



Imagining War and Keeping Peace ?

Military Cultures and Peace Operation Effectiveness

Chiara RUFFA

PhD thesis defence on 31st May, 2010

Abstract

Why do similar armies deployed in the same peace mission with a similar level of material resources behave differently? Why are they effective in different ways? According to conventional wisdom, an army's material resources, such as the number of troops it can deploy, its equipment, and budget more generally, determine their level of success and failure in peace operations. Yet, my analysis proves that the link between resources and success of peace and stability operations is, on average, not very strong. I argue, first, that this is because the dichotomy of success and failure of a mission does not always reflect a military organization's "peace operation effectiveness," a new concept developed to evaluate peacekeepers' practices. Second, I show that despite an increasing convergence among armies worldwide, and between Western ones in particular, soldiers still behave differently in the field. For instance, in two very different operations, the NATO mission in Afghanistan and the UN mission in Lebanon, the French and the Italian battalions deploy a similar number of soldiers and similar equipment and vehicles. In addition, they operate under the same NATO and UN procedures and identical rules of engagement, implementing similar doctrines, receiving similar training and deploying in areas with comparable threat levels. However, they behave very differently. In a second step I argue that it is the difference in the force employment on the tactical level that explains variation in effectiveness. But why do armies behave differently in peace operations? The third part of my argument contends that, in opposition to the prevailing sociological, military, and political factors, the most important source of variation in force employment are differences in the "military culture" of different military units. In order to understand and test this argument, I conducted extensive fieldwork in Lebanon and Afghanistan between 2007 and 2008. This work lies at the crossroads between security studies and military sociology and makes an empirical contribution to debates about the role of ideational factors in the social sciences



Pascal Vennesson (EUI/RSCAS) (Supervisor), Christopher Dandeker (King's College, London), Elizabeth Kier (Univ. Washington), Chiara Ruffa, Friedrich V. Kratochwil (EUI)

Chiara Ruffa received a Master in Political Sociology from the Ecole Normale Supérieure in Lyon and an MA in International Relations (with Honours) from the « Sant'Anna » School of Advanced Studies in Pisa. She worked as an external evaluator of development projects and as an assistant human rights officer for the UN peace building mission (BONUCA) in the Central African Republic. Her research interests revolve around International Relations and security and military studies in particular with a focus on humanitarian, development and military actors in complex humanitarian emergencies. She has a strong experience in empirical research, especially ethnography (interviews, questionnaires and observation) and operational code analysis. For her thesis «Imagining War and Keeping Peace ? », she has conducted extensive fieldwork as participant observer with NGOs and with French and Italian military units in Lebanon and Afghanistan. In 2009, she taught International Security at the University of Victoria, Canada.

Starting from September 2010, Dr. Ruffa will be Fulbright Schuman Fellow and International Security Research Fellow at the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs at Harvard University. She is currently working on a project aimed at understanding the propensity of NGOs and armies to cooperate in complex humanitarian emergencies and on an article that focuses on the worldview of Louis Michel, former EU commissioner to development and humanitarian aid. Her next project will be on the theoretical and practical distinctions between peacekeeping and counterinsurgency.

Her latest publications include "What colours for the helmet? Major regional powers and their preferences for UN, regional or ad hoc peace operations", Perspectives on Federalism, 1/2009; "With or without you? A Comparison of EU, European and US Policies in Afghanistan" in the book "Issues in European Union and US Foreign Policy" edited by Munevver Cebeci, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers (forthcoming) and "Across cultures in the crossfire ? A cross-cultural study of non-Western and Western armed forces and their effectiveness in UNIFIL II" in the book « The UN interim force in Lebanon » edited by Joseph Soeters and Efrat Elron, Lynne Rienner Publisher, (forthcoming)