Warfare as a Relational Whole
Towards a coherent analysis of Strategy, Operational Art and Tactics

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Résumé


A common understanding of warfare is that the areas of Strategy, Operational Art and Tactics are interdependent. Subsequently, they need to be in harmony not to contradict each other. A common rule is that Strategy sets the goals, Operational Art sets the activities in the actual operational area, executed by Tactics in order to defeat or otherwise neutralize an opponent. In reality, however, several examples exist that question the balance and harmony within this trinity of warfare in theory and in practice. Such critics have been particularly common when conflicts are characterized as including Irregular Warfare. In a general meaning, this implies opponents fighting asymmetrically, not involving the eulogistic warfare paradigm of platform-centric fighting. Similarities can be found in critics of the Vietnam War and the Afghanistan counterinsurgency operations with a stated unclear strategy, although functionalable tactics.¹

How to understand warfare per se (as regular, irregular or a hybrid) and how to view the construction of warfare with characteristics of strategy, operational art and tactics (solely and in relation to each other), thus form two areas in need for further theorization. Together, these two areas might be argued to deliver a comprehensive thought of Warfare as a Whole to paraphrase Frank Kitson.² However, the character of the relations between Strategy, Operational Art and Tactics in contemporary military preferences are not self-evi-
dent knowledge. Education and conceptualization of the military ontological warfare paradigm as Strategy, Operational Art and Tactics are basically dealt with more separately than inclusively. Such a tradition and a truth almost taken for granted might theoretically be useful for introductory education and possible in a static world with a stable and uniform understanding of the three aspects. Knowledge of the character of all three aspects is thus argued to be important in order to be able to identify and understand the consequences of this triple construction. This article will outline and discuss a Warfare as a Whole-perspective based on results from a dissertation study regarding standpoints on tactics in irregular warfare by field unit commanders. The question for the article is: How can Warfare as a Whole be analysed from a new approach?

Tactical preferences – a study on characteristics

The following part presents principle parts and results from a dissertation study at the Finnish National Defence University. The study’s initial description of the Swedish perspective, background to, and view of irregular warfare in general was published in 2012 in the book “Winds of Changes”. A midterm report was published also in 2012 in the Baltic Defence and Security Review. Results from study literature examinations have been used for the new descriptions and definitions on irregular warfare and the accompanying warfare-style descriptions in the Swedish Military Strategy Doctrine (MDS 12) and in the new Swedish Army field manuals published in 2009–2012. The study is a sociological investigation of Swedish army and amphibious forces commanding officers’ views or articulated preferences on tactics in irregular warfare (IW), particularly regarding Counterinsurgency (COIN) operations. IW is here understood as struggles where the militarily weaker party uses an indirect approach with smaller units and integrates the civilian and military dimensions in a violence spectrum including subversion, terrorism, guerrilla warfare and infantry actions.

IW is argued to be the main armed warfare style in insurgencies. COIN is understood as the combined political, military, economical, social and legal actions to counter-insurgencies. The empirical material involves approximately the whole Swedish population of officers commanding battalion or company units of infantry, motorized, mechanized, ranger, intelligence and security arms, including the amphibious battalion within the Swedish naval forces, (n= 43). The main method of the investigation is sociological prosopography, implying the collecting and analysing of data concerning standpoints on tactical issues and background factors. The results are analyses of a space of tactical preferences expressed during 2010–12.

An initial literature study from a collection of argued influence sources has provided an empirical generalization of a concept in general of the so-called irregular warfare phenomena. The results of this has guided the interviews with several open and alternative answer questions. Applying an adapted field theory approach and a Multiple Correspondence Analysis, a filter is also argued to have been arranged that has positioned the researcher out of a direct unwanted influence. An inductive approach in order to let the data speak has resulted in identification of standpoints and background factor structures leading forward to a model of stand-
points. This approach aims at providing a transparent method where specific questions can be identified and discussed. The study provides knowledge of a starting point for various types of further analyses. The overall situation regarding research on irregular warfare and COIN can be characterized as maturing after the strong re-expansions since 2007. The publishing of the American Army and Marine Corps Field Manual FM 3-24 Counterinsurgency marked a paradigm shift regarding interest in small wars in the western countries. Research in Sweden on irregular warfare, and in particular on tactical thought about such conflicts, has not been any substantial part of War Studies research before 2008 and can currently be said to be in progress.

However, after a short period, 2008–2012, of interest in irregular warfare, Sweden is again focusing on rebuilding knowledge and skills for regular warfare. Even when recognizing the needs for knowledge on irregular warfare, research interest and findings seem more directed to regular warfare challenges.

An overview of the research area of irregular warfare during the period of 2007 up until today, points to several areas that have not yet been examined scientifically. For obvious reasons, experiences from Afghanistan and Iraq will be studied and interpreted for a long time as new data will emerge and become accessible. From a multitude of possible questions and perspectives, the very question of views of tactics as a cluster of the military profession is argued to be missing and needs to be approached. The broad span of duties from traditional military combat-associated tasks, also including traditional police-related tasks or support for civilian security areas and even non-combat related civil affairs tasks, are particularly connected to COIN-operations. Such a multitude of tasks for the modern officer to handle incurs a growth of different solutions and different kinds of thinking and possible challenges.

New views of tactical solutions and views of a suitable mindset for such environments have to be expected. A reality that can be seen to be consisting of a new span of strategy and tactics, as subsequently in operational art and leadership, can be approached from several ways and perspectives, inductive or deductive.

The research question was outlined as: how can contemporary Swedish military thought on tactics in irregular warfare be characterized as for descriptive standpoint patterns in relation to background factors and normative standards?

**Theoretical influences and methodological approach**

Articulations of warfare and tactics belong to an area of experiences, explanations, expectations and thoughts clearly wider than a particular scientific discourse. The military culture and tradition often views tactics as a practice, or even as an art. Tactics may be understood as ways of solving military problems within a limited part of the operational environment, and is one of three parts of the scientific subject of war studies in Sweden, also including military strategy and operational art. With the aim of examining viewes on tactical issues in order to present an intersubjective structure, standpoint analysis in relation to the influence of background factors has been chosen as an interesting approach. The combination of the hitherto limited sociological approaches in Swedish War Studies and an interest for Pierre Bourdieu, led to
the field and capital concepts, field theory and Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA). These concepts and tools for sociological examinations of standpoints and background factor structures justify an introduction, as they are not yet common in the subject of War Studies.

By the term field is meant; “a field is a system of relations between positions occupied by persons and institutions in a struggle of something with a common interest”. An example of a definition of a particular field, the field of power, is given by Hjellbrekke et al. as; “a field of power is defined whenever agents located in dominant positions in several fields are engaged in struggles that effect power relations within and between different fields”. A field can thus be understood, and here speaking of a social field, as something that exists when certain groups of people and institutions are in interest conflicts over something in common.

A field requires investments as standpoints on important questions at stake and specific properties as, for example, recognitions, rank and command roles. As has been presented earlier, the context of irregular warfare can be understood and thought of (as for tactics) in many ways, and a limited space of experiences on tactics in the Swedish ground forces might contain and develop different ways of thinking and evaluating tactics. If, however, particular struggles of tactics do in fact exist or not, is not the issue.

Rather, it is if indications of potentialities for struggles of interest as characteristics of the thoughts can be found. Bourdieu’s field theory, empirically oriented and a socially-culturally structured analytical approach, delivers a tool box for these kinds of investigations. The field term shall be seen as a tool given meaning through the use of examinations and research work. An examination of a field, or mere a social space, initially means to construct the system of relations that connects positions.

The approach focuses, after outlining a certain structured space of statements, on the identification of the distribution of positions and properties in the space. After this first phase that leads to a construction of a space of statements with possible structures of background factors, a multitude of further analyses is possible if proper data is at hand. Some examples are; types of investment demand by the agents in order to be recognized and operate in the space, possible strategies, systems of the dispositions of the agents and possible connections of the space or actual field to other fields. Field theory can thus be described as a model of an approach in sociology. It is about epistemology, not a social theory, as a theory that focuses on practical reason and a methodological toolkit based on the empirical data collection of different human categories.

The field theory can be characterized as a theory building on sociology, a form of a knowledge building enterprise where the relationship between the researcher and the research object (e.g. in the form of concepts, obstacles and challenges) is put in the centre. The use of field theory with research-unique adaptations was clearly encouraged by Bourdieu. The sample chosen for the investigation might, however, be viewed in a rather sociologically uniform way regarding social heritage and military rank levels, raising limited expectations for any findings of background factor differences in tactical thinking. On the other hand, differences might well be structured by different practical experiences, such as international missions and combat. The task for this chosen theoretical approach
can be outlined so as to provide a foundation for an understandable and intersubjective constructed structure or model. Such a model aims at disclosing categorized groupings, possible to further analyse for internal and external comparisons and hypothesis generation, particularly regarding what practical consequences that might be expected.

There are, however, challenges adopting a field theory and method approach. Can an area such as “tactical thinking in irregular warfare” at all be viewed as a field, or at least belonging to a possible field in being or under development? The examination does only address a part of tactics, tactics in irregular warfare, and even looking a tactics in every context, the linkage to strategy and operational art are obvious and intermingled. Several more actors exists with opinions on tactics other than battalion and company commanders. Also, several principal demands exist for a space in order to be recognized as autonomous; a specific art of capital, a certain structure of polarities, a certain space of possibilities, certain recognitions and value systems, certain beliefs (called “doxa” by Bourdieu), certain drivers (“illusio” according to Bourdieu), certain instances that produce and manifest the doxa (“consecration instances” according to Bourdieu) and mechanisms for transforming imported themes and discussions to its own logics.20

From these principles it is possible to define a theoretical “field of military thought”, containing tactics as well as strategy as they co-exist and mutually effect each other, and, as has been previously described, traditions of warfare principles (as doxas) exist and are sanctified in military education and in doctrines. Relational structures exists, such as for example regarding how in fact to solve the military problem with different conceptual solutions. The most obvious example here is the different structures, traditions and cultures within the Army, the Air Force and the Naval Forces, and within the different branches of the Army. A possible field-like space must be seen in the light of the military and strategic culture and the production within a larger field in its entirety, as defence politics. It is the theory of relational structures possibly conflicting on values and interest that is argued as being of interest and a new approach. In such a view, the field theory is applied in order to indicate field-like or at least relational structures.

Connected to the area of values and interests there might be found opposing different groupings of standpoints, where the concept of capital has its place. Capital is defined as; symbolic and tangible assets in general and can be seen as a tool that allows very different phenomena being kept together, otherwise often separated in the social sciences or humanities.21 Symbols, material and informational resources are examples of capital. As a lable of a certain kind of value that is recognized, the term Symbolic Capital is used.22 Viewing the military community as a social group, several areas exist that are recognized as particularly valuable, demanding investment and provided with recognitions. The whole hierachical structure of the officer corps, with particular education and knowledge, ranks, insignias and expected skills and performances, can be said to examplify a social group with a special and unique assignment. A common interest is established in the area of military skills. However, concepts vary for producing the required skill and views of how to do it, by tactics. One example is the traditional preferences in the Armed Forces for mechanized warfare,
leading to a culturally lower status of other units.

Combat and international experiences are other examples of culturally highly recognized properties in the cultural capital class.23 A third form is the social capital that can be seen as aspects that involve both assets as affiliation to different social networks, in reality and perceptions of these compared to other assets – a relational activity.24 Rank is one obvious example. We find here a division hard to follow when certain properties such as, for example, affiliation to units, international missions and combat experiences generate values that might be argued to belong to the cultural, as well as social capital classes. The term symbolic capital is therefore used for discussions of social structures in the space of standpoints.

The study uses three methodological approaches; a qualitative textual and content analysis of a conceptual history approach for literature study, interviews with open-ended and alternative-answer questions for data collection from the officers, and the main method; so-called sociologic prosopography, here meaning collecting and analysing data concerning the officers’ standpoints and the structuring pattern of background factors.25 Concepts such as capital, field and relations developed by Bourdieu and his followers, are used as tools. The sociological prosopography of the officer’s standpoints, background factor positions and relational structure has been done with a Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA), which is the key method for the study.

MCA is a method of analysis belonging to a family of methods for data analysis, all originating in the French mathematician Jean-Paul Benzécri’s mathematical methods to represent data-sets as clouds of points with geometrical relational calculations of every data.26 In short, MCA can, according to Henke Roose at al., be said to be a modelling technique that discloses underlying structures in categorized data. This is done by representing both modalities (answer alternatives) of questions as well as individuals in a multidimensional Euclidian space, very similar to Principal Component Analysis (PCA) for nominal data.27 MCA has a relational approach argued to suit an area such as tactical thoughts and focuses on tables of individuals and categorized variables.28 MCA has been a main method of Bourdieu and his followers’ work.29 The MCA has been performed with the French data program Cohersis SPAD.30

Empirical material and sources

The empirical materiel consists of a collection of literature on the subject of irregular warfare, and data from the interview study of Swedish Army and Amphibious officers. The literature on western thinking and thoughts on military issues relating to irregular warfare has been sought among two main categories.

First; military doctrines as the NATO,31 American32 and British ones,33 suggested as being the most influential military normative writings for the western world. For comparative examples of earlier military definitions two American sources have been used; the U.S. Army FM 31-15 Operations against Irregular Forces34 and Small Wars Manual, U.S. Marine Corps.35 For a compilation with a contemporary Swedish governmental view, the source Försvar i användning 36 has been used. Secondly, selected literature has been included as classical military thought and practice think-
ing on the subject, influential writings from the post-Second World War period, primarily the period 1950 – 1970, and finally writings from the beginning of 2000 to 2010.37

The literature has been studied in three time periods; period one; “From Clausewitz to the Second World War”, containing writings from Carl von Clausewitz, Charles Callwell and Thomas Edward Lawrence, period two; “Second World War to the 70’s” with descriptions on irregular warfare by David Galula, Werner Hallweg, Frank Kitson, John J. McCuen, Robert Thompson and Roger Trinquier, and the third period, labelled “From 9/11 to 2010”, containing selected books written by James Corum, Colin S. Gray, Thomas X. Hammes, David KilCullen, James D. Kiras, James Mackinlay and Gil Merom. The second part of the empirical material consists of data from interviews of officers in the Swedish Armed Forces’ Army and Amphibious Forces, assigned during 2011 as battalion or company commanding officers. The units consisted of so-called “manoeuvre battalions” containing various numbers and types of mechanized/armoured vehicles, two intelligence/security battalions, one ranger battalion, and one amphibious battalion. The motive for choosing this category of officers was that I argue that they come closest to practical tactics, still with a need for a military theoretical understanding and thinking beforehand, during the practical tactical execution of action. The study involved just about the whole population of relevant officers (n= approximately 43). The total sample consists of approximately 45 officers, depending on the status in each unit due to the on-going transformation of the Swedish Armed Forces.

How can so-called irregular warfare be understood?

The initial literature study aimed at a contextualizing of the phenomena of irregular warfare in a way where general perspectives and aspects are derived. A qualitative textual analysis of a collection of literature and military doctrines results in an empirical generalization. This generalization is argued to catch the main thread of 200 years of descriptions on meaning and traits of this kind of warfare, as also in contrast to traditional regular warfare. The result can be seen as a framing of the context in which tactical thoughts are to be mirrored and has been used as directing guidance for construction of the interview questions. The following three questions were in focus, leading forward to an empirical generalization; “How is the form of warfare labelled ‘irregular warfare’ defined and explained?”, “What is said as regards differentiating irregular warfare from other forms of warfare?” and “What are typical traits argued for irregular warfare?”

The following empirical generalization was the result.

Traits of irregular warfare in general; a political struggle leaning on society’s acceptance/support – not military victory with a diversity in actors’ rules of warfare. Asymmetrical concepts for acceptance and use of violence, limited physical focus as for more social/mental focus and hidden forms of combat/influences. Fluid, highly adaptable and flexible networks of influence/combat groupings using what is supposed to bring desired results regardless of western views of humanism and moral/ethical norms. A military weakness leads to a continuous need for integration of control of and support by the people and society. A low military interest has from time
to time characterized such forms of conflicts and warfare compared to capabilities, skills, competence and education concerning regular warfare.

Traits of irregular warfare regarding tactics: a broadened violence spectrum with lower end bases, with what the defenders address as terror and subversion as key capabilities, not excluding higher tactical forms of ground operations when suitable and possible. Subversion, terrorism, guerrilla warfare, and mobile warfare are important competences in irregular warfare. The empirical generalization attempts to objectify and frame the context in which the tactical thoughts are analysed. Broadly summarizing common characteristics of irregular warfare found in the study in contrast to regular warfare, the result in the following figure has been derived, showing an example of generalized principal differences devised in contextual and conceptual perspectives.

This broad description or sketch can be seen as an example of a principal space of experience and horizons of expectations regarding regular and irregular warfare.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perspectives and aspects</th>
<th>Regular Warfare</th>
<th>Irregular Warfare</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contextual perspectives; Dominantly Actors aspect</strong></td>
<td>State actors</td>
<td>Non/Sub-state actors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategy aspects</strong></td>
<td>Military victory, enemy defeat/destruction</td>
<td>Political victory, popular support, enemy exhaustion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Operational art aspects</strong></td>
<td>Joint military operations</td>
<td>Different operational concepts of subversion, guerrilla/terrorist and local/regional forces up to regular warfare structures (ground forces)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rules of Law and Engagement</strong></td>
<td>Follow western society norms, laws and conventions</td>
<td>Do not follow western society norms, laws, conventions or moral ethical standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conceptual perspectives; Tactical aspects</strong></td>
<td>Direct approach, to control physical terrain. Overt, uniformed structures and operations, static concepts, separate to civilian functions. Combat focus with larger units operating collectively</td>
<td>Indirect approach, to control people’s minds and political ambitions. Overt, covert and clandestine structures and operations, dynamic adaptable and fluid concepts, integrating civilian functions. Intelligence focus with smaller units operating dispersed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time aspects</strong></td>
<td>Strive for short duration</td>
<td>Accepting protracted war/campaign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Physical aspects</strong></td>
<td>Military strengths Anti-subversive weakness</td>
<td>Military weakness Subversive strengths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Moral aspects</strong></td>
<td>Exclude the people in fighting structures</td>
<td>Integrate people in fighting and supporting structures</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1. A theoretical generalization of argued principal differences between regular and irregular warfare.
The interviews of the officers was built on questions where aspects such as the following were included; focus on a people-centric or enemy-centric approach in COIN, thinking mainly on military or civilian supporting tasks and views on primarily kinetic or non-kinetic effects. Primarily a focus on violence (subversion, terrorism, guerrilla warfare and more traditional tactical infantry-style operations), a focus on combat or intelligence, the use of larger or smaller unit concepts and a capability to carry out overt or low-visible actions. Another question concerned the priority for national defence tactics or for multinational mission interoperability, and, correspondingly, regarding the capability for regular warfare or irregular warfare. Of particular interest for the analysis has been to find standpoint positions in a current space of tactical thinking with different structures of background factors.

Contemporary Swedish Military Thought and Preferences

Three analysis methods are presented with results; a Multiple Correspondence Analysis regarding the standpoint structure, a Multiple Correspondence Analysis on a collection of background factors and a capital and field concept discussion in order to characterize military-sociological patterns. The interviews with 43 officers took place from March 2011 to March 2012 with a duration of often at least two hours. The questions included open-ended and semi-structured multiple-choice questions with sixteen background aspect questions, eighteen questions on tactical thoughts in form of standpoints and ten questions on thinking about the subject of tactics in more general terms. The interviews started with a set of questions concerning the officers’ background factors. The choice of background factors and categorizations has been made of what can be argued to be commonly used features in categorizations of military personnel; e.g. unit affiliation, type of unit (affiliation), unit backgrounds, rank and roles. Twelve different kinds of background factors were included. Civil education, military backgrounds and international experiences are argued to represent three common and interesting classification areas.

According to Swedish traditional standards, a relatively extensive international mission’s geographical and cultural experience can be expected in general from the sample. Geographical mission experiences for the sample in all covered eight missions in Afghanistan, ten in Bosnia, and twelve in Kosovo/Macedonia and seven in Liberia. Viewing command role experience, nine had served as platoon leaders. Four of them claimed combat experience. Twelve had served as company command officers. Two of these had served twice as company commanders, and two had served as company commanders during three missions. Six of them claimed combat experience. In summary, a smaller part of the sample contained experience of company command, an even smaller part claiming combat experience. The result points out the variation regarding participation in international missions where geographic and cultural spaces of experience are argued to clearly dominate compared to actual performance of command (and command in combat). This leaves us with a certain possible span of horizons of expectations on tactics in irregular warfare with a stronger leaning on theoretical thought and limited experience.
The answer of the research question; “How can contemporary Swedish military thought on tactics in irregular warfare be characterized in the form of descriptive response patterns mapped in relation to background factors and normative standards?” generated by the results of the descriptive analyses and the normative comparison, is here summarized and described in five blocks; a characteristic of how tactics in general is understood – a characteristic of how tactical preferences in irregular warfare in general, the main result; a model of the Swedish space of statements of preferences on tactics in irregular warfare consisting of four tactical types, a sociological discussion of background factor structures and character, and finally a normative comparison of the model with a collection of international and Swedish doctrinal standards for tactics in counterinsurgency operations.

Thoughts and preferences in general regarding Tactics.

The officers’ general view of tactics per se can be characterized with a meaning in general of being as either “the use of units or resources for reaching a specific goal”, or as ways of thinking in general. Reflections on principal influences can be described as either regular warfare tradition-dominated, or with a more generic and wider analytical approach, or a more direct irregular warfare tactics perspective. Influences on tactical preferences connect mainly to education and school activities, literature and gaming, personal experiences, and personal influences such as senior officers and colleagues and exercise.

Direct or indirect practice is considered important for influences. Compared to the areas of strategy and operational art, the officers’ interest in tactics is clearly dominant. However, communicating and speaking of tactics is not a well-developed tradition. Experiences and influences from past wars are thought of to be important for the development of tactics and tactical preferences, although the view is largely scattered. Areas such as education and exercises were only mentioned by a few. A rather consistent way of thought exists with a self image as field or troop officers, regarding tactics as a combination of theory and practice, and with a basically offensive mindset. Skills and knowledge in regular warfare for national defence needs are more highly prioritized than skills in irregular warfare for multinational operations. The focus is on troops before technical aspects with an ambition to lead and develop tactics for larger units (battalion structures before specialized company formations).

The officers’ general reflexions of tactics in irregular warfare can be characterized with expressions mostly with regard to conceptual aspects, including capability and functional area aspects, as for example intelligence. Broader aspects such as military and civilian relations, education and training, leadership and mindset are addressed only on a few occasions. Even if many many of the articulations correspond to general current COIN standards, views still exist with a more regular warfare mindset. A major aspect in thinking relates to new or other demands in command and functional thinking, for example intelligence, psychological operations and electronic warfare. A minor number of the officers emphasized regular warfare capabilities. As for warfighting capabilities the focus is on moral and conceptual factors (or combined), as a contrast to psychological factors.
A common view of tactics in irregular warfare and counterinsurgency is a focus on guerrilla warfare in contrast to low-violence areas such as subversion and terrorism. Regarding conceptual views, a unified focus on basic battalion structures with additional special functions, capable of operating in task group structures. Tactics in irregular warfare is viewed as having a low priority in the Swedish armed forces. A rather common view is, however, that the development of tactics for irregular warfare is needed and important.

The space of standpoints – a generalized model of four tactical types.

This section answers the question; “How can standpoints of tactical thoughts be characterized?” and it describes the result of Multiple Correspondence Analysis of standpoints’ distribution aiming at describing and characterizing structures of tactical standpoints building a generic model of a space of statements. The questions used were the following;

3:12 Perceive themselves foremost be a field/front officer or a staff officer?
4.1 Focus on type of violence in irregular warfare (IW)?
4.2 Focus on collective or distributed operations irregular warfare (IW)?
4.3 Priority of capability in regular warfare (RW) or irregular warfare (IW) or equal; hybrid warfare (HW) capabilities?
4.4 View on need for specialization of units?
4.5 Thinking about tactics often or seldom?
4.6 Thinking about tactics as theory or practice or a combination of both?
4.8 Focus on overt/visible or low visible operations?
4.9 Focus on the troops or on technology?
4:10 Focus on military or civilian tasks?
4:11 Focus on kinetic or non-kinetic effects?

Fifteen of the questions were chosen for analysis as so-called active variables. The following questions were not chosen due to the dominance in one answer alternative; 3.5 Offensive or defensive focus (34 officers stated an offensive focus), 3.10 Focus on commanding own units or training others (33 officers stated a focus on commanding own units rather than training the host nation’s security forces), and question 4.4 Conceptual focus for irregular warfare regarding organization structures (39 officers stated a focus on task force structures rather than traditional standard battalion structures). From this we can generalize that the sample in general has tactical preferences rather uniformly regarding an
offensive focus. The officers would rather command their own units before training others and preferably work with task force structures adapted for irregular warfare, such as counterinsurgency operations, instead of using standard mainly regular-warfare organized battalion concepts. The questions could be answered as a preference of either of the stated alternatives or as an equal preference. The chosen fifteen questions were subsequently analysed with MCA using answer alternatives with responses from more than five officers. From identified clusters of answer alternatives from all the questions, logical meanings in relation to military theory was derived and categorized in two dimensions (x- and y-bar or “axes”).

The main result; the model of the Swedish space of statements of thought on tactics in irregular warfare consists of a fourfold generic model of tactical types. This model provides an intersubjective constructed structure of the space of statements of thought on tactics in irregular warfare. The tactical types are labelled and broadly explained as follows; 1. Regular Warfare: Ranger tactics with a focus on military tasks, smaller and larger units and reconnaissance, 2. Regular Warfare: mechanized tactics with a focus on military tasks, larger units, and combat, 3. Hybrid Warfare: infantry tactics focused on mixed military and civilian tasks, smaller and larger units, reconnaissance and combat, and, finally 4. Hybrid Warfare: mechanized tac-

![Figure 2. A broadly outlined symbolic capital structure in the space of statements on tactical preferences in irregular warfare.](image-url)
tics focused on military/civilian tasks, larger units and combat. These tactical types are suggested as the content of the space of statements mainly constructed from two perspectives; contextual and conceptual. The investigated sample of 43 battalion and rifle company commanders (or the equivalent) were distributed rather equally over the Types 2, 3 and 4. A certain weight could be noted for Type 1.

A sociological pattern of the structure of background factors in the space of statements is possible to identify. Unit affiliation (regimental culture and traditions), and unit background is clearly distributed in the space of statements. Unit affiliation and backgrounds show a correlation regarding ranger and infantry unit affiliation, backgrounds and tactical thinking. This is, however, not possible to indicate regarding mechanized affiliation, backgrounds and tactical thinking.

Command roles show an observable distribution. Rank and military education levels show weak distribution signs, contrary to civilian education where 2-year programmes are found in the lower sides of axis 2, as opposed to a 3-year economic and university education at the upper side of axis 2. Age shows a nonlinear distribu-

Figure 3. Graph over the officers’ individual positions in the space of statements. Four officers (12, 25, 30 and 28) are marked with circles exemplifying four different tactical types preferred for irregular warfare.
tion on axis 1 mainly, where older categories are found more significantly positioned compared to the younger categories.

International mission experience seems to bear marks more depending on where and how many times one has served compared to what role and action one has participated in.

Many background factors are distributed rather axis/quarters-centric, several with minor position distances leaving a weaker basis for a capital-field discussion. Still, observable results can be found. The space of standpoints is suggested to be viewed as a social space where relational structures exist. The individual positions of the officers in the space of statements show a distribution all over the four different tactical types, as can be observed in the graph below.

Compared to normative standards, the space of Swedish tactical thinking is argued to be partially coherent but also partly different relative to the normative tactics in irregular warfare, particularly regarding counterinsurgency operations. Subsequently, there are indications of different views on the needs for warfare capabilities and officers’ competencies, leadership and education. The Swedish descriptive result of tactical types primarily contains two aspects; a military task focus and a focus on combat tasks, possibly conflicting with or even contradicting normative texts on tactics in COIN (American, British, French, Canadian and Swedish doctrines or field manuals). Tactical Type 1; Regular warfare ranger tactics and, in particular, Type 2; Regular warfare mechanized tactics, represents tactical preferences not corresponding to current normative views regarding primarily a contextual mindset.

Analysis of Warfare as a Relational Whole – a discussion

Seen in a possible larger space of tactics, strategy and operational art, the result indicates a potentiality of field characteristics in Swedish military thought, implying potential power and influence struggles and development dynamics. The numbers of officers in different positions are not the main focus. The point is that one single officer with a contradictory thinking or mindset can be enough to create effects of new possibilities or frictions. Depending on actual strategy and operational art, officer number 12 will probably generate different tactical arguments (and effects) compared to officers number 25, 30 and 28. If influential officers at the strategic level and in operational command show equal distribution characteristics, a complex space of military thought is at hand. The following two generic examples will show theoretical spaces of standpoints containing different potentials for frictions, creativity, harmony or internal confrontation and immobilization of Warfare as a Whole way of thinking.

In the example above different ways of thinking are indicated, thus warning against relational effects that ought to be analysed. Operational art is, in this case, required for harmonizing the difference between tactical thinking and strategic thinking. If this is not possible, the strategy has to be altered or adjusted depending on the reasons for the differences in tactical thinking.

In the example below, the situation is quite different. Here, the character of thinking is in harmony regarding strategy, operational art and tactics, providing a theoretical comprehensive and sound thinking of
Warfare as a Whole. Such a result of a total standpoint analysis might, on the other hand, warn against group-thinking not to be taken for granted to correlate with the view of an opponent.

A discussion of differences in military preferences

The study results of an argued dual character of contemporary tactical preferences on irregular warfare have been put into a broader Warfare as a Whole perspective, including thinking on strategy and operational art and preferences. The indicated character of tactical preference is argued to have a particular important value as officers usually start their careers with tactical problem-solving. Later on they advance and take responsibility for operational and strategic issues and command. This motivates further discussion on the character of tactical preferences, as it is often from these bases that further thought will be developed or at least related to.

Views and articulations on tactics is obviously not a uniform discourse, particularly not regarding so-called irregular warfare. As a new phenomenon for the Swedish military organization and officer collective’s ways of thinking, tactics exists, emerges and structures dynamically or statically, in a fragile or more stable way. An older and more stable military social network represented by regimental and field unit affiliation with ranger traditions sanctifies and reproduces small-war thinking. Other, also traditional structures, such as the mechanized traditions, are under development not any longer solely reproducing a tra-
ditional “large-unit combat” mindset. On the contrary, signs of new ways of thinking on tactics that highlights an intelligence-focused and distributed operational concept clearly exists. Still, without a prominent and strong direction from the military strategy policy-makers, such ambitions risk being marginalized due to generations of an habituated culture and doxa of regular warfare ideals.

When traditional thinking on tactics meets other needs in practice, such as in multinational COIN operations, social networks emerge that question old thoughts and shape new thinking. Existing social structures, such as regiments and unchanged units structures, sanctify and reproduce as well as shape new thinking. An internationalization of tactics in irregular warfare has emerged normatively parallel with the still strong living doxa of regular warfare as the highest ideal and a derivate of the threat perception. The Swedish tactical thinking of irregular warfare – internally and externally – is partly struggling with embracing both principles. Tactical thinking has a dynamic, today moving towards hybrid warfare scenarios where concepts of “the Big War and Small Wars” intermingle and sometimes contradict each other and are in conflict. A creative palette of tactical thinking exists among Swedish field unit commanders – the next generation of senior military strategists. A field of military thinking on strategy, operational art and tactics might very well exist, or is under way, developing challenges to current visions of strategy and operational art in a revitalizing way. Such a field might create structure in ways not as uniform according

Figure 5. Three spaces of standpoints of strategic, tactical and operational-art thinking, respectively. The example shows similar positions indicating a potential for thinking of Warfare as a Whole in harmony.

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to regimental affiliation and culture traditions as we are used to. Signs of a new generation of tactical thinking exist with a more open mind for combining principles of the small war with the large one. A development of tactical thinking for the modern officer seems to need knowledge equal to that of ranger, mechanized and infantry principles. An approach is suggested that deals with the little or small warfare at the same level as the the big warfare principles in order to promote a more open mindset, needed for a hybrid warfare future.

The model of the space of statements and distribution of background factors on tactical thinking is thus suggested be used as a method also concerning views on strategy and operational art. Subsequently, the result of three such models with a distribution on thinking can indicate the character of the relationship them between. Such an analysis does not exist in a systematic and structured way in general education on war studies, although officers are expected to be able to understand, plan and execute command in a real war including all these interconnected aspects. The main argument proposed is that finding a duality of tactical thinking has to be seen in relation to strategy, operational art and leadership, especially when discussing irregular warfare scenarios. Different and partly contradicting tactical thinking, being problematic in resources and narrowing the Army’s way of conceptualizing in the same units, brings forward several questions on coherence.

The answer to the article’s question

The answer to the article’s question “How can Warfare as a Whole be analysed from a coherent approach?” can be summarized with the word “relational”. The key argument is that the three aspects; strategy, operational art and tactics, or how warfare at all is chosen to be labelled, analysed and divided, have to be analysed together. Neither of them can be viewed as containing one and only one understanding and standpoint focus. Differences do exist, as officers (like politicians) have different backgrounds and experiences promoting different values and articulations for various aspects. This means that in order to be able to understand the whole thinking map, not only differences regarding each area should be examined, but in particular the structure of differences all taken together. Thus the use of field theory stands out as one possible way to work with. Not only the map of differences in standpoints on the actual thought of strategy, operational art and tactics will be possible to outline, but also underlying social structures of uniting or separating background factors for different prioritized perspectives. Such a result will present stronger or weaker aspects of thinking as the degree of robustness of the whole warfare thought construction. As tactics without strategy is highly disregarded, strategy without tactical resources in reality, or operational art that cannot direct operations according to strategic needs, is of no use. The concept of Warfare as a Whole, as a way of relationally analysing the three interdependent areas of strategy, operational art and tactics is therefore suggested as being a new coherent analytical approach in War Studies.

Reflexion

Against such a suggestion to include not only further analysis of each aspect, but indeed also a new relational analysis approach, can be held the danger of adding further complexity to an already truly
complex planning and comprehensive reality (or at least common ontology rhetoric or narrative). Handling several perspectives of very different kinds is, however, even today a prerequisite for the officer. Supported by various planning tools and command systems the capacity, capability and even drive to seek and meet challenges of new and different thinking must be regarded as prerequisites for officers and commanders. If so, the question of mental energy to cope and excel in such an environment will be a vital one in leadership training as well as in the academic education in general.

General Frank Kitson, thinking on the question of mental energy as a characteristic for the commander, says “Intense mental energy, combined with an adequate store of knowledge, is the foundation of creative thought, which is itself the conscious manifestation of the subconscious state known as imagination. It is the possession of creative ability and imagination which distinguishes the great commander from the merely competent.” The fact that mental comprehension of various perspectives and dimensions bears a relation to analytical capability is not news. However, the strengths and practical methods for developing and sustaining the mental energy needed for multiple analysis work is an area suggested to be elaborated on and not taken for granted as a once-and-for-all given thing. The questions will then be “What sort of training programme develops mental strengths and creativity for analysing, planning and directing Warfare as a Whole with relational perspectives and dimensions?”

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Notes


3. Finnish National Defence University, Military Science, Capt (N) Michael Gustafson dissertation study 2010-2014 with the research question; “how can contemporary Swedish military thoughts of tactics in Irregular warfare be characterized as for descriptive standpoint patterns in relation to background factors and normative standards?”


5. Gustafson, Michael, “Conventional Armed Forces’ Thinking about Irregular warfare Tactics – A challenge for Officer Training”, *Baltic Defence and Security Review, Volume 14, Issue 1*, 2012, Baltic Defence College, pp.151 – 181. The article presents the background for study and the work under way. A first preliminary interpretation and adaption of the Field Theory Approach is described, later to be matured and developed as presented in this present paper.


7. The sample consisted of officers positioned in 2011 as battalion and company commanders (Rifle Coys and the equivalent) and consisted of eleven battalion commanders (Bn COs), thirty rifle company Commanders (Coy COs) and three armoured company commanders = 43 officers. One Bn CO was not available and some second-in-command officers where interviewed, resulting in an almost full sample with representations from all units concerned.


9. The Swedish Armed Forces started from around 2009 to request research work on Irregular Warfare from the Swedish National Defence College.


11. I use an explanation of the term discourse from Michel Foucault; “Discourse, the scientific order of conversation characterizing the scientific writings, education och exchange of thoughts within a certain area of research during a time period”, p. 12 in Foucault, Michel, *Vansimmet history under den klassiska epoken*, Arkiv förlag, Lund 1983, translation to Swedish by Carl G. Ljungman.


15. With a field I mean a social field, defined as “a system of relations between positions posed of specialized agents and institutions in the struggle of something in common” (author’s translation from Swedish). This “mini-definition” is outlined in Broady, Donald: *Sociology and Epistemology* (1991), p. 266. For an overview and explanation of field theory; see Bourdieu, Pierre: *Praktiskt förnuft, bidrag till en handlingsteori* (1996, 2004), pp. 11-24.
17. Ibid., p. 267.
19. Ibid., pp. 575-582.
23. Ibid., p. 174. The examples are ”adapted” as Bourdieu more referred to educational values, ”high culture” and ”noblesse” – aspects of more limited use for the study of officers in Sweden today.
24. Ibid., p. 15.
27. Roose, Henk; van Koen, Eijk and Lievens, John: ”Culture of distinction or culture of openness? Using a social space approach to analyse the social structuring of lifestyles”, Poetics 40, August 2012, pp. 491-513.
29. Ibid., p.15.


