Resolving Identity Tensions: The Case of the Peacekeeper

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INTRODUCTION

"It is certainly the worst military scandal in the postwar period and the most devastating development in the 45-year history of Canadian peacekeeping."1 This is how the editor of Canada's weekly newsmagazine Maclean's described the March 1993 incident when members of the elite Canadian Airborne Regiment (CAR), deployed in Somalia as part a multinational UN peacekeeping force, brutally tortured and killed 16-year old Shidane Arone. UN peacekeepers had come to Somalia in late fall of 1992 to complete a straightforward mission: delivering food to the hungry. Almost immediately upon arrival, however, the soldiers found themselves contending with more than a dozen warring clans. The Somalis they had come to save pelted the peacekeepers with rocks and sometimes even shot at them. Although Arone claimed he entered the Canadian camp because he was looking for a lost child, the soldiers who captured him believed he was just another would-be looter -- and showed him no mercy.2

How could this tragedy have happened? Why did soldiers tasked with providing relief and saving lives engage in such abominable behavior that jeopardized their unit, the mission, and, subsequently, their own professional careers? Situations that challenge individuals' self-conceptions will lead them to base behavioral choices on their most important identity images. Psychological explanations in terms of individual motivations cannot be detached from the socio-cultural factors that may spark, encourage, prevent, or restrain these motivations. Although committed by a few individuals, the murder of Shidane Arone occurred in the context of a UN-led peace operation. By nature of its purpose, the military trains and socializes its members to adhere to norms that are explicitly non-normative in civilian society, such as killing people and obeying orders.3 Since everybody's self-conception is a unique reflection of his or her values, attitudes, interests, experiences, desires, and hopes, individuals draw upon a repertoire of identity images that might contain contradictory self-descriptions. For example,

the self-identification "soldier" may include self-descriptions as loyal, tough, aggressive, dedicated, selfless, and willing to kill on others' behalf, while the self-identification "Christian" may include loyal, strong, *gentle*, dedicated, selfless, and *unwilling* to kill at all. This is possible because people do not *subjectively* experience the self- concept in its entirety but rather as relatively discrete *self-images* which are dependent on "context." Different times, places, and circumstances render different self-identifications "salient" self-images.4
Social scientists commonly attempt to explain motivations, decisions, and behaviors by linking them to the identity of individuals, claiming that values, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors are influenced by specific group memberships. However, these explanations often oversimplify the complexity of individuals' life experiences and ignore the uniqueness of their self-conceptions. Instead, in any given context, individuals derive their self-conceptions from a network of "central life interests" comprising their

identities, beliefs, values, and attitudes.[5] Understanding the dynamic association between these central life interests and knowing which of them are most important to individuals' self-conceptions will help explain and predict behavioral choices.

This article begins by illustrating cognitive inconsistencies and identity tensions in the context of contemporary peace operations. Based on social identity theory, it examines the network of central life interests and develops a dynamic model of identity which assumes that identity, values, attitudes, and behaviors mutually influence one another. The model extends social identity theory by considering contextual variations in the salience and the potency of particular identities and renders a conceptual frame for recognizing sources of identity tensions and for developing resolution strategies. The final part of the analysis explores the effectiveness of different strategies for resolving cognitive inconsistencies in the context of peace operations.

THE CONTEXT OF PEACE OPERATIONS

Like war, peace operations are military enterprises serving political ends. But unlike war, they lack a focal enemy and, oftentimes absent clearly defined mission objectives, are typically conducted in an environment that is not well defined. There is much debate in military circles on how to differentiate among the growing array of "peace operations," that is the spectrum of military operations other than war (MOOTW) encompassing humanitarian assistance, preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peacekeeping, peacebuilding, and peace enforcement.[6] Military involvement in humanitarian assistance ranges from fostering a climate of security for civilian populations and supporting the work of humanitarian organizations in providing goods and services to those in need. Preventive diplomacy connotes actions that either prevent hostilities from arising or prohibit existing disputes from escalating into conflicts and limit the latter when they occur. Peacemaking describes actions designed to bring hostile parties to agreement, essentially through peaceful means as specified in Chapter VI of the United Nations Charter. Peacekeeping in the classical sense denotes the deployment of interventionary forces to prevent an existing dispute from re-igniting. Typically, peacekeeping operations are undertaken with the consent of all major parties to a dispute and normally involve United Nations forces. Peacebuilding or peace-maintenance operations are primarily diplomatic and economic post-conflict actions to help strengthen and rebuild governmental infrastructure and institutions and to avoid a relapse into conflict. Finally, peace enforcement activities stand in the gray zone between peace and war, using or threatening to use military force, typically pursuant to international authorization, to compel compliance with resolutions or sanctions designed to maintain or restore peace and order.[7]

Although it is quite possible to delineate peace operations on paper, in reality these distinctions are often much less clear. The international community's intervention in Somalia, for instance, included three distinct operational phases with different mandates and sets of resources.[8] UNOSOM I began in mid-1992 as a Chapter VI humanitarian relief and peacekeeping operation to alleviate the suffering that, by then, had already taken the lives of nearly half a million people. With the effects of the civil war

worsening, the UN authorized a US-led Chapter VII peace enforcement operation in December 1992 (UNITAF) with a mandate to enforce peace by "using all necessary means to establish as soon as possible a secure environment for humanitarian relief operations in Somalia."[9] By March 1993 it appeared that the situation in Somalia had stabilized. As a result, the Security Council authorized UNOSOM II which took the character of a peace-building mission covering the whole country and relying on the help of a reestablished Somali police force.

For the forces on the ground, transitioning between operational assignments meant continuous change in the mission and its objectives. To make matters worse, as mission objectives changed so did the rules of engagement (ROE), that is the norms and regulations that define the legitimate use of force and guide behavior during an operation. As a result, soldiers were oftentimes confused and felt unprepared to conduct the mission.

