

ABSTRACT

Military education in the changing operational environment

Might liberal thought provide the decisive edge?

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The research starts with the consideration of how the end of the Cold War caused a reassessment of the concept of security beyond the conventional, state-centric and militarized terms of the bi-polar era. In the first chapter I present different sources compiling the concept of security in broader terms i.e. encompassing economic development, social justice, environmental protection, democratization, disarmament, and respect for human rights and the rule of law. At the centre of this new idea of security lies the shaping of the concept of “human security”¹, whose definition and policy implications are still debated among scholars and policymakers². This innovative concept promotes a universalistic approach to security, that relates to a human community with global common concerns, shifting the focus from the security of the State to that of the individual. It adopts a multidimensional and holistic interpretation of security and advocates the need to ensure for individuals not only “freedom from fear”, but

¹ UNDP, Human Development Report 1994. *New Dimensions of Human Security*, New York and Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1994, <http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/global/hdr1994>

² Advocates of human security are divided between two different perceptions of the concept: a narrow approach is supported by middle powers such as Canada and Japan and embedded in the Human Security Report regularly produced by the Human Security Report Project (HSRP) in Vancouver (<http://www.hsrgroup.org>); the main reference for the promoters of the broader perspective is the UNDP’s Human Development Report. See Nikolaos Tzifakis, “Problematizing human security: a general/contextual conceptual approach”, in *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 11, No. 4 (December 2011), p. 353-368.

also “freedom from want, based on the conviction that issues such as underdevelopment, human rights violations and insecurity of citizens in conflict zones are strongly interrelated. In the debate about security, besides the shifting of focus from the state level to the individual level, also technological developments and as well as the political decision to encourage free circulation of people and goods - increasing the porosity of modern borders - contributed significantly to the multifaceted erosion of state sovereignty. New transnational entities, such as networks of terrorism and organized crime have forcefully emerged, exercising their power and pursuing their own interests. From a policy perspective, non-military root causes of instability co-exist together with military implications, and therefore requires a common framework for cooperative problem-solving among diverse actors (governments, NGOs, international organizations, transnational agencies and coalitions) and across separate but related policy areas (development, human rights, conflict resolution, etc.). The purpose of my research hence has been to assess how military education is keeping the pace with the changing operational environment and what might be the key elements for succeeding in this endeavour.

The White Paper³ issued in 2015 by the Italian Minister of Defence underlined that “the current period is distinguished by two and concomitant geopolitical trends: a progressive globalization of phenomena and problems, which tends to turn the world into a highly interconnected and interdependent "global village" at least for that part of the world with a high level of interdependence, and a parallel process of fragmentation, which causes structural weakening and destabilisation especially in weaker or newly constituted states.”

³ Libro Bianco (White Paper)

http://www.difesa.it/Primo_Piano/Pagine/20150429Libro_Bianco.aspx

Therefore "Addressing the problem of national security and defence from a modern perspective requires a comprehensive and multi-disciplinary approach. It is necessary to think about how the various capabilities which make the country safer can be developed and if the concept of "defence" can evolve, become broader, including all the different perspectives and skills involved in it". Within the EU CSDP Security is understood in its widest sense: it combines a traditional definition of state security (crisis management often involves reinforcing the state apparatus) with a more human security approach that establishes the link between the security of the state and that of individuals. This widened security agenda links to the nexus between security and development according to which no long-term peace can be sustained without a parallel process of economic development. The hybrid civil-military nature of crisis management in the EU has become one of its central features.⁴

According to the two foremost war strategists Von Clausewitz⁵ and Sun Tzu⁶, the conduct of war demands a deep understanding of the enemy – his culture, history, geography, religious and ideological motivations, and particularly the manifest differences in his perceptions of the external world. Thus the inherent nature of the human condition guarantees now as ever that uncertainty, ambiguity, and surprise will dominate the course of events. In military terms the future operating environment is defined as volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA). Hence military leaders in order to

⁴ TARDY Thierry 'CSDP in Action – What Contribution to International Security?' Chaillot Papers, EU Institute for Security Studies, May 2015, p.9-10

⁵ "War is not the action of a living force upon a lifeless mass... but always the collision of two living forces "

Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, translated and edited by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), p. 77

⁶ "if you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the results of a hundred battles" Sun Tzu Maxims

understand and respond to the necessities of war, especially in modern warfare environment, require a truly “adaptive mind-set”. Thus, while experiencing in the majority (notable exceptions being China and Russia) significant downsizing, the military force structure have to be smaller, flexible, agile and reversible with no loss to capabilities: a smaller force then requires a professionalized force across the ranks with a “mission command”⁷ mentality, where “mission command” is the “exercise of authority and direction by the commander using mission orders to enable disciplined initiative within the commander's intent to empower agile and adaptive leaders in the conduct of unified operations”. I maintain that the “mission command” mentality changes the paradigm of traditional military framework, enabling initiative and the agility of leaders to take action, appropriate to the situation. In my work I argue that the only viable means to acquire the critical skills that are needed is through education, intended as the ability to respond to the unknown⁸.

In this framework more than ever, trust and confidence represent a requirement for success in a decentralized operating environment in which the lack of understanding and situation awareness causes potentially strategic complications. The successful conduct of the mission is critically dependent on consent and local ownership, as no sustained stability can be imposed from the outside, be it in capacity-building, monitoring or peacekeeping. The challenge is to foster local support not only at the highest level of the state authorities, but also within the ministries/administrations that will be the involved in the operation.

⁷ U.S. Department of the Army, Mission Command, Field Manual 6-0 Draft (Washington, D.C.:U.S. Department of the Army, August 8, 2011), 1-2.

