HEROES IN HELMAND

MILITARY HEROISM AND NATIONAL IDENTITY IN DENMARK

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Introduction

In the beginning of 2017 around two hundred Danish soldiers were returning from Operation Inherent Resolve in Iraq and the Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan, where they had been training local forces. Following the practice of recent years, the uniformed men and (a few) women participated in a homecoming parade from Rosenborg Barracks to Copenhagen City Hall on March 3. Here they enjoyed the Town Hall Pancakes, which are traditionally served on special occasions and, as many Danes surely know, as an honour granted to national sporting heroes when they return to Denmark with international gold. Danish Defence transmitted the event on live camera via Facebook, where Defence TV also posted a video interview with the current prime minister, Lars Løkke Rasmussen. 'I am here today since my son has been in Iraq as First Lieutenant in the Reserve, so I am here as a relative,' the minister told the camera, while standing in front of the historic walls of Rosenborg Castle. For a few seconds viewers were exposed to footage of small groups of civilians (presumably other relatives) waiting for the parade and waving small national flags. Returning to the prime minister, we got an answer to a question we had not heard:

> Well, I think it's wonderful. You become proud – in this case on behalf of my son, you see, and, altogether, I think that Denmark has become still better to celebrate our heroes. And for me it is heroes we send off. Also I have enjoyed the privilege, *qua* my job, of following them closely. Well, not just this Team 4 that my son has been in, but also other teams. I was out to visit them in Iraq in December and got an impression of the huge difference they actually make when they train Iraqi forces to take care of the security of their own country. And for that we owe our uniformed women and men thanks. (Ramussen on Danish Defence, 2017)

The brief video continued with other interviews (with high ranking officers) and shots of the parade through the capital; the sound of martial music playing in the background. The video is interesting for a number of reasons: the public display of military power in a once non-militant country, the military's development of new traditions, the militarisation of 'old' national traditions, the significance of emotional (and, in the case just cited, biological) bonds between politicians and soldiers, the maxim of

'making a [more or less huge] difference', the armed forces as a source of national pride, the proclaimed 'heroism' of our soldiers, and the still new ring of the title 'hero' in Danish ears. In that light, the video captures some peculiar changes in Denmark since the end of the Cold War. It also captures many themes of this PhD dissertation.

The following pages introduce the four papers, which make up the body of the dissertation. I begin with a sweeping history of military heroism in Denmark, which serves as the empirical backdrop and justification of the project. After presenting my research question, I summarise the four papers and provide a chapter outline, which anticipates the dissertation's limitations and contributions.

A Brief History of Military Heroism in Denmark

In Denmark, the introduction of compulsory military conscription, public rituals and the reverence of classical and Nordic heroes merged in the late 18th century, as a political-military elite aimed to mould the population into nationally self-assured citizens with great loyalty to the state (Damsholt, 2000). A crucial instrument in this subjectification process was the book of heroes written by historian Ove Malling: *Store og gode Handlinger af Danske, Norske og Holstenere* [*Great and Noble Deeds of the Danes, Norwegians, and Holsteinians*]. On the basis of its many tales of native warrior heroes, Damsholt (2000: 106) suggests that 'civic virtue first and foremost had to do with the willingness to defend one's native country and to risk one's life in doing so'. As Denmark was a seafaring power and war at sea the speciality of its forces, Danish and Norwegian naval officers in particular were the object of reverence in the larger culture of patriotism up to the 19th century (Lyngby et al., 2010). Enlisted men and the land forces gained a more prominent role in public discourse during the First and Second Schleswig Wars of 1848-1851 and 1864, when foot soldiers were elevated into an incarnation of patriotic heroism and military self-sacrifice, as illustrated by the monuments to Den tapre landsoldat (The Brave Soldier) and Landsoldaten med den lille hornblæser (The Soldiers with the Little Horn Blower) (Adriansen, 2010: 97).

Denmark was reduced from a medium-sized power in the European theatre to a small nation by its defeats in 1807 and 1864. Denmark was forced to cede Norway, Schleswig, Holstein and Southern Jutland, and gradually the figure of the soldier hero and patriotic discourses of military

heroism faded away. Moving forward to 1993, Hedetoft (1993: 291) rightly declared that 'the Danes are not a heroic people. They do not have a glorious history. War memories and ultimate sacrifices do not form the very core of their national identity. Danes would not even like them to.' The unheroic and non-militant spirit had manifested itself in various ways: for instance, the Danish state did not award the army and navy men who had fought the German invasion on 9 April 1940 and in the brief exchange of fire when the negotiation policy broke down on 29 August 1943 (Jørgensen, 2005); during the 1980s Denmark became quite infamous in NATO, when the so-called footnote policy of the Social Democrats brought the small nation out of line with the deterrence policy of its larger allies (Friis, 2010: 778). Hedetoft (1993: 291) further described how the un-heroic spirit of Danes spilled over into the public image of the Danish soldier, commonly portrayed as 'an honest but blundering, upright but harmless fellow, an anti-hero donning his uniform for as brief a time as possible, subsequently to boast about the combination between ridiculous hardships and his personal ability to overcome them.'

Much has happened since 1993. Among other things, there has been a change of attitude to war and military power and what is frequently referred to as 'the new Danish military activism' (Kristensen, 2003). Major Danish military deployments include the operations in the Balkans, Iraq and, not least, Afghanistan, where Danish troops have experienced heavy fighting and severe casualties (see Table 1). Discarding their Cold War policy, Danish political parties have largely agreed on the use of

Table 1. Major Danish military deployments 1991-2014

Year	Location	Mission	Total deployments (deployed individuals)	Soldiers killed (combat-related)	Soldiers wounded
1991-2004	Balkans	UNPROFOR/IFOR/ SFOR	20,231 (13,288)	11 (5)	35
1999-2009	Balkans	KFOR	11,497 (8,546)	1 (0)	0
2003-2007	Iraq	DANCON	6,158 (4,381)	8 (6)	19
2002-2014	Afghanistan	ISAF	18,376 (10,216)	43 (37)	214

Note: Inspired by Kold and Sørensen (2013: 291). In addition to the above figures, there have been 11,109 total deployments (6,618 deployed individuals) and 5 fatalities (none combat-related) in connection to the international engagement of Danish Defence between 1991 and the present. Hence, the Danish campaigns in the Balkans, Iraq, and Afghanistan amount to 84% of the total number of deployments between 1991 and the present. The ISAF mission itself (beginning in 2002) accounts for 27% of the total number of deployments, 63% of all fatalities, and 80% of all wounded in the post-Cold War missions.

Source: Danish Ministry of Defence (2016a).

military force in the international arena since the 1990s.[1] Even the decision to join the intervention in Iraq, with only a small majority in Parliament and without support from the UN or NATO, did not generate strong resistance in Denmark, in contrast to the UK and US. As Friis (2010: 818-819) points out, the 'opposition was against, but not so much that it mattered ... [and it was] not important enough to become a theme in the parliamentary election campaign of 2005 and 2007.' Adding to this, *Gallup* surveys suggest that Danes have grown fond% embraced the country's engagement in the alliance in 1998 (Friis, 2010: 797-798). Also Danish support for the mission in Afghanistan has been the staunchest in the coalition despite the highest rate of casualties per capita (Jakobsen, 2013). Unlike the UK and US, Denmark had no tradition of military honouring. Yet, this seems to have changed:

- Denmark held its first National Flag Day for Danes Serving Abroad on 5 September 2009. Returning from deployment in Afghanistan in 2016, a Danish officer K.E. Thygesen proposed that Denmark should have a day of military honouring in line with the UK and US, both close allies in Afghanistan. Eventually Danish politicians agreed on a neutral date, on which veterans have since been celebrated (Reeh, 2011: 241). The day has involved homecoming parades, church services, wreath laying, and public speeches in front of the Parliament and in many provincial towns. Participants come from the highest level of government and the Danish royal family (Christensen, 2016; Sørensen og Pedersen, 2012).

- The repatriation of fallen Danish soldiers has become a focal point in media coverage and political discourse (Martinsen, 2013; Rasmussen, 2011: 2011: 98–110; Åse and Wendt, 2018). Official representatives of the armed forces, government and national church have been present at the official reception of the dead in Denmark and at soldiers' funerals, where the coffin has been cloaked in the national flag and patriotic and Christian songs sung: *Det var på Isted hede*, *Kongernes konge* and *Altid frejdig når du går,* which, among other things, conjure national military history. In 2007, the Defence Minister inaugurated Denmark's first national monument for soldiers

[1] Denmark's radical left party the Red Green Alliance has been an exception to the general tendency, since its members in parliament have voted against most such decisions with the exception of the decision to join the UN peacekeeping intervention in Ethiopia and Eritrea in 2000, to send fighters and weaponry to Libya in 2009, to let a naval ship take part in the NATO Ocean Shield operation against piracy at the Horn of Africa in 2009, and let four F-16 Fighting Falcons participate in the NATO campaign against Colonel Gadaffi in Libya in 2011.

who had died abroad, among other things with reference to the request of veterans‘ associations, bereaved families, and foreign state visitors (Sørensen, 2017: 31). HM Queen Margrethe II inaugurated the Monument to Denmark’s International Effort since 1948 on 5 September 2011. Located at Kastellet in Copenhagen, the monument consists of a front wall in granite with the inscription ‘En tid – et sted – et menneske’ (One time – one place – one human being), an eternal flame, and two memorial sections with the names of the mission fields and the dead (Danish Ministry of Defence, 2016b). Besides this monument, Danish Defence has built at least ten local monuments on its own premises since the beginning of the millennium (Veterancentret, 2016a).

- The Danish Ministry of Defence has introduced new medals, which together with medal parades and a wall of honour at Danish barracks have acquired status in honouring individuals as well as veterans as a group. Before 1991, the armed forces mainly awarded military personnel for long faithful service, while those deployed received the United Nations Medal or the NATO Medal for time abroad (Stevnsborg, 2005). Currently 24 medals can be awarded, of which 16 have been recently introduced. Nine of the new decorations recognise individual prowess, bravery, and self-sacrifice. The most prestigious, the Tapperhedskorset (Cross of Valour), was launched in 2010, officially compared with the British Victoria Cross and the American Congressional Medal of Honor, and has been awarded once (Danish Ministry of Defence, 2017). Moreover, the Ministry of Defence has introduced the Forsvarets Medalje for Internationel Tjeneste (Forces Medal for International Service), which has been given to all veterans since 2010. From 2015, a similar decoration has also been given to the around 30,000 Danes who were deployed between 1948 and 2009 (Danish Ministry of Defence, 2017; Danmarks Radio, 2015; also see *Appendix 1*).

- In 2010, Parliament enacted the Danish veterans policy (Danish Ministry of Defence, 2016c). With an annual budget of 25 million DKK, the policy is a framework around the organisation of initiatives in support of veterans, considered as a distinct group in Danish society and officially defined as those who have been deployed in at least one international operation on behalf of the Ministry of Defence (ibid.). The 2010 policy introduced 19 initiatives to enhance the recognition of veterans generally, their effort and needs; to create a more holistic approach, whereby soldiers and veterans are supported before, during and after deployment; to integrate family members into the

> support effort; and, at last, to improve the coordination of treatment and support for the wounded with an eye to individual needs and resources. The founding of the Veterans Centre, veterans' housing opportunities, and the official recognition of psychological wounds in line with physical injuries are typically highlighted as concrete outcomes of the policy (Veterancentret, 2016b).

Besides this formal acknowledgement, Danish soldiers have become quite visible in the media, appearing under such headlines as 'The hero from Musa Quala' (Svendsen, 2008), 'The Danish heroes' (BT, 2013), and 'A Danish act of heroism' (Landert, 2013). Civilians have had the opportunity to experience life on the front line in Janus Metz' *Armadillo* from 2010 and the TV documentary *Min Krig* (*My War*) (DR3, 2014), or, alternatively, enjoy how Danish Afghanistan veterans were transformed from cripples to racing drivers in the TV production *Jason og soldaterne (Jason [Watt] and the Soldiers)* (TV2, 2013). *I morgen angriber vi igen* (*Tomorrow We Attack Again*) by journalist Kim Hundevadt (2008) presented its readers with a noble fight of Danish troops in the Green Zone in Helmand Province. Also there has been a growing body of memoirs written by the new war generation, besides a flurry of war novels that typically depict a likeable young male veteran with a broken soul (Rothstein, 2014). To standing ovations, disabled veterans have danced in a war ballet at the Royal Danish Theatre (Mors, 2016), while the Museum of National History has invigorated the tradition of the battle painting (Gade, 2017) and the Danish Arsenal Museum tried to give the public a true Helmand experience in the exhibition *Den fjerne krig* (*The Distant War*) (Daugbjerg, 2017).

Once again Danish soldiers figure in public discourse, honoured as figures of national prowess (Martinsen, 2013; Rasmussen, 2010; Reeh, 2011; Åse and Wendt, 2018). The German sociologist Elias (2000: 8) once noted that national concepts and national symbols 'gradually die when the functions and experiences in the actual life of society cease to be bound up with them,' but added that 'At times, too, they only sleep, or sleep in certain respects, and require a new existential value from a new social situation' (ibid.). The end of the Cold War seems to have created a new social situation of this kind, or *awakening* to remain with the metaphor. The Danish soldier is no longer an 'anti-hero' in public discourse (Hedetoft, 1993: 291), but nor would today's praises of soldierly professionalism, humanitarian goals and eagerness to make a difference rather than nativity and love of country suggest that the new existential – or heroic – value of the soldier figure bears witness to the return of an earlier patriotism. What then is the relationship between military heroification and Danish national identity

today? I will try to elucidate the question from the perspective of a meaning-orientated, or cultural, sociology, while maintaining both a historical dimension and the importance of socio-political structures for the analysis of it.

Research Question

Prompted by the change in the public discourse on Danish soldiers and the occurrence of the term 'hero' in this regard, I will here pursue the following research question: *what characterises Danish discourses of military heroism, and how are they bound up with broader discourses and structural changes?* To narrow down the notion of *broader discourses* and *structural changes*, I have focused on the following three themes: (1) changes in the external relations between Denmark and other states, (2) changes in the internal relations between the state, its military, and the citizens, and (3) changes in expressions of national belonging, ideals and values. These themes have been gradually developed and refined on the basis of reading the scholarly literature on heroism, the military and national identity, besides engaging in analytical work. Hence, I have followed an 'abductive research strategy' (Timmermans and Tavory, 2012), where theoretical concerns and empirical engagement inform each other during the research process.

While the objective here is to advance our knowledge of military heroism and national identity in Denmark from a sociological point of view, I draw on literature from many disciplines. Weber (1946: 134–135) once warned us that explorations transgressing disciplinary boundaries, such as I attempt here, should be carried out 'with the resigned realization that at best one provides the specialist with useful questions upon which he would not so easily hit from his own specialized point of view'. Recognising that this type of 'work must inevitably remain highly imperfect' (ibid.), my objective here lies not in a complete – or nearly complete – covering of the linkage of military heroism and national identity in Denmark, but in bringing together theories, themes, and types of data that are infrequently brought together. In so doing, the dissertation brings into focus issues that have been largely ignored by more specialised researchers. This includes the multidimensional feature of heroism (Paper 1), the dependency of heroic figures and the notion of military heroism on the external relations and the survival strategies of states (Paper 2), and the significance of the heroic and nationally orientated discourses in transnational interventions such as that in Afghanistan (Papers 2 to 4).

Outline of the Four Papers

Here I summarise the main argument and theoretical coherence of the four papers: the first provides a brief history of social theories about heroism, which forms the backdrop of the three analytical papers, in which I explore the configuration of military heroism and national identity in different spheres of Danish society.

Paper 1 reviews the study of heroism, which has been closely tied to the origin and development of sociology. However since there is no self-conscious tradition of research on heroism, sociologists interested in the heroic have been confronted with a fragmented body of literature. To create a more organised discussion, Paper 1 looks into four dominant perspectives in the sociology of heroism: the study of great men; hero stories; heroic actions; and hero institutions. The discussion ties together heroism and fundamental sociological debates about the relationship between the individual and the social order; it elucidates the socio-psychological, cultural/ideationaland socio-political structuring of heroism, a process which challenges the tendency to understand people, actions and events as naturally, or intrinsically, heroic; and it points to a theoretical trajectory within the literature, which has moved from very exclusive to more inclusive conceptualisations of a hero. An examination follows of three problematic areas in the sociology of heroism: its underlying masculine character; the presumed disappearance of the hero with modernisation; and the principal idea of heroism as a socially positive phenomenon. A more self-conscious engagement with this legacy, which could stimulate dialogue across different areas of sociological research, is surely desirable. On this basis, Paper 1 places the following three analytical papers within a broader theoretical discussion. As a contribution to

Table 2. The four papers in the dissertation

No.	Paper title	Journal (first published)
1	What makes a hero? Theorising the social structuring of heroism	*Sociology* (April 2018)
2	'But when I tell them about heroes, then they listen': the soldier hero and transformations of the Danish welfare state	*Acta Sociologica* (December 2016)
3	Post-heroic warfare revisited: meaning and legitimation of military losses	*Sociology* (January 2017)
4	Armadillo and the Viking spirit: military names and national myths in transnational military interventions	*Critical Military Studies* (May 2017)

that discussion, the following Papers 2 to 4 aim at strengthening our understanding of how ideational and socio-political structures impinge upon heroic discourses.

Paper 2 contributes to the literature on the social construction of heroes by bringing the state into the centre of the analysis. If we wish to understand why specific notions of heroism emerge and attain legitimacy, it is not enough, I here argue, to consider how individuals, groups, deeds or virtues are recognised as heroic *within* society, since heroification processes are bound up with larger dynamics *between* states. I explain what Elias (1978, 2001) meant by the state as a 'survival unit', and how this concept can advance our knowledge of heroes with a theoretical perspective that foregrounds the dynamic figurations in the international system of states to explain the emergence and transformation of heroic discourses. Developments in Denmark are here a case in point. Through an analysis of prime ministerial New Year addresses from World War II to the present, Paper 2 connects the rise of the soldier hero in Denmark with the elevation of professionalism, self-motivation, individual responsibility and global outlook into civic virtues since the 1990s. Utilising Elias' survival unit, the paper argues that this elevation has been preconditioned by the gradual development of the 'competition state' (Cerny, 2010; Pedersen, 2011) and the 'security state' (Kaspersen, 2013) strategies for sustaining the Danish welfare state in the wake of growing internationalisation, and that the soldier figure has come to reconcile these seemingly contradictory strategies.

Before recapitulating the remaining part of the dissertation, it is appropriate to explain the coherence of the three analytical papers. Put briefly, Paper 2 provides the historical and theoretical background of Papers 3 and 4, which both take a closer look at what is going on inside the military. While Elias' concept of the survival unit does not figure prominently in these papers, it does serve to illustrate how in-group dynamics are tied to external relations: both the relations between the Danish state and its defence, and the relations between the Danish Army and Denmark's coalition partners. To that extent I have used Elias' relational way of thinking as a general framework that captures how the relations *between* states underpin the formation of meaning *within* smaller social units and, in the concrete case, the discursive formation of heroism in the Danish Army. I have analysed this formation by using Berger's (1967) concept of 'nomizing' and Blumenberg's (1985) theory of the 'work on myth', which are in themselves much in line with a Durkheimian approach. While this approach considers the symbolic universe and the social coherence of a group of people to be the result of their coming together, Elias' relational perspective brings into view the somewhat limited conclusions drawn

by pure-bred Durkheimians, as it widens the perspective and elucidates how the external relations of groups and their state precondition meaning-making and integration processes within that group. It follows that Paper 3 and Paper 4 serve to illustrate the importance of the relational approach developed by Elias and elaborated later (Højrup, 2002; Kaspersen, 2013; Reeh, 2011, 2016).

To test the scope of the political discourse on the Danish soldier, the two following papers explore discourses of military heroism within the Danish Army. While Paper 2 concerns the honouring of soldiers and veterans as a (constructed) whole, Paper 3 focuses on a very distinct band of heroes, a group to which politicians, journalists and military personnel have paid extraordinary attention: the fallen. As this euphemistic label reminds us, discourses of heroism are time and again evoked in dealing with fatalities. Paper 3 brings this to the fore, analysing the obituaries produced by the Army in memory of soldiers killed in World War II and in the campaign in Afghanistan. The paper shows that a 'good' military death is no longer conceived of as a patriotic sacrifice, but is instead legitimised by an appeal to the unique moral worth, humanitarian inspiration and high professionalism of the deceased. This appeal is basically in line with the official political discourse, found in Paper 2, and so there is no reason to assume, as seems to be the case in the literature on post-heroic warfare, that the remembrance of dead servicemen has been detached from broadly recognised norms and civic virtues. On the contrary, the Danish case may illustrate that a predominant order of meaning, what Berger (1967) called the 'nomos', may underpin and not *by default* undermine ideals of military heroism and self-sacrifice today. On this basis, Paper 3 proposes that the losses in Helmand have invoked a sense of *post-patriotic heroism* instead of a *post-heroic crisis*.

To bring home a little further the extent to which the post-patriotic discourse rules in today's expeditionary forces, Paper 4 turns to a more elusive way of constructing heroism. Based on a case study of the Danish experience as part of Task Force Helmand, the paper looks at how military names form part of a broader process of the construction of meaning, or what Blumenberg (1985) termed the 'work on myth', since names function as principal devices for creating, reproducing and transforming cultural narratives. First, I explore how the base named Armadillo relates to the heroification of Anders Storrud, a Danish Major who was killed in Afghanistan in 2007. Second, I elucidate how the Viking names of Danish bases, units and operations have brought stories of national origin, heroic greatness and warrior ancestry into the banal space of life abroad. While the case of Armadillo conforms to the findings of Papers 2 and 3, Viking mythologies rather evoke combativeness

and strength as core military values. On this basis, Paper 4 stresses the fecundity of national images and values as a source of meaning in transnational military operations, but it also brings into focus a gap between some men on the ground, and official political discourses. The polyphonic nature of military heroism is further addressed in the concluding chapter of the dissertation.

Chapter Outline

The next chapter reviews the research literature and defines the key theoretical concepts in play throughout my papers. Among other things, it elucidates how the dissertations delivers a nationally specific investigation of international research themes, while contributing to Danish studies by situating current discourses of military heroism and national identity within a longer time frame on an empirical basis. The following chapter concerns methodological issues. I describe my research design through a discussion of case selection, data sources, and analytical strategies. In the course of the chapter, I will touch upon questions of validity, possible bias, and the more general value of my findings. A key point here is that my investigation of previously unexplored sources and unconventional types of data may illuminate new areas of the cultural ramification of Denmark‘s military engagement, and, perhaps, encourage a more imaginative use of data in military sociology, but that my empirical material is rather restricted, which may limit the general value of my conclusion. The chapter ends with a brief note on research ethics.

The four papers are followed by a final chapter, which provides a brief summary and concluding discussion. First, I elaborate somewhat on the conclusion reached by each paper, brought together with studies by others, to develop ‘cross-contextual generalities’ (Mason, 2002: 125). I will try to make a coherent argument about the emergence of a discourse of post-patriotic heroism and its link to broader discourses and structural changes. I then turn to the discourses of patriotic heroism and warrior heroism. Although they do not loom large in my analyses, they are important to my conclusion, since they bear witness to the existence of more than one discourse of military heroism, while emphasising the context-dependent relationship between that heroism and national identity. A critical perspective follows these discussions. Here I illuminate anti-heroic discourses on Danish soldiers, thus emphasising the contested nature of heroification of the military, and point out three pertinent areas of

research, all of which bear on the general value of my conclusion. Finally, I round off with a brief note on future discourses of military heroism.

Theory

What makes a hero? Is it greatness? If so, Napoleon Bonaparte would be one, playing as he did a unique role in introducing the educational, legal, and military system adhered to in many countries today. If we understand heroism as the willingness to sacrifice your own life to help others, Napoleon would be less fitting. Here Mother Teresa would be a better example. As would Staff Sergeant Salvatore Giunta, throwing himself into enemy fire to pull two wounded comrades back to safety during a Taliban ambush in the Korengal Valley in 2007. But does a hero really need to be *that* daring? What about our teachers, doctors and nurses helping people every day? What about our top athletes and best brains; poets, musicians, and movie stars? And while we are at it, does a hero even need to be real? Are Tarzan and Jane, Luke Skywalker and Princess Leia, Rambo, or Lara Croft not heroes and heroines too?

Although most people know, or feel, what a hero is, there is little consensus about the precise meaning of the term. This is evident too if we read the scholarly literature, where historians, military researchers, sociologists, psychologists and others have expressed and assessed definitions of heroism for more than a century. A limited discussion of theories and research on heroism also fills the following pages, as I explain my theoretical-analytical approach and key concepts. In particular, I draw on Elias' relational thinking and labours in cultural sociology and Critical Discourse Analysis. Yet prior to this, I engage three areas of research with special reference to the objective of the dissertation. Here I take a look at some of the international currents in the study of soldier heroes, elucidate what has been written in a Danish context, and discuss the literature on post-heroic warfare. Against this background, it is possible to locate the dissertation and point to its eligibility within the wider field of research with more clarity.

Research Background

In the following, I briefly discuss the research literature of particular importance to the issue of my dissertation. First, I outline some of the dominant themes in the larger study of military heroism. As my dissertation explores a national-specific case, I then search out what has been written on the relationship between the public image of soldiers and the construction of national identity in Demark.

On this basis, I emphasise that there is a need of cultural analyses with a stronger historical focus. Third, I engage in a discussion on theories of post-heroism that point to a fading of discourses of military heroism, which is seen as a response to modern warfare. Contrary to this history of decline, I argue that it is more productive to look at the social construction of the heroic, since this perspective brings into focus the dynamics of heroism.

International Currents

A quick glance at the scholarly literature on military heroism reveals that the issue relates to a series of subject-specific themes. As a way of introduction, I will provide a brief overview of the thematic treatment of military heroism across academic disciplines. In so doing, I locate the present dissertation in relation to broader tendencies within the international research on soldier heroes to which it contributes with a nationally specific investigation that falls within more common topic (i.e. national commemoration and military casualties) and conflicts of interest (i.e. the Second World War and the recent mission in Afghanistan).

Copying the approach of Warburg (2004:127), I have conducted a quantitative content analysis based on a systematic collection of research literature. I have collected items through the Social Science Citation Index (accessed 26 April 2018), in which I have searched for 'hero', 'heroes', 'heroine', 'heroines', 'heroic' or 'heroism' and 'soldier' or 'soldiers' in the title or résumé of English papers within every discipline from 1900 to 2018, thus discarding non-English literature, book reviews, comments, and conference papers. A reading triage reduced the resultant 93 papers to 53[2] that were almost evenly published within the fields of history, international relations, political science, and sociology. Table 3 presents the 53 papers, broken down by frequency from highest to lowest and divided into three main categories: *topic*, *conflict*, and *country*. Each paper is placed in only one subcategory, which has necessitated some difficult choices, especially in the case of the subcategories military casualties and national commemoration, since there is overlap between the former, which denotes discourses, practices and attitudes towards dead soldiers, and the latter that focuses on the

[2] I removed my own Paper 2 during the reading triage, as the aim of this literature review is to situate *my* dissertation within the research of *others*.

Table 3. Themes in international research on soldier heroes (n = 53)

Divided by topic	Divided by conflict	Divided by country
Military casualties (11)	Second World War (13)	USA (15)
Veterans (9)	First World War (10)	Europe (14)
National commemoration (8)	Afghanistan and Iraq (9)	Israel (5)
Combat motivations (6)	None (10)	None (5)
Female soldiers (5)	Other (11)	Other (14)
Other (14)		

Note: Inspired by Warburg (2004: 127).

Source: Social Science Citation Index (accessed 26 April 2018).

national, symbolic significance of particular groups or individuals, of whom quite a few have been killed violently. The division is relevant, however, as it captures the focus of each paper and the overall field. As this analysis does not include books and minor journals that are not contained in the research database, the following deals with only an important fragment of the literature of relevance. Other pieces are included in later discussions.

Considering the choice of topic presented by Table 3, it appears that military casualties, national commemoration, veterans, combat motivation, and female soldiers make up 74 per cent of the topics. Military casualties are the most popular subjects at 20 per cent, whereas veterans are investigated in 17 per cent. The study of veterans is divided equally between public discourse on veterans and veteran experiences; both approaches frequently discuss military heroism in relation to marginalisation, psychological problems (either PTSD or shell shock) and abuse. Fifteen per cent explore soldier heroes in national commemoration: both groups, for instance, of Anzac soldiers (in this case Australian) and individuals, such as Evgenii Rodionov (Russia), Mark Graham (Canada), and Joseph Trumpeldor (Israel). Combat motivations and female soldiers remain smaller themes, each around 10 per cent of the total. Combat motivations concern what leads to bravery on the battlefield, encompassing both commanders (what determines good leadership in particular) and enlisted men (what determines self-sacrifice in particular), while the study of female soldiers elucidates the underlying masculine understanding of military heroism. This is done by examining media representations of female soldiers, or by offering a voice to the women in uniform, both of which show that heroic discourse typically forms part of the discrimination affecting them. Other papers focus on military heroism in relation to the legitimisation of war (three papers), recruitment campaigns (two

papers), and child soldiers (two papers), among other things. It is as well to note that many papers touch upon more than their main topic: recurring areas of interest involve gender, national identity, and collective memory.

Table 3 also shows that hero studies primarily focus on the two world wars and the so-called War on Terror, as it is fought in Afghanistan and Iraq. Approximately one quarter of the papers explore military heroism in the Second World War, while one sixth go into the trenches of the preceding conflict, focusing on shell-shocked veterans and the Tombs of the Unknown Soldier. Five papers examine military heroism in relation to the transnational military intervention in Afghanistan, three go into Iraq, while two engage both countries. Other conflicts cited are the American Civil War, the Arab–Israeli War of 1948, the Yugoslav Wars, and the Chechen–Russian conflict of the 1990s, just to mention a few. One fifth of the items do not relate military heroism to any particular war, as they discuss abstract issues, such as casualty phobia, PTSD symptoms, and tropes in the legitimisation of warfare. Most papers also focus on the soldier heroes of western countries. One third of the papers concern the US and its forces. The same goes for Europe considered as a whole. Yet here the UK has attracted the most attention with just four papers, which means that Israel is the best-illuminated empirical-geographical area next to the US. Few papers concern the armed forces in Africa (4), Asia (3) and Central America (1).

Danish Studies

There is no shortage of military research in Denmark. Researchers have examined the political and strategic dimensions of Denmark‘s participation in the distant wars (Kaspersen, 2013; Kristensen, 2013; Rasmussen, 2005, 2011), the role of the Danish media in this context (Hjarvard and Kristensen, 2014; Kristensen and Ørsten, 2006), and the professional ethos, personnel motivations, demographic characteristics, and typical problems of servicemen and veterans (Lyk-Jensen et al., 2012; Nørgaard, 2004; Pedersen, 2017). Summing up the literature on the military about-turn of Denmark since the end of the Cold War, Daugbjerg and Sørensen (2017: 2) have found that between the ‘two already existing research trajectories [i.e. policy-analysis and psychological studies], focusing respectively on systems and individuals, a significant gap can be found regarding the understanding of the social and cultural meanings and ramifications of the new wars on the (ill-defined) "home front"’. Yet there is a growing

body of literature that focuses on the cultural meaning of the new wars, some of it relating directly to heroic discourses on Danish soldiers. Them I look at below.

In Denmark, research on military heroism pays special attention to cultural changes on the home front in the wake of the participation of Danish troops in the operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Methodological approaches include fieldwork (Christensen, 2014; Daugbjerg, 2016; 2017; Sørensen, 2017; Sørensen and Pedersen, 2012), analysis of texts (Christensen, 2016; Reeh, 2011; Åse and Wendt, 2018), and the examination of pictures and footage (Gade, 2017 Knudsen and Stage, 2012; Mortensen, 2016). As illustrated by Table 4, the empirical objects of research can be divided into two generic topics (national commemoration and military casualties) and two discursive levels (official and unofficial). All items mentioned in the table deal with the meaning the national/domestic setting and

Table 4. Empirical areas covered in the study of the public image of Danish soldiers as heroes in the post-Cold War era

Topic/discursive level[1]	Official	Unofficial
National commemoration	Flag-flying day Christensen, 2016 Reeh, 2011 Sørensen and Pedersen, 2012	Museum exhibitions Daugbjerg, 2017 Gade, 2017
	Remembrance of 1864 Christensen, 2014 Daugbjerg, 2017	War porn Mortensen, 2016
Military casualties	Soldier repatriation Martinsen (2013)	Newspaper coverage Åse and Wendt, 2018
	National monument Adriansen, 2010 Sørensen, 2017	Grassroots memorials and tombstones Sørensen, 2017
		Online tribute videos Knudsen and Stage, 2012

Note: [1]Official and unofficial discourses are understood as two contrasting ideal types. Official discourse emanates from the ruling circles in Parliament, the Ministry of Defence, and Danish Defence, whereas unofficial discourse denotes discursive formations outside the direct control of government and the forces. National commemoration focuses on the national, symbolic significance of particular groups or individuals, while military casualties refer to the discourses, practices and attitudes towards dead soldiers studied. The four categories of the field are not clear-cut, but represent the main focus of the studies mentioned.

the international and distant character of military operations. All studies highlight the importance of military activism to national self-understanding, but, simultaneously, the body of literature elucidates how heroic discourse has different flavours in different social situations, and at least hints at a discrepancy between official and unofficial discourses.

At the level of official communications, researchers point to the new significance of the Danish soldier as a symbol of the prowess and responsibility of a small country in an increasingly globalised world. As emphasised by Martinsen (2013: 3), official discourse has underlined the soldiers‘ role in peacekeeping *and* combat in gaining recognition internationally, and during this process ‘hero worship ... was actively encouraged in Denmark’. Somewhat similarly, Daugbjerg (2017: 14) argues that the notion of Danish activism is a ‘genuine cultural current’, and that ‘enthusiasm for "activism" in itself is not in question, ... and the idea that "we" can (once again) make a difference, and throw off the traumatic shackles of 1864 ... allows Danish politicians, soldiers, and citizens alike to sense direction and purpose’ (Daugbjerg, 2017: 13). Sørensen and Pedersen (2012: 27) argue that the introduction of homecoming parades has served to celebrate, domesticate and normalise returning soldiers through national symbols, and that this ‘builds and legitimises an alternative national self-understanding in which war and soldiers are central and acceptable’ (Sørensen and Pedersen, 2012: 43). Adding to this, Christensen (2015: 360) finds that speeches given on this day of commemoration oscillate between tropes of military heroism, humanitarianism and vulnerability by which they form a hegemonic discourse, and here the ‘soldier figure is not a "simple" warrior hero but rather a reflective hero figure possessing democratic and ethical values.’

At the level of unofficial discourse, some have detected a more pronounced appearance of hyper-masculine, belligerent and patriotic images. Analysing a video uploaded from the front line in Afghanistan, Mortensen (2009: 52) underlines ‘the film‘s violent, triumphant, and patriotic iconography ... [and] the soldiers‘ display of themselves as representative of the nation and the national armed forces.’ Mortensen (2009: 54) concludes that ‘the narrative proposed by this video, is one of Danish soldiers joined in a heroic, patriotic mission,’ but because of its violence and patriotic language ‘the video collides with the official Danish narrative of ... peace and democracy’ (Mortensen, 2009: 52). Remembrance videos on *YouTube* do not corroborate this picture entirely (Knudsen and Stage, 2012: 432), but Sørensen (2016: 45) pinpoints that if ‘the tombstones [of dead soldiers] reflected how soldiers wished to be remembered, they typically called for recognition and remembrance as

professional soldiers and heroic warriors.' On this basis, the headstones run counter to the official monument, which avoids any reference to violence (ibid). Adding to this, Åse and Wendt (2018: 36) argue that in Denmark '[m]edia narratives [around dead soldiers] express remilitarisation and a return to masculinised heroic ideals and conceptions of national blood sacrifice,' which would suggest that the taste for patriotic warriorhood is not restricted to ground troops alone.

My dissertation cannot clarify the apparent discrepancy between some varieties of official discourse (top-down heroism) and unofficial discourse (bottom-up heroism): but nor should the significance of any such discrepancy be overstated, since instances of friction have not loomed large in Denmark, at least not in the public sphere (Martinsen, 2013: 17; Mortensen, 2009: 52). Contrary to the studies here mentioned, this dissertation will provide an intensive discussion of heroic discourse in a Danish context, which may allow for a more coherent understanding of the varieties of military heroism. More importantly yet, the dissertation illuminates Danish discourses of heroism and soldiering as far back as the Second World War, and this is done on a systematic and empirical basis. With this time frame, it should be possible to see more clearly what makes heroism a historically specific social form.

Theories of Post-heroism

Finally, I will engage in a discussion on theories of post-heroism, which reach back to the early study of great men, although the idea of a post-heroic age is still a focal point for lively debate. Now classical scholars expected heroic figures to disappear with the growing rationalisation of modern western society (Carlyle, 2001: 18-19; Weber, 1978: 1133), while more recent observers have pointed to growing democratisation, individualisation, mediatisation, secularisation, and the promotion of egalitarianism, multiculturalism, and risk-aversion as core values in these societies (Boorstin, 1992: 52, 57; Campbell, 2004: 358–360; Drucker and Cathcart, 1994; Edelstein, 1996; Furedi, 2007: 172; Giraud, 1957: 48; Klapp, 2014: 141; Kohen, 2014: 14; Lyotard, 1984: xxiv; Schwartz, 2008: 8–9). A subject-specific body of such theories is to be found in the study of the military.

The American strategist Luttwak (1995) popularised the term *post-heroic warfare* when labelling what he saw as a growing tendency to casualty phobia in the population of the US and other western countries. While Luttwak discussed the emergence of a post-heroic spirit with special reference

to the US engagement in the so-called 'New Wars' in the Balkans and Africa and decreasing birth rates in western countries, other observers have pointed to advances in weaponry and the industrialisation of warfare as a factor in undermining the importance and meaning of valour and military self-sacrifice: modernity has simply reduced warfaring to a mechanical affair, where there is no role for heroes, since everyone becomes a victim in the storm of steel: so the argument goes (Bartov, 1989; Gabriel, 1987; Siebrecth, 2012). At the same time, observers have emphasised the significance of ideational factors: for instance, the breakdown of meta-narratives that once were capable of turning the loss of military lives into stories of national greatness (Calder, 2004) or, relatedly, the weakness of discourses of humanitarianism and cosmopolitanism in legitimising the use of military violence and body counts (Ryan, 2014).

Contrary to the above, other observers understand post-heroic warfare in a broader sense, as they focus more broadly on public recognition of the soldiery (not just dead soldiers) as heroic. For instance, Coker (2007: 2) has argued that as a consequence of growing liberal values, pacifism, and risk-aversion in western countries 'survival is considered the act of real moral or emotional worth' (2), while 'we seem to be increasingly skeptical of the heroic temper, perhaps because we rarely see ourselves in a heroic light' (Coker, 2007: 3). Where Coker has discussed the post-heroic spirit in regard to a widespread distaste for both violence and heroism in post-modern society, King (2014) has pointed out a corrosion of military heroism in connection with transformations in the social organisation of western armed forces: while the poorly trained army of conscripts depended on heroic deeds performed by skilled and (quite often) lucky individuals, typically officers, individual acts of heroism have become less important to the professional all-volunteer force, since professional soldiers 'instinctively turn to their collective drills to conduct almost any other maneuver on the battlefield' (King, 2014: 234): Hence: 'Professionalization has perhaps involved a democratization of heroism; as they conduct their drills, everyone – and no one – has become heroes' (ibid.).

