Anne Julia Hagen

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization and Cross-Cultural Competence

A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing?
Cross-Cultural Competence in NATO and its Missions

Universitätsverlag Potsdam

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Bibliografische Information der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek
Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation in der Deutschen Nationalbibliografie; detaillierte bibliografische Daten sind im Internet über http://dnb.dnb.de abrufbar.

Universitätsverlag Potsdam 2022
http://verlag.ub.uni-potsdam.de

Am Neuen Palais 10, 14469 Potsdam
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Dissertation, Universität Potsdam, 2022

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Satz: Laura Mohacsi, kleinkariert Lektorat und Satz
Druck: docupoint GmbH Magdeburg

ISBN 978-3-86956-527-9

Zugleich online veröffentlicht auf dem Publikationsserver der Universität Potsdam:
URN urn:nbn:de:kobv:517-opus4-53446
http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:kobv:517-opus4-534463

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ACFLS	Army Culture and Foreign Language Strategy (U.S. Army)
ACT	Allied Command Transformation (NATO)
AFC	Army Futures Command (U.S. Army)
AFCLC	Air Force Culture and Language Center (U.S. Air Force)
ARCIC	Army Capabilities Integration Center (U.S. Army)
ARI	Army Research Institute (U.S. Army)
AMISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia
ANSF	Afghan National Security Forces
BMVg	Bundesministerium der Verteidigung (German Federal Ministry of Defence)
CAC	Combined Arms Center (U.S. Army)
CAOCL	Center for Advanced Operational Culture Learning (U.S. Marine Corps)
CSA	Chief of Staff Army
DoD	Department of Defense (U.S.A.)
FüAkBw	Führungsakademie Bundeswehr (German Armed Forces Command and Staff College)
HSU	Helmut Schmidt University Hamburg (University of German Armed Forces)
HQ	Headquarters
IEB	Interkulturelle Einsatzberatung/Interkulturelle(r) Eisatzberater/in (Intercultural Deployment Advising/Intercultural Deployment Advisor)
IkK	Interkulturelle Kompetenz (Intercultural Competence)
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force

JAP	Joint Air Power Strategy (NATO)
KSAO	Knowledge, Skills, Abilities, and Other Characteristics
MC	Military Committee
MCU	Marines Corps University
NAC	North Atlantic Council
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OAE	Operation Active Endeavour
OC	Operational Culture (U.S. Marine Corps)
RTO	Research and Technology Organization (NATO)
STO	Science and Technology Organization (NATO)
STANAG	Standardization Agreement
SACT	Supreme Allied Commander Transformation
TRADOC	Army Training and Doctrine Command (U.S. Army)
UniBwM	University Bundeswehr Munich (University of German Armed Forces)
USACC	U.S. Army Cadet Command
ZInFü	Zentrum Innere Führung (Center for Civic Education and Internal Leadership, German Armed Forces)
ZKIkK	Zentrale Koordinierungsstelle Interkulturelle Kompetenz (Central Coordination of Intercultural Competence, German Armed Forces)
ZMSBw	Zentrum für Militärgeschichte und Sozialwissenschaften der Bundeswehr (Center for Military History and Social Sciences, German Armed Forces)
3C	Cross-Cultural Competence