Sometimes, there would be changes in the Rules of Engagemet . . .. It gets confusing. At first, you get Rules of Engagement saying that if a guy breeches the wire just shoot to maim. That's not bad. Then a week later they say to shoot the knee bone and then a week later they say no between the knees and the foot. So you say what is it this week.

We had far too many ambiguous orders given to us and every day things would be changing. It's like playing telephone when you're a kid. By the time you get to the bottom, the message changes. Orders changed daily, so if you missed a day, you didn't know where you were. Shoot in the air, shoot in the ground. Shoot wherever. Don't shoot. That was a problem.[10]

Ambiguities in how to interpret the ROE were commonplace, leading not only to confusion and frustration but also to feelings of moral ambivalence. In her study of the CAR, anthropologist Donna Winslow observed tensions that arose from deploying combat soldiers to a peace operation. She concluded that "because civilized military training incorporates into its standards the notion that it is permissible to kill certain people but not others, feelings of ambivalence are likely to result among combat troops when faced with their ROE. This ambivalence may create an environment within which concepts of morality and legality become abstract, subject to varying situational definitions."[11] It is not surprising that in the constantly changing Somalia mission environment, some soldiers, confused by the mission objectives, searched for other cognitive frames of reference to come to terms with their peacekeeping assignment and to preserve stable self-conceptions. A number of US soldiers, for instance, employed a "warrior strategy," generalizing the behavior of local rioters to all Somalis (e.g., stereotyping them as lazy and uncivilized) and treating the entire population as potential enemies.[12]

Personal accounts of US peacekeepers in Bosnia also suggest that participating in peace operations may challenge the stability of established self-conceptions. These interview excerpts further illustrate the significance one's central identity images may have for behavioral choices.

A Second Lieutenant: We were taught how to sneak around these tanks quietly, surprise the enemy and destroy him in combat. But here we are supposed to stay out of combat by being obvious. To me, it's like teaching a dog to walk backwards.

A Sergeant: I'm a tanker, that's what I do, been one for 14 years. But let me tell you, those skills are perishable. You got to use them, and all I'm doing here is checking people's driver's licenses.[13]

SOCIAL IDENTITY AND THE NETWORK OF CENTRAL LIFE INTERESTS

Identifying with others who share common attributes is an important part of deriving one's sense of self. Social identity, Henri Tajfel suggested, is "that part of individuals' self concept which derives from knowledge of their membership in a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership."[14] Of course, individuals draw on multiple, sometimes even competing identity images to derive their self-conceptions. More important identities form a core that influences most decisions, whereas peripheral identities may affect decision-making only in certain circumstances.[15]

More than half a century ago, Prescott Lecky suggested that an individual's self-conception is "his only guarantee of security, its preservation becomes a goal in itself. He seeks the type of experience that confirms and supports the unified attitude and rejects experiences which seem to promise a disturbance of his attitude."[16] Consequently, people work deliberately to create and sustain stable self-conceptions and tend to be most invested in beliefs and attitudes that confirm those self-conceptions.[17] Christian Harleman illustrated the importance of reference group identifications for achieving mental stability during peacekeeping assignments.[18] "The existence of a family or loved ones, a healthy social life, sound personal finances, and an absence of personal dilemmas are conditions that contribute to a good soldier. This will provide a psychological resiliency and firmness which will assist in sound solutions of difficult situations that may be encountered."[19]

In a series of experiments psychologists William Swann and Robin Ely discovered that subjects' responses were significantly influenced by tendencies to verify their self-views and to confirm their expectations of others.[20] When people entered interactions with independent and sometimes conflicting agendas, they tended to resolve cognitive inconsistencies through a process of identity negotiation, enabling them to assume an identity for the duration of the interaction consistent with their self-conceptions.[21] Identity negotiation shapes social interactions and provides a tool for resolving cognitive inconsistencies that may arise from referencing conflicting identities. People tend to avoid behaving in ways that clash with an identity or value that is central to their self-conception. Furthermore, they will seek confirmation first for those identities and values that are most central to their self-conceptions. Robert Dubin described those identities, values, beliefs, and attitudes that shape individuals' self-conceptions as central life interests, that is "the set of activities about which each of us says: 'That is who I am,' and then invests all energies in realizing that 'I'."[22] Dubin suggested that individuals can

fulfill the demands of conflicting social or institutional role obligations because, as long as these activities and the cognitive and emotional responses they provoke are not central to the self, contradicting demands will not usually lead to crises of conscience. However, when core values or central identities are threatened, decisions will affect and may have lasting consequences for individuals' self-conceptions.

In Somalia, soldiers experienced what Thomas Britt described as a "conflict between the desire to follow orders to help members of the local population and their own convictions that it is important to help others who are less fortunate."23 One peacekeeper affirmed:

We had been trained to do peacekeeping. And we ended up with a mission that was totally different....[The] mission changed, and very quickly, we had to get ready, and we were gone. And of course, because of the change in focus, we never really had time to prepare ourselves for the task at hand, or for what might happen. The only thing we were prepared for, I think, when we left, was that we were going to war. So the peacekeeping role was totally gone. But that was the nature of the mission.24

Whether or not a particular identity image (male, Jewish, black, warrior, peacekeeper, etc.) is invoked in a given situation depends on how salient or accessible that identity is in the context. Sheldon Stryker conjectured that an individual's various identities exist in a hierarchy of salience that becomes consequential when a context invokes evaluations based on conflicting identity images.25 In these situations, Stryker argued, invoking one identity over others is a function not only of its salience, but also of the level of commitment to that identity. He hypothesized that the stronger the identity commitment, the more individuals perceived the identity as instrumental to their "wants." At the same time, the more committed individuals are to a particular identity, "the higher the probability of role performance consistent with the role expectations attached to that identity" and the greater the probability that they will seek out opportunities to perform consistent with the identity image.26

Extending Stryker's conception of identity, John E. Hofman specified salience as the probability by which a subidentity is remembered and activated in a given context.27 Prolonged salience enhances its "centrality," i.e., its importance among subidentities and the degree to which it interconnects with other subidentities. The stronger the identity's centrality the more committed individuals will be to preserving and enhancing that identity. Centrality and commitment influence the "potency" of a subidentity, i.e., how meaningful it is normatively and, consequently, how great its potential is for shaping attitudes, values, and behaviors.

What decisions soldiers make and how they perform during a mission will depend to a large extent on how they understand the mission. If the mission makes sense and confirms their self-conceptions, if members of their most important reference groups (family, friends, company, platoon, etc.) share this meaning, and if society at large supports the operation, motivation and performance will be high. If, on the other hand, soldiers invoke cognitive frames (e.g., warrior) that are ill-suited for a particular assignment (e.g., peacekeeping) morale, motivation, and performance might suffer.28 Individuals tend to internalize categories such as nationality, ethnicity, gender, social

class, occupation, religion, political ideology or military occupation specialty, unit, or regiment and focus on similarities with other members of the group. As a result, attitudinal and behavioral choices will be influenced by the correlation between group identification and group norms and values.29

Social Identity Theory

Human behavior is most immediately shaped by the cognitive frames, i.e., the categories, meanings, and beliefs, that individuals rely on to understand a given context. The stronger individuals' commitment to a particular group, the more potent the group identity becomes and the more they will perceive group norms and values as part of their self-conceptions. John Turner and colleagues conceptualized the identification process in three stages. First, individuals define themselves as members of social groups; second, they learn the stereotypical norms of those groups; and third, under conditions where a particular ingroup category becomes salient, they tend to employ the ingroup attributes to decide on the appropriate conduct in the given context.30

In a series of "minimal group" experiments Tajfel, Turner and colleagues discovered that even artificially created, trivial group labels significantly affected individuals' perceptions of one another.31 Most test-subjects consistently favored anonymous members of "their own group" at the expense of outgroup members. Since the experiments were set up so that group designation caused attraction, subjects liked or disliked others not as individuals but merely as members of ascribed groups. By showing that even the most trivial group affiliations can influence decisions and behaviors, minimal group experiments suggest that identification with normatively meaningful social reference groups would magnify the observed correlations between group identity and behavioral choices.

Military socialization exemplifies the process of self-categorization. Basic training, for instance, disconnects recruits from past social networks and established identities and develops new identities. Although recruits begin basic training as complete strangers, the extreme isolation from civilian society, an almost complete lack of privacy, and shared socialization experiences create a strong normative group bond among new soldiers. Depriving recruits of any alternative sources of meaning, basic training almost invariably forces them to adopt the "soldier" frame of reference.32

While peacekeeping is a relatively recent task for the US military (Somalia was only its second post-Cold War peace operation), Canada has had a long and much cherished record of peacekeeping going back to the end of World War II. Nevertheless, like its southern neighbor, "the Canadian army socializes members to its ideal (institutional) ethos of combat." Winslow found that "in this type of army [warriors assigned to peacekeeping] it is natural for some men to feel frustrated and unchallenged."33 One Airborne soldier observed, "The Airborne are trained to kill. Getting used to that is hard. They were a hard combat unit and they trained hard. An infanteer has to know everything about throwing a grenade or building road blocks or digging a trench."34 Winslow concluded that "in a highly stressed environment and with leaders giving mixed messages

about aggressive behaviour, perspective can be lost and extreme attitudes adopted."35
One soldier reflected on his Somalia experience:

It's a deep, personal dilemma. We all wanted to go to Somalia, not just to go to war. We would have hoped to go into battle, but it's very simple, we wanted to go bring food to the good guys and kill the bad guys. That's about it. If it had only been that simple, once we got there. They're all Black, who's who? They all look alike. Who's our friends, who's the enemy?36

Based on social identity theory, Marilynn Brewer argued that "social identity derives from a fundamental tension between human need for validation and similarity to others (on the one hand) and a countervailing need for uniqueness and individuation (on the other)."37 She viewed social identity as a compromise between assimilation with and differentiation from others, "where the need for deindividuation is satisfied within in-groups, while the need for distinctiveness is met through inter-group comparisons." This way, she conjectured, group identities enable individuals to be "the same and different at the same time." Of course, the degrees of assimilation and differentiation vary depending on the salience of particular life interests in a given context. For instance, Winslow found that, although Canadian soldiers in Somalia shared the same national identity, the CAR developed a distinct and inclusive regimental combat identity. Soldiers who were not able to meld into the Airborne group identity were excluded. Many CAR members reported pressure to become and remain part of the group.38 One CAR member observed, "The maroon beret is a very big deal. When you get to the Airborne, it's like brain washing, because after that, you spit on the green berets. You're maroon."39 In addition to their identity as CAR warriors, each of the three Airborne commandos had a distinct commando identity that became potent in situations when the outgroup was one of the other CAR commandos, as the following interview excerpts illustrate.

1 Commando was flavored by its French Canadian culture and linguistic specificity. It seemed to specialize in winning sports competitions. 2 Commando members portrayed themselves as the rebels, cowboys, wild ones -- 'the hardest meanest fighting section,' while 3 Commando seemed to maintain an attitude of quiet professionalism.

1 Commando is French, so that's a big distinction. 3 Commando is from the Maritimes. They were pretty friendly with the French .... 2 Commando, that's the gang of red necks from out West. They just hate the French. And they're the ones we had all the problems with. They were apart from the rest....That's where the conflicts started, the rebels on the one side, the fleur de lis on the other. And there was a time, in the eighties, when we were avoiding each other. But we worked together all right when we had to, like on a jump, the Regiment parachuted together. It's just our origins, our different ways of working, that kept us apart.40

Although both Turner and Brewer considered the importance of multiple identities and varying contexts for behavioral choices, they assumed identity to unidirectionally influence attitudes and behaviors, yet they neglected the significance of the dynamic interdependence among the various central life interests. What is needed is a model of social identity that: first, tests the validity of its assumptions within genuine social field settings; second, focuses research on identifications that are normatively meaningful to

subjects; third, assesses the salience and potency of multiple (and often competing) identity images in varying social contexts; and finally, examines the interdependent association between identity, values, and attitudes (i.e., conceptualizes identity both as a dependent and an independent variable).

The Dynamic Model of Identity

Figure 1 depicts identity as part of the dynamic network of central life interests. The underlying assumption is that identity (as represented by ingroup [Ii1, Ii2, ..., Iik] and outgroup identity images [Io1, Io2, ..., Iok]), values (V1, V2, ..., Vk), attitudes (A1, A2, ..., Ak), and behaviors (B1, B2, ..., Bk) are interdependent. They simultaneously shape and are shaped by individuals' self-conceptions. The dynamic identity model considers the salience and centrality of values and attitudes and takes into account the potency of multiple identity images. In any given context individuals tend to invoke those central life interests that reinforce their existing self-conceptions. The various subidentities, values, attitudes, and past behaviors inform individual preferences in that context, depending on how potent (as indicated by the size) and central (as indicated by the distance from the core) each is to the individual's self-conception. Valence is indicated by the sign preceding the central life interest (a negative sign indicates a negative connotation; no sign indicates that the identity invokes a positive connotation).

Figure 1: The Dynamic Model of Identity and the Network of Central Life Interests

The earlier example of the peacekeeper in Somalia can be used to illustrate the model. Identity images as a Christian (Ii1), warrior (Ii2), and peacekeeper (Ii3) may be central and potent to the soldier's self-conception. Thus, these subidentities are salient under most circumstances and will typically be evaluated positively (valence). Probable outgroups in the Somalia context might be Muslim (Io1), war clan (Io2), enemy soldiers (Io3), or perceived Somali looters (Io4). As a trained warrior the soldier may perform exceptionally well during the peace enforcement stages of the operation since neither central life interest is challenged in this context. When the mission shifts to peacekeeping or peacebuilding, however, the new identity image of peacekeeper may conflict with his core warrior identity.

The dynamic model of identity can be further illustrated using Britt's analysis of psychological ambiguities in peacekeeping.41 Britt developed a model to explain individual responsibility in diverse settings. He conceptualized responsibility as a transaction between a specific event (context) that has occurred or is anticipated (e.g., exam, mission, battle, training exercise), the prescriptions or rules (norms) that govern the event (e.g., ethical codes, group norms, ROE), and the identity images the individual invokes to make sense of the event and/or prescriptions (e.g., warrior, humanitarian, peacekeeper, Christian, parent). Events that allow soldiers to recall previous training experiences, rely on clear mission objectives and unambiguous ROE, and invoke uncontested identity images will render operational decisions fairly straightforward (e.g., invoking the warrior identity image during combat). Unfortunately, many peace operations present soldiers with rather fuzzy cognitive frames of reference.42

Moreover, soldiers differ in their view of the importance of and commitment to peace operations.43 Undoubtedly, these differences are a function of the importance soldiers place on the prescriptions (the norms and values) and the identity images associated with being a peacekeeper. Britt argued that the weaker the cognitive links between event, prescriptions and identity images, the lower the levels of commitment, motivation and performance.44 A weak prescription-identity link may exist, for example, when there is ambiguity in the ROE or when soldiers experience identity tensions or role conflicts. The continuously changing ROE during the Somalia mission and operational shifts between humanitarian relief, peacekeeping and peace enforcement indicates that for many soldiers on the ground prescription-identity links might have been weak. The identity- event link refers to the extent to which an individual feels he or she has control over the outcome. Britt found that soldiers who felt a "lack of control" during peacekeeping operations tended to be often less committed to the purpose of the mission. He cautioned that "rules of engagement that are overly restrictive can serve to make soldiers feel 'out of control,' thereby decreasing the soldier's belief in his or her efficacy to perform even the most basic behaviors."45 Britt concluded that psychological ambiguities during peace operations may be minimized and commitment to the mission maximized, "when a clear set of guidelines applies to the event (prescription-event link), the rules apply to the individual as a function of proper training (prescription-identity link), the individual has personal control over his or her performance on the event (identity-event link), and the event is viewed as important by the individual."46

Of course, whether or not soldiers experience identity tensions is not only a function of their group identifications. Their social identities correlate with their other central life interests, the potency of which is directly influenced by the unique alignment of identities, values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviors. Predicting how individuals will act in a situation when central life interests clash requires understanding the mosaic of cognitive, affective and behavioral motives that shape their self-conception. The following section attempts to extend the network of central life interests, and suggests ways in which the dynamic identity model could serve to understand, diminish and potentially help resolve cognitive inconsistencies. For illustration purposes I will again use the example of the peacekeeper, but the model can be extended easily to cognitive inconsistencies involving other social identities.

RESOLVING INCONSISTENCIES IN PEACEKEEPING

More than two decades ago, military sociologist Charles Moskos already detected identity tensions among UN "blue helmets" assigned to peacekeeping duties in Cyprus:

A British Officer: One thing makes a soldier different and better than anybody else. The thing which gives that dignity which nobody else can have is his respect for the man he is fighting. No civilian can ever have that. No soldier who hasn't fought can have it either. In peacekeeping the trouble is that you don't have any enemy, and this means you don't have any dignity as a soldier.

A Canadian Officer: Even in peacekeeping you need some trouble to keep the men happy. The more trouble there is, the more everybody enjoys peacekeeping. Without trouble peacekeeping runs against the grain of the soldier.[47]

How can cognitive inconsistencies between the peacekeeper and the warrior identities be resolved? In a classic study of belief dilemmas Robert Abelson suggested four modes for resolving cognitive inconsistencies.[48] I will assess in turn each strategy within the peacekeeping context:

Denial

In a strategy of denial, the commitment to one of the conflicting identities is denied (i.e., the valence of that identity is reversed) or identification with an outgroup is asserted. In the first case, soldiers faced with a decision to kill an enemy might deny their pacifist or humanitarian identity by justifying the use of lethal force in self-defense. Soldiers who employed a "warrior strategy" during the Somalia operation certainly denied their identity images as peacekeepers.[49] As for outgroup identification, Karen Dunivin observed that women in the US Air Force often distanced themselves from other women, feeling the need to exhibit non-feminine behaviors and attitudes in an effort to become accepted by their male counterparts. She concluded that "to assimilate into the masculine social world of the military the women subordinated and sacrificed their gender roles and identities to conform to male standards."[50]

Bolstering/Hyper-Investment

This strategy means that one of the conflicting identities is related to other central life interests so as to reduce dissonance. Soldiers may justify decisions to use force by claiming to act in pursuit of some greater good (e.g., restore peace and democracy, terminate an unjust regime, end civilian suffering) or by establishing congruities with previously experienced situations. For instance, many of the US peacekeepers deployed to the Balkans had initially been trained for combat missions. To resolve cognitive inconsistencies with their peacekeeper role and to maintain their self-conceptions as warriors, these soldiers sought identifications with more "appropriate, honorable roles." As a result, many imagined that they were stationed in Macedonia as reserve troops that could be quickly mobilized to fight in Bosnia if necessary.[51] Similarly, Winslow concluded that the training conditions in the Canadian Airborne Regiment deployed to Somalia led to a "hyper-investment" in the warrior identity. One of her interviewees noted, "a peace-making mission in Somalia finally offered an opportunity for some gung-ho members of the CAR to prove themselves in battle."[52] Another soldier reported, "I felt that members of 2 Commando were very gung-ho. Basically saying: 'I can't wait to kill my first black!' Some of them were trigger-happy and too aggressive."[53] While hyper-investment or bolstering may be adaptive during a war when the self needs to be sufficiently alienated from the enemy in order to justify his destruction and to live with the emotional and cognitive consequences, this strategy is not readily adaptive to peace operations. As individuals become progressively invested in the group identity, their

"capacity to relate to others outside of the group becomes significantly diminished and the potential for xenophobia increases."54

In a recent study, Shanna Levin and Jim Sidanius discovered that exhibiting more negative effects toward the low-status outgroup (i.e., local Somalis) and increasing identification with the high-status ingroup (the CAR or the individual commando unit) may enable high-status group members to simultaneously meet social dominance and social identity needs, thereby stabilizing their self-conceptions.55 Among US peacekeepers deployed to Somalia, white male combat soldiers showed the greatest propensity for stereotyping Somalis and adopting the warrior strategy, clearly bolstering their identity images as masculine warriors.56 Sadly, the death of Shidane Arone illustrates perhaps the most excessive effects of bolstering and outgroup denigration -- the CAR was predominantly white and exclusively male.

Differentiation

Within this strategy, one identity is split into discordant subidentities. Individuals acknowledge incongruities and establish continuities with other situations and/or prior experiences. This way, they can focus on a positively valenced subidentity and related values and, in so doing, preserve their self-conceptions. Although combat soldiers may feel unfavorably toward peacekeeping assignments or toward serving under UN command, they have sworn an oath to support and defend their nation. US soldiers, for instance, have pledged commitment to "political authority, loyalty, duty, selfless service, courage, integrity, respect for human dignity, and a sense of justice."57 Differentiation enables them to interpret their peacekeeping role as concordant with their identity image as military professionals. David Segal and Mady Weschler Segal have termed this process "normalization." They found that most soldiers interpreted peacekeeping not as part of a soldier's job, but as requiring qualities that only soldiers possessed, "most particularly, obedience and discipline."58

Britt found that soldiers often attempted to minimize threats to their self-conceptions resulting from psychological ambiguities they experienced in peacekeeping.59 Many of them either engaged in distracting activities (i.e., denial) or reinterpreted the situation in terms that provided them with a non-direct form of control (i.e., bolstering). However, Britt argued that, when soldiers "are faced with taunts and have to restrain their natural tendency toward aggression they should be encouraged to reinterpret the situation in a way that provides some form of secondary control over their situation."60 For example, invoking prior experiences, they could justify not using aggression to prevent a potential escalation of the conflict. Clear ROE and prior peacekeeping training will help provide cognitive tools for officers and soldiers to learn to differentiate among mission objectives without undermining their identity images.61

Transcendence/Integration

In this case, both conflicting identities are combined and subsumed under a superordinate identity, and the dilemma is resolved by embedding the discordant identities into a

comprehensive "superidentity" that, when potent, either resolves the tension or provides a cognitive justification for certain behavior. Military socialization and training that encourages positive evaluations of non-conventional assignments might prepare soldiers to view the peacekeeper subidentity as an integral part of their professional self-conceptions rather than merely as "a job that it takes a soldier to do."62 While integration strategies may not always resolve severe moral dilemmas, military socialization and training that exposes soldiers continually to employ different strategies for resolving cognitive inconsistencies may make them more effective peacekeepers.

Integrating the identity images of warrior and peacekeeper may help to avoid identity tensions that impacted the Somalia mission. Winslow argued that a strong group identity (e.g., with the regiment or unit) could be offset by discipline and leadership. She concluded "a truly elite unit with a strong sense of professionalism and discipline would, in fact, be less likely to commit aggressive acts against members of the out-group. This is because the individuals are invested in an [integrated, VF] identity which has components of self-discipline and ethics embedded in it."63 Individual soldiers and officers who view warfighting and peacekeeping as equally important components of their central life interests will more easily be able to switch among mission requirements without jeopardizing their self-conceptions.

CONCLUSION

Empirical research on cognitive inconsistencies has demonstrated that when conflicting values are unequal in strength or when one subidentity is significantly more central to the individual's self-conception than another, individuals tend to employ denial or bolstering strategies. The more individuals rely on monistic belief systems or ideologies, i.e., the more they view choices in black and white terms, the more they will tend to employ these simplistic strategies.64 However, simplistic strategies may be ineffective in situations where individuals perceive two discordant life interests as central and rank them as close to equal in importance. In situations of high value pluralism, people tend to turn to the more effort-demanding strategies of differentiation (distinguishing the context-specific impact of alternative choices on one's values and self-conception) and integration (developing rules or schemata for coping with value trade-offs or identity dilemmas independent of a specific context).65 Although socialization may not resolve identity tensions completely, differentiation and especially integration strategies, once learned, may be invoked more readily and may help to prevent indecision, resolve moral dilemmas, and avoid suboptimal behavioral outcomes.

Both Philip Tetlock and Thomas Britt illustrated the context-dependent nature of human information processing.66 Their research findings point to the importance of the interaction between contextual, social and personological factors that may influence some soldiers to rely on warrior strategies while others develop humanitarian strategies to make sense of the same situation. The relative uncertainty of the Somalia mission combined with a lack of cognitive preparation encouraged soldiers to employ denial or bolstering strategies to overcome conflicting identity images. But these strategies do not provide lasting solutions. By contrast, repeated exposure to scenarios that require soldiers to

employ more complex cognitive strategies will encourage them to negotiate among central identity images and to avoid or resolve identity tensions more effectively in new contexts.

As the Somalia mission illustrates, facing identity dilemmas for the first time on mission duty may stimulate denial or bolstering strategies. Early military socialization should stress the importance of combat and non-combat roles for the professional identity of post-Cold War soldiers. Training in differentiation and integration strategies may equip soldiers with more effective cognitive tools helping them negotiate their military identity, resolve cognitive inconsistencies, and make mission congruent decisions across operational assignments. Military socialization that teaches soldiers to invoke positively valenced identity images that are congruent with different mission objectives would add certainty to behavioral choices, especially in the non-conventional context of peace operations. Such cognitive preparation could diminish the need to bolster the warrior identity or to deny or normalize the peacekeeper identity and could motivate soldiers to negotiate a new military identity reflecting both combat and non-combat roles. As a result, soldiers would be able to rely on previously practiced integration strategies to help them resolve identity dilemmas more quickly and more effectively.

Rapidly changing strategic assignments, mission objectives, operational partners and norms governing the interaction context increasingly challenge soldiers' stable self-conceptions. As a result, it becomes increasingly critical for soldiers to organize their experiences and to negotiate among identity images. With increasing exposure to new roles, their self-conceptions will more and more reflect those roles. At the same time, they will be less likely to experience cognitive inconsistencies that might challenge their self-conceptions and pose severe dilemmas undermining their effectiveness in accomplishing the mission.

More generally, the conceptual arguments presented here yield a number of hypotheses that should be subjected to further empirical testing in different social settings:

1. The more central a group identity is, the more likely it is that individuals will experience that identity as potent, independent of situational context. In turn, this identity will be more potent for these individuals and they are more likely to engage in behavior relevant to confirming and stabilizing that identity.

2. The more strongly individuals rely on a single group identity in a given context, the more likely it is that they will engage in denial or bolstering strategies when this identity is threatened. Individuals who rely on multiple identities, on the other hand, will be more open to negotiate among their central life interests and employ differentiation and integration strategies.

3. Given close to equal importance of two or more conflicting identities, the more uncertain and novel a situation, the more likely it is that individuals will engage in simple resolution strategies (denial or bolstering). This suggests that in order to successfully maintain an identity in a new environment, "a person must develop new bases for

supporting that identity and, in the process, detach the identity from its supports in the former environment."[67] In order to maintain a stable self-conception, however, the individual must synthesize old and new experiences and resolve cognitive inconsistencies through differentiation or integration strategies.

4. Situations that pose identity dilemmas or require behavioral choices that are dissonant with a central identity will enhance the salience of that identity. Context, the specific alignment of identity images, and prior experience with resolving identity tensions will inform the choice of resolution strategy. The more novel the context, the more individuals rely on a monistic identity structure, or the less experienced they are with resolving cognitive inconsistencies, the more simplistic their resolution strategy will tend to be.

Testing these hypotheses in different social settings will yield important data on identity formation, on the sources of and resolutions to cognitive inconsistencies, and on the effects of reference group affiliations for decision-making. Moreover, this research would have significant implications for the study of social conflict. Apart from reducing identity tensions and resolving cognitive inconsistencies, training in differentiation and integration strategies may also increase tolerance and understanding among members of different social groups.

Although individuals may identify with different social groups in one context, they may share the same identity in another (e.g., the peacekeeper allied in a joint operation with soldiers from former enemy states). Recognizing shared bases of identification will allow them to accentuate similarities rather than differences. Focusing on a common identity, a shared purpose, or similar role commitments may permit members of conflicting groups to emphasize common experiences and comparable life interests rather than the differences that motivated the conflict in the first place. Learning to employ differentiation and integration strategies may not only help individuals to resolve cognitive inconsistencies without destabilizing their self-conceptions, it may also be an effective way to increase intergroup tolerance and compassion for others.

Endnotes

1. Maclean's, 28 March 1994, p. 2.

2. A military court eventually convicted the primary culprit of manslaughter and torture. The private was dishonorably discharged and sentenced to five years in jail. As a result of the government investigation into the deployment of Canadian forces to Somalia, the Canadian Airborne Regiment was disbanded on 4 March 1995.

3. Four decades ago, Samuel Huntington described military professionals as experts trained in the "management of violence." This training, Huntington found, developed a professional identity that legitimized officers' professional status and inspired their commitment to military service. See Samuel P. Huntington, The Soldier and the State (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1957), pp. 11-18.

4. Michael Hogg and Dominic Abrams, Social Identifications: A Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations and Group Processes (London: Routledge, 1988), pp. 24-25, emphasis in original.

5. See Robert Dubin, Central Life Interests: Creative Individualism in a Complex World (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1992).

6. The United States Department of Defense, for instance, distinguishes 16 types of MOOTW: arms control, combating terrorism, support to counternarcotics operations, enforcement of sanctions/maritime intercept operations, enforcing exclusion zones, ensuring freedom of navigation and overflight, humanitarian assistance, military support to civilian authorities, nation assistance, noncombatant evacuation operations, protection of shipping, recovery operations, show of force operations, strikes and raids, support to insurgency, and peace operations. See Michael Hardesty and Jason Ellis, "Training for Peace Operations: The U.S. Army Adapts to the Post-Cold War World," Peaceworks 12 (1997), p. 30. See also United States Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM 100-23): Peace Operations (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1994), pp. 2-12.

7. For detailed discussions of the range of peace operations, see Charles Kegley, "Thinking Ethically about Peacemaking and Peacekeeping," in T. Woodhouse, R. Bruce, and M. Dando, eds., Peacekeeping and Peacemaking: Towards Effective Intervention in Post-Cold War Conflicts (London: Macmillan, 1998), pp.17-38; Larry Minear, "Introduction to Case Studies," in N. Azimi, ed., Humanitarian Action and Peace-keeping Operations: Debriefing and Lessons (London: Kluwer Law International, 1997), pp. 43-66; Jarat Chopra, "Background Paper: Political Peace-Maintenance in Somalia," in N. Azimi, ed., Humanitarian Action and Peace-keeping Operations, pp. 99-123; Hardesty and Ellis, "Training for Peace Operations;" Boutros Boutros-Ghali, An Agenda for Peace, 2nd ed., (New York: United Nations, 1995); and Paul Diehl, International Peacekeeping (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993).

8. For a detailed account of the Somalia mission, see Lynn Thomas and Steve Spataro, "Peacekeeping and Policing in Somalia," in R. B. Oakley, M. J. Dziedzic, and E. M. Goldberg, eds., Policing the New World Disorder: Peace Operations and Public Security (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 1998), pp. 175-214; Donna Winslow, The Canadian Airborne Regiment in Somalia: A Socio-Cultural Inquiry (Ottawa: Canadian Government Publishing, 1997), pp. 157-90; and Chopra, "Political Peace-Maintenance in Somalia."

9. United Nations, Security Council Resolution 794 (1992), 3 December 1992.

10. Canadian soldiers quoted in Winslow, The Canadian Airborne Regiment in Somalia, pp. 210-11.

11. Ibid., p. 210.

12. See Laura L. Miller and Charles Moskos, "Humanitarians or Warriors?: Race, Gender, and Combat Status in Operation Restore Hope." Armed Forces and Society 21, no. 4 (Summer 1995), pp. 615-37. Heightened outgroup denigration ultimately may have contributed to the death of Shidane Arone. For detailed accounts of the impact of outgroup denigration on attitudes and behavior, see Shana Levin and Jim Sidanius, "Social Dominance and Social Identity in the United States and Israel: Ingroup Favoritism or Outgroup Denigration," Political Psychology 20 (March 1999), pp. 99-126; Jim Sidanius, Seymour Feshbach, Shana Levin, and Felicia Pratto, "The Interface between Ethnic and National Attachment: Ethnic Pluralism or Ethnic Dominance?" Public Opinion Quarterly 61 (1997), pp. 102-33; Jim Sidanius, "The Psychology of Group Conflict and the Dynamics of Oppression: A Social Dominance Perspective," in S. Iyengar and W. J. McGuire, eds., Explorations in Political Psychology (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 1993), pp. 183-219; and M. Sherif, O. J. Harvey, B. J. White, W. R. Hood, and C. Sherif, The Robbers Cave Experiment: Intergroup Conflict and Cooperation (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1988).

13. Mike O'Connor, "Does Keeping the Peace Spoil G.I.'s for War?" New York Times, 13 December 1996, p. A3.

14. Henri Tajfel, Human Groups and Social Categories: Studies in Social Psychology (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 255.

15. See Dubin, Central Life Interests; Marilynn B. Brewer, "The Social Self: On Being the Same and Different at the Same Time," Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin 17 (1991), pp. 473-82; Hogg and Abrams, Social Identifications; John E. Hofman, "Social Identity and Intergroup Conflict: An Israeli View," in W. Stroebe, A. W. Kruglanski, D. Bar-Tal, and M. Hewstone, eds., The Social Psychology of Intergroup Conflict: Theory, Research and Applications (Berlin: Springer Verlag, 1988), pp. 89-102; and Gordon W. Allport, The Nature of Prejudice (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1979).

16. Prescott Lecky, Self-Consistency: A Theory of Personality (New York: Island Press, 1945), p. 123.

17. See Daniel Kahneman, Paul Slovic, and Amos Tversky, eds., Judgment under Uncertainty: Heuristics and Biases. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

18. Christian Harleman, "Psychological Aspects of Peacekeeping on the Ground," in H. J. Langholtz, ed., The Psychology of Peacekeeping (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1998), pp. 101-10.

19. Ibid., p. 103, emphasis added.

20. See William B. Swann, Jr. and Robin J. Ely, "A Battle of Wills: Self-Verification Versus Behavioral Confirmation," Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 46 (1984), pp. 1287- 1302.

21. See also William B. Swann, Jr., "Identity Negotiations: Where Two Roads Meet," Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 53 (1987), pp. 1038-51.

22. Dubin, Central Life Interests, p. 3.

23. Furthermore, Britt concluded, "the prescriptions associated with the identity images of 'peacekeeper' and 'warrior' are themselves conflicting, and soldiers are often expected to adopt both types of identities during a single operation." Thomas Britt, "Psychological Ambiguities in Peacekeeping," in Langholtz, The Psychology of Peacekeeping, p. 119.

24. Winslow, The Canadian Airborne Regiment in Somalia, p. 198.

25. Sheldon Stryker, "Identity Salience and Role Performance: The Relevance of Symbolic Interaction Theory for Family Research," Journal of Marriage and the Family 30 (November 1968), pp. 558-64.

26. Ibid., p. 563.

27. Hofman, "Social Identity and Intergroup Conflict."

28. See Britt, "Psychological Ambiguities in Peacekeeping;" Miller and Moskos, "Humanitarians or Warriors?"; and David R. Segal and Mady Wechsler Segal, Peacekeepers and their Wives: American Participation in the Multinational Force and Observers (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1993).

29. See Levin and Sidanius, "Social Dominance and Social Identity in the United States and Israel;" Tom Woodhouse, "Peacekeeping and the Psychology of Conflict Resolution," in Langholtz, The Psychology of Peacekeeping, pp. 153-66; Sidanius, Feshbach, Levin, and Pratto, "The Interface between Ethnic and National Attachment;" Penelope J.Oakes, S. Alexander Haslam, and John C. Turner, Stereotyping and Social Reality (Oxford, UK and Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1994); Sidanius, "The Psychology of Group Conflict and the Dynamics of Oppression;" John C. Turner, Michael A. Hogg, Penelope J. Oakes, Stephen D. Reicher, and Margaret S. Wetherell, Rediscovering the Social Group: A Self-Categorization Theory (London: Basil Blackwell, 1987); Henri Tajfel, ed., Differentiation between Social Groups: Studies in the Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations (London: Academic Press, 1978).

30. See Turner et al., Rediscovering the Social Group, p. 181.

31. See Tajfel, Differentiation between Social Groups; and Turner et al., Rediscovering the Social Group. The authors referred to the social categories to which subjects were assigned as "minimal groups" because the experiments were designed so that: (1) the intergroup categorization itself was ad hoc and based on very trivial criteria; (2) there was no previous social interaction among subjects; (3) complete anonymity of group membership was preserved; and (4) there was no rational or instrumental link between

the subject's self-interest and/or the criteria for group classification and a strategy of responding in terms of ingroup favoritism.

32. Winslow, The Canadian Airborne Regiment in Somalia, p. 63. Military socialization at the United States Military Academy at West Point, for instance, provides cadets not only with physical skills intended to strengthen self-confidence, it also instills such martial values as aggressiveness, combativeness, self-discipline, team focus, the warrior spirit and respect for fair play. For further detail on Cadet Basic Training at USMA, see Volker C. Franke, Preparing for Peace: Military Identity, Value Orientations, and Professional Military Education (Westport, CT: Praeger, forthcoming); and Robert F. Priest and Johnston Beach, "Cadets' Values, Changes After Basic Training: A Ten-Year Comparison," paper presented at the 96th Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association in Atlanta, GA, 14 August 1988.

33. Winslow, The Candian Airborne Regiment, p. 66.

34. Ibid., p. 64.

35. Ibid., p. 248.

36. Ibid., p. 249.

37. Brewer, "The Social Self," p. 477.

38. Winslow, The Canadian Airborne Regiment in Somalia, p. 101.

39. Ibid., p. 105.

40. Ibid., pp. 143-44.

41. Britt, "Psychological Ambiguities in Peacekeeping."

42. See Laura L. Miller, "Do Soldiers Hate Peacekeeping?: The Case of Preventive Diplomacy Operations in Macedonia," Armed Forces & Society 23, no. 4 (Summer 1997), pp. 415-50; and Miller and Moskos, "Humanitarians or Warriors?"

43. See Volker C. Franke, "Old Ammo in New Weapons?: Comparing Value-Orientations of Experienced and Future Military Leaders," Journal of Political and Military Sociology 26 (Winter 1998), pp. 1-22; David R. Segal and Ronald B. Tiggle, "Attitudes of Citizen-Soldiers toward Military Missions in the Post-Cold War World," Armed Forces & Society 23, no. 4 (Summer 1997), pp. 373-90; and Charles Moskos, Peace Soldiers: The Sociology of a United Nations Military Force (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1976).

44. Britt, "Psychological Ambiguities in Peacekeeping," pp. 117-23.

45. Ibid., p. 122.

46. Ibid., p. 123.

47. Moskos, Peace Soldiers, pp. 126-29.

48. Robert P. Abelson, "Modes of Resolution of Belief Dilemmas," The Journal of Conflict Resolution 3 (1959), pp. 343-52.

49. See Miller and Moskos, "Humanitarians or Warriors?" The idea that anyone could be an "enemy" was reinforced right at the beginning of the Somalia mission. The Handbook handed to CAR members prior to deployment stated, "always remember, yesterday's allies can turn on non-vigilant groups if it is in their interest and they can get away with it. This is an unfortunate aspect of trust building in Somalia." Quoted in Winslow, The Canadian Airborne Regiment in Somalia, p. 246.

50. Karen O. Dunivin, "There's Men, There's Women, and There's Me: The Role and Status of Military Women," Minerva 6 (1988), p. 62.

51. See Miller, "Do Soldiers Hate Peacekeeping?"

52. Winslow, The Canadian Airborne Regiment in Somalia, p. 24.

53. Ibid., p. 123.

54. Ibid., p. 86.

55. Levin and Sidanius, "Social Dominance and Social Identity in the United States and Israel."

56. See Miller and Moskos, "Humanitarians or Warriors?"

57. Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 100-5: Operations (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1993), pp. 1-2.

58. Segal and Segal, Peacekeepers and their Wives, pp. 52-55.

59. Britt, "Psychological Ambiguities in Peacekeeping," p. 122.

60. Ibid., pp. 122-23.

61. The US Army, for example, has taken first steps to adjust its doctrine and expose troops to peace operations as part of regular training exercises. However, while the training of commissioned and non-commissioned officers focuses on tactical expertise, task and skill proficiency, attitude development, camaraderie and team building, and leadership competence, it does not yet integrate the roles of warrior and peacekeeper into

equally potent identity images. For further detail, see Hardesty and Ellis, "Training for Peace Operations."

62. See Franke, Preparing for Peace.

63. Winslow, The Canadian Airborne Regiment in Somalia, p. 266.

64. See Paul M. Sniderman, Richard A. Brody, and Philip E. Tetlock, Reasoning and Choice: Explorations in Political Psychology (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

65. See Philip E. Tetlock, "A Value Pluralism Model of Ideological Reasoning," Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 50 (1986), pp. 819-27.

66. Ibid. and Britt, "Psychological Ambiguities in Peacekeeping."

67. Kathleen A. Ethier and Kay Deaux, "Negotiating Social Identity when Contexts Change: Maintaining Identification and Responding to Threat," Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 67 (1994), p. 244.