Researchers have identified different events of significance to the decline of heroism in war: the body counts, the horrors and the meaninglessness attested in connection to the First World War (Bartov, 1989; Mosse, 1994; Siebrecth, 2012) and the American war in Vietnam (Coker, 2003: 34-36; Mosse, 1994), besides the transformation of warfare and war legitimisation since the 1990s (King, 2014; Ryan, 2014). While theories of post-heroism capture, perhaps, one tendency of the *longue durée* of western history, a growing body of empirical studies has simultaneously pointed to a strong

discourse of military heroism in a range of countries today. This includes Australia (Donoghue and Tranter, 2015), Canada (Mutimer, 2016), Israel (Ben-Amos, 2003), Russia (Fomina, 2018), the UK (Dawson, 1994; Kelly, 2012; Woodward, 2010) and the US (e.g. Goren, 2007; Lorber, 2002; Papayanis, 2010), besides Denmark (Christensen, 2014, 2015; Martinsen, 2013; Daugbjerg, 2017; Gade, 2017; Knudsen and Stage, 2012; Mortensen, 2016; Sørensen, 2016; Sørensen and Pedersen, 2012; Åse and Wendt, 2018), always taking into account that there may be national, local, and situational differences.

Whether or not one can talk about a post-heroic age indeed seems to depend on the narrowness of the concept of heroism adopted and the historical span of the study undertaken, besides the specific social context. Without dismissing the importance of empirical studies that suggest a deterioration of military heroism, the following section argues that it is more productive to look at the social construction of that heroism, since this perspective brings into focus the historically specific character of the heroic.

Approach

In the next four subsections, I make clear my general theoretical-analytical approach, and describe how I have built upon and departed from the conceptions of others on heroism as a social and cultural phenomenon. The following pages elucidate the social construction of heroism, the relationship between heroic discourses, carrier groups, collective identity, and the relationship of heroism to broader societal processes and state relations in particular. The final subsection outlines the epistemological implications. Several of the theoretical concepts mentioned are also specified in the following explanation of *Key Terms*.

The Social Construction of Heroes

Indebted to the classical sociological understanding of the hero as a social phenomenon, as found in the writings of Cooley (1902) and Weber (1978) in particular, a growing body of research has begun to explore the social construction of heroism. This body of research provides an alternative to the many attempts at defining heroism or the hero in essential terms, for instance, as a man of greatness, a bringer of social transformation, and a prime mover of history (Boorstin, 1992: 49; Carlyle, 2001); as a

champion of personal limitations and a cultural expression of man‘s innate desires and dreams (Campbell, 2004; Rank, 1914); or as a person willing to help others despite a high risk of personal injury and even death (Oliner, 2002). From the perspective of social constructivism essential definitions, such as those mentioned here, can be accused of playing down the history and societal context of heroic discourse (Paper 2: 3), which is the product of concrete actors and particular socio-historical circumstances: people, actions and events do not draw their heroic status from within themselves but from the community they form part of, since discourses and institutional action fill out the gap between an act or an event and the eventual recognition of that act or event as heroic. This is to say that heroism is basically a process of the making of meaning, or what Alexander (2003: 83) has termed ‘cultural work,’ which means that the phenomenon should be understood as ‘an ongoing process in which many actors participate, and in which the meaning of heroism is contested and constantly reinterpreted’ (Scheipers, 2014: 15).

Heroism, Carrier Groups and Collective Identity

Discourses of heroism are no free-floating phenomena. The organisation of the public perception of heroism is rather tied to the working of individual and collective actors, which means that any discourse of heroism relates to the history, values and self-understanding of particular collective communities, large or small, tangible or imagined. Inspired by Weber’s study of religious groups as vehicles of social change, Alexander (2012, 16) has emphasised how ‘carrier groups’ play a key role in ‘meaning making’ in the public sphere. According to him (ibid.), ‘Carrier groups have both ideal and material interests … [while they] make use of the particularities of the historical situation, the symbolic resources at hand, and the opportunities provided by institutional structures.’ At the heart of the process of heroification lies the formation of a collective identity of the carrier group. As Cooley (1902, 346) has paradigmatically argued, ‘The hero is always a product of constructive imagination,’ so that heroic figures ‘produce in large groups a sense of comradeship and solidarity’ (Cooley, 1902: 326): besides, as Klapp (2014: 16–24) has pointed out, they function to reduce social complexity, guide people in their daily life, and maintain a necessary level of moral consensus. In this capacity the hero ‘states for us as a people what we seem to the world, and, in some measure, what we are’ (Klapp, 2014: 49), thus constituting ‘the triumphant embodiments of collective identity … [who stand] for the community in an

exemplary way,' as Giesen (2004: 19, 21) has put it. The carrier groups examined here involve the Danish political elite and the military establishment in particular.

Heroism and State Relations

The way heroism forms part of the construction of collective identity of certain carrier groups depends not just on their close environment. In order to explain why specific notions of heroism have emerged and attained legitimacy, it is necessary to supplement the constructivist approach with a theoretical perspective that brings the relations of the carrier groups and especially the state into the centre of the analysis. As argued by Featherstone (1992: 162), the social construction of heroes and heroism must be conceived 'in terms of the changing struggles of interdependencies between figurations of people bound together in particular historical situations in which they seek to mobilize various power resources'. In this process, states play a significant role, since 'the particular conditions of a society's state formation, and its relation to the other nation-states in which it is bound in a figuration, determine the actual type and degree of differentiation which may propel and maintain certain groups ... in positions of power' (Featherstone, 1992: 163). This means that the public recognition of certain groups or virtues as heroic must be regarded not only as a part of the discourse within society but, more significantly, as historically dependent on the dynamic relations between state-societies, since the geopolitical situation and the state's response to other states precondition the distribution of honour and public recognition of merit by the state within its borders. As further elaborated later, I have utilised the work of Elias (1978; 2000) to capture this process.

Relative Heroes

Observing heroism through the lenses of social constructivism has at least three interrelated implications. First, it means that there are 'no such things as heroes, only communication about heroes,' (Strate, 1994: 16), which involves various discursive elements, for instance the use of emotionally-charged concepts, metaphors, narratives, and basic nomenclature (Berger 1929: 29; Blumenberg, 1985: 4-6, 95-97; Elias, 1978: 123, 137). Second, it means that heroism is wholly in the eyes of the beholder. Considering heroism as a social construction entails a perspectivist stance, which perhaps may be captured by the dictum that one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter and is,

for instance, illustrated by espionage literature (Buono and Eco, 1989) and the dual status of Islamist suicide attackers (Lincoln, 2009). Third, it means that the very idea that a precise definition of heroism can be given must be abandoned (Paper 1: 10, 12). Instead of defining the hero in essential terms, the constructivist approach must begin by exploring what counts as heroism and then proceed by asking how heroic discourse engages with other discourses, and how larger structural processes precondition it.

Key Concepts

The dissertation uses a number of key concepts, presented here in a brief form. The following description of discourse, heroism, military culture, national identity, state, and soldier are to be considered as working definitions that serve a heuristic purpose.

Discourse

Following Fairclough (2010: 75), the term *discourse* is here conceived as 'a particular way of representing certain parts or aspects of the (physical, social, psychological) world.' Discourse is thus broadly applied 'for language and other semiotic modes (such as 'body language' and visual images) seen as an element of social events ..., which is dialectically related to other [discursive as well as non-discursive] elements' (Fairclough, 2010: 381). Hence, there is a close interrelationship between a particular discourse and the situational, institutional, and wider societal context of its carrier group or groups (Fairclough, 2010: 95). Unlike Fairclough (e.g. 2010: 185-188), I treat discourse as a theoretical-analytical concept. As urged by Jørgensen and Phillips (2002: 144), a naive empiricism must be avoided and discourses conceived of 'as objects that the researcher constructs rather than as objects that exist in a delimited form in reality, ready to be identified and mapped.' Somewhat similar to Weber's notion of ideal types, the demarcation of a particular discourse must nevertheless be empirically drawn through the analysis of its 'linguistic make-up' (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002: 148). I have done so by focusing on the occurrence of particular terms and thematic patterns in specific bodies of text. Alterations of the terms and patterns within texts over a period of time are seen as indicators of discursive changes (Lynggaard, 2010: 145).

Heroism

A hero is here considered as one whom other people cheer as a hero, whereupon the person or persons so revered enter a life of symbolic significance, that is, as a social representation in the terms of sociologists (Cooley, 1897, 1902; Giesen, 2004; Klapp, 2014; Schwartz, 2008; van Krieken, 2012). Contrary to a very exclusive, purely semantic notion of a hero, as one who is directly labelled 'hero' or 'heroic', I focus on broader discourses that represent some person or thing as 'fulfilling a high purpose or attaining a noble end,' as described, for instance, by *Meriam-Webster*. I have borrowed the term *heroification* from Kelly (2012) to emphasise that the social construction of heroes and heroism must be based on a continuous social process of public recognition to keep the hero alive, so to speak; this by means of '*formally acknowledged esteem* (titles, medals, prizes and so on ... [and/or *informally acknowledged esteem*] that is, visibility in the media, and star status in theatre, film, radio, television, popular music and sport' (van Krieken, 2012: 66; italics added). *Discourse of military heroism* designates the heroification of military men, performances, organisations, and values on the basis of formally as well as informally acknowledged esteem.

Military Culture

In Papers 3 and 4 I look at heroic discourses within particular sections of Danish Defence, where they form part of the *military culture*, broadly defined as shared universes of meaning, ideas, and symbols that define the role of the military in the world. This working definition draws on the study of culture within the area of military studies (Callaghan and Schönborn, 2004: 12; Haaland, 2010; Soeters *et al*., 2003: 237-240) and on broader theories on culture-as-meaning (Alexander, 2012; Berger, 1991; Blumenberg, 1989). On the basis of this definition, I focus on military culture at ideational level, which means that I pay less attention to other important dimensions of cultural life, for instance body, emotions, and material objects. Also it should be noted that every military organisation constitutes a complex, dynamic and multi-layered arena of social interaction and human experience, and great differences indeed exist between its branches and hierarchies. Reflecting this point, Papers 2 to 4 capture the co-existence of different discourses of military heroism within the Danish armed forces.

National Identity

Following Elias, I perceive the *national we-identity* as the cognitive and emotional attachment of the citizen to the state, of 'I' to 'We' (Elias, 1978: 137). The interdependency of citizens as members of the same state (Elias, 1978: 138), and the members' consciousness of that interdependency because of 'the manipulation of feelings in relation to state and nation, government and political system, [which] is a widespread technique in social praxis [of state institutions]' (Elias, 2001: 210), mean that the modern western state has taken priority over other social units as a 'frame of reference for the we-identity of the great majority of all members' (Elias, 2001: 206). The national we-identity may be created and maintained through the use of a national 'We' in human discourse (Elias, 1978: 123), the telling of stories about native origin, destiny, and greatness (Hutchins, 2011; Schwartz, 2008), the usage of shared symbols (Adriansen, 2010; Billig, 1995), the commemoration of traditions and holidays (Hobsbawn and Ranger, 1983), and reverence of national heroes (Ben-Amos, 2003; Dawson, 1994; Mosse, 1994; Schwartz, 2008). Discourses attached to processes of this kind develop with a group whose expression they are and typically express 'what it is proud of: the level of *its* technology, the nature of *its* manners, the development of *its* scientific knowledge or view of the world, and much more' (Elias, 2002: 5; italics original).

Soldier

Considered as a distinct group in modern western societies, I follow Huntington (1985: 11-18), among others, who understands the soldier as belonging to a unique occupational group, distinguished from other professions today and the warrior class of earlier ages by a specialisation in the management and application of violence, combined with a primary responsibility to the state. Unlike shoemakers or sociologists, soldiers are not free agents, but depend on the formal organisation of the military because of its right to use legitimate force on behalf of the state. As Nuciari (2003: 69) points out, it means that 'organisational processes can determine types, contents, and boundaries of military professional activity, so that typical traits of the [military] profession are barely distinguishable from those relating to organisational position.' Contrary to Huntington and many other military sociologists (see Kümmel, 2003; Nuciari, 2003), I use the term 'soldier' without regard to rank, or branch, specialisation, role, and value orientations. Rank and organisational affiliation are understood in an emic manner if mentioned

in my papers, where I examine what it means to be a soldier in more subjective terms. Yet this is done by focusing on a single aspect: the heroic.

State

Building on the work of Elias (2000; 2001) and later sociologists (Kaspersen, 2013; Reeh, 2016), I understand the state as the highest-ranking *survival unit*, which fulfils the function of tribes and kin groups of earlier times, since one of the state's primary tasks and *raisons d'être* is to 'protect the individual as a subject from the violence of other people within and outside the state territory' (Elias, 2001: 208). On this basis, the state works as a 'protection unit' and 'annihilation unit' at the same time (Elias 2001: 208-209), meaning that internal pacification and external aggression have historically gone hand in hand, as all states 'seem to have exercised extreme control over the use of physical violence in relationships between their members ... [while] they have allowed, and often encouraged, their members to use physical violence against non-members' (Elias, 1978: 138). States are more than war organisations, however, and there are ample historical examples of how they have tried to secure their material and cultural existence through bloodless 'survival strategies' (Kaspersen, 2013), such as social welfare (Lidegaard and Højrup, 2007; Kaspersen, 2013), education (Elias, 201, 210; Reeh; 2016), and economic competitiveness (Cerny, 2010; Pedersen, 2011). As Kaspersen (2013: 262) has emphasised in this regard, the state operates as a collective actor with 'a space in which the political elite ... makes decisions that are implemented with important consequences.'

Data and Methods

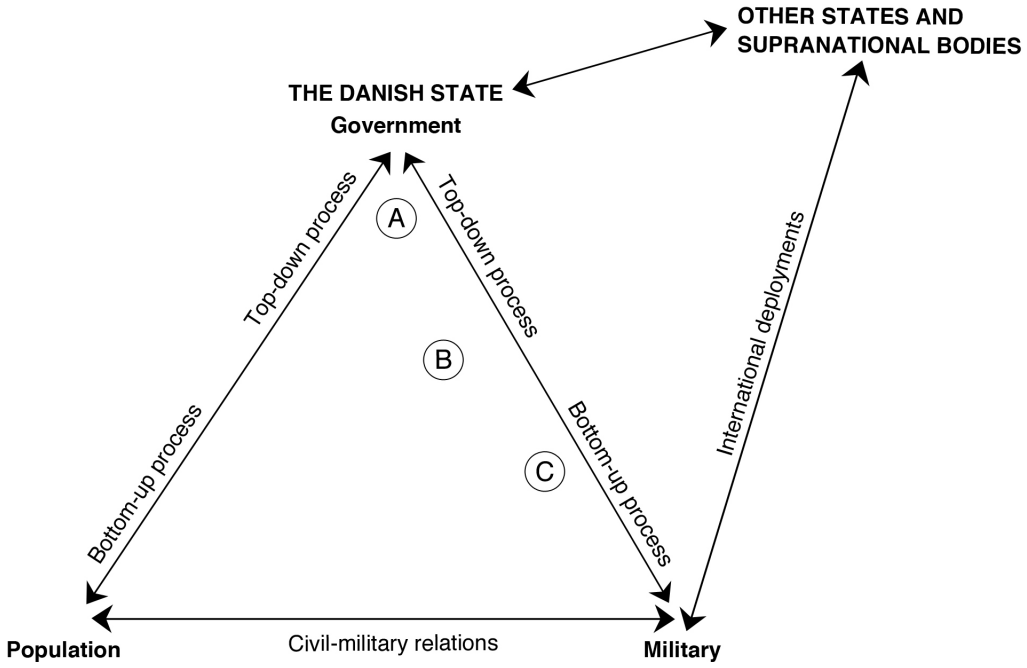
The renowned strategist Clausewitz (2008: 119) once noted that 'Everything in war is very simple, but the simplest thing is difficult'. Not only is watching war from 'outside' or 'above' impossible (Mieszkowski, 2012: 14), or at least unsatisfying for any understanding of how it is experienced, narrated or legitimised (Sylvester, 2013: 2), it is frequently very difficult to get access to relevant data and background information. Rather than lamenting the military's control over relevant data, or the almost impossible (and dangerous) task of studying war at the front, I have, following Woodward (2004: 156), tried to find 'creative ways of obtaining information, and more sophisticated ways of using available data to understand military impacts'. The following discussion outlines how I have done so. Here I set out my research design through a discussion of case selection, data sources, and analytical strategies. In the course of the discussion, I will touch upon questions of validity, possible bias, and the more general value of my findings. The chapter ends with a brief note on research ethics, addressing the relationship between this dissertation, its informants, and the military establishment.

Case Selection

What is presented here is a case study, since it concerns the particular relationship between military heroism and national identity in a single country. As the configuration of military heroism and national identity presumably varies in time and space, the dissertation follows the design of a multiple case study, where 'a number of cases may be studied jointly in order to investigate a phenomenon' (Stake, 2005: 446). For the purpose of case selection, I have used 'purposive sampling' (Bryman, 2010: 414-415) and chosen three different cases because of their relevance to the elucidation of my research question. Since that question implies that the social construction of military heroism has been bound up with (1) *changes* in the external relations between Denmark and other states, (2) *changes* in the internal relations between the Danish state, its military, and its citizens, and (3) *changes* in the expression of national belonging, ideals and values, it has been important to illuminate this process of social construction by exploring different time periods. Hence, the case study of Paper 2 and Paper 3 tracks developments between the Second World War and the Afghan War, whereas the case study of Paper 4 involves the period from the Balkan missions of the 1990s to the Helmand campaign.

As tentatively illustrated in Figure 1, the three cases simultaneously bear witness to the social construction of military heroism and national identity within different spheres and levels of Danish society. The model illustrates the *internal* relations between the government, the population and the military in Denmark, and the *external* relations between the Danish state and its armed forces to actors in the international arena. The circles inside the triangle illustrate in what areas of Danish society discourses of military heroism are mainly to be analysed. Circle A represents the official political discourse on Danish soldiers, as it appears in the prime ministers‘ New Year speeches (Paper 2), whereas Circle B symbolises official military discourse, as it appears in relation to the army‘s obituaries (Paper 3). The position of both circles in the top of the triangle illustrates the direction of these discourses from top to bottom. Circle C symbolises the soldiers‘ use of names to evoke narratives about national origin and heroic greatness in relation to their deployment (Paper 4). It is closer to the

Figure 1. Discourses of military heroism and national identity in Denmark



Note: Inspired by Højrup (2002: 109). Circle A represents the prime ministers‘ New Year speeches, 1940-2015 (Paper 2); Circle B represents the army‘s obituaries from the Second World War, 1940-1945, and the War in Afghanistan, 2002-2014 (Paper 3); Circle C represents the names of bases, units and operations used by the Danish Army in the Balkans, Iraq, and Afghanistan, 1992–2014 (Paper 4).

triangle's base and further to the right, since it expresses a more dynamic interplay of *top-down* and *bottom-up* heroification within the military.

Considered as pieces of a much larger mosaic, the three cases intend to draw the contours of discursive formations of military heroism in Denmark, with special reference to the official meaning of the Afghan War (especially Papers 2 and 3) and the soldiers' universe in Helmand (especially Paper 4). Since this multiple case study is based on a purposive sampling, it does not allow for generalisations to a population in the same way that many statistical studies do (Bryman, 2010: 414-415). Yet this does not mean that it cannot generate knowledge of a more general order. Supporting the argument made by Gobo (2007: 422), social researchers should avoid the logical mistake of 'confusing the representativeness of the case with the representativeness of its characteristics,' implying that even a small case can point to 'main structural aspects that can be noticed in other cases or events of the same kind or class' (Gobo, 2007: 423). From this perspective, one may assess the general value of a case by comparing its characteristics with the findings of others, thereby trying to generate what Mason (2002: 125) has termed 'cross-contextual generalities.'

The selection of cases may have implications for my discussion of military heroism and national identity in Denmark. First of all, civilian discourses, that is, the left side of the triangle's base pictured in Figure 1, remains unexplored. Surveys suggest that Danes have indeed been fully supportive of their troops and of the introduction of a national day of military honouring (Jakobsen, 2013; Kold and Sørensen, 2013: 291; TNS Gallup 2009), but I have also observed how this day has remained a political and military event without many civilian hurrahs. Likewise, the Yellow Bumper Sticker Band (Jakobsen, 2013) and the Danish Soldiers' Memorial Grove at Rindholm Kro (Sørensen, 2017: 37-41) have been rare instances of a *bottom-up* honouring of soldiers and military values among civilians. For that reason I do not explore this area, but clearly any such decision comes with the risk of missing something, which again creates a bias that may limit the ability to assess the scope of the new discourse on military heroism. To be clear, my discussion of this discourse directly relates to three small case studies, and these are, as illustrated in Figure 1, mainly concerned with a top-down process in Danish policy and the army. Cross-contextual generalities, are largely based on others' research, and this makes them vulnerable to the criticism of being hypothetical.

Data

The dissertation is primarily based on textual analysis of political speeches (Paper 2), the obituaries of soldiers (Paper 3) and military names (Paper 4). As supplementary data and background information, I have made use of semi-structured interviews with Danish Afghanistan veterans and observations from a trip to Camp Bastion in Afghanistan and the national flag-flying day in Denmark. Before delving into the different types of data, it might be useful to take a brief overview of overarching strengths and weaknesses.

Strengths and Weaknesses

There are at least four general strengths to the data of Papers 2 to 4, which are discussed in more detail in the next subsection. First and foremost, no one else as far as I know has previously conducted a systematic analysis of this data. It may consequently contribute new empirical knowledge on the relationship between heroism, militarism and expressions of national belonging in a Danish context. Second, few sociologists have explored this type of data. Although influential scholars in that field have acknowledged the importance of obituaries and names as empirical sources for understanding wider social processes (Bourdieu, 1991; Fowler, 2005), examples of *how* to do so are still rare. Engaging this kind of material, the dissertation may thus help to widen the empirical scope and methodological approaches within the discipline. Third, my primary data is characterised by being publicly accessible. This not only makes it feasible for other researchers to test my analytical results; more importantly, it indicates that the texts and visual images analysed have played an active role in the way individuals and groups position themselves within the public arena and 'represent themselves collectively to themselves and to others' (Atkinson and Coffey, 2011: 78). Hence the sociological relevance of this data must be considered, as Elias (2000: 48) has put it, 'less as an individual phenomenon or work than as a symptom of changes, an embodiment of social processes.' Fourth, as a form of 'naturally occurring data' (Silverman, 2001: 159), or 'process-produced data' (Bauer and Ernst, 2011), the data selected differs from 'researcher-provoked data', because they have been created without interference from the researcher. As a consequent advantage, they have no 'reactive effects' (Bryman, 2008: 467-468).

Similarly, there are four overarching weaknesses in the form of selection biases that may challenge the general value of my analytical results. First, the data is concerned almost exclusively with the *Royal Danish Army* (Paper 3 and Paper 4 in particular). There are several reasons for this. One is that the army employs more personnel (around 10,000 persons) than naval and air forces put together (maybe 3,000 each). Another cause is that the army has played the leading role in international missions since the end of the Cold War (Kold and Sørensen, 2013: 291;
: 33), where it has been engaged in heavy combat and experienced a high rate of casualties unlike the other two Services (Danish Defence, 2015). Second, the data pays special attention to the recent mission in Afghanistan. The reason is that this campaign has been the most expensive in Danish dead and wounded (see Table 1); it has provided the backdrop to furthering the transformation of Danish Defence from national protection (based on conscription) to expeditionary forces (based on voluntarism and professionalism) (Rasmussen 2013, 136); and, as a final point, its outcome is 'likely to define European military posture in the second and third decades of this century,' as King (2011: 8) has emphasised.

Third, the data is less suited to capturing anti-heroic discourses, portraying the soldier as a coward, deserter, traitor, victim, or warmonger, or to illustrating how the soldier figure is tied to a wider cast of characters produced by the new wars: for instance the New York fire fighters, Islamist terrorists, local interpreters, military families (especially mothers, spouses, and children), Muslim women, schoolgirls, and displaced persons (see for instance Goren, 2007; King, 2010; Lorber, 2002; Stabile and Kumar, 2005). Anti-heroic images and discourses were not present in the data utilised here, and I have decided to discard the broader gallery of war figures known to me from my primary interest in the field, despite being well aware that no contemporary discourse of military heroism can be fully understood without taking them into account. As a consequence of this bias, the dissertation deals with only *one* dimension of the complexity of meaning woven around soldiery and waging war, which poses a clear limitation to the general value of my findings and the dissertation's conclusion (see also *Anti-heroic discourses*).

Fourth, my empirical material is rather small. Contrary to the growing celebration of *big data* in recent years, I have tried to 'make a lot out of a little' (Silverman and Marvasti, 2008: 161), and to view the greater history from the perspective of the small. The limited size of my database inevitably raises the question of generalisability. For instance, if we want to know how many Danes perceive

soldiers as heroes, or what percentage of men and women join the army to live out some heroic military fantasy – what Pedersen (2017) has described as 'warrior dreams' – this study is near useless. This does not mean that it is impossible to generate knowledge of a more general value from the data utilised here, although the generalisability of qualitative data will always, as Bryman (2008: 392) has emphasised, 'be limited and somewhat more tentative than those associated with statistical generalizations of the kind associated with probability sampling'.

Main Data

Here I discuss the collection, nature and validity of the main textual data, consisting of political speeches (Paper 2), soldiers' obituaries (Paper 3) and military names (Paper 4).

POLITICAL SPEECHES

Trying to answer the research question of how Danish soldiers have been portrayed in official political discourse in Denmark from the Second World War to the present, Paper 2 examines the annual New Year Address to the Danish People given by prime ministers. The Danish prime minister Thorvald Stauning of the Social Democratic Party (in office 1924–1926 and 1929–1940) delivered the very first New Year Address in 1940, deliberately trying to bring together the Danish nation in the face of the looming threat of an invasion by Nazi Germany. Since then the New Year Address has gradually become part of the political tradition in Denmark, with only a few omissions during the occupation (i.e. 1943-1945) and in later years (i.e. 1947, 1960, 1968, 1975, and 1984). For the present purpose, I have thus explored a total of 68 speeches (given by 16 different prime ministers) of which 26 (by nine different prime ministers) mentioned Danish soldiers. These include the New Year Addresses of 1946, 1952, 1953, 1957–1959, 1965, 1991, 1993–1995, 1997, 2002, 2004 and 2006–2015.

There are at least four good reasons to examine the New Year Addresses with the purpose of answering the above research question. First, the New Year Address is the most widely circulated of all prime ministerial (and political) speeches, with an average of over two million TV viewers per year over the past 20 years (Mellbin and Mellbin, 2011: 12). Second, the New Year Address has not (to the best of my knowledge) been the object of sociological analysis before. Third, the international research on prime ministerial speeches points out the power of such broadcasts to shape public opinion and

legitimise particular national narratives (Gavriely-Nuri, 2014; Shenhav, 2008; van Dijk, 2005). Fourth, the annual nature of the broadcast makes possible the comparison over time, since it has recurred almost every year since 1940. Fifth, the New Year Address is easily accessible, since all speeches are available from Mellbin and Mellbin (2011) and from the Danish Prime Minister's Office Website.

Evidently other kinds of material might have been incorporated to buttress, and perhaps challenge, the main argument of Paper 2. Incorporating a greater number of political speeches and parliamentary debates, for instance, could help to elucidate party-political differences and counter discourses on Danish soldiers within the political field. An exploration of defence budgets and recruitment campaigns would strengthen our knowledge of the economic and ideational ramification of the official political discourse on soldiers within the military, or the lack thereof, while media analysis could tell us more about the relationship between the official political discourse and alternative understandings of the soldier and military power within the population. While the New Year Address provides one window into the configuration of military heroism and national identity in Denmark, a broader exploration of various kinds of data would thus provide a better understanding of the scope and limitation of the argument presented in Paper 2, including a clearer picture of the importance of genre and context in connection to the relationship between military heroism and national identity.

MILITARY OBITUARIES

To answer the research question as to if and how the meaning and legitimation of military losses have diminished or alternatively changed from the Second World War to the present, Paper 3 explores obituaries written and published by the Danish army in honour of its fallen. As a genre of writing, obituaries are characterised by being 'publicly legitimiz[ing] certain cultural ideals, [while] they link published memories of individual lives with generational, or family, [and organisational] memory and with ... [national] collective memory' (Hume and Bressers, 2010: 258). While this seems to be the case in very general terms, Fowler (2005: 64) argues that although obituaries function as 'the collective memory of modern heroes or as the contemporary mythologies that nurture a nation,' we should also be aware of various subgenres, including traditional positive obituaries, negative obituaries, tragic obituaries, ironic obituaries, and untraditional positive obituaries (Fowler, 2005: 64-66). The military obituary utilised here clearly falls within the traditional positive obituary, 'characterized as it is by an

unambiguous celebration of its protagonist and a delineation of a continuous ascent' (Fowler, 2005: 64). As these obituaries not only echo the deeds of the deceased but also work as 'effective apparatuses for presenting the deceased in consistency with the bereaved's aspirations for themselves' (Bonsu, 2007: 202), they should be regarded as a 'genre of governance' (Fairclough, 2003: 32) that reflect and shape particular social understandings of fatalities.

This study includes obituaries published in military magazines (during the Second World War) and on the army's web page (during the Afghan War). The obituaries are thus primarily targeted on military personnel, but since both printed magazines and web pages are publicly accessible, the obituaries scrutinised here work within at least three different fields: the ranks of the military, the family (of the fallen) and the general public. I have collected 12 obituaries from the Second World War through an examination of military magazines published between 1940 and 1950, and 32 obituaries commemorating Danish soldiers killed in Afghanistan through the newsfeed of the army's website, where I have searched for the names of the deceased. The magazines explored involve *Garderbladet* (seven units), *Gardehusaren* (one unit) and *Militært Tidsskrift* (four units), *Folk og Værn* (no units found) *F.O.U.* (no units found), *Officiantbladet* (no units found), *Underofficeren* (no units found) and *Vor hær* (no units found). To the best of my knowledge, I have included every obituary of relevance to my search criteria, focusing on combat-related casualties in the Danish army during the Second World War and the Afghan campaign.

There are three main reasons to focus on combat-related casualties, covering those who die as a result of hostile action or friendly fire while serving in the force (Danish Defence, 2015a). First, an exploration of the meaning and legitimisation of combat-related casualties provides the best way of 'testing' the widespread scholarly assumption that the emergence of a post-heroic spirit has prevented death in action from being perceived as an act of heroism. This assumption serves as the point of departure of Paper 3, and it would therefore be less relevant to include non-combat-related casualties in this study. Second, combat-related casualties pose a problem quite unique to military organisations. Such casualties may have severe political consequences (Smith, 2005), so that it is of great relevance to explore how the military's management of death works in order to secure good mental health, *esprit de corps* and combat performance in the ranks, while ensuring the legitimacy of the military and its operations in the eyes of politicians, journalists and common citizens (Bartone and Ender, 1994; Ben-Ari, 2005). Thirdly, I found no obituaries written in honour of the six non-combat-

related casualties in Afghanistan on the web pages of respectively the Danish army, Danish Defence, or the Danish Ministry of Defence.

Similarly, there are three reasons to compare the obituaries of the Second World War and the recent mission in Afghanistan. First, the ISAF-mission accounts for 63% of Danish fatalities since the end of the Cold War (Danish Ministry of Defence, 2016) and represents the highest body count in the Danish forces since the Second World War, when an estimated 40 Danish soldiers were killed as a consequence of the German invasion on 9 April 1940, and the brief exchange of fire that occurred when the negotiation policy between Denmark and Germany collapsed on 29 August 1943. The basis for the comparison is not simply quantitative, however. If for instance we look at the building of regimental and national monuments (Veterancentret, 2016a)[3], the army's opening of memorial books (e.g. Caruso et al., 2010; Pontoppidan, 1955) and the politicians' recent involvement in the commemoration of dead soldiers (Martinsen, 2013: 69; Rasmussen, 2011: 99-110), it seems as if the appearance, consolidation and transformation of military remembrance practices have come to the fore in connection with the Second World War and the War in Afghanistan. Third, the restriction of my field to two groups only of military obituaries has been a way of reducing archival work, which proved to be very time consuming, since I had to go through every military magazine published within the period of relevance to be sure of collecting all relevant data.

The choice of data can be problematised in numerous ways. Firstly the process of data collection disregards the *historical* significance of the army's distinction between combat-related and non-combat-related casualties. In fact the Danish army introduced the distinction as late as 1991, and for this reason there are no official figures on the distribution of the two types of death from the Second World War and the international missions of the Cold War era (Danish Defence, 2015b). From a strictly historical perspective, it may thus be considered an anachronism to speak of combat-related casualties in the Danish army prior to the introduction of the concept in 1991.

Second, and relatedly, the choice of data ignores the *social* workings of the distinction of combat-related and non-combat-related casualties. What counts as one or the other is always a question of discretion, which influences the right of the bereaved families to compensation (Sørensen, 2017: 35) and potentially the symbolic value attached to the individual soldier's death. The cause of death has not

[3] Just two out of ten official memorial stones erected in honour of Danish soldiers who died in international service had been erected before the Danish military campaign in Afghanistan.

influenced the inscription of the deceased's name in granite on the Monument for Denmark's International Effort since 1948 (ibid.), but the absence of obituaries in honour of the six non-combat-related casualties in Afghanistan would suggest that not all deaths are equally valued[4]. The exclusion of other war-related casualties from the data thus means that Paper 3 possibly omits how some causes of death are regarded as less worthy than others of public grief and commemoration. The heuristic purpose of the concept of combat-related casualties in the process of data collection may therefore have limited the scope of my analysis and allowed the processes of meaning construction and legitimisation of military losses to appear more harmonious and less dynamic than they perhaps are.

My choice of data may have one or two further implications. For instance, I omit the obituaries commemorating previous conscripts, sailors and police officers killed as a result of their engagement in the Resistance, obituaries which constitute an important national narrative about the unity of the military and heroic civilians against the Germans (e.g. Pontoppidan, 1955). Also, I ignore the deaths occurring in UN peacekeeping operations and the mission in Iraq, which are included in the official remembrance calendar and, therefore, capable of providing further insight into developments and differences in the meaning and legitimisation of military losses in a Danish context. Incorporating the obituaries of the navy and air force (the latter having been separated from the army in 1950) would additionally increase our knowledge of the perception of fatalities and strengthen the validity of my analysis. A broader analysis of the legitimisation of military losses in political discourse, or remembrance practices connected to military funerals, memorial ceremonies, regimental monuments and online commemoration would do the same, while sharpening the focus on how 'actors may frame dead soldiers differently depending on agenda, arena, and audience, and ... to what extent representations are derived from a particular medium's affordances and associated sociality,' as Sørensen (2017: 46) has emphasised.

MILITARY NAMES

To answer the research question of how military names function as devices for creating, reproducing, and transforming cultural narratives, and how these narratives provide significance to the experience of war, Paper 4 engages a variety of data. First of all, it brings together a total of 87 military names that

[4] There *are* obituaries written in honour of non-combat-related casualties on other missions – Iraq for instance – and so the lack of obituaries dedicated to non-combat-related casualties in Afghanistan points to a tendency rather than a consistency.

were used by Danish army personnel in the peace missions in the Balkans (1992–2004), the Coalition of the Willing in Iraq (2003–2007), and the ISAF in Afghanistan (2002–2014). I have collected the corpus of names from a historical record provided by Christensen and Iversen (2014) and from my personal interviews with Danish Afghanistan veterans. To the best of my knowledge, I have included every base used by the Danish army in the Balkans, Iraq and Afghanistan, whereas I have collected the names of military units (including companies and platoons) and operations on a more selective basis, since it has been impossible to gather every name in these categories. The names of units and operations thus function to assess the general pattern found in the corpus of military base names.

To elucidate how the nomenclature of the Danish army has been woven into cultural narratives that give significance to its missions, the paper presents a case study of the Danish experience as part of Task Force Helmand in Afghanistan. The case study is divided into two parts. First, it traces the history of the base known as Armadillo, illustrating how the Danish army has created a *new* myth that brings together its long history of national defence and the post-Cold War experience, in which it has played a growing role in transnational military interventions. This part of the case study not only illustrates how the army‘s experience of peace building as well as peace enforcement in the international arena has been framed within nationally orientated narratives, but also tells us how a single person, Major Storrud, was elevated into a contemporary military hero as part of the army‘s broader transformation. While the history of Armadillo focuses on the single most significant name of the Danish Afghan forces, the following part explores Viking names, since they stand out as the dominant source of names of Danish origin, if we include not just the Afghan bases but also the Danish companies, platoons and quarters in the greater Camp Bastion and Camp Feyzabad. The exploration of Viking names also serves to broaden the theme of the dissertation, illustrating how discourses of heroism have been connected to stories of national origin and warrior ancestry within the military.

The case study is based on data source triangulation. First of all, it is built upon texts that have been retrieved from the army‘s public websites. As part of the collection of data, I have searched on ‘Armadillo’, ‘Storrud’ and the Viking names of the Danish Afghan forces. Many texts predictably contained one or more of these names but gave no information on their history, usage or cultural significance. A small sample did, however, and from this sample I have singled out seven texts in the final analysis, since they were particularly informative on the meaning of the army‘s names. I have secondly considered the soldiers‘ usage of symbols and decorations, since cultural narratives also

operate with icons (Bottici and Challand, 2006: 325). To this end, Paper 3 includes an examination of the images on 89 sleeve badges used by Danish units in Afghanistan. The Danish army does not store sleeve badges in any systematic way and, therefore, the sample was obtained from a private collection. Supplementary to this, the study includes observations from a visit to Camp Bastion, photographs of signs and decorations, plus my interviews with veterans, all of which may point to the scope of my textual analysis. As a last source I have gathered newspaper articles through *infomedia.dk*. Here I searched for the army's names in the Danish national press published between 2002 and 2014 with the purpose of elucidating whether names 'mediate the public's perception of military practices and, as such, are an important link between civil society and the military,' as Gavriely-Nuri (2010: 826) has found.

There are several biases to this study. Even though it employs data source triangulation akin to other studies of military names (e.g. Brinkman, 2004), the data is scarce in a dual sense. First, the total number of names is low compared to somewhat similar studies. For instance, Gavriely-Nuri (2010) examined a corpus of 239 Israeli names of military operations and weaponry to elucidate the 'annihilative' strategies of the Israeli Defence Force, whereas Cooper and Knotts (2010) made a study of 700 names to find out if there had been a change in usage of the words 'Dixie' and 'Southern' in American business names. In contrast to these studies, my database is too small to detect any changes of statistical significance. Second, I have mainly looked at the meaning of names as it is expressed in written sources, and these do not capture how soldiers may use their names in specific social contexts. Fieldwork research, for instance the study of the relationship of military naming practices and the formation of cohesion within the ranks conducted by King (2006), is clearly more attentive to the situational meaning and dynamics of military names. On this basis, the findings of Paper 4 should be considered tentative.

Supplementary Data

Supplementary data consists of two main sources: interviews and observations. This data has served three main purposes. First, I have made use of personal interviews and observations to penetrate the field. As Ben-Ari and Levy (2014, 10) have argued, organisational and epistemological entry into the field go hand in hand. As ways of encountering the military field of knowledge, I have therefore used

conversations with service personnel and observations made on a trip to the Danish sector of Camp Bastion in Afghanistan. Second, I have used personal interviews and observations to get information on social practices, and organisational processes within the military. Although military routines and practices are frequently written down in regulations and handbooks, a great deal naturally happens that is simply contingent. Personal interviews and observations have been a means of getting to know what actually happens, particularly in relation to the commemoration of the fallen and the custom of naming. Third, I have used those interviews and observations as a means of validation. When analysing and interpreting my primary data, I have returned to what was said and what was seen to check whether my categorisations and ideas were supported or challenged by this data, and to assess the scope and limitations of the findings from my analysis of textual data.

INTERVIEWS

I have conducted two different types of interviews: formal and informal. The first type has involved a total of 19 semi-structured, one-to-one, in-depth interviews with Danish Afghanistan veterans (three officers and seven other ranks) and formerly deployed civilians (two press officers, two army chaplains and three members of KFUM's Soldier Mission). The purpose here was to learn about the experiences of Danes deployed in Afghanistan, especially their everyday life, joys and concerns abroad (also see *Appendix 2*). To this end, I made use of 'snowball sampling' (Bryman, 2008: 184). Through my personal acquaintance, I came into contact with Danish soldiers and civilians who had served with the Danish Afghan forces. Apart from this criterion of inclusion, my informants differed in age, occupation or function, rank, regimental affiliation, year of deployment, and number of deployments. Most respondents appeared quite eager to share their story with an interested outsider, while only a couple declined or ignored my inquiry. I conducted all interviews between July 2013 and September 2014. They lasted from one to three hours and took place wherever my interviewees preferred, which was typically at their home or work place. All interviews were taped for the purpose of writing down a summary and making a written copy of the passages of particular interest.

The interviews and my usage of them have at least five important weaknesses. First, the number of respondents was fairly low. Although my interviews may elucidate some of the common experiences among those deployed, there are too many experiences to be captured within my small

sample. Second, I have only conducted interviews with those who were interested in telling their story and had the time and resources to do so. There may, consequently, be many stories that remain untold. Third, my lack of military experience may have caused the respondents to avoid telling me about particular issues, which they may have deemed too sensitive for civilian ears (Ben-Ari and Levy, 2014: 13). Fourth, half of my respondents were no longer in the army at the time of the interview, and typically their Afghan deployment lay years behind them. From the perspective of social constructionism, the retrospective nature of my interviews would influence the narrative, thoughts and feelings of the respondents. Fifth, I have not analysed my interviews in depth, but simply compared them on the basis of the themes of my interview guide.

Informal conversations with military personnel make up the second type of interviews conducted as part of my research. This category first and foremost includes conversations with officials at the Danish Ministry of Defence, Defence Command Denmark (Army Operational Command before 2014) and the different regiments, but it also involves conversations with personnel during my research stay at the Institute for Military History and War Studies at the Royal Danish Defence College (spring 2015) and my attendance at the annual flag-flying days in Copenhagen and Slagelse in recent years. The purpose here was to acquire background information on concrete social practices within the military, especially with regard to the commemorations of dead soldiers and the custom of naming. In this connection, I have always sought to validate the information given to me by informants by asking for verifying documents or, alternatively, by talking with others on the same issue. As a source of background information, interview data is, however, somewhat limited, since respondents may withhold facts, or stress only certain aspects, due to personal or organisational concerns (Ben-Ari and Levy, 2014: 12-13). Using interviews as a source of background information might also neglect some varieties of social practices at a local level, and changes in these practices, since the knowledge obtained is bound to the experience and expertise of particular bodies. Yet the military is a complex organisation with no central memory, so that there is no clear alternative to interviews as a source of background information.

OBSERVATIONS

Before going into the nature of my observations, it is relevant to discuss my problem of gaining access to the Danish armed forces, which was related to my position as a 'student,' as I was primarily classified by military personnel, thus being outside the military field and its command structure.

As with most wars, the initial plan of my study was quite different from the final outcome. At first the Department for International Missions at Army Operational Command had welcomed my project and agreed to let me participate in a press tour to Camp Bastion in Afghanistan (October 9-17 2013), but prior to my departure (September 29) I was denied permission to conduct personal interviews with the deployed personnel, or distribute questionnaires, during my stay, even though the soldiers' participation would be entirely voluntary and anonymous. Army Operational Command and the Army Deacon informed me that they now considered my questions to be a violation of the soldiers' right to privacy, since I envisaged at that time asking about the soldiers' religion. Because I had no prior knowledge of the military world, I decided to participate in the trip anyway and get a glimpse of daily life at the base, where I learned that the restrictions imposed on me were in fact unheard-of among the journalists and military personnel there. Consulting the literature back home, I learned that failure to get access to military data is not unheard-of among researchers, out of consideration for national or international security, confidentiality of personnel, and institutional defensiveness (Ben-Ari and Levy, 2014: 12; King, 2011: 9; Woodward, 2004: 156). The army's wish to protect the soldiers' privacy may thus have been bound up with an unwillingness to let me examine things on my own account out of concern that my research might be used as a stick to beat the military and, perhaps especially, the army chaplaincy, which had been the centre of a public debate a year prior to my trip (Høy, 2012; Josefsson, 2012).

In the course of the press trip to Camp Bastion, I participated in the official programme, which involved a tour around the different sections of the Danish quarter of Camp Bastion, visits to other quarters in the base and briefings on the security situation and the work of the Danish military personnel in the area. I joined all social events taking place in the camp while I was there, for instance movie night, Sunday brunch, bingo and the church service, and since I had much leisure time, I had the opportunity to talk with many Danish soldiers and deployed civilians about their work and everyday life in and around the base. Like most other civilian researchers (Ben-Ari and Levy, 2014: 13), I was not allowed outside the perimeter wire. Nor was I able, encouraged or permitted to participate in the

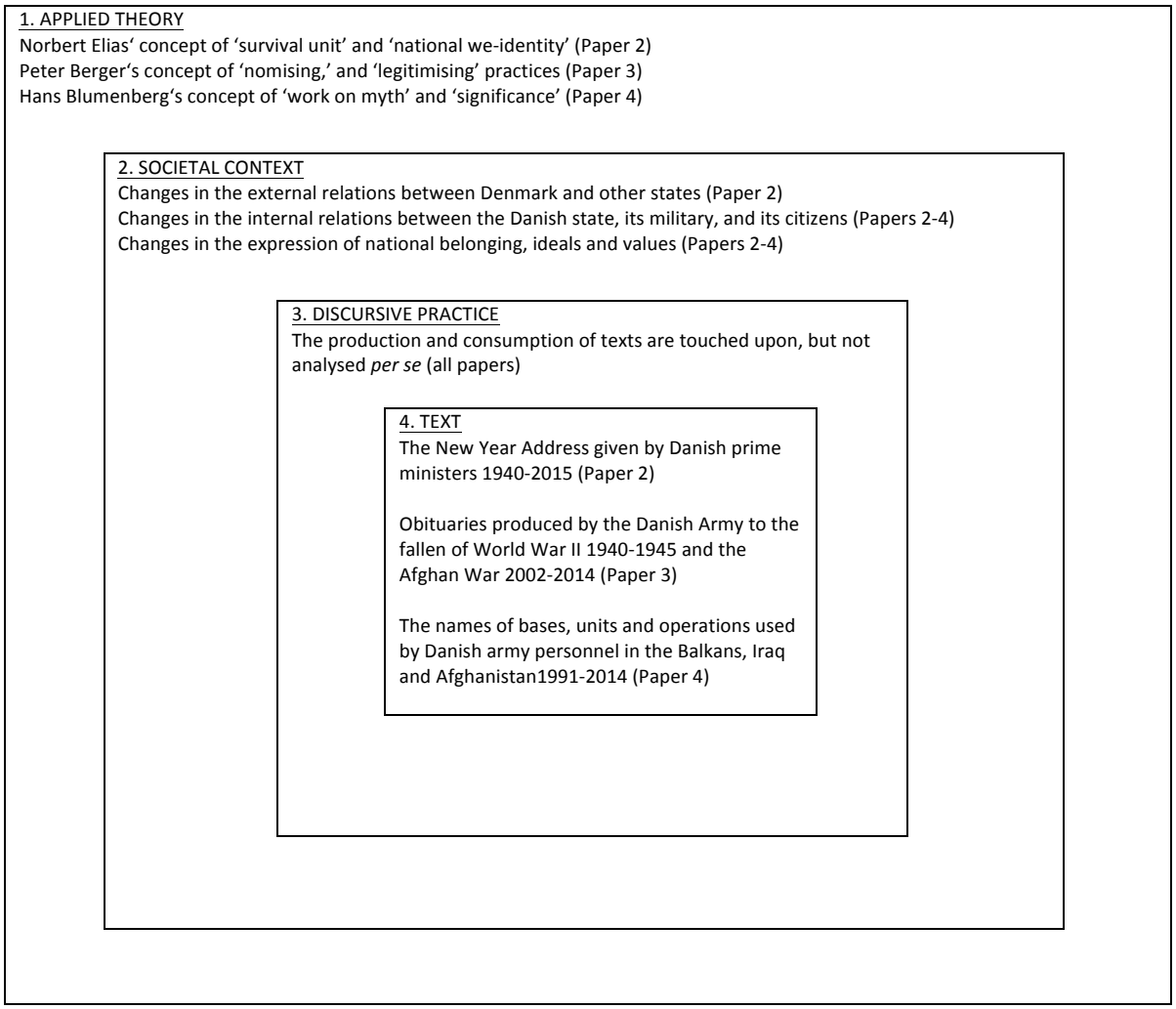
soldiers‘ work within the camp. This meant that I took a rather ‘passive role’ (Bryman, 2008: 413), and my fieldwork thus relied as much on informal conversations as observations. Finding myself in the role of the ‘observer-as-participant’ (Bryman, 2008: 410), I took ‘jotted field notes’ (Bryman, 2008: 420) during the day when I was alone, whereas I spent the last hour of my evenings writing down full field notes while the memory was still fresh. I also took photographs and included these in my field notes as an additional ‘*aide-mémoire*’ (Bryman, 2008: 425).

The visit to Camp Bastion did not play an important role in the process of data collection. That said, it helped in at least three ways. First and foremost, the trip served as a point of entry to the military field, as I here encountered a good deal of military jargon and military practices for the first time, besides becoming aware of a range of themes and problems that I later pursued, for instance the importance of the commemoration of the dead, and the significance of the soldiers‘ names and decorations. Second, during that time I made some contact with informants that was of use later, while observations from the visit, and the mere fact of my having been at the base, created some common ground with the veterans during subsequent interviews. Third, some of my observations of the military‘s material culture were later incorporated into papers as supplementary data. In this connection, it is important to make clear that my observations from this single trip have only served as anecdotal evidence, and that the outcome of my efforts was limited not just by the army‘s restrictions on me, but also by the circumstance that I was participating in a press trip. Most soldiers assumed I was a journalist, and that status, I discovered, was no recommendation in the context, as the majority of the men I spoke to found that journalists played down the positive results of their effort in Afghanistan and elsewhere.

Analysis and Interpretation

The analytical strategies of this dissertation have used various methods of textual analysis and, to a much more limited extent, visual analysis. As I have tried to illustrate in Figure 2, the selection and analysis of texts (square no. 4) have been influenced by my choice of both theory (square no. 1) and my overarching research questions, which, simultaneously, have directed my emphasis on themes or societal context (square no. 2). The following subsection provides a short presentation of the approaches taken in Papers 2 to 4. After that, I discuss their strengths and weaknesses and consider

Figure 2. Four-dimensional model of the analyses of Papers 2 to 4



Note: Inspired by Fairclough's (2010: 133) three-dimensional model for critical discourse analysis.

some of the problems of interpretation, especially in regard to the issue of contextualisation and discursive practices (square no. 3).

Analysis of Texts

My analyses focus on the internal features of speech and writing and, to a minor degree, visual images. As Fairclough (2010: 94), amongst others, has emphasised, texts contain many layers of meaning. From an analytical perspective, it is possible to distinguish between 'ideational,' 'interpersonal' and

'textual' meaning, describing 'the representation and signification of the world and experience, the constitution (establishment, reproduction, negotiation) of identities of participants and social and personal relationships between them, and the distribution of given versus new and foregrounded versus backgrounded information' (ibid.). Applying Fairclough's typology, I have focused on the ideational and interpersonal meaning by combining an 'a priori approach' and a more 'inductive approach' to textual analysis (Ryan and Bernard, 2003: 88; Timmermans and Tavory, 2012). I first generated various themes on the basis of my research questions and from reading the literature, both theory and empirical studies: for instance, I looked for positive vs. negative framings of the military and the connection of the soldiery to national values or historical sites and events in the texts.

Second, I tried coding a few texts, before refining coding categories to the point of saturation where they could be applied to the entire corpus. Between these two steps, I refined the list of a priori themes and added emically induced themes and subthemes by searching for 'repetitions' (Ryan and Bernard, 2003: 89) and 'similarities and differences' (Ryan and Bernard, 2003: 91-92) across the units of data. For instance, the analysis of obituary involved the process of breaking down the theme 'work history' into such subthemes as 'education,' 'civil career,' 'military career,' 'attitude and behaviour towards work,' and 'quality of work and job performance' (Paper 3). Processing the data, I used a cutting and sorting technique that involved 'identifying quotes or expressions that seem somehow important and then arranging quotes/expressions into piles of things that go together' (Ryan and Bernard, 2003: 94). Besides this manual approach, I have made use of the computer programmes *Excel*, *NVivo*, and *R Studio* when organising data into 'a unit-by-theme matrix' (Ryan and Bernard, 2003: 99)

In the remaining part of this subsection, I will briefly describe how each paper has combined qualitative and quantitative approaches with the purpose of reaching a detailed account of the material, while simultaneously capturing more general patterns and tendencies. Using process-orientated text analysis as developed by Elias (2000: 8–9) and Bauer and Ernst (2011: 132–134), Paper 2 thus presents a longitudinal and thematically orientated study of the New Year speeches delivered by Danish prime ministers. Initially I cross-read the speeches from 1940 to the present and divided them into two time periods. For this purpose, I observed the frequency with which Danish soldiers are mentioned (by the year) and then conducted a thematic analysis. In this process, I have focused on how the prime ministers' speeches represent the bond between the government, the military, and the people

of Denmark; if and how they conceptualise Danish soldiers as part of 'the national we-identity' (Elias, 1978: 137); what values and qualities they associated with the military and soldiery; and which of those values and qualities they recognise as particularly desirable to the state.

Modelled on a historical content analysis of US obituaries conducted by Long (1987), Paper 3 presents a content analysis of themes found in the obituaries of Danish soldiers killed in the Second World War and the War in Afghanistan. In performing this analysis, I focused on information about the fallen and the mechanisms of 'nomising' and 'legitimising' (Berger, 1990: 19, 29) language about death. Besides this, I carried out a comparison of two particular obituaries: one from each war (see *Appendix 3*). The two examples were not selected because they were representative in any statistical sense, but because I found that 'they represent recurrent motifs from the wider archive with particular lucidity,' as King (2010: 4) has argued in his study of eulogies to British soldiers. Stimulated by textual analyses conducted by Fairclough (2003: 146), I have examined the obituary usage of 'generic categories' and their oscillation between 'realist statements' and highly moralised 'evaluations' (Fairclough, 2003: 172–173). Supplementing my usage of content analysis, the tool box of Critical Discourse Analysis is more tentative as to how words, certain expressions, and themes are expressed and form part of a larger whole.

For Paper 4, the construction of an analytical strategy was inspired by a content analysis of Israeli military names by Gavriely-Nuri (2010) and studies of cultural narratives in International Relations (Bottici and Challand, 2006; Kaczmarska, 2016; Kühn, 2016). Again, content analysis served to provide a general view of the data, here entailing the identification of the dominant sources to which the names of bases used by Danish deployed belonged. On this basis, I present a case study, which is the result of a textual and discourse analysis of a variety of empirical sources, which have been selected and analysed for the purpose of illustrating how names decided by the Danes have been woven into cultural narratives to give significance to the intervention abroad. Very similar to the focus on 'chains of equivalence' in discursive theory (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 127), I have utilised Blumenberg's (1985: 95-97) concept of 'significance' to bring out how Danish soldiers link together the names given to bases, operations and units with military heroism on the one hand and, on the other, cultural narratives of national belonging. A content analysis of images on sleeve badges forms part of the analysis too. This part of the analysis is further discussed below.

Problems

Papers 2 to 4 share at least three analytical problems. First, my identification of themes has, to a large extent, been based on prior theorising. While this approach may provide a fresh perspective, since it is likely to point out surprising connections in the material, it also runs the risk of corroborating the theatrical preferences of the researcher (Ryan and Bernard, 2003: 94). Relatedly, practitioners of grounded theory would possibly argue that it is a problem that the process of coding conducted here has produced 'analyst-constructed typologies' (Ryan and Bernard, 2003: 89), since these are less likely than 'indigenous categories' (ibid.) to fit the participants' conceptual world view and, therefore, less likely to get 'respondent validation' (Bryman, 2010: 376-377), which, in any case, may not be an ethically unproblematic criterion of validity within military studies (see *Ethics*).

Similarly, the decision to use content analysis comes with a price. On the one hand, content analysis has made it possible to assess the scope of patterns, tendencies and differences within my data with a higher degree of reliability, or at least transparency, than more qualitative approaches would allow for (Krippendorff, 2004: 194-197, 112-120). In this context, tabulations play an important role, as shown in all my papers. On the other hand, the frequency of specific words, themes, and visual elements says little about *how* words and images have been expressed stylistically, or *how* they form part of a larger whole (Griffin, 2014: 148). While my usage of methodological triangulation serves to reduce the seriousness of this generic drawback, the fact that I had neither time nor resources to secure inter-observer consistency in the process of coding may seriously weaken the internal validity of the analyses presented in Papers 2 to 4 (Bryman, 2010: 376; Krippendorff, 2004: 216).

Finally, conducting an analysis on a small body of data, as I have done in Papers 2 to 4, runs the risk of premature closure. While I have returned to my interviews and observations to check whether my categorisations were supported or challenged by this data, discussed the fitness of my analyses with my supervisors, and consulted the literature of relevance to my subject, the categories/themes that I have developed during the process of analysis may simply lack the empirical power to underpin discussion of a more general and/or theoretical nature, which brings us to the questions of interpretation.

Papers 2 to 4 suffer from at least two problems of interpretation. First, they pay little attention to discursive practices: I have briefly touched upon the immediate social context of the texts and visual images in all papers, but I have not considered their production and consumption in a

satisfying manner due to a lack of information. Consequently, I have not taken into account important social conditions when interpreting my data.

Second, I have, like most sociologists conducting discourse analysis and similar investigations, been faced with the problem of demonstrating empirically that the data forms part of a dialectical relationship with broader discourses and non-discursive developments; here changes in the public discourse on national belonging, ideals and values and the relations between state, military, and citizens on the one hand and, on the other, structural changes in the external relations between Denmark and other states and the internal relations between state, military, and citizens. At the least this has three consequences: the first, my contextualisation of data has to a wide extent been the result of theoretical preferences and analytical choices (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002: 71, 89-90); two, my interpretation of data draws heavily on research from Denmark and internationally, which may be considered too general to support my interpretations; and three, I may play down other important contextual factors, such as the changing character of war (e.g. territory, cause), differences in the soldiers' role (e.g. defence, peace-building, aggression), and developments in recruitment practices (e.g. conscription, volunteering).

Ethics

While the ethical principle of minimising the risk of harm seems relevant within all areas of social research (Bryman, 2008: 118), it appears particularly interesting when research deals with military organisations and warfare, since violence and destruction are here central to the very object of investigation (Ben-Ari, 2014: 33). Surprisingly, reflexions about the researcher‘s role remain marginal among sociologists interested in the military. Higate and Cameron (2006: 219) have proposed that 'Reasons for this go to the heart of the dominant epistemological foundations of a military sociology that implicitly assumes that researcher bias can be neutralised by adhering to the traditional positivist model of sociological research.' Yet without reflexivity, it remains unclear how ethical concerns and the researcher‘s relation to the subject field may influence the process of research and its outcome (Brinkman, 2010: 434). From a 'micro ethical perspective' (Brinkman, 2010: 439) it is relevant to ask whether the researcher runs the risk of causing harm to informants who have directly contributed to the research project by telling their stories and sharing personal experiences or, alternatively, if the

researcher may harm those who are mentioned by name in the final publications. Contrary to this, the 'macro ethical perspective' (ibid.) concerns the relation of the researcher to dominant power structures. In this context, it is relevant to clarify the link between the researcher and the object of investigation before considering the potential impact of the research project on its object and society.

Micro Considerations

As has been said, the research project is above all based on publicly available data. The texts (and to a much more limited extent, images) have either been produced by Danish politicians or by military personnel, before their public distribution via radio, television, websites, or magazines. Yet some texts were originally intended for a small readership, for instance Danish regimental magazines, whereas others were aimed at a broad public, such as the prime ministers' speeches and, less so, the soldiers' obituaries, which speak to those who grieve, both colleagues and family members, the wider military community, and to varying degrees journalists and civilians in Denmark as well. Analysis always entails a process of re-framing, which may run counter to the writers' intentions or the readers' immediate experience. Simultaneously, texts may have an emotional significance to people, which may possibly be the case of the obituaries of dead soldiers or texts about the base Armadillo and Major Storrud. Analytical deconstruction of such texts may reopen old wounds and upset their writers or readers.

Yet I have decided to use these texts without any kind of anonymisation, since I believe that sociological research ought to contribute to an informed debate, even if this means that feelings of loss and grief may then not be protected against further exacerbation. Subordinate to this idea of sociology's normative role in society, the importance of which should always be considered *in situ* and against potential consequences, there are three other reasons behind my decision. First of all, Danish Defence has published the texts with the approval of their creators and close relatives, in the case of the obituaries. Since this body of texts has been published with informed consent, and since it has been part of the military's communication with the public, I have decided to make use of them without anonymisation. Secondly my decision to do so is reinforced by the fact that there are precedents for this practice in both Danish and international research (e.g. King, 2010; Rasmussen, 2011; Zhefuss, 2009) and, thirdly, since proper source references help to ensure research transparency. However, I *have*

anonymised my own informants, those who have contributed to the retrieval of background information and, in few instances, been quoted directly (Paper 4: 13-14). This anonymisation was agreed with the informants, with the aim of avoiding self-censorship and ensuring their privacy and relations to Danish Defence, including their colleagues.

Macro Considerations

A macro ethical perspective should first take into account the researcher‘s relation to the object of research and, second, the influence if any of the project on this object and, more broadly, institutions in society (Brinkman, 2010: 439).

First, then, the relationship between researcher and the military institution is important. Sceptical researchers have expressed concern that a close relationship to the military tends to generate self-censorship, produce problem-solving approaches and neutralise the military‘s conceptual world view: all of which assist, or legitimise, the operations of the military (Gray, 2016: 72-73). From this perspective, it is relevant to make clear that I have had no prior attachment to the military of any country; military organisations or funders have imposed no criteria on my PhD project; and I have not had to negotiate with military gatekeepers to get access to the data analysed in Papers 2 to 4. Gatekeepers did constrain my fieldwork at Camp Bastion and, therefore, that visit played no important role in the process of data collecting. During my time as a PhD student, I did enjoy a six-month research stay at the Royal Danish Defence College, but there I experienced no restrictions or pressure in regard to the direction of my work. On this basis, I can describe the process of writing this dissertation as independent of military interests, while it has been based on a productive dialogue with military informants and experts.

Second, the project aims to provide a critical account of military heroism. Expressing what Berger (1963, 38) termed the ‘debunking’ motif of sociological consciousness, my project confronts heroic discourses and the tendency to perceive soldier heroes as naturally heroic: and because ‘the sociological frame of reference, with its built-in procedure of looking for levels of reality other than those given in the official interpretations of society, carries with it a logical imperative to unmask the pretensions and the propaganda by which men cloak their actions with each other,’ (ibid), my exploration may be considered iconoclastic to the state‘s discourse on Danish Defence, its personnel

and their missions. From a normative view, I thus try to understand the new celebration of military men and merit in Denmark, and its link to new forms of political identification, citizenship, structures of governance, and military organisations, to help us to be less at its mercy, since discourses of this kind are prone to reduce complexity and conceal unequal power relations (Butler, 2016; Kelly, 2012; Mosse, 1994; van Krieken, 2012: 137-144). The principle of minimising the risk of harm may thus underpin a critical approach, which may be part of nurturing a 'critical language awareness' (Fairclough, 2010: 544) or, as in the present case, critical *hero* awareness, as Paper 1 is about to discuss in further detail.

Papers

Article

Sociology

What Makes a Hero? Theorising the Social Structuring of Heroism

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Abstract

The article discusses four dominant perspectives in the sociology of heroism: the study of great men; hero stories; heroic actions; and hero institutions. The discussion ties together heroism and fundamental sociological debates about the relationship between the individual and the social order; it elucidates the socio-psychological, cultural/ideational and socio-political structuring of heroism, which challenges the tendency to understand people, actions and events as naturally, or intrinsically, heroic; and it points to a theoretical trajectory within the literature, which has moved from very exclusive to more inclusive conceptualisations of a hero. After this discussion, the article examines three problematic areas in the sociology of heroism: the underlying masculine character of heroism; the presumed disappearance of the hero with modernisation; and the principal idea of heroism as a pro-social phenomenon. The article calls for a more self-conscious engagement with this legacy, which could stimulate dialogue across different areas of sociological research.

Keywords

Altruism, bravery, charisma, classical social theory, courage, gender, great man theory, heroism, modernity

Introduction

While the study of heroism has been closely tied to the origin and development of sociology, surprisingly little labour has been done to summarise the different attempts to understand the hero as a social phenomenon.[1] There is no self-conscious tradition of research on heroism, meaning that sociologists interested in the heroic are confronted with a fragmented body of literature that covers different subject areas, distinct societies and various disciplines. Going through this literature, it also becomes

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clear that there is little consensus about the precise definition of the heroic, from Carlyle's (2001 [1841]: 5) 'Great Men […] [who] have shaped themselves in the world's history', Campbell's (2004 [1949]: 28, emphasis in original) culture hero who '*comes back from* […] *a mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man*', Oliner's (2002: 123) perception of 'heroic altruism, involving greater risk to the helper […] [than] conventional altruism' to Featherstone's (1992: 165) discourse on 'the heroic life' as a counter-concept describing 'the sphere of danger, violence and the courting of risk whereas everyday life is the sphere of women, reproduction and care'. On that basis, the purpose here is to create a more organised discussion of the sociology of heroism.

I begin by exploring four dominant perspectives within the literature: the study of great men; hero stories; heroic actions; and hero institutions. My discussion focuses on the main lines of demarcation between the four perspectives, the multidimensional features of heroism and the theoretical trajectory of the overall field of research. During this discussion, I link heroism to the mainstream of social theory, since discussions as to what makes a hero relate to fundamental sociological questions about the relationship between the individual and the social order, the cause of history, the locus of human behaviour and the formation of cultural meaning. I argue that sociologists have advanced our understanding of heroism by elucidating the social structuring of heroic figures, heroic actions and hero-worship, thereby disproving the tendency to understand people, actions and events as naturally, or intrinsically, heroic. Finally, I call for a more self-conscious engagement with the heroic legacy in sociology. To this end, I address three problematic areas within the literature: the underlying masculine character of heroism; the presumed disappearance of heroes with modernisation; and the dominant idea of heroism as a prosocial phenomenon. I argue that such areas could not only reinvigorate the sociology of heroism, but also stimulate sociological discussion across the study of media, nationalism, policy, religion, sport, warfare and more.

Methodology

The article presents a thematic discussion of a body of texts found by combining a systematic and more intuitive process. First, I have located relevant items through the *Social Science Citation Index*, where I have searched for 'hero', 'heroes', 'heroine', 'heroines', 'heroic' and 'heroism' in the title or resume of papers within the category of sociology (accessed 1 November 2017). The resultant 288 items were reduced to 194 after a reading triage. I then extended the collection by extracting relevant items from the bibliographies, until I reached a point of saturation where I found no more text of immediate importance to my discussion. During the process, I decided to include texts from disciplines other than sociology, where they play a paradigmatic role in the study of heroism or deal with themes of sociological relevance. To get a manageable volume, I focused on articles and books in English (both original and translated) and excluded non-English literature, conference papers, reports and theses. While this entire body of scholarship has informed my discussion, it has not been possible to acknowledge every item found. Consequently, the article focuses on items of major importance to the history of the sociology of heroism and items that address the concept of heroism most directly.

Table 1. The ideal typological field of the study of heroes, divided by analytical focus and conceptual approach.

Analytical focus/ conceptual approach	Exclusive	Inclusive
Individuals	1. Great men	3. Acts of heroism
	Object of study The life and characteristics of significant persons in history	*Object of study* Factors determining why some people act heroically
	Theory The submissive dimension of hero-worship (Carlyle); the revolutionising but transient power of the hero's charisma (Weber); the social precondition for the development of great men (Spencer, Elias, Bourdieu); the symbolic and cohesive dimensions of hero-worship (Cooley)	*Theory* Common personological traits of heroes (Midlarsky, Jones and Corley); motivational explanations (Oliner); the banality of heroism (Zimbardo); the importance of socialisation and emotional culture (Lois), roles (Blake and Butler), group cohesion (King), and social capital (Glazer and Glazer)
Structures	2. Hero stories	4. Hero institutions
	Object of study Narrative structures in mythology and fiction	*Object of study* Function of hero-systems, and the social construction of heroism
	Theory Common cross-cultural features of hero stories (Rank, Raglan, Campbell); developments in heroic figures as expressions of historically specific conflicts (Friedsam, Giraud, Ziolkowski)	*Theory* The moral grammar of hero types (Klapp); the existential function of cultural hero-systems (Becker); the exchange economy of heroic status (Goode); the reciprocal formation of heroism, collective identity and power (Featherstone, Giesen, Hobsbawm, Schwartz)

Exploring Heroism: Four Perspectives

This section is organised as in the grid of Table 1. As the table shows, differences in *analytical focus* and *conceptual approach* divide the literature on heroes into four ideal types: the study of *great men*; *hero stories*; *heroic actions*; and *hero institutions*. The study of great men and heroic actions has focused on heroic *individuals*, whereas the study of hero stories and hero institutions has focused on the internal and/or external *structures* of discourses. While differences in *analytical focus* elucidate the multidimensional features of heroism, (i.e. its socio-psychological, cultural/ideational and socio-political components), differences in *conceptual approach* point to a theoretical trajectory within the study of heroism. Initially the study of

great men and hero stories was characterised by an *exclusive approach* to heroism, where the title of hero was restricted to grand figures in history and myth. Yet around the 1950s the study of heroic actions and hero institutions began to promote a more *inclusive approach*, embracing such relatively mundane figures as celebrities, foot soldiers, mountain rescuers, Righteous Gentiles and sportspersons within the hero-category. In the following four subsections, I aim to give substance to these two main points. A fifth and final subsection summarises sociology's contribution to the cross-disciplinary study of heroism.

Great Men: Carlyle, Weber, Spencer and Cooley

Many scholars have equated the term 'hero' with 'great man' to describe a host of significant historical persons, from Alexander the Great to William Shakespeare. Although the idea that great men act as prime movers in history has surfaced in a broad range of literature since the 19th century, one treatise has been particularly important in popularising it. In *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History*, Carlyle (2001 [1841]) argued that the progress of civilisation could be boiled down to the thoughts and deeds of a few distinguished personalities. 'Universal history,' he wrote, 'the history of what man has accomplished in this world, is at bottom the History of the Great Men who have worked here' (2001 [1841]: 3). Appearing 'as lightning out of heaven' (2001 [1841]: 91), these great men have been the object of worship by the many, whether in the form of gods, prophets, priests, men of letters, or kings, and so 'Society everywhere is some representation […] of a graduated Worship of Heroes', or '*Hero*archy' (2001 [1841]: 17, emphasis in original). Conceptualising hero-worship as the 'submissive admiration for the truly great' (2001 [1841]: 17), Carlyle paradigmatically stressed the dictatorial dimension of hero-worship, which was celebrated across Europe from the Romantic era to the end of the Second World War (Boorstin, 1992: 50; Schwartz, 1985: 104).

Another great man, Weber (1978 [1921]), rethought the hagiography in sociological terms, developing the ideal type of 'charismatic authority' that tied together heroism and the legitimisation of power. In brief, Weber (1978 [1921]: 1116) argued that contrary to the rational and traditional types of legitimate domination, 'the power of charisma rests upon the belief in revelation and heroes, […] upon heroism of an ascetic, military, judicial, magical or whichever kind'. Although these charismatic leaders are 'bearers of specific gifts of body and mind that were considered "supernatural" (in the sense that not everybody could have access to them)' (1978 [1921]: 1112), their continued recognition is based on the success of their mission. Contrary to the inertia of 'rational authority' and 'traditional authority', charismatic belief, for him, is characterised by a transformative energy. This energy 'revolutionizes men "from within" and shapes material and social conditions according to its revolutionary will' (1978 [1921]: 1116): but it is also fragile, transient and prone to coagulating, 'as permanent structures and traditions replace the belief in the revelation and heroism of charismatic personalities' (1978 [1921]: 1139).

Both Carlyle and Weber focused on the hero as a progressive force in history. Although Carlyle (2001 [1841]: 134) assumed that the outward shape of the hero 'will depend on

the time and the environment he finds himself in', and Weber (1978 [1921]: 1112) briefly noted that charismatic leaders tend to rise to power 'in moments of distress – whether psychic, physical, economic, ethical, religious, or political', both were fairly unconcerned as to the origin of the hero. Roughly put, both of them perceived the hero, or the heroic force, as coming from somewhere outside the social order. Confronting this theoretical deficiency, Spencer (2008 [1873]: 24) argued that 'the genesis of societies by the actions of great men, may be comfortably believed so long as, resting in general notions, you do not ask for particulars'. Uncomfortable particulars, Spencer claimed, come to the fore if one asks where such great men come from. Calling attention to the sociological preconditions of individual greatness, he argued that before the great man 'can re-make his society, his society must make him' (2008 [1873]: 25). Along with society's 'institutions, language, knowledge, manners, and its multitudinous arts and appliances, he [the great man] is a resultant of an enormous aggregate of forces that have been co-operating for ages' (2008 [1873]: 34).

Taking a somewhat similar perspective, Cooley (1897: 121) connected the great-man debate with perhaps the fundamental question of sociology: 'that is, of the mutual relations between the individual and the social order'. Cooley (1902: 355) argued that the authority of great men is 'so potent as to reorganize a large part of the general life in its image, and give it a form and direction which it could not have had otherwise', but that this greatness 'stands on top of a culminating institution' (1897: 156). Also in contrast to Carlyle and Weber, he postulated that the hero 'leads by appealing to our tendency, not by imposing something external upon us […] [and heroes] are, therefore the symbols or expressions, in a sense, of the social conditions under which they work' (1902: 354). Bringing to mind Durkheim's totemic principle, Cooley (1902: 346) proposed that most people are not interested *in* the hero, but in what the hero can make them feel, and so '[t]he hero is always a product of constructive imagination'. On this basis, he stressed the cohesive dimension of hero-worship, claiming that heroic figures 'produce in large groups a sense of comradeship and solidarity […] [which] is possibly the chief feeling that people have in common […] and the main bond of social groups' (1902: 326).

Summing up, Carlyle and Weber perceived the hero as a cause of social transformations, while Spencer and Cooley stressed heroic greatness as both cause and effect of the surrounding society, by which they called into question their colleagues' romanticist notion of the genius and the existence of a supreme force of will (Schwartz, 1985: 104). By emphasising the cohesive and symbolic feature of the cult around great men (Schwartz, 1985: 108–114), Cooley in particular contributed to a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between the hero and society, which has also characterised more recent studies on the psychological profile of great men (Erikson, 1962); the ability of a single person to shape history (Hook, 1955); the genesis and structure of the field, or figuration, in which great men are formed (Bourdieu, 1993; Elias, 1993); and, most extensively, the power of charismatic leaders in totalitarian states, developing countries and religious communities (see Schwartz, 1985: 104). In the latter research tradition, there is a fine line between the study of great men and the study of hero institutions, which, together with the gendered understanding of heroism, will be discussed later in this article.

Hero Stories: Explorations in Mythology and Fiction

The study of hero stories is a dominant field within the study of heroes, and this, according to Edelstein (1996: 31), 'explains why tales of giants, ogres, and the demigods of a mysterious past so often come to mind when one thinks of heroes'. Contrary to Carlyle's assumption that a few heroic men brought about what mankind had accomplished, the study of hero stories proposes that the heroic figure is a creation *of* man. Exploring the hero not as a historical figure but as a narrative phenomenon, the early study of hero stories, such as the paradigmatic work of Rank, Campbell and Raglan, has opened our understanding of the cultural/ideational dimension of heroism by drawing attention to the typical structures of folklore, myths and religious texts about heroes through cross-cultural comparisons.

Integrating the study of mythology with psychoanalysis, Rank (1914: 68) thought that 'the hero should always be interpreted merely as a collective ego', expressing society's suppression of man's innate urges of incestuous desire, growing self-awareness and aggression, while carrying 'the knowledge of a very ancient and universally understood symbolism, with a dim foresight of the relations and connections which are appreciated and presented in Freud's teachings' (1914: 71). Relatedly, Campbell (2004 [1949]: 16–18) proposed that hero stories are organised in the three stages of separation, initiation and return and explained the origin and function of the so-called 'monomyth' of heroism with reference to 'the collective unconscious' of Jung. Also Raglan (1949: 281) delineated a tripartite structure in hero stories, but connected their focus on the hero's birth, accession to the throne and death with the principal rites of passage of ancient kings: hero stories, he wrote, 'grew up with the [ritual] drama, of which they formed an essential part', and here there was no distinction between heroes, kings and gods (1949: 284).

While Raglan's hypothesis is highly speculative, it points to an important dimension that Rank and Campbell largely neglect: the relationship between hero stories and the organisation of wider society. The study of heroes in fiction and popular culture has strengthened our understanding of this linkage. Yet before sociologists began to explore the telling of hero stories by Hollywood or within the world of sport (e.g. Butryn and Masucci, 2003; Llinares, 2009), Friedsam (1954) pointed to the social structuring of hero stories. He observed that the occurrence of bureaucrats as heroes in American literature during the 1940s departed from previous norms, since this new type of hero expressed an intrinsic paradox of modernity where 'ideal conceptions and integrity (for the artist, the scientist, the executive – any man) [clashed] with the practical requirements of behaviour in a bureaucracy' (1954: 272). Somewhat similarly, Giraud (1957: 185) connected the 'unheroic hero' of the late romantic novel to the development of bourgeois society: 'Too bourgeois to be heroic, too lonely and sensitive to be bourgeois, the contradictory unheroic hero is a tragic misfit in modern society', he wrote. Travelling even further back, Ziolkowski (2004: 5) argued that an inhibition expressed by heroes as far back as Virgil's *Aeneid* bears witness to growing cultural crises: where classical heroes incarnated the convictions of their culture, the 'hesitant hero' appears as 'an epigone, a man born so late that he is torn between opposing systems of belief and value and becomes incapable of the same unthinking action that characterised his heroic predecessors'.

Apart from showing how heroic figures have been linked to historically specific encounters between the individual and social structures, the study of heroes in fiction and popular culture elucidates the point that conceptions of the hero as a kind of mythological being (Campbell, Raglan and Rank), or a person of unique talent, charisma and willpower (Carlyle, Cooley, Spencer, and Weber), have given way to a less exclusive approach to heroism. While these differences in conceptual approach clearly express some 'disagreement about what sorts of *qualities* ought to be considered heroic', as Best (2011: 93, emphasis in original) has proposed elsewhere, they also (and perhaps more interestingly) point to a theoretical trajectory in the general field of the study of heroism. However, the gradual widening of the concept of heroism did not involve a move away from one perspective to another. As illustrated here, it rather entailed a growing interest in less heroic heroes *within* the study of hero stories and, perhaps more visibly, the gradual emergence of the study of heroic actions and hero institutions that began in the post-war period. Hence, Table 1 does not illustrate four schools of clear-cut paradigms, but reduces the complexity of the study of heroism in line with Weber's conception of ideal types.

Acts of Heroism: Motives, Situations and Organisations

The study of heroic actions clearly illustrates the inclusive, or democratic, turn in the study of heroism. As Oliner (2002: 136, emphasis in original) has paradigmatically put it, heroic acts 'are not the exclusive province of larger-than-life figures. Rather, they are usually the *deeds of ordinary people*'. Hence, the basic question here is why some individuals act heroically, whereas others do not. The study of heroic actions makes up an interesting point of intersection between theories on the locus of human behaviour of which the bulk regards heroism as an extreme form of altruism, designating the willingness to help others despite a high risk of personal injury or death (e.g. Oliner, 2002: 123; Shepela et al., 1999). The Gentile rescuers of Jews during the Holocaust have been a major theme, as psychologists have investigated their personality traits, characterised by a high degree of locus of control, risk-taking behaviour, social responsibility, tolerance, empathy and altruistic moral reasoning (see Midlarsky et al., 2005: 908–911). Others have looked into the question of heroic motivation. As a famous example, Oliner (2002) has delineated three motivational factors on the basis of 700 in-depth interviews with rescuers: 52 per cent of them expressed 'normocentric' motivations (a feeling of obligation to community-based norms); 38 per cent 'empathetic' motivations (a feeling of pity for Jewish refugees); 11 per cent 'principled' motivation (a feeling that their own principles were being violated).

Recent years bear witness to a productive debate about the relative significance of *personological* versus *situational* factors in determining heroic action (Franco et al., 2011; Jayawickreme and De Stefano, 2012; Walker and Frimer, 2007), and this debate relates to more sociological concerns. Attacking the idea of 'the heroic elect', Zimbardo (2007: 275) proposed the hypothesis that '[t]he banality of evil is matched by the banality of heroism. […] Both emerge in particular situations at particular times, when situational forces play a compelling role in moving individuals across the line from inaction to action'. Instead of trying to dig out people's inner core of heroism, Franco et al. (2011:

101–102) have pinpointed a host of situations that typically incite heroic action. A conceptual consequence of their situational perspective is that heroism cannot be perceived as a subtype of altruism, since the triggers of bravery and self-sacrifice are here found *outside* (not *inside*) the individual (Franco et al., 2011: 102–103). Yet heroic action is not only dependent on the *right* mind, motivation and situational circumstances, but is also preconditioned by the characteristics of human organisation, as demonstrated by sociologists from various subject areas.

Military heroism is here a case in point. In examining the receivers of the Congressional Medal of Honor, Blake and Butler (1976) found that military honouring has underpinned the latent role structure of the US military by inculcating a war-winning orientation among officers (victorious heroes) and a comradely mentality in the rank and file (fallen heroes). Riemer (1998) explained military self-sacrifice by citing the forging of *esprit de corps* and expectations that leadership will be demonstrated. Historicising this discussion, King (2014: 234) has pointed out how the poorly trained army of conscripts depended on heroic deeds performed by either skilled or lucky individuals, but that the processes of military professionalisation have 'involved a democratisation of heroism; as they [today's professional soldiers] conduct their drills, everyone – and no one – has become heroes'.

The importance of organisational structures, social roles and human bonds is clearly not exclusive to military heroism. In a study of courageous political activists, Glazer and Glazer (1999: 279) have found that heroic actions are seldom a spontaneous decision taken by a single actor: rather network and cultural resources make up a core component of such heroism, since heroes (just as other people) 'call on a reservoir of social capital, of bonds that they have developed over many years'. Relatedly, Lois (2003) has shown how bravery is linked to the gradual socialisation of individuals into specific roles and 'emotional cultures'. From fieldwork among mountain rescue volunteers, she found that the prospective corps members were required to learn 'other-directed feelings' through engagement in 'self-denying' routine work if they were to gain acceptance within the team (2003: 64–83), during which they slowly internalised a culture of extreme self-control that involved 'not only the ability to manage one's own emotions during crisis but also the superior ability to pass along that emotional control to others in distress' (2003: 195). While this line of research has emphasised that social forms are embedded in the motivations of heroic acts, the last perspective brings into focus the broader social dynamics and historical processes of heroism.

Hero Institutions: Functional Systems and Social Constructions

Although the study of hero institutions is highly indebted to the classical sociological understanding of the submissive, institutional, cohesive and symbolic features of hero-worship (Weber and Cooley in particular), it departs from the study of great men by focusing on how ideational and socio-political structures impinge on heroes as collective representations. Instead of looking into the biography of great men, narrative patterns and developments, or the driving forces of courageous behaviour, the study of hero institutions investigates the link between the public recognition of the hero and the wider webs of cultural meaning, identity and power structures.

Following larger developments in social theory, the study of hero institutions has moved from the view of functionalism (static thinking) to social constructivism (processes thinking). As a key representative of the 'old' school, Klapp (1954, 2014 [1962]) argued that the hero (alongside the villain and the fool) is a social type embedded in language, 'used by all societies to maintain the social system, especially to control persons and put on significant dramas and rituals' (2014 [1962]: 17). Since the hero type functions to reduce social complexity, guide perceptions and behaviour and maintain a basic level of moral consensus in society (2014 [1962]: 16–24), the hero 'states for us as a people what we seem to the world, and, in some measure, what we are' (2014 [1962]: 49). Becker later used the term 'cultural hero-system' to direct attention to the way in which a society 'cuts out roles for performances of various degrees of heroism: from the "high" heroism of a Churchill, a Mao, or a Buddha, to the "low" heroism of the coal miner, the peasant, the simple priest' (Becker, 1973: 4–5). While Becker (1973: 4–5) insisted that the principal function of the hero system is to inculcate in people the hope and belief 'that the things that man creates in society are of lasting worth and meaning, that they outlive or outshine death and decay', Goode (1978) proposed that heroic status is part of a wider economy of respect, esteem and honour. From the perspective of exchange theory, Goode (1978: vii) thus argued that the public celebration of heroes is bound up with the distribution of prestige in society, which generates 'a system of social control that shapes much of social life'.

Whereas the early literature was preoccupied with the role of heroic figures within systems of symbolic action (Klapp and Becker) and economic exchange (Goode), the literature that has gradually emerged since the 1980s explores the formation of heroism within the wide-ranging paradigm of social constructivism. Avoiding the universalist claims of previous scholars who were determined to find the trans-historical essence or functioning of heroism (Becker, 1973; Campbell, 2004 [1949]; Carlyle, 2001 [1841]; Goode, 1978) – or, alternatively, fix the phenomenon by classifying it according to universal social (Klapp, 2014 [1962]), situational (Franco et al., 2011: 102) or moral types (Kohen, 2014) – these recent studies have examined how and under which conditions discourses of heroism are created. For instance, Featherstone (1992: 162) has argued that 'the heroic life' derives its meaning from the opposite life style, that is, 'the everyday life', conceived of 'in terms of the changing struggles of interdependencies between figurations of people bound together in particular historical situations in which they seek to mobilize various power resources'. Somewhat similarly, Scheipers (2014: 5, emphasis in original) has proposed that what makes a hero should be understood 'as a *continuous process of social construction* rather than the performance of an individual courageous act or as a social condition that emphasizes narratives of heroism and sacrifice'. According to Scheipers (2014: 14) this process is formed by many actors and, consequently, the concept of heroism 'never arrives at an ultimate interpretation, but is necessarily subject to reconstruction and reinterpretation'.

A growing literature has pointed to various cultural/ideational and socio-political forces that can influence the heroic as a category of social recognition. Among other things it involves notions of authenticity, body, career, death, gender, history, national identity and political leadership (Benwell, 2003; Brad, 2008; Connell, 2005; Giesen, 2004; Hutchins, 2011; Lorber, 2002; Rodden, 2009; Schwartz, 1983, 2008; Seale,

1995), besides developments in the relationship between media and society (Drucker and Cathcart, 1994; Van Krieken, 2012), struggles between dominant and dominated groups (Curott and Fink, 2012; Hargreaves, 2013; Hobsbawm, 1959), the influence of the elite (Fine, 1999), changes in *raison d'État* (Frisk, 2017a) and, relatedly, developments in warfare (Kelly, 2012; Mosse, 1991; Scheipers, 2014). Exploring this dynamic play of forces has brought into focus the elusive, impersonal and temporal characteristic of heroism as a social phenomenon, which is perhaps most instructively shown by the study of how people may go from being hero to villain (Ducharme and Fine, 1995; Jackson, 1998), or villain to hero (Bromberg, 2002). Hence, recent developments in the study of hero institutions have challenged the very idea that a precise definition of heroism can be given.

Sociology's Contribution

While folklore, historical research, literary criticism and social psychology have provided important insights into the biographies, narratives, symbolic meaning and mindset of heroes, they seldom provide us with the necessary theoretical tools to analyse and explain the processes by which social institutions, networks and hierarchies impinge on the life, character, role, worship, fall and revival of heroes. Sociological concepts such as 'charisma' and 'routinisation' (Weber, 1978 [1921]), 'collective memory' (Giesen, 2004; Schwartz, 2008), 'emotional culture' (Lois, 2003) and 'social type' (Klapp, 2014 [1962]) manage to do so. Sociologists have simultaneously brought into view the *use value* of the concept of heroism, which has been largely overlooked otherwise. From the viewpoint of sociology it has become clear how the label 'hero' functions as a category of social recognition, and how it forms part of the negotiation of juridical and symbolic status, group membership and collective values. Confirming Alexander's (2012: 7–15) argument about the importance of social theory, sociologists have drawn attention to the social structuring of heroism thus: if heroes are to emerge at the level of the collective, they must be recognised as heroic, which is a process that involves a dynamic play of social forces. On this basis, the sociology of heroism has challenged the tendency to perceive heroes as heroic in and of themselves, thus releasing the study of heroism from the hero's self-presentation, which is precisely 'to deny that there is any strategy, that *their* heroism is entirely "natural" and requires no synthetic support from the organization of their public perception', as Van Krieken (2012: 7, emphasis in original) has recently put it.

Problematising Heroism: Three Areas for Future Research

As is illustrated in the previous section, there is a valuable legacy within the study of heroism with which sociologists can engage. I conclude this thumbnail introduction by embarking on a critical engagement with this legacy. To this end, I explore three common problematic areas, all of which lie at the root of the sociology of heroism: the underlying masculine character of heroism, the presumed disappearance of heroes with modernisation and the general neglect of the hero's dark side. By addressing such common problem areas, I suggest that sociologists could advance our understanding of what makes a hero,

and how and why this is so, and simultaneously enrich sociological discussion across the study of gender, nationalism, policy, religion, sport, warfare and more. What is needed is not another branch of academic specialisation, but a broadly orientated, more self-conscious and perhaps better organised sociology of heroism that could integrate empirical knowledge and theoretical perspectives from different areas of sociological research, while counteracting the segregation of sociology into enclosed sub-disciplines. A starting point could be found in the following areas.

A (Fe)Male Heroism

The absence of women in the early literature on heroes, as in the writings of Carlyle, Weber, Spencer, Rank and Ragland, points to a close association between heroism and masculinity. While Campbell (2004 [1949]: 18) indeed declared that a hero could be a man *or* woman, Pearson and Pope (1981: 4) have persuasively argued that he too 'proceeds to discuss the heroic pattern as male and to define the female characters as goddesses, temptresses, and earth mothers'. In the now classical literature, the hero is almost exclusively a *man* who *takes action*, either as a bearer of social transformations (Carlyle and Weber), or as a champion of personal limitations (Campbell, Ragland and Rank). Heroism has here been tied to physical strength, especially in warfare and long journeys, or great accomplishments on the public stage of politics, theology, science and art. In both cases, the hero has typically shown traditionally masculine virtues, involving competitiveness, power of will and risk-taking. From a long historical perspective, the idea that heroic action belongs to the world of men, as evident in this literature, mirrors the celebration of male heroism in warfare and the processes of nation-building (Connell, 2005: xvi; Mosse, 1991: 53), besides a longer dualistic tradition of defining masculinity in contrast to the domestic sphere of allegedly *in*active women (Featherstone, 1992: 161), which has handed the heroine a passive role in western cultures, where it is 'she who waits (Penelope), she who is to be rescued (Andromeda), she who receives (Mary), she who is abducted (Persephone)' to quote Nicholson (2011: 190–191).

With the advent of feminism in theoretical discourse, scholars have felt that the traditional focus on *men's* heroism presents itself as a challenge to be overcome, because the study of heroism otherwise runs the risk of neglecting the female side (Nicholson, 2011: 192; Pearson and Pope, 1981: 13). Answering this call, recent studies have found that women in post-traditional societies have indeed begun to be recognised as heroes, but, paradoxically, often with reference to traditionally female virtues, such as giving care and concern for others (Kinsella et al., 2015: 125; Seale, 1995, 2002). Yet women are still less likely than men to be recognised as heroes in public discourse, even if they demonstrate courage and self-sacrifice to the same degree as men (Becker and Eagly, 2004; Lorber, 2002). Sociologists have likewise found that women who enter traditionally male roles that require a high level of risk-taking, or physical performance, have been constrained by conventional gender stereotypes with few opportunities to excel. At least, this has been the case in the fields of sport (Hargreaves, 2013; Lines, 2001), search and rescue (Lois, 2003: 180–186) and the military (Frühstück, 2007: 184). Changes in the role of women within traditionally male-dominated institutions, and the simultaneous

emergence of anti-heroic discourses of masculinity (Benwell, 2003), may thus be fertile soil for cultivating our knowledge of the gendered patterns of heroic opportunities.

No More Heroes

While Carlyle (2001 [1841]: 19) held that 'hero-worship endures forever while man endures', he nevertheless lamented a presumed decline of heroism, on the grounds that the cultivation of a rationalistic world view produced a 'general blindness to the spiritual lightning' of great men (2001 [1841]: 18–19). Less vigorously, Weber (1978: 1133) claimed that it is the fate of heroic leaders 'to recede with the development of permanent institutional structures', while Boorstin (1992: 52) found that the spread of democratic beliefs has encouraged distrust in heroes, since '[h]ero-worship, from Plato to Carlyle, was often a dogma of anti-democracy' (1992: 50). Relatedly, Giesen (2004: 151–152, 162) has observed that the victim (not the hero) became the main figure of reverence in post-war Europe, where claims of heroism have been met with irony and scepticism. With this Schwartz (2008: 8) seems to agree, highlighting that a democratic society 'inclusive of all people and solicitous of their rights, is precisely the kind of society in which great men and women and their achievements count for less, while the victimised, wounded, handicapped, and oppressed count for more than ever'. Scholars have also emphasised such factors as growing alienation and anomie (Becker, 1973: 6; Klapp, 2014 [1962]: 141), mediatisation (Boorstin, 1992: 57; Drucker and Cathcart, 1994) and risk-aversion (Furedi, 2007: 178), besides the displacement of religion by 'business ethics' and 'monkey-holiness' (Campbell, 2004 [1949]: 360).

Instead of speaking of the disappearance of heroes, Ziolkowski (2004: 131) has urged that it is more correct 'to say that an increasingly fragmented society has produced a variety of heroes to suit its needs'. Confronting the above hypothesis more directly, Best (2011) argued that Americans today live in a 'congratulatory culture' in which everyone celebrates everyone as heroes, and so the problem is not that we live without heroes, but that we live in an age with too many of them, which devalues the meaning of heroism. Ironically, the argument that we live in an anti-, post- or hyper-heroic age has led to the selfsame conclusion: that heroism has lost meaning with modernisation. Against this, empirical studies point to hero-worship in today's societies, suggesting that claims of a corrosion of heroism are (at best) exaggerated (e.g. Brad, 2008; Fine, 1999; Frisk, 2017a, 2017b, 2017c; Kelly, 2012; Lorber, 2002; Scheipers, 2014; Seale, 1995, 2002). Whether or not one can talk about a post-heroic age seems to depend on the narrowness of one's conceptual approach to heroism and, as Schwartz (2008) has demonstrated, the historical time frame of one's study. Rather than speaking of more or less heroism, it would be more productive to explore *what counts as heroism*, how it may change and how the very idea that there are no more heroes may be part of such transformations.

Dark Heroism

When Schwartz (2008: 17) wrote that the diminution of heroes seems to go 'hand in hand with the nation's increasing civility and enlarged awareness of its present faults and their historical sources', he touched upon the dark side of heroism. So did Weber (1978: 1117),

emphasising how 'charisma, in its most potent forms, disrupts rational rule as well as tradition altogether and overturns all notions of sanctity'. Usually scholars have conceptualised heroism as a positive, or pro-social, phenomenon, meaning that the disruptive side of the hero and of hero-worship, or what Giesen (2004: 18) has termed the 'madness of the hero', has been largely ignored. As a paradigmatic illustration of the positive view on heroism, Carlyle (2001: 21) claimed that a lack of heroes threatened the moral development of man, since 'every true man feels that he is himself made higher by doing reverence to what is really above him'. Associations between heroism and religion in the writings of Carlyle, Cooley, Campbell, Becker and Oliner have likewise stressed the significance of heroism to the maintenance of cultural meaning, public morality and social cohesion, without which society would surely fall apart.

As with every other social phenomenon, the social labour done by heroic figures is not always desirable from all perspectives. Again military heroism can be a case in point. Exploring the relationship between hero-worship and authoritarianism (initially pinpointed by Carlyle and Weber), Mosse (1991: 7) posited that Nazi Germany's militarism was not just made meaningful through the cult of personality, but that broader discourses of heroism – especially the cult around fallen soldiers – played a crucial role in this process by providing 'the nation with a new depth of religious feeling, putting at its disposal ever-present saints and martyrs, places of worship, and a heritage to emulate'. While soldiers of today's democratic states are typically represented as peacekeepers and freedom fighters, the figure of the soldier hero has also played a role in the legitimisation of the resort to military violence by for instance the USA, UK and Denmark in Afghanistan (Frisk, 2017a, 2017b; Kelly, 2012; Lorber, 2002). As demonstrated by a few other studies (e.g. Curott and Fink, 2012; Fine, 1999; Hargreaves, 2013; Hobsbawn, 1959; Jackson, 1998), the celebration of heroes indeed appears to be an integral part of group antagonism and the struggle for recognition, rights and resources, the study of which could provide a better understanding of the double-edged character of the heroic.

Conclusion

In sum, I have argued that discussions of heroism relate to fundamental sociological questions about the relationship between the individual and the social order, the cause of history, the locus of human behaviour and the formation of cultural meaning; that a fragmented body of literature has elucidated the formation of heroism at various levels of society, thereby bringing into focus the multidimensional features of heroism, that is, its socio-psychological components (especially the study of great men and heroic action), cultural/ideational components (especially the study of hero stories and hero institutions) and socio-political components (especially the study of great men and hero institutions); that the general field of research has moved away from an elite concept of heroism to a wide-ranging interest in mundane figures and discourses; and, finally, that sociologists have contributed to the general study by drawing attention to the function of the label 'hero' as a category of social recognition and contestation, while providing the necessary theoretical tools to describe how top–down (instrumental/disciplinary) and bottom–up (expressive/cohesive) processes influence heroic figures, heroic action and hero-worship, and vice versa. Embarking on a more self-conscious engagement with this legacy,

future studies could strengthen our knowledge of heroism, while the exploration of such wide-ranging themes as the gendered patterns of heroism, the possible corrosion of heroism in modernity and the hero's dark side could stimulate dialogue across different areas of sociological research.

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1. Brief discussions are found elsewhere; see Best (2011); Edelstein (1996); Jayawickreme and De Stefano (2012); Schwartz (1983, 1985); Segal (2004).

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'But when I tell them about heroes, then they listen': The soldier hero and transformations of the Danish welfare state

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Abstract
This paper explores the rise of the soldier hero in Denmark. From the analysis of prime ministers' New Year Addresses between 1940 and 2015, it is evident that the heroification of Danish soldiers has been linked to the elevation of professionalism, self-motivation, individual responsibility, and global outlook as civic virtues since the 1990s. Utilising the concept of a survival unit developed by Norbert Elias, it argues that this elevation is a result of the gradual emergence of 'competition state' and 'security state' strategies for protecting the Danish welfare state in the wake of growing international interdependency. On this basis, the paper seeks to contribute to the literature on the social construction of heroes within a theoretical perspective that takes the dynamic relations between states into account, and to explain why specific notions of a hero develop.

Keywords
Denmark, military, national identity, Norbert Elias, state formation, soldier heroes, war

Introduction

Inspired by the USA and the UK, Denmark has developed a policy of honouring military personnel in the wake of the growing international engagement of the Danish Defence after the end of the Cold War. Denmark held its first National Flag Day for Danes Serving Abroad on 5 September 2009, a day that involved homecoming parades, the hoisting of flags, church services, and public speeches in front of the Parliament and in many provincial towns (Christensen, 2016; Reeh, 2011; Sørensen and Pedersen, 2012). As a spatial equivalent to the flag day, Parliament decided to build the Monument to Denmark's International Effort since 1948, inaugurated by HM Queen Margrethe II in 2011, one year after the enactment of the first Danish veterans' policy (Ministry of Defence of Denmark, 2010; Sørensen, 2016).

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These initiatives have revised the status of the soldier and veteran in a legal and symbolic sense, often accompanied by an unprecedented identification of Danish soldiers as heroes. The speech given by then Defence Minister (2011–2013) and Social Democrat Nick Hækkerup on the national flag-flying day of 2012 may serve as an example of the new heroic discourse.

> I have four children. It is not often they bother to listen to what I say. But when I tell them about heroes, then they listen – and I tell them about you [Danish soldiers]. As a country we place the freedom and security of our children and grandchildren in your hands. It is not possible to thank you enough. Thank you. (Hækkerup, 2012)[1]

Søren Gade (Defence Minister 2004–2010), from Denmark's Liberal Party, evoked a similar notion of military heroism in commenting on the loss of three Danish soldiers in Afghanistan: 'All the soldiers that we have here in Afghanistan are, in my eyes, the real heroes who are fighting to ensure that the assholes do not come to our part of the world to brawl' (Gade in Stougaard, 2009). This heroic discourse has also gained ground in the ranks of the military. The Chief of the Danish Afghanistan force in 2007 and Leader of the Year 2009, elected by The Danish Association of Managers and Executives, said the following in a newspaper interview: 'When I went to the military academy, we looked for our war heroes in the history books. Now I can look around the room and point to them' (Kim Kristensen in Stougaard and Caruso, 2009). Reflecting the high degree of consensus between the political and editorial framing of Denmark's participation in coalition warfare (Hjarvard and Kristensen, 2014), journalists and debaters have also covered the engagement of Danes deployed in heroic terms, for instance under such headlines as 'The hero from Musa Quala' (Svendsen, 2008), 'The fallen' (Nielsen et al., 2010), 'The Danish heroes' (*BT*, 2013), 'Two minutes of silence for three heroes' (Lilleør, 2009), 'A matter of heroes, honour, and usefulness' (Knudsen, 2009), and 'A Danish act of heroism' (Landert, 2013).

Needless to say, the heroification of Danish soldiers has been contested, perhaps most loudly by the far-left politicians of the Red–Green Alliance, public intellectuals, and small social movements such as Copenhagen Peace Watch, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, and Hizb ut-Tahrir, who also protested in front of the Parliament on 5 September. This being said, the figure of the soldier hero has gained a self-evident or sacred quality in the public debate, even among some of the critics of Denmark's military engagement. As the defence spokesman of the Social Liberal Party has argued,

> . . . Danish soldiers are heroes. It is not they who failed, but we politicians who sent them out on an impossible task. . . . And I certainly do not think that the heroic deeds of the soldiers are reduced, because of this realisation – on the contrary. (Zenia Stampe in Redder, 2013)

A similar view has been measured at the popular level. According to a survey conducted by TNS Gallup, 73% of Danes agreed or mostly agreed with the statement that 'the nation has a duty to pay tribute to its soldiers, whether or not one [as a citizen] supports the war' (TNS Gallup, 2009). Of course, the heroic discourse on soldiers has been put to use strategically to legitimise the military activism of Denmark, but the 2009 survey and the general picture both indicate that it is inadequate to explain the celebration of soldiers as heroes as a mere token of political support for the deployment of troops. As such, we are left with the puzzle of how and why Danish soldiers have come to be so unequivocally celebrated as heroes, in many cases without regard to the political goal and nature of the military missions in which they are involved.

The issue I wish to address in this paper is how to understand the rise of the soldier hero in Denmark. Analysing the New Year Addresses to the Danish People given by prime ministers from 1940 to 2015, I show that the heroification of Danish soldiers has been tied to the elevation of professionalism, self-motivation, individual responsibility, and global outlook to civic virtues since the 1990s. I argue that this elevation is part of a broader transformation of the national we-identity, itself a result of the emergence of 'competition state' (Cerny, 2010; Pedersen, 2011) and 'security state' (Kaspersen, 2013) strategies for

sustaining the Danish welfare state in the wake of growing international interdependency. At a more general theoretical level, I apply the relational approach of Norbert Elias to the study of national heroes and military heroism, thus seeking to demonstrate that the social construction of heroes must be regarded not only as a functional discourse *within* society but, more significantly, as historically dependent on the dynamic relations *between* state-societies.

The study of (soldier) heroes

The study of heroes is deeply embedded in a specific western literary and cultural discourse, as represented in the now classical studies of mythical, religious, folkloristic, and national heroes. These paradigmatic studies have focused on the life and adventures of the hero, conceptualised as a great man who shaped himself in the world's history (Carlyle, 2001 [1841]); defied challenges and oppression to satisfy personal needs (Rank, 1970 [1909]); and served, protected, or restored society (Campbell, 2008 [1949]; Raglan, 2013 [1936]).[2] Although this literature elucidates how the image of society lies at the heart of the hero, the theoretical frameworks are too simplistic in that they play down the history and social context of the hero figure in favour of a universal psychological force and/or narrative structure.

Daniel Boorstin (1992 [1961]) and Orrin E Klapp (2014 [1962]) have contributed to bringing into focus the social dynamics of the hero phenomenon, while the Changing Character of War programme at Oxford University has stressed the social construction of heroes as 'an ongoing process in which many actors participate, and in which the meaning of heroism is contested and constantly reinterpreted' (Scheipers, 2014: 15). Despite evidence that the soldier hero has lost some glamour in the shadows of World War I and the war in Vietnam (Calder, 2004; Mosse, 1994), a growing body of literature has persuasively shown that military heroes remain familiar figures to the armed forces, the political debate, the media, and popular culture (Christensen, 2016; Dawson, 1994; Frühstück, 2007; Goren, 2007; Kelly, 2012; Papayanis, 2010; Scheipers, 2014; Woodward, 2000). These studies have examined heroification as a discourse within society, with special reference to the formation of nationhood and masculinities. At the same time, they have described the functioning of the heroic discourses, which work to blur the cruel realities of war, generate social unity, normalise military violence, give meaning to casualties, recruit new soldiers, boost the morale of fighting soldiers, re-socialise veterans into society, provide public support for waging war, and ward off criticism of war when waged.

In order to explain why specific notions of heroism have emerged and attained legitimacy, it is necessary to supplement the constructivist approach with a theoretical perspective that brings the state into the centre of analysis. The public recognition of certain groups or virtues as heroic must be regarded not only as a part of the discourse within society but, more significantly, as dependent on the dynamic relations between states. This is evident if we consider, for instance, the heroification of the knight-errant of European feudal society, the British explorer in colonial times, or the (re)emergence of the soldier hero in the post-Cold War era. To this end, I have utilised the concept of the survival unit developed by Norbert Elias (1978, 2001) and elaborated by Lars Bo Kaspersen and Norman Gabriel (2008).

States, soldiery, and the national we-identity

Elias conceptualised a survival unit as a figuration that represents the highest level of human integration at a given time and place: a tribe, city-state, kingdom, or parliamentary state (Elias, 1978: 134–139). The unit is a complex collective actor, which is continuously engaged in an elimination contest with other units, each of which seeks to secure their material and cultural existence through various survival strategies. According to Kaspersen, the ruling ideology of a survival unit is thus 'always limited and structured by another rationale that is inherent to any state . . . that orchestrates its activities towards its own reproduction and survival' (Kaspersen, 2013: 40). Unlike Max Weber's conception of the state as a monopoly of violence, or Émile Durkheim's theory of collective consciousness, the concept of the survival unit actively takes into account that societies have emerged and developed in relation to each

other (Kaspersen, 2013; Kaspersen and Gabriel, 2008). In line with more recent theories of the relational dynamics of state development (Kaspersen, 2013; Lidegaard and Højrup, 2007; Reeh, 2011) and the impact of globalisation on the raison d'être of states (Cerny, 2010; Pedersen, 2011), the notion of the survival unit brings attention to the exogenous formation of the state, including the institutions, beliefs, and values within its borders.

Needless to say, warfare is a fundamental dimension in the construction of the survival unit (Kaspersen, 2013; Kaspersen and Gabriel, 2008). Survival units 'are born in wars and for wars' (Elias, 2001: 208), and so it is no surprise that the soldier figure has often come to represent 'national ideologies and the conviction of the special merit, the greatness and superiority of one's own national tradition' (Elias, 2001: 82). Simultaneously, the honouring of the soldier profession has functioned to remind citizens in general that:

> [T]he state's function as survival unit, as guarantor of its members' security, is combined with the demand that its members be prepared to forfeit their own lives should the government deem this necessary for the security of the whole nation (Elias, 2001: 208).

Hence, the figure of the soldier hero epitomises the social contract between the state and its citizens, and therefore plays an important role in the discursive formation of the national we-identity.

Moreover, Elias argued that the nation state takes priority over other communities as an object of common identification because of its function as a survival unit (Elias, 2001: 183; Kaspersen and Gabriel, 2008: 376). As an expression of this, the state carries with it an 'extended "I-and-We" consciousness' or 'national we-identity' so strong that people's 'attachment to such large social units is often as intense as their attachment to a person they love' (Elias, 1978: 137). The attachment of the citizen to the state, of 'I' to 'We', is more or less consciously created and maintained through the use of personal pronouns, 'represent[ing] the elementary set of coordinates by which all human groupings or societies can be plotted out' (Elias, 1978: 123). At a more general level, the emotional bonds of the citizen to the state are constructed through collective symbols, such as when people connect their beliefs, values, and sense of belonging 'to coats of arms, to flags and to emotionally-charged concepts' like *Kultur* and *civilité* (Elias, 1978: 137; 2000). Below, I argue that the soldier figure has come to serve this purpose as a consequence of changes in Denmark's national we-identity, survival strategy, and external relations.

Data and methods

Discussing the methodology of Elias's work, Nina Bauer and Stefanie Ernst (2011) have argued that process-produced data are one key way of reconstructing a figuration and its changes over time. Elias demonstrated this by exploring the literature on manners, noting that the sociological relevance of these texts was 'less as an individual phenomenon or work than as a symptom of changes, an embodiment of social processes' (Elias, 2000: 48). The selected data must be central to the figuration to point to larger developments in its structures (Bauer and Ernst, 2011: 132–134) and, therefore, I have explored each New Year Address to the Danish People given by prime ministers on 1 January between 1940 and 2015.[3] The New Year Address has been the most widely circulated of all prime ministerial speeches, with an average of over two million TV viewers per year over the past 20 years (Mellbin and Mellbin, 2011: 12). In addition to its focus on economy, foreign policy, and security (Mellbin and Mellbin, 2011: 830), the speech has been an occasion for prime ministers to bring the nation together, promote values deemed particularly desirable to the state, and acknowledge citizens for their contribution to society. The mentioning of Danish soldiers illustrates this, though their significance has varied considerably throughout the years. Consequently, the excerpts presented here are not representative of the New Year Address in toto, but rather point to changes in its representation of Danish soldiers.

Table 1. The soldier and the Danish state, 1940–2015.

		Time period 1 1940–1990	Time period 2 1991–2015
The soldier figure in the New Year Address given by Danish prime ministers	Mentions of Danish soldiers[a]	Exceptional	Standard
	Attitudes toward the soldiers	Appreciative	Grateful, proud, and admiring
	Emotional bond between government, military, and people	Weak	Strong
	Dominant values attached to soldiers	Fulfilling collective duties and volunteering for peace	Professionalism, self-motivation, and global outlook
Central element of the Danish state as a survival unit	Survival strategy	Welfare	Welfare through competitiveness and security
	Civic virtues	Focus on democratic participation	Focus on work efficiency

[a]Danish soldiers were mentioned in 1946, 1952, 1953, 1957–1959, 1965, 1991, 1993–1995, 1997, 2002, 2004, 2006–2015.

Inspired by the historical methodology of Elias (Bauer and Ernst, 2011: 132–134; Elias, 2000: 8–9), I have cross-read the New Year speeches and divided them into two time periods. For this purpose, I have observed the frequency with which Danish soldiers have been mentioned (year) and then conducted a thematic analysis, pursuing the following questions:

1. How has the bond between the government, the military, and the people of Denmark been represented?
2. Have soldiers been conceptualised as part of the national 'We' and, if so, how?
3. What values and qualities have been associated with soldiers, and which of those values and qualities are recognised as particularly desirable to the state?

On this basis, I have tried to connect the prime ministers' discourses to the workings of the Danish state as a survival unit. Here, I draw upon secondary sources, especially Kaspersen (2013). Focusing on the geopolitical situation of Denmark and the underlying logic of the state, I have given less attention to the immediate context of each speech and speaker.

The soldier and the state of Denmark, 1940–2015

Table 1 summarises the changes in the significance and image of the Danish soldier from World War II to the present. Firstly, I connect the few mentions of Danish soldiers in the New Year Address between 1940 and 1990 to the development of the Danish welfare state as an anti-militaristic strategy for collective national survival during World War II and the Cold War. Secondly, I argue that the new significance of the soldier figure is linked to changes in the national we-identity and civic virtues, which have been underpinned by the gradual emergence of 'competition state' (Cerny, 2010; Pedersen, 2011) and 'security state' (Kaspersen, 2013) strategies for ensuring the Danish welfare state in the dynamic environment of the post-Cold War era.

Time period 1: 1940–1990

Soldiers did not stand out in New Year Addresses between 1940 and 1990. In fact, they were only mentioned immediately after the liberation and then in six speeches in the early years of the Cold War (Table 1). In these speeches, prime ministers addressed three different groups of soldiers: expatriates that had fought together with the Allies in World War II (mentioned in 1946); conscripts (1952, 1953, and 1957); and troops deployed with the UN (1957, 1958, and 1965). The performance of collective duties and volunteering for peace missions were acknowledged values associated with the soldiers, but the emotional bond between the government, the military, and the people remained rather weak, which is further illustrated by the omission of soldiers from the annual speeches for some 30 years after 1965. Below, I elaborate on the role of the soldier figure in the formation of the national we-identity in this time period, arguing that its symbolic feebleness is closely linked to the development of the Danish welfare state as a survival strategy in World War II and the Cold War.

World War II. The unstable power ratio between the great states of the interwar European chessboard created a delicate situation for Denmark, which had been reduced in size by the loss of Norway, Schleswig-Holstein, and Southern Jutland in the patriotic wars of the previous century (Kaspersen, 2013: 60). The growing political tension in Europe posed especially difficult problems because Denmark had become economically reliant on Germany *and* the UK as the largest export markets for agricultural products (Lidegaard and Højrup, 2007: 218). With the purpose of avoiding interference and securing prosperity, Denmark pursued a neutral foreign policy as advocated by the Social Democratic Party and Social Liberal Party, which had shaped the dominant view on military force since their defeat by Prussia and Austria in 1864 (Kaspersen, 2013: 120–126; Lidegaard and Højrup, 2007; Rasmussen, 2005). This view came to the fore in the New Year Address given by Thorvald Stauning of the Social Democratic Party (prime minister 1924–1926 and 1929–1940) in the face of the German threat. Speaking on radio, he pointed to agriculture, the maritime industry, and the idyllic countryside of Denmark as sources of national pride, after which he turned to the limited capability of the country to defend itself. On behalf of the national 'We', Stauning juxtaposed the 'war preparedness' of the previous century and the 'abjuration of war' of his own government and, purportedly, the people:

> [T]he abjuration of war, which has gradually developed in the population, has led Denmark into a position that prevents any belief in effective war preparedness . . . Neutrality has become the order of the day without regard to the changing colour of governments. There was a time after the war of 1864 when Denmark's government openly committed to a defence directed against Germany, but this has long been condemned by the people. (Stauning, 1940)

The policy of neutrality could not prevent an invasion by Germany on 9 April 1940, partly because the geographical position of Denmark provided an important route to Norway (Kaspersen, 2013: 122). Enabled by the negotiation policy, the unity government of Denmark, consisting of the Social Democratic Party, the Social Liberal Party, the Conservative People's Party, and the Liberal Party, did what Danish politicians had done during World War I and in the fiscal crisis of the 1930s: they struggled to manage outside pressure with a high degree of state regulation based on political compromises and close collaboration with organisations in the Danish civil society (Kaspersen, 2013: 122). The response of the Danish politicians to the occupation of 1940–1945 showed that the 'welfare state, where state and society are interlocked, had become the survival strategy of the Danish state . . . [which] drove Danish development onto a particular welfare-state track', as Kaspersen has argued (2013: 122, 124).

Moreover, the welfare strategy drove the role of the soldier figure as a unifying national symbol off the beaten track for some decades. Although the general public found that the Danish soldiers had fought heroically against the superior *Wehrmacht* on 9 April 1940, and in the brief exchange of fire when the Germans detained the Danish Defence after the collapse of the negotiation policy on 29 August 1943

(Jørgensen, 2005), the story of these men was also the story of the suspension of Danish sovereignty and Denmark's negotiation policy, which became increasingly unpopular after 1943. The decision of resistance leaders to avoid military initiatives to expedite liberation on 4 May 1945 also contributed to the image of an impotent national defence, leaving the old members of the resistance as *the* national heroes of World War II. One group of soldiers was still given some positive attention in the New Year Address of 1946, when the nationally minded Knud Kristensen (Prime Minister 1945–1947), from the Liberal Party, praised Danish expatriates for their involvement with the Allies:

> In the war, many of them [the expatriates] risked their lives in Denmark's cause in combat with submarines, or as participants in the Allied campaign in East and West, and thus made their contribution to the liberation of our country. Others, in combat against Japan, expeditions in the Pacific, or in war in Papua's jungle, have guarded the honour of Denmark under distant skies (Kristensen, 1946).

By emphasising the expatriates who had fought on the right side of the war, Kristensen distanced the new liberal government from the negotiation policy of the former, but without obstructing the general message of national reconciliation. The expatriates functioned well in underlining ideological sympathy with the Allies and promoting the government's positive attitude towards deterrence. At the same time, Kristensen avoided bringing attention to the widespread feeling in the population that Danish politicians had abandoned their soldiers in 1940 and 1943 (Jørgensen, 2005). Danish politicians' attempts to secure national survival by regulating welfare in negotiation with the German oppressor had thus compromised the soldier figure as a unifying national symbol.

The Cold War. The two World Wars fundamentally changed the global figuration of states. The USA rose to become a hegemon in the western world, while the great European powers were left emaciated (Kaspersen, 2013: 101–110). As a front-line state with sovereignty over Greenland, Denmark constituted a key geopolitical arena if the USA was to secure the North Atlantic against the Soviet Union (Kaspersen, 2013: 150–151). After the five wretched years of occupation, the Danish Treasury required the economic aid offered by the Marshall Plan, and when Parliament joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) in 1949, its politicians broke with a long tradition of neutrality. Denmark thus adopted a policy of deterrence, in which the USA led the way, as a means of surviving in the bi-polar configuration of the new era (Kaspersen, 2013: 153–155; Rasmussen, 2005: 74).

The question of defence did not 'unite the whole Danish population' as the first post-war government had hoped (Bjerg, 1991: 79). A strong anti-militarism still prevailed among parties on the left (Lidegaard and Højrup, 2007: 226–227) and the number of conscientious objectors increased as military service was extended to meet NATO requirements (Bjerg, 1991: 85). Symptomatically, Erik Eriksen of the Liberal Party (Prime Minister 1950–1953) spoke of the cost of prolonging national service, which he termed a 'sacrifice' and a 'burden' that young men and taxpaying citizens had to share if the national 'We' should contribute to peace and independence in the western bloc.

> [T]he age of sacrifices is not over. One of the last things that happened in the old year was the decision to extend the duration of military service . . . It is not an insignificant burden to impose, not only on young people who must now serve one and a half years, but also on citizens who must pay the costs of such an extended duty. It is my belief that there will be an understanding that Denmark could not be exempt from the need to participate in joint efforts to ensure the peace and independence of the western world; we form part of a community that offers us great advantages but must obviously lift our part of the load. (Eriksen, 1952)

As illustrated here, the extension of national conscription clearly burdened relations between the government, military, and people. In this context, the figure of the conscript pointed to both the exposed position of the small Danish state and to the fulfilling of collective duties. The latter quality was also acknowledged when Eriksen greeted the Danish brigade in North Germany in 1952 and 1953, and when

HC Hansen (Prime Minister 1955–1960) thanked 'the conscripts for the work that they have had to take on' in his 1959 speech. Contrary to the conscripts, the Danish UN troops evoked the unity of the government, military, and people and carried forward an image of Denmark as a responsible state in an increasingly interconnected world. The UN peacekeeping missions appealed to the Social Democratic Party and Social Liberal Party in particular, because the UN 'emphasized the community of a transnational civil society based on the universal equality of individuals' (Rasmussen, 2005: 73). In this spirit Hansen, who belonged to the Social Democratic Party, accentuated the connectedness between the head of government, 'I', the Danish population, 'we at home', and 'our troops' in Port Said. Note that all were drawn together by their shared values of voluntarism and peace:

> I also feel a particular urge to send a special greeting to our troops in the UN force in Egypt. I thank them because they voluntarily undertook this task of peace. The fact that Denmark is among the countries that have set up this force is vivid and lucid proof of the cohesion that exists for good and ill between the world's countries of our day. We here at home are thinking of our soldiers in Egypt also in this hour and wish them well in the year to come. (Hansen, 1957)

Hansen also thanked the Danish UN troops 'for the work that they carry out in the service of peace' in 1958, and his party colleague Jens Otto Krag (Prime Minister 1962–1968 and 1971–1972) briefly thanked those deployed in Cyprus for a 'splendid effort' in the New Year message of 1965. Although the prime ministers' references to Danish deployed projected an image of Denmark as a peace-loving nation with an internationally recognised humanitarian approach to world problems, the Danish soldiers did not receive another New Year greeting before 1991. Instead, the New Year Addresses of the intervening period stressed the public school system, free hospital care, and foreign aid as sources of national pride and unity, and frequently recognised the expanding workforce of civil servants, thus promoting an ideal of democratic, morally equal, and caring citizens.

The question inevitably arises: Why did soldiers disappear from the New Year Address for so long? The first part of the answer lies in the consolidation of the Danish welfare state during the Cold War. The Soviet threat was felt to be less urgent after 1953 thanks to Denmark's inclusion into the American hegemony (Lidegaard and Højrup, 2007: 224–229), which tolerated Denmark's reluctance to rearm against the eastern bloc, since Washington and the Social Democratic Party considered the welfare state project to be the best way to prevent class polarisation and the spread of Communism within the small front-line state (Kaspersen, 2013: 150–154; Lidegaard and Højrup, 2007). As the consolidation of the Danish welfare state became part of the American policy of containment, the most pressing task of the Danish state became to ensure the democratic formation and loyalty of all citizens through collective welfare rights (Kaspersen, 2013: 150–154; Lidegaard and Højrup, 2007). As a result, military virtues and, to some degree, the very notion of heroism, with its underlying assessment of human worth, became irrelevant, if not illegitimate.

Another part of the answer lies in the intrinsic dynamics of the international state system. In the bi-polar power ratio, both blocs sought 'to increase their own power potential out of fear of the power potential of their opponent' (Elias, 1978: 30), which generated a deadlock so that the Cold War itself (not the Soviet enemy) appeared as the biggest threat to society (Lidegaard and Højrup, 2007: 231–233). Previous notions of military heroism lost glamour in the wake of this arms race and the proxy war in Vietnam (Calder, 2004; Mosse, 1994), and at the same time the bi-polar figuration of the Cold War produced a new distinct set of heroes. John F Kennedy emerged as one of the greatest political heroes of the time, since he avoided a military escalation during the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962, but not all heroes were peace icons. The space race resulted in a widespread heroification of the astronaut, while the usages of espionage elevated the secret agent to the status of hero in popular culture. Like other symbols, the soldier hero had '[gone to] sleep in certain respects, and acquire[d] a new existential value from a new social situation' (Elias, 2000: 9). This situation arose with the evaporation of the bi-polar world order.

Time period 2: 1991–2015

The soldier hero came slowly into view with Denmark's participation in the First Gulf War and the Yugoslav Wars of the 1990s, before appearing more clearly in the wake of its engagement in Afghanistan as part of the American-led War on Terror (2001–2014), the Coalition of the Willing in Iraq (2003–2007), and the NATO bombing of Libya (2011). The prime ministers of this period have referred to Danish soldiers more frequently than ever before (Table 1). The importance of world peace has been stressed in continuation of the discourse on the UN missions of the 1950s and 1960s, but the prime ministers have also addressed soldiers (and increasingly veterans) in an unprecedentedly thankful, proud, and admiring tone, thus strengthening the bond between the government, military, and people. Moreover, the prime ministers have imbued the soldier figure with a new citizenship ideal, celebrating professionalism, self-motivation, individual responsibility, and global outlook as civic virtues. Once again, the significance of the soldier figure has been bound up with the workings of the Danish state as a survival unit.

As a consequence of the perceived pressure of globalisation from the mid-1990s and the financial crises of the 1970s and 1980s, Denmark has pursued a competition state strategy based on '*global competition as the primary requirement for the achievement of economic growth*' (Cerny, 2010: 8, original italics). The overarching strategy has been:

> to prise open the nation-state to a globalising world, in the interest of ensuring that citizens keep up with the multiple pressures and demands of the increasingly integrated and interdependent political, economic, and social ecosystem. (Cerny, 2010: 6)

Paradoxically, the state's response to the problem of international terrorism runs counter to this process (Kaspersen, 2013: 247). Siding with the USA, the emergence of the Danish security state strategy 'implies the gradual transfer of funds from welfare to security', counting surveillance, anti-terror activities, and military expeditions that require 'clearly defined borders and an internal strengthening of the state' (Kaspersen, 2013: 208, 247). Below, I argue that the soldier figure has come to reconcile these seemingly contradictory strategies for sustaining the Danish welfare state in the wake of growing international interdependency.

The First Gulf War and Yugoslav Wars. The collapse of the Soviet Union radically altered the global figuration. The USA found itself to be the only superpower within a very dynamic configuration of states, comprising a variety of regional and global networks and supranational organisations (Kaspersen, 2013: 174–179). The growing interdependency of the global figuration also changed Denmark's survival strategy. With the disappearance of the Soviet threat, the majority of Danish politicians felt that Denmark should play a more active role in the world and, gradually, military activism became an important means of gaining recognition from the USA, UK, and other powerful players in the international arena, thereby influencing the surrounding environment in regard to commerce, migration, and security issues (Kaspersen, 2013: 212–214; Pedersen, 2011: 14; Rasmussen, 2005).

The decision taken by Parliament on 31 August 1990 to send the corvette *Olfert Fischer* to the Persian Gulf to reinforce the UN sanctions against Iraq was still controversial, however (Rasmussen, 2005: 79). In the New Year Address of 1991, the conservative Poul Schlüter (prime minister 1982–1993) thus had to reassure the population that 'We can be proud of the work that the two crews carry out'. When Danish troops joined the peacekeeping mission in Bosnia two years later, Schlüter more confidently asserted that Denmark had contributed 'more men than most other countries in handling the acute and demanding missions in former Yugoslavia and other places'. Contrary to previous speeches, Schlüter used the deployment of troops as a basis for comparing Denmark with other states. The 1994 speech of Social Democrat Poul Nyrup Rasmussen (prime minister 1993–2001) illustrated how this new tendency of comparing Denmark with other countries was part of a broader transformation of the national we-

identity. Starting with the benefits of joining the European Union (EU), Nyrup Rasmussen considered the international military engagement a political tool in line with EU membership, diplomacy, and humanitarian aid, by which Denmark could help others and, simultaneously, gain recognition internationally.

> [W]e must not make ourselves smaller than we are. That is – among others – the Danish soldiers, who under almost impossible conditions struggle to separate the conflicting parties in former Yugoslavia. That is – among others – Danish drivers, who struggle to deliver relief to victims of the war. That is an effort that we can be proud of.... So, we are small. But it is by no means unimportant what we do – not even in the international arena – and it is certainly not unimportant with what attitude we do it. (Rasmussen, 1994)

In conjuring the deployed into proof of the political capability, moral excellence, and international commitment of Denmark, Nyrup Rasmussen broke with the small state ideology that had shaped the national we-identity of the previous era. Note that the prime minister mentioned the deployed as part of a more general injunction to show the proper attitude in the international arena, which became a major feature of New Year Addresses in the years to come.

The War on Terror. Al-Qaeda's attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on 11 September 2001 exposed the vulnerability of the American hegemon and the strong interdependency of the global figuration (Kaspersen, 2013: 194–197). Anders Fogh Rasmussen of the Liberal Party (prime minister 2001–2009) quickly signed up for fighting terrorists in Afghanistan and Iraq alongside Denmark's mighty ally. Supported by the Danish People's Party, Fogh Rasmussen framed the historically unique participation of Denmark in a war of aggression as a direct reflection of Danish and western values, a necessary defence against the threat to freedom, equality, democracy, and prosperity in the domestic sphere, international arena, and operational areas. The political framing of the wars was accompanied by statements concerning the soldiers' families and the minister's visits to the troops abroad, linking together the government, the military, and the people in a language of thankfulness, pride, admiration, and respect. As part of this development, the speeches have focused on the soldiers' attitude and motivation 'to make a difference'. The New Year Address of 2009 illustrates this.

> I would like to say a warm thank you to all of you serving for Denmark around the world. You have not asked if it can be of use. You have done what you thought was right. You are an inspiration to us all. An inspiration to take responsibility and not simply pass the task on to others. To make an effort yourself and not only make demands of others. To see possibilities and not just give up. This is the attitude that creates respect for us Danes around the world. This is the attitude that it takes to overcome challenges and resistance. And this is also the attitude that will now bring us, strengthened, out of the economic storm clouds. (Rasmussen, 2009)

As illustrated above, Fogh Rasmussen imbued the deployed with the proper attitude towards work and the challenges of an increasingly globalised world, thereby elevating the soldier figure into a role model for civilians. Set within a domestic debate on personal responsibility in a time of financial crisis, targeting citizens who 'rode' on passive income support and collective welfare services, the soldier came to function not only as a unifying, but also a disciplining, figurehead of professionalism, self-motivation, and global outlook. When Helle Thorning-Schmidt of the Social Democrats (prime minister 2011–2015) addressed the nation at the turn of 2012, the recognition of the soldier as a super-citizen was also part of her call to ordinary Danes to keep up with change and opportunities abroad with a view to ensuring national economy. After Thorning-Schmidt had talked about the need to improve the education system, seize the benefits of the EU, and engage the rising export market of East Asia, she concluded that 'we must take action abroad to secure our jobs at home'. She then turned directly to the troops in Afghanistan:

> Tonight I want to say a heartfelt thank you to the Danes who very literally take action in the world, and who change the world with what they do and risk. I want to say thank you to our soldiers in Afghanistan. We are proud of you. (Thorning-Schmidt, 2013)

As the connection of the soldiers' preparedness 'to make a difference' with the Danish membership of the EU (the speeches of 1993 and 2011) and the financial crisis (the speech of 2009) also made clear, the new significance of the soldier figure has been tied to new demands on citizens by the state. According to Ove Kaj Pedersen, the Danish state 'no longer has the primary task of forming the individual to . . . participate in a democracy, but of developing the individual into a "soldier" as a part of the nations' competition' (Pedersen, 2011: 172). As the principle of competitiveness has become a defining survival strategy of Denmark, the Danish state has tried to mould the citizen-subject in new ways. The Social Democratic governments of the mid-1990s spent around DKK 200 million to promote the belief in human development and self-realisation through a professional career (Bovbjerg, 2004: 18), and articulating an urge to 'make a difference' is thus widespread among Danish professionals today (Knudsen, 2007: 45). The proactive citizenship ideal of 'making a difference', 'seeing possibilities and not just give up', and 'taking action in the world' has also been evident in the reduction of compensational welfare services in the last few decades (Kaspersen, 2013: 229–236) and the reforms of Danish public schools, where skill building and work readiness have been strengthened and student tests have been introduced to assess Denmark's ability to compete with other countries (Pedersen, 2011: 169–204). As illustrated here, the soldier figure has been imbued with the new citizenship ideal of work efficiency and competitiveness, while simultaneously legitimising the eagerness of Denmark to participate in the American-led War on Terror. By merging professionalism, self-motivation, individual responsibility, and global outlook as civic virtues with the new military activism of Denmark, the soldier figure thus appears to reconcile the 'paradox' (Kaspersen, 2013: 247) of the increasingly market- and security-orientated Danish state.

Concluding remarks

Although recent studies contain important insights into the functional, dynamic, and contested characteristics of the social construction of heroes, none provide us with the necessary theoretical tools to describe the processes by which the recognition of certain individuals, groups, and qualities as heroic are underpinned by the historical relations of states. Utilising the concept of Elias's survival unit, I have argued that the rise of the soldier hero in Denmark is linked to a broader transformation in the national we-identity and civic virtues, itself a result of the gradual emergence of 'competition state' (Cerny, 2010; Pedersen, 2011) and 'security state' (Kaspersen, 2013) strategies for ensuring the Danish welfare state in the wake of growing mutual dependency between states and people. When Defence Minister Nick Hækkerup told his four children about soldier heroes, he then quite properly urged them to 'make a difference' in the international arena in line with the new raison d'être of the Danish state. In this sense, it is not so great a leap from being daddy to being Her Majesty's minister: when you tell somebody about heroes, then – usually – they listen.

In spite of some national peculiarities, such as the absent tradition of military honouring, the case of Denmark is not without similarities to the contemporary discourse on soldiery in other parts of the world. Anthony King (2013) suggests that celebration of military professionalism in many western countries, as well as China, Russia, and Brazil, may serve to unify professional soldiers and citizens without military experience, since professionalism has come to be one of few collective values in increasingly differentiated societies (King, 2013: 444). In contrast, Deborah Cowen (2008) accentuated the disciplinary functioning of the soldier figure, which has been imbued with new meaning as a result of changes in the notions of welfare in Canada. She has suggested 'Neoliberal workfarism and national militarism, combined, instruct the nation's poor to sacrifice and serve, and in exchange they will receive services' (Cowen, 2008: 253). Sanna Strand and Joakim Berndtsson (2015) have linked contemporary discourses

on soldiery to neo-liberal governance. Comparing army recruitment discourses in the UK and Sweden, have found that 'in both cases, the recruitment of ''voluntary'' soldiers to military service focuses to a large extent on a ''marketized'' rhetoric, and images of individual self-fulfilment and self-enterprise' (Strand and Berndtsson, 2015: 233). Future studies may elaborate on the cohesive and disciplining potential of the (new) soldier figure and other heroes, and how they are bound up with the relational (and often contradictory) dynamics of state formation.

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Notes

1. All translations from the Danish are by the author.
2. For an expanded discussion of Campbell, Raglan, and Rank, see Robert Segal (1990).
3. All speeches are available from Eva Mellbin and Franz-Michael Skjold Mellbin (2011) and the Danish Prime Minister's Office Website. The New Year Address was omitted in 1943, 1944, 1945, 1947, 1960, 1968, 1975, and 1984.

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Author biography

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Article

Post-Heroic Warfare Revisited: Meaning and Legitimation of Military Losses

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Abstract

The article challenges the thesis that western societies have moved towards a post-heroic mood in which military casualties are interpreted as nothing but a waste of life. Using content analysis and qualitative textual analysis of obituaries produced by the Royal Danish Army in memory of soldiers killed during the Second World War (1940–1945) and the military campaign in Afghanistan (2002–2014), the article shows that a 'good' military death is no longer conceived of as a patriotic sacrifice, but is instead legitimised by an appeal to the unique moral worth, humanitarian goals and high professionalism of the fallen. The article concludes that fatalities in international military engagement have invoked a sense of post-patriotic heroism instead of a post-heroic crisis, and argues that the social order of modern society has underpinned, rather than undermined, ideals of military self-sacrifice and heroism, contrary to the predominant assumption of the literature on post-heroic warfare.

Keywords

Afghanistan, death, Denmark, legitimation, military casualty, obituary, post-heroic warfare, Second World War

Introduction

The commemoration of dead soldiers, whether their death is considered good or bad, heroic, necessary or utterly tragic, is of great relevance for wider society, since the fallen are prone to playing a role in the promotion, reproduction and contestation of the collective identities, moral values and social coherence of large groups of people. Accordingly, a key theme in the literature on dead soldiers is the investment of fatalities

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with meaning and higher purpose. Max Weber (2004: 225, emphases in original), for instance, argued that death on the battlefield attains a positive value because of the strengthening of the feelings of community in face of an external threat: '[d]eath in arms, *only* here in this massiveness of death, can the individual believe that he *knows* that he dies "for" something'. Discussing the power of collective symbols over individual consciousness, Émile Durkheim (1965: 251–252) similarly found that: '[t]he soldier who dies for his flag, dies for his country […] [because he] loses sight of the fact that the flag is only a sign'.

More recent studies have shown that memorial practices surrounding soldiers killed in war have provided consolation to those left behind (Bourke, 1996; Winter, 1995); expressed the values of society as sacred in the sense that these values (and hence society) are worth dying for (Marvin and Ingle, 1996); and worked as a propaganda instrument in service of the warring state (Jarvis, 2010; Mosse, 1994). Scholars have above all explored the 'memory–nation nexus' (Pierre Nora in Olick, 2003: 2), focusing on the dual process in which images of national heroism have made death on the battlefield meaningful and mourning of the fallen has nurtured nationalism. Other scholars have, however, begun to speak of an increase in the so-called 'casualty factor', 'casualty aversion', 'casualty shyness' or 'casualty phobia' in western democracies (Smith, 2005), arguing that the emergence of a *post-heroic* spirit has prevented death in action from being perceived as an act of heroism.

In calling for 'a new mentality that would inject unheroic realism into military endeavour', the military strategist Edward N Luttwak (1995: 122) popularised the term 'post-heroic warfare'. The new concept was a reaction to an assumed unwillingness to accept fatalities in post-industrial societies as a result of their low birth rate. Richard Gabriel (1987: 44) had, however, already visited the issue under the heading *No More Heroes*: '[w]hen so many are killed and maimed so quickly [due to the power of modern weapons], of what value is the notion of personal sacrifice?' he asked. More recently, Angus Calder (2004: x) has contended that 'Homeric, Virgilian, Romantic and Wagnerian conceptions of heroism, conditioning representations of war, have lost their glamour […] [and that the idea] that it is sweet and decorous to die for one's country, may have lost some of its potency'. An even stronger claim is Christopher Coker's (2007: 102) assertion that 'society as a whole can no longer interpret sacrifice except as a waste of life', but he thinks that the post-heroic spirit derives from growing liberal beliefs and 'deep scepticism towards all organised violence, whatever form it takes' (Coker, 2007: 1). In contrast to the widespread assumption that images of the fallen as victims (and not heroes) have emerged in the wake of the First World War and the Vietnam War, Cheyney Ryan (2014) has identified the post-heroic spirit with current developments in the moral discourse of war, questioning whether universal and cosmopolitan (as opposed to particularistic and national) values are capable of motivating and justifying military self-sacrifice.

A reading of the literature outside the study of military affairs might suggest that post-heroic warfare is merely one dimension of the general demise of the hero-figure. Bringing to mind the classical work on heroes and hero-worship by Thomas Carlyle (2001 [1841]) and Joseph Campbell (2008 [1949]), Daniel Boorstin (1992 [1961]: 49) has argued that democratic belief, 'which has brought with it a passion for human equality, has carried a

distrust, or at least a suspicion of individual heroic greatness', while the growth of sociology and psychology – or rationalisation more generally – has dissolved 'the heroes' heroic qualities […] into a blur of environmental influences and internal maladjustments' (1992 [1961]: 52). Somewhat similarly, Orrin E Klapp (2014 [1962]: 169) has conjectured that the deterioration of the gallery of American heroes constitutes 'a symptom of severe alienation and anomie'. In line with Boorstin and Klapp, Susan Drucker and Robert Cathcart (1994: 3) have called attention to the growing role of the media as a driving force behind the corrosion of heroism, noting that 'in the wake of the televised Vietnam War and the videogame war in the Persian Gulf with revelations concerning death by friendly fire and "jobs left undone", even General Schwarzkopf may have a difficult time maintaining hero status'. Finally, Ernest Becker (1997 [1973]: 6) has surmised, with perhaps the greatest apprehension of all, that a profound crisis of heroism threatens to undermine the realisation of humans' true potential:

> Man will lay down his life for his country, his society, his family. He will choose to throw himself on a grenade to save his comrades; he is capable of the highest generosity and self-sacrifice. But he has to feel and believe that what he is doing is truly heroic, timeless, and supremely meaningful. The crisis of modern society is precisely that the youth no longer feel heroic in the plan for action that their culture set up. […] We are living in a crisis of heroism that reaches into every aspect of our social life.

In brief, the literature on post-heroic warfare and heroism is characterised by a basic assumption that heroism has evaporated in the course of modernisation, whatever concrete reasons are given. The concept of post-heroic warfare captures, perhaps, one tendency of the *longue durée* of western history, but the underlying conviction of the literature also leaves us visually impaired to nuances, black swans and counter-developments in the meaning and legitimation of fatalities. In view of this connection it is significant that studies in policy and media have assessed how national interests, the course of warfare, the domestic political debate and long-term social changes have, in fact, constituted important variables in determining the degree of willingness to accept fatalities (Smith, 2005), while the Oxford Changing Character of War Programme has called attention to how historically specific the discourse on military self-sacrifice and heroism can be. In summing up the research of this programme, Sibylle Scheipers (2014: 3) has rightly concluded that 'it makes little sense to speak of a "post-heroic condition" when we conceive of the dynamic of the social construction of war heroes and their commemoration as both contested and open-ended'.

My aim here is to challenge the concept of post-heroic warfare from another viewpoint. Starting out from a brief discussion of a 'good' death in the military, inspired by Peter Berger (1990), I present an analysis of obituaries produced by the Royal Danish Army in memory of its dead from the Second World War (1940–1945) and the campaign in Afghanistan (2002–2014). The analysis shows that claims about the death of heroism and an assumed death taboo have been exaggerated, at least in the case of Denmark. While it is to some extent true that soldiers are no longer dying heroically for king and country, they nonetheless do so on the basis of a common ideal of job proficiency and a moral commitment to 'making a difference'. I suggest that Danish losses in the Afghan

War have invoked a sense of post-patriotic heroism instead of a post-heroic crisis, indicating that the social order of modern society has in fact underpinned and not undermined the public commemoration of dead soldiers as heroes. In the concluding discussion, I consider the wider commemorative practices in Denmark and other nations, especially the UK, and suggest that the remembrance of dead servicemen has not been detached from the memory–nation nexus, but simply tied to changes in the nomos of society.

A 'Good' Death and the Military Obituary: Theoretical Framework

Although Durkheim's study of suicide and funeral rites and Weber's exploration of the Calvinian doctrine of predestination placed death as a key object for sociological analysis, the human experience of death has, first and foremost, been dealt with by psychoanalysts and psychologists, who have focused on the normative aspects of a 'good' death (Kellehear, 2007: 90; Walter, 2008). Gradually, the notion of a 'good' death has begun to attract attention from sociologists. Their aim has been to explore the social phenomenon of death as it relates to the social structure and historical processes such as demographic developments, political subjugation, urbanisation, individualisation, secularisation and rationalisation (Árnason and Hafsteinsson, 2003; Kellehear, 2007; Parsons, 1963; Seale, 1998; Walter, 2003). In their line of work, the notion of a 'good' death has thus been re-constructed from a prescriptive model in palliative care to a theoretically saturated concept for analysis purposes.

Derived from the work of Peter Berger (1990: 44), the notion of a 'good' death envisages dying 'while retaining to the end a meaningful relationship with the nomos of one's society – subjectively meaningful to oneself and objectively meaningful in the minds of others'. As part of the order of common meaning, or 'nomos' as Berger labelled it, perceiving a death as 'good' entails a 'nomizing' process with which 'the several meanings of the actors are integrated into an order of common meaning' (Berger, 1990: 19). The subjugation of death to a meaningful order is consequently linked to a process of legitimation within which 'socially objectified "knowledge" […] serve[s] to explain and justify the social order' (Berger, 1990: 29). The observation that the social construction of a 'good' death is bound up with the exercise of control as part of the reproduction of the social order – an idea that also permeates the concept of 'resurrective practice' developed by Clive Seale (1998: 3–4) and several other studies (e.g. Árnason and Hafsteinsson, 2003; Kellehear, 2007: 103–104) – is clearly evident if one considers the management of death in the armed forces.

According to Eyal Ben-Ari (2005), the bureaucracy of death management has to be accompanied by a profound belief in a 'good' military death to ensure mental health, *esprit de corps* and combat performance within the ranks, and maintain legitimacy in the eyes of politicians and civilians alike. The military has, above all, inculcated belief in a 'good' death through the remembrance of servicemen killed on duty, and the obituaries to fallen soldiers have played an important role in this context (Danilova, 2015; King, 2010; Zehfuss, 2009). The nomising property of the military obituary is not unique, since such texts constitute 'effective apparatuses for presenting the deceased in consistency with the bereaved's aspirations for themselves and their dead' (Bonsu, 2007: 202). As a

'genre of governance' (Fairclough, 2003: 32), the military obituary thus serves to sustain the social order both inside and outside the organisation by operating within the ranks of the military, the family (of the fallen) and the national public. Keeping in mind the holistic viewpoint of Berger's theory, military obituaries not only provide a key to understanding how the forces seek to maintain legitimacy in the wake of losses, but also how changes in the society they serve have influenced the nature of a 'good' death for a soldier. As death by cancer and old age is the most delineated in the sociological literature (Walter, 2008), an analysis of a 'good' death in the military world might even advance our general empirical knowledge of death and help to assess the generalised nature of previous studies.

Data and Methods

To answer the research question if and how the meaning and legitimation of military losses have diminished or alternatively changed, the data for the analysis consist of obituaries written and published by the Royal Danish Army in the wake of the Second World War and the War in Afghanistan. I have only included obituaries composed in the wake of combat-related casualties, covering those who died as a result of hostile action or friendly fire while serving in the forces (Danish Defence, 2015a).[1] On this basis, I have collected 12 obituaries from the Second World War through an examination of military magazines,[2] as well as 32 units commemorating Helmand's dead through a search on the newsfeed of the army's website. To the best of my knowledge, I have included every obituary of relevance to my search criteria. The construction of an analytical strategy is inspired by a historical content analysis of US obituaries conducted by Gary Long (1987) and the tool-box for qualitative textual analysis provided by Norman Fairclough (2003). I have focused throughout on information about the fallen soldiers and the presence or absence of legitimising language about death. In the process of coding, some of the obituaries can be put into two or more categories and when such cases arise, the obituaries are included in all of the relevant categories. Differences between the two groups of obituaries are analysed statistically by cross tabulation and the level of significance calculated by Fisher's Exact Test in order to take account of the small size of the data set ($N = 44$).

Analysis

The analysis is organised in four parts: after a brief overview of battle casualties in the Danish army from the Second World War to the present, it provides a general description of the military obituary and some of the overall developments of the genre. I then present a qualitative and quantitative textual analysis of the representation of the war dead, before identifying the main strategies of legitimation and their changes over time.

A Brief History of Fallen Danish Soldiers

On the outbreak of the Second World War, the government of Denmark pursued a survival strategy based on neutrality and negotiation. This response was in line with the pacific

Table 1. Casualties of the Danish forces, 1992–2014.

Location	Mission	Year	Combat-related casualties	Non-combat-related casualties
Lebanon	UNIFIL	2009	0	1
Iraq	OIF	2003–2007	6	2
Afghanistan	ISAF	2002–2014	37	6
Kosovo	KFOR	1999–	0	1
Bosnia-Herzegovina	IFOR/SFO	1996–2004	1	2
Croatia	UNDPROFOR	1992–1995	4	4
Other UN missions		1992–	0	4
Total number of fallen			48	20

Note: combat-related casualties denote soldiers who have died as a result of hostile action, Improvised Explosive Devices (IED) and friendly fire. Non-combat-related casualties include losses due to illness or accidents.
Source: Danish Defence (2015a), updated 31 January 2014.

policy of the social democratic and social liberal parties that had shaped foreign policy and dominated the view on military force ever since the devastating defeat by Prussia and Austria in 1864 (Rasmussen, 2005). Although Denmark was not a combatant in the Second World War, an estimated 40 Danish army soldiers were killed as a consequence of the German invasion on 9 April 1940, and the brief exchange of fire when the negotiation policy collapsed on 29 August 1943.[3] The deployment of Danish servicemen with UN peacekeeping missions between 1948 and 1992 resulted in 36 losses of which very few were combat-related (Danish Defence, 2015a).[4] As the country changed its geopolitical strategy to play a more active role in international affairs after the disappearance of the Soviet threat, the international engagement of the military increased and with it the number of casualties (Table 1), most notably in Afghanistan, where Denmark has lost the most men per capita in the coalition (Jakobsen, 2013). The dead of Helmand thus represent the largest number of fatalities in the Danish forces since the Second World War.

General Description and Developments of the Military Obituary

The obituaries usually contain a close-up photograph of the deceased (smiling in uniform) and a short text written by commanding officers and occasionally colleagues (around 600 words on average). In the case of several deaths in the same incident these are remembered collectively in one obituary. The obituary text typically includes a very brief and sanitised description of the incident leading to death and a positive portrait of the deceased. The portrait involves an account of the deceased's career and achievements in the military and a description of his (and in a single case her) distinct qualities as a colleague, friend and family member. The bereaved family and comrades-in-arms are frequently greeted with condolences. In contrast to the obituaries of the Second World War, contemporary obituaries are characterised by a democratic inclusion of the rank and file (see Table 2) and a 'hybridization of the genre' (Fairclough, 2003: 34), blending the conventional biography with letters to bereaved families, memorial speeches and

Table 2. Obituaries of the Danish fallen of the Second World War and the War in Afghanistan, presented by rank and in total.

	Second World War (*N* = 12)	War in Afghanistan (*N* = 32)
Privates and sergeants	4	32
Officers	9	4
Total number of fallen	13	36

Note: the Danish army has published an obituary in honour of all but one of the fallen of the Afghan mission. During the Second World War, however, only four obituaries honoured a fallen soldier below officer rank, although 25 privates and sergeants were killed as a consequence of the German invasion in 1940 and Operation Safari in 1943.

accounts from commemorative ceremonies. As a result of the speedy publication online (one or two days versus one month during the Second World War), the military obituary has also gained a more immediate character. Although Danish Defence has omitted to gather these obituaries on a single memorial website (unlike the British Armed Forces), the fact that obituary writing has entered the curriculum at the Royal Danish Army Officers' Academy in the wake of the missions in Iraq and Afghanistan indeed suggests that the obituary has become a more important part of the army's apparatus in managing death (Sørensen, 2013). The earliest online obituary is dated 3 May 2007.

Representation of the Fallen

A comparison between the obituary written in memory of lieutenant Poul Arne Hansen-Nord, who died in combat on 29 August 1943, and private Jacob Sten Lund Olsen who was killed by an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) in Afghanistan on 3 September 2011 serves to illustrate how the military ascribes meaning to casualties by portraying the deceased. A coding of the use of 'generic categories' (Fairclough, 2003: 146) in the obituary of Hansen-Nord that was written by his chief at the Guard Hussar Regiment shows that the deceased is remembered with reference to his social role as a soldier (76%), countryman (10%), friend (8%) and son (1%).[5] This representation is quite dynamic and anything but neutral, since the text oscillates between 'realist statements' and highly moralised 'evaluations' (Fairclough, 2003: 172–173). The quotation below is made up from the introduction and final section of the obituary:

> Lieutenant Hansen-Nord was born 3/7 1916 at *Nordgården* [the Northern Farm] near Ringsted [provincial town in Denmark], which his father owned. Raised in the countryside in a strong Danish home, the love for the Danish soil, for country and people was early awakened, and it fell very naturally that he chose a commission in the army as his life path, he wished a profession where he could make the greatest efforts for the preservation of what he loved. […] It is sad that this young, very promising officer only reached the first milestone on the military road, but his life was not in vain. His courage, sacrifice and dutiful devotion to his country, the army that he belonged to, and his regiment will live on and be a shining example to us all. (Fog, 1944: 41–42)

Here the life history of Hansen-Nord is literally wrapped in the patriotic foil of the opening and final paragraphs. In between, he is described in terms of his 'immense vitality',

'bravery', 'self-sacrifice' and 'dutiful devotion' and characterised as 'open', 'fearless', 'festive', 'joyful', 'exuberant', 'quick witted' and in possession of 'the courage of his convictions'. These qualities together with his ambitious nature and tough attitude towards subordinates are praised and conceptualised as a proof of his native disposition.

As a second example, the obituary in memory of Olsen includes a letter by the head of the Danish Battle Group and another by the comrades in his unit. Once again the coding of generic categories shows that Olsen is represented as a soldier (29%) and then as a unique personality (28%), friend (18%) and family member (7%).[6] The national identity of private Olsen is subtly included, and exceptionally, when he is described in terms of his love for Bornholm, a small island where he was brought up (7%). In contrast to the obituary of Hansen-Nord, soldiering and ultimately death are conceived as a reflection of moral worth and a unique personality. This is underlined by the rhetorical juxtaposition of seemingly opposite character traits: the 'temperamental fighter' with the 'conspicuous tattoos and physical strength' was also 'a calm and balanced person' who was 'by nature a little shy', but nevertheless a role-model by virtue of his 'loyalty', 'helpfulness', 'compassion', 'sense of responsibility', 'zeal and zest for life'. Information about his penchant for 'honey schnapps and bad dance rhythm' and ability 'as no other […] [to] convey his good spirits and positive attitude to life with a single glance' also stresses this notion of individuality (Knudsen and the Unit, 2011).

If these findings are combined with the statistical analysis, one can observe significant differences between the obituaries of the Second World War and the Afghan War. As demonstrated by Table 3, these differences highlight a statistically significant reduction in the proportion of obituaries providing information about birth date, birthplace, marital status, residential history, family occupation, native qualities and masculinity. A major part of this information serves to position the deceased within a national topography. Occasionally that topography is even attributed a metaphysical meaning – as the obituary of Hansen-Nord illustrates – since it is linked to the formation of the patriotic and manly qualities of the fallen. One of the consequences of the introduction of women into the Royal Danish Army in the 1950s, and the rapprochement between the military and civilian spheres that followed, is the decline of the 'cult of manliness' (Coker, 2003: 105). Although classical masculine virtues, for instance physical strength, are admired in Helmand's fallen, they are almost never explicitly gendered. Combined with the statistically significant increase in obituary content emphasising qualities of work and physical attributes, the lack of references to the national and masculine virtues shows that the soldiers are remembered as individuals who have invested their unique personality in a professional career in the army (in line with obituaries to fallen British soldiers, i.e. Danilova, 2015; King; 2010; Zehfuss, 2009). So apart from being a way of paying tribute to the deceased and upholding a positive image of the military in the wake of fatalities, the focus on job performance bears witness to changes in the memory–military–nation nexus.

Strategies of Legitimation

In this section, I investigate the more explicit strategies deployed to invest death in action with moral meaning. These forms of legitimation are typically included in the narration of the fatal incident, or occur in the final paragraph of the text in which the soldiers assert their moral

Table 3. Information about the fallen, frequency (%).

	Second World War (*N* = 12)		War in Afghanistan (*N* = 32)	
Personal data				
Date of birth**	10	(83.3)	0	(0.0)
Date of death	11	(91.7)	25	(78.1)
Place of birth**	6	(50.0)	0	(0.0)
Place of death	8	(66.7)	24	(75.0)
Age of deceased*	1	(8.3)	16	(50.0)
Marital status	6	(50.0)	6	(18.8)
Residential history**	7	(58.3)	2	(3.1)
Nickname	1	(8.3)	6	(18.8)
Family relations				
Names	4	(33.3)	4	(12.5)
Personality and social characteristics	1	(8.3)	0	(0.0)
Occupation**	8	(66.7)	0	(0.0)
Mentioned but without names	5	(41.7)	23	(71.9)
Work history				
Education	1	(8.3)	2	(6.3)
Civil career	1	(8.3)	1	(3.1)
Military career	11	(91.7)	25	(78.1)
Attitude and behaviour towards work	10	(83.3)	31	(96.9)
Quality of work and job performance**	6	(56.6)	30	(93.8)
Personality, disposition and personal characteristics				
Personality and disposition	12	(100.0)	31	(96.9)
Attitude and behaviour towards self-improvement	2	(16.7)	7	(21.1)
Attitude and behaviour towards others	11	(91.7)	28	(87.5)
Attitude and behaviour towards family	2	(16.7)	10	(31.2)
Native qualities and acts*	4	(33.3)	1	(3.1)
Humanitarian qualities and acts	0	(0.00)	7	(21.9)
Masculine qualities and acts*	4	(33.3)	1	(3.1)
Religious qualities and acts	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)
Political preferences and activities	0	(0.0)	1	(3.1)
Physical attributes**	1	(8.3)	17	(53.1)
Hobbies	2	(16.7)	11	(34.4)

Note: *$p < .05$; **$p < .01$. Inspired by Long (1987: 970–971).

commitment to honour the memory of their dead comrade. As demonstrated by Table 4, the military-external reference point of legitimation has changed from fatherland to humanity, whereas the military-internal reference point seems to have been more permanently tied to a notion of professional sacrifice, which, however, has itself undergone an important change.

Patriotic Sacrifice. King and country have constituted the main reference points in the normative discourse on self-sacrifice in war since Christianity lost its function as the

Table 4. Legitimation of casualties, frequency (%).

	Second World War (*N* = 12)		War in Afghanistan (*N* = 32)	
Military-external reference point				
Patriotic sacrifice**	8	(66.7)	0	(0.0)
Humanitarian sacrifice*	0	(0.0)	12	(37.5)
Military-internal reference point				
Professional sacrifice*	3	(25.0)	12	(37.5)
Buddy sacrifice	0	(0.0)	4	(12.5)
No explicit legitimation of death	2	(16.7)	8	(25.0)

Note: *$p < .05$; **$p < .01$.

prime source of moral meaning in the wake of the Peace of Westphalia of 1648 (Berger, 1990: 48). Justifying death in the name of the fatherland is also the dominating form of legitimation in the Second World War obituaries. As already noted, Hansen-Nord is honoured for his 'courage, sacrifice and dutiful devotion to his country' (Fog, 1944: 41–42). In another obituary, it is stressed that the 'fallen comrades gave their lives and those injured sacrificed their blood as they defended king and country, and their sacrifice was not in vain' (Unnamed editor, 1940). In a more elaborate style, it is described how

> Lennart Ahlefeldt fell with honour and with head held high. Courage, valour, a sense of duty to his country, and ruthlessness for himself were prominent traits of character in him. […] he went quietly into death and was proud of dying for his country. (Giersing and Hansen, 1945: 1–2)

As illustrated in Table 4, the legitimising discourse on national self-sacrifice is quite absent from the obituaries commemorating the servicemen who died in Afghanistan some 70 years later.

Humanitarian Sacrifice. Transitioning from the sample of the Second World War to the War in Afghanistan entails a statistically significant shift in the legitimation of casualties, since the dead soldiers of Afghanistan have been recruited into a humanitarian discourse on helping the world's needy. Incorporating the official humanitarian goals of the Helmand campaign after 2006, the casualty is metamorphosed into a compassionate relief worker. This is evident from the following quotation:

> Lieutenant Jonas Peter Pløger gave his life in the struggle for better conditions for the Afghan people who are in daily need of security and stability. He rejoiced whenever he and the unit achieved results that helped this process in the right direction. […] Now his light lives in us and in the results he contributed to achieve. His example will help us to move forward again tomorrow. (Hansen, 2010)

In this discourse, death in action is considered to be evidence of an altruistic disposition. Private Dan Gyde, for instance, 'was very dedicated in helping others, and it was in this effort that Dan had to pay the ultimate price' (Soelberg and the Units, 2008).

The humanitarian discourse has not, however, eliminated combat as a military virtue as one might think. A bereaved platoon thus assures us that they 'will be fighting to solve a task that Steffen wholeheartedly believed in. A task in which egoism and self-glorification play no part. A task in which the joy of being able to help others is honoured' (Third Unit et al., 2009). An officer similarly declares that 'we will continue fighting for a better Afghanistan. We owe Rocco this, his efforts should not be in vain' (Lønborg, 2008).

Professional Sacrifice. The military obituary typically shows warfare as work and makes sense of death within this context. In the obituaries of the Second World War, the discourse on professional sacrifice is closely linked to values of duty, loyalty and obedience. As we have seen, Hansen-Nord proved his 'courage, sacrifice, and dutiful devotion' not only to his country but also to 'the army that he belonged to, and his regiment' (Fog, 1944). Similarly 'Godtfredsen and Brodersen fell during the execution of a given order in defence of their country. No more than anyone else in the army did they fail in their duty that morning' (Førslev, 1940: 183). In the context of the Afghan War, the professional self-sacrifice has not only increased significantly but also subjugated a more common ideal of job proficiency. It is, for instance, emphasised how private Simon Mundt Jørgensen 'the same day he died still ensured that the work he had begun that morning was completed' (Berger, 2010). In many cases it is relatedly claimed that a man was killed 'while he did the job he loved' (Soelberg and the Units, 2008). In this context the euphemism of 'paying the ultimate price' is used in a way that implies the sole act of doing the job is worth the risk to life. As for instance, 'Jacob, Sebastian and Benjamin all knew what they were getting into. They knew that they might have to pay the ultimate price. Yet they left without blinking to solve the task they were trained to do' (Christensen et al., 2008). At other times the discourse on professional sacrifice not merely evokes a sense of responsible risk-taking but promotes the fallen to the status of a role model:

> Henrik knew the dangers. On his fifth deployment, he had decided that it was a danger he would expose himself to. He knew what he was doing. Henrik was a professional soldier – second to none. […] We have to live on, and we shall do so in his spirit. We have to live on in the most professional way, as Henrik was the most professional soldier among us. (Christensen and Andersen, 2008)

Buddy Sacrifice. Although both buddy sacrifice and professional sacrifice refer to the military unit, the buddy sacrifice is less abstract than getting killed as a token of professional devotion or dying in the name of the nation or humanity (Brænder, 2009: 64; Coker, 2003: 34). Buddy sacrifice is most clearly expressed in the obituary of private Gyde who 'under heavy fire tried to fight his way toward his wounded colleague Jacob. This heroic act would prove to be his last' (Soelberg and the Units, 2008). In this connection it is worth noting that the strategies of legitimation are complementary rather than mutually exclusive, since the death of private Gyde is also perceived as a humanitarian and professional sacrifice. Although empirical studies have shown that most soldiers risk their lives for platoon members and not some ideological call or national loyalty (Malešević, 2010: 187), this form of legitimation is, somewhat surprisingly, statistically

insignificant in the analysed data. Despite the fact that dying to save a comrade constitutes a key narrative among soldiers (not to mention in war movies and literature), the analysis proposes that attempts at legitimising military casualties usually transcend the value system specific to the brotherhood in arms and in a way subordinates these in favour of more widespread principles defined by the state. This idea is further elaborated below.

Concluding Discussion

This analysis has led to the conclusion that the notion of a 'good' military death is no longer conceived as a patriotic sacrifice, but legitimised by appealing to the uniqueness, moral worth, humanitarian goal and high professionalism of the deceased. As a consequence, the development from the Second World War to the military expeditions of the post-Cold War environment does not point in the direction of a post-heroic zeitgeist. Instead, the analysis indicates the emergence of a post-patriotic discourse on military self-sacrifice and heroism, contrary to the basic assumption of the literature on post-heroism. The basic claim emerging from the data thus demonstrates that ideas such as the tabooing of death and the eclipse of heroes have been largely exaggerated, which corroborates others' studies of death (Árnason and Hafsteinsson, 2003; Parsons, 1963; Seale, 1998; Walter, 2008) and military heroism (Kelly, 2012; Scheipers, 2014; Sørensen, 2016).

The military does not exist in isolation, and so the script of a 'good' military death is also informed by attitudes towards death in broader society. At a very general level, the memorial discourse linked to the soldiers' obituaries points to the long-term development of a secular or this-worldly orientation in western societies, so that 'meaning is sought in the nature of this life, and when a loved one dies, it is likely that it is their life that will be celebrated rather than the assumption of their entry into heaven' (Howarth, 2007: 32). Although the violent death of the young soldiers differs dramatically from the 'average' death in Denmark and other western countries, the soldiers' death is nonetheless ascribed meaning and legitimacy within a more common *achievement-oriented ethic*, since their obituaries express a 'strong urge to "round up" a life […] with a record of creditable achievements' (Parsons, 1963: 63). The obituaries' claims that the soldiers were killed while they did the job they loved is consistent with the paradigmatic idea of a 'good' death as one of your own choosing (Árnason and Hafsteinsson, 2003; Walter, 2003). The contemporary ideal of personal autonomy in the face of death, and indeed the characteristic of death preparation as a project of self-identity (Seale, 1998), is similarly mirrored in the military's attempt to secure a 'well-managed death' (Kellehear, 2007: 147), for instance by forcing its personnel to fill out *My Last Will. If I fall in the service of the Danish Forces* before deployment (Sørensen, 2016: 15). In alignment with the broader cultural script of a 'good' death, fatalities are thus framed as a marker of a fully lived life and something that the bereaved must draw strength from in order to live – and soldier – on.

Needless to say there are wide national differences in the public commemoration of dead soldiers. The emphasis upon humanitarian causes in contemporary Denmark, the UK, Germany and Japan, for instance, is less pronounced in countries such as Israel and the USA, where a more conventional discourse on national sacrifice prevails (Ben-Ari, 2005; Brænder, 2009; Drake, 2013; Sørensen, 2016). Future elaborations might also

strengthen our understanding of when, where and how different value systems are evoked (if they are) in legitimising military casualties, and what their effects might be. In this regard it is significant that although the military obituary of today lacks patriotic imagery, the broader memorial practices have in fact involved explicit national symbols, for instance, in connection to the ceremony at the ramp held at the departure of the aircraft carrying the fallen back home; the solemn reception at the military airport in Denmark; the military funerals; and the annual memorial services. On these occasions official representatives of Danish Defence, government and national church are present. The coffin of the fallen is cloaked in the national flag and patriotic and Christian songs referring to the nation's martial history are sung. Although a notion of patriotic sacrifice has occasionally been aired at these occasions, the public commemoration of dead soldiers has by and large reflected the post-patriotic discourse linked to the military obituary, whereas the invocation of national iconography has resembled what Michael Billig (1995) has called 'banal nationalism'.

Recent studies of obituaries of British soldiers killed in Iraq and Afghanistan have found that the grieving discourse on the loss of unique personalities, skilful professionals and family members constitute 'a significant part of the production of the frames that make war possible' (Zehfuss, 2009: 419) and '[foreclosed] the public discussion of ethical dilemmas of modern conflicts' (Danilova, 2015: 277). Although it is difficult to assess the impact of the military obituaries and other forms of response to death by the military, the notion of military heroism invoked by the inscriptions on tombstones of dead servicemen (Sørensen, 2016), soldiers' tattoos in memory of their dead comrades (Grarup, 2013), *You Tube* videos commemorating the fallen with appeals to national, Christian and Viking symbols (Knudsen and Stage, 2012) and memorial *Facebook*-groups like BIAs memorial page for Danish soldiers indicate, anecdotally at least, that the Danish army has successfully inculcated a belief in a 'good' military death among its personnel. Accusations about a lack of proper military equipment, experience or skill have sometimes accompanied the loss of Danish life in Helmand, but the doubling of applicants for military service from 2005 to 2010 (Rasmussen, 2010) and the fact that the political *and* public support for the Afghan War has been the highest in the coalition despite the highest casualty rate per capita (Jakobsen, 2013) suggest that the discourse on post-patriotic heroism has also been accepted in Danish society at large.

Finally, remembering dead servicemen as heroes has been part of the formation of national identity. Considering the military obituary as a key to post-modern memory, Anthony King (2010) argues that the personalised and domesticated image of British soldiers killed in Afghanistan points to a change in the social contract and national self-understanding. While King (2010: 22) concludes that British citizens 'no longer live so much in a nation-state but in a national community of personalities, united through a shared domestic sphere', the present analysis instead leads to the conclusion that the ability to invest one's personality in professional progress and international commitment has replaced patriotic duty and loyalty as a primary civic ideal.[7] Considering the invocation of traditional national symbols during the public commemoration of fallen Danish soldiers, it appears that the advancement of personal self-fulfilment, humanitarianism and professionalism as values worth dying for has not been detached from the memory–nation nexus. Rather, changes in the commemorative discourse have elucidated the fact

that post-patriotic values have come to constitute the order of common meaning, or *nomos*, of the Danish society.

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Notes

1. As a consequence of this choice, I have not included the obituaries commemorating previous conscripts, sailors and police officers killed as a result of their involvement in the Resistance, although they form part of an important narrative about the unity of military personnel and citizens against the Nazi Germans.
2. The search included *Garderbladet* (seven units), *Gardehusaren* (one unit) and *Militært Tidsskrift* (four units) published between 1940 and 1950. My examination of *Folk og Værn*, *F.O.U, Officiantbladet*, *Underofficeren* and *Vor hær* revealed no obituaries that matched my search criteria.
3. No official figure on the number of fallen servicemen is available and the number is highly contested. Here I have included all combat-related casualties in the Danish army from 1940 to 1945.
4. There are no official figures on the distribution of combat-related versus non-combat-related casualties in international service between 1948 and 1992 (Danish Defence, 2015b).
5. Four per cent of the texts do not identify the deceased with reference to generic codes and consequently remain uncoded.
6. Twelve per cent of the texts do not identify the deceased with reference to generic codes and remain uncoded.
7. In a different context, King (2013: 442) has proposed the somewhat similar idea that '[p]rofessionalism may be a central integrative element in the civil sphere'.

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Armadillo and the Viking spirit: military names and national myths in transnational military interventions

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ABSTRACT

Recent studies have shown that names of military bases, equipment, operations, sites, units, and weaponry have played a key role in the demonstration of power, the legitimization of war, and the formation of cohesion in the ranks. This paper argues that such naming practices form part of a broader process of the construction of meaning, or what Hans Blumenberg has termed the 'work on myth', since names function as principal devices for creating, reproducing, and transforming cultural narratives. Based on a case study of the Danish experience as part of Task Force Helmand in Afghanistan, the paper elucidates how the army's names have brought stories of national origin, heroic greatness, and warrior ancestry into the banal space of life abroad, where a mythscape has grown and changed in response to the situation on the ground and changes in the wider figuration of the Afghan War. On this basis, the paper stresses the importance of nationally orientated and highly emotional myths in transnational military interventions, and calls for other researchers to look into the elusive and largely ignored cultural factor of warfare.

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Introduction

History books are packed with the names of military bases, *matériel*, operations, sites, units, and weaponry. Some of the names sound as if designed to go down in history: for instance Operation Barbarossa and Operation Overlord of World War II, or the more recent Operations Desert Storm, Enduring Freedom, Joint Guardian, and Neptune Spear. Names on the order of Big Bertha, Fat Man and Little Boy have become common currency, but they are just the tip of the iceberg, and nicknames for weaponry indeed span wide, from Anzio Annie to Bouncing Betty, Devil's Chariot, Ferocious Feline, Ma Deuce, Tommy Cooker, Trench Broom, and Whispering Death, just to mention a few. Despite the importance of names as a window into military culture and the dynamics of war, they have typically been taken for granted, or dismissed with a brief comment by the historian if they have been odd enough to raise his brow. While the cultural and strategic importance of military nomenclature has been largely ignored, a few observers have pointed out that the giving of names to military places, people, and practices, and

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the reproduction of these names through utterance or inscriptions on maps, signs, and logos, is not just a means of physical navigation or a peculiar by-product of war, but is intrinsic to the use of military power.

A branch of this literature has emphasized the linkage of naming and domination. Exploring the history of imperialism, Mary Louise Pratt (2007, 31) has shown that Europe's control over firearms formed the basis for a process of 'global resemanticizing', which is 'how empire makes the world meaningful to its subjects, how it weaves itself into the everyday' (Pratt 2007, 3). Somewhat similarly, Hilary Footitt and Catherine Baker (2012, 146) have described how the introduction of new place names, or *toponomies*, by the Allies in occupied Germany and the United Nations peacekeeping forces in Bosnia-Herzegovina became a signal of domination, which ultimately harmed local–military relations, since it created 'mental and physical maps quite at odds with local geography'. Another branch of this literature has stressed the legitimizing impact of military names. Exploring the names of Israeli military operations and weaponry, Dalia Gavriely-Nuri (2010, 828) argued that the widespread use of names derived from nature and the Bible has worked as a way of 'symbolically eliminating events or objects by blurring or even preventing recognition of their undesirable or controversial features'. This strategic goal is not always reached, however. One frequent reason is the military's lack of local knowledge. As noted by Mikkel Vedby Rasmussen (2011, 90), the inability always to distinguish the Dari from the Pashto language may have hindered western forces in winning Afghan hearts and minds:

> What seemed an Afghanisation of the operation to western television viewers who watched the images of Tufaan Kwandi [the Dari-name of a major operation], appeared for the residents of Helmand [where most speak Pashto] as yet another proof that the Dari-speaking north, with the Kabul government in the lead, invaded their territory by force.[1]

A third branch of literature has brought into focus the cohesive function of military names. As a participant at the Western Front during World War I, Ernst Jünger (2004, 14) had a keen eye for the unifying potential of military names, describing how the 73rd Regiment to which he belonged was known as The Lions of Perthes due to its fierce defence of this area, and Les Gibraltars because of 'the blue Gibraltar colours we wore in memory of the regiment from which we traced our descent, the Hanoverian Guards, who defended the island fortress against the French and Spanish from 1779 to 1783′ (Jünger 2004, 15). The names of the trenches were not just expressive of national–regimental identity, but important vehicles of gallows humour and local knowledge: for instance Bellevue (isolated heights with panorama over the front), Columbus's Egg (hospital shelter), Shell Wood (a shattered area of woodland), and the Witches' Cauldron (place of combat). From observations of the Royal Marines in Afghanistan, Anthony King (2006, 502) noted that the names of drills and operations 'do not simply communicate the significance of a feature on a particular mission but also remind soldiers of their membership of a social group and the obligation to perform the collective actions expected of them'. Somewhat similarly, Inge Brinkman (2004, 146) found that the widespread use of 'personal war names' among guerrilla soldiers in Angola has been bound up with drastic changes of identity and expressions of social belonging, so that these names tended to form 'part of the internal logic of fighting and develop into a constitutive element of warfare'.

Conceptualizing military names as a more or less conscious way to claim power, legitimize war, and generate cohesion is consistent with the growing body of literature on naming as a social practice (e.g. Alderman 2008; Bourdieu 1991; vom Bruck and Bodenhorn 2009). While this literature provides valuable insights into the relationship between names, identity, memory, and power status, the basic performance of names as building blocks in the social construction of meaning has not been expansively addressed. Taking my cue from Hans Blumenberg's (1985) suggestion that the act of giving a name is *the* fundamental form of 'the work on myth', this paper sets out to explore how naming has been part of a broader process of constructing meaning and is woven into cultural narratives. Focusing on the names given to bases, operations, and units by the Danish Army in the peace missions in the Balkans (1992–2004), the Coalition of the Willing in Iraq (2003–2007), and, especially, the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan (2002–2014), the paper explores how military names function as principal devices for creating, reproducing, and transforming cultural narratives, and how these narratives provide significance to the experience of war. On this basis, the aim is to widen our theoretical understanding of military nomenclature, and in doing so 'foreground' the cultural component of war in line with the more recent literature on the experience of war and narratives recording it (Basham 2013; Kühn 2016; Smith 2005; Sylvester 2013).

The paper begins by arguing that Blumenberg's philosophy of myth is helpful in grasping the linkage of naming and narrating, which makes up an under-theorized feature of the role of myth in warfare. After a brief summary of the variety of names used by the Danish troops abroad, I examine the history of the Afghan base named Armadillo and the troops' adherence to Viking names. This is done through a variety of empirical sources, including the army's web page, history books, military decorations, news reports, regimental magazines, and, to a more limited extent, personal interviews with Danish Afghanistan veterans and observations during a visit to Camp Bastion (October 2013). In the course of the paper, I hope to show not just how military naming practices incorporate the experience of desert warfare within nationally orientated frameworks, but also that we should be more aware of elusive and easily ignored manifestations of the construction of meaning in war. Hence, I conclude my analysis by stressing the endurance of national ideology, beliefs, and values in transnational military interventions, which has largely evaded the *structurally* and *individually* orientated approaches that dominate the field.

Theory: names, myths, and war

In contrast to the literature on naming practices as a means of domination, legitimization, and cohesion, Hans Blumenberg (1985) emphasized the *mythical* significance of naming, which brings into focus how names form the basis of cultural narratives. According to Blumenberg (1985, 35), 'the earliest and not least reliable form of familiarity with the world is to find names for what is undefined', which makes the act of giving a name *the* fundamental means of reducing the overwhelming 'absolutism of reality' (Blumenberg 1985, 4). As a nameless world remains elusive, naming is a form of mastery that gives what is unknown 'the capacity to be addressed' (Blumenberg 1985, 16). This capacity ensures that 'Every name that becomes accepted, every network of names … and every story that

presents the bearers of these names as endowed with characteristics enriches definiteness over against the background of indefiniteness' (Blumenberg 1985, 169). Naming is thus a core component in the 'work on myth' (Blumenberg 1985, 97), which entails 'a structuring that is opposed to the intolerable indifference of space and time' (Blumenberg 1985, 97), thereby allowing people 'to be at home in the world' (Blumenberg 1985, 133). As Blumenberg put it, 'What has become identifiable by means of a name is raised out of its unfamiliarity by means of metaphors and is made accessible, in terms of its significance, by telling stories' (Blumenberg 1985, 6).

Contrary to the idea that myths are created with an etiological or legitimizing purpose, Blumenberg (1985, 54) has argued that the basic performance of myth 'is more nearly the trivial quality – a "premordiality" – of the taken-for-grantedness of something that is named in the life-world'. Hence, 'Myth does not need to answer questions; it makes something up, before the question become acute and so that it does not become acute' (Blumenberg 1985, 197). This is done through 'stories that are distinguished by a high degree of constancy in their narrative core and by an equally pronounced capacity for marginal variation' (Blumenberg 1985, 34). The myth of origin is a case in point, since it expresses 'not what was pre-given, but rather what remains visible in the end, what was able to satisfy the receptions and expectations' (Blumenberg 1985, 175); hence, it oscillates 'between where we come from and where we are going' (Blumenberg 1985, 188). When people tell their 'fundamental myth' (Blumenberg 1985) and summon its significance through 'art myths' (Blumenberg 1985, 176), or broader processes of 'aesthetic translations' (Bottici and Challand 2006, 325), they thus engage in an on-going search for significance, where new experiences are incorporated into a well-known narrative framework (Blumenberg 1985, 95). This makes 'ages that are characterized by high rates of change of their system-conditions eager for new myths, for remythicizations' (Blumenberg 1985, 35). Stories of mythical significance are thus always in a process of reproduction, or remythicization, without reaching a final form (Blumenberg 1985, 270–1).

While Blumenberg's philosophy drew upon classical myth, modern literature, and the history of science, it has begun attracting attention from researchers into policy and international relations, where Blumenberg's idea that mythicization is a necessary device for structuring reality has challenged the more widespread idea that myths obscure reality (Cassirer 1946; Mosse 1991). Departing from Blumenberg's concept of significance, Chiara Bottici and Benoît Challand (2006) have argued that western decision makers, intellectuals and journalists have turned the hypothesis of the Clash of Civilizations into a self-fulfilling prophecy, as they have used it as a common narrative, or 'political myth' (Bottici and Challand, 2006: 216), to provide significance to the political condition of the post-Cold War era. From a similar perspective, Katarzyna Kaczmarska (2016, 210) has called attention to the mythical undercurrents of international state-building projects, proposing that 'for policy practitioners the idea of international community has become a narrative that not simply helps make sense of experience but provides significance, inspires people, and guides action'. Inspired by Blumenberg's notion of premordiality, Florian Kühn (2016, 151) has examined the widespread but unquestioned stories about Afghanistan as a 'graveyard of empires', Afghans as 'fierce fighters', Afghanistan as a 'terrorist safe haven', and the Afghans' 'democratic fondness', finding that such

myths 'fulfil a significant role in interpreting reality in interventions such as in Afghanistan'.

While the above literature lays bare how uncontested stories and strong emotional images shape international policy, this paper turns to the military microcosm and explores the use of names as primary expressions of the 'work on myth' (Blumenberg 1985, 34–5). Exploring this key tab of the military culture may, as Victoria Basham (2013, 140) has pointed out in regard to the study of soldiers' performance and experience, 'go some way towards helping us to think through how the geopolitics of war materialises', and, in the concrete sense, help in capturing how stories may exist side by side, underpin each other, merge together, and compete with each other as means of interpretation in transnational military interventions. In so doing, this paper brings the cultural component of war into the centre of analysis, contrary to the major 'realist' tradition in the study of war. Criticizing this tradition for reducing the language and symbols used in war to mere window dressing, Philip Smith (2005, 11) persuasively argued that 'Fighting without the correct cultural system in place is like driving with the parking brake on'. From a feminist perspective, Christine Sylvester (2013, 2) argued that 'war cannot be fully apprehended unless it is studied up from people's physical, emotional, and social experience, not only from high politics places that sweep blood, tears, and laughter away'. As illustrated in the remaining part of this paper, blood, tears, and laughter indeed seem to be the stuff that myths are made of.

Overview: what names?

Military naming is an elusive phenomenon. There is no policy of naming in the Danish Army, which means that the choice of a name is highly dependent on context. As we shall see, the organizational processes involved in naming elude a simple top-down and bottom-up dichotomy, and military naming practices should, therefore, be understood as part of the complex figuration of military relations[2] and the wider geopolitics of war. Expressing this complexity, the names of bases used by the Danish Army in the Balkans, Iraq, and Afghanistan draw upon a variety of sources. As illustrated in Table 1, Danish troops have named 39% of the bases, and the majority of these names allude to well-known figures, places, and concepts in Denmark. While this network of names illustrates how the troops have baptized what they must have considered empty, foreign, or hostile space with familiar names 'to be at home in the world' (Blumenberg 1985, 133), or in the operational area to be more precise, the high number of local names (40%) and names decided by American, British, or French coalition partners (21%) brings into focus the international context of the Danish 'work on myth' (Blumenberg 1985, 97). Since it has not been possible to collect a comprehensive list of names of operations and units, I discuss these on a more selective basis with the purpose of assessing the general value of the pattern found in the corpus of bases. After outlining *Danish, local*, and *other* names, I close with a brief note on *nicknames* before going on to consider the mythical significance of these names.

Table 1. Full list of names of military bases used by the Danish Army in the Balkans, Iraq, and Afghanistan, 1992–2014. Total number of names = 57.

Dominant sources	Names	n (%)
Danish	Anders Lassen (AFG), Armadillo[3] (AFG), Bülow (HR), Danevang[7] (IQ), Dannevirke (BiH), Dannevirke (HR), Eden (IQ), Einherjer (IQ), Goenge (BiH), Gold (AFG), Golf Bravo 81 (AFG), Holger Danske (HR), Holger Danske (KS), Kronborg[8] (BiH), Lille Almegaard (HR), Mjoelner (AFG), Olaf Rye (KS), Patrole Base Viking (AFG), Sankelmark (HR), Valhalla (BiH), Valhalla (HR), Yggdrasil[7] (IQ)	22 (39)
Local	Attal (AFG), Barakzai[1] (AFG), Bridzar (AFG), Budwan[3] (AFG), Divusa (HR), Dürres (AL), Elbasan (AL), Elbrino (MK), Feyzabad (AFG), Hazrat (AFG), Khar Nikah[4] (AFG), Kiseljak (BiH), Zetra Stadion[8] (BiH), Lashkar Gah (AFG), Marshall Tito Barracks (BiH), Musa Qala (AFG), Novo Selo[5] (KS), Ohrid (MK), Rahim[2] (AFG), Shir Agha (AFG), Shorabak[6] (AFG)	23 (40)
Other	Artillery Hill (AFG), Bastion[6] (AFG), Clifton (AFG), Eagle Base (BiH), Gibraltar (AFG), Keenan[4] (AFG), Malvern (AFG), Maréchal de Lattre de Tassigny[5] (KS), North-Pole Barracks (BiH), Price (AFG), Sandford[2] (AFG)	12 (21)

Abbreviations: Afghanistan (AFG), Albania (AL), Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), Croatia (HR), Iraq (IQ), Kosovo (KS), Republic of Macedonia (MK).

Table inspired by Gavriely-Nuri (2010).

Numbering: A superscript number points to a change of name. For instance, Camp Bastion was renamed Camp Shorabak when the *British Armed Forces* handed it over to the *Afghan National Army* in October 2014. Also, a superscript number may refer to a base with two names, for instance Camp Kronborg in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which was also known by its original local name, Zetra Stadion.

Source: Secondary historical records (Christensen and Iversen 2014) and personal interviews with Danish Afghanistan veterans. To the best of my knowledge, I have included every base of relevance.

Danish names

The names of Danish origin draw upon two main sources. The first source is the military history of Denmark: for instance, names like Almegaard, Sankelmark, and Kronborg designate places in Denmark of significance to the army's history, whereas other bases have been named after national heroes, such as Svend Goenge, Olaf Rye, Frederik Bülow, and Anders Lassen, who are known from the feuds between Denmark and Sweden (1644 and 1675–1679), the Danish–Prussian Wars (1848–1851 and 1864), and World War II (1940–1945). The second cluster of names evokes the Viking heritage: for instance, Einherjar (Vikings who died honourably in battle), Mjoelner (the hammer of the thunder-god Thor), Valhalla (the hall of the slain), and Yggdrasil (the tree of life). While Table 1 indicates that Vikings were the preferred source of Danish names in Iraq and Afghanistan, the development is far from unambiguous. For instance, Valhalla designated two bases in the Yugoslav Wars, and the decorations created there were also inspired by (among other things) the Vikings, such as the sleeve badges worn by the companies A-COY (depicting a Viking ship), LOGCOY (a Viking helmet), and C-COY (a male Viking) in Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1996 (Frandsen 1996). Also, the Danish contingent of ISAF6 has bestowed on at least a few of its operations the names of Danish war heroes, including Wilhelm Dinesen, Niels Kjeldsen, and Anders Lassen (Danish Defence 2014). The case of Armadillo further elucidates this custom.

Local and other names

The high number of bases with foreign names bears witness to the transnational figuration of the military interventions since the end of the Cold War. *Local* names were commonly borrowed from the village, town, or city located around or near a base, but also, more exceptionally, inspired by local political figures (Marshal Tito Barracks)

or communities living in the operational area (the Pashtun tribes Attal and Barakzai). Coalition partners have typically decided the *other* names in memory of familiar places at home (Clifton, Malvern, and Spondon), fallen comrades (Keenan and Sandford), and national war heroes (Maréchal de Lattre de Tassigny). Other names in this category were derived from nature (Eagle Base, Gold or North Pole Barracks), while a last group of names refer to function, such as Artillery Hill and the logistics centre of ISAF, which was named from the Hesco Bastion bags used for building its bomb-proof walls.

Nicknames

Official names are not always respected. A newsletter from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark (2013) thus described how Camp Price in Helmand 'quickly earned the nickname Camp Nice because the soldiers appreciated the cosiness and good facilities of the smaller camp'. The Danes have also (but sometimes less flatteringly) referred to Holger Danske as Holger Dvask [Holger Indolent], Holger Hygge [Holger Cosiness] and Holger Velfaerd [Holger Welfare]; Olaf Rye as Olaf Roev [Olaf Ass]; Dannevirke as Intetvirke [Camp Do-nothing]; Valhalla as Val Halal; Bastion as Baconminen [the Bacon Pit]; and Patrol Base Golf Bravo 81 as Gokkeborgen [the Wanking Fortress]. In a similar vein, Major Brian Kaempe Berthelsen (2009, 6) described how Patrol Base Attal 'was named Tom's holiday house if you asked our commanding officer, and if you asked the third division, Patrol Base SHIT FUCK', going on to explain that 'When you are in daily combat then you develop a humour that fits the situation'. Thus, the widespread usage of nicknames discloses the importance of irony, play, group affiliation, and local knowledge in military units operating abroad, while emphasizing the situational, multi-layered, and potentially contested character of military names. Such dynamics are further illustrated in the case study of Denmark in Afghanistan.

Denmark in Afghanistan: what's in a name?

The case study provided here explores how military names of Danish origin have been woven into cultural narratives, evoked, reproduced, and transformed to give significance to the intervention in Afghanistan, where 10,466 Danish soldiers (or 18,910 individual deployments) have been engaged since 2002 (Danish Ministry of Defence 2016). In Afghanistan, the Danish Army provided part of the British-led Task Force Helmand between 2006 and 2014, and sought to use this operation 'as a way to further the transformation of the army from a force dedicated to national defence to an expeditionary force' (Rasmussen 2013, 136). As part of that transformation, the Danish Army experienced its most violent encounters in 150 years, and with a total of 43 dead and 212 wounded (Danish Ministry of Defence 2015), Denmark has lost the most men per capita in the Afghan coalition (Jakobsen 2013). Here, I focus on two aspects of this experience. First, I trace the history of the base known as Armadillo, which serves to show how the Danish Army has created a *new* myth that brings together its long history of national defence and its growing international role. Second, I elucidate the troops' adherence to Viking names, illustrating how *old* national myths have been renewed to give significance to the experience of combat far away from home. Both illustrations show how the army's transformation into a rapid reaction corps has brought about a process of 'remythicisations' (Blumenberg 1985, 35).

Armadillo

The case of Armadillo illustrates how 'the search for significance operates within the realm of documentable history' (Blumenberg 1985, 102), when people evoke real-life occurrences to assign meaning to their existence and experience (Blumenberg 1985, 185–8; Bottici 2007, 201). The history of Armadillo begins with the Danish encounters with the Taliban in the province of Helmand in 2006–2007. Denmark had just decided to deploy an entire battalion to take charge of the area around the city of Gereshk, which was known to be a Taliban stronghold, and so Helmand became a testing ground for the fighting fitness of the Danish Army (Rasmussen 2011, 61–3). Attempting to move the forward line of enemy troops farther north, British and Danish forces managed to occupy a new territory in the Upper Gereshk Valley during Operation Thunder on 15 January 2008. The new base of this area had hitherto been known by the code name Giraffe 1, but the Danish command in Helmand decided to name it Armadillo after the mascot of Major Anders Storrud, a very popular company commander who had died from the wounds of an enemy mortar shell on 16 October 2007.[3]

The inauguration of Armadillo took place on 2 February 2008. On the army's web page, Major Peter Hansen explained to people back home 'that the foundation of the success [of Operation Thunder] was created by the company commander Anders Storrud … who brought the Armadillo logo to the company' (Reinhold, 2008). The logo depicted the armoured mammal (Figure 1) and had previously been used in the Danish mission in Kosovo, where Major Storrud had served as the head of the armoured personnel carriers, which are also termed 'armadillos' in military jargon. Hence, the name and logo of Armadillo impregnated the unfamiliar desert landscape of the Upper Gereshk Valley with the memory of a renowned Danish officer, while tying together the dramatic events in Helmand and the army's previous missions. Soon the Armadillo name and logo were found on sleeve badges, wristbands, and tattoos among the servicemen deployed and the veterans who had served at the base, thus illustrating how the Armadillo myth was created and spread through 'aesthetic translations' (Bottici and Challand 2006, 325), in which 'fragmentary and allusive references … of images … are apprehended through more or less conscious exposure to them' (Bottici and Challand 2006).

It did not take long before the work on myth in the deployed units was mirrored back in Denmark, where the army's leadership mythicized Major Storrud by placing him in the wider historical gallery of Danish war heroes. Yet again name-giving played a primary role. A press release on the army's web page thus elucidates how the Royal Danish Army Academy baptized a team of officer cadets in honour of the fallen Major (Royal Danish Army 2009). The baptismal event took place at the academy on the Major's day of birth in 2009, when he was commemorated with a Christian memorial service and a military parade of more than 400 men. In one of several speeches made at this occasion, the then Chief of the ground forces linked the career and personality of Major Storrud to the transformation of the Danish Army since the end of the Cold War. Symbolizing where the army came from and where it was going, Major Storrud came to embody the most recent chapter of its fundamental myth, and so the new bearers of the name Storrud were incorporated into the larger military history and endowed with its new spirit of global outlook and high professionalism. I quote:

Figure 1. The name plate of Armadillo. Source: forsvarsgalleriet.dk.

> During his career Anders succeeded in being deployed three times – to Kosovo, Iraq, and Afghanistan. His career is therefore a mirror of the development of the Royal Danish Army from a defence of the Cold War to a modern land force. … [I] cannot imagine any better role model and namesake for an officer class. With the upcoming Team Storrud, and the many teams who will come after, the Royal Danish Army Academy gets yet another distinguished role model in the line of Danish heroes. Heroes, by virtue of their professional skill, strength of character, and personal qualities will always be worth looking up to. … In this way Anders Storrud becomes a part of the official history of the Royal Danish Army – even when we are not here any more. (Bundsgaard 2009)

The online press release stressed the historical uniqueness of the baptismal event even further, claiming that the tradition of naming had not been observed since the end of World War II. Also, it described how the birth of Team Storrud meant that

> there will be lectures about him, a portrait put up in the classes, and that Major Storrud will be remembered on his birthday, date of death, and by examining issues such as tactics and leadership, where he can be used as a role model. (Royal Danish Army 2009)

Two months later, the Royal Life Guard commissioned a painting of the Major, and here the army's web page emphasized that this purchase was the first Danish battle painting since the nineteenth century (Royal Life Guard 2009). Bringing together the military's past and present, the domestic sphere and the international theatre, grief and glory, this piece of 'art myth' (Blumenberg 1985, 176) points to the significance of nationally orientated stories and symbols in transnational military interventions. In contrast to this, the final destiny of the Armadillo base shows how the building of national myths has also been constrained by growing internationalization.

The Afghan theatre became an object of intense remythicization in the beginning of 2010, when General Stanley Allen McChrystal, then newly appointed Commander of ISAF, decided to rename Afghan bases and units. As part of this process, the Danish Battle Group was renamed Combined Force Nahr-e Saraj, while most bases were

endowed with Afghan names. The army's web page described the decision of ISAF to rename the bases, some of which had existed for years, as 'a natural step in the process of the Afghan security forces to assume more and more responsibility for security' (Guard Hussar Regiment 2010). While the Armadillo myth had thrived so long as the myth about Afghanistan as a 'safe haven' for terrorists and Afghans as 'fierce fighters' had prevailed in international discourse (Kühn 2016, 156–63), it was now cut short by the growing importance of the myth of the Afghans' 'democratic fondness' (Kühn 2016, 164–6) that served to underpin the exit strategy of western forces. Although ISAF launched its policy of renaming as a natural step of Afghanization, the adoption of Afghan names might not have felt so natural on the ground, since it displaced the soldiers' mythical structuring of the Afghan battlescape. At least, the newsletter found it necessary to stress that

> changing the name of the Armadillo base does not mean that the base is forgotten or that Anders Storrud and his company are forgotten … The same goes for the bases Sandford and Keenan that were named after British soldiers who were killed. Guard Hussar Regiment, 2010 2016

Armadillo was then renamed Budwan, and the old sign with the Armadillo logo was repatriated to Denmark. Unveiling the sign at the Guards' barracks, Colonel Lasse Harkjær explained that 'The Armadillo name will always be something special to the Royal Life Guard … [and also] history books will refer to it as something special' (Royal Life Guard 2010). Yet the mythical significance of Armadillo seems to have been restricted to the ranks of the Danish Army – as illustrated next.

Before the dismantling of the base began in December 2010, Armadillo had become widely known in Denmark through the documentary film *Armadillo* by Janus Metz. One of the leading Danish newspapers, *Politiken*, had strongly criticized some of the battle scenes depicted in the film (Halskov and Svendsen 2010), and its journalists later covered the closing of the Afghan base as a sign of the futility of the entire campaign (Halskov and Svendsen 2012). The liberal newspaper also claimed that Danish Defence had maintained the base because of its significance as a national symbol of valour and self-sacrifice – even despite British advice to close it down already in the spring of 2009 (Halskov and Svendsen 2012). Questioning the myth of Armadillo clearly challenged the fundamental experience among some of the veterans and bereaved families, who expressed a sense of anomie in the public debate (e.g. Svendsen 2012; Sørensen 2012).[4] However, Defence Command Denmark soon assured the public that there had been no disagreement between Denmark and the UK, claiming that the base had maintained strategic importance until the last moment – it was closed down by 11 February 2011 (Brøndum 2012). In so doing, the army managed to keep the memory of Major Storrud in high honour, while preserving a sense of professional prowess (comparable to more experienced forces such as the British Army) and *making a difference* (despite severe casualties and the lack of long-term progress in Helmand). Underscoring Blumenberg's thesis as to the robustness of myths, the Guard Hussar Regiment and Royal Life Guard thus launched a custom-made beer labelled with the Armadillo logo to celebrate the repatriation of ISAF15 in 2013 (Brøndum 2013).

The Viking spirit

While the Armadillo myth drew upon the army's recent history, the soldiers' use of Viking names illustrates how traditional and fictive stories have been renewed to give significance to the Danish Afghan experience. The Viking heritage has served as a wellspring of stories and symbols in Denmark since the mid-nineteenth century (Adriansen 2003, 101–13), and fantasies about Viking authenticity, heroism, and manliness have been part of the army's discourse ever since (Perlt 2013). Also, Danish Afghan forces have evoked the national myth of Nordic origin and a Golden Age 'of great deeds, adventurous expeditions, important formations of kingdoms and of forceful heroic men making Scandinavia famous and feared' (Svanberg 2003, 52). For instance, the Danish sector of Camp Bastion was initially named Danelagen Lines after the Danish-ruled area of England – the Danelaw – around 800 AD. Later it was renamed Camp Viking, where the sleeping quarters were named Camp Dannevirke (a fortification built around 600 AD) and Camp Midgaard (the human sphere in Norse cosmology). Similarly, the Danish quarter of the German-controlled Camp Feyzabad was named Odin (the king of the Norse pantheon), while the Danish tactical air control party was known as Norsemen, and the companies and the platoons frequently were named after the Vikings and their gods Odin, Loki, Fenrir, and Vidar. Such names have brought stories of national origin and warrior ancestry into the arid arena of the soldiers' life abroad, as here illustrated by a letter written by the company commander of Vidar Coy to a Danish regimental magazine:

> At home we are called First Armoured Battalion but for our mission … we have chosen the name Vidar COY to follow up on the tradition of taking the name of one of the Norse gods.
>
> Vidar is the son of Odin and Grid. He keeps to himself and trains for Ragnarok [the final battle between gods and giants]. According to Völuspá, Vidar will avenge his father's death at Ragnarok. He will put his foot in the mouth of Fenrir [a monstrous wolf], break its jaw and then stab a sword into the wolf. For this purpose, he has a huge leather boot … Protected by the boot, Fenrir cannot bite off his foot and Vidar survives and becomes one of the surviving gods of Ragnarok, who are building a new and more beautiful world.
>
> In our sleeve badge for ISAF7, we have tried to gather some of the stories of Vidar, home and Helmand. We have used the saddlebag of the Guard Hussar Regiment as framing. In the top left corner of the saddlebag, we have two hands shaking to symbolise that we are here to help the Afghan population to a better life. The background of the saddlebag is green like the Green Zone where we work most of the time and split by three blue lines that symbolise the Helmand River running through the Green Zone. At bottom right, we have Fenrir, who is being killed just as we are defeating the Taliban. (Berthelsen 2009, 3)

This work on myth connects the bearers of the name Vidar to military training, fighting, surviving, protecting, helping others, and rebuilding society, while merging vengeance and altruism into an important motive for joining the universal battle of good and evil. The fact that the company commander incorporates the strategic goal of ISAF into the eschatological prophecy of the *Edda* not only illustrates the capacity of myth to fit historically specific needs and expectations (Blumenberg 1985, 270–1), but also points to its premordial characteristic (Blumenberg 1985, 54). Whether belief in the *Edda* prophesy is genuine is thus less important than the way this text reduces the complexity of the war in Afghanistan by incorporating it into a pre-established and (for many Danes) familiar narrative, which underpins the military's life-world, including the goal and means of the Helmand

campaign. The sleeve badge of Vidar Coy further illustrates the aesthetic translation of Viking myth (Blumenberg 1985, 176; Bottici and Challand 2006, 325), since it evokes and brings together visual images of Norse mythology, regimental history, and the Afghan landscape (Figure 2). Although the Danish Afghanistan forces have used Viking images less than they have used depictions of animals and weaponry on their sleeve badges (Table 2), Viking icons have played an important role as a means of national distinction. A press release taken from the army's website further illustrates this:

> The Viking Company is a young and newly established company. This means that we have had great influence on our company badge and our slogan. The company leadership quickly agreed to use the old Viking axe with double blade as logo. An axe that symbolises Viking strength, willpower, and the connection to our ancestors' fighting spirit and history.
>
> It also meant that we had introduced the Viking spirit into the company. In keeping with this spirit, we brought the name Viking to Afghanistan. The reason is not just that we have the axe as our badge, but also to have a name that differed from the British companies, and made us more Danish. And what is more Danish than our Viking heritage?
>
> And there is great respect, mystery and strength around our axe badge and the name Viking among our British colleagues. (Sylvestersen, 2013)

Here the bearers of the Viking name are endowed with masculine and martial deeds, but more than merely illustrating how warfaring has become a key element of the army's identity, enabled and reinforced by Viking associations, this fragment of text points to the function of myths as a means of national distinction in interventions such as in Afghanistan. The importance of the international context has also been recognized by the Danish Afghanistan veterans. A male private thus told me that his company was named Odin,

Figure 2. The sleeve badge of Vidar Coy. Source: The Royal Danish Army.

Figure 3. The Danish cartoonist Peter Madsen published the first issue of the Valhalla series in 1979. The cartoon is still very popular among Danes and has probably contributed to maintaining a wide interest in Nordic gods (Adriansen 2003, 113). It is hard not to see the graphic affinity between the poster of Valhalla – the Movie (1986) and the sleeve badge of Danish Battle Group – ISAF7. The yellow, snake-like scroll represents the Midgard Serpent, or Jörmungandr, of Norse mythology. Source: Peter Madsen and forsvarsgalleriet.dk.

Table 2. Images on sleeve badges used by Danish teams, companies, and platoons in Afghanistan, 2002–2014. Total number of badges = 89.

Dominant sources	Examples	n (%)
Animals	Armadillo, bat, bull, camel, desert rat, eagle, horse, lion, owl, piranha, polar bear, rhino, scorpion, snake, tiger	37 (42)
Vikings	Fenrir, horned helmet, Hugin and Mugin, Midgaard Serpent, Mjolnir (with thunderbolt), Viking longship, Viking warrior	24 (27)
Weapons	Flintlock pistol, bomb, suit of armour, machine gun, military vehicle, sword	33 (38)
Other	Crown, flag*, Garfield the Cat, horseshoe, human skull, iron fist, laurel wreath, map of Afghanistan, saddle bag, Rota Fortunae, thunderbolt (without Mjolnir)	66 (74)

Note: Around half of the badges were classified twice or more, because of the frequent mixing of images in a single badge. *The flags represent Denmark (n = 11), Afghanistan (n = 4), and other coalition partners (n = 3).
Source: www.para-world.dk (accessed 16 September 2016). The Royal Danish Army does not store the troops' sleeve badges in any systematic way and, therefore, the present sample is obtained from a private collection. The collection is extensive but not exhaustive, and the findings are to that extent tentative. Duplicates and unknown badges were removed from the original collection before coding (n = 17).

> because those Brits had given our battalion the name Viking Battle Group. Because we are Danes. … Because we had red beards down there. Almost everyone had a beard, and we were all white-skinned [laughs]. … I cannot even remember how we decided it. It was just like: 'We should call ourselves Odin, shouldn't we?' Odin is like the wildest in Norse mythology [laughs again]. (personal interview, 20 July 2013)

Another male private explained that

> It's probably just what it means to be Danish there. The Vikings were, and yeah, I know that they were trading men and everything too, but what they were known for all over the world was for being warriors. After all, it's part of *our* days of glory. (personal interview, 4 March 2014)

Naturally, not everyone can relate to Viking mythology. For instance, a signal officer told me that

> It's a bit tough and a bit rough to be a Viking, you know, and hey, it makes very good sense, for it is something very Danish. … It is a very typical Danishness-thing. I don't care. We could call ourselves anything. (personal interview, 9 December 2013)

The signal officer was perhaps right when he considered himself atypical in this respect. A broader look at the Danes in Afghanistan indeed points to the widespread work of Viking myth: for instance, the soldiers' material culture (rune-like signs, Viking shields, and Viking helmets for decoration in the camps), their biomarkers (Viking tattoos and necklaces with the hammer of Thor), YouTube videos commemorating the fallen with appeals to Viking images and other national symbols (Knudsen and Stage 2012), and the allegedly high number of Ásatrú (or neo-pagan) practitioners in the Danish force (Joensen 2011). Although the Viking spirit has been quite visible abroad, it has not attracted much attention from journalists and politicians at home.[5] Despite a few army chaplains who have lamented the soldiers' attraction to Norse mythology as 'youthful romance' and silly 'role-playing games' (Schnabel 2008), it appears that the troops' Viking spirit has been in line with the taste for Vikings in broader Danish society (Figure 3), where artists, businesses, museums, politicians, and schools have reproduced and celebrated Viking stories and Viking symbols since the mid-nineteenth century (Adriansen 2003, 101–13; Svanberg 2003).

Concluding discussion

Supplementing the study of how nomenclature is playing a role in controlling places and people (Footitt and Baker 2012; Pratt 2007), legitimizing warfare (Gavriely-Nuri 2010; Rasmussen 2011, 90), and generating cohesion within the ranks (Brinkman 2004; King 2006), this paper has argued that the invention and use of military names form part of a broader process of the construction of meaning, or what Blumenberg has termed the work on myth, since names evoke important cultural narratives that structure human experience. As illustrated in the case study of Denmark in Afghanistan, military naming practices have brought stories of national origin, heroic greatness, and warrior ancestry into the disciplined and difficult reality of the soldiers' life abroad, where a mythscape has grown and changed in response to the situation on the ground (bottom-up) and the military's role and strategy (top-down). Exploring this key tab of the military culture thus demonstrates the importance of nationally orientated and highly emotive myths in transnational military interventions, which may themselves be perceived as a work *of* myth insofar as names, stories and symbols generate combat motivation and legitimize military violence. The history of Armadillo and the Viking spirit indicates that this is the case, but future studies are clearly required to tell us more about the working of such processes in war.

As military names provide a largely neglected source of data, they are not just interesting in themselves but may also nuance scholarly debate. The idea that there has been a general

decline of national ideology, beliefs, and values in the western militaries is here a case in point. Hence, Charles Moskos and James Burk (1994, 142) argued that we find ourselves 'in a period of transition away from the modern mass army, characteristic of the age of nationalism, to a postmodern military, adapted to a newly forming world-system in which nationalism is constrained by the rise of global social organisations'. From a different perspective, King (2013, 424) argued that 'A sense of professional not patriotic duty seems to have substantially displaced the national mission as the central means of sustaining cohesion'. A growing body of literature has likewise pointed to a weakening of national motives among American, British, Italian, and Swedish soldiers (Battistelli 1997; Hedlund 2011; Segal 1989; Woodward 2008), and the motive 'to make a difference for my country' was rated as one of the very lowest among the Danes in Afghanistan (Lyk-Jensen, Heidemann, and Glad 2012, 48). In line with this literature, Thomas Randrup Pedersen (2017, 8) has observed how young Danes from the Force Protection Section Fenrir 'largely sought out war zones and, ideally, battlefields as exceptional sites for learning revelatory truths about self and world'.

Bringing the social practice of naming into the centre of analysis, it is possible to nuance that picture, since this type of data captures the elusive and context-dependent workings of national discourses, which have largely evaded the *structurally* orientated and *individually* orientated approaches that dominate the field. While this paper has brought into focus the durability of nationally orientated frames of interpretation in transnational military interventions, it finds merit in the above literature too. For instance, the history of Armadillo illustrates that a sense of national mission endures as part of the change of paradigm towards professionalism 'as the central means of sustaining cohesion' (King 2013, 424), while the custom of using local names, and especially the introduction of the naming policy of ISAF in 2010, demonstrates one way that 'nationalism is constrained by the rise of global social organisations' (Burk and Moskos 1994, 142). Also, the Danish Viking spirit speaks to us about how the transnational figuration of the post-Cold War missions (Burk and Moskos 1994), and the growing importance of experience-seeking motivations among western soldiers, their so-called 'warrior dreams' (Pedersen 2017), are filtered through national stories and national symbols. This paper therefore calls for other researchers to explore the world of military names and similar elusive processes of the construction of meaning from the history of war, which may advance our understanding of the relationship between the expeditionary forces and national discourses and a broad range of other themes.

Notes

1. All translations from the Danish are by the author.
2. Officers in the Danish Army typically stress the dependence of naming on time, place, and the people involved. Yet there seems to be a general procedure, when I compare my interviews with these men: for instance, the Coalition Command has usually decided the names of major bases, operations, and units, while the nomenclature of minor bases and operations has been delegated to the contingent commanders. The Danish company commanders and their subordinates have usually decided the names of their own companies and platoons, but frequently under the supervision of the Chief of the battalion, contingent, and/or Danish Army (depending on the individuals in office).

3. Operation Reese and Operation Sørensen of Team 4 were also named after Danish soldiers killed in Helmand.
4. Admiral Tim Sloth Jørgensen was quoted as saying: 'In my opinion, it would be seen as a defeat [to abolish Armadillo]. Not that we had lost the war, but in the microcosm it would be a defeat. It was hard to describe it as something positive, even though it was part of a new overall approach. Personally, I was very sorry that Armadillo maybe had to be closed down. *There was something mythical about the base. The name and the stories about the fight*. What would the relatives say if we closed it? Had it been in vain, that the soldiers had given their lives to get there? (Halskov and Svendsen 2012; italics added by author). The Admiral later withdrew this statement.
5. In contrast to Denmark, there has been a public debate in Norway on the extent to which Viking imagery in the Norwegian Army is a problematic expression of a warrior culture among the proclaimed peace builders. The Norwegian debate was ignited by a YouTube video made public by the tabloid newspaper *Dagbladet* in September 2010. The video shows a company commander from Norway's Telemark Battalion saluting the troops before a patrol in Afghanistan, shouting: 'You are the predator. Taliban is the prey. To Valhalla!' Then, some 30 heavily armed Norwegian soldiers shout 'Ohrrah!' while raising their weapons to the sky (Gilbrant, Kristiansen, and Sandli 2010). Simultaneously, the Norwegian tabloid newspaper *Verdens Gang* claimed that the Telemark Battalion had spray-painted skulls on Afghan houses, where they suspected the residents of supporting the Taliban (Ege, Hegvik, and Andersen et al. 2010). According to Synne Dyvik (2016, 138), the Norwegian Viking debate revealed 'a chasm between the public narrative told about the war in Afghanistan and the experiences of some of the Norwegian military personnel serving there'.

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Concluding Discussion

This final section contains a brief summary and discussion of my analytical results. First, I elaborate somewhat on the conclusion reached by each paper, brought together with studies by others, to develop 'cross-contextual generalities' (Mason, 2002: 125). I will try to make a coherent argument about the emergence of a discourse of post-patriotic heroism, its link to broader discourses and structural changes. I then discuss the discourse of patriotic heroism and warrior heroism. Although they do not loom large in my analyses, they are important to my conclusion, since they bear witness to the existence of more than one discourse of military heroism, while emphasising the context-dependent relationship between military heroism and national identity. On this basis, I outline three theoretical and three empirical contributions of this dissertation to the research literature (see Table 5). I then append a critical perspective, which illuminates dissident voices in the public debate on Danish soldiers and outlines three pertinent areas of research that refer to the general value of my analyses and conclusions. Finally, I round off with a very brief note on future discourses of military heroism.

Table 5. Main contributions and pending research areas

Theoretical contributions	Empirical contributions	Pending research areas
Reinvigoration of theories on heroism as a social phenomenon	Investigation of previously unexplored sources	Examination of sub-discourses, their internal relations, and structural anchoring
Bringing into dialogue the study of heroism, military studies, and social theory	Analysis of unconventional types of data	Explorations of civilian discourses of military heroism, and military heroism during the Cold War
Demonstration of an Eliasian approach to heroism	Selection of cases that challenge the hypothesis of post-heroic warfare	Assessment of the interpretational value of a relational and state-orientated approach to heroism

Summary

The dissertation has pursued the following research question: what characterises Danish discourses of military heroism, and how are they bound up with broader discourses and structural changes? To

narrow down the notion of *broader discourses* and *structural changes*, I have focused on the following themes: (1) changes in the external relations between Denmark and other states; (2) changes in the internal relations between the state, its military, and the citizens*;* and (3) changes in expressions of national belonging, ideals and values. As previously illustrated by Figure 2, Papers 2 to 4 have dealt with the three themes in different ways. Paper 2 directly addressed changes in the external relations between Denmark and other states, tying together the discourse on soldier heroes and the emergence of 'competition state' (Cerny, 2010: Pedersen, 2011) and 'security state' (Kaspersen, 2013) strategies for protecting the Danish welfare state in the wake of growing international interdependency. This paper's description of the transformation of the Danish state and the shifting power balance in the international figuration provided the historical background and master frame of interpretation of Papers 3 and 4. All analytical papers dealt with changes in the internal relations between the Danish state, its military, and its citizens and changes in the expression of national belonging, ideals and values: on the background of the military's transformation from a force largely based on military conscription (and dedicated to territorial defence) to a professional volunteer force (designed for expeditionary warfare), they elucidated the discursive associations between soldiering and civic virtues (Paper 2 and 3) and expressions of cultural narratives of national origin, distinction and greatness (Paper 4). Paper 1 did not engage the themes directly, since it aimed to provide a more general introduction to heroism in social thought.

Varieties of Military Heroism

In the following, I will briefly summarise the characteristics of the discourse of *post-patriotic heroism* and how this discourse relates to the broader discourses on Danish warfare and Danish national values, as well as to structural transformations of the Danish welfare state. While my papers suggest that the discourse of post-patriotic heroism has taken the lead role since the 1990s, there *are* nonetheless other discourses of military heroism in contemporary Danish society. Discourses of *patriotic heroism* and *warrior heroism* do not loom large in my analyses, but they are important to my conclusion, since they bear witness to the existence of more than one discourse of military heroism in Denmark today, and to a context-dependent relationship between military heroism and national identity. With the purpose of providing an overview of my collective empirical findings, Table 6 sums up the three discourses of

Table 6. Discourses of military heroism

Discourse	Soldiers' purpose	Core military values	Examples from dissertation
Post-patriotic heroism	To make a difference in the world	Professionalism, self-motivation, and global outlook	Danish prime minister's New Year Address since the 1990s (Paper 2); obituaries to Danish soldiers killed in Afghanistan (Paper 3); army's heroification of Anders Storrud and Armadillo's history (Paper 4)
Patriotic heroism	To protect Queen and country	Duty and love of country, and manliness	Obituaries to Danish soldiers killed during the Second World War (Paper 3); army's usage of names from the Danish–Prussian Wars and the Second World War (Paper 4)
Warrior heroism	To fight wars	Combativeness, courage, and strength	Army's usage of Viking names and visuals (Paper 4)

Note: Inspired by Haaland (2010: 542).

military heroism, with special reference to their promotion of the soldiers' purpose and core military values. As stated in my discussion of theory and key concepts, the table illustrates three analytically delineated discourses, which encapsulate but also simplify *real* discursive formulations in line with Weber's concept of ideal types.

POST-PATRIOTIC HEROISM

Collectively, Papers 2 to 4 call attention to the emergence of a discourse of p*ost-patriotic heroism*[1] in Denmark, as it has appeared in the prime minister's New Year speech since the 1990s (Paper 2), the obituaries produced by the Danish Afghan forces (Paper 3), and the army's official discourse on Anders Storrud and the Armadillo base (Paper 4: 8-10). Common to these three empirical cases is a discourse, characterised by celebrating the soldiers' willingness to make a difference in the world, while elevating global outlook, high professionalism, and self-motivation as core values within the ranks (Paper 3 and 4) as well as in the civilian sphere (Paper 2). Throughout the papers, I have discussed this notion of heroism with special reference to two broader discourses within Danish society: a moral discourse on the militaristic turn taken by Denmark, and a wider public discourse on

[1] Originally I used the term 'post-patriotic heroism' in my study of obituaries (Paper 3). As demonstrated here, I think the term should be applied more widely to the prevailing discourse on Danish soldiers and veterans since the 1990s.

Danish national values and identity. For the sake of clarity, the two interweaving discourses are analytically separated in the present recapitulation.

First, the discourse of post-patriotic heroism has been bound up with the broader moral discourse of Danish warfaring. This is the prevailing 'strategic narrative' (Graaf et al., 2015) coming from Parliament and the Ministry of Defence, which have framed the campaign in Afghanistan as a CIMIC operation, in which military power goes hand in hand with civilian objectives, such as democratic development, gender equality, and the building of schools (Jakobsen, 2013; Jakobsen and Ringsmose, 2015a, 2015b; Rasmussen, 2013). Politicians have time and again conjured up the soldiers' willingness to serve – and occasional death – into a proof of the moral worth of their active foreign policy and, as one dimension of this, the growing engagement of Danish forces internationally. This has occurred in connection with soldiers' funerals, at which Søren Gade (Defence Minister 2004–2010) began, in an unprecedented step, to participate, (Rasmussen, 2011: 2011: 98–110), and on the occasion of the inauguration of the Monument to Denmark's International Effort since 1948 (Sørensen, 2017: 31-35), the National Flag Day for Danes Serving Abroad (Christensen, 2016; Reeh, 2011; Sørensen and Pedersen, 2012), and the remembrance of the defeat by Prussia and Austria in the war of 1864 (Christensen, 2014; Daubjerg, 2017). Contributing to the literature on the moral discourse of Danish warfare, the dissertation elucidates how the prevailing strategic narrative of the Danish 'security state' (Kaspersen, 2013) has underpinned the discourse of post-patriotic heroism, as it has appeared in ministerial speeches (Paper 2) and the army's official tribute to the fallen in Afghanistan (Paper 4; Paper 3: 8-10).

Second, the discourse of post-patriotic heroism has been linked to a broader change in Danish national identity and values. From the end of the Cold War, Danish prime ministers have elevated the figure of the soldier into a role model for ordinary citizens and used this figure to promote a more potent image of *Danishness* in contrast to the so-called 'small state ideology' resulting from the defeat of 1864. This has been done with special reference to the soldiers' professionalism and willingness to take action in the world, a development that appears to be associated with the notion of 'making a difference,' which again and again has entered the discourse on the soldiers' role (Christensen, 2016: 354; Rasmussen, 2011: 132-133; Paper 2: 9-11; Paper 3: 4; Paper 4: 10), as well as discourses on education, management, personal development, public welfare, and work (Bovbjerg, 2004: 18; Knudsen, 2007: 45; Pedersen, 2011: 172). On this basis, the dissertation calls attention to the

correspondence between the emergence of a proactive citizen ideal in Danish society and the social construction of military identity and values. Adding to the literature on work efficiency and international commitment as civic ideals in today's society, I elucidate how the discourse of military heroism has been preconditioned and influenced by the transformation of the classic welfare state of the 1970s into a new dispensation, here described as a 'competition state' (Cerny, 2010; Pedersen, 2011).

While the analyses presented by Papers 2 to 4 found that Danish politicians and military staff have increasingly referred to the soldiers' self-motivation, international commitment, humanitarian goals, and high professionalism as core military values, they also bear witness to at least two other discourses of military heroism: a discourse of *patriotic heroism,* and *warrior heroism*, which are quite important to this conclusion, as they point to the existence of more than one notion of military heroism.

PATRIOTIC HEROISM

My papers provide a few illustrations of a discourse of patriotic heroism, focusing on the protection of homeland, while duty and love of country as well as a strong sense of manliness are celebrated as core values. Although I have found that the notion of national self-sacrifice was quite absent from the army's obituaries to Danish soldiers killed in Afghanistan (Paper 3), patriotic utterances have been heard within the political discourse on national security. Commenting on the loss of three Danes in Helmand, the then Defence Minister stated that 'All the soldiers that we have here in Afghanistan are, in my eyes, the real heroes who are fighting to ensure that the assholes do not come to our part of the world to brawl' (Gade in Paper 2: 2). Likewise a patriotic spirit has been summoned in connection with the public commemoration of fallen soldiers (Paper 3: 13). For instance at a military funeral in 2009, one of the army chaplains praised how the deceased 'served his people and his nation, his queen and his family, and consequently he served all of us who live and breathe safe at home in freedom' (Aallmann, 2009). The army's usage of names taken from places of significance to the army's history, and from military figures known for their heroism in the Danish–Prussian and the Second World Wars, belongs within this discourse of patriotic heroism (Christensen, 2014; Paper 4: 6).

WARRIOR HEROISM

The dissertation has briefly touched upon a discourse of warrior heroism that elevates fighting into a purpose in itself, as Haaland (2010: 542) has pinpointed, while celebrating combativeness, courage, fighting spirit, willpower, and strength as core military values. While the obituaries to Danish soldiers killed in Afghanistan largely resembled the official political celebration of soldier heroes, as it appeared in the prime ministers' speeches (Paper 2 and 3), the army's usage of Viking names provides a window into a discourse of warrior heroism, which may or may not evoke national imaginaries. The re-interpretation of the god Vidar and the Viking axe (Paper 4: 11-12) may thus illustrate the discourse of warrior heroism and its characteristic blending of belligerent images, national-romantic symbols, and popular culture. The same goes for others' analyses of the gravestones of Danish soldiers killed fighting recent wars (Sørensen, 2017: 41-45), the *You Tube* footage of Danes under heavy fire against the Taliban in Afghanistan, a genre popularly known as 'war porn' (Mortensen, 2016), the tattoo culture among members of the *Royal Life Guard* (Grarup, 2013), and the desires uttered by some soldiers to become 'true warriors' (Pedersen, 2017). Because of a lack of data and time, I have not been able here to address the internal relationship or structural location of the discourses of post-patriotic heroism, patriotic heroism, and warrior heroism in more substantial terms. However, I will revisit this issue when I discuss the pending areas of research.

Main Contributions

As illustrated by Table 5, my dissertation contains three theoretical and three empirical contributions to the sociological literature on heroes and military heroism. The following paragraphs elaborate.

THEORETICALLY

There are at least three theoretical contributions to the research literature that can be extracted from my papers. First, I have identified heroism as an interesting but largely ignored object of fundamental sociological debates and developments in social theory. By synthesising the research literature on heroism (Paper 1) and discussing it in relation to my three empirical cases (Paper 2 to 4), I have tried to lift the study of heroism back into the mainstream of theoretical debate; to flag up a more self-

conscious engagement with this legacy; and integrate empirical knowledge and theoretical perspectives from different areas of sociological research, while countering the segregation of sociology into enclosed sub-disciplines. The latter brings me to the next area of my contribution.

Second, the dissertation contributes to building bridges between military research and, especially, military sociology, which is a relatively isolated and application-orientated discipline (Joas and Knöbl, 2012: 14), and social theory, which has largely ignored the military and warfare (Smith, 2005). While sociologists have simply missed the human conduct of war in their analyses of societies, the lack of social theory in the study of military institutions and warfare have, according to Malešević (2010: 50), resulted in 'extremely detailed descriptive narratives of individual battles, epic portrayals of actors and events or ... simplistic 'commonsense' explanations of highly complex sociological processes involved in organised collective violence.' With the aim of reducing this gap between the disciplines, I contribute with a meaning-orientated sociological approach to classical themes in military sociology: civil-military relations (Paper 2), the management of military casualties (Paper 3), and the question of cohesion within the ranks (Paper 4). In so doing, the dissertation brings into focus the cultural frames that make warfare possible (Butler, 2016; Smith, 2005).

Third, the dissertation expands the research literature on the social construction of heroism, which, among other things, has advanced our understanding of how discourses of military heroism work to blur the cruel realities of war, generate social unity, normalise military violence, give meaning to casualties, recruit new soldiers, boost the morale of fighting soldiers, re-socialise veterans into society, provide public support for waging war, and ward off criticism of war when waged (e.g. Christensen, 2016; Dawson, 1994; Goren, 2007; Kelly, 2012; Papayanis, 2010; Scheipers, 2014; Woodward, 2000). Although this body of research contain important insights into the functional, dynamic, and contested characteristics of the social construction of heroes, none provide us with the necessary theoretical tools to describe the processes by which the recognition of certain individuals, groups, and qualities as heroic are underpinned by the historical relations of states. Utilising Elias's (1978: 134–139) concept of 'survival unit', it is possible to bring the state into the centre of analysis. Supplementing the widespread Durkheimian paradigm within the study of heroism and many sociological analyses, the relational and state-oriented approach developed by Elias bring into focus how the public recognition of certain groups or virtues as heroic must be regarded not only as a part of

the discourse within society but, more significantly, as dependent on the dynamic relations between states, thus providing a stronger explanation of why specific notions of a hero and heroism develop.

EMPIRICALLY

Alongside the theoretical, the dissertation provides three empirical contributions. First, it illuminates the relationship between military heroism and national identity in Denmark in the period 1940 to 2016 on the basis of data, which, to the best of my knowledge, have not previously been investigated. Hence, Papers 2 to 4 shed light on unexplored empirical areas of the cultural ramification of Denmark's military engagement in line with other recent studies, albeit with a stronger historical focus, while providing a national-specific contribution to the international literature on the military's heroification with special reference to national commemoration, military casualties, the Second World War, and the war in Afghanistan. The substance of this contribution has already been summarised above.

Secondly the dissertation explores different types of data that sociologists and military researchers have not often treated as an object of analysis. Studying obituaries and names in particular, I have sought to cultivate a more imaginative use of data for two reasons: I have tried to find creative ways of understanding the military by manoeuvring around military gatekeepers who control access to relevant data (Woodward, 2004: 156), while broadening sociology's methodological *habitus*, as questionnaires, personal interviews, and fieldwork sometimes at least seem to be default tools, which overrule alternative routes to elucidating the research question and phenomenon of interest (Silverman, 2015: 276). On this basis, the analysis presented here may expand the empirical basis for sociological discussion of the different notions of the soldiery by showing how heroic discourses found at the level of the military organisation and the political sphere precondition and legitimise value orientations articulated by individual soldiers, which have been the focus of many previous studies based on surveys and personal interviews (e.g. Lyk-Jensen et al., 2011; Nuciari, 2003).

Third, my selection of empirical cases challenges the hypothesis that an anti- or post-heroic spirit animates modernity. Now classical scholars expected heroic figures to disappear with the growing rationalisation of modern western societies (Carlyle, 2001: 18-19; Weber, 1978: 1133), while more recent observers have pointed to growing democratisation, individualisation, mediatisation, secularisation, and the promotion of egalitarianism, multiculturalism, pacifism, and risk-aversion as

core values (Boorstin, 1992: 52, 57; Campbell, 2004: 358–360; Coker, 2001; Drucker and Cathcart, 1994; Edelstein, 1996; Furedi, 2007: 172; Giraud, 1957: 48; Klapp, 2014: 141; Kohen, 2014: 14; Lyotard, 1984: xxiv; Schwartz, 2008: 8–9). In that light, Denmark can be perceived as a 'critical case' (Flyvbjerg, 2006: 230), demonstrating that heroic figures may emerge in a society characterised by strong democratic values and secular beliefs (Gundelach, 2011). If modernity is indeed characterised by the decline of heroes, then perhaps we have never been as modern as we suppose. At least my work, along with that of others, proposes that each era produces a distinct gallery of heroes (Martinsen, 2013: 122-125; Featherstone, 1992; Scheipers, 2014; Ziolkowski, 2004), and in post-Cold War Denmark, the figure of the soldier hero appears to have played a somewhat significant role in this regard.

Critical Perspective

This sections aims to bring a critical perspective to my conclusions. It does so in three ways. First, it illuminates the varieties of anti-heroic discourse on Danish soldiers and veterans. The aim here is to emphasise the dynamic and contested nature of the processes of heroification to avoid painting too homogenous a picture of public discourse in this field. Second, I outline three pending areas of research arising from my analyses and conclusions. These involve (1) a further examination of sub-discourses of military heroism in Denmark, their internal relationship and structural anchoring; (2) a further examination of civilian discourses of military heroism, and discourses on Danish soldiers during the Cold War; and (3) a further examination of the interpretational value of an Elisian approach to heroism.

Anti-heroic Discourses

Widespread political and popular support of Danish troops does not mean that critical voices have not been raised. That they have affirms the assumption of Critical Discourse Analysis that discursive formations are dynamic, since they are bound to power relations, struggles for meaning, and political resistance (Fairclough, 2010: 79). To get a better grasp of dissident discourses, which have so far been mentioned only in passing, I will here pencil in a chorus of dissident voices that runs counter to the prevailing discourse of military heroism emanating from government, the defence establishment, and media. First, I deal with Danish anti-war groups and how they seem to have experienced some difficulty mobilising protesters against Denmark's military role. Second, I discuss elite discourses and,

third, discourses on vulnerable veterans. Although both of the latter seem to have played a more noticeable role in public debate than pacifist groups, none really seems to have threatened the moral grounds for military intervention and the popular backing for the troops in Afghanistan (Martinsen, 2013: 14, 18; Åse and Wendt, 2018: 27). As Martinsen (2013: 43, 124), Christensen (2015: 360) and Sørensen (2016: 11) have proposed, the heroic discourse on Danish soldiers, with its focus on making war as a personal choice *and* a manifestation of the country's prowess in a globalised world, has made it difficult to oppose the militant about-face of the country, as disagreeing is then readily received as a personal insult to deployed servicemen, veterans, and bereaved families.

ANTI-WAR GROUPS

Although Danish anti-war groups have witnessed a loss of support by the population and the politicians after the disappearance of the Soviet threat (Martinsen, 2013: 119; Madsen, 2017), there are still a rather small (but unknown) number of civilians who work against their country‘s militaristic turn at the grass-roots level. As illustrated by Table 7, Danish peace activists have organised themselves in national and locally based ‘protest communities’ (Diani, 2009), besides campaigning through digital networks. Some of the groups are long established and attached to transnational mother organisations. Worth mentioning are Aldrig Mere Krig (Never Again War), created in 1927 as a Danish section of War Resisters‘ International, and Kvindernes Internationale Liga for Fred og Frihed (Women‘s International League for Peace and Freedom) dating from 1915, when it was known as *Danske Kvinders Fredskæde (Peace Chain of Danish Women)*. Other groups are newcomers, as for instance FredsVagten (Copenhagen Peace Watch) that was formed in 2001 by the Danish peace activist Bo Richard ‘in protest against Danish participation in the so-called ‘War on Terrorism’ (Copenhagen Peace Watch, 2012).

Danish anti-war groups have planned and carried out various types of protest. For instance, annual demonstrations on the date of the invasion of Iraq, and the creation of large posters that agitate against the decision of Danish politicians to join the Joint Strike Fighter programme in the streets of Copenhagen. At the annual flag-flying day in honour of the Danish deployed, I myself have

Table 7. Anti-war groups in Denmark

Type of network	Examples
National network	Det danske fredsakademi (The Danish Peace Academy), Nej Til Krig (No to War)[1], Aldrig Mere Krig (Never again War)[1], Kunstnere for Fred (Artists for Peace), Kvindernes Internationale Liga for Fred og Frihed (Women's International League for Peace and Freedom)[1], Fredsministerium.dk (Peaceministry.dk), Tid til Fred – Aktiv mod Krig (Time for Peace – Act against War)
Local network	FredsVagten (Copenhagen Peace Watch), Århus mod Krig og Terror (Århus against War and Terror), Esbjerg Fredsbevægelse (Esbjerg Peace Movement), Fredsbutikken (The Peace Shop), Rød 1. maj Initiativet i Odense (Red First of May Initiative in Odense), Valby og Sydvest mod Krig (Valby and Sydvest against War)
Digital network	Fred.dk (Peace.dk), Stop Terrorkrigen (Stop the Terror War)

Note: [1]Directly inspired by peace movements in other countries.

Source: Anti-war websites.

encountered a few attendees from FredsVagten[2], Kvindernes Internationale Liga for Fred og Frihed, and Hizb ut-Tahrir protesting on the waterfront opposite Parliament, where they waved their banners, shouted slogans and sang anti-war songs from the 1960s and 1970s (Paper 2: 2)[3]. On these occasions, the participants in the military parade and members of the press largely ignored the protesters. On other occasions, the two contending discourses have clashed more violently. Defacement of the unofficial Mindesten for fred og militærnægtelse (Memorial for Peace and Conscientious Objectors) is a case in point.

As described by Sørensen (2017: 36-37), the Memorial was inaugurated in November 2008 on the initiative of Henning Sørensen, a Danish peace activist. The inscription[4] evokes the struggle of conscientious objectors but does not contest discourses of military heroism *per se*. Nevertheless unknown vandals smothered the stone in tar and covered it with a Danish flag, reading 'No one mentioned – No one forgotten. In memory of the fallen heroes.' Soon thereafter, someone covered the stone in paint and placed a Danish flag next to it with the text: 'Remember the 51 fallen,'

[2] A member of the Copenhagen Peace Watch has been standing in front of the Parliament seven days a week since 19 October 2001. On the day of the military parade, peace protestors have not been allowed to stand at the entrance of Parliament. Instead they have been relocated to the opposite side of the Copenhagen Canal some 150 metres from their usual spot.

[3] Singing hippy war-songs clearly does not apply to Hizb ut-Tahrir.

[4] The sign on the memorial stone reads as follows: '1917, Conscientious Objectors Act, 13-Dec., 1998, Camp for Conscientious Objectors, Gribskov, and Peace World War I, 1918, 11 Nov.' (quoted in Sørensen, 2017: 38).

referring to the Danish losses in Iraq and Afghanistan. Considering the case, Sørensen (2017: 37) argues that this iconoclasm 'demonstrated the common challenge that anti-war activists [have] faced, namely that their criticism was received as an unforgivable insult to fallen soldiers and rejected as such.' As illustrated below, such voices have occasionally been raised, yet primarily from the cultural elite, the celebrity class, and the party furthest to the left in Parliament, the Red-Green Alliance.

ELITE VOICES

Artists, media personalities, public intellectuals and politicians of the Red-Green Alliance have rebuked the militaristic conversion of Denmark[5]. One ideal type of war criticism has targeted soldiers as killers. For instance, TV and radio host Timm Vladimir found the proposal to introduce a veterans day in Denmark absurd. During a radio debate, he ironically argued that Danes should indeed pay tribute to soldiers by wearing a badge saying 'I support state sponsored murder' (BT, 2007). After having watched the documentary *Armadillo*, media personality Mick Schack accused Danish troops in Afghanistan of being a bunch of 'tattooed jackasses [drengerøve] ... who just want to act out those war computer games they pass the time playing between their patrols among barefoot children and old, toothless men wearing robes.' Not dissimilarly, the popular musician Thorbjørn Radisch Bredkjær, perhaps better known by his stage name 'Bisse,' has framed the men in Afghanistan as killers. In a song entitled 'Camp Bastion' on the album *Happy Meal* issued in 2016, he caricatured the experience and world view of an unnamed Danish soldier in Afghanistan. As for instance in this second verse: 'Og Ronni han er vores chef /frækkere end en slagterhund / han ved vi bedst kan li' / at trykke triggeren helt i bund. / Jeg husker det første møde / med fjenden og lokalbefolkningen / i bomberegnen ku jeg / slet

[5] While most critics of the moral discourse of war can be placed to the left of the classic political spectrum, there are examples of criticism from a more conservative standpoint. For instance, literature researcher Hans Hauge has rejected the typical political explanations of Denmark's war participation for being unclear with regard to the purpose of the fighting and the enemy. According to him, the celebration of Danish soldiers as cosmopolitan relief workers is a false and frail construction, inferior to nationally orientated narratives, which he regards as a necessary interpretational framework when politicians with popular support decide to risk the lives and health of Danish soldiers in faraway conflicts. Here I quote from his opinion piece in the daily *Kristeligt Dagblad*: 'We are still in Afghanistan. And do I need to mention the navy off Somalia's coast or the air force in Libya? Danish soldiers win battles and kill people, take prisoners and die for their native country. The next focus area may be East Africa and the Arctic, or who knows? Syria? How should we talk about all that? For who is the enemy? And who are the people? We do not dare to call the enemy by his name, and therefore the enemy becomes a ghost. Although the Danes generally support the war, there is not much talk about it as we lack a language. We do not know what we should or must say. It's a rite without a myth, but the myths are on their way. ... Soldiers do not die to improve infrastructure in the province of Helmand, for the UN or to gain oil from Iraq. ... The soldiers are fighting for Denmark, what else?' (Hauge, 2012).

ikke se forskel på dem'.[6] In Danish public discourse, utterances framing soldiers as killers have been rare, perhaps because references to combat have been promoted as evidence of the country's prowess and willingness to take responsibility (Martinsen, 2013: 115-116).

Another ideal type of war criticism has focused on the 'bread and circus' effect of heroic discourses, arguing that praising troops has prevented public debate about the political and strategic dimension of Danish intervention. Writer Stig Dalager (2010) illustrates this, pinpointing that the country 'has established a flag-flying day to honour and remember the dead Danish soldiers, and where the military and the Defence Minister underline the importance of the Danish "effort", while it is remarkably rare that the Afghan War becomes an issue of debate and inquiry in Parliament'. Bo Lidegaard (2012), then editor-in-chief of the daily *Politiken*, has likewise described how the flag-flying day 'was celebrated with trooping the colour and ten-gun salutes, fireworks at City Hall Square, a military orchestra in Parliament,' adding that the 'buzz and lack of thoughtfulness once again testified, how inexperienced we are with the role of a fighting nation.' In a more fierce tone, Carsten Jensen, a writer and persistent opponent of the growing military engagement of Denmark, lashed out at the gullible character of the citizenry. In an opinion piece in *Politiken*, he argued that the legitimacy of Denmark's involvement in Afghanistan rested on a number of powerful falsehoods, or 'dogmas,' about Afghanistan, Denmark, and the men on the ground. The public image of Danish soldiers is here seen as a destructive expression of a 'sense of moral superiority' and 'illusory self-regard?' in the small nation. Beware of irony:

> The most important dogma regarding our perception of the war in Afghanistan is rooted in our history. For 150 years we have not been at war, and we have compensated for our sense of military inferiority with a sense of moral superiority. Certainly we are not weak. We are just good, and for that reason we do not care so much about warlike posturing and cannon size.
>
> A nation's greatness is not kept in the armoury, but in the heart, and it is as representatives of this illusory self-regard that our boys are in Afghanistan. Behind the uniforms they are pacifists and shoot only when forced to. First of all, they are there to help. They are open, friendly, accommodating, understanding, sensitive, broad-minded, tolerant, put briefly, an incarnation of all Danish virtues, which are here comprised under one and the same steel helmet.
>
> Moreover, our boys are all supporters of women's emancipation and love children. This image must not under any circumstances be challenged, as it violates the soldiers' self-esteem as well as the national self-understanding. (Jensen, 2010)

[6] In English: 'And Ronni he's our chief / bolder than a butcher's dog / he knows that we love / to pull the trigger to the max. / I remember the first meeting / with the enemy and the locals / in the rain of grenades / I couldn't see any difference at all.'

One last shot has been directed at the military's heroification as signifying and stimulating an undesirable change on the home front. An illustration is provided by an opinion piece written by Mikkel Warming, a member of the Red-Green Alliance since 1998 and then deputy mayor in Copenhagen. Disturbed by the annual flag-flying day in front of Copenhagen City Hall and the veterans policy, Mikkel Warming perceived military honouring as a threat to the Danish welfare system and its basic value of egalitarianism. I quote:

> The politicians in Copenhagen contribute to putting the soldiers on a special pedestal. And special people deserve special privileges too. This can be seen in the public debate, when we meet arguments that our soldiers need special treatment when they return home. Last year, there were several major newspaper stories about how war veterans figured on the same waiting lists for disability homes as everyone else, were treated as inhumanly as other unemployed, and so forth. The stories led to a growing political demand that soldiers should be put first in line. ...
>
> In this way the waging of war forms part of a showdown with the basic thoughts of solidarity behind our welfare society. A solidarity, maintaining that all human life has value. A solidarity by which we ensure that all - soldiers, social workers, general managers, and alcoholics - have equal access to social services and hospital treatment. (Warming, 2011)

As the excerpt illustrates, the public honouring of soldiers as heroes has become a point of departure for a broader discussion of the merits of the welfare state, as I have discussed in further detail in Paper 2. Yet it is not just media personalities, public intellectuals and left-wing politicians that have challenged the heroic image of Danish soldiers. Actors within the military field and supporters of the troops have done so too. This has taken place in public debates on the problems of, and society's handling of, vulnerable veterans.

VULNERABLE VETERANS

Veterans, relatives, psychologists, and military union leaders have used the public debate surrounding the introduction of the national flag-flying day, war memorials, military awards, and a veterans policy to call attention to veterans' need for public recognition and special welfare services because of their willingness to make a difference for national security and the world's needy (HKKF, 2017; Madsen, 2016; Salquist, 2016; Søndergaard, 2015). Here PTSD has reached a high level of media attention, especially in connection to the suicide of veterans (Svendsen, 2016) and episodes of violence (Vester,

2017), in which veterans have typically been portrayed as victims let down by the state, the defence establishment and civilians (Brøndum,2013; BT, 2016; Vester, 2017). Anti-heroic images are not difficult to find within this discourse, as for instance the following quotation by Stig Winther Petersen, a psychologist with professional experience in treating veterans suffering from PTSD: 'Soldiers are sent out to help, but return home helpless. On the surface they are big heroes, who are celebrated with an annual veterans day, but many soldiers are and remain angry. They feel abused' (quoted in Jensen, 2016). Discourses on veterans as frail and at risk of marginalisation do not necessarily contradict discourses of military heroism, however. As Danish and international research has shown (Christensen, 2016; Scheipers, 2014), images of personal strength and human vulnerability have frequently come together in the representation of soldiers and veterans as 'hero-victims'.

Pending Research Areas

Besides the thematic and methodological limitations of my dissertation, as already discussed, I here identify three pertinent areas of research that have arisen from my analytical results and conclusion. Pending research areas involve a further examination of sub-discourses of military heroism in Denmark, their internal relationship, and structural anchoring; a further examination of civilian discourses and discourses on Danish soldiers during the Cold War; and, finally, further exploration of the interpretational value of an Eliasian approach to heroism. All areas of research relate to the portability of my analytical results and conclusion.

As previously discussed, it is above all imperative to investigate the nature and figurations of sub-discourses of military heroism. While my empirical analyses have pointed to the emergence and dominance of a discourse of post-patriotic heroism in Denmark since the end of the Cold War, they tell us little about the internal relationship between discourses of post-patriotic heroism, patriotic heroism, warrior heroism, and other possible subcategories. On this basis, future studies should explore the order of contemporary sub-discourses and how this 'order of discourse' (Fairclough, 2010: 96) has changed over time on a more solid, empirical ground than I have been able to cover here. As part of the research process, it will be profitable to investigate if and how different 'text genres' and 'contexts' (Fairclough, 2010: 94-96) evoke different sub-discourses of military heroism,[7] and how such

[7] Different text genres, defined as 'use of language associated with a particular social activity' (Fairclough, 2010: 96) may

discourses are structurally anchored within the political, military, and civilian spheres, as illustrated by Figure 1. A concrete research question would thus be to find out if and how discourses of post-patriotic heroism and patriotic heroism are tied to the left–right political spectrum, and how they form part of the military field and relate to the discourse of military heroism in general.

Second, the dissertation leaves two major gaps unexplored: one in space, one in time. As my dissertation does not provide an independent analysis of the expressions, beliefs, and doings of civilian actors, there is a need to fill in this gap. For instance by focusing on civilians' attitudes to Danish Defence, its operations, its employees and veterans through surveys; by focusing on the positions and arguments in the public debate on Denmark's participation in wars, and on veterans, through media analysis; or by focusing on the relations, reasons, and world views of Danish civilians who engage in organised support for veterans or, alternatively, promote rejection of war through fieldwork and qualitative interviews. The second gap relates to historical time, since Paper 2 identified a period of about 30 years when Danish soldiers played no role in the prime ministerial New Year address, while Papers 3 and Paper 4 did not subject this period of time to further inspection. Analysing more data from this time period is thus critical in determining what status, value and quality have been attributed to Danish soldiers during the Cold War, not least to elucidate whether there is a *missing link* that binds together the official discourse on Danish soldiers during the 1950s and the post-Cold War era, or whether there is a discursive *rupture* between the two periods. My own work and the research of others would suggest that the importance of world peace has been stressed, while there is also something new in the post-Cold War discourse (Friis 2010: 827-716; Paper 2: 9).

Third, it is relevant to examine the heroification of other individuals and groups to explore the interpretational value of my basic theoretical proposition, which emphasises relational dynamics between states in explaining who, and what values, are celebrated as heroic within the national community. Future studies may explore the gallery of heroes that began to emerge in Denmark in the 1990s. Several events at least indicate the importance of the international arena in this regard. For instance, the national soccer team won the European Championship in 1992, Bjarne Riis triumphed

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involve parliamentary speeches, recruitment campaigns, and military briefings ahead of patrols, while context, which may imply 'the context of situation,' 'the institutional context,' and the wider 'social context' or 'context of culture' (Fairclough, 2010: 95) may involve different types of mission, for instance peacekeeping missions versus peace enforcement operations, different operational areas, for instance Afghanistan versus Balkans, Denmark, and Mali, as well as different institutions, for instance the army versus navy and air force, plus subdivisions, such as different regiments and special units.

in the Tour de France in 1996, and the women's national handball team held as many as three international titles in 1997. Also Dogme 95 put Denmark on the world map of cinema, while music groups such as Aqua, Dizzy Miss Lizzy and Michael Learns to Rock reached fame outside the domestic sphere. The hyperbole that has surrounded the New Nordic Cuisine since 2004, and the celebration of Andreas Mogensen when he 'became the first Dane in space' in 2015 are more recent expressions of the proposition that Denmark can 'make it' in the international – and interplanetary – arena. If we take a closer look at such socio-cultural trends, it might be possible to get a better apprehension of how the military's heroification reflects a broader development towards a more potent image of *Danishness*, which stands in contrast to the so-called 'small state ideology,' and the inward and unpretentious national self-understanding typically referred to by the notion of 'hygge' and ironically captured by Aksel Sandemose's (1972 [1933]) *Law of Jante:* 'You're not to think *you* are anything special.'

Future Heroes

Finally we may ask about the future of the soldier hero. Without trying to predict the future, a number of developments indeed indicate that the times they are a-changin'.

For one thing, entire battalions are no longer deployed, and, except for elite units, Danish soldiers no longer fight in the front line. Perhaps stunned by the 'friction of war' (Clausewitz, 2008: 65-68), it appears that many politicians have reached the same conclusion as the former prime minister, who led Denmark into Iraq and later Afghanistan. Joining a talk show on national television, Anders Fogh Rasmussen explained that what he had 'learned is that if you begin a military action, you should always have a well-thought-out political plan for what you will do when the war is over' (Anders Fogh Rasmussen on Danmarks Radio, 2016). Like the men and women who have just returned from Operation Inherent Resolve in Iraq and Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan, Danish soldiers have recently been more engaged in training local forces to fight than fighting themselves. Besides this supportive function, Danish politicians have increasingly preferred to use the air force as a trump card in the great power game, most recently in Libya, Mali and Iraq, whereby Danish pilots drop bombs on the warrior heroes of Islamic State. Reflecting broader changes in the conduct of western warfare in the

wake of the unsatisfactory outcome in Iraq and Afghanistan, Danish soldiers have thus been less face to face with the enemy in the last couple of years – and perhaps have had their fifteen years of fame.

Yet disturbances in the distribution of power in the international state system may have the opposite effect. A number of developments indeed suggest that soldier heroes might in fact come to play a more prominent role in the decades to come. Terrorist attacks within Europe's borders, Russian operations in Georgia, Ukraine and Syria, the unilateral inclination of the US president Trump, the European Union's fragility since Brexit, and the progress of rightist and nationalist movements in many European countries may all play a role in this context. Are we witnessing a growing *renationalisation* across the globe in these years, a counter-development to the process of 'internationalisation' (Kaspersen, 2013: 165-179), which characterised the liberal world order that rose from the ruins of World War II? The consequences of these developments will be major and can amount to nothing less than a reconfiguration of the global theatre and, consequently, the emergence of new types of heroes – or, who knows? the rebirth of old patriotic ones.

Summary

Since the end of the Cold War, Denmark has played a new and active role in transnational military interventions. Prompted by the change in the public discourse on Danish soldiers and the occurrence of the term 'hero' in this regard, this PhD dissertation pursues the following research question: *what characterises Danish discourses of military heroism, and how are they bound up with broader discourses and structural changes?* To elucidate the question, I focus on the following three themes: (1) changes in the external relations between Denmark and other states, (2) changes in the internal relations between the state, its military, and the citizens, and (3) changes in expressions of national belonging, ideals and values. While the objective here is to advance our knowledge of military heroism and national identity in Denmark from a sociological point of view, I draw on literature from many disciplines. On this basis, the dissertation brings into focus (1) the multidimensional and processual character of heroism as a social phenomenon, (2) the dependency of heroic figures and discourses on the survival strategies of states, and (3) the significance of the heroic and nationally orientated discourses in transnational military interventions such as that in Afghanistan. The following summarises the main argument and coherence of the four papers, which make up the body of the dissertation. The papers are:

- What makes a hero? Theorising the social structuring of heroism, published in *Sociology* (Paper 1)
- 'But when I tell them about heroes, then they listen': the soldier hero and transformations of the Danish welfare state, published in *Acta Sociologica* (Paper 2)
- Post-heroic warfare revisited: meaning and legitimation of military losses, published in *Sociology* (Paper 3)
- Armadillo and the Viking spirit: military names and national myths in transnational military interventions, published in *Critical Military Studies* (Paper 4).

Paper 1 reviews the study of heroism, which has been closely tied to the origin and development of sociology. However since there is no self-conscious tradition of research on heroism, sociologists

interested in the heroic have been confronted with a fragmented body of literature. To create a more organised discussion, Paper 1 looks into the study of great men, hero stories, heroic actions and hero institutions. The discussion ties together heroism and core debates about the relationship between the individual and the social order; it elucidates the socio-psychological, cultural/ideational and socio-political structuring of heroism, a process which challenges the tendency to understand people, actions and events as naturally heroic; and it points to a theoretical trajectory within the literature, which has moved from very exclusive to more inclusive conceptualisations of a hero. An examination follows of three problematic areas in the sociology of heroism: its underlying masculine character; the presumed disappearance of the hero with modernisation; and the principal idea of heroism as a socially positive phenomenon. The paper calls for a more self-conscious engagement with this legacy, which could stimulate dialogue across different areas of sociological research. To this end, the following Papers 2 to 4 aim at strengthening our understanding of how ideational and socio-political structures impinge upon heroic discourses.

Paper 2 contributes to the literature on the social construction of heroes by bringing the state into the centre of the analysis. If we wish to understand why specific notions of heroism emerge and attain legitimacy, it is not enough, I here argue, to consider how individuals, groups, deeds or virtues are recognised as heroic *within* society, since heroification processes are bound up with larger dynamics *between* states. I explain what Elias (1978, 2001) meant by the state as a 'survival unit', and how this concept can advance our knowledge of heroes with a theoretical perspective that foregrounds the dynamic figurations in the international system of states to explain the emergence and transformation of heroic discourses. Developments in Denmark are here a case in point. Through an analysis of prime ministerial New Year addresses from World War II to the present, Paper 2 connects the rise of the soldier hero in Denmark with the elevation of professionalism, self-motivation and global outlook into civic virtues since the 1990s. Utilising Elias' survival unit, I here argue that this elevation has been preconditioned by the gradual development of the 'competition state' (Cerny, 2010; Pedersen, 2011) and the 'security state' (Kaspersen, 2013) strategies for sustaining the Danish welfare state in the wake of growing internationalisation, and that the figure of the soldier hero has come to reconcile these seemingly contradictory strategies.

To test the scope of the political discourse on the Danish soldier, the following papers explore discourses of military heroism within the Danish Army. While Paper 2 concerns the honouring

of soldiers and veterans as a (constructed) whole, Paper 3 focuses on a very distinct band of heroes, a group to which politicians, journalists and military personnel have paid extraordinary attention: the fallen. Analysing the obituaries produced by the Army in memory of soldiers killed in World War II and in the campaign in Afghanistan, the paper shows that a 'good' military death is no longer conceived of as a patriotic sacrifice, but is instead legitimised by an appeal to the unique moral worth, humanitarian inspiration and high professionalism of the deceased. This appeal is basically in line with the official political discourse, found in Paper 2, and so there is no reason to assume, as seems to be the case in many studies of heroism and in the literature on post-heroic warfare, that the remembrance of dead soldiers has been detached from broadly recognised norms and civic virtues. On the contrary, the Danish case may illustrate that a predominant order of meaning, what Berger (1967) called the 'nomos', may underpin and not *by default* undermine ideals of heroism and military self-sacrifice today. On this basis, Paper 3 proposes that the Danish losses in Helmand have invoked a sense of *post-patriotic heroism* instead of a *post-heroic crisis*.

To bring home a little further the extent to which the post-patriotic discourse rules in today's expeditionary forces, Paper 4 turns to a more elusive way of constructing heroism: naming. Based on a case study of the Danish experience as part of Task Force Helmand, the paper looks at how military names form part of a broader process of the construction of meaning, or what Blumenberg (1985) termed the 'work on myth', since names function as principal devices for creating, reproducing and transforming cultural narratives. First, I explore how the base named Armadillo relates to the heroification of Anders Storrud, a Danish Major who was killed in Afghanistan in 2007. Second, I elucidate how the Viking names of Danish bases, units and operations have brought stories of national origin, heroic greatness and warrior ancestry into the banal space of life abroad. While the case of Armadillo conforms to the findings of Papers 2 and 3, Viking mythologies rather evoke combativeness and strength as core military values. Adding to the previous papers, Paper 4 suggests that a discourse of *post-patriotic heroism* has taken the lead role in a Danish context since the 1990s, but it also point to the fecundity of discourses of *patriotic heroism* and *warrior heroism* in transnational military interventions.

Dansk resume

Siden afslutningen på Den kolde krig har Danmark spillet en ny og aktiv rolle i transnationale militære interventioner, bl.a. i ex-Jugoslavien, Irak og Afghanistan. Foranlediget af en forandring i diskursen vedrørende danske soldater og en ny betoning af danske soldater som helte i kølvandet på den nye aktivisme, undersøger denne ph.d.-afhandling, hvordan danske diskurser om militær heroisme er bundet op på bredere diskurser og forandringer af strukturel karakter. For at belyser forskningsspørgsmålet, fokuserer afhandlingen på følgende tre temaer: 1) forandringer i de ydre relationer mellem Danmark og andre stater, 2) forandringer i de indre relationer mellem den danske stat, dets forsvar og borgere og 3) forandringer i den nationale selvforståelse, herunder nationale idealer og værdier. Formålet er at undersøge relationen mellem militær heltedyrkelse og dannelsen af dansk national identitet ud fra et kultursociologisk perspektiv, selvom afhandlingen bygger på forskning inden for flere discipliner. Afhandlingen bidrager til denne forskningslitteratur ved (1) at belyse heroisme som et flerdimensionalt og processuelt samfundsfænomen (2) at belyse statens *raison d'être* og overlevelsesstrategi som en vigtig ramme om dannelsens af heltefigurer og militær heroisme og (3) at belyse betydningen af det heroiske og nationale i internationale militære interventioner som den i Afghanistan. Afhandlingen består af en rammetekst og følgende fire artikler:

- What makes a hero? Theorising the social structuring of heroism. Udkommet i *Sociology* (Artikel 1)
- 'But when I tell them about heroes, then they listen': the soldier hero and transformations of the Danish welfare state. Udkommet i *Acta Sociologica* (Artikel 2)
- Post-heroic warfare revisited: meaning and legitimation of military losses. Udkommet i *Sociology* (Artikel 3)
- Armadillo and the Viking spirit: military names and national myths in transnational military interventions. Udkommet i *Critical Military Studies* (Artikel 4).

Artikel 1 gennemgår studiet af heroisme, der forskningshistorisk har været tæt forbundet med sociologiens oprindelse og udvikling. På trods heraf, er der ingen selvbevidst forskningstradition i heroisme, og sociologer med en forskningsinteresse i det heroiske konfronteres derfor med en

fragmenteret litteratur. For at skabe overblik, gennemgår Artikel 1 fire dominerende perspektiver inden for forskningslitteraturen: studie af store helte, heltegerninger, heltefortællinger og helteinstitutioner. Artiklens forbinder heroisme til grundlæggende sociologiske problemstillinger vedrørende forholdet mellem individ og den sociale orden; den belyser den socialpsykologiske, kulturelle/ideationelle og socio-politiske strukturering af heroisme, en proces der udfordrer en tendens til at opfatte mennesker, handlinger og begivenheder som naturligt eller iboende heroiske; og den fremhæver en teoretisk udvikling inden for forskningen, der har bevæget sig fra en meget eksklusivt til en mere inklusivt opfattelse af hvad en helte er. Derpå identificerer artiklen tre problemområder inden for helteforskningen: forskningens underliggende maskuline fokus; en antagelse om, at helte vil forvinde med moderniseringen; og en ide om heroisme som et gennemgående positivt fænomen. Artiklen argumenterer på den baggrund for et mere selvbevidst engagement med sociologiens heroiske tradition for bl.a. at fremme dialog på tværs af forskellige emneområder. Artikel 2-4 forsøger at bidrage til dette igennem en analyse af sammenvævningen af socio-politiske, forandringer i den nationale selvforståelse og den sociale konstruktion af militær heroisme i en dansk kontekst.

Artikel 2 placerer staten i centrum af en analyse af den sociale konstruktion af helte. Artiklen argumenterer for, at det ikke er nok at undersøger hvordan personer, grupper, handlinger eller værdier anerkendes som særligt heroiske inden for et samfund, hvis vi ønsker at forstå, hvorfor bestemte heltediskurser opstår og opnår legitimitet, da heltegørelsesprocesser er bundet op på relationerne mellem stater. Jeg forklarer, hvad Norbert Elias (1978, 2001) mente med staten som en 'overlevelsesenhed', og hvordan dette begreb kan bidrage til en bredere forståelse af helteprocesser ved at tilbyde et teoretisk perspektiv, der fremhæver internationale dynamikker til at forklare fremkomsten og transformationen af specifikke heltefigurer og heltebegreber. Heltegørelsen af militæret i Danmark tjener som et illustrativt eksempel herpå. På baggrund af en analyse af danske statsministres nytårstaler i perioden 1940-2015, viser artiklen, hvordan fejringen af danske soldater som helte er forbundet med en forandring af dansk national identitet og promoveringen af professionalisme, individuelt ansvar og globalt udsyn som centrale borgerdyder siden 1990erne. Artiklen forsøger igennem denne analyse at vise, hvordan promoveringen af soldaten som en national rollemodel har været bundet op på en gradvis udvikling af konkurrencestats- og sikkerhedsstatsstrategier, som har beskyttet, men også forandret, den danske velfærdsstat i kølvandet på øget internationalisering, og at repræsentationen af de danske soldater forener disse tilsyneladende modsatrettede overlevelsesstrategier.

For at undersøge rækkevidden af den officielle politiske diskurs om danske soldater, fokuserer de efterfølgende artikler på diskurser, der udgår fra militæret. Artikel 3 behandler hærens håndtering og erindringskultur omkring de faldne. Artiklen tager udgangspunkt i en analyse af de nekrologer, som hæren har publiceret til minde om danske soldater, der blev dræbt i 2. Verdenskrig og under missionen i Afghanistan. Den komparative analyse viser, at en 'god' militær død ikke længere betragtes som et patriotisk offer, men i stedet legitimeres ved at appellere til den faldnes unikke moralske værd, humanitære mål og høje professionalisme. Denne appel er på linje med den officielle politiske diskurs, der blev identificeret i Artikel 2, og som med overvejende succes har legitimeret danske tab i Afghanistan. I modsætning til den grundlæggende antagelse i forskningslitteraturen om *post-heroiskkrigsførelse*, er der således næppe grund til at konkludere, at statens ideologi og almene borgeridealer ikke længere er i stand til at legitimere militære tab. Heltegørelsen af danske faldne i Afghanistan indikerer derimod, at den i dag gældende 'meningsorden', eller hvad Peter Berger (1967) har betegnet 'nomos', faktisk kan understøtte, og ikke udelukkende underminerer, idealer om heroisme og militær selvopofrelse. Artiklen foreslår på den baggrund, at Danmarks tab i Helmand har affødt en form for *post-patriotisk heroisme* i stedet for en *post-heroisk krise*.

For at komme nærmere i hvilket omfang denne post-patriotiske heltediskurs karakteriserer hæren i dag, undersøger Artikel 4 et vigtigt men underbelyst element af heltedannelse: navngivning. På baggrund af hærens beretninger fra Afghanistan, belyser artiklen hvordan soldaternes navngivningspraksis indgår i en bredere meningskonstruerende proces, hvad Hans Blumenberg (1985) har betegnet 'myte-arbejde', da navnene fungerer som grundlæggende redskaber i dannelsen, reproduktionen og transformationen af kulturelle fortællinger. Først undersøger artiklen, hvordan navnet på basen Armadillo relaterer sig til heltegørelsen af Anders Storrud, en dansk major, der blev dræbt i Afghanistan i 2007. Derpå beskriver artiklen, hvordan de udsendtes brug af vikingenavne har bragt fortællinger om national oprindelse, heroisme og kriger-æt til det fremmede Afghanistan, hvor et 'myte-landskab' voksede frem og ændrede sig i takt med missionens udvikling. Armadillo-eksemplet falder i tråd med heltediskursen, der blev analyseret i de to foregående artikler, hvorimod soldaternes brug af vikingenavne vidner om en fejring af kampånd og råstyrke som grundlæggende militære idealer. Artikel 4 illustrerer betydningen af *patriotisk heroisme* og *krigerheroisme* i Afghanistan-missionen, hvormed artiklen understreger den dynamiske og flertydige karakter af diskurser om militær heroisme.

Appendix

Appendix 1: Medals Given to Danish Soldiers by Year of Inauguration

Year	Medal
1457	Order of the Elephant[1, a]
1616	King Christian IV's Order of the Armed Fist[1, d]
1671	Order of Dannebrog* [1, a]
1673	Navy Bravery Medal[1, d]
1709	Bravery Medal Virtuti et Fidei[1, d]
1715	Navy Bravery Medal[1, d]
1719	Medal for the Battle of Marstrand[2, d]
1801	Medal of Honour for the Battle of Copenhagen[2, b]
1801	Navy Long Service Medal* [4, b]
1817	Army Long Service Decorations for Non-Commisioned Officers[4, b]
1842	Long Service Decoration for Army Non-Commissioned Officers[4, b]
1854	Long Service Decoration for Army Non-Commissioned Officers[4, b]
1875	Commemorative Medal for the Wars of 1848-50 and 1864[2, b]
1906	King Christian IX's Memorial Medal[3, a]
1907	King Christian IX's Memorial Badge[3, a]
1912	King Frederik VIII's Memorial Medal[3, a]
1912	King Frederik VIII's Memorial Badge[1, a]
1914	King Christian X's Military Commemorative Medal[3, a]
1916	25th Anniversary of King Christian X's Matriculation from the Military Academy[3, a]
1916	Commemorative Medal of the Royal Horseguards[3, a]
1916	King Christian X's Commemorative Medal of the Cavalry School[3, a]
1939	King Christian X's Military Commemorative Medal[3, a]
1940	Memorial Medal of 9 April 1940 [1, b]
1941	Commemorative Medal on the Occasion of the 50th Anniversary of King Christian X's Matriculation from the Military Academy[3, a]
1945	Army Long Service Medal* [3, b]
1946	King Christian X's Medal for Participation in the War 1940-1945[2, c]
1947	King Christian X's Memorial Medal[3, a]
1953	Air Force Long Service Medal* [4, b]
1953	Medal for Long Service in the Department of Defence* [4, b]
1956	Commemorative Medal for Participation in the Hospital Ship Jutlandia's Expedition to Korea 1951-1953[2, c]
1959	Homeguard Medal of Merit* [1, b]
1959	Homeguard 10 Years Service Decoration* [4, b]
1962	Distinguished Flying Medal* [1, b]
1965	Royal Medal of Recompense 1st Class with Crown and Inscription[1, a]
1968	Homeguard 20 Years Service Decoration* [4, b]
1972	King Frederik IX's Memorial Badge[3, a]
1972	King Frederik IX's Memorial Medal[3, a]
1973	Homeguard 25 Years Service Decoration* [4, b]
1978	Medal for 25 Years Good Service in the Reserve Force* [4, b]
1988	Homeguard 40 Years Service Decoration* [4, b]
1991	Defence Medal[2, b]

1994	Rescue Preparedness Medal* [1, b]
1996	Defence Medal for Bravery* [1, b]
1996	Defence Medal for Fallen and Wounded in Service[1, b]
1998	Homeguard 50 Anniversary Medal[4, b]
2000	Homeguard 50 Years Service Decoration* [4, b]
2001	Queen Ingrid's Commemorarive Medal[3, a]
2009	Medal of the Minister of Defence* [1, b]
2009	Defence Medal for Excellent Service* [1, b]
2009	Defence Medal for Fallen in Service* [1, b]
2009	Defence Medal for Wounded in Service* [1, b]
2009	Defence Medal for Meritorious Service* [1, b]
2010	Valour Cross* [1, b]
2010	Defence Medal for International Service* [2, b]
2012	Medal for 40 Years Good Service in the Reserve Force* [4, b]
2015	Defence Medal for International Service 1948-2009* [2, b]

Notes: N = 56.

*Used today (n= 24).

Medal types: [1]devotion to duty, [2]campaign medals, [3] royal commemorative medals, and [4]length of service. A historical pattern emerges if we look at the introduction of the various medals of merit (decorations given for individual prowess, valour, and self-sacrifice, and medals awarded military personnel for long faithful service) and remembrance (campaign medals, and medals signifying royal events). The introduction of medals for devotion dominated in the age of absolutism between 1457 and 1814 (six out of nine medals) and then again in the decades of the new military activism of Denmark between 1991 and 2015 (nine out of 16 medals). Medals celebrating royal-military relations were introduced between 1848 and 1945 in particular (11 out of 18 medals), while medals of seniority dominated the period 1946 to 1990 (seven out of 13 medals).

Administrative authority: [a]The Court; [2]The Ministry of Defence (the Army General Command before 1848, and the Ministry of War and the Ministry of Marine between 1848 and 1950); [3]the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; [4]unknown.

Source: Stevnsborg (2005) and Danish Ministry of Defence (2017).

Appendix 2: Interview Guide

1. Vil du oplyse navn, alder, bopæl, erhverv, civilstand, evt. børn. Fortæl om dit livsforløb, hvor du har boet, og hvad du laver i dag?

Motivation og karriere

2. Hvor og hvornår aftjente du din værnepligt?
3. Hvad gjorde du efter værnepligten?
4. Hvornår besluttede du dig til at blive soldat?
5. Hvornår besluttede du dig til at blive udsendt?
6. Hvad sagde din familie og dine venner?

Dagligdagen som udsendt

7. Hvornår har du været udsendt?
8. Hvor har du haft base – Camp Bastion, Camp Price eller en af de fremskudte baser?
9. Hvad var dit første indtryk, da du kom til Afghanistan?
10. Hvad var dine vigtigste opgaver som udsendt?
11. Hvordan ser en helt almindelig dag ud, når man er udsendte? Var dagligdagen i Afghanistan anderledes end i Danmark – og hvordan (lejrlivet, vagt, patrulje, kontakt til civilbefolkning, kamp, Taleban)?

Overvejelser

12. Hvilke personlige, eksistentielle og/eller moralske overvejelser havde du i forbindelse med din udsendelse?
13. Udfyldte du *Min sidste viljen*? Hvilke tanker gjorde du dig i den forbindelse, og havde du kontakt til en præst, feltpræst eller en helt tredje, fx familiemedlem eller ven?
14. Hvilke overvejelser havde du i forbindelse med deltagelse i evt. kamphandlinger, herunder muligheden for at blive dræbt eller slå ihjel?

Fællesskabet blandt udsendte

15. Kan du huske dit første indtryk af soldaterne, der tog imod dig under din første udsendelse i Afghanistan?
16. Hvordan vil du beskrive fællesskabet med de andre soldater, evt. både danske og udenlandske?
17. Hvordan tilbragte du tiden, når du ikke arbejdede, træning, spil, dansk TV, computer og/eller ophold på Kuffen?

Afghansk kultur og islam

18. Hvordan oplevede du det at være udsendt i et land med en anden kultur og en muslimsk befolkning? Var der noget særligt du bed mærke i og talte om med de andre soldater, både i forhold til civilbefolkningen og de afghanske styrker?

Det særligt danske

19. Kunne soldater fra andre lande se, at I var udsendt fra Danmark, f.eks. på flag, kompagni/lejrnavne, skjolde? Hvad tænker du om det?
20. Hvad betyder det danske eller Danmark, når man er udsendt i længere tid?
21. Har vi som danskere en særlig rolle i verden?

Vikinger og nordisk mytologi

22. Under mit besøg i Camp Bastion bemærkede jeg, at der er en del nordisk mytologi i lejren, f.eks. tatoveringer og navne på lejre og enheder. Hvad synes du om det?
23. Hvad forbinder du med nordisk mytologi/vikingetiden i forhold til det at være dansk?
24. Ifølge en rapport fra Forsvarsakademiet er der nogle danske soldater, der dyrke vikingernes guder, fx Odin og Tyr? Hvordan oplevede du det?

KFUM Soldatermission

25. Brugte du Kuffen, hvordan (hverdagshygge, brunch, laglagebanko, filmaften med præsten, andagt)?
26. Hvordan oplevede du det, at Kuffen er drevet af kristne fra KFUM Soldatermission?
27. Havde du kendskab til KFUM Soldatermission før din udsendelse?

Feltpræsten

28. Var der en feltpræst i din lejr, da du var udsendt – og hvad betød det for dig, at der var en dansk feltpræst til rådighed under din udsendelse?
29. Hvor ofte deltog du i gudstjeneste under udsendelsen – og gik/går du også i kirke eller noget alternativt i Danmark?
30. Havde du anden kontakt til feltpræsten, f.eks. i forbindelse med personlige samtaler (sjælesorg), militærbegravelser, mindehøjtideligheder, dåb, velfærdsydelser, psykologisk debriefing og gejstlig rådgivning af den militære ledelse, herunder etablering af kontakter til den lokale muslimske befolkning?
31. Der er jo tradition for at nogle feltpræster velsigner soldater inden patrulje. Oplevede du det?
32. Var der bestemte situationer, hvor feltpræsten blev særligt vigtig for dig?
33. Har du haft kontakt til feltpræsten efter hjemkomst?
34. Mener du overordnet, at det er en god ide, at der bliver udsendt en præst med danske soldater i krig?

Religiøs tro og ritualer

35. Opfatter du dig selv som religiøs/kristen – eller er din religiøse identitet af mere personlig art?
36. Bar du kors, lykkeamuletter eller torshammer under din udsendelse - og gør du også det i Danmark?
37. Var der bestemte situationer, hvor det religiøse blev særligt vigtig for dig?
38. Skete det at du bad en bøn, alene eller sammen med feltpræsten eller de andre soldater? I så fald hvornår, og er det også noget du gjorde/gør, når du ikke er udsendt?

National anerkendelse

39. Var der besøg af det officielle Danmark, fx politikere eller kongehus, da du var udsendt? Hvordan foregik det? Hvad synes du om det?
40. I 2009 blev flagdag for Danmarks udsendte indført til ære for alle de soldater, der har været udsendt på internationale missioner for Danmark siden 1948? Hvad synes du om det? Har du selv deltaget og hvordan?

41. Er det vigtigt at det officielle Danmark støtter op omkring de udsendte og mindes de faldne – eller passer soldaterne bare et arbejde som alle andre?
42. Har du besøgt Monumentet for Danmarks Internationale Indsats eller lignende steder (og i så fald, hvilke) for at mindes din udsendelse eller dræbte kammerater efter din hjemkomst? Alene eller samme med andre, og i så fald hvem og hvornår?
43. Nogle gange høre man politikere og andre sige, at soldaterne er helte. Hvordan forholder du dig til det?

Afsluttende spørgsmål

44. Vil du udsendes igen – hvorfor/hvorfor ikke?
45. Er du stadigt ansat i Forsvaret?
46. Er der noget vigtigt, som vi ikke har talt om, fx nogle situationer, som du i særlig grad husker tilbage på?

Appendix 3: Examples of Obituaries

Hansen-Nord

Officerer, faldne den 29. August 1943.

Premierløjtnant Poul Arne Hansen-Nord faldt den 29. August 1943 på Garderhusarkasernen i Næstved.

Premierløjtnant Hansen-Nord blev født d 7/3 1916 på Nordgaarden ved Ringsted, som hans fader ejede. Opvokset på landet i et stærkt nationalt hjem blev kærligheden til den danske jord, til land og folk tidligt vakt, og det faldt såre naturligt, at han valgte officersgerningen til livsvej, han ønskede en gerning, hvor han kunde gøre den største indsats for bevarelsen af det, han elskede.

20/10 1935 indkaldtes han som rekrut ved Gardehusarregimentet, og han havde til sin død kun båret dette regiments uniform.

Han var den fødte soldat og var altid den første i sin afdeling. Over Rytteriets Kornetskole, Officersskolens yngste og ældste afdeling gik det sikkert frem mod målet at blive fast officer ved Garderhusarregimentet.

Ved Beredskabsstyrkens indkaldelse 2/9 1939 udnævntes han til sekondløjtnant, og 1/11 1941 stod han ved den første milepæl på sin militære løbebane, udnævnelse til premierløjtnant.

Hansen-Nord var ualmindeligt velbegavet og klarede alle sine militære prøver som nr. 1, bortset fra Afgangseksamen, hvor han blev nr. 2.

Men han havde ikke blot let ved at tilegne sig boglig viden, han var også uhyre praktisk og havde et godt greb om alle tjenestens grene, han var i besiddelse af en uhyre vitalitet.

Den lethed, hvormed han selv kom ind i de forskellige ting, hans sprudlende initiativ, hans lyst til at nå det mest mulige, gjorde, at han fordrede meget af sine undergivne. Han var sikkert en af dem, der blev betegnet som hård, men han var altid strengt retfærdig, fordrede altid mest af sig selv, var altid forrest i eskadronen, når det gik hårdest til, og han havde derfor evne til at rive mandskabet med sig.

Han var åben og frygtløs. I kammeraters lag var han festlig og fornøjelig, hurtig i replikken, altid med i

Olsen

AFGHANISTAN, Helmand: Jacob var en person, som kunne formidle en stemning med et enkelt blik. 05-09-2011 - kl. 14:07

Chefen for Den Danske Kampgruppe, oberst Ken Knudsen:

Den Danske Kampgruppe har mistet en soldat. En familie har mistet et elsket medlem. Mange har mistet en ven.

Jacob Sten Lund Olsen efterlader med sin død et tomrum. Den bomstærke bornholmer var en viljestærk ung mand med begge ben solidt placeret på jorden. Når Jacob havde sat sig et mål, blev det jagtet helhjertet og seriøst.

Med sine iøjnefaldende tatoveringer og fysiske styrke sendte Jacob ét signal til omgivelserne. Med sit ansigt og øjne sendt han et helt andet. Øjnene løj aldrig. Som ingen andre kunne Jacob formidle sit gode humør og positive indstilling til livet med et enkelt blik.

Der var aldrig tvivl om hans loyalitet og hjælpsomhed. Jacob var af natur lidt genert, men han følte sig tryg og hjemme i sin deling. Han var ikke bekymret for egen sikkerhed. Men risikoen for, at andre skulle komme til skade, lå ham meget på sinde. Jacob havde simpelthen et godt hjerte.

Der hviler en dyb sorg over Den Danske Kampgruppe. Men i denne svære tid går vores tanker til Jacobs familie, hans kæreste, venner og kammerater i delingen.

Æret være Jacobs minde.

Delingens mindeord:

Det er med stor sorg, at vi måtte sige farvel til konstabel og vor gode ven Jacob Sten Lund Olsen. Jacob var en temperamentsfuld fighter, der til stadighed gav alt, hvad han havde. Han var højt respekteret for sin professionelle tilgang til tjenesten og for evnen til altid at nå sine fastsatte mål. Jacob stod altid fast ved sine meninger og holdninger, og han kæmpede altid til det sidste for at opnå sine mål eller for at løse de opgaver, han var pålagt.

Jacob var aldrig sen til at lade sit store overskud komme kammeraterne til gode, hvilket ikke kun gjaldt på det fysiske plan. Jacob var trods sit temperament et roligt og afbalanceret menneske, der altid gav sig tid til andre. Han

diskussionerne og aldrig bange for at tage en dyst med sine foresatte. Han havde sine meningers mod.

Det er sørgeligt, at denne unge, meget lovende officer kun skulle nå den første milepæl på den militære løbebane, men hans liv var ikke forgæves. Han mod, opofrelse og pligttroskab mod sit land, den hær, han tilhørte, og sit regiment vil leve videre og være et strålende eksempel for os alle.

Æret være hans minde.

Magnus Fog.

var altid frisk, i godt humør, smilende og holdt sig ikke tilbage for at komme med en passende kæk bemærkning. Jacob var i ånd, sind og styrke robust som bornholmsk granit, og han elskede sin hjem-ø. Han var altid frisk og klar til et muntert arrangement med honningsnaps og dårlig danserytme. Han var en meget loyal og pålidelig kammerat, med meget tætte bånd til sine søskende, forældre og ikke mindst sin kæreste, som altid blev nævnt ved enhver kærkommen lejlighed.

Jacob var en soldat og ven, som vi aldrig vil glemme. Han vil altid stå for os som et lysende eksempel på medmenneskelighed og ansvarsfølelse over for dem, han holder af. Han indeholdt en iver og en livslyst, som inspirerede mange omkring ham. En inspiration, som vil gå igen i det uendelige.

Jacob, du var en god ven, et elsket menneske og en stor mand, vi aldrig vil glemme. Æret være dit minde.

Source:

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