⁸ Ronald G. Haycock ‘Getting Here from There’: Trauma and Transformation in Canadian Military Education”, *Scientia Militaria, South African Journal of Military Studies*, Vol 32, Nr 1, 2004. <http://scientiamilitaria.journals.ac.za>

When reviewing the training methodology of the past, it can be identified a common theme of focusing on the fundamentals: during the relative stability of the Cold War era, the repetition of actions ensured that the military did the right thing when directed. This sort of muscle memory training methodology (repetition) enabled the development of the skills required for success in a symmetric environment and a centralized decision-making process. This mentality fitted in the scenario of a linear fight against a defined enemy force. In a nonlinear - VUCA - fight, the new method must enable the unit command to become a more relevant thinking participant. The military's deficiencies in training became apparent as the environment shifted to a more dynamic and demanding way of looking at the problem and required a holistic understanding of the ways and means outside of the trained expertise. Therefore I argue that past military's training lacked the focus on the cognitive skills development, insofar as it didn't enable the military force with the skills to collect, analyse, adapt, and make critical decisions at the right time and place. Jeffrey D. McCausland and Gregg F. Martin⁹ summarized the linkages between military preparedness and the evolution of challenges stating that "in addition to the well-trained officer we needed during the Cold War, our jurisdiction during the era of globalization requires a well-educated officer as well".

Reviewing the data presented by a European-wide observation¹⁰ the basic officers' education is generally structured on two "pillars", which are the academic education and vocational training, supporting the leadership "pediment", which embodies a goal in its own. Being a

⁹ Jeffrey D. McCausland and Gregg F. Martin, "Transforming Strategic Leader Education for the 21st-Century Army", in *Parameters*, Autumn 2001,

¹⁰ Sylvain PAILE (Ed.) "Europe for the Future Officers, Officers for the Future Europe -Compendium of the European Military Officers Basic Education". Department of Science and Military Education of the Ministry of National Defense in cooperation with the European Security and Defense College, September 2011

military officer is not simply a “job”, because it has implications for soldiers’ everyday life and it may require an ultimate sacrifice from them. Furthermore leadership¹¹ is key to becoming a military commander in all aspects of the work: e.g. acting as a leader in coaching subordinates, or noting changes in the operational environment and reporting on them. The role of a leader entails some distinctive features in interpersonal relationships, such as influence, vision, obligation, responsibility. Ethics and leadership are thus inextricably intertwined and both are necessary for the particularity of the work and the cohesion that is required from armed forces. There is a general agreement nowadays that the military education framework is now required to develop officers who seek after the "why" of a situation, task or directive, the understanding of which makes better use of the purpose¹².

Consequently in the second chapter I review the on-going debate amongst scholars regarding the evolution of military education. Again the Italian White Paper¹³ highlights how “The human element will remain central to the action of the military component, and it is essential to maintain this high level of professionalism over time. The ability to interact in multicultural and complex environments, the ability to understand situations as well as a spirit of invention and

¹¹ There is an extensive literature on leadership. See for example: “The nature of leadership” editors David V. DAY, John ANTONAKIS, 2nd ed. SAGE Publications 2012. Previous publications more specific to the military domain include: Vesa NISSINEN, “Military Leadership Training, Development of Leadership Behaviour in the Finnish Defence Forces”, Publication Series 1 Research Reports No 18/2001 (National Defence College, Helsinki 2001); James MAC GREGOR BURN, “Leadership”, Harper Collins, New York 1978; Bernard M. BASS, “Leadership and Performance Beyond Expectations”, Free Press, New York, 1985

¹² In the research I present the ongoing debate; it suffices here to recall the argument offered by Donald E. Vandergriff, “Today’s Training and Education (Development) Revolution: The Future is Now!”, The Land Warfare Papers, 1.

¹³ Libro Bianco (White Paper)

http://www.difesa.it/Primo_Piano/Pagine/20150429Libro_Bianco.aspx

adaptability to different environments, will be the main human characteristics in which to invest.”.

Being interoperable means to be able to work together in any kind of context, overcoming differences of languages, nationalities, cultures, to unite towards a common objective and a shared set of values. Military education, in particular professional military education, has a strong bearing not only on military effectiveness but also on personnel cohesion.

U.S. General Martin Dempsey, former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, argued that developing capable future leaders is the best hedge against an austere and uncertain future. In accord Dr. Steven Metz, Director of Research at the Strategic Studies Institute of the US Army War College argues that the purpose of the war colleges is actually a mix of professionalism (that is, sharing a body of knowledge related to the military mission) and higher education, which includes developing critical thinking skills¹⁴: i.e. strategists who understand not only current doctrine but also how to cope with emerging national security problems. Many military and not military leaders agree that education need to impart the critical thinking skills that will allow future leaders to adapt and perform well in a dynamic, complex security environment. As Prof. Ronald G. Haycock underlined “Contemporary soldiers are confronted by a bewildering range of civil, cultural and political factors foreign to their traditional martial skills. They must be knowledgeable and analytical with it all to do their jobs; and to use Sir Michael Howard’s phrase, they must have a “liberal conscience.””¹⁵

¹⁴ METZ Steven, “Strategic Horizons: U.S. Professional Military Education on the Chopping Block,” World Politics Review, April 17, 2013, available at www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/12879/strategic-horizons-u-professional-military-education-on-the-chopping-block

¹⁵ Ronald G. HAYCOCK ‘Getting Here from There’: Trauma and Transformation in Canadian Military Education”, Scientia Militaria, South African Journal of Military Studies, Vol 32, Nr 1, 2004. <http://scientiamilitaria.journals.ac.za>

The issues touched by the debate regarding military education are: education as transmission of knowledge versus education as the fostering of inquiry and reasoning skills that are conducive to the development of autonomy. For some critics that this kind of debate takes place at all in the field of military education is surprising in itself: the traditional military education rested more on the concept of obedience than on that of autonomy. This change of perspective is visibly linked with the change in the operational environment, and particularly the shifting of focus on the individual level, vis a vis the state-centric approach previously adopted.

In my effort to analyse military education, I drew mainly from the work of David Carr¹⁶ in his endeavour to present a coherent perspective on education and the issues related to it, starting with the basic idea that education is profoundly implicated in the essentially normative task of promoting *personal* growth. The concept of person that Carr maintains is distinct from human being and is that of a bearer of rational and practical capacities, values and traits of character. I then build on the *personal* growth's concept derived from Carr to incorporate Kant's idea of the moral agent as a non-empirical subject of an other-worldly moral law, presented in his *Critiques of Pure and Practical Reason*. For Kant there can be no genuine personhood without the freedom of rational autonomy or self-determination; yet, in turn, no such self-determination is feasible apart from the rational disinterest and impartiality that characterises the moral law. According to Kant the *real* person is not the empirical self of familiar everyday association, but rather the metaphysical self of transcendent practical rationality.

¹⁶ CARR David, *Making Sense of Education*, (2003) Routledge Falmer London and NY

Somehow surprisingly the aim of military education as described earlier - i.e. developing critical thinking combined with the ability to operate on intent through trust, empowerment and understanding, the ability to deal with surprise and uncertainty and the ability to recognize change and lead transitions – is not too distant from the concept of autonomy developed by Oxford-trained liberal theorist Meira Levinson in *The Demands of Liberal Education*¹⁷, described to be:

“to teach (..) the skills, habits, knowledge, and dispositions (..) to be thoughtful, mature, self-assured individuals who map their path in the world with care and confidence, take responsibility for their actions, fulfil their duties as citizens, question themselves and others when appropriate, listen to and learn from others, and ultimately lead their lives with dignity, integrity, and self-respect—i.e. to be autonomous in the fullest sense of the word”. Therefore I argue that philosophy not only has a play on military education but even that military education might be considered from a normative perspective a liberal education in the sense that it requires above all the intellectual and moral resources and capacities for critical interpretation of information or knowledge, in order for the military to be able to take principled and/or discriminating decisions. Both in the Greek philosophical tradition, as in current military doctrine, wisdom is a kind of critical capability. In this regard I maintain that military education has to remain an essentially ‘Socratic’ practice in the sense that its foundations lay not in having more knowledge than others, but in its keener appreciation of the complexity of the issues and of the limits of understanding it all. In the Aristotelian tradition strict impartiality is not the most salient feature of moral thought, as there may be no less injustice in treating un-

¹⁷ LEVINSON, M. (1999) *The Demands of Liberal Education*. New York: Oxford University Press, p.164

equals equally than there is in treating equals unequally. This critical capability needs to be coupled with the ethical behaviour required by the military profession. In the words of Gen. Dempsey “trust stands out as the defining element that enabled our military to overcome adversity and endure the demands of extended combat”¹⁸. To maintain this elusive trust, military leaders must keenly understand the tension inherent in completing martial missions both adroitly and ethically. Hence I argue in favour of expanding the ethics education, derived by the liberal thought tradition, of senior military leaders as critical to meeting the demands of current hostilities and the challenge of preserving the trust of the public and allies. Recognizing the intricacy of these issues entails a reflection on the pervasive relevance of ethics education, on which I dealt with in chapter three.

According to philosopher, social and political theorist, Sir Isaiah Berlin “the world that we encounter in ordinary experience is one in which we are faced with choices between end equally ultimate, and claims equally absolute, the realization of some of which must inevitably involve the sacrifice of others”¹⁹. I concur insofar as the resolution of the moral conflicts and dilemmas that we face, must undergo a process of reasoned decision making, without yielding to general relativism: in fact the ability to understand the values of other cultures, does not imply the absence of common metrics, on the contrary it entails a shared framework of reference.

The idea of a reasoned moral decision making is on-keeping with the Aristotelian tradition as developed in depth by Kant: the person with practical reason (*phronemos*) decides how the competing considerations should be balanced, through accumulation of

¹⁸ DEMPSEY Martin E., America's Military-A Profession of Arms – White paper , available at: http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/concepts/white_papers.htm

¹⁹ BERLIN Isaiah, Liberty, ed. H. Hardy, Oxford University Press , 2002 (pp 213-214)

experience in dealing with cognate situations. The human capacity to understand other cultures, through the universality of human experience, and empathise with their values presupposes a common “human horizon”²⁰, or a shared field of liberal values. In what Rawls later defined as the “Kantian Constructivism in Moral Theory”²¹, Kant argued that ‘through disciplining, the child learns to accept norms which restrict his freedoms so that it is compatible with the freedom of others (...)the child learns to govern himself in accordance with these norms’²². In his views discipline foster the development of an understanding of what constitutes society’s moral code and norms. In his work Kant highlighted how the process of learning and growing liberates the child from “the despotism of desires” and he thereby acquires the liberty of “human choice”.²³ Rawls expands this line of reasoning even further and his account of public reason relies on citizens who have been educated to share a "sense of justice." Rawls²⁴ endorses a notion of egalitarian liberalism, which postulates the idea that there should be a balance between two concepts frequently regarded as being in tension: individual freedom and social equality. The term ‘social justice’ implies ideas of mutual obligation and a certain legal and institutional monitoring of the distribution of opportunities between citizens, such that all are given a fair and equal chance to succeed in life: a “stable society” requires an “overlapping consensus” on the conception of justice. Insofar as liberalism provides

²⁰ BERLIN, Isaiah, *The Crooked Timber of Humanity*, Murray, London 1990 (p.80) *Ib. The Proper Study of Mankind*, ed. H. Hardy & Hausheer, London Chatto & Windus, 1997

²¹ RAWLS, John, "Kantian Constructivism in Moral Theory: The Dewey Lectures 1980." *Journal of Philosophy* 77 (1980): 515-572

²² FORMOSA, Paul, "Discipline and Autonomy: The Kantian link between Education and Morality," in *Kant and Education: Interpretations and Commentary*, eds. Klas Roth & Chris Surprenant. New York: Routledge, 2011: 163-76.

²³ FORMOSA, Paul, *ib.*.

²⁴ RAWLS, J. (1999) *A Theory of Justice*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press

special weight to concept such as toleration, personal autonomy and human rights, hence our ability to understand other cultures implies a set of universal liberal values.

One principle of a liberal regime is that it seeks to justify itself "as the tribunal of each person's reason"²⁵: citizens need to be capable of reasoning for themselves - i.e. to make autonomous judgments - hence to act reasonably and to address their fellow citizens with reasons they can be expected to share. According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)²⁶ 'All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood'. This exemplifies how justice in relation to equality seeks to ascertain how people should be treated in the distribution of all or certain social resources, welfare and roles. UNESCO (United Nations Educational Scientific Cultural Organization) was subsequently created in order to respond to the firm belief that political and economic agreements are not enough to build a lasting peace and that in fact there are principles which are essential cornerstones on-which an education for a humanistic and international society must be built. Deriving from the idea that peace must be established on the basis of humanity's moral and intellectual solidarity, UNESCO issued a set of guidelines on Values for the Humanistic & International Dimension as a means of fostering humanistic and international understanding²⁷, which include respect and tolerance, sense of self-esteem, sense of belonging and social responsibility, coupled with openness, in the sense of willingness to discuss and to listen. Therefore three key ideas provide a unifying base in order to plan and implement educational

²⁵ WALDRON, Jeremy, "Theoretical Foundations of Liberalism," in *Philosophical Quarterly* 37 (1987): 127-50.

²⁶ <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/>

²⁷ CIDREE/UNESCO Publication, 1993 ISBN 1 85955 090 8

development experiences: namely cooperation, interdependence and autonomy. There are palpable similarities to the constituent elements of the concept of 'Intercultural competence'²⁸ that has figured very prominently in the debate about 'global citizenship', especially in relation with desired attitudes i.e. respect, openness, curiosity and discovery, in the sense of tolerating ambiguity and viewing it as a positive experience. In the context of the National Symposium organized by the International Education Association of Australia, global citizenship has recently been defined as: "an attitude or disposition towards others and the world; underpinned by moral and transformative cosmopolitanism and liberal values (openness, tolerance, respect and responsibility for self, others and the planet); more than a technical efficiency or competence; a mind-set for mature, critical, ethical and interconnected thinking; underpinned by ethical capacities that cannot be easily captured by surveys or quantitative measurement; positioned along a continuum of development; a non-prescriptive and variable concept"²⁹.

I have discussed how contemporary military forces are confronted by a bewildering range of civil, cultural and political factors, foreign to their traditional martial skills. Justice is a central part of ethics and must play a central role in any decision making process. When dealing with operations so called "other than war" it is crucial military personnel acquire the capacity to understand other cultures, through the universality of human experience, in order to seek that "overlapping consensus" on the conception of justice, required for a

²⁸ DEARDORFF Darla K. in *Journal of Studies in International Education*, Fall 2006, 10, p.241-266 and in *The SAGE Handbook of Intercultural Competence*, 2009 (Thousand Oaks: Sage).

²⁹ LILLEY, K. (2014). *Educating global citizens: translating the 'idea' into university organisational practice*. Discussion paper prepared for an International Education Association of Australia National Symposium: 'Fostering global citizenship and global competence', Melbourne. Retrieved from www.ieaa.org.au

stable society. Rawls's concept of the stability of a society - or any group - relies upon the extent to which the members of that society feel that they are being treated justly. Building on Kant's assumption that human beings all have the same dignity, and in virtue of this dignity they deserve to be treated as equals, he concludes that whenever individuals are treated unequally on the basis of characteristics that are arbitrary and irrelevant, their fundamental human dignity is violated. I argued earlier that a liberal conscience provides the ability to understand other cultures by a set of universal liberal values. Hence military personnel need to be able to act as "moral agents" insofar as they need to be capable to make autonomous judgments, as well as to act reasonably, according to a "sense of justice", and to address their fellow human beings with reasons they can be expected to share. Immoral behaviour by even the lowest ranking soldier can have a strategic effect. When viewed in this manner, the conflict between role and ordinary morality is overcome, as that which is contrary to ordinary morality indirectly undermines the mission by destroying public support, and is therefore also contrary to role morality. Responsibility is at the very heart of citizenship. Thus military ethics and military education are of crucial importance to the creation of a military which is knowledgeable, reasonable, and which combines the sense of belonging with accountability and the capacity for ethical action. Hilliard Aronovitch in an article in *Journal of Applied Philosophy* concluded: "Effective fighters are also ethical fighters, good soldiers in the one sense are also good soldiers in the other sense Hence, good soldiers must in certain ways be good persons as well."³⁰ There is ample consensus concerning the principles on which ethics education should be aimed

³⁰ Hilliard ARONOVITCH, "Good Soldiers: A Traditional Approach," *Journal of Applied Philosophy*, 18 (2001), 17

to: the objective should be to develop individuals who are able to cope with ethical challenges independently and act “autonomously”. The desired outcome of ethics education is to deliver soldiers who recognize that the values they believe in are more important than merely obeying orders or succumbing to peer pressure. The ‘moral component’ of fighting power and military effectiveness is a subject increasingly under international scrutiny. Capacity building and stabilization operations in fact have to be achieved through the promotion, respect, and protection of the rights and freedoms recognized under both domestic and international law. Simply pointing out that a particular tactic is effective is not sufficient to morally justify it, and failing to recognize this kind of trade-offs entails negative consequences of its own. In choosing targets and tactics in fact soldiers cannot avoid making certain trade-offs, yet it does not follow that one must either concede defeat or commit unethical acts; on the contrary it implies that one is obligated to seek alternatives to practices that make a fetish of tactical victories, according to the overarching duty of protecting fellow soldiers and avoiding civilian casualties.. Successful ethical reasoning, just like successful practical reasoning, entails balancing competing demands, not selectively ignoring them. In an era in which societies are increasingly insistent that soldiers must exercise restraint, minimize collateral damage, and so on, the sole acceptance of the ‘force protection’ logic is no longer adequate. I argue therefore that greater efforts need to be made to encourage military personnel to consider themselves ‘citizens under arms temporarily enabled to the use of force’ i.e. members of a broader group which encompasses civil society. Hence ethics education methodology needs a more “values-based” approach, building on the more traditional and simplistic “virtue”/ “role morality” one (virtues representing desirable

characteristics of individuals, such as courage; and values representing the ideals that the community cherishes, such as freedom and respect). In the domain of military education some critics have argued that innovative methods are needed to impart critical thinking skills. The traditional reliance on the Socratic method of open seminar discussion moderated by faculty it is perceived as falling short as a means of replicating complex problem-solving under stress, an essential requirement for strategic leaders. Some suggest that the customary Socratic approach should be augmented with more advanced simulations and crisis decision making exercises to better prepare students for future strategic leadership challenges (cfr Chapter 2: the debate on the education reform). As discussed earlier strict impartiality is not the most salient feature of moral thought, as there may be no less injustice in treating un-equals equally than there is in treating equals unequally. Therefore the kind of deliberation required for genuine interpersonal moral association necessarily involves some affective or empathic sensitivity to the needs of others in their particular circumstances. Thus the liberal values fostered by the Socratic model are key to develop military leaders both ethical and effective: in times of uncertainty it's crucial to develop the ability to understand and adapt to the environment in order to ensure readiness to face future unknown challenges. To this end education needs to march hand in hand with ethics. Given that the primary goal of the armed forces is to achieve operational effectiveness, the "strategic corporal", or captain, physically and morally, can make all the difference to operational success or failure. A mission can fail if it is not a 'just war' as much as if the fighting is militarily ineffective. It can fail if soldiers conduct themselves wrongly or insensitively, with regard to the culture of the nation in which they are operating. In the light of the above I argued that an ethical behaviour, i.e. a behaviour

inspired to the liberal values as expressed in the previous chapter, is also operationally effective.

In the fourth chapter I addressed the operational relevance of liberal values and ethics, particularly in connection to the concept of leadership. I argued that the development of ethical habits of mind is essential to equip the individual leader with the ability to react professionally to rapidly changing environment and tactics and to foster trust within military organizations and alliances with partner forces. Moving moral sensitivity to the point where the individual leader possesses the courage to act upon it is peremptory. This entails the enhancement of the leader's "self-sustaining capacity to be a moral actor [even] in the absence of social sanctions or reinforcements."³¹

Moral leadership is a vital supplement to military education: it is crucial that the individual leader encourages ethical debate and possesses the courage to act as a moral actor. Scholar and academic Paul Robinson³² refers to the example provided by Jamie Cullens, director of the Centre for Defence Leadership Studies at the Australian Defence College, who pointed out that the Australian Defence Force has sought to create an organizational culture which is willing to discuss past errors as well as to promote traditions emphasizing military achievements and positive examples of military ethics and liberal values. Robinson in fact suggests that through programs of this sort it could be feasible to tackle ethical issues before, not after, the next disaster, and he concludes reaffirming the need for a common set

³¹ Sean T. HANNAH and Patrick J. SWEENEY, "Frameworks of Moral Development and the West Point Experience: Building Leaders of Character for the Army and the Nation," from *Forging the Warrior's Character: Moral Precepts from the Cadet Prayer*, Don M. Snider and Lloyd J. Matthews, eds. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2007), 127, citing USMA Circular 1-101, Cadet Leader Development System, 2002

³² ROBINSON Paul, "Ethics Training and Development in the Military". From *Parameters*, Spring 2007, pp. 22-36.

of values, to be used in coalition warfare, despite the lack of consensus on how to institutionalise ethics education in the military.

I briefly present the juridical framework combining laws, rules and regulations on the status of armed forces personnel, describing the duties of superiors (i.e. commanders); these duties are further elaborated in military disciplinary codes and penal laws. In general the commanding officer is responsible for the education, security, discipline, health, wellbeing, morale, and general operational ability of his subordinates. Yet laws, rules and regulations sometimes fall short in providing an exhaustive framework to commanders, as John Gardner very aptly points out in his plea for ethical leaders “We should hope that our leaders will keep alive values that are not so easy to embed in laws—our caring for others, about honour and integrity, about tolerance and mutual respect, and about human fulfilment within a framework of values”³³.

Therefore leadership studies provide a necessary complement to the mere definition of “commanding officer”, provided by the legal framework. Scholar Joanne B. Ciulla defines a leader as “Someone who (...) thinks about how to enlarge the domain of what is possible, which means that he or she has a broader sense of what is possible and therefore a broader sense of moral obligation”³⁴. In the military jargon the term ‘vision’ captures this aspect of leadership. Visions are not simple goals, but rather ways of seeing the future that implicitly or explicitly entail some notion of the good.

In the work of scholar and political scientist James MacGregor Burns, an authority on leadership studies, a key aspect of leadership theory lies in the ethical dialectic between leaders and followers, on an

³³ GARDNER, J. W. (1990). *On leadership*. New York, NY: The Free Press. p. 77

³⁴ CIULLA Joanne B. “The state of leadership ethics and the work that lies before us”, in *Business Ethics: A European Review*, Volume 14 Number 4 October 2005. Blackwell Publishing Ltd Oxford, OX4 2DQ, UK. p.325

equality basis. A concept further explored by Robert C. Solomon, who focuses on understanding the dynamics of trust. Trust is always about both leaders and followers, therefore he suggests to study the two-way transaction between leaders and followers. Solomon notes that the most important element of trust is not how to gain it, but how to give it³⁵.

Burns in his latest book, "Transforming Leadership" describes 'leadership not only as a field of study, but a master discipline that illuminates some of the toughest problems of human needs and social change, and in the process exploits the findings of political science, history, sociology, philosophy theology, literature and psychology.'³⁶ He does not embrace the great man theory: rather he believes that transforming leaders engage followers in a dialogue about values and through this process they come to a consensus on what is important. The transforming leaders do not elevate people's values to their own values, but rather leaders and followers elevate each other's values. These agreed-upon values then have to measure up to what Burns called in his first book the 'end values' of liberty, justice and equality³⁷. The end values represent according to Burns the standards we need to apply to determine if a leader does the right thing, the right way and for the right reason. Applying Burns' end values, or standards, to the combined views of Walzer and Aquinas with regards to the Just War Theory, we can translate the afore sentence in military terms as acting fairly /ethically, within the *jus in bello* constraints, in the context of a *jus ad bellum* legitimate war.

³⁵ SOLOMON, R.C. 1998. 'Ethical leadership, emotions, and trust: beyond 'charisma'. In Ciulla, J.B., Ethics, The Heart of Leadership. Westport, CT: Praeger.

³⁶ BURNS, J.M." Transforming Leadership" (2003). New York: Atlantic Monthly Press

³⁷ BURNS, J.M."Leadership", (1978) New York: Harper and Row

Hence if we concur that the leader/follower is a relationship and one of mutual influence, regardless of disparities in the amount or type of power held by each side, one cannot study the ethics of leaders without including the ethics of followers. Justice, fairness, trust, duties and the greater collective good are more than a leader's beliefs. They represent universal values and the pillars for all human relationships. I share Ciulla's view, where she sees leader ethics and leader outcomes as indissolubly interweaved, arguing that leaders cannot be considered effective unless they are ethical³⁸. In my work, I present evidence of how both history and current court rulings exposed the fact that the idea of 'just following orders' does not take subordinates off of the moral hook.

In practice one can distinguish between a leadership style based on power and control and a leadership style that emphasizes the role of commanders in creating an environment of mutual trust and respect. In his work Burns³⁹ described the first as "transactional" and the second as "transformational": transactional leaders appeal to lower level needs of followers, exchanging benefits and rewards in return to obedience; transformational leaders involved higher level needs such as esteem, competence and self-fulfilment, referring to values as liberty equality and justice to elicit motivation.

Military leadership based on mutual trust and respect, contrary to that based on threats and fear, is the foundation for a well-functioning military. An important example of this approach can be found in the concept of the cited *Innere Führung* in Germany. Following this approach, the behaviour of both commanders and subordinates need to be guided by respect for human rights. Robinson expressed a similar

³⁸ David V. Day, John Antonakis editors "The nature of leadership" 2nd ed. 2012 SAGE Publications, Inc Thousand Oaks, California, ISBN 978-1-4129-8020-3 p.19

³⁹ BURNS, J.M. "Leadership", (1978) ib.

pledge when affirming that “we want soldiers who are willing, when it is suitable, to risk the disapproval of their comrades to win the approval of those whom they serve”⁴⁰

The importance of mutual trust in a team work effort can be associated - from a philosophical point of view - with the idea that is group actions, which reveals features identifying ‘proper’ or real leadership as opposed to cases of ‘purported’ leadership, as described in the work of philosopher Eva Kort. She highlights the normative and practical aspects of leadership as follows: “a concertmaster holds a formal leadership position. If he conducts the orchestra with instructions that the musicians know are bad, they will follow him because of his position. ‘It is only when the concertmaster (...)participate in the plural action in the right sort of way – that the concertmaster is the leader in the proper sense’ ⁴¹ Retired Gen. Burridge, in the 2004 St George’s Annual Lecture evoked a similar musical paraphrases (cfr. Chapter 2): in an environment where the tempo is variable and complex and improvisation is required around a central theme, the lead player is crucial as he needs to maintain a diverse group as in-tuned as possible. Military commanders hence are required more and more to be able to provide that “central theme” and be recognized as lead player, to be trusted and followed in their intuition.

Military commanders have in fact become increasingly aware that on the battlefield, they cannot rely on mere obedience, instead they need to aspire to Kort’s definition of a leader, i.e. that “leaders are those whose ideas are voluntarily endorsed and acted on by others”. The concept of “categorical imperative”, as described by Kant⁴² - the

⁴⁰ ROBINSON P., *ibidem*

⁴¹ KORT, D. Eva (2008) “What after all is leadership” in *Leadership’ and Plural Action, Leadership Quarterly* 19.(411-425), p. 422

⁴² KANT, I. (1993). *Foundations of the metaphysics of morals* (J.W. Ellington, trans.). Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company.

moral choice that you would want to make into a universal law - is fundamental to justice and to building trust. Kant emphasizes the importance of moral consistency and respect for the dignity of all human beings, and he forbids using people as a means to an end. This idea is not merely rooted in the western philosophical tradition, in fact it's quite in tune with the Confucian predicament that "If a ruler sets himself right, he will be followed without his command. If he does not set himself right, even his commands will not be obeyed"⁴³.

At a more practical level, an analogous viewpoint, ingrained in a more military – related scenario, was expressed by a U.S. researcher⁴⁴, who further underlined the link between ethics education and the development of specific skill-set, i.e. the ability of military leaders to build trust through mutual understanding: first, as the ability of deployed security forces to deal with the current environment of persistent conflict of ever-increasing lethality; second, as the ability of senior military leaders to communicate effectively with the policy makers of their home countries and within a joint and combined environment. Hence ethical habits of mind are essential both to equip the individual leader with the ability to react professionally to rapidly changing environment and tactics as well as in order to foster trust within military organizations and alliances with partner forces, and the civil society as a whole.

Military officers, to be moral agents, must reason well, because reason tells you how to practice moral and professional virtues. Thus excellence is inseparable from task and the concept of good. The function of humans, according to Aristotle, is to reason. In so far as the task of a commanding officer is to lead, an excellent leader will be

⁴³ CONFUCIUS, (Trans. 1963) in W.Chan, (Ed. & Trans) *A source book in Chinese philosophy*, Princeton: NJ. Princeton University Press. p. 38

⁴⁴ MAJOR ,Edward "Ethics Education of Military Leaders" *MILITARY REVIEW* March-April 2014

both effective and ethical. In other words, the ethical leader will also be a competent leader, because he or she will reason well and thus know what is required in the job and act on it in the right way. Hence an ethical leader, basing his leadership on the liberal reasoning, valuing respect and thus able to build trust, is also an effective leader. In the fifth chapter I tackle one more aspect that binds together military education and liberal values, such as liberty, equality and respect: cross cultural competence. As discussed earlier, nowadays the military engages in a variety of different missions, each with different requirements: conventional combat, counterinsurgency, peacekeeping, stability and reconstruction, humanitarian assistance, and disaster relief. Missions can shift and change rapidly. All of these will occur (1) in collaboration with different cultural groups; (2) among different cultural groups; or (3) against different cultural groups. Armed Forces operate within and among populations that are culturally very different from themselves. In addition, the military is already itself culturally diverse and encounters a wide range of other culturally diverse groups, including allies (e.g., NATO troops, non-government organizations, and civilians), as well as enemies. Future military activities – whether for peacekeeping or war-fighting – will require Soldiers to be able to form relationships, build trust, communicate, and collaborate with people of greatly different backgrounds. I refer to the required skill-set as “cross-cultural competence”: a concept derived from the past half century studies on the idea of intercultural competence in its varying terms, mainly due to the work of scholar Darla Deardorff⁴⁵. The study of “cross-cultural competence” presupposes the adoption of a liberal thought framework, since, as

⁴⁵DEARDORFF, D.L. (2006). Identification and assessment of inter cultural competence as a student outcome of internationalization. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 10(3), 241-266. Available at <http://jsi.sagepub.com/content/10/3/241.full.pdf+html>

discussed earlier, our ability to understand the others implies a set of universal liberal values, insofar as the human capacity to understand other cultures and empathise with their values presupposes a common “human horizon”⁴⁶, or a shared field of liberal values. Following the definition provided by Deardoff “Intercultural competence” is the “ability to develop knowledge, skills and attitudes that lead to communication and behaviour that is both *effective* and *appropriate* in intercultural interactions (and all interactions can be considered to be intercultural)”⁴⁷; hence, given how both communication and behaviour are crucial elements also in effective leadership - as I have highlighted in the previous chapter – even effective leadership is linked with intercultural competence.

The internal desired outcome of intercultural education is aimed to achieve an informed frame of reference/ filter shift according to the environment. One of the practical methods advised by researchers to further students’ intercultural competence is through an educational program that brings together international and domestic students in intentional ways. Later on, I also present one example of senior military education, on which a more intentional and coordinated intercultural competence education might be built. It connects with another stream of intercultural research: service learning, that “involve[s] students in relationships across human differences, e.g. gender, race, age, economic status, national origin, faith, sexual [and gender orientations], and/or educational attainment”⁴⁸. In fact

⁴⁶ BERLIN, Isaiah, *The Crooked Timber of Humanity*, Murray, London 1990 (p.80)
Ib. *The Proper Study of Mankind*, ed. H. Hardy & Hausheer, London Chatto & Windus, 1997

⁴⁷ Adapted from Deardoff 2006

⁴⁸ SLIMBACH, R. “Connecting Head, Heart, and Hands: Developing Intercultural Service Competence.” In R. Sigmon (ed.), *Journey to Service-Learning: Experiences from Independent Liberal Arts Colleges and Universities*. Washington, D.C.: Council of Independent Colleges, 1996., p. 102

intercultural exchanges happen when students question their own and others identities through a dialectic method and open students to be conjointly more appropriate and effective in their views about and engagement with other people.

This offers reinforcement to the argument in favour of the benefits provided by the Socratic method of an open seminar discussion moderated by faculty as key to develop military leaders both ethical and effective: in times of uncertainty it's crucial to develop the ability to understand and adapt to the environment in order to ensure readiness to face future unknown challenges.

I then review the research examining the variables associated with intercultural effectiveness among other populations who live and work outside their country of origin for extended periods of time: expatriate managers, study-abroad students, and Peace Corps volunteers⁴⁹, as well as the literature⁵⁰ on an individual's ability to adapt successfully to other cultures and applied it to the military context, in an attempt to identify and measure the characteristics that comprise cross-cultural competence. There is in fact emerging agreement within the military services that culture is an important factor in irregular warfare and stability, support, transition, and reconstruction operations; besides the results from the research illustrate how the KSAs (knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudes) associated with 3C – specifically 1) willingness to engage, 2) cognitive flexibility and openness, 3) emotional regulation, 4) tolerance for uncertainty, 5) self-efficacy, 6) ethno-cultural empathy – are not unique to that capacity, in-stead they

⁴⁹ See for example: Bhaskar-Shrinivas, Harrison, Shaffer, & Luk, 2005; Black, 1990; Deardroff, 2006; Hechanova, Beehr, & Christiansen, 2003; Van Dyne, Ang, & Koh, 2008; Van Dyne et al., 2012

⁵⁰ ABBE, A., GULICK, L. M. V., & HERMAN, J. L. (2008). *Cross-Cultural Competence in army leaders: A conceptual and empirical foundation* (Study Report 2008-01). Arlington, VA: U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences

overlap significantly with the KSAs identified as vital in other fields of the Defence domain, such as small unit leader decision-making, adaptability, resilience, observation/situational awareness, leadership⁵¹, with ethics providing a cross cutting aspect.

I further provide different examples derived from the field and from different publications showing how cross cultural competency is key in multiple tasks undertaken by the military in the current operational environment. Then I present the case study I conducted at the NATO Defense College as an interesting on-going attempt to build cross cultural competence across military across the globe.

The Senior Course, offered there twice a year, provides an opportunity to work and build consensus with officers and officials from different Alliance and Partner countries, with a wide variety of backgrounds and experience with a view to furthering cohesion within the Alliance and between the Alliance and its Partners. I personally attended the Senior Course in 2009 and I also served at the NATO Defense College for a period, while conducting my PhD research, as member of the faculty; although I am conscious of ample room of improvement, I have personally witnessed how sharing of knowledge and views among Course Members and the process of achieving consensus, play a dominant role in reaching common understanding of the international environment and the defence and collective security issues at stake. During my stay, I chaired discussion where representatives of Japan, China and South Korea were seated at the same table together with representatives of Israel, Algeria and Egypt.

⁵¹US Army, Field Manual 6-22, *Army Leadership: Competent, Confident, and Agile* (Washington: Headquarters Department of the Army, 2006); Department of the Navy, Marine Corps Warfighting Publication 6-11, *Leading Marines* (Washington: Headquarters US Marine Corps, 1995); US Air Force, Air Force Doctrine Document 1-1, *Leadership and Force Development* (Washington: Headquarters Department of the Air Force, 2006).

Given such diversity, there should be no expectation of consensus in the discussions that take place in group meetings, and yet consensus often is achieved. However the foremost benefit of such meetings is the opportunity for full and frank exchanges in a respectful manner. As each course member participate in an Elective Course during the length of the Senior Course, led by a Subject Matter Expert who chairs the discussions, I furthered my investigation by chairing an elective course on “The evolving challenge of military education and training”, where I exposed my attendees to the themes of my research (liberal values and cross cultural competence as an effective response to security challenges). Despite the philosophic terminology does not always lend itself to easy adoption among military personnel, the overall assessment of the course was a positive one, and one course member even chose the subject as the theme of his final paper (see Annex 1). Terms like “emotional self-regulation” has been the cause of laughter during meetings, as the role playing exercise I assigned. However, when it is explicitly linked to something more familiar, such as, resilience, observation/situational awareness and adaptability the conversation can move forward more easily. The challenge is balancing accessibility and palatability with the need to maintain clear links to the operational environment.

The idea of a multicultural society is not relegated to the Western tradition: one example of an attempt by a society to compose its future in multicultural terms, is provided by the *Shahnameh* or *Book of Kings*, which explores the views of many cultural and ethical stances on warfare, turning the defence of Persia against the Roman General Vespasian into a multicultural statement of what ethics should be and how to create international relations that are just. Yet other non western examples are provided by the pre-revolution work of Iranian philosopher Ali Shariati, which was aimed at forming a new

nationalism in Iran through a reformed and modernistic view of Islam, more tuned to the modern world, and able to accommodate modern Western philosophy, or the endeavour of Sheikh 'Abdullah bin Bayyah, as the head of the Forum for the Promotion of Peace in Muslim societies, who promoted the conference, which led to Marrakesh Declaration⁵². This declaration in fact advocates the protection of minority rights as integral to Islamic heritage and history, drawing from the "Charter of Medina", which, in the view of the subscribers, already encompassed "principles of constitutional contractual citizenship such as freedom of movement, property ownership, mutual solidarity and defense, as well as principles of justice and equality before the law", thus providing the basis for guaranteeing human and citizen rights in the constitutions of modern Muslim states.

The overarching challenge consists in recognizing and valuing the universal set of values while restraining from other universalizing tendencies: striking the right balance is an on-going endeavour. Democracy is a matter of norms and institutions, while liberalism is an organically developed matter of values. The comprehensiveness of international relations in the future calls for a true understanding of the others and their goals. The consequences of the current security risks and threats would not just affect the Euro-Atlantic region and therefore military forces must be willing and able to work with other regions around the world. These partnerships require that we are able to understand another culture on its own terms, overcoming the isolated legacies of different regions and moving towards a civic identity in which we recognize our common humanity and become acculturated to one another. Liberal thought and education thus

⁵² <http://www.Marrakeshdeclaration.org>

provide the skills necessary to the military to be able to adapt to the changing operational environment and cope with the emerging challenges.