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TEŽAVEN POLOŽAJ VODNIKA: TEHTANJE MED OBČUTKOM PRIPADNOSTI IN SOCIALNO KOHEZIJO V MIROVNI OPERACIJI

THE TROUBLED POSITION OF A SERGEANT: MEDIATING BETWEEN ESPRIT DE CORPS AND SOCIAL COHESION IN A PEACE OPERATION

Povzetek Članek se osredotoča na opažanja danskega vodnika in njegov boj z dvema osrednjima dejavnikoma vojaškega vedenja - občutkom pripadnosti in socialno kohezijo v mirovni operaciji. Na podlagi terenske študije je predstavljeno in analizirano večje število opažanj iz različnih situacij, v katerih se je vodnik srečal z občutkom pripadnosti ali socialno kohezijo. Opazovanja so pokazala, da sta občutek pripadnosti in socialna kohezija osrednja dejavnika tako v tej konkretni operaciji kot v vojnih operacijah. Opazovanja so pokazala tudi, da je zaradi utečenih samodejnih procesov, ki zahtevajo osebni stik in prevzemanje vlog, danski vodnik imel težave s svojo bojno skupino. Druga opazovanja kažejo, da je občutek pripadnosti v tej konkretni mirovni operaciji bolj v žarišču in da del vojakov zaradi svojih interpretacij delovanja v neformalni hierarhiji zavzema drugačno mesto. Različne interpretacije povzročajo konflikte v danski bojni skupini in vodnik jih težko obvladuje.

Ključne besede ***Občutek pripadnosti, socialna kohezija, vodnik, bojna skupina, mirovna operacija, danski kontingent Kforja.***

Abstract This article focuses on the observation of a Danish Sergeant in a peace operation and his struggle with two central factors of military behavior, esprit de corps and social cohesion. Based on a field study, several observations from different situations where the Sergeant is facing either esprit de corps or social cohesion are presented and analyzed. The observations show that, both, esprit de corps and social cohesion are central factors in this specific peace operation, as in war operations. Observations also show that due to leadership based on routinized tacit face-to-face and role-taking processes the Danish Sergeant has difficulties with his combat group. Other observations show that esprit de corps in this specific peace operation is more in focus and part of the soldiers' interpretation of operations positions them differently in the informal hierarchy. The production of different interpretations causes conflicts in the Danish combat group, which the Sergeant has difficulties handling.

Key words ***Esprit de corps, social cohesion, Sergeant, combat group, peace operation, Danish KFOR.***

Coheison in peace operations

This article primarily discusses the observations of a Danish Sergeant and, secondly, the two central social factors of the military, esprit de corps and social cohesion, with which the Sergeant seems to struggle. Both factors are well researched and point to the Sergeant's general role as the mediator between the military institution and the combat group in situations of war (Caforio, 2006, p.15).

Despite the fact that there are close to one million peacekeepers worldwide, little is known about esprit de corps and social cohesion in peacekeeping (Mouthaan, 2005, p. 103). Consequently, this article will, instead of presenting military behavior in a war operation, focus on the behavior of a Danish Sergeant in a peace operation to see if (and if so, how) the Esprit de Corps and Social cohesion change with the type of operation. The attempt is also to see whether, in this specific peace operation, the Sergeant has retained his usual functions, and if so, how these functions are carried out in this peace operation.

Introduction

In order to understand soldiers' motives to fight, much interest of military sociology has centered on the social origins of the military, due to the assumption that such information could explain and predict soldiers' behaviour and capacities.

One focus has received special attention, and that is combat stress. This has been the case, because research into combat stress has revealed several other central factors (- as for instance social cohesion and the related question: under what circumstances and when does a combat group break up and loose its ability to fight or function as a whole? -) which are also relevant when we want to understand soldiers' motives and behavior, also in peace operations. To illustrate, even if peace operations are generally not comparable with combat operations, the shared deployment experience, and the unchanged emphasis on group formation and social bonding during military service and deployment lead to the belief that a 'band of brothers' is forged among peacekeeping soldiers similar to war operations (Mouthaan, 2005, p. 103). This shared social bonding in both war operations and peace operations makes it conceivable that they also share stressors as well as other factors. Although deployments to peace operations seem to have stressors in common with combat deployments, the general approach of a peace operation mission is based on a constabulary model, and, consequently, it differs from war operations in its fundamental approach and expectations. As a consequence, deployment in peace operations strains soldiers differently by combining a potentially threatening situation with the task of self-control. The tension inherent in this balance between soldiers' aggressive or retaliatory impulses and forced non-reaction is reflected in the term, the *UN soldier stress syndrome* (Adler, 2005, p. 121).

1 MILITARY STRESS, ESPRIT DE CORPS AND SOCIAL COHESION

During the First World War, doctrine held that soldiers were motivated to fight by ideology and moral; i.e. by esprit de corps. In this understanding combat stress such as 'shell shock' was rejected and called 'cowardice', and stressed soldiers who stopped fighting were often shot (Birenbaum, 1994, p. 1484).

Later, during Second World War the doctrine from the First World War that men fought for moral reasons such as patriotism, esprit de corps, pride and leadership changed in favor of small-group psychology.

In a situation where more than 16 million Americans went through service during World War II, Samuel A. Stouffer and his research team conducted more than 200 studies, including 600,000 interviews with personnel, both, on the home front and in operations abroad. Stouffer's research team identified the combat situation to be an extreme condition in which nearly all an individual's needs are denied satisfaction; the threats concern the vital facets of the person, life and physical integrity, fundamental conflicts are created in values; individuality is nullified; and anxiety, pain, fear, uncertainty, and powerlessness triumph. The hostility against the soldier's self could not be more profound. However, flight, desertion, psychological breakdown, suicide, etc. from a combat situation show that this is relatively rare. Therefore, Stouffer's research team concluded that there were two factors which compensated the stress factors and made the soldier remain in line. According to Stouffer, the two central factors were the primary group and group cohesion. For Stouffer, it is the group that guarantees the psychological survival of an individual in combat. Still, the group could let its members out of the stress situation without changing the cohesive values if it abandoned the combat situation as a whole. From this observation, Stouffer concluded that an external factor prohibited the group from deserting. The research group identified this factor in a system of interiorized norms, accompanied by a system of domination applied by the military. In short, the primary group is brought to fight for itself in order to save its existence and position within the military institutional system, whereby it adheres to the values of the military institutional system, which it has incorporated into its own informal codes (Stouffer, vol. I & II, 1949).

Shils and Janowitz in their analysis of cohesion in the German army during World War II, based in part on primary group theory, provided a set of factors for the measurement of military cohesion. Shils's and Janowitz's research pointed to the importance of the cohesion of primary groups and to the fact that any intervention of the military institution that could act as a disaggregating factor should be avoided. The most important aspect of the primary group was the defence of its cohesion, which has been reached through the roles that the group distributed to its individual members: One crucial role was that of the 'natural' leader, who had to mediate between the combat group and the military institution. The operational consequence was the preparation of the Sergeant to become the combat group's natural leader.

The Sergeant is able to undertake the natural leadership of the group if he is able to recognize and respect the informal code. In order to do that he has to be a member of the group and fully share its combat situation. At the same time, he has to be a representative of military hierarchy (Shils & Janowitz, 1948, p. 280-315).

The post-World War II period saw an explosion of small group research. Almost every variable and combination of variables was examined. In this research process, the definition of cohesion, motivation and combat stress came to include multiple concepts and factors which divide cohesion into a horizontal *social* cohesion and a vertical *task* cohesion.

As a consequence, the research of the sociology of the military differed between one group focusing on 'esprit de corps', which is the soldiers' vertical identification with the military institution and organization (discourse about operation's objective) and the other focusing on 'cohesion', which is the soldiers' horizontal identification with the small primary group to which they belong- behavior, tacit knowledge and brotherhood (Siebold, 1999). As a result, two schools were formed as regards the understanding of military behavior: one pointing at esprit de corps as the central factor and one pointing at social cohesion as the central factor (See: Wong, 2006; MacCoun, 2006). Studies of the vertical identification with the military institution tend to use rational studies of the survey type, whereas studies of the horizontal identifications tend to use direct observations of the field studies. Both esprit de corps and social cohesion are, however, being associated with combat effectiveness and the prediction of soldiers' behavior during battle.

In effect, it was the Sergeant who functioned as a mediator between the discursive objectives of the military institution and the habituated and tacit behavior of the combat group. This position, then, is also a crucial pivoting point between the vertical esprit de corps of the military institution and the horizontal social cohesion of the combat group.

2 METHOD

This article presents the observations of the early phase of the NATO KFOR operation, which included a Danish KFOR contingent. A Danish Sergeant was one of the observed people.

The study used the method of grounded theory (Glaser, 1992). The reason for choosing this approach was that *no* field studies up to that point had ever been carried out in the Danish military. Consequently, there were no empirically grounded Danish concepts or theories to be tested. They had to be developed. Naturally, this placed the research task "at one end of the continuum of abstraction in sociological work." (Glaser, 1994, p. 235)

The grounded theory approaches focus on *how* to understand 'thick' qualitative data and how the different concepts in the field interact. If we turn to Barney Glaser, he

writes the following about grounded theory: "In grounded theory, one does not think up hypotheses and then test them. That is the verificational methodology. In grounded theory the analyst induces patterns of relationships suggested by data, and they emerge with theoretical codes to relate them. The analyst then writes these integrated hypotheses into a grounded theory, knowing that a few of the most relevant could be tested later on in a verificational study." (Glaser, 1992, p. 84)

Also, in order to be 'open' to the observation of new or undiscovered concepts and interactions, the grounded theory method is *not* to be influenced by old concepts and research. Again, in the words of Glaser, the researcher must try "to analyze what is going on and how to conceptualize it, while suspending one's knowledge for the time being. The researcher starts finding out what is going on, conceptualizes it and generates hypotheses as relations between the concepts." (Glaser, 1998, p. 95) Glaser advises, indeed, *not* to read field-related theories when doing grounded theory: "An effective strategy is, at first, literally to ignore the literature of theory and fact on the area under study, in order to assure that the emergence of categories will not be contaminated by concepts more suited to different areas." (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 37)

Observations were carried out in different organizational situations: at observation posts and check points; in a platoon on alert, at mobile check points; patrols; and in company and battalion briefings.

Those observed in the whole field study were a Private First Class, a Sergeant, a First Lieutenant, a Major and a Colonel. They had all been observed for a week, and after that interviewed individually. The observations and interviews were repeated three times, as the field was observed in three different periods of time during the deployment.

These 5 soldiers were selected to create a representative cross section of the organization in terms of purpose, agency, position, function, organization, leadership and institution (n=5). Supplemental interviews were carried out with 21 (n=21) of the 130 infantry KFOR soldiers, total n=26. These interviews were added as a consequence of the situations and of recommendations. The interviews were all of the open-ended variety.

In addition to interviews, data was obtained from participant observations and from official documents collected in the field. The field observations were written down or recorded. Sound recordings cover approximately 200 hours. Photographs were taken, and material from a range of different battalions' home pages downloaded.

The study may be criticised for not being supported by enough data and cause suggestions to go back and collect more data. It should be noted that at the end of each operation the Danish Battalion seizes to exist. Thus, it is not possible to go back for more data.

To sum up, this article presents a grounded theory field study focusing on *how* to understand a small number of Danish soldiers in a specific peace operation, KFOR, in the beginning of the operation, and what concepts these soldiers developed and how these concepts interacted. As a consequence of the grounded theory approach only an outline of Esprit de Corps and Social Cohesion have been presented as the dynamics of the operational context in which the Danish Sergeant operated. Focus, however, remained on the different practices of the soldiers, in this case the Sergeant, and his combat group. Also, while the concepts of for instance Swedish or Slovenian soldiers might be interesting, they must be kept out of the observation of Danish soldiers and introduced only later in comparative or verification studies.

2.1 Consent in a conflict zone

Institutional Consent. Before the field study started, both the Danish Defense Command and the Danish Defense Academy received the description of the research project. Both the object of study and the freedom of the researcher to use the research method which suited the object were accepted. So a general institutional consent was obtained.

Interviewer's Consent. The soldiers were asked if they wanted to participate in the interviews, and were told that it was an absolutely free choice. Their expressed consent was obtained and recorded in the beginning of each interview.

Combat Group Consent. Back in Denmark and prior to the deployment, all the soldiers had been informed in advance that they were being subject to research and that this was the reason for my presence. In many situations, the consent was only implied , which means that it was not expressly granted by every single soldier or the combat group, but that they accepted that I was openly interviewing them, writing down observations, and participating in their everyday life and operations.

Public Consent. Other situations were of a more public character: actions at a check points, morning drills, common meals, briefings etc. Such open situations were considered public and open, not only by this researcher but also by others, such as journalists.

2.2 Results

A variety of grounded excerpts will be presented showing the representative situations in which the Sergeant was central. It is a two-tier presentation, which first presents the situation, which is in itself a theoretical and methodological choice, and then the analysis.

2.3 Morning briefing

The following case is one of several examples of leadership situations experienced in the beginning of the tour. The case is taken from a daily morning briefing and the Major is talking about an incident in a little village of Zubin Potok:

Major: *"*…so it was around 50-70 meters away from where we were standing therefore it was But it began with an Albanian national..eh..song and then..TMK carried out a small .parade .there and this, as you know, already gives a signal eh . seeing both that TMK had 100 men there that is, as you know, relatively many, .and it is interpreted as the first step in the direction of raising a pro-Albanian profile .what could this develop into . there has been some talk of an abbreviation KNA – and that is simply Kosovo National Army and that . as we know . they are not allowed to according to resolution 1244 . You do remember that .1244 .that is . don't You . now what is that . Come on, what is it? … (the Major is snapping his fingers rapidly and whistling as you would whistle for a dog, prompting it to move faster) . Laursen!

Laursen: well, that is the resolution eh which we are down here to enforce which holds some sub items.

Major: Yes??! Who has passed this resolution? Is it something NATO passed?

Someone: UN (in a low voice)

Major: *BE QUIET! PUT ONESHAND UP IF ONE KNOWS THE ANSWER!!* Who has passed it, Laursen?

Laursen: UN has

Major: Who in UN, What is U- UN, that is getting off too cheaply……

Laursen: But isn't it that council that is assembled .

Major: Yes, what is the name of that council?

Laursen: I bloody don't remember…

Major: Try looking up here

Someone: are you sure

Major: Be Quiet!!!

Major: UNSCR??! …..(snapping his fingers) We have been through this many times in Knowledge-of-service [part of the training], Laursen, if you can't remember then you will fucking have to write it down, this is important stuff. And you, 3.4? which council was it? ….. (snapping his fingers) when you listen to – that is, if you watch a little more news and a little less Baywatch then you will hear this around every other day … (snapping his fingers) It is the UN Security Council! ..(snapping his fingers) The UN Security Council! That is in fact the only agency in this world that can authorize war, as we have mentioned, and this resolution 1244 which has been passed by the UN Security Council, what is it about? What is it about 3.5?

3.5: that among other things we shall unarm UCK

Major: Yes, correct

3.5: eh uphold freedom of movement

Major: Correct!

Before this briefing, during the morning drill, the Sergeant, *Laursen*, is placed and drilled as a collective 'body', a part of the platoon, and here he receives the collective information and orders. Likewise, he is performing the same bodily movements

as the first privates. Later, however, he is taking part in the briefing of the company. This participation gives him a role as an individual subject. The Sergeant seems to be situated in a situation characterized by mutual exclusive relations and positions. He tries to be a part and not to be a part at the same time. Sergeants are not members of the combat group of privates nor are they a part of the leader group. Still, they are ordered to participate daily in the platoon briefings. It is observed that the only time the Sergeants participate in the morning briefing, is when they are asked to give report. This is typically given in practical descriptions of where they were, what they did – not *why* they chose to do what they did. The rest of the time, they just listen. During these briefings the Sergeants were observed to perform poorly, not being able to answer even basic questions. The Sergeants did not have separate briefings or meetings from which they could build a frame of reference and an independent Sergeant's identity.

Most of the time, it is the Major who does the talking; then it is the Captain; then the Lieutenants and almost never the Sergeants. This is the general structure of communication in the company. And generally, the officers talk about their decisions as an "I" decision, but when they address the platoons they use the collective "we", "you" or "one". The platoon is a collective "we" while the Lieutenant is an individual "I".

If we turn to the briefing: The bodily language of the Major conveys a message of irritation and impatience. This is communicated by his restless movements in front of all lower-rank officers and Sergeants. Most of the time, he is snapping his fingers. During his lecture, the Major shifts from the Sergeants to one of the officers. Here he gets the right answer and thus gives the officer a status position, as one with the correct answer and a higher position.

It is probably the conflicting positions of the Sergeant, which give him a hard time answering. First, the morning drill is habituating him to be part of a tacit collective and commanded bodily "we", next he has to change from this 'we' position to a reflective "I" position. This observation is further expanded in the next case.

2.4 Communicating a position

In the following case, a second-in-command Sergeant (NK) of the 3rd platoon talks to the observed Sergeant (Sgt.) at a Delta 2-6; the gunner 1 also interferes in the conversation:

NK: then I need to see your 'Junior Woodchucks Guidebook' and your signal orders .
Gunner 1: and a signal order . I'd really like one .
NK: but you don't get that – I was told – it's not for all – only for you – [the Sergeant is looking for his books] ..I must *see* that you've got it – physically see it – and you do alright – that's nice All: thank you..
Sgt: didn't some of the others have it?

NK: then you must maintain minimum crew .there are 10 men out here . and the rest you must send in .. to the camp
Sgt: okay ..
NK: for 'KONURO' equipment [riot equipment] …
Sgt: what .are they allowed to drive in
NK: 1 Piranha ..eeh ..but it must be like this that when you are standing down there now . the Piranha stands down here . and when you stand down there then it is down there .. you'll have to coordinate that yourself ..
Sgt: yes ... we've broken open the locks on my ..we have to figure out that too [NK looks very resigned] yes . but .what were we to do .. really?
NK: I don't know .
Sgt: then you bloody got to get out here with some keys .and the ones you got you obviously can't find . so then it was ..
NK: no but the .the..
Sgt: it doesn't matter .now .they are broken . so now..
NK: yes yes ..but it's four padlocks . with the same key … that's the problem
Sgt: yes but what can we do?
NK: I don't know
Sgt: alright .all you can do is to give me an earful

This conversation is dominated by short key phrases, in which the verbs are held in imperative, in commands from the NK and short questions from the Sergeant. The sentences refer to tasks and are very detailed. NK's sentences are dominated by instructions and rules. There are no personal utterances. Personal demarcations take the form of swearing and facial expressions, in bodily demarcations, which cannot be read out of the text, but are visible, especially with the Sergeant. The two persons, a senior Sergeant and the Sergeant, are talking to each other without using "I", "you" or "he" in singular. Instead they use the plural form of the pronoun "you".

Language objectifies mutual human experiences and makes them understandable to everybody in a linguistic collective (Berger and Luckmann, 1966, p. 86f). Likewise, military language is transformed into an accessible place for the depositing of military meaning and experience, which can be stored over time and then transferred to future military generations. As a system of signs with a specific 'logic', military language forces the individual into its patterns. Military language thus transforms specific experience into general types such as being a Sergeant (Berger and Luckmann, 1966, p. 91).

The language of these two Sergeants is divided into organizational hierarchical dialects with vocabularies that refer to specific and delineated forms of action. The senior Sergeant is addressing the Sergeant without pronouns. Verbs used to describe tasks are mostly kept in passive voice with no agent, or in the short imperative form. The discourse (of esprit de corps) at one and the same time exclude the Sergeant's private reflective "I", emphasize the correct habituation (behavior) of the Sergeant's role (morning drill) and still expect the Sergeant to be able to reflectively participate in the briefings.

2.5 Organizational separation

The military organization is divided by hierarchy, function and rank; by secrecy, information and knowledge; by power and influence; and by symbols, rituals, traditions and norms. (Finer, 1962, p. 7f; Roslyng-Jensen, 1980, p. 19)

In Denmark, the enlisted men are instantly, at the beginning of military service, separated into different hierarchical, functional and commanding positions as privates, Sergeants and officers and sent off to schools with different geographical places and differences in terms of training and socialization.

During the first interview with the Sergeant, he spoke about his experience with this organization's separation between the rank and file and the officer group. In his words:

Q: and relating to your superiors ..how do you expect that the development will be .. that you will have a better social relation to them or ..
Sgt.: I don't think so ..damn I don't think so .. really we eh .. we get along .. to a certain level .. and then of course there are . this thing . officers and Sergeants separately . and KC [the Major] does much of that .. to him its …
Q: yes?
Sgt.: I don't know..
Q: so you are separated?
Sgt.: yeah a bit
Q: why?
Sgt.: mmm I don't know ..he just does .. really the officers .. or the o-group as they are called right .. and us .. we mind ourselves a bit .

Institutions always have a history of which they are products. For the military, this history is closely intertwined with the history of State, Power and People. As such, the history of the military institution constitutes the objectified culture to which the enlisted soldier has to relate. As an objectified deposition of knowledge, institutional "memory" of old wars, former technologies, and former socializations of privates and officers as deep military-institutional codes, are carried in traditions, rituals and routines.

This objectified deposition of knowledge positions Sergeants in their specific identity and role. Sergeants' identity is learned in different schools than that of the officers, but it is also prepared by and rests within civil society at large ((Berger and Luckmann, 1966: 86). This physical and mental separation was partly maintained in Kosovo.

2.6 Socializing privates

During the study, a development of a close familiarity within the combat group was observed. This was also expressed by the Sergeant during the interview in which he talked about his primary-like upbringing of the privates:

Sgt.: what the hell does it then do .really..then one don't get that . culture shock . there are *really* many to whom it is good to get away from his mom .. I came to feel that myself .that one has to shine your boots yourself .
Q: what do you mean by culture shock?
Sgt.: what can I say .when one gets in and then suddenly all your rights are taken away .
Q: yes?
Sgt.: they don't decide a damn thing [for themselves] the first long time when they are in the military .
Q: that's a culture shock?
Sgt.: yes I think so .yes .
Q: yes?
Sgt.: where you before .then you could do what you liked . now you have to ask permission to go to the toilet . right .say Sir . and .there's somebody who decides when you are to get up and decides when to go to bed . you are really deprived a lot of .. rights .
Q: what's good about that?
Sgt.: really . I think that you eh . I think at least I myself have got another insight into myself.

In this interview, the Sergeant links 'mom', 'bed' and 'toilet' to 'Sir' and 'deprived rights'. Apparently, the Sergeant is in a position where he has to connect the heterogeneous internal life of the combat group with the external homogenous esprit de corps of the military institution.

The internal behavior and conversation was observed to consist of diffuse acts and a conversation between the privates, going back and forth between own doings and external tasks. The conversations were characterized by two distinct directions: an "upward" direction radiating the individual micro level *feelings* of the private trying to confirm, support, and continually recreate perceived structures, and the person's "downward" direction which comprise the shaping forces that do not originate in the individual (Franks, in Reynolds, 2003, p. 794).The privates thus related to each other as both "persons" and as "individuals". The distinction is important in understanding both the social cohesion and the socialization process as the "downward" role-taking of the *persons* is characterized by the organizational statuses the privates hold and the roles they play. Thus, while members of the combat group related to each other horizontally as *individual* family members, they were also extremely aware of the vertical role each *role person* played in the combat group and outside of it in the battalion in general.

This way, the privates' interactions generated a *classical* combat group with its brotherhood. The conception of combat group was "publicly" displayed and recognized by the battalion and other soldiers in the drill as in other acts. As seen from the inside of the combat group, this primary group seemed to form a loose composition of family-like relations between the privates. As seen from the outside, the private was part of a military structure, definitions, directives and orders that were defined from above by the organization to meet certain tasks.

The combat group became objectified through both internalizing and externalizing interaction with other soldiers and, over time, part of what is meant by a 'combat group as a basic institution of the military (Caforio, 2006, p. 64). In this process, the Sergeant was the central mediator when he was present; this was, however, not always the case.

2.7 Operational objective, conflict and cohesion

During the deployment, the combat group had growing internal conflicts and a mediation meeting in the combat group in which they were asked to hear each other out was observed. The mediation had been decided by the Lieutenant and not by the Sergeant.

Some of the problems were the heated temper of the Sergeant, a penalty given to one of the first privates for sleeping on duty and the constant grumbling and laziness by a certain private. After the mediation, the combat group was deployed in an operation close to the Albanian border while the Sergeant was on leave, leaving leadership of the combat group to the gunner 1. After these incidents, the following situation was observed: The combat group is to search through fields and the sides of a mountain for weapons. It is early in the morning and the Piranha has just unloaded the soldiers:

Sgt.: .did you bring enough water along?
Me: mmm . I've got 1½ liters along...
(…)
Sgt.: Well .we deploy along the fence and then we proceed forward and then the aqueduct . we probably have to cross it somehow so . let's do it
Harder: yeah .then let's do it!

The privates form a long line and start to move forward at the same time as they search the area:

Sgt.: Now get up in that line so that we can report when you are ready
Harder: Or what? It might be.. It's just because..
TK 3.1!![Sgt.]
Sgt.: YES!!..
TK what are we to do here .. ?
Sgt.: Try to keep the distance .we are only going up to the aqueduct there

Slowly the group moves up the mountainside:

TK: Is it one of the mountain tops we are headed for?
Larsen: We just follow the first
Sgt.: When we reach the top of that one .then we walk eh . over there . and then we walk back again … and downwards . (lower voice to himself) no . perhaps that's too stupid . we'll have to see . ARE WE READY??
Line yes yea yeah yes...

One hour has passed without finding anything and we sit down to drink some water:

Sgt.: yes .now we'll walk over there and then we'll head downwards again .. and the we'll spend really a whole lot of time on the houses down there because then we don't have to come up here again
JK: oh that's my man
TK: but what..?
MM: are they not all that we are lacking or what…?
Sgt.: yes it is ..but really . what is it . it . I think it's a bit strange that we must .go so far into the area
Gunner1 yeah right .but really it's laying down in that direction .. you are to lazy to get up there again..
Sgt.: no the last .the last situation reports are first of all that they found three uniforms . an ABC-mask . a west . a steelhelmet and .. and eh a raincoat..

The privates are clearly tired and express detachment to the over-all objective of the operation. However, the 'gunner 1' criticizes the group for being lazy. The conversation goes on until the Sergeant pulls himself together:

Sgt.: Well! Folks..!!
Harder: then we are to have 5 more minutes..
MM: you said ½ an hour more!?
All: (get up) aaahuoooohgnnnnehhpfffttttt .. etc. (laughs)

It is observed that the Sergeant speaks from the collective "we" position and not the commanding "I". It almost seems as if he is the 'alter ego' of the combat group when he says: "we walk along the fence!" and ends the sentence with a: "then let's do it!" In the first excerpt one of the privates asks what he is supposed to do, and the Sergeant answers back with an instruction to keep the distance in the line. So, the private is asking for meaning and the Sergeant is instructing the bodily behaviour.
The internal conflicts in the combat group become evident in the 'gunner 1', who wants to become an officer, when he calls the other privates lazy. It seems as if he is already talking from the future position of an officer and from here addressing the subordinate private's lazy body. The Sergeant answers him from the vertical task cohesion, the institution and the esprit de corps. The chat is illustrative of the relations and the cohesion of the combat group. The resistance of the privates is

being interpreted as laziness by gunner 1, while the soldiers on their side are constantly asking for the reasons and logic of operations. The privates' remarks are often followed by cursing which expresses frustrations regarding leadership.
At this point, the combat group has broken into different fractions, pivoting around different persons, episodes and interpretations of the objective of the operation. The three fractions consist of the group referring to the Sergeant. This is the group which follows the formal organization. The next group is the one referring to gunner 1, who represents the officers' 'war' interpretation, and the last group is the one referring to the first private, TK, who represents an 'it's absurd' interpretation.

Conclusion

In combat of war, horizontal social cohesion is mainly fear-driven and perhaps defensive. The combat group is fighting enemies in trying to survive and to defend something it takes for granted: a nation-state, a culture or a local community. This fighting takes place on habituated ground, so to say, with routinized and tacit actions. In a peace operation situation, however, agency is not routinized and tacit-driven, but is formulated in a logical global political discourse about security. In this discourse the tasks of the soldiers are formulated so as to try to establish security, to mediate conflicts and build trust among the local population. As a result, the discursive political objective of the deployment is brought more into focus in peace operations. This means that the discourse was exercised at a level where it was actually confronted with tacit military practices. This confrontation seemed to create the processes of securitization at the lowest levels of the military institution. (Wæver, 1997; 2004; 2010, p. 650)
In this specific case, these processes caused the development of not just one informal code in the combat group, but two. During deployment, the group had one formal leader, the Sergeant, and developed two informal competing codes, gunner1 and TK. All three positions interpreted the objective of the deployment as well as the specific operations differently. This process of interpretation of the esprit de corps was observed to cause conflicts in the combat group and to disturb the social cohesion.
From these specific observations it is suggested that, in this peace operation, the balance between esprit de corps and social cohesion is leaning more towards esprit de corps. The competing interpretations of the objective of the deployment brings the leadership of the Sergeant in a new and vulnerable position, because his maintenance of the social cohesion of the combat group is in many respects based on habituated practices which originate from war operations and does not support the discourse of his leadership in a peace operation.

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