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meetings and involving them in training and doctrine development, the CCOE has made a significant contribution to improving civil–military cooperation and interaction. The CCOE serves as an important entry-point for humanitarian actors to engage in dialogue with the military on civil–military interaction, and can also explain military doctrine, procedures and attitudes to humanitarian counterparts. The CCOE has found that some of the most useful input and feedback on CIMIC doctrine and guidelines has come from external non-NATO sources.

The CCOE’s approach to engaging with civilian actors involved in delivering humanitarian and development assistance has enabled it to build trust with these organisations and to better understand their principles, objectives and culture. As a result, NATO and the humanitarian and development communities are more open to engaging constructively with each other.

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## Testing the cultural boundaries of the British military

Lauren Greenwood

The British military has faced a range of challenges when engaging with non-military actors in ‘population-centred’ counter-insurgency and stabilisation operations. Such actors include humanitarian agencies, non-government organisations, civilian populations and national and international government institutions. There has been considerable resistance, especially from the British Army, to processes that have the potential to undermine traditional military combat skills. Managing the interface with civilian organisations is the task of the tri-service British Military Stabilisation Support Group (MSSG), formerly the Joint Civil Military Cooperation Group. Members of the MSSG must learn and then embody a new set of rules and cultural codes that allows them to take military practices out of the strict confines of military hierarchies and into the comparatively undisciplined, messy and unpredictable civilian sphere. This includes developing an awareness of humanitarian principles and stabilisation practices, and educating the wider armed forces about these concepts, both during training in the UK and on deployment. These challenges have heightened the tension between tradition and change within the British military, and have tested identities, boundaries and roles in a plethora of ways. This article explores three problem areas: the (re)negotiation of masculinity; issues of ‘common sense’; and the effect of increased civilian interactions on military leadership styles.<sup>1</sup>

### (Re)negotiating masculinity

Gender, and the relational constructions of masculinity and femininity, can be conceived of as practices that are produced socially, where social structures shape the actions of individuals and vice versa.<sup>2</sup> Masculinity is socially and culturally expressed, and is not confined to just the male body: both men and women go through a militarisation process in which they learn to reproduce a range of culturally specific military masculinities within the confines of their respective service. Military institutions exhibit certain particular characteristics, including clearly

1 L. Greenwood, *British Military Stabilisation Training and the Negotiation of Masculinity: ‘It’s Not Pink and Fluffy, It’s Difficult and Dangerous’*, unpublished PhD thesis, University of Sussex, 2012.

2 R. Connell, *Gender* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2002).

defined physical and social boundaries, with members working and living together in barracks that provide a place of residence for large numbers of like-minded individuals.<sup>3</sup> The identities of British military recruits are heavily influenced by the service they join – the Royal Navy, the British Army or the Royal Air Force – by their position within the military hierarchy, and whether they are regular or reserve members. This complex identity is visually and formally illustrated by military uniforms, which locate individuals by service, rank and branch, each with its formal and informal cultural codes. Behind the uniform is a military institution that is culturally rich and diverse, and much broader than popular stereotypes, with a multiplicity of roles and competing and potentially paradoxical identities.

For the British Army, warfighting demands that soldiers see themselves as warriors, with a warrior ethos. Counter-insurgency and stabilisation, with their focus on populations rather than, or at least in addition to, ‘the enemy’, challenges this traditional warrior ethos. Such operations require a different set of qualities, skills and practices, including ‘emotional intelligence, empathy, subtlety, sophistication, nuance and political adroitness’.<sup>4</sup> They entail restraint within the rules of engagement, heightened force protection and interaction with the media. They also involve working with a range of ‘non-warrior’ actors, the deconstruction and problematisation of the objective term ‘enemy’ and a focus on long-term solutions.<sup>5</sup> These two self-perceptions – of the traditional warrior and this new ‘population-centred’ warrior – are essentially mutually exclusive, and handling the tension between them can be extremely difficult.<sup>6</sup>

For stabilisation operatives, managing the interface between the military and the civilian worlds requires a fundamental shift in mindset. British military stabilisation

3 C. Kirke, ‘Orders Is Orders ... Aren’t They? Rule Bending and Rule Breaking in the British Army’, *Ethnography*, vol. 11, no. 3, 2010.

4 J. Kiszely, ‘Learning About Counter-Insurgency’, *RUSI Journal*, vol. 151, no. 6, December 2006.

5 *Ibid.*

6 *Ibid.*



British soldiers on patrol near Camp Bastion in Afghanistan

perspectives have been heard. However, within the wider military an end product is often seen as more important than process. As one informant put it: 'When on tour people [the wider military] kept saying what does the doctrine say? We kept turning around and going what doctrine, there is no doctrine for this'. When the British military's stabilisation doctrine (Joint Doctrine Publication 3-40 on *Security and Stabilisation: The Military Contribution*) was produced in November 2009 it was criticised within the military for not being 'doctrine' as commonly understood: it was too 'grey' and 'ambiguous', and it failed to set out the 'fundamental guiding principles'. An attempt to address this was made with the release

training teaches new recruits a spectrum of 'masculinities', from the kinetically oriented combat soldier, where weapon-handling skills, fitness and situational awareness are necessary to establish trust within the team, to the more feminised and ambiguous masculinity of the military facilitator. This facilitator masculinity is constantly in flux, and while it draws on the dominant masculinity of the combat soldier and notions of emotional control as the first point of acceptance and credibility, especially in terms of situational awareness, it also expands, restrains and resists elements of this combat masculinity, through specific articulations of cultural awareness and empathy. In this sense, stabilisation operatives are caught between the demands of the 'disciplined' military body and the creative subjectivity of the military facilitator, where challenging traditional military perceptions is a fundamental aspect of the role. The skilled stabilisation operative develops a 'chameleon-like' flexibility between these masculinities.

### 'Common sense'?

Within the military 'common sense' is something that is formally trained and drilled, a specific way of doing things, of unifying behaviour and making reactions predictable in situations of intense pressure. A phrase I repeatedly heard from stabilisation operatives during my fieldwork was: 'It's just common sense, people just need to be able to speak to other people'. But 'common sense' within a military setting is very different to 'common sense' in a civilian or humanitarian setting. To the military, 'common sense' means referring to books, pamphlets or doctrine: it is, in other words, a 'way of doing things' that is rational, efficient and objective. It is also culturally dependent.

In stabilisation operations, black and white, clear-cut military approaches are substituted for complexity, ambiguity, uncertainty, a focus on restraint and an understanding of the importance of intangible processes, such as generating a sense within communities that their

in April 2010 of *A Guide to Joint Doctrine Publication 3-40 Security and Stabilisation: The Military Contribution*, which is designed to be read quickly and feed the military's need for clarity, certainty and speed.

Whilst on field research I watched one stabilisation Commanding Officer chatting with their six-person Military Stabilisation Support Team during a training exercise, trying to explain the team's role and asking them to start 'thinking outside the box'. Many people 'got it' and, although a difficult task, took to the role relatively quickly. Others found the ambiguity and flexibility highly frustrating. A lack of flexibility and lateral thinking within the army has, on a number of occasions, been described to me using the Parachute Regiment phrase 'bone':

*bone, completely indoctrinated, 100% Army, twenty years of being an Infantry man or Cavalry man. You explained it [civil-military coordination, stabilisation] to them and they get it, they understand, it's not a difficult concept to understand, but there were lots of people who should know better in theatre who still don't get it.*

Once trained, it is the military Stabilisation Operatives' role to help educate the wider military in these principles, although evidently this is taking time to feed into wider military culture.

### Leadership

The skilled stabilisation operative develops the leadership skills to help the wider military valorise interaction through culturally specific forms of communication and discussion to establish and build relationships. One way of achieving this is in the practical application of the term 'courageous restraint', a term coined by American General Stanley McChrystal. The term connects courage, one of the valorised attributes of soldiering associated with bravery under fire, to a form of self-control that associates bravery

with the resistance of conditioned reflexes, valorising ‘the use of brainpower rather than firepower’. The power vested in the word courage has been attached to what is viewed by some as a softer or more feminine form of performance. Paradoxically, restraint for the combat soldier is harder to perform. The term, although not the concept, was short-lived, going out of fashion in 2010. It was replaced by the phrase ‘tactical patience’, which was deemed to be less confusing for soldiers and ‘more war-y’ through the removal of any associations with emotion, especially the emotions invoked by the word courage. During fieldwork I heard stories of how military stabilisation operatives had either successfully or unsuccessfully used their training and experience to persuade the wider military to use ‘courageous restraint’ or ‘tactical patience’ and adopt ‘population-centred’ stabilisation practices. As one informant told me, this was not easy: ‘generally, the ideas for counter-insurgency or stabilisation are not that easy to reconcile with red meat-eating killers. A lot of them really, really, want to get into fire fights’.

Good leadership, military teamwork and physical fitness are fundamental skills taught during military training. It is a powerful emotion to be part of a team that is working efficiently and symbiotically. Multi-actor stabilisation operations provide testing conditions for military leadership styles. Stabilisation operatives are required to fit into the infantry-dominated military chain of command, and embed with infantry patrols on the ground and in military headquarter formations. To perform their role effectively they must learn to switch between quite different leadership styles: a direct, forceful, sometimes aggressive style when dealing with soldiers or the military chain of command, and a quieter, softer but still direct style when dealing with all the other actors involved. Essentially, as one operative told me: ‘It’s all personality driven; it’s about getting relationships going. Stabilisation Operatives need to demonstrate that they are a vital component both up and down the military chains of command’. It is evident that the masculinity

of the combat soldier, and its forceful and direct style of leadership, remain dominant within the British Army. However, if Stabilisation Operatives are able to gain credibility, and therefore power and authority, they have the means to ‘influence, cajole and sometimes slap’ the fighting-oriented soldiers they work alongside towards adjusting to population-centred stabilisation practices.

## Conclusion

Stabilisation operatives must act as ‘go-betweens’ in the complex area opened up between bounded, disciplined and hierarchical mainstream military institutions and the comparatively undisciplined and unpredictable ‘outside world’. By becoming ‘critical centres of knowledge’ and learning how to engage with controlled and rationalised forms of emotion and empathy, stabilisation operatives challenge the dominant masculinity of the traditional soldier on the ground. On the one hand, operatives must live up to the ideal of ‘the soldier’, the warrior; on the other, they are expected to engage with non-traditional forms of conduct and emotion that pose a threat to both the status and identity of ‘the soldier’.

Military Stabilisation Operatives are now being referred to as ‘hybrid soldiers’. While the British military has been slow to adapt,<sup>7</sup> it is this ‘hybrid soldier’ that the humanitarian community will increasingly be engaging with in stabilisation operations. This ‘hybridity’ is achieved through formally and informally negotiating masculine performance, ‘common sense’ knowledge, learning to deal with ambiguity and intangibility, prioritising process over product and developing the flexibility to switch between leadership styles.

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<sup>7</sup> S. Catignani, “‘Getting COIN’ at the Tactical Level in Afghanistan: Reassessing Counter-Insurgency Adaptation in the British Army”, *Journal of Strategic Studies*, vol. 35, no. 4.

## Building consensus within the humanitarian community: lessons learned from the revision process for the IASC guidelines on the use of military and armed escorts

Jules L. Frost

In July 2011, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Working Group asked the Task Force on Humanitarian Space and Civil-Military Relations to review and update the IASC Non-binding Guidelines on the Use of Military and Armed Escorts for Humanitarian Convoys (2001). The primary concerns that led to the decision to revise the guidelines were the recognition of a growing reliance on armed escorts, the need to synchronise a more robust decision-making process on the use of armed escorts with the new UN

Security Management System (SMS) and inconsistencies in the interpretation and application of the out-of-date guidelines. The revised guidelines, which are currently under review by the IASC Working Group and Principals, include a new section which encourages due consideration of alternatives to armed escorts. Throughout the revised guidelines, greater attention is drawn to the importance of conducting comprehensive security risk assessments that emphasise programme criticality as well as threat,