Analytical Categories – Reference Charts

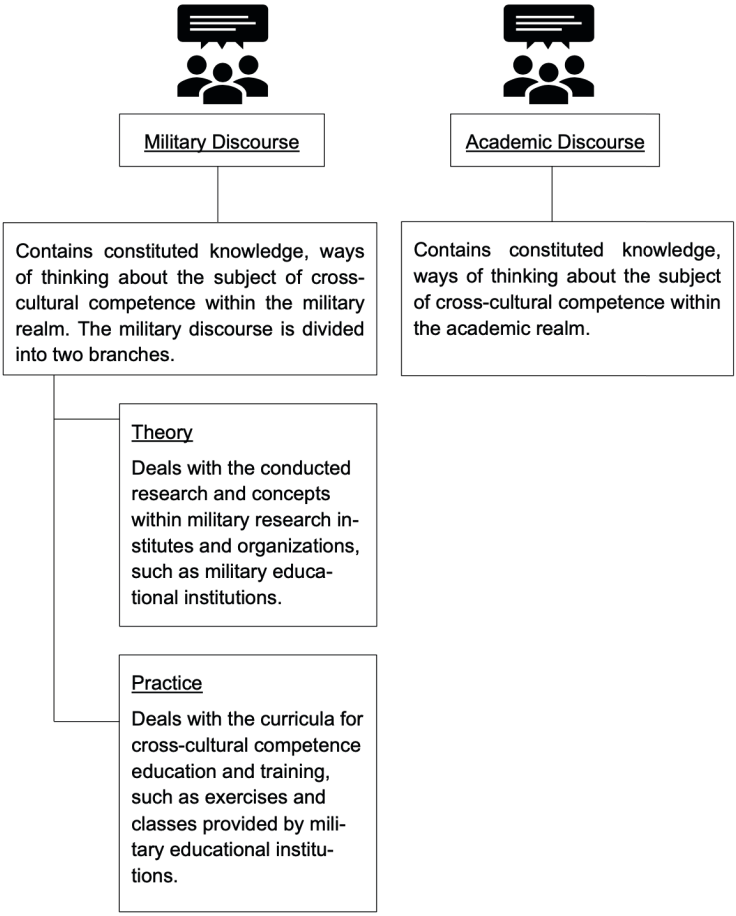


Figure 1: Discourses

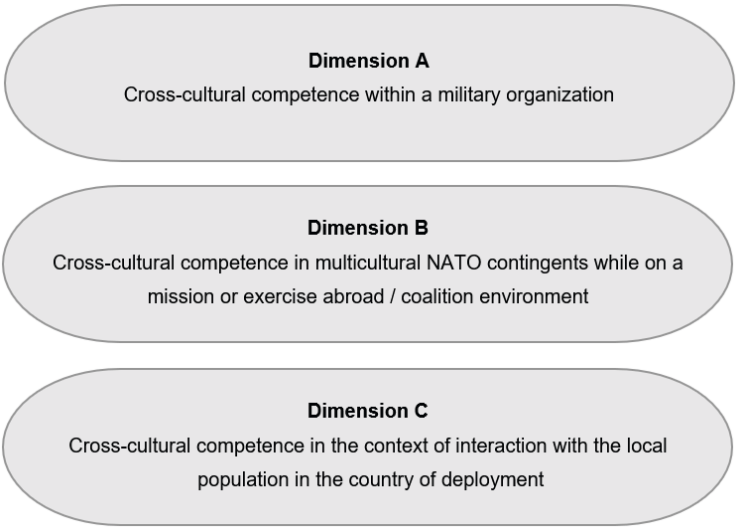
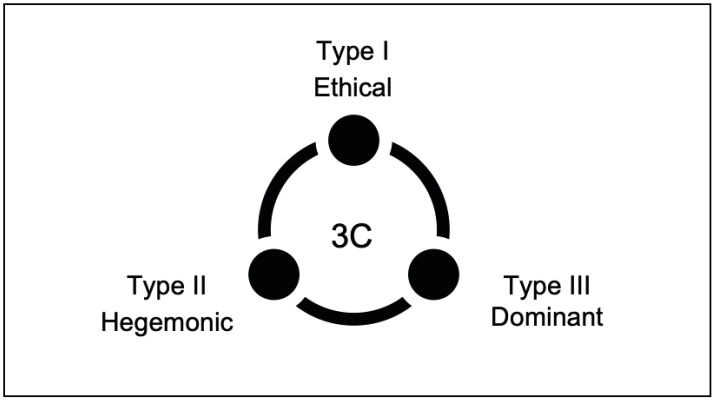


Figure 2: Dimensions



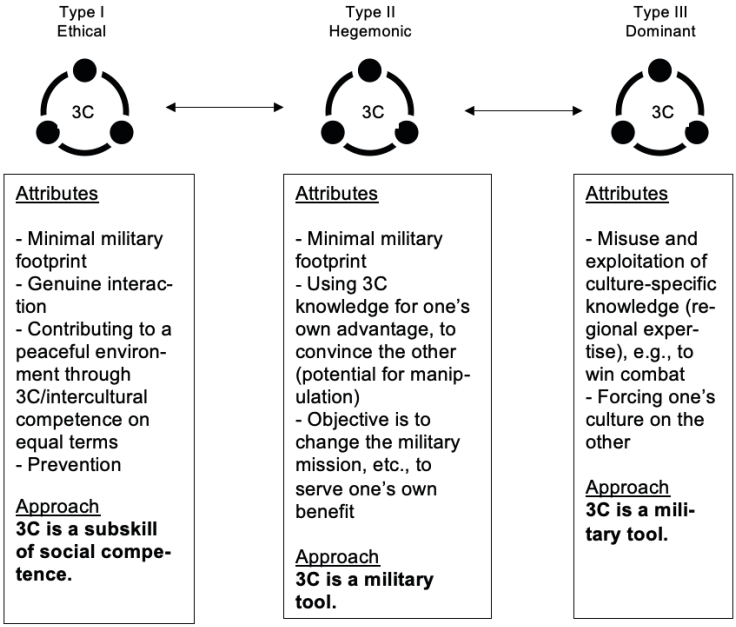


Figure 3: Types of Cross-Cultural Competence

Abstract

This paper examines the function that cross-cultural competence (3C) has for NATO in a military context while focusing on two member states and their armed forces: the United States and Germany. Three dimensions were established to analyze 3C internally and externally: dimension A, dealing with 3C within the military organization; dimension B, focusing on 3C in a coalition environment/multicultural NATO contingent, for example while on a mission/training exercise abroad; and dimension C, covering 3C and NATO missions abroad with regard to interaction with the local population.

