The Relevance of Transformational Leadership, Collective Drills & Skills, Professional Trust, and Task Cohesion for the All Volunteer Military

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An implicit assumption within most Western militaries and as well within modern military sociology is that strong group respectively force cohesion is at least an advantage if not a basic precondition for good operational performance of military units. Now this rather functional imperative seems too narrow given the wide variety of different types of military forces and the range of functions today’s armed forces are called upon to perform. Understanding the current evolution of military roles as a primarily functional response to objective threat appears to be of ultimately limited utility. A more explicit recognition of the contextual and contingent nature of armed forces functional imperatives – that without a doubt exist – is important for the understanding of the manifold aspects of “togetherness” for the military.

The republican legitimisation for the existence of a military is that it remains every citizen’s responsibility to defend one’s country because this furthers democracy and social virtues; therefore the republican model of the military is conscript forces. The liberalistic approach to military security is that due to societal division of labour only some paid citizens – or even individuals from other countries – should be made responsible for national defence; the AVF are the military model of the liberalistic state. In the case of integrated multinationality the relevance of force cohesion is extremely virulent because the Western military is since round about 200 years mainly nationally defined and by the same token a major defining institution for national sovereignty. Therefore the question arises, how parts of nationally defined armed forces and their soldiers can co-operate with each other in a multinational environment. Since the All Volunteer Forces (AVF) are the predominant model in the Western hemisphere since the end of the Cold War the following discussion deals only with this model of a military.

Military roles are emerging as a consequence of domestic and international socio-political influences that shape states’ perceptions of what their armed forces should look like and the purposes they should serve. As a consequence armed forces’ functional imperatives are themselves primarily a response to changing socio-political influences rather than an inevitable institutional response to objective threat. These conditions already character national armed forces and especially multinational military units as a consequence of some trends within international security policy:

There is a decline in the significance of the defence of national territory role as a core organising principle for regular armed forces of the Western hemisphere. Secondly, the increasing dominance of a model of military professionalisation equates modern armed forces with smaller, highly skilled, flexible force structures able to project power abroad whether for war fighting or peacekeeping operations. Finally, the emergence of a discourse concerned with
the threats of the so-called “New Security Environment” (NSE) such as civil wars, transnational terrorism, weakened states, and growing scarcities of natural resources that has refocused military roles. Furthermore “Operations Other Than War” (OOTW) are being conducted in alien environments where language, custom, culture, and religion differ from the expeditionary Western soldiers. OOTW include peacekeeping, “drug war”, interdiction and surveillance operations, educational programs, environmental preservation, disaster support to civil authorities, and support to civilian law enforcement. Operational effectiveness in a broader sense, therefore, requires Western armed forces to expand their skill sets accordingly.

In the self image of most militaries their main purpose is the protection of national sovereignty and territory. But with the evolution of the NSE doctrine throughout the Western world and an ongoing process of European integration this legitimisation seems to change. Parts of the armed forces of most EU countries are meanwhile involved in multinational forces; be it in ad-hoc deployments or on a regular basis as integrated bi- and multinational units. Since in bi- and multinational formations the centripetal forces of a commonly shared national heritage do not exist, it is expected that, in a bi- and multinational context force cohesion is even more sensitive. In order to uphold coherent operational capabilities integrated multinational formations like 1 German/Netherlands Corps (1 GNC) have a special interest in positive cohesion among its members. This raises the question how coherent, co-ordinated, and integrated military structures operate within a multinational context.

More recently, Elron, Shamir & Ben-Ari (1999) illustrated how multinational forces in deployment solve cross-cultural problems, while Kretchnik (2003) has shown the importance of training to the effectiveness of multinational staffs. I will argue that to provide a convincing account of multinational military structures, it is necessary to follow the advice by King (2006) and focus on military practices rather than on informal rituals. Therefore it seems extremely relevant to concentrate on procedures that assist multinational military units to create organisational effectiveness at the operational and the tactical level. In the case of 1 GNC group activities that devise and execute operations on the operational level are mainly conducted by the headquarters (HQ) of 1 GNC. The tactical level is subordinate to the operational level and is being represented by the two integrated battalions of 1 GNC.

Most security forces, and the armed forces especially, are notable for their relative homogeneity – not only insofar as phenotypic visible minorities or members from minority ethnic groups is concerned but also on just about all other conceivable counts of diversity, as exemplified manifestly by recent debates about women and homosexuals in the military and more latently by the lack of religious and linguistic pluralism. Most military’s ultimate principle is force cohesion or group cohesion. The relevance of the concept of group cohesion to the military was introduced by Shils/Janowitz (1948), who focused on the question why even separated units of the German Wehrmacht were vigorously fighting until the very end of the II. World War. Theirs and the explanation of Stouffer et al. (1949) this phenomenon was the extreme cohesion within the primary group of those military units. Shils/Janowitz (1948: 196ff.) were aware of the specifically military functions of primary groups and the relevance of a disciplined hierarchy to the creation of these military units. For them primary groups were held together by bonds of comradeship produced by personal relations and the fulfilment of psychological and physical organic needs by their leadership and the organisation. Yet, in organisational research the study of complex organisations demands to go beyond the small
group. With this focus in mind Etzioni (1961: 176) defines cohesion as “a positive expressive relationship among two or more actors.” His definition emphasizes the norms that define the relationship of actors and avoids the emotionally laden notion of shared values. Furthermore his approach seems to allow for a pragmatic and rigorous approach to trust. It keeps a sober notion of cohesion and the more harmony oriented notion of consensus apart.

So far the construct of social cohesion remains within modern military sociology to be central. Literature within modern military sociology and psychology offers a lot of approaches for describing force cohesion. Basically it can be found, that this very concept describes the solidarity of a military unit, most of the time on or below company level, which will motivate soldiers to fight and accept a harsh environments for the sake of their fellows. It is seldom geared to a higher political or strategic ideal. Force cohesion, to different extents, can have a vital effect on the outcome of armed conflicts. There are many examples within modern history (e.g. the Vietnam War) that show that strong cohesion can help to defeat an overwhelmingly strong enemy. However, according to our findings in integrated multinational AVF group cohesion seems to be rather the function of professional trust and not its prerequisite. Trust in one’s comrade or leader exists - or not - much rather due to confidence in his or her skills than in due to the same nationality. Good leadership that goes beyond the mere implementation of orders brings military skills, trust, and cohesion together. We call that transformational leadership, i.e. leadership that is based on high ethical and moral standards, creates followership.

**Hypothesis:** Transformational leadership creates well-trained teams and units that display an intuitive communication built on shared experiences in complex team skills. Sufficient training helps to create collective drills & skills that are a precondition for successful operational performance. This specific form of confidence and reliance based on co-operation between social actors (i.e. in a group between peers, and between subordinates and leaders) creates professional trust which results in task cohesion.

The evaluations made in this essay are based upon data from oral interviews with professional soldiers from the Netherlands and Germany of the two integrated battalions (StSptBn and CIS-Bn) of 1 GNC and a quantitative survey. The twenty Dutch and German interviewees that we talked to belonged to all rank groups and had different functions and levels of experience. The interviews were conducted in May 2005 in Münster/Germany and Eibergen/The Netherlands in the respective military facilities. The quantitative data stem from a questionnaire survey conducted in May and June 2005 in the HQ, the StSptBn and the CIS-Bn. Every soldier of 1 GNC was provided with a questionnaire (in English for the HQ; in Dutch resp. German for the battalions). One quarter of the total population of soldiers responded. All rank groups, nations and military installations of 1 GNC are equally represented.

**Transformational Leadership**

Leadership involves influencing the behaviour and interaction of others, and presupposes the existence of followers respectively subordinates. What leaders do is to influence the behaviour, beliefs, thinking and feelings of other group members in an intended direction (cf. Katz/Kahn 1978). Thus, leadership can be understood as social actions, through which common
efforts are co-ordinated towards common goals and collective goods. Leadership skills are not personal. Rather a leader can be effective if the group he/she represents has a clear understanding of what it is trying to achieve and how to do it. Groups ultimately create the leaders they get, for a leader will draw upon collective group symbols to direct action. However, the potency of those group symbols rests with the group not with the leader.

More recent theories of leadership are based not so much on classic traits of leadership, but on analyses of the relationship between the leader and the follower. Particularly relevant for this purpose is the debate on transactional and transformational leadership (Bass 1985; 1990). *Transactional leadership* is considered an increasingly common form of leadership in business, in politics, and in government bureaucracy (MacGregor Burns 1978: 19f.). However, this kind of leadership has limitations. A transaction creates no enduring purpose that holds the parties together. It does not bind the leader and follower in a mutual and continuing pursuit of a higher purpose because it is utilitarian by nature.

In contrast, *transformational leadership* “[...] occurs when one or more persons engage with others in a way that raises both leaders and followers to higher levels of motivation and morality [...] Their purposes, which might have started out as separate but related, as in the case of transactional leadership, become fused” (Yammimario/Bass 1990: 157f.). This leadership approach is basically people-oriented and has it that success comes first and last through deep and sustained commitment. Therefore it seems adequate to speak of *leadership & followership* because subordinates have to accept a leader. In a way this leadership concept is very traditional as far as the leader is considered to be the servant of the subordinates and egalitarian at the same time. The concept of transformational leadership is in the military context sometimes referred to as *ethical leadership*. The notion of ethical leadership would be a tautology if the espoused values and the practiced values concerning responsibility of superiors towards the well-being of their subordinates within the military were identical. Transformational leadership allows for and needs superiors that are bound to a moral that puts the soldiers’s welfare first.

Superiors will not be leaders if they do little to motivate and inspire their subordinates. The superior, in effect, becomes a leader only when accepted as such by subordinates because they chose to be his or her followers. Real leadership requires much more than management skills or legal authority. The leader is the one who due to dedication – not necessarily character – encourages the other members of the unit. Trusted leadership, i.e. positive followership reduces the outside stresses not related to operational tasks that can destroy a unit. Central prerequisites for valuable leadership are therefore constructive social interaction, known goals, lucid timeframes, clear work roles and knowledge of tasks, distribution of relevant information, guidance, control and acceptance, allocation of time and resources, and if necessary the initiation of corrective actions. Insofar the notion of ethical or moral leadership would be an oxymoron. In relation to leadership within larger work units, organisations prove to be a prerequisite for co-ordinated leadership. Uncertain information and rumours, that contribute to friction and lost morale, can be clarified by trusted leaders. Confusing operational aims, opposition in the home society, unsound strategy, and other questions can all be mitigated to a certain extent by nurturing, caring commanders that have the trust of their subordinates (Stewart 1991). Therefore *task cohesion* is highly dependant on practised transformational leadership.
Subordinates must be convinced that their leader has their welfare in mind. Leaders must continually set a strong personal example, especially in deployment, in order for men and women to follow them. In deployment or in an exercise good leaders live with their unit, eat with their unit, empathise with their unit, and care for their unit (cf. Henderson 1985; Stewart 1991). Good leaders share discomfits and danger and their optimism and courage is contagious (Stewart 1991). Not through paternalism but through giving a good example good leaders earn their followers trust. As well, leaders are only entitled to ask from below what they are prepared to give above, and the people in charge must put first the interests of those over whom they are positioned (vertical social cohesion). A leader must proof competent in the skills relevant to the fulfillment of the primary task of his unit and worthy of the subordination of potential followers (vertical task cohesion). In this sense good leadership equals followership even in the hierarchical structures of the military field.

Collective Drills & Skills

In a recent publication British sociologist Anthony King (2006: 496) argues that by focusing on the exclusively military practices a better understanding can be reached of how military groups are able to sustain themselves even at the cost of personal injury and death to their members. His research focus is social practices that are critical to social cohesion. King holds that it is not personal relations that account for strong social but other social practices he calls collective drills. He suggest that rather than looking at informal rituals one should focus on formal rituals that soldiers undergo, e.g. intense training regimes, in which collective drills are inspired. Formal training practices stand in the forefront of his research because King is mainly interest in the social practices at the tactical level of combat units. Like the huge majority of the literature on cohesion of military units also King focuses on relatively small and stable groups of combat units. But King (ibid.) argues that socially cohesive structures are not merely the consequence of mutual, continuous, and common personal experience, but result from intense training regimes.

The rigorous and lengthy training processes in which soldiers learn collective drills are essential because in this way troops become oriented to collective representations, collective movements, and efficient ways of communication. King (2006: 506) argues that it is a high level of collective military proficiency that causes cohesion: “Successful armies like the Wehrmacht consist of a myriad of mutually supporting primary groups, all militarily proficient, and all ultimately directed to the same shared goals.” In this sense King (2006: 509) considers genuine military comradeship to be a function of collective drills and military proficiency because within the troops one has to prove worthy of comradeship.

There are integrating mechanisms that are relevant for the ground forces and the staff personnel as well. In an article on cultural diversity within multinational UN-peace-keeping missions Elron/Shamir/Ben-Ari (1999: 87ff.) give several specific and actively managed mechanisms that help to create operational unity. By including the operational level of staff units it turns out to be necessary not only to take collective drills but also to take shared skills into account. A few of these mechanisms described by Elron et al. (1999) on the basis of their analysis of multinational UN-peace-keeping missions seem also to be highly relevant for the analysis of collective drills & skills within integrated multinational staffs and units:
• **Joint operations and training**: Training in and with other armed forces and various joint exercises allow as concrete instances for co-operation and incorporation. Common military practices and values can be established.

• **Formal co-ordinating mechanisms**: Co-ordination structures at the top of the command framework representing all participating countries.

• **Information flow and sharing knowledge**: The exchange of information and sharing of professional knowledge can facilitate better co-ordination and forms part of a process of mutual learning that may, in turn, lead to an increase in the will to engage in further interactions.

• **Leadership and deliberate social activities**: Leaders have to take efforts to make goals and tasks clear. By creating sentiments of co-operation and affiliation through social events the concept of team-work will be sustained.

On the operational level of staffs and headquarters military proficiency may look different than in the “mud zone” of combat units. Here the procedures for effective command & control – in a more general sense – are the central elements of military practices. Therefore King’s construct of collective drills has to be enlarged to *collective skills*. So-called standard operating procedures (SOPs) are laid down in written form but they have to be trained in exercises in the “learning by doing” fashion. The staff must establish and practice an SOP to effectively manage all the information the operational level has to check and evaluate. This SOP must include standard displays the commander can use for decision making, as well as procedures and techniques the staff uses to report critical information. Through the played but realistic events and incidents of the exercises the staff personnel can undergo processes where they have to develop militarily relevant collective skills. Another aspect of such exercises is to train the co-operation with assigned and subordinated units. Collective drills in the form of formal training practices respectively commonly shared procedures can be understood as mechanisms for integration. The staff level must be highly competent in the skills relevant to the discharge of the primary task of the organization. In order to be able to co-operate the staff level must share collective skills since usually more than one person is involved in evaluating and handling a new situation. In an integrated multinational setting it is necessary that staff soldiers from all nations involved are familiar with the relevant procedures of their unit.

**Professional Trust**

*Trust* is widely considered a necessary condition for co-operation of actors in positive social interaction, within organisations and between groups (cf. Kramer/Tyler 1995). To be sure, co-operation among individuals or organisations can occur without the involvement of trust. This is often the case in first-time or one-time encounters when we have no experience to support expectations about trust. Trust (or mistrust) develops out of the joint experience of living or working together. By observing how different individuals, groups or organisations deal with risk and vulnerability, we learn to expect certain behaviours. Trust, therefore embodies an expectation that those we deal with are reliable and will not take advantage of one another or
exploit situations that benefit one at the expense of others. When trust is low, we usually build formal protections into these relationships. When trust is high, we are more likely to develop informal but well-understood ways of acting together. Alan Fox (1974) established the concept of “high-trust vs. low-trust” within organisations. Fox (1974: 13 ff.) emphasizes that for the level of trust within an organisation one has to take the level of discretion for the exercise of one’s tasks into account, although one has to be aware that the level of discretion is one among other factors that contribute to or compromise the establishment of trust. Within the social context of organisation that demands a formal framework for collaboration the relations of trust are mainly based on reciprocity. Fox (1974: 69) even argues that institutionalised trust is “compatible with personal dislike of the person trusted; distrust with personal liking and respect for him.”

Trust is less a strategy, i.e. the result of intentional acting of an interested person or group, but rather the consequence of processes of acting which are the results of a successful common praxis on which they are based. Therefore Gambetta (1988: 225) argues that trust can be found “in societies and groups which are successful because of their ability to cooperate, and would consist in nothing more than trust in the success of previous cooperation. Cooperation could be triggered not by trust, but simply by a set of fortunate practices, random at first, and then selectively retained (with various degrees of learning and intentionality)”. It remains highly interesting why even in very hierarchical organisations, characterised by institutionalised distrust and a low level of discretion, the idea of trust is considered as something positive and important for co-operation even by the managers or the leadership of such hierarchical organisations.

In the military context for some time now the value of trust to operational effectiveness has been accepted. However, as organisational structures have slowly changed towards collective work in the form of units or teams, both virtual and proximate, the importance of trust has become even more prominent. For example, trust within a work unit environment is more complex due to there being multiple agents acting to establish or degrade trust, so that a single action may impact on the perception of trust of the entire group. Trust among peers solidifies. Concerning the military as an hierarchical organisation there is the fundamental problem of discretion and trust. Within different armed forces there are diverse levels of discretion for accomplishing a task. Not only do leadership doctrines differ in this respect but especially the social practices. It can be assumed that the aspect of discretion within military leadership doctrines has an impact on the level of trust within multinational military co-operation.

The current US Marine Corps doctrine on Command and Control (MCDP 6: 115) argues on trust in the following way: “In order to earn a senior’s trust, subordinates must demonstrate the self-discipline to accomplish the mission with minimal supervision and to act always in accord with the larger intent. Seniors, in order to earn subordinates’ trust, must likewise demonstrate that they will provide the subordinate the framework within which to act and will support and protect subordinates in every way as they exercise initiative.” That is to say that there seems to be a strong connection between trust and personal leadership.

The concept of professional trust holds that trust is an essential component of what it means to be a “professional”. Under professional trust we can understand the degree to which individuals and organisations charged with developing and delivering a service believe they can rely on the motives and predict the performance of the other participants due to common professional standards. Similar to this approach is Sako’s concept of “competence trust” that
entails the confidence in the other’s ability to perform properly (cf. Sako 1992). But the idea of professionalism goes beyond the notion of mere competence. In addition to mere competence in handling required skills to fulfil given tasks, professionalism furthermore includes not only the knowledge of commonly shared explicit and implicit rules but especially the self-obligation towards the ethics of the profession and its standards of performance. Military sociologist Morris Janowitz [1960] defined a profession in the following terms: (1) “special skill, acquired through intensive training”; (2) “a sense of group identity”; (3) “a system of internal administration”; (4) “a body of ethics and standards of performance” (Janowitz 1964: 5f.). Concerning trust in the “profession of controlled violence” Collins/Jacobs (2002: 39) put it in the following words: “In respect to professionalism, trust is so critical that it is hard to imagine a healthy profession of arms without widespread trust.”

Trust is based on a number of assumptions about professional behaviour and its underpinning ethical norms. They include the belief in the integrity and honesty of the professionals in all of their activities, the impartiality of their knowledge, the fiduciary nature of their relationship with their colleagues respectively comrades, their adherence to their profession’s standards of practice, the confidentiality of information, their willingness to disclose conflicts of interest and their regard for the public interest (cf. Daykin 2004). This list is not exhaustive, but it makes sufficiently clear that professional behaviour is not limited to a judgement on competence or knowledge, although this is certainly taken for granted, and is also concerned with the character of the individuals assuming a professional status. Therefore, competence is not enough on its own; what is required is the ability to make appropriate professional judgements that go beyond standardised, codified knowledge. As already stated, traditional conceptualisations of professionalism rest upon the attainment of certified skills and knowledge. The benign spiral at the heart of the formation of trust between practitioner and client is arguably predicated upon the practitioner’s legitimate, authentic possession of this expert, accredited knowledge (cf. Gilmore/Hoecht/Williams 2005).

Concerning professional trust in the military in general and in an integrated multinational context especially it’s the collaboration between individuals and groups that all belong to a single profession what counts. If the military were world-wide “brothers in arms” conducting the same craft with the same skills and the same leadership doctrines there wouldn’t be any problems concerning multinational collaboration apart from sometimes being enemies. There are indeed indications from UN-Peace-Keeping missions that something like a common world-wide military culture exists (cf. Moskos 1976; Belamy 1996; Segal/Tiggle 1997; Soeters/Recht). In particular Elron et al. (1999: 84) argue that the military culture common to AVF around the globe centres on the notion of the military profession. Elron et al. (1999: 85) put it this way: “[...] even before entering a specific multinational force, officers (and some men) may have already undergone vicarious, anticipatory, and actual socialization to work in such frameworks.” That is to say that at least the armed forces of those countries that support multinational collaboration in UN-Peace-Keeping missions or in military alliances like NATO find themselves in processes of institutionalised isomorphism, i.e. they are structurally converting to each other due to internal and especially external developments (c.f. DiMaggio/Powell 1983). In this sense the existence of military professionalism would therefore be the precondition to high professional trust and task cohesion. This constellation can contribute to successful operational performance of multinational units. Those who are militarily proficient can be trusted because they are able to contribute to collective goals and share similar norms. In respect to
professionalisation within Western militaries Elbe/Richter (2005: 148) argue that the phenomenon of military professionalism leads to normative isomorphism through common standards, defined work methods, common standards and commonly shared way of thinking. Since there is usually only one regular military force per country this implies that these processes of convergence take place on a transnational level. Therefore professional trust can be understood as an integrating condition for successful multinational co-operation in operations abroad, in a multinational high-readiness unit or headquarters in garrison.

Social Cohesion and Task Cohesion

Research has made it clear that cohesion is not a unitary construct. Many dimensions of cohesion have been discussed in the research literature. Perhaps the most important and fruitful distinction is that between social cohesion and task cohesion (cf. Davis 1969; Tziner/Vardi 1982; Carron, Widmeyer/Brawley, 1985; Griffith 1988; Siebold/Kelly 1988; Zaccaro/McCoy 1988; Mudrack 1989; MacCoun 1993; Mullen/Copper 1994; MacCoun 1996; Kier 1998). Robert MacCoun (1993: 291) offers the following definitions:

- **Social cohesion** refers to the nature and quality of the emotional bonds of friendship, liking, caring, and closeness among group members. A group is socially cohesive to the extent that its members like each other, prefer to spend their social time together, enjoy each other’s company, and feel emotionally close to one another.

- **Task cohesion** refers to the shared commitment among members to achieving a goal that requires the collective efforts of the group. A group with high task cohesion is composed of members who share a common goal and who are motivated to co-ordinate their efforts as a team to achieve that goal.

The imperatives for small unit leaders to build teams are clear and straightforward: keep units together as much as possible, assign units not individuals to duty on guard and maintenance, billet units together, emphasise unit uniqueness, insure barracks and other facilities support distinctive unit identity and clear unit boundaries, schedule non-training appointments together to minimise absences, manage off-duty time, grant leave and liberty to entire units, and plan picnics, sports, and family days together (cf. Wong 1985; Henderson 1985). Leaders need to insure that the unit satisfies the soldier’s physical needs for food, water, medical, shelter, social needs for esteem and affection, and security needs. These actions, and others, increase interdependency, trust, respect, and peer bonding, which all contribute to social cohesion.

According to most findings in sociology and social psychology task cohesion may be more important than social cohesion in enhancing group performance. What remains very emotionally discussed within the military establishment and even within modern military sociology is the importance of each type of cohesion (social or task) for the level of operational performance. The construct of social cohesion is known to the military world as comradeship, which signifies most often the trust into one another on the same rank level, but also towards superiors and subordinates. In the military as well as the civilian context all over the world commonsensical notions emphasise the importance of emotional bonds, trust, and loyalty to the primary group for successful operational performance. Researchers such as Elizabeth Kier (1998: 18) examined the literature and concluded that concerning social respectively primary group
cohesion “fifty years of research in several disciplines has failed to uncover persuasive evidence [...] that there is a causal relationship leading from primary group cohesion to military effectiveness.” After reviewing military and civilian studies of cohesion and performance, MacCoun (1996) concluded that it is task cohesion – not social cohesion or group pride – that drives group performance. He pointed out that when social cohesion is too high, deleterious consequences can result, including excessive socialising, group-think (the failure of a highly cohesive group to engage in effective decision-making processes), insubordination, and even mutiny. MacCoun’s arguments are echoed by Segal/Kestnbaum (2002: 453) who stated that, “There is no clear causal link that can be demonstrated using rigorous methods between social cohesion and high levels of military performance”. It seems that bonding within military units increases social cohesion but might have no or even counterproductive outcomes concerning operational effectiveness. This holds especially true for tasks where co-operation with non-group members – like in loose multinational formations and in OOTWs – is demanded.

The general circumstances of current multinational collaboration in 1 GNC

Task cohesion, leadership and training are the key multipliers for successful operational performance of integrated multinational forces. Positive qualities of community (social cohesion) of the service member’s face-to-face unit; competent, ethical, and properly supported leadership; and prolonged, realistic, progressive, state-dependent training that work for what troops and their leaders really have to do and have to face are the elements that build collective drills & skills. In what follows firstly, the background to the intensive loads of training and exercises within 1 GNC are explained and described. In a second step results from qualitative and quantitative interviews are presented and discussed.

For many years 1 GNC was a truly binational structure. With the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Monday 23 September 2002, the Headquarters 1 GNC was officially designated as an International Military Headquarters to NATO. Already on 19 June 2002 the Commanding General of 1 GNC declared 1 GNC Corps operational ready to act as a High Readiness Forces Headquarters to the Dutch and German ministers of defence. This declaration marked the end of an intense transformation period that lasted eighteen months. While for several years 1 GNC only consisted of Dutch and German soldiers the HQ was opened by early 2002 to small contingents of soldiers from now ten different NATO countries, the so called Other Participating Nations (OPN), making the HQ truly multinational.

Since a few years 1 GNC is certified as a NATO High Readiness Force HQ. The HQ 1 GNC is under Operational Command of Allied Command Operations and will conduct operation once the North Atlantic Council has agreed upon a mission. The governments of Germany and the Netherlands offered NATO the Headquarters 1 GNC as Land Component Command (LCC) for NRF 4 (January-July 2005) under the lead of NATO’s Joint Forces Command Naples (Italy). The concept of NATO Response Force (NRF) was first endorsed with a declaration of NATO’s Heads of State at the Prague Summit on 22 November 2002 and is planned to be fully developed by October 2006. Now that HQ 1 GNC is certified to act as Land Component Command for the NATO Response Force, the time to respond to crises has even been reduced to five days for the first Corps elements. A constant pressure of time as well as the multinational corps’ environment has both contributed to a current state of readiness that has to provide swift answers to future challenges. First elements of the NRF are able to deploy within five days and the whole force is
able to operate self-sufficiently for thirty days. Units that are assigned undergo a specialised 12-month preparation program that is split into the six months of unit training under national responsibility and six months of joint and combined training under the responsibility of the respective component command. After a successful final test, NATO’s Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) certified the forces of 1 GNC.

In the first half of 2004, Headquarters 1 (GE/NL) Corps prepared itself through a series of seminars, workshops and the two main exercises Peace Rider 1 in January and Honest Sword in March. To meet NATO’s demands, as of 1 July 2004 the HQ has deepened the joint and combined training as highlighted by exercises Peace Rider 2 in July, Heroic Sword in October and SACEUR’s final certification exercise Allied Warrior in November 2004. On 14 January 2005, Headquarters 1 GNC took over the lead of the six-month NRF-4 LCC stand-by period. It ended officially on 28 June 2005. From 21 April to 22 April 2005, Headquarters 1 GNC conducted a seminar on Non-Combatant Evacuation Operations (NEO) and Counter Terrorism Operations since the planning and execution of these operations are two potential missions of the NRF concept. Then from 23 May until 17 June 2005, about 5,500 soldiers from various NATO nations participated in Norway in an exercise at the training areas south-east from Hamar. The exercise Iron Sword 05 was a combined Deployment and Field Training Exercise in which the Headquarters of 1 GNC performed its role as Land Component Command (LCC) for the (NRF). The NRF-4 Land Contingent has shown that it is capable to conduct a complex Joint and Combined Operation for four weeks from scratch and without much preliminary training, 1500 kilometres away from the peacetime location. NRF-4 practised operational principles and demonstrated their capabilities. Demanding tasks such as the deployment of 5,500 soldiers and more than 2000 vehicles as well as Non-Combatant Evacuation and Counter Terrorism Operations were trained.

The praxis of multinational interaction in 1 GNC

Although Germany and the Netherlands share only to a certain extent a common history, one can find that their cultures are not as diversified as one may think. Several research projects have shown (e.g. Hagen/Klein/Moelker/Soeters 2003) that the people of both countries show common cognitive schemas, attitudes and through their lingual and cultural roots both countries can be placed within the “Germanic European cluster” (cf. Szabo et al. 2002). As one soldier put it: “We are very much alike [i.e. the Dutch and the Germans], but that is exactly why all the differences that do exist are under the magnifying glass.”

Language

In 1 GNC a notable difference is that most Dutch soldiers are very proficient in the English and the German language. This is among other factors due to the fact that people in the Netherlands are confronted with these languages in their everyday life, e.g. that all originally Anglo-Saxon TV-Programmes are subtitled. Their aptness to communicate in three different languages is a key advantage for the Dutch soldiers to work in an international environment. The contrary is often the case for German ranks, of which a majority seems not having a good knowledge of the working language of 1 GNC and the other multinational formations. Since the average Dutch soldier is able to communicate more easily in English than his or her German comrades he or she might get the impression that the German soldier is less qualified and even
expects Dutch soldiers to speak German. This is to say that a lack in the proficiency of the English language is more than a simple communication problem.

In the integrated battalions of 1 GNC the overall understanding is that German is the language primarily utilised in informal binational co-operation. Though English is the official language for meetings and documentation, all soldiers benefit from the fact that the Dutch usually have proficient knowledge of the English as well as the German language. A Dutch soldier of the StSptBn: “Everyday practice is that on an informal level the Dutch adjust to the Germans and start speaking their language, whilst on a formal level people usually speak English.” German enlisted soldiers have often poorer proficiency in the English language, which has lead to supplemental mandatory language instruction initialised by the battalion commander in Münster. In Eibergen the situation was a little different. In the interviews with German soldiers it was stated that English, thus spoken by both nations, is the major language for official and informal use, although people would often switch between English and German. The Dutch interviewees in Eibergen perceived the language situation differently. One of them said: “When working with Germans I immediately start talking to them in German. Just to prevent myself from having to say the same thing twice.” It is recognised that the overcoming of the lingual barrier is vital for the functioning of the integrated battalions. That is why the slots are geared to standardised proficiency knowledge of the English language. De facto the German human resources department is not always able to find enough personnel with apt qualifications in the usage of the English language. In order to avoid gaps, the slots are filled with personnel who hold minor lingual skills. A German sergeant called that: “Manpower before language proficiency”. The problems of the German Army in finding soldiers with the right skills and a working knowledge of the English language causes sometimes eye-brow raising among Dutch soldiers concerning the professionalism of the German Army. Doubts like these can have further implications when it comes to professional trust. The following statement highlights that concerning the English language issue there is more on stake than just being able to communicate or the idea of the military professionalism of the partner army: “It is very easy to say to in English to a lieutenant colonel ‘good morning Sir’, but somehow it feels very different for a Dutch soldier to say to a German ‘Guten Tag, Herr Oberstleutnant’.” All in all the black and white image of the German soldiers in the battalions having problems with the English language and the Dutch soldiers not was often drawn. In the next statement this image gets repeated and corrected at the same time: “It is always a struggle that the German refuse to learn and speak Dutch and hardly speak English. Only from the level of cadet officer / officer the level of English is workable. The Dutch normally take pride in their skillfulness with languages and the fact that we all speak German ... well ... the practical situation is very different.” Initiatives like the above mentioned supplemental mandatory language course remain crucial as long as there is no structural solution to the language issue.

Leadership Styles

Leadership style is the manner and approach of providing direction, implementing plans, and motivating people. The U.S. Army Handbook (1973) mentions three styles of leadership:

- **Authoritarian**: This style is used when the superior tells the subordinates what he or she wants done and how he or she wants it done, without getting the advice of his or her subordinates. Some of the appropriate conditions to use it are when the superior has all
the information to solve the problem, there is time pressure, and the subordinates are well motivated.

- **Participative:** This type of style involves the superior including one or more subordinates in on the decision making process determining what to do and how to do it. However, the leader maintains the final decision making authority. This style is normally used when the superior possesses parts of relevant information, and the subordinates have other parts. Using this style can improve the quality of decisions and improves team building processes.

- **Delegative:** In this style, the superior allows the subordinates to make the decision. However, the leader is still responsible for the decisions that are made. This style is used when employees are able to analyze the situation and determine what needs to be done and how to do it. This is a style to be used when the superior has full confidence in the subordinates.

Although good leaders use all three styles, with one of them normally dominate, bad leaders tend to stick with one style. A good leader uses all three styles, depending on what forces are involved between the followers, the leader, and especially the situation. However, participative and delegative leadership styles are closest to the demands of transformational leadership.

In order to find out what type of leadership the Dutch and German soldiers of 1 GNC would prefer if they had their choice and what type their immediate superior resembles the most we depicted four ideal type superiors. The first two superiors (type 1 and 2) resemble the authoritarian leadership style – with superior 1 being more autocratic than superior 2 –, the third ideal type superior stands for participative and the fourth superior type for delegative leadership.

Table 1: Which type of superior would you prefer?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Superior</th>
<th>Dutch</th>
<th>Germans</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Superior 1</td>
<td>9,3%</td>
<td>5,7%</td>
<td>7,2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superior 2</td>
<td>24,4%</td>
<td>36,6%</td>
<td>31,6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superior 3</td>
<td>61,6%</td>
<td>54,5%</td>
<td>57,4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superior 4</td>
<td>4,7%</td>
<td>3,3%</td>
<td>3,8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100,0%</td>
<td>100,0%</td>
<td>100,0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Eta = .046; N = 209

Table 2: Which of these four types of superiors resembles you own superior the most?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Superior</th>
<th>Dutch</th>
<th>Germans</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None of the four types</td>
<td>15,9%</td>
<td>7,3%</td>
<td>10,8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superior 1</td>
<td>19,3%</td>
<td>17,7%</td>
<td>18,4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superior 2</td>
<td>25,0%</td>
<td>40,3%</td>
<td>34,0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superior 3</td>
<td>38,6%</td>
<td>29,8%</td>
<td>33,5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superior 4</td>
<td>1,1%</td>
<td>4,8%</td>
<td>3,3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
During the research on the tactical level of the battalions within 1 GNC it turned out that the German soldiers are used to more hierarchical and strict formal rules and regulations in the Bundeswehr than what is the case within the less authoritarian form of leadership practised by the Dutch army. Furthermore it was frequently quoted, that Dutch subordinates often feel the need to discuss orders, which is rather strangely perceived by the German chain of command. Again it was quoted, that there seems to be a more moderate military tone within the battalions of 1 GNC than in the Bundeswehr. Furthermore German soldiers appreciate the fact, that within 1 GNC they are not tied to the rather strict formalism of the Bundeswehr. A Dutch NCO stated in this respect: “You come across different mentalities here in Münster, but all in all I don’t think working with Germans is any different from working with Dutch people. As long as you keep account for their strictness and more hierarchical approach. We Dutch tend to do things outside of set rules and functions. We are more inclined to evaluate somebody on the premises of his personnel qualities rather then his hierarchical position. Germans play it more by the system.” In the Dutch system orders often seem to offer a basis of discussion, prior to execution. Compared to the Dutch conduct, the German soldiers interviewed stated that the German system implies authoritarian styles of leadership and a stronger usage of leading by orders to be immediately executed. The following table may be able to give an impression concerning the differences between the Dutch and the German army in respect to differences in leadership styles.

Table 3: How do superiors interact with their subordinates in 1 GNC in comparison to your country?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Do not know</th>
<th>Rougher and stricter</th>
<th>Approximately the same</th>
<th>More relaxed and friendlier</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dutch</td>
<td>3,3%</td>
<td>34,4%</td>
<td>47,8%</td>
<td>14,4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germans</td>
<td>7,4%</td>
<td>.8%</td>
<td>21,3%</td>
<td>70,5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OPN</td>
<td>,0%</td>
<td>,0%</td>
<td>55,6%</td>
<td>44,4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5,4%</td>
<td>14,5%</td>
<td>33,5%</td>
<td>46,6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Concerning command and control on the operational level of the HQ 1 GNC the practises of all the nations involved are naturally not the same. Concerning the level of empowerment one member of the “Other Participating Nations” (OPN) within 1 GNC stated the following: “Overall I find command and control [within HQ 1 GNC] dogmatic, bureaucratic and timid, not at all what I have experienced in other UK and multinational formations. Mission command is not generally practiced.” Another member of the HQ from one of the OPNs put it this way: “There is little sense of empowerment across the whole HQ. In some staff divisions it is obvious whereas in others the book is followed without question. The HQ, although an enjoyable, relatively happy HQ, is nonetheless the most bureaucratic one that I have served in.” The question whether these alleged characteristics of the HQ 1 GNC reflect the military cultures of both the frameworks
nations remains open. Although officially the armies of the Netherlands and Germany use the concept of mission command, there seem to be differences between the ten nations involved in GNC when it comes to the practical side of the notion of mission command.

There tend to be a lot of subtle differences concerning leadership between the Dutch and the German national military cultures which lead to misunderstandings. Do German soldiers wrongly interpret the lack of formalism within the Dutch chain of command? In field manuals of the Bundeswehr it is strictly expressed, that the official military language is a formal one. This means among other rules, that soldiers are not supposed to address each other by the first name. This is freely overlooked by the Dutch superiors resulting in a collegial tone, to which German soldiers are at first not accustomed to. It seems that this might lead to confusion among some German soldiers. In the German system, especially young NCOs are taught to guard their formal distance to superiors and subordinates in order to be able to breach authority difficulties resulting out of lack of experience, young age and uncertainty. The formal language does help many young superiors to lead more effectively, because they are taken as an authority. When the formal discipline is put away, the formal authority of the superior can be more easily questioned. Often then, German subordinates feel that they do not have to perform as highly anymore. Here is what a typical Dutch corporal stated concerning formal discipline respectively self discipline (Selbstdisziplin) of German soldiers: “The Germans are very keen on hierarchical positions and give very directive and piecemeal [hapklare brokken] orders, while the Dutch are know for taking own initiative, which is something a German would never do.” For the evaluation of the research findings this allegedly behavioural pattern of authoritarian thinking among some German soldiers leads to the assumption that such German soldiers might receive the lack of formalism on the part of Dutch superiors as an invitation to show lower performance because they misunderstand the signals sent. This is the point where the renowned German leadership concept of “Innere Führung” (inner direction and moral guidance) must come in. Soldiers from the battalions and the HQ answered in the following way:

Table 4: I support the German leadership concept of “Innere Führung”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Dutch</th>
<th>Germans</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never heard of</td>
<td>23,5%</td>
<td>2,5%</td>
<td>11,2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>5,9%</td>
<td>28,9%</td>
<td>19,4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partially agree</td>
<td>25,9%</td>
<td>40,5%</td>
<td>34,5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither/nor</td>
<td>30,6%</td>
<td>18,2%</td>
<td>23,3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partially disagree</td>
<td>7,1%</td>
<td>9,1%</td>
<td>8,3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>7,1%</td>
<td>0,8%</td>
<td>3,4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100,0%</td>
<td>100,0%</td>
<td>100,0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Those soldiers who are familiar with Innere Führung were asked if the principles of this concept were applied in their unit. As it turns out the German soldiers have quite a different perception concerning the application of Innere Führung in their unit. Mind you that some Dutch soldiers might have given a negative answer concerning application of Innere Führung since they serve in purely Dutch units where rather the principles of the similar Dutch leadership concept “Leidinggeven” are applied.

Table 5: The principles of “Innere Führung” are applied in my unit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Dutch</th>
<th>Germans</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>5,3%</td>
<td>16,5%</td>
<td>12,1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partially agree</td>
<td>25,3%</td>
<td>41,7%</td>
<td>35,3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither/nor</td>
<td>46,7%</td>
<td>34,8%</td>
<td>39,5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partially disagree</td>
<td>5,3%</td>
<td>6,1%</td>
<td>5,8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>17,3%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>7,3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100,0%</td>
<td>100,0%</td>
<td>100,0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It was often mentioned by most German interviewees of the two battalions, that the Dutch soldiers feel the need to discuss orders once they are issued. In the Dutch military culture this does not mean that these orders are taken into question, but that the execution is being re-examined collectively without taking the formal authority of the superior into question. Furthermore, the subordinates get a chance to contribute their own thoughts to the order. This may lead to the perception, that subordinates actively participate in the decision making process. A German corporal expressed it this way: “With us things go more through orders, with them things go more through comradeship.” The discussion of orders is something rather unknown within the Bundeswehr. It is rather evaluated as a lack of respect than a sign of trust or constructive critique. In the German system orders are perhaps discussed after they were executed. Due to our Dutch and German interviewees there were moments when this phenomenon has lead to frictions between German superiors and Dutch subordinates. Generally speaking, most German soldiers within the integrated battalions of all ranks appreciate the Dutch way of leadership and the moderate military formalism and tone. One German NCO put it this way: “What I envy the Dutch for is their ease in challenging tasks. Also their leadership style is much more co-operative than ours. Also the Germans can learn from the Dutch social systems, e.g. medical welfare, care for soldiers, giving trust. I think the Dutch Army is several years ahead of us.” Those German soldiers who prefer the standard German military way of “Lage, Auftrag, Ausführung” (situation, mission, execution) and the traditional military ideas of hierarchy, discipline, and formalism often belong to the older age group.

On the battalion level soldiers from both armies feel to be, in a professional sense, in a privileged position because of the amount of exercises conducted. The perception, that leisure time is drastically reduced due to the large amount of manoeuvres in the field, seems to challenge especially the mature ranks. Integrated binationality as such is well appreciated.
Soldiers seem to serve with a certain consciousness concerning integrated binationality which still cannot be described as an overwhelming pride for serving in those exposed units. The development within the StSptBn in Münster suggests that the work on a binational basis has improved during the last 1½ years. Soldiers feel that the leadership emphasises binational work and contributes means in order to improve cohesion, whilst leading and living the binational idea by example. Most conflicts are attributed to personal issues and explicitly not to problems deriving from national cultural differences. The daily service shows that when the battalion command performs binationally, then the subordinate units will do the same. Furthermore, all German interviewees agreed that they like the Dutch form of leadership. As long as the Dutch soldiers are also satisfied with the Dutch leadership style it should therefore be possible to find common grounds concerning the norms and standards of command and control on the tactical level within 1 GNC. Concerning practiced leadership this would obviously ask much flexibility on the German side.

**Regulations, Procedures and Professionalism**

Service in a multinational environment always implies different national regulations not always being compatible with each other. “We have German, Dutch AND Nato procedures working here. They sometimes simply don’t match.” Sometimes bi- or multinational regulations are introduced without the national regulations being diminished in the everyday praxis. “It is typical that we have an office German material, an office Dutch material and also work with binational material. On three similar vehicles totally different rules may apply. But this office for material consists of three people who work quiet closely together and juggle their way through the regulatory jungle.” Concerning procedures there seems not to be one standardised binational way. When it comes to decide which procedures are chosen a Dutch officer emphasizes in the interview the importance of the person in charge: “What procedures are leading, more or less depends of the division heads. The amount of relative power / authority this person has will guide the choice for either Dutch or German procedures.” The problem of common procedures is virulent for all branches but especially for logistics: “Regularly though, we have to switch gears between the prescribed Dutch procedures and the procedures originating from Germany, which – more often then not – lie quiet far apart”. But for some units there seems to be light at the end of the tunnel: In May 2005 a section of the StSptBn was in midst of introducing a NATO system in order to harmonise the two logistical supply chains. The introduction of NATO SOPs is viewed as positive and the personnel are looking forward to completing the process thus it might further upgrade the interoperability and operational readiness of the StSptBn.

In the CIS-Bn the maintenance and application of material seems to fairly work out without larger deficiencies. Both sides make an effort to treat each others material well. The main problem in this respect seems to be that there exists the perception among Dutch and German soldiers that the Dutch Army – perhaps due to lesser financial restrictions – provides the better personal equipment to their soldiers and also provides the more up-to-date material to the CIS-Bn.

Limits for binational co-operation are found with adequate translations of field manuals and contradicting national guidelines. A German NCO stated: “One should start to think about common ‘regulations’. E.g, concerning training on the obstacle course there are different regulations in Germany than in the Netherlands. Which one is relevant for me? Whose liability is
it when something happens to me? This is only one example but it applies on all fields of binational co-operation.” On a shooting range, e.g., different rules apply depending on the country the binational soldiers are training in; this is in binational setting normal but can be confusing for the individual soldier. Even though there are official regulations for cases like the before mentioned one, they can only be considered to be effective for binational co-operation as long as they are well known. There seems to be a connection between the internal logics of national regulations and the practical outcomes they show. One Dutch sergeant put it this way: “During exercises you often see a lot of people putting effort in, but in opposite directions, and you see a lot of national regulations that contradict each other.” If differences in national regulations that are used parallel would result in different standards of professionalism, which they might very well, the basis for the establishment and development of professional trust would be hard to achieve. The same Dutch sergeant emphasizes the importance of the notion of professionalism: “For a newly arrived here, who wants to be accepted, you have to show professionalism and a honest and open attitude.” This raises the question of the structures and standards of professionalism.

Those common professional standards can be achieved through shared drills & skills that only can develop in training and exercises, and common daily practices. The establishment of such common drills & skills are not sustained through national practices within the respective sections and units: “During the exercise [Iron Sword 05] there will mainly be Dutch procedures since the Dutch OpCo is leading. That will almost certain conflict with German procedures and we will need different kind of forms and documents.” In order to establish common procedures the staff level has to be highly competent in their basic skills as soldiers and as well as professional staff personnel, because this is relevant to the discharge of the primary task of any military organization. Therefore the staff level has to share collective skills since it takes a team for evaluating and handling a new situation. In an integrated multinational setting the staff soldiers from all nations involved must be familiar with the relevant procedures of their common unit. A high level of collective drills & skills can have further outcomes, as the following statement should make clear: “There is not a constant corps spirit. It does exist after, e.g., successful exercises though.” In successful exercises you learn from each other, change together and establish new common procedures. Only under these preconditions a specific corps spirit can develop. Not only due to structural reasons internal to the two contributing mother-organizations, i.e. the Dutch and the German Army, such a binational corps spirit has to be constantly renewed.

Differences or similarities in personnel structure will also have an impact on commonly shared professional standards. The Dutch and the German personnel structure appear to be quite different: “We also know two totally different personnel structures. The Dutch are here for 3 years, fill their pockets with the expatriate bonus and are off to another position. The Germans on the other hand are in the same position for 20 years and are impossible to get rid off when they perform badly.” The fact that there is a constant fluctuation of the personnel makes it difficult to establish a binational continuity: “Due to the major changes in the personnel every three years, there hardly is any continuity here. You can start from scratch over and over again.” It seems that a little more personnel continuity would be helpful for the further development of cohesion within 1 GNC.
Feelings of most German soldiers towards the Dutch soldiers are straightway positive, due to the collegial tone and little formalism in the Dutch military culture. It is perceived that the Dutch soldiers are more easygoing while they also have a higher ability of improvisation. Binational socialising outside of the barracks does not take place very often and is of coincidental nature. German-Dutch friendships are rare and togetherness is limited to service and function. In the CIS-Bn in Eibergen/Netherlands there are several initiatives which aim at upgrading cohesion and cross-cultural understanding. The NCO-Club holds meetings once a month in order to introduce newcomers and keep members informed about latest developments concerning the overall situation. This meeting is held during office hours and has a rather formal character. Other than that, binational workshops were held in order to emphasise teambuilding and a better understanding as well as cultural awareness for the juxtaposed nation. These events were binationally initiated and are maintained by senior warrant officers of the battalion.

Many soldiers really like working for a multinational unit because of the “special feel” it sometimes gives. The case that 1 GNC often falls outside normal procedures makes things more demanding but also more challenging for proactive soldiers. This special feel can be at the same time highly contradictory, as one platoon commander stated: “My boys do not have one good word for the corps. This negative attitude is rather striking among the groups. But I sometimes see them busy with their work and you can tell that they think it is pretty cool to do a lot of things in English. Then there is also the blue beret and the NRF badge which are among peers nothing special; but to the outside world that is something they wear with pride.” All in all on the tactical level of the integrated battalions there appears to be a friendly disinterest among the members of two nations. A Dutch sergeant: “I myself do not spend social time with the Germans and none of my colleagues do. The contacts are good, but professional.” On the small group level, though, nationality does not seem to be very important for social cohesion. A Dutch corporal: “What keeps me going is the small group that I work with daily and my direct chef that does appreciate me.” This statement confirms the academic wisdom and common sense knowledge that there can hardly be any social cohesion beyond the company level anyway, be a national or binational unit. Social cohesion is often understood as a kind of trustful feeling between individuals in a given context. We were interest in the question whether people in 1 GNC not felt that they share bonds but what the practices are like. On most questions on social cohesion the Dutch and the German answers were pretty similar. Therefore we were puzzled to see clear differences on the following questions.

Table 6: The members of my unit stand up for each other

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Dutch</th>
<th>Germans</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>19,1%</td>
<td>13,0%</td>
<td>15,6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partially agree</td>
<td>57,3%</td>
<td>37,4%</td>
<td>45,8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nether/nor</td>
<td>11,2%</td>
<td>35,8%</td>
<td>25,5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partially disagree</td>
<td>10,1%</td>
<td>10,6%</td>
<td>10,4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>2,2%</td>
<td>3,3%</td>
<td>2,8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100,0%</td>
<td>100,0%</td>
<td>100,0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It seems that the Dutch soldiers are much more content with their direct comrades at 1 GNC than the German soldiers are. Interestingly the soldiers in Garderen responded in pretty much the same way as their Dutch comrades in Münster and Eibergen. According to the quantitative data on social cohesion the most contented Dutch soldiers are to be found in the HQ 1 GNC. The same holds true for the German soldiers of the HQ 1 GNC.

Given that most German soldiers actually like the more relaxed and friendlier leadership style of the Dutch Army one would have expected the German soldiers to be more enthusiastic on matters of social cohesion. The answers might express the feeling of certain strangeness on the German part with the more vivid but laid back attitude of this bi- and multinational setting at 1 GNC.

**Professional Trust and Task Cohesion**

Achieving a common goal requires the collective efforts of the group. Only groups that are composed of members who share a common goal and who are motivated to co-ordinate their efforts as a team are able to achieve such common goals. Beyond the pure will to be successful in pursuing the set goals there must be trust in the group being able to succeed. In a military context the need to trust in the professional capabilities needs to be even stronger than in a civilian context because profession of arms involves the risk of getting injured and even killed. Therefore it should seem evidently that trust in the professional skills and work of the other member of one’s group is very important.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Dutch</th>
<th>Germans</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>20,0%</td>
<td>11,5%</td>
<td>15,1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partially agree</td>
<td>46,7%</td>
<td>34,4%</td>
<td>39,6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither/nor</td>
<td>21,1%</td>
<td>42,6%</td>
<td>33,5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partially disagree</td>
<td>11,1%</td>
<td>9,8%</td>
<td>10,4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>1,1%</td>
<td>1,6%</td>
<td>1,4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100,0%</td>
<td>100,0%</td>
<td>100,0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As it turns out Dutch and German soldiers of 1 GNC have a different perception concerning the level of professional trust within their unit. The perceived feeling of trust in each others work within one’s unit is on the German side clearly lower than on the Dutch side. According to most interviewees there is an apparent difference concerning the level of binational task cohesion in and shortly after exercises compared to ‘peacetime routine’. Successful combat units all around the world therefore emphasize the need for constant training of collective drills. The units of 1 GNC find together on shared tasks and the necessary skills. A Dutch NCO put it this way: “The main advantage of bi-nationality is that you sometimes come to solutions that you normally never would have thought of. It is sometimes those small details that seem to matter so
much.” He expresses a pragmatic but at the same time very hopeful sight on binational togetherness. Also in the spirit of the less emotional idea of task cohesion a German officer made the following statement: “Getrennt marschieren, gemeinsam schlagen” (marching separately, fighting together). Healthy binational co-operation within the military is based on such pragmatic approaches.

Conclusion

The very progressive approach of 1 GNC to also practice integrated binationality outside the HQ can be considered a milestone in European integration. The higher the wishes the harder reality appears to be. Though there seems not be much space for emotional sameness between the members of different military cultures there is a lot of common ground when it comes to peruse a commonly shared idea on the basis of collective professional standards. In order for those standards to amalgamate it is necessary to share as much time as possible together and especially to establish collective drills & skills through permanent training.

Whereas there are still differences between the national and the military cultures of the Netherlands and Germany there seems to be much common ground on the personal and professional level. The organisations of the Dutch and the German Army show structural differences that often make co-operation harder than the soldiers involved wish. Soldiers from both nations experience their secondary socialisation within their organisations and they are coined through these experiences. Yet a lot of them perceive being a member of an outstanding military formation like 1 GNC to be a professional challenge. It does not look like there is the easy way to binational comradeship, with all its emotional notions, but rather that the pragmatic idealism of learning from each other how to perform as professional soldiers without the dark side national chauvinism for a better way of living together as European citizens in arms offers a lot of motivational aspects. The higher military and political echelons have to make the way so that unnecessary frictions between the members of one European military formation are put aside. Personal and professional trust can only flourish when the structures ameliorate and there is enough time given to establish common grounds. In the respect the 1 GNC is on the borderline between yesterday and tomorrow.

Successful leadership and high task cohesion depend on each other. Leader stability appears to be the central requirement for a high level of vertical cohesion. Small unit leaders must serve long tours in the same billet, ideally equivalent to the length of their soldier’s tours, to build credibility and teamwork. Leaders should join a unit early and train that unit throughout its full training cycle. Armies that keep leaders in place stabilise unit habits, standard operating procedures, expectations, and performance. In cohesive units, leaders know and try to understand their men. They know why soldiers work hard or fight and show a caring concern and respect for their soldiers.

The principle of a strong social cohesion is within the military still considered the alpha and omega of operational effectiveness. Whether social cohesion is important to military effectiveness, irrelevant or something in between can not be answered on the grounds of our results, since that was not the aim of this research project. What is obvious is that multinational soldiers consider the principle of social cohesion – that has its origins in the national armed
forces – also to be relevant for the context of integrated multinational units. This alone might have an impact on the attitudes and social practices within multinationality.

Social bounds and trust into one another are important for human beings, and due to emotional stress and lethal danger they might especially relevant for soldiers in a deployment or combat theatre. The idea of comradeship and the construct of trust get easily mingled up because they depend heavily on each other although they are not the same, since comradeship is heavily loaded with normative values while trust expresses simply confidence in each others reliability. One is considered reliable because of one’s good (human and professional) reputation and not only because of belonging to a group. What is beyond the formal structures of the military is comradeship. It can play a major role concerning the specific positive or negative quality of military force cohesion.

Trust is not only central for building up social cohesion but also vital for task cohesion. What seems to be pretty obvious is that professional trust leads to strong task cohesion. At the same time social cohesion seems to be a “hygiene factor” for professional trust: the absence of social cohesion damages professional trust, but more social cohesion does not automatically lead to more professional trust. At the same time only professional trust allows within a military context for social cohesion, because an untrustworthy soldier endangers the life of the next soldier and the whole military unit.

Performance, behaviour and feelings of the soldiers are to a large extent shaped by the hierarchical relation of superiors and subordinates. Cohesion within work units has impact on work unit effectiveness. However, the relationship between cohesion between the members of a group and operational effectiveness is moderated by many variables, of which committed leadership is a fundamental one. Cohesion is strengthened considerably and soldiers gain critical confidence, trust, and respect in their leader when the leader displays professional competence and tactical abilities while leading his or her unit in training evolutions that simulate deployment. Policies of the higher leadership can strengthen an organisation’s vertical cohesion in the sense that decentralised leave and liberty decisions, promotion recommendations, and assignment policies empower small unit leaders, strengthen each leader’s contributions to the welfare of his or her troops, and thereby increase an organisation’s cohesion. In the end we are all involved in relationships of trust but by the same token trust also involves risk and the possibility of mistrust. Groups need to find ways to work effectively together to accomplish their goals and to solve problems that sometimes can have serious ends. In this sense it is important to accept dissent and to avoid imposed consent.
Literature:


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1 Only armed forces with more than two thirds of conscript soldiers can truly be considered conscript forces (see Haltiner !!). It does not matter if these armed forces are a standing army or militia forces.

2 Instead of “service-man and -women” I use throughout the text the term “soldiers” referring to all rank groups.

3 In the NSE more and more Western armed forces no longer operate mainly in areas of responsibility, but operate in areas of interests. Therefore the question of “self legitimisation” is becoming more complicated and relevant.

4 The term *diversity* refers to all the ways we have of being different (James 2000). It covers distinctions based on phenotype, sex, age, language, ethnic origin, faith, opinion, orientation, and association (Rutherford 1990; Schuster & van Pelt 1991; James 1994). It also refers to differences in personal experience, personality, approach, and position in a hierarchy (Griggs & Low 1994).

5 All data of this and the following tables refer to the integrated battalions and the HQ.

6 The field research was conducted in May 2005.