historical-Institutionalist Explanation of NGO–Military Relations," *Security Studies* 23, no. 3 (July–September 2014): 582–621.

[67] Ibid.

[68] Nuti, *L'esercito Italiano Nel Secondo Dopo Guerra, 1945-1950*; Idem., *La Sfida Nucleare: La Politica Estera Italiana E Le Armi Atomiche, 1945–1991* (Bologna, Italy: Il Mulino, 2007); Labanca,

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diplomacy (*la diplomazia della sedia*), meaning being as present as possible in multilateral settings, "the armed forces retained their special status as a separate body."[69] With the beginning of the peacekeeping era in the early '90s, after the Italian armed forces had already been used domestically for rescue operations in the aftermath of natural disasters in the '80s, at several levels of the army it became apparent that peacekeeping could become a formidable instrument to regain the support of the widely pacifist public opinion internally and to serve decision makers' foreign policy objectives. The preexisting belief casting Italian soldiers as good people acquired the humanitarian twist that we know today, and it was internalized across all levels of the organization.[70] Looking at the operational experience of the Italian army from the early '90s until today, one can find continuous confirmation of the persistence of such belief.[71]

French and Italian military cultures are thus noticeably distinct, displaying profoundly different core beliefs, attitudes, and values. In the following sections I show how, once deployed in the missions under study, these military cultures guided the French and Italian soldiers in their interpretations of their mission, and ultimately, shaped their actions.

<1>French and Italian Soldiers in The UN Mission In Lebanon</1>

<2>Similar Contexts, Different Perceptions</2>

Despite their identical mandates, similar resources and AOs, French and Italian troops

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L'istituzione Militare in Italia; Ruffa and Vennesson, "Fighting and Helping?; Leopoldo Nuti, *L'esercito Italiano Nel Secondo Dopo Guerra, 1945-1950*; Idem., *La Sfida Nucleare*; Labanca, *L'istituzione Militare in Italia*.

[69] Pietro Barrera, "Crisis in the Military: Rethinking Conscription and the Military Code," in *Italian Politics: A Review*, ed. Robert Leonardi, Raffaella Y. Nanetti, and Piergiorgio Corbetta (London: Pinter, 1988);

[70] Ignazi, Giacomello, and Coticchia, *Italian Military Operations Abroad*.

[71] Bruno Loi, *Peace-Keeping, Pace O Guerra? Una Risposta Italiana: L'operazione Ibis in Somalia* (Firenze: Vallecchi, 2004).

deployed in the UN mission in Lebanon differ significantly in their interpretations of context and appropriate standards of behavior. In this section, I document these differences as they emerge from the surveys and interviews conducted in Lebanon and show how they are consistent with French and Italian military cultures. When asked about values of the mission, the French unit identifies military training and high technology as most important (53%), followed by neutrality and impartiality (40%), being a warrior (27%), and being culturally aware and free from prejudice (13% each), in line with the focus on controlled assertiveness. The Italian unit's value rankings are almost the inverse and mirror broader beliefs about the Italian army culture's focus on being good humanitarian soldiers: being culturally aware and without prejudice score equally high (53%), followed by being neutral (40%). Military training, technology, and being a warrior were not preferenced.[72]

Perceptions of the nature of peace operations, as contrasted to traditional military operations, are also relevant. French soldiers considered combat skills to be equally important in peace operations as in traditional operations, whereas the Italians perceived humanitarian skills as the most important required skills in both peace and conventional operations. When asked to explain the concept of peace, the French invoked a negative concept (absence of war), while the Italians refer to peace in a fuller and positive conception. Specifically, 53% of the French respondents defined peace as the absence of war, compared to 13% of Italian respondents. In contrast, only 27% of French respondents defined peace as building trust amongst the local population, while this was the most common response amongst the Italian respondents (60%). Similarly, 40% of Italian respondents saw peace as the building up of a

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[72] The comparison in the table is significant with (*p* value = 3.773523e-07). This means that the variations occurring in the table are not occurring independently. Variations across French and Italian units in Lebanon are again significant (*p* value = 7.406111e-06).

democratic regime, a response not found at all amongst the French.[73]

The units in Lebanon had a very different perception of their enemy. While French soldiers acknowledged they did not have an enemy in the traditional sense of the term, they nonetheless saw "the terrorists" that want to jeopardize the success of their mission as their enemies.[74] They did not specify whom they meant when they referred to "terrorists," leaving interpretation open to include Hezbollah, the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF), or Islamist terrorism.[75] In contrast, all Italian soldiers interviewed shared the view that "there is no enemy." The units also differed in their understandings of their mission. The Italians understood it as a traditional peacekeeping mission, whereas the French considered it a peace enforcement operation.[76] On a scale ranging from 1 (low) to 10 (high), the Italian unit perceives a low-level threat (80% of responses clustered between 2 and 4), whereas the French threat perception is high (67% between 8 and 10).[77]

Each of these differing contextual interpretations is fully consistent with the main traits of French and Italian military cultures. The French perceived the UNIFIL mission as an ordinary military operation with a high threat level that calls for military skills, in line with

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[73] The entire table is significant with *p* value = 4.350171e-06. This means that the variations occurring in the table are not random. Variations across French and Italian units in Lebanon are significant (*p* value = 7.923224e-05).

[74] O-5, FrenchBatt, December 2008, Tyre, Lebanon also found in O-1, O-3, NCO-1, NCS-2 This statement is confirmed by NCS-1, NCS-2, NCS-5; NCO-1, NCO-4, NCO-5; O-1, O-3, O-4.

[75] O-3; O-10, Frenchbatt, December 2008, Tyre, Lebanon This statement is confirmed by NCS-1, NCS-4, NCS-5; NCO-1, NCO-2, NCO-5, O-1, O-3, O-4.

[76] Based on the questionnaires only, the *p* value is significant with *p* value= 3.960009e-07. This means that the variations occurring in the table are not random, but that there is instead a clear pattern. Variations across French and Italian units in Lebanon is also significant (*p* value= 0.0001529019).

[77] Questionnaires for each unit.

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the core trait of the French army culture, controlled assertiveness. The Italians, in contrast, understood the mission as a peacekeeping operation and consequently have a low threat perception. Their role as peacekeepers and their required skills are constructed around cultural awareness and neutrality, in line with the belief of being good humanitarian soldiers, and the main traits of the Italian military culture. The next section shows how the differing interpretations of the mission context are consistent with differences in force employment.

<2>Variations in Force Employment in Lebanon</2>

This section documents differences in behavior along the following four dimensions: patrolling, cooperation with the Lebanese Armed Forces, interaction with civilians, and force protection.

<3>Patrols: Frequency, Timing, and Level of Armament</3>

The French unit conducts an average of twenty-seven patrolling activities daily, mainly during the night, when more hostile activity occurs.[78] In contrast, the Italians conduct approximately fifteen daily patrols, mostly during the day.[79] Further, the units differ in the means used for patrolling. The French use heavy and noisy Leclerc tanks, whereas the Italians never use tanks and rather patrol with lightweight armored vehicles.[80] The French explain: "We are authorized to react in case of self-defense and in order to react, we have to be heavily armed from the start."[81] The French means of patrolling provoked complaints from the local

[78] Numbers and time of patrols confirmed by nine French soldiers: O-1, NCO-1, NCS-2, NCS-3, O-2, O-4, O-5, NCO-2, NCO-4. No interviewees disagreed.

[79] O-2, ItalBatt, November 2007, Tibnin, Lebanon. Also confirmed by NCO2, NCO-3, NCO-4, NCO-5; NCS-1, NCS-2, NCS-3, NCS-4, none disagreed.

[80] For the French, NCO-1, O-1, O-3, NCS-1, NCO-4, December 2007. Italian usage confirmed by the entire unit, NCS-1/2/3/4/5, O-1/2/4/5, NCO-1/2/3/4.

[81] O-1, FrenchBatt, November 2007, At Tiri, Lebanon. Lebanon. Also confirmed by NCO1, NCO-3, NCO-4, NCO-5; NCS-1, NCS-5, O-3, NCS-4, none disagreed.

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population: “Yes, they complained at the beginning. . . . we realized very quickly that patrolling with our tanks at two in the morning was neither ideal for the people nor discrete.”[82] Instead of changing vehicles, the French decided to change routes.[83] The French only use lightweight armored vehicles for patrolling when specifically requested by headquarters: “Only if we are obliged to use light vehicles we use them, otherwise—most of the time—we have the choice to patrol with tanks or with other vehicles and we prefer tanks.”[84] Despite the criticism it attracts, the French are convinced that the message sent by a tank is more meaningful than that of a civilian vehicle.[85] In stark contrast, Italian patrols are centered on talking to the local population in the villages.[86]

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<3>Interaction with Lebanese Armed Forces</3>

French and Italian units also differ in the way they cooperate with the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF). The French unit often performs joint activities with the LAF, especially joint patrolling: “we have a friendly relationship with them [the LAF] and we work with them more and more, we get along really well” and “of course we do it because it is written in the mandate.”[87] The Italian soldiers cooperate less often with the LAF and do not conduct joint

[82] O-1, FrenchBatt, November 2007, At Tiri, Lebanon. Lebanon. Also confirmed by NCO2, NCO-3, NCO-4, NCO-5; NCS-1, NCS-2, NCS-3, NCS-4, none disagreed.

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[83] Confirmed by NCO2, NCO-3, NCO-4, NCO-5; NCS-1, NCS-2, NCS-3, NCS-4, none disagreed.

[84] O-1, FrenchBatt, December 2007, At Tiri, Lebanon. Lebanon NCO2, NCO-3, NCO-4, NCO-5; NCS-1, NCS-2, NCS-3, NCS-4, none disagreed.

[85] O-1, FrenchBatt, December 2007, At Tiri, Lebanon. NCO2, NCO-3, NCO-4, NCO-5; NCS-1, NCS-2, NCS-3, NCS-4, none disagreed.

[86] O-6, ItalBatt, November 2007, Tibnin and Marake, Lebanon.

[87] NCS-5 and NCO-4 FrenchBatt, December, 2007, At Tiri, Lebanon. NCO2, NCO-3, NCO-4, NCO-5; NCS-1, NCS-2, NCS-3, NCS-4, none disagreed.

patrols.[88] All soldiers unanimously confirmed that they prefer not to get involved.[89] One Italian officer commented: "[W]e do not train the LAF that already exist; they are supposed to have control of the territory."[90] In general, the relationship between the French unit and the LAF was much stronger: French soldiers made many more references to the LAF during interviews than the Italians, even in response to the same questions.

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<3>Interaction with Civilians</3>

The UN resolution authorizing the mission in Lebanon mentions a broad "need for humanitarian assistance," often referred to as civil-military coordination (CIMIC) in military studies. As the UN mandate and headquarters directives leave ample margins of maneuver regarding CIMIC activities, it is here that one might expect to find the most behavioral variation. Indeed, although the French and Italian units undertake some similar activities (such as contact patrolling and CIMIC at large), remarkable differences exist regarding the number and type of projects, the priority dedicated to them, and their means of implementation.

First, the Italians make CIMIC the top priority of the mandate, launching five times more projects than the French.[91] The Italians are involved in school reconstruction, rehabilitation of playgrounds, mine risk education, and constructing hospitals, and have at their disposal a specific CIMIC team. In contrast, the French do not consider CIMIC a priority

[88] When asked, everyone denied and said that only the Indian and the French were doing foot patrolling, O-1, O-2, O-3, NCO-1, NCO-2, NCS-3, Italbatt, Marake, November 2008.

[89] NCO-1, NCO2, NCO-3, NCO-4, NCO-5; NCS-1, NCS-2, NCS-3, NCS-4, NCS-5, O-1, O-2, O-3, O-4, O-5, Italbatt, Marake, January 2008 none disagreed.

[90] NCO-2, ItalBatt 1, Lebanon confirmed by NCO-1, NCO-4, NCO-3, NCO-5, O-1, O-3, O-5, NCS-1, NCS-2.

[91] NCS-2, ItalBatt, November 2007, Tibnin, Lebanon. NCO-1, NCS-2, NCO-3, O-4 also agreed with this statement.

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and implement smaller, short-term projects, mainly revolving around support to schools, demining, and distribution of tools, such as special engines for olive presses.

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Second, the Italian unit interacts more closely with the local population than the French. This is the case both for the specific Italian CIMIC team and its escort, both of which frequently emphasized talking to the local population, including children and elderly people, whereas the French almost never interact with the locals. Similarly, Italian CIMIC agents wear no combat jackets, no helmet, and carry short weapons discreetly; whereas French CIMIC agents carry long weapons, wear combat jackets at the minimum, and are escorted by heavily armed patrol teams when conducting CIMIC activities.

Finally, French and Italian troops differ in the means of transport they use for CIMIC activities. The Italians "use a small vehicle, a jeep or a small van."[92] They are aware of the impact of armored vehicles on the local population and would never conceive of deploying heavy tanks: "many children are already afraid when they see armoured vehicles."[93] In contrast, the French use the noisy *Leclerc* tanks for CIMIC activities, as recommended by the mandate.[94]

<3>Force Protection</3>

During the period of study, the UN Headquarters in Naqoura operated under security code "yellow," a medium level of alert and force protection for all units deployed. However, the French and Italian units perceived and interpreted the UN regulations differently, resulting in variations in levels of force protection. The French had recently embarked on construction

[92] O-3, ItalBatt, December 2007, Tyre, Lebanon. Also confirmed by O-1, O-2, O-5, NCO-1, NCO-2, NCS-1, NCS-2, NCS-3.

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[93] NCS-5, ItalBatt 1, November 2007, Tibnin, Lebanon. Also confirmed by O-1, O-2, O-3, O-4, NCS-1, NCS-2, NCS-3.

[94] L-1, Bar-el-Canoon, October 2007, O-1/4/5, NCO-1/3/4, NCS-1, At Tyre, November 2007, Lebanon.

works to enlarge and further secure their base, which is fortified with reinforced concrete and situated on a well-protected hill. One soldier explained: "We have not had particular problems for a year . . . nevertheless we stay vigilant in order to avoid the worst."[95] The Italian unit, in contrast, allocates few resources to force protection. The two Italian bases do not have permanent walls, are not built in strategic positions, and passing the entry checkpoints is easy. Accordingly, their bases are less protected from potential attacks. Similarly, the Italian unit displays lower force protection measures during patrolling, only wearing helmets and combat jackets if they are standing outside their vehicles. In contrast, French soldiers wear helmets and bulletproof vests even when inside vehicles. As previously mentioned, the Italians use armored vehicles for patrols, whereas the French use tanks.[96]

In summary, French and Italian units' force employment differ systematically across all activities undertaken, that is, with respect to operational activities, CIMIC, and force protection. The findings show that the Italian unit prioritizes the humanitarian aspects of the UNIFIL mandate, whilst the French emphasizes different aspects of the same mandate, namely control of territory, cooperation with the Lebanese Armed Forces, and military activities. This finding is in line with the perceptions of each unit deployed—the French having a more traditionally military-oriented understanding of the context and the Italian a more peacekeeping oriented one. As such, these results are also consistent with the core traits of the each army culture: controlled assertiveness in the French case and the belief of being good humanitarian soldiers in the Italian case.

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[95] O-1, FrenchBatt, November, 2007, At Tiri, Lebanon. Also confirmed by O-1, O-2, O-3, O-4, NCS-1, NCS-2, NCS-3.

[96] O-1 Frenchbatt, December 2007, At Tiri, Lebanon; 0-3 Italbatt, December 2007, Tibnin, Lebanon; O-1 Rokbatt, November 2007, Tyre, Lebanon; O-2 Ghanabatt, October 2007, Rmeish, Lebanon. Also confirmed by O-1, O-2, O-3, O-4, NCS-1, NCS-2, NCS-3.

<1>French and Italian Troops in the NATO Mission in Afghanistan</1>

<2>Similar Context, Different Perceptions: French and Italian Soldiers in ISAF</2>

As in Lebanon, French and Italian soldiers deployed in the NATO mission in Afghanistan understand their mission differently, in a way that is consistent with their armies' military cultures. Because of the higher perceived threat level of the mission, the issue of combat is explicitly discussed by some of the French soldiers. In response to the question, "what are the appropriate values about behavior in peace operations?," however, similar variations are observed between French and Italian troops in Afghanistan.[97] Sixty percent of the French soldiers consider being a warrior the most appropriate characteristic, followed by military training (27%) and cultural awareness (20%). No preference is given to lack of prejudice and neutrality. The importance of sticking to the mandate is tackled directly: "I often compare the military to firefighters . . . in order to have firefighters you need to have educated people, professionals who are well motivated for the mission or well-suited for the operation."[98] French soldiers also express a desire to engage in combat more frequently, because this is how soldiers should behave: "[E]verybody would like to go for it [literally: *y aller une fois pour toutes*]."[99]

In contrast, the Italian soldiers prioritize absence of prejudice (53%) and neutrality (47%) as most important, giving low priority to military training (13%), cultural awareness (8%) and being a warrior (8%). They consider empathy between commanders and soldiers to

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[97] The entire table is significant with (p value = 3.773523e-07). This means that the variations occurring in the table are not random. Variations across French and Italian units in Afghanistan is again significant (p value = 1.0982e-06).

[98] NCS-4, FrenchBatt, December 2009, Camp Warehouse Afghanistan. This statement is confirmed by NCS-2; NCS-3; NCS-4, NCO-1, NCO-2, NCO-3, O-1, O-3, O-4.

[99] NCS-1, FrenchBatt, December 2009, Camp Warehouse Afghanistan. This statement is confirmed by NCS-1, NCS-2; NCS-3; NCS-4, NCO-3, NCO-4, NCO-5; O-1, O-3, O-4.

be very important. Furthermore, the Italian unit elaborates on the broad and populist narrative of Italians as good people, as empathic, and equalitarian: "The approach derives from our military culture . . . meaning we are all friends, brothers, so Italian."[100] They also consider that national military culture is relevant to the way others see them: "We are Italian, they love us abroad, they really see the Italians with a different eye."[101]

There was again a strong difference in perception regarding the combat capacities required for peacekeeping missions: 87% of the Italian sample consider that peacekeeping requires less combat capacities than actual combat, while 60% of the French sample holds that peacekeeping requires more combat capacities.[102] Furthermore, the negative and positive conceptualizations of peace observed in Lebanon are consistent for the units in Afghanistan. The French unit mostly characterizes peace as an absence of war (60% of the sample), while a smaller but conspicuous number (40%) of soldiers believe that peace is the absence of major security attacks in the past three or six months, with 7% characterizing peace as the absence of security threats. Only 13% of French soldiers consider peace to mean building trust among the local population, and no respondents referred to the presence of a democratic regime. In contrast, the Italians see peace in a fuller sense: 53% and 47% respectively believe that peace means building trust among the local population and the presence of a democratic regime. The option "absence of war" receives a meager 7%, while the other options do not receive

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[100] O-1, ItalBatt, December 2009, Kabul Camp Invicta, Afghanistan, This statement is confirmed by NCS-1, NCS-2; NCS-3; NCS-4, NCS-5; NCO-1, NCO-2, NCO-5; O-1, O-3, O-4.

[101] O-1, ItalBatt, Camp Invicta, October 2008, Afghanistan. This statement is confirmed by NCS-1, NCS-2; NCS-3, NCO-1, NCO-2, NCO-3, NCO-4, O-3, O-4.

[102] The entire table is significant with *p* value = 1.08674e-05. This means that the variations occurring in the table are not occurring randomly. Variations across French and Italian units in Afghanistan are significant (*p* value = 0.0003881324).

any preference.[103] The Italian soldiers speak about peace in idealistic and broader terms: "[P]eace is the greatest resource for the human being but unfortunately it is not exploited by everybody";[104] "it [solving global inequalities] is our end goal but unrealizable while some people are still richer than others."[105]

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The French and Italian units also differ in the way they perceive the mission. For the French, ISAF is not a peace operation: "[W]e know we are not in time of peace and thinking sometimes that we are not at war is being unfair towards people that are taking enormous risks."[106] Instead, they describe the mission as a counterinsurgency operation: "[W]ithout doubt we are in an area in which there is a counterinsurgency" and "at every moment we can be drawn into war actions . . . it is definitely not peacekeeping, it is a war."[107] In stark contrast, the Italians perceive the mission to be a peace operation: "yes, this is clearly peacekeeping,"[108] with objectives of economic development, or "to obtain a declaration of defeat from the Taliban, then followed by a political process."[109] French and Italian units differ in the way they perceive the local context, in particular, the hostile parties. For the

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[103] The entire table is significant with *p* value = 4.350171e-06. This means that the variations occurring in the table are not occurring randomly. Variations across French and Italian units in Afghanistan are again significant (*p* value = 1.398868e-05).

[104] NCS-1, ItalBatt, Camp Invicta, October 2008, Afghanistan. This statement is confirmed by NCS-1, NCS-2; NCS-3; NCS-4, NCO-3, NCO-4, NCO-5; O-1.

[105] NCO-1, ItalBatt, Camp Invicta, October 2008, Afghanistan. This statement is confirmed by NCS-1, NCS-2; NCS-3; NCS-4, NCS-5; NCO-1, NCO-2, NCO-3, O-3, O-4.

[106] NCO-2, Questionnaire, FrenchBatt, October 2008, Afghanistan.

[107] O-6, Questionnaire, FrenchBatt, October 2008, Afghanistan.

[108] O-1, Questionnaire, Italbatt, October 2008, Afghanistan.

[109] O-3, Italian unit, October 2008, Afghanistan. This statement is confirmed by NCS-1, NCS-2; NCS-3; NCS-4, NCS-5; NCO-1, NCO-2, NCO-3, NCO-4, NCO-5; O-1, O-3, O-4.

French, the Taliban are the enemy: "the Taliban are taking over at the moment;"[110] "our enemies are not all here for the same reasons, but they are all our enemies."[111] The Italian unit also sees the Taliban as enemies, but draw a clearer distinction between the Taliban and the local population: "an American, English or French soldier would never do that, they see their enemy everywhere."[112]

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Perceptions of threat level are consistent with those about the mission and the enemy. Ninety-three percent of the French unit reported a threat perception ranging between 8 and 10 and 7% ranging between 5 and 7. Seventy percent of the Italian unit reported a threat perception ranging between 5 and 7, with 27% perceiving it in the low ranges of 2 to 4.[113] Not only is the threat perception lower for the Italian unit than for the French in Afghanistan, the two units also frame the threat differently in qualitative terms. The French perceive the local Afghans to be distant, in contrast to previous deployments where they have felt welcomed by the local population.[114] The Italian unit's perception is the inverse: "[I]n Afghanistan, compared to Kosovo[,] we relate to people more actively."[115] And more precisely, "we are all

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[110] NCO-5, Questionnaire, FrenchBatt, October 2008, Afghanistan.

[111] NCO-3, Questionnaire, FrenchBatt, October 2008, Afghanistan.

[112] On the distinction: O-5, Questionnaire, FrenchBatt, October 2008, Afghanistan. O-1, Italian unit, October 2008, Afghanistan. This statement is confirmed by NCS-1, NCS-2; NCS-4; NCS-5, NCO-2, NCO-4, NCO-5, O-3, O-4.

[113] The entire table is significant with *p* value = 3.960009e-07. This means that the variations occurring in the table are not random. Variations across French and Italian units in Afghanistan are significant (*p* value = 0.0003147363).

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[114] Most have been deployed in Chad, Gabon, the Ivory Coast as well as the Balkans, New Caledonia, or the Central African Republic. See results of questionnaires. This statement is confirmed by NCS-1, NCS-2; NCS-3; NCS-4, NCS-5; NCO-1, NCO-2, NCO-3, NCO-4, NCO-5; O-1, O-3, O-4.

[115] O-1, Questionnaire, Italbatt, October 2010, Afghanistan.

brothers."[116]

Taking into account the higher threat level of the Afghan case, these findings are in line with the Lebanese case. The perceptions of French soldiers deployed to Afghanistan resonate with the core trait of the French army culture, controlled assertiveness, in that soldiers' appropriate skills are combat-related, they understand the mission as a counterinsurgency where the enemy can be hiding among the civilian population, hence the higher threat perception. Conversely, the Italian unit perceives the mission as more lenient—a standard peace operation—than the French, and understand their role in line with their core army cultural belief: being good humanitarian soldiers.

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<2>Variations in Force Employment in Afghanistan</2>

Though higher security precautions in Afghanistan restrict the activities of both units, the differences observed in operational activities between the French and Italian units are still significant and systematic.

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<3>Patrols: Number, Timing, Level of Armament, and Interaction with Local Armed Forces</3>

The French unit places high emphasis on monitoring and patrolling, conducting 25 to 30 patrols per day, as means of readiness to respond to hostile activity or threat to soldiers.[117] Eleven out of the 15 French soldiers interviewed had engaged in combat. In contrast, the Italian unit is less involved in combat. They patrol 8 to 12 times per day and spend the rest of their time undertaking softer activities, including delivery of humanitarian aid, training the Afghan army, and demonstrating physical presence. In interviews and informal discussions, the Italian soldiers were reluctant to discuss the possibility of being involved in acts of war.[118]

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[116] NCO-3, Questionnaire, Italbatt, October 2008, Afghanistan.

[117] O-1, O-2, O-5, O-4, NCS-1, NCO-1, NCO-2, NCO-3, NCO-4, Frenchbatt, Afghanistan.

[118] O-2, Italbatt, Afghanistan. This statement is confirmed by NCS-1, NCS-2; NCS-3; NCS-4, NCS-5;

French soldiers emphasize how much they invest in training the Afghan army: "[E]veryone is here to train the Afghan army, they scan villages, they pass by villages to check that the zone is secure."[119]

<3>Interaction with Civilians</3>

In Afghanistan, soldiers differed also in their interactions with the local population. In general, French soldiers are detached from the local population: they focus on military targets rather than local engagement. In contrast, the Italian approach relies on their relationship with the population and they interact much more closely. An Italian officer recalls: "I have seen my soldiers giving children something to eat in a moment of chaos during a patrol."[120] Nine interviewees confirmed such behavior. The more combat-oriented behavior of the French is consistent with the higher rate of accidents incurred by French soldiers.[121] In sum, French and Italian soldiers emphasize different aspects of the mandate: the French unit prioritizes patrolling, whereas the Italian prioritizes their relationship with the local population.

With respect to CIMIC activities, the French unit works mainly in the agricultural domain and on a limited number of projects: "Our approach is to develop these [agricultural] activities, help feed the Afghans and help nourish them, it includes distribution of wheat seeds, fruit trees . . . and hens in order to help them have eggs and chicks."[122] They prefer to

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NCO-1, NCO-2, NCO-3, NCO-4, NCO-5; O-1, O-3, O-4.

[119] O-2, interview via email, Frenchbatt, Afghanistan. This statement is confirmed by NCS-1, NCS-3; NCS-5; NCO-1, NCO-2, NCO-5, NCO-4, NCO-5; O-2, O-3, O-4.

[120] O-3, Italian unit, October 2008, Camp Invicta, Afghanistan, This statement is confirmed by NCS-1, NCS-2; NCS-3; NCS-4, NCS-5; NCO-1, NCO-2, NCO-5; O-1, O-2, O-5.

[121] Refer to the full discussion above about threat levels, 10.

[122] O-8 French unit, via phone, December 2010 This statement is confirmed by NCS-1, NCS-4, NCS-5; NCO-1, NCO-2, NCO-3, NCO-4, NCO-5; O-1, O-3, O-4.

focus on "small projects, we do not have big projects,"[123] and they do not do broader "aid distribution anymore."[124] During the period of observation, they launched three small projects. Conversely, the Italians are mainly involved in bigger projects and humanitarian aid delivery: reconstruction and humanitarian projects, nominally similar to those implemented by NGOs.[125] As an Italian CIMIC agent recalls, "we did 130 projects this year, of any kind: from electrical cables in a school, to the construction of an Afghan WC."[126] Thus, despite having similar budgets, the Italian unit gives greater priority to CIMIC. "It is important to keep the distinction from other contingents: if in that zone there are always Italians and the Italians are doing humanitarian aid delivery[,] and if a patrol passes by the Afghan people greet the patrolling unit rather than throwing a stone."[127]

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<3>Force Protection</3>

The formal requirements for force protection are identical for French and Italian units: NATO regulates the type of weapons that soldiers should wear and estimates the level of risk on a ten-point scale.[128] Yet, differences in force protection persist. With respect to entry

[123] O-8 French unit, via phone, November 2011 This statement is confirmed by NCS-1, NCS-2; NCS-3; NCS-4, NCS-5; NCO-1, NCO-2, NCO-5; O-1, O-3, O-4.

[124] O-8 French unit, via phone, November 2010 This statement is confirmed by NCS-1, NCS-2; NCS-3; NCS-4, NCS-5; NCO-1, NCO-2, NCO-3, NCO-4, NCO-5; O-1, O-3, O-4.

[125] O-3, Italian unit, October 2008, Camp Invicta, Afghanistan. This statement is confirmed by NCS-1, NCS-2; NCS-3; NCS-4, NCS-5; NCO-1, NCO-2, NCO-3, NCO-4, NCO-5; O-1, O-3, O-4.

[126] O-3, Italian unit, October 2008, Camp Invicta, Afghanistan. This statement is confirmed by NCS-1, NCS-2; NCS-3; NCS-4, NCS-5; NCO-1, NCO-2, NCO-3, NCO-4, NCO-5; O-1, O-3, O-4.

[127] NCS-3, Italian unit, October 2008, Camp Invicta, Afghanistan. This statement is confirmed by NCS-1, NCS-2; NCS-3, NCS-5, NCO-4, NCO-5, O-1, O-3, O-4.

[128] NCS-1, NCS-2, NCO-1, O-3, O-1 French unit, December 2008, Camp Warehouse, Afghanistan, O-4, NCS-1, NCO-2 Italian unit October 2008, Camp Invicta, Afghanistan. And also UN-1, UNAMA, Kabul, July 2008; NATO-1, NATO-2, NATO-3, ISAF, Kabul, December 2008.

procedures, the French base has three separate entrances, one each for pedestrians, and civilian and military vehicles, while the Italian base has one single entrance for everybody, diminishing the degree of force protection.[129] Entering the French base as a civilian is a much longer process, with careful one-by-one screening, whereas at the Italian base, the first round of inspections is made in front of everybody, followed by passport control.

While the Italian unit is very keen on employing local personnel inside the base, the French perceive them as a serious threat. One French soldier notes: "[H]ere in the base, I find there is a bit too much Afghan civilian personnel. There is not enough control on them, they can go wherever they want and I don't find this normal at all."[130] These differences in force protection are also consistent outside the base. For instance, the Italians tend to stop more often "to repair vehicles in case somebody gets stuck in the middle of the road," a practice the French consider unacceptable.[131]

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In summary, despite similar mandates, resources, and objective threat levels, French and Italian troops behave differently in joint deployments, and the differences are systematic across the two locations studied. In both missions, the French unit places higher emphasis on patrolling, conducts fewer CIMIC projects, and displays higher force protection precautions, while the Italian unit is less concerned with patrolling and force protection, launches significant CIMIC projects, and prioritizes interactions with the local civilian population. These results are in line with the different perceptions of French and Italian soldiers about the

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[129] O-2, French unit, December 2008, Camp Warehouse, Afghanistan, O-5, Italian unit October 2008, Camp Invicta, Afghanistan. This statement is confirmed by NCS-1, NCS-2; NCS-5, NCO-2, NCO-3, NCO-4, O-3, O-4.

[130] O-1 French unit, December 2009, Camp Warehouse, Afghanistan. This statement is confirmed by NCS-3; NCS-4, NCS-5; NCO-1, NCO-4, NCO-5; O-1, O-3, O-4.

[131] NCS-2, French unit, October 2008, Camp Warehouse Afghanistan. This statement is confirmed by NCS-1, NCS-2; NCS-3; NCS-4, NCO-2, NCO-3, NCO-4, NCO-5; O-2, O-4.

context they are deployed in. Specifically, for the French, the Afghanistan experience is more hostile than for the Italians—despite the similar level of difficulty—and each unit perceives a different set of skills as appropriate. These different perceptions mirror, on the one hand, the core trait of the French army culture, controlled assertiveness, and, on the other, the Italian army cultural belief—being good humanitarian soldiers.

<1>Complementary and Competing Explanations</1>

I here discuss the alternative explanations that seem the most relevant for explaining behavior on the tactical level, which is the focus of this study. I show that some of them are, indeed, complementary to my cultural explanation. I conclude, however, that none of them can comprehensively account for the observed differences in behavior on the tactical level within the same mission as documented in the previous sections.

<2>Complementary Explanations: Doctrines, SOPs, and Training</2>

The first thing to note is that we would expect military culture to potentially affect army activities at all levels. We would thus expect doctrines, SOPs, and training guidelines to partly express the military culture of the army that produces them.[132] This paper's main aim is to show the consistency between military culture, individual soldiers' values and perceptions, and observed differences in behavior on the tactical level. The argument per se is thus equally valid if some of the observed variations operate through intervening variables such as doctrines, SOPs, and training. This section shows, however, that these three factors alone can in fact not account for the observed variation.

As expected, the Italian and the French military doctrines differ. In fact, the Italian military doctrine discusses the peacekeeping approach at length and emphasizes the

[132] Magnus Petersson, Thomas Slensvik, and Palle Ydstebø, "Introduction," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 39, no. 2 (February 2016): 174–84; Barry R. Posen, "Foreword: Military Doctrine and the Management of Uncertainty," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 39, no. 2 (February, 2016): 159–73.

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importance of humanitarian aid to be conducted by Italian soldiers.[133] Similarly, in line with the French military culture, the French joint military doctrine shows some focus on assertiveness both in conventional (particularly nuclear warfare) and nonconventional operations.[134] The two doctrines are, however, more similar than one might expect for several reasons. First, the French and Italian armies share the same historical origins, with the Italian doctrine originally built on the French model.[135] Second, strong similarities exist between French and Italian doctrines, and in fact their SOPs, as a result of an ongoing standardization. This would be expected to lead to a convergence in behavior, but this is unobserved on the ground. Third, one should not dismiss that, although France reflects differently on conventional operations (particularly on nuclear warfare), the approach to peacekeeping is similar.[136] The two points above are also confirmed by a wealth of interviewees: "French and Italian doctrines? Nowadays they are the same, particularly when it comes to out-of-area operations."[137] Most importantly, the sets of recommendations contained in the doctrines remain at a rather high level of generality and are not sufficiently detailed for explaining behavioral differences on the tactical level.

Mentioned by the literature as an important mechanism affecting military behavior, the importance of SOPs for force employment postures is more difficult to assess. [138] While they often provide detailed guidelines to soldiers on how to behave, such as the decision to point the rifle to the sky while sitting on the top of a tank, SOPs are difficult to analyze—they

[133] Stato Maggiore della Difesa, III Reparto, "La Dottrina Militare Italiana," 2012, http://www.difesa.it/SMD_/Staff/Reparti/III/CID/Dottrina/Pagine/Dottrina_Militare_Italiana.aspx.

[134] CDES, "L'action Des Forces Terrestres Au Contact Des Réalités

[135] Irondelle and Schmitt, "France."

[136] Charnay, "Incidences Des Opérations de Paix Sur L'emploi de l'Armée Française."

[137] GEN-1; GEN-2, Rome, Italy, November 2014; O-1; GEN-2, Paris, France, May 2014.

[138] Allison, *Essence of Decision*

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remain confidential in most militaries. It is implausible, however, that SOPs alone can account for the observed variation. First, SOPs are partly common across contingents, particularly in NATO missions. For instance, in Afghanistan a security code of yellow imposed a particular way of organizing the entrance in the base. Second, SOPs could explain differences in force protection, but not the quantity or kind of CIMIC activities. Third, and importantly, SOPs are always seen in line with culture: in my interviews, I have checked whether soldiers perceived them to be aligned with cultural characteristics and asked explicitly about SOPs. Soldiers never reacted as if what they were doing was in contrast with their military culture. For instance, one NCS told me: "yes of course I am pointing the rifle towards the population I do it because it is in my SOPs but mainly because I deem it appropriate."[139] Soldiers perceived their behavior to be guided by their own decisions, not just SOPs. Finally, SOPs are mission-specific; that French and Italian units displayed consistent behavior across cases confirms that SOPs alone are unable to account for the consistency in behavior.

Training templates are similar for French and Italian units as a result of the strong adaptation to NATO standards that has occurred over the past twenty years. For UNIFIL, both units have undertaken six months of predeployment training, which covered similar themes. But their similar mission-specific training templates do not seem to have reduced the amount of variations. Despite the similarity of the templates, the observed variations in behavior were persistent. The French and Italian units under study in Afghanistan did their predeployment training together in preparation for deployment for about three weeks.[140] According to my interviewees, French and Italian soldiers still behaved differently in training. An Italian officer told me, "during the training, you know the French, they were shooting around a

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[139] Italian NCS-1. Confirmed by French NCO-4; Italian O-2; French O-5.

[140] GEN-1; GEN-2, Rome, Italy, November 2014; COL-1; GEN-2, Paris, France, May 2014.

lot."[141] And a French officer reiterated: "[I]t is sometimes difficult to train with the Italians, as they are so peace-oriented."[142] Overall, training templates seem unable to explain the observed variations but anecdotal evidence from soldiers' behavior during training seems consistent with my argument.[143]

In sum, while important, none of these three factors are able to account for the breadth and width of the detected variations in behavior among French and Italian units in Lebanon and Afghanistan.

<3>Mission-Specific Factors: HQ Directives and Leadership</3>

NATO and UN headquarters directives, respectively, seem unable to account for the observed variations in behavior. In Lebanon, in 2007, the UN force commander issued a directive to ask the French contingent to stop using heavy *Leclerc* tanks. The French switched to a lighter tank but still refused to dismiss tanks and patrol only with armored vehicles. Also in Afghanistan, variations in behavior cannot be explained by headquarter directives as "there is absolutely no coordination" between the regional command and national contingent.[144]

I also asked the force commander in each unit whether they had received any particular instruction by their national HQs but neither on the French nor on the Italian side there was anything but a generality: "have as little accidents as possible" and "minimize the number of casualties." The different personality types of the force commanders could also explain the different approach of French and Italian soldiers.[145] While in the French case no individual

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[141] Italian NCS-1, Rome, Italy, November 2014.

[142] French NCO-4, Paris, France, June 2014.

[143] See, for instance: "UNIFIL: Addestramento congiunto italo-francese," http://www.difesa.it/Primo_Piano/Pagine/201508019_Libano_addestramento_congiunto.aspx.

[144] O-6, Italian unit, October 2008, Camp Invicta, Afghanistan. This statement is confirmed by NCS-1, NCS-2; NCS-3; NCS-4, NCO-1, NCO-3, NCO-4,-3, O-4.

[145] Richard J. Samuel, *Machiavelli's Children: Leaders and Their Legacies in Italy and Japan* (Ithaca,

initiative could be detected, the Italian Force Commander initiated some of the humanitarian activities. For example, the commander of the Alpini unit in Afghanistan launched a collection of toys in the local community in Italy where the unit is located. The initiative of individual leaders, however, seems unlikely to explain either the systematic focus on humanitarian activities or the other detected variations in force protection and operational activities.

<3>Government Mandates, Role of Previous Operations and Organizational Interests</3>

I now discuss three explanatory factors for differences in observed military behavior within the domestic political environment: governmental mandates, operational past, and organizational interests. Elsewhere I have argued that domestic institutional configurations are key factors for the emergence and the shaping of a military culture, which partly develops in response to critical junctures in the domestic political arena.[146] Once a military culture has emerged from its domestic institutional conditions, however, it becomes rather inertial and persists even though the domestic political environment changes or evolves.

Governmental mandates—understood as the instructions provided to the military in terms of the authorized range of activities in specific operations—could plausibly explain why French soldiers behave in a more assertive way than the Italians. Yet, soldiers' behavior seems independent from the actual government mandate, as in both cases there were important shifts in government in the period of observation that did not have consequences for the actual behavior. In Italy, in May 2008, there was an important change in government from a left-wing coalition lead by Romano Prodi to a right-wing Silvio Berlusconi government whose defense minister explicitly started to talk about a change in mandate and posture for

NY: Cornell University Press, 2003), 4.

[146] Mallet, *General Loup Francart et Évolutions de La Doctrine Militaire Française*; Irondelle and Schmitt, "France."

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deployed Italian soldiers.[147] Yet, soldiers on the ground reacted strongly to his statements, arguing instead for being peace soldiers and, most importantly, allegedly, they did not change their behavior.[148] The opposite happened when President Nicolas Sarkozy asked French soldiers to withdraw from Afghanistan after the deadly Uzbin attack.[149] The reaction of my interviewees was immediate: "[T]his is a bad idea" and "we should stay here" as well as "we will do what they tell us from above but we disagree."[150] These reactions seem to confirm the culturalist argument: French soldiers stressed their obedience to the order they received but they also made clear that they would rather stay and keep fighting. Incidentally, they ended up staying longer than Sarkozy had planned.[151]

The more extensive operational past in combat operations of the French army, mainly in Africa, but also in colonial wars in Indochina and Algeria, could potentially explain their emphasis on operational activities. Assertiveness as a core trait of the French military culture was preexisting and persisting notwithstanding a wide array of operational experiences in conflicts that required not only standard combat skills but highly developed population-centric skills in Indochina and Algeria. Also, in many operations, particularly those of

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[147] "Ignazio La Russa, 'I soldati italiani combattono da un anno,'" http://www.corriere.it/politica/08_luglio_01/afghanistan_larussa_soldati_88225cee-4784-11dd-8c36-00144f02aabc.shtml.

[148] O-4, NCS-1, NCO-2 Italian unit October 2008, Camp Invicta, Afghanistan.

[149] "Nicolas Sarkozy à Kaboul : 'Ici se joue une partie de la liberté du monde.'" *Le Monde,* 20 August 2008, http://www.lemonde.fr/asie-pacifique/article/2008/08/20/nicolas-sarkozy-en-afghanistan-pour-rendre-hommage-aux-soldats-francais-tues_1085614_3216.html.

[150] NCS-1, NCS-2, NCO-1, O-3, O-1 French unit, December 2008, Camp Warehouse, Afghanistan.

[151] GEN-2, June 2015, Paris, France. Natalie Nougayrede, "Le 'ni-ni' de Nicolas Sarkozy en Afghanistan," *Le Monde,* http://www.lemonde.fr/idees/article/2009/12/03/le-ni-ni-de-nicolas-sarkozy-en-afghanistan-par-natalie-nougayrede_1275503_3232.html.

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decolonization. French soldiers were asked to conduct also policing and civil-military relations kinds of activities. Indeed the French experience in counterinsurgency should, if anything, have led the French army to a more population-centric approach and should have made soldiers keener to interact with the local population, as suggested by several counterinsurgency thinkers, such as David Galula and Roger Trinquier.[152] But the operational experiences alone do not seem to account for the observed French focus on patrolling and the Italian soldiers' belief of being humanitarians, respectively. On the Italian side, the operational experience was more reduced but points in the same direction. Participation in operations that turned out rather kinetic, such as the UN missions in the Congo in '60s or the Multinational Force in Lebanon from 1982–84 and the contribution to the UN in Somalia did not shift the preexisting ideas that Italian soldiers were good people or, from the '80s onward, that they had to be humanitarians.[153]

Organizational interests could also potentially explain why French and Italian soldiers display such important variations in behavior. For example, given a set of civilian constraints, rational military organizations should be expected to seek an increase in power or prestige.[154] It could for instance explain why Italians behave in a humanitarian effective way. Yet, as seen above, their behavior remained constant across the change of government in a way that did not protect their organizational interests. The Italian centre-right government ruling in 2009 with Ignazio Larussa as defense minister started to talk about Italian armed forces in more

[152] David Galula, *Contre-Insurrection : Théorie et Pratique* (Paris: Economica, 2008); Roger Trinquier, *Les Maquis d'Indochine. Les Missions Spéciales Du Service Action* (Paris: Albatros, 1976).

[153] Bastien Irondelle and Sophie Besancenot, "France: A Departure from Exceptionalism?," in *National Security Cultures: Patterns of Global Governance*, ed. Emil J. Kirchner (London: Routledge, 2009).

[154] Farrell, "Transnational Norms and Military Development," 70; Posen, *The Sources of Military Doctrine*

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military terms. That would have been an occasion to change narrative and seek to increase the defense budget by showing their alignment with the new political leadership through more assertive behavior, which did not happen. A variant of the organizational interest explanation—where organizations seek more resources—could explain why French forces behave the way they do. Yet, their approach has been said to be counterproductive to their own organizational interests.

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<1>Concluding Remarks and Policy Implications</1>

This paper has presented how, within UNIFIL II and ISAF, French and Italian soldiers were deployed under very similar conditions but also how, in both missions, they displayed consistent and systematic variations in behavior. Whereas the French troops emphasized operational activities and displayed high force protection levels, the Italian troops focused on humanitarian activities. These variations in behavior are consistent with the ways in which French and Italian soldiers understand the context they are embedded in as well as the French military culture of controlled assertiveness and the Italian military culture of humanitarianism. How generalizable is this argument on military culture and behavior?

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I have demonstrated the validity of the argument in diverse contexts: very different ongoing peace operations (the UN mission in Lebanon and the NATO mission in Afghanistan) with the same armies (French and Italian) displaying similar resources within each mission. The hypothesized relationship between military culture and behavior was substantiated in both contexts. Though one must always be cautious in generalizing, the stringent case-selection criteria employed suggest that other cases are likely to show similar relationships between military culture and behavior. In short, the theory is now ripe for further testing.

This paper has also engaged with the perennial debate between rationalist and constructivist theories. For the specific problem under study, rationalism is not as well placed

as military culture to explain substantial behavioral variations by soldiers deployed in peace operations. Given the apparent strength of the culturalist argument, it would be relevant to study whether this also holds true for conventional military operations, where rationalism has traditionally been the dominant theory at play. Another important path for future research would be to focus on how the local population reacts and interacts with armies of different nationalities.

This paper also has significant policy implications. First, it points to the need to overcome the assumption that material resources and strategic considerations are the only relevant factors to consider when looking to improve military operations. Other factors, such as the specific military culture of the army deployed in the field, matter. It would be advantageous to deploy units to AOs best suited to their characteristics rather than naively assuming, for instance, that all units will respond equally well once they come under fire. This is not the common practice: at NATO or the UN, decisions about which national contingent to assign to a specific area are either set by specific state constraints or haphazardly. This is even more true at the national level, where units are not chosen according to specific humanitarian or military needs. Furthermore, national contingents are often treated as interchangeable across missions, meaning that any contingent can be sent anywhere, regardless of its specific weaknesses and strengths.

While both political benefits and costs attend participation in multinational operations, the costs may be particularly high when national contingents' military cultures are not compatible with the operations or regions to which they are assigned. The United States, and NATO thereafter, expended considerable political capital to have European countries in Afghanistan and accepted very restrictive national caveats. Those caveats were quite appropriate for the operations until 2006, but were not thereafter, and meant that soldiers with peacekeeping-oriented military cultures ended up in the midst of fighting with severe

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restrictions on the use of force.

Furthermore, cultural variations are likely to impact on the effectiveness of cooperation among contingents in multinational operations. It may be difficult for contingents in similar AOs with differing or incompatible military cultures to coordinate. While British and American coordination in southern Afghanistan resulted in many military successes, the same cannot be said for the American and Polish units that have struggled to coordinate their profoundly different approaches to achieving similar tactical objectives in Afghanistan. This does not mean that unilateral operations are better. Multinational interventions present clear advantages in terms of legitimacy and accountability, but specificities and compatibilities across military cultures must be considered more seriously.

In sum, military culture has been shown to impact significantly on the behavior of peacekeepers in the field, and consequently, is a relevant consideration for policy decisions about missions. Greater understanding of specific army military cultures deployed in peace operations could increase the likelihood of successful operations and better meeting the needs of the civilian population.

<1>Acknowledgements</1>

I am deeply indebted to all my interviewees for their openness, patience, and commitment. I am grateful to Pascal Vennesson for his continuous support of this project. For comments on different drafts of this article, I thank Stephen Biddle, Tobias Broer, Sarah S. Bush, Allan Dafoe, Christopher Dandeker, Rosemary A. Kelanic, Peter Krause, the two anonymous reviewers at *Security Studies*, as well as participants at seminars at the Harvard University Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs; the Uppsala University Department of Peace and Conflict Research; the University of Chicago Program on International Security Policy; the Nanyang Technological University S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies; the Norwegian Institute for Defense Studies; and the CERI at Sciences Po. All remaining

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