When developing the research design, the cultural studies-based theory of hegemony constructed by Antonio Gramsci was applied to a comprehensive document analysis of 3C coursework and regulations as well as official documents in order to establish a typification for cross-cultural competence.

As the result, 3C could be categorized as Type I – Ethical 3C, Type II – Hegemonic 3C, and Type III – Dominant 3C. Attributes were assigned according to each type. To validate the established typification, qualitative surveys were conducted with NATO (ACT), the U.S. Armed Forces (USCENTCOM), and the German Armed Forces (BMVg). These interviews validated the typification and revealed a varied approach to 3C in the established dimensions. It became evident that dimensions A and B indicated a prevalence of Type III, which greatly impacts the work atmosphere and effectiveness for NATO (ACT). In contrast, dimension C revealed the use of postcolonial mechanisms by NATO forces, such as applying one's value systems to other cultures and having the appearance of an occupying force when 3C is not applied (Type I-II). In general, the function of each 3C type in the various dimensions could be determined.

In addition, a comparative study of the document analysis and the qualitative surveys resulted in a canon for culture-general skills. Regarding the determined lack of coherence in 3C correlating with a demonstrably negative impact on effectiveness and efficiency as well as interoperability, a NATO standard in the form of a standardization agreement (STANAG) was suggested based on the aforementioned findings, with a focus on: empathy, cross-cultural awareness, communication skills (including active listening), flexibility and adaptability, and interest. Moreover, tolerance of ambiguity and teachability, patience, observation skills, and perspec-

tive-taking could be considered significant. Suspending judgment and respect are also relevant skills here.

At the same time, the document analysis also revealed a lack of coherency and consistency in 3C education and interorganizational alignment. In particular, the documents examined for the U.S. Forces indicated divergent approaches. Furthermore, the interview analysis disclosed a large discrepancy in part between doctrine and actual implementation with regard to the NATO Forces.

Keywords: Cross-Cultural Competence, Interkulturelle Kompetenz, Culture-General Skills, Function of Cross-Cultural Competence, Leadership, Hegemony, 3C Education, Standardization (STANAG), Qualitative Research, Content Analysis, Multinational Organizations, Military Organizations, NATO, U.S. Armed Forces, German Armed Forces, Interoperability

Zusammenfassung

» Überblick – Methodik – Forschungsfragen

Die vorliegende Dissertation mit dem Titel „The North Atlantic Treaty Organization and Cross-Cultural Competence – A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing? Cross-Cultural Competence in NATO and its Missions" befasst sich mit dem Themenfeld der interkulturellen Kompetenz im militärischen Kontext am Beispiel der NATO, einem zivil-militärischen Verteidigungsbündnis mit 30 verschiedenen Mitgliedsstaaten. Insbesondere zwei NATO-Mitglieder, Deutschland und die USA, werden für die empirische Untersuchung in Form einer qualitativen Datenerhebung durch eine komparatistische Dokumentenanalyse sowie einer Studie von Interviews, die mit militärischem Personal geführt werden, herangezogen.

Für diese sozialwissenschaftliche Methodik ist eine kulturwissenschaftliche Fragestellung leitend: Handelt es sich bei der NATO im Hinblick auf interkulturelle Kompetenz um einen Wolf im Schafspelz? Oder anders ausgedrückt: Wird interkulturelle Kompetenz in diesem Kontext nicht nur genutzt, um militärische Konflikte zu verhindern, sondern auch dafür, Kriege leichter gewinnbar – und damit auch wahrscheinlicher – zu machen?

Die Kriegsführung hat sich entwickelt; neue Kriegstypen wie Cyber Warfare, asymmetrische Kriegsführung und Peacekeeping Missions erfordern neue Strategien. Die Tatsache, dass das NATO-Mitglied USA mit Hilfe des Department of Defense die Vorteile von interkultureller Kompetenz für den militärischen Einsatz untersuchen ließ, ist daher eine zu erwartende Entwicklung und Anlass für diese provokative Frage. Zudem werden hegemoniale Züge sichtbar, die sich in der Aussage eines U.S.-Militärangehörigen äußern, dass ein Krieg nur dann gewonnen werden könne, wenn ‚der Kriegsgegner' verstanden würde. Interkulturelle Kompetenz könnte somit als kriegerisches Mittel und Vorteil in einer militärischen Auseinandersetzung dienen, obwohl in den Kulturwissenschaften interkulturelle Kompetenz bislang in einem ethischen Kontext verortet und insbesondere der Vorbeugung von Konflikten und Missverständnissen zugeordnet wurde. Diese ethische Einordnung wird in Darla Deardorffs Handbuch für Interkulturelle Kompetenz her-

vorgehoben. Unter ‚ethisch' ist dabei ein ernsthaftes Interesse an und Wohlwollen für ein divers-kulturelles Gegenüber zu verstehen.

Da interkulturelle Kompetenz nicht nur die Wechselwirkung zwischen der Bevölkerung und dem Militär beeinflussen kann, sondern auch die Zusammenarbeit innerhalb des Militärs sowie in einem Koalitionsverband wie der NATO, werden drei Analysekategorien erstellt: Interkulturelle Kompetenz in Bezug auf Dimension (A) – innerhalb der militärischen Organisation, (B) – im NATO-Koalitionsverband bzw. in multinationalen und multikulturellen NATO-Kontingenten einer Übung oder Mission im Ausland und (C) die Interaktion mit der lokalen Bevölkerung des Einsatzlandes.

Vor dem Hintergrund verschiedener Einsatzmöglichkeiten von interkultureller Kompetenz, die im Folgenden nach drei Typen (ethisch, hegemonial und dominant) differenziert wird, kann daraufhin die erste Forschungsfrage deduziert werden:

Welche Funktion nimmt interkulturelle Kompetenz in den drei Dimensionen jeweils ein?

Des Weiteren wird darauf aufmerksam gemacht, dass es vereinzelt zu schwerwiegenden Unstimmigkeiten in der NATO kommen kann, wie anhand des Beispiels der mangelnden Begriffsdefinition für das Wort ‚Terror' verdeutlicht wird. Der französische Präsident Emmanuel Macron hatte der NATO vorgeworfen, sie sei ‚hirntot', wenn NATO-Mitglieder im Gegensatz zu ‚NATO-Interessen' handeln würden (The Economist, 2019). Der türkische Präsident Recep Tayyip Erdogan hatte die kurdische People's Protection Unit (YPG) ohne Zustimmung der NATO angegriffen, obwohl die YPG mit der NATO in Syrien gegen den Islamischen Staat (IS) gekämpft hatte (Zeit Online, 2019).

Mit Blick auf das zuvor angesprochene hegemoniale Potenzial, das interkulturelle Kompetenz in sich trägt, wird daraus die zweite Forschungsfrage abgeleitet:

Sollte es einen Standard für interkulturelle Kompetenz in der NATO geben?

» Forschungsziel

Ziel dieser Arbeit ist es somit, die Funktion von interkultureller Kompetenz in den verschiedenen Denk- und Handlungsräumen der

NATO zu bestimmen, um anhand eines Modells Generalisierungen zu ermöglichen. Dieses Modell wird mithilfe der Theorie der Hegemonie von Antontio Gramsci erstellt sowie des akademischen Diskurses zur interkulturellen Kompetenz, der hauptsächlich durch Darla K. Deardorff et al. (2009) geprägt ist und interkulturelle Kompetenz ausschließlich ethisch versteht und definiert.

Darüber hinaus wird ein Kanon für Teilkompetenzen der interkulturellen Kompetenz angestrebt, um einen Vorschlag für einen möglichen Standard, ein Standardization Agreement (STANAG), unterbreiten zu können. Der Mangel eines Standards für interkulturelle Kompetenz in der NATO ist daher Anlass dieser Untersuchung dazu beitragen, einen solchen Standard zu entwickeln.

» Interdisziplinarität

Zunächst wird in der Einleitung eine kulturwissenschaftliche Perspektive eingenommen, wobei die methodischen Potenziale dieser Disziplin aufgezeigt werden, so etwa das interdisziplinäre Arbeiten und die sich daraus ergebenden Schnittmengen mit beispielsweise Soziologie, Literaturwissenschaft oder Kunstgeschichte. Dadurch gelingt es den Kulturwissenschaften, Fragestellungen und Themenfelder aus verschiedenen Blickwinkeln zu erforschen und zugänglich zu machen. Im gleichen Zuge befasst sich das Kapitel mit dem britischen Pendant Cultural Studies, indem Zusammenhänge und Gemeinsamkeiten beider Disziplinen hervorgehoben werden. Hier wird verdeutlicht, dass sich zwar unterschiedliche Entwicklungen vollzogen haben, jedoch zentrale Konzepte in beiden Fächern von Bedeutung sind. Als Beispiel wird die Kultursemiotik genannt. Diese wird als hilfreiches Instrument für das Verständnis und Bewusstsein für verschiedene Kulturen erläutert und bietet damit wertvolle Ressourcen zur Beschreibung von interkultureller Kompetenz. Darüber hinaus wird verdeutlicht, dass sich Worte, denen gesellschaftlich ein Sinn und ein immanentes Konzept zugeschrieben werden, je nach kulturellem Umfeld ändern können. Hierbei spielt der Begriff ‚Politik' eine entscheidende Rolle. ‚Politik' wird als Machtinstrument verstanden, das einen Einfluss auf diese Zuschreibungen haben kann. Dabei wird diese nicht auf ‚Staatspolitik' und politische Parteien begrenzt, sondern umfasst politische Handlungen allgemein im Sinne gesellschaftlicher Wirkung. An dieser Stelle wird der Bogen zur Theorie der Hegemonie und der Ausgangshypothese gespannt, im zur Untersuchung stehenden

Bereich militärischer Handlungen würden existierende Machtstrukturen nicht kritisch hinterfragt. Laut Gramsci müssen Machtpositionen ständig neu ausgehandelt und darüber hinaus von der Zivilgesellschaft akzeptiert werden, um das Gewaltmonopol zu erhalten. Das Aushandeln bezieht sich dabei auf öffentliche Diskurse in der Zivilgesellschaft durch Intellektuelle und deren Bestreben, die gegenwärtige Machtkonstellation als die bestmögliche Situation darzustellen. Dabei kann die Machtkonstellation nur durch valide Argumente und deren Anpassung an kritische Forderungen der Zivilgesellschaft durch die Vertreter der Macht erhalten bleiben. Ein Schwerpunkt kulturwissenschaftlicher Forschung und ihrer Ergebnisse liegt somit auf der methodischen Hinterfragung und Erforschung von Machtstrukturen und dem damit verbundenen Interesse, globale Institutionen in den Fokus zu nehmen und dadurch zu gesellschaftlichen Veränderungen beizutragen. Die NATO als Gewaltmonopol und ihr Verständnis interkultureller Kompetenz ist deshalb ein geeignetes Forschungsobjekt, da dieses bislang nicht aus kulturwissenschaftlicher Perspektive untersucht wurde.

» Kulturverständnis

Da die NATO sowohl zivile als auch militärische Komponenten in sich trägt und mit über 30 verschiedenen Mitgliedstaaten eine multikulturelle Organisation darstellt, bietet sie ein interessantes Forschungsobjekt, zumal keine Standardisierung für die ‚angemessene' interkulturelle Interaktion zwischen den Akteuren vorhanden ist. Bevor jedoch interkulturelle Kompetenz näher definiert wird, folgt eine allgemeine Einführung zum Thema Kultur. In diesem Abschnitt wird zwischen verschiedenen Ansätzen und Begriffsbestimmungen aus dem ‚akademischen Diskurs', der sich hauptsächlich aus Kulturwissenschaften, Soziologie und Anthropologie zusammensetzt, differenziert und eine für die weitere Arbeit geltende Definition abgeleitet: Kultur ist ein facettenreiches, sich ständig wandelndes Konzept, das nach der Lesart des Soziologen Leslie White in drei Bereiche unterteilt werden kann. Der erste Bereich ‚Kommunikation' umfasst die Sprache und Symbole. Der zweite Bereich beinhaltet ‚objektive/extrasomatische Dinge' wie Traditionen, Veranstaltungen, Artefakte oder Medien, während der dritte Bereich sich mit ‚subjektiven/intrasomatischen Dingen' auseinandersetzt, wie etwa Denkmustern, Regeln, tradierten Normen und Werten, Vorstellungen von Raum und Zeit und dem eigenen Handeln. Hier wird darauf hingewiesen, dass Unterschiede in den

genannten Aspekten zu Konflikten zwischen Angehörigen divergierender Kulturen führen können. Somit kann Kultur eine Grenze darstellen, die sie zu einem mächtigen, sowohl inklusiven als auch exklusiven Konstrukt werden lässt. Schließlich wird diese deduzierte Definition mit der des ‚NATO-Diskurses' verglichen, mit dem Resultat, dass die vorliegenden Schnittmengen eine gemeinsame Basis für das weitere Vorgehen bilden.

Im Folgenden werden die zwei NATO-Mitgliedsstaaten USA und Deutschland und deren Streitkräfte bezüglich ihres Verständnisses von Kultur betrachtet. Die Auswertung von Lehr- und Informationsmaterial der U.S.-Streitkräfte und ihrer Bildungsstätten demonstriert teilweise divergierende Perzeptionen zwischen den Teilstreitkräften. Während die U.S. Marine Corps ‚Operational Culture' hervorheben, die sich ausschließlich mit den für den Einsatz relevanten Komponenten von Kultur und deren Wirkung auseinandersetzt, zeigen die U.S. Army und Air Force Schnittmengen mit der im akademischen Diskurs deduzierten Definition von Kultur auf. Dessen ungeachtet wird die Auffassung, dass Kultur ein dynamisches, geteiltes, tradiertes und erlerntes Konstrukt ist, das das Verhalten beeinflusst, und, dass Kultur aus mehreren sichtbaren oder unsichtbaren Schichten besteht, von den U.S. Marine Corps geteilt und überschneidet sich mit den Erkenntnissen des vorherigen Kapitels.

Ein weiterer Unterschied zeigt sich in der differierenden Signifikanz von Kultur in Bildungseinrichtungen der U.S. Navy. Hier wird im Gegensatz zu den Lehrbetrieben der übrigen Teilstreitkräfte Kultur als Komponente von Sprache unterrichtet. Die Sprache wird bei Ersteren eher als eine Zusatzqualifikation gesehen.

Die heterogenen Perzeptionen von Kultur in den U.S.-Streitkräften lassen sich nicht auf die Bundeswehr übertragen. Hier sind deutlich einheitlichere Zugänge zur Definition von Kultur festzustellen, die mit der im Gegensatz zu den U.S.-Streitkräften zentralen Ausbildung zusammenhängen können. Dabei nimmt das Zentrum für Innere Führung mit der ihm angegliederten Zentralen Koordinierungsstelle für Interkulturelle Kompetenz (ZKIkK) eine tragende Rolle ein. Die Determination von Kultur des ZKIkK weist Übereinstimmungen mit der von U.S. Army, Air Force und Marine Corps sowie den Definitionen des akademischen Diskurses auf. Eine weitere Gemeinsamkeit liegt in der mangelnden Standardisierung von interkultureller Kompetenz. Dessen ungeachtet arbeitet das deutsche Bundesministerium der Verteidigung derzeit an einer zentralen Dienstvorschrift für interkulturelle Kompetenz.

» Interkulturelle Kompetenz

Das anschließende Kapitel bietet einen Überblick über den aktuellen Forschungsstand zur interkulturellen Kompetenz. Der Vergleich einer Auswahl an wissenschaftlichen Zugängen und Definitionen lässt erkennen, dass interkulturelle Kompetenz hauptsächlich als ethische und präventive Kompetenz betrachtet wird. Hingegen besteht Uneinigkeit, aus welchen Komponenten sich interkulturelle Kompetenz zusammensetzt. Unter anderem werden sogenannte kulturallgemeine Fähigkeiten wie auch kulturspezifisches Wissen genannt. Zu den kulturallgemeinen Skills werden Fähigkeiten wie interkulturelles Bewusstsein, Selbstreflexion, Observationsfähigkeit, kognitive Flexibilität, Offenheit, Toleranz oder das bewusste Zurückhalten von Stereotypisierungen und Vorurteilen gezählt. Die Korrelation zur kulturwissenschaftlichen Methodik wird hier mithilfe der Anwendung von kulturallgemeinen Fähigkeiten und kulturspezifischem Wissen am Beispiel der Semiotik veranschaulicht. Das Erkennen von Symbolen, Gesten und Objekten und deren angemessene Deutung durch kulturspezifisches Wissen wie Historie und Tradition einer Gruppe können adäquates Handeln ermöglichen.
Grundsätzlich wird konstatiert, dass interkulturelle Kompetenz die Befähigung darstellt, ‚angemessen' und ‚erfolgreich' mit Individuen zu interagieren, die eine Kultur besitzen, die sich von der eigenen unterscheidet. Dies wird durch die Anwendung der benannten Fähigkeiten erreicht, wobei gleichzeitig die Kriterien für ‚Angemessenheit' und ‚Erfolg' im jeweiligen Konzept der interkulturellen Kompetenz definiert werden.

Die erläuterten Definitionen und die Teilkomponenten in Form von kulturallgemeinen Skills und kulturspezifischem Wissen von interkultureller Kompetenz resultieren in der Annahme, dass interkulturelle Kompetenz auch instrumentalisiert werden kann und weitaus mehr Potenzial in sich trägt, als bisher wissenschaftlich beleuchtet wurde.

» Theorie

Im weiteren Verlauf werden zur theoretischen Einbettung des Themas drei kulturwissenschaftliche Theorien vorgestellt: die Hegemonie, die Postkoloniale Theorie und der Orientalismus, wobei Hegemonie als Schablone und Inzentiv für den empirischen Teil der Arbeit genutzt wird. Nach einer kurzen historischen Kontextualisierung der Hegemonie und ihrer Bedeutung für eine Vielzahl an Fächern wird das Hauptaugenmerk

dieser Theorie erläutert. Hegemonie orientiert sich an dem Gedanken, dass ein Gewaltmonopol seine Konzipierung der Weltordnung zu verbreiten sucht, was nach Gramsci auf zwei Wegen möglich ist: durch Hegemonie oder Dominanz. Während Hegemonie Überzeugungskraft und die Erhaltung von der durch die Allgemeinheit akzeptierten Ordnung der Dinge erfordert und somit als das effektivere, langfristige Mittel angesehen wird, ist Dominanz aufgrund ihrer Anwendung von Gewalt eher als kurzzeitiger Effekt mit geringerer Anstrengung zu verstehen.
Die nachfolgende Postkoloniale Theorie, die insbesondere durch Stuart Hall geprägt wurde, steht in einem engen Zusammenhang zur Hegemonie. Insbesondere die Machtkonstellation basierend auf Superiorität und Inferiorität wird thematisiert. Des Weiteren wird aufgezeigt, dass die Postkoloniale Theorie mangelnde interkulturelle Kompetenz aufdeckt und helfen kann, das fehlende Bewusstsein für Machtkonstellationen und Abgrenzungen von ‚Andersartigkeit' zu reflektieren.

In einer Wechselbeziehung hiermit steht ebenfalls der Orientalismus, der von Edward Said (Said, 1979) konzipiert wurde. Im Kern handelt es sich bei der Theorie des Orientalismus um die Zuschreibung von Attributen durch externe Akteure zu einer Kultur und einem vermeintlichen Kulturkreis; in diesem Falle ‚dem Orient'. Diese Attribute sind von Inferiorität und Mangel gekennzeichnet. Dabei werden diese etablierten Stereotypen reproduziert und konserviert.

Nachfolgend wird konkludiert, dass die Postkoloniale Theorie und der Orientalismus als potente Mittel zur Sensibilisierung und Bewusstmachung von kulturellen Stereotypen sowie konstruierten Superioritätsansprüchen dienen können. Hierzu wird angemerkt, dass dieser Ansatz in keinem der untersuchten Materialien der Bildungsstätten der NATO, der U.S.-Streitkräfte oder der Bundeswehr angewandt wird. Daraus lässt sich schließen, dass die akademischen und militärischen Diskurse interkultureller Kompetenz nicht deckungsgleich verlaufen.

» Interkulturelle Kompetenz in der NATO

Die anschließenden Kapitel befassen sich mit der NATO, dem eigentlichen Forschungsobjekt der Arbeit. Nach einer kurzen historischen Kontextualisierung wird die Integration interkultureller Kompetenz in die NATO verdeutlicht. Insbesondere die steigende Zahl an Mitgliedern und die damit verbundene kulturelle Vielfalt führen zu einer wachsenden Komplexität an Interessen, Forderungen und Ansprüchen. Daraus

resultiert eine gleichermaßen wachsende Bedeutung der interkulturellen Kompetenz für die NATO. Die Entscheidungsfindung im Rahmen der Koalition mit Berücksichtigung und Einbeziehung von interkultureller Kompetenz kann effektive und effiziente Entscheidungsprozesse herbeiführen, wie im weiteren Verlauf der Arbeit aufgezeigt wird.
Dass mehr als nur die Entscheidungsprozesse auf Koalitionsebene von interkultureller Kompetenz betroffen sind, wird im darauffolgenden Unterkapitel anhand eines Organigramms im Hinblick auf interkulturelle Kompetenz illustriert. So veranschaulicht das Organigramm, dass interkulturelle Kompetenz innerhalb und außerhalb der NATO von Bedeutung ist. Innerhalb der NATO spielt interkulturelle Kompetenz im North Atlantic Council (NAC) eine Rolle, was den politischen Körper der NATO darstellt. Hier muss eine erfolgreiche Kommunikation zwischen 30 Delegierten der jeweiligen Mitgliedsstaaten erfolgen. Das NAC besitzt wiederum weitere ihm unterstellte Komitees und Arbeitsgruppen, in denen interkulturelle Kompetenz Auswirkungen haben kann. Die Kommunikation zwischen diesen Gremien des NAC erfordert gleichermaßen interkulturelle Kompetenz. An der Seite des NAC steht das Military Committee (MC), das das oberste militärische Komitee bildet. Auch das MC verfügt über weitere Instanzen wie die Allied Command Transformation (ACT) in den USA und die Allied Command Operations (ACO) in Belgien. Erstere ist aufgrund ihrer Zielsetzung zur kontinuierlichen Optimierung und organisationalen Vereinheitlichung von Einsätzen Gegenstand im Teil der qualitativen Forschung. Des Weiteren ist interkulturelle Kompetenz in der Kommunikation zwischen den beiden internen Elementen NAC und MC relevant. Gleiches gilt für die externe Komponente, die die Interaktion zwischen militärischem Personal derzeit lokalisiert auf der NATO Base Allied Command Transformation auf Trainings- oder Friedensmissionen als auch des militärischen Einsatzes beinhaltet, sowie die Interaktion mit der lokalen Bevölkerung. In diesem Zusammenhang wird darauf hingewiesen, dass ebenso das zivile Personal der NATO von interkultureller Kompetenz betroffen ist, die vorliegende Arbeit sich jedoch hauptsächlich mit militärischem Personal auseinandersetzt.

» Komparatistische Dokumentenanalyse

Die darauffolgende Dokumentenanalyse setzt sich mit der komparatistischen Auswertung von Informationen aus Lehrmaterial und weiteren

offiziellen Dokumenten der NATO, U.S.-Streitkräfte und Bundeswehr, die sich mit interkultureller Kompetenz befassen, auseinander. Zunächst wird der aktuelle Stand von interkultureller Kompetenz aus den vorliegenden Dokumenten für die NATO ermittelt. Später wird dieser den erhobenen Daten der qualitativen Studie in Form von Interviews gegenübergestellt.

Die Auswertung ergibt, dass die NATO keinen Standard für interkulturelle Kompetenz vorsieht und es jedem Mitglied obliegt, wie oder ob interkulturelle Kompetenz ausgebildet und eingesetzt wird. Hier wird eine Diskrepanz zwischen Anspruch und Realität verzeichnet, die sich im Ziel der NATO äußert, durch Standardisierung Interoperabilität, das funktionsfähige Zusammenwirken von militärischen Organisationen und Ausrüstungen, zu gewährleisten.

Das Beispiel ACT verdeutlicht, dass interkulturelle Kompetenz von multinationalem und multikulturellem militärischen Personal, das bei ACT aufeinandertrifft, vorausgesetzt wird. Dies geht aus der Auswertung einer Einführungsveranstaltung mit dem Titel „Cultural Awareness Training" hervor. Nur eine kulturallgemeine Komponente, das interkulturelle Bewusstsein, wird hier beleuchtet. Zudem konzentriert sich das Training auf kulturelle Kategorisierungen und damit auf kulturspezifisches Wissen. Die Umsetzung und die Teilnahme an diesen Schulungen sind flexibel, wie sich in den Interviews herausstellt. In diesem Zusammenhang wird auf eine Studie der damaligen Research and Technology Organization (RTO) der NATO verwiesen, die sich mit „Multinational Military Operations and Intercultural Factors" auseinandersetzt. Das Ergebnis der über zehn Jahre zurückliegenden Forschungsarbeit beläuft sich auf eine stark differierende Priorisierung von interkultureller Kompetenz in der Ausbildung von Streitkräften der NATO-Mitglieder. Zudem werden mehr interkulturelles Bewusstsein und Sensibilität für alle Ebenen der Streitkräfte sowie deren Vermittlung bereits in der Grundausbildung gefordert. An dieser Stelle wird kritisiert, dass die Studie zwar Schwachstellen aufzeigt, es jedoch versäumt, konkrete Lösungen wie etwa die Erarbeitung von kulturallgemeinen Fähigkeiten anzubieten. Letztere könnten zur universalen Ausbildung von NATO-Streitkräften dienen. Da die Ausbildung und die Anwendung von interkultureller Kompetenz überwiegend den NATO-Mitgliedern und ihren Streitkräften überlassen werden, untersuchen die zwei folgenden Kapitel die Theorie und Praxis der U.S.-Streitkräfte und der Bundeswehr. Dabei bezieht sich die Theorie auf die Forschung der militärischen Institute und Lehreinrichtungen im Bereich interkulturelle

Kompetenz, während sich die Praxis auf die Auswertung von Kursinhalten der jeweiligen militärischen Bildungsstätte konzentriert.

Bei der Dokumentenanalyse der U.S.-Streitkräfte werden divergierende Ansätze zwischen Theorie und Praxis deutlich. Sowohl zwischen den Teilstreitkräften als auch innerhalb der Teilstreitkräfte sind ambivalente Definitionen und Auffassungen zur interkulturellen Kompetenz zu finden. So werden beispielsweise von Forschenden des Army Research Institute kulturallgemeine Skills bevorzugt, die in der Ausbildung wiederum kaum eine Rolle spielen. Obwohl jede Teilstreitkraft ihre eigene Doktrin für interkulturelle Kompetenz erstellt hat, ergibt die stichprobenartige Analyse eines Trainingspamphlets des U.S. Army Cadet Commands zu Cultural Awareness Schnittmengen mit der Doktrin der U.S. Marine Corps, ohne sich mit der Doktrin der U.S. Army zu decken. Außerdem werden in den Zielformulierungen dieser Trainings hegemoniale und teilweise dominante Züge sichtbar, die mit der Theorie der Hegemonie korrelieren.

Dessen ungeachtet kann ein Kanon für kulturallgemeine Skills deduziert werden, der aus den Dokumenten der verschiedenen Forschungsinstanzen generiert wird. Ein Vergleich mit dem zuvor erstellten akademischen Diskurs in interkultureller Kompetenz weist große Schnittmengen auf, sodass die Arbeit auf dieser Basis fortgeführt wird.

Mit der Auswertung für die Bundeswehr wird ebenso verfahren. Zunächst lässt sich im Rahmen der Auswertung der Theorie erkennen, dass im Gegensatz zu Teilen der Theorie der U.S.-Streitkräfte interkulturelle Kompetenz aus einer ethischen Perspektive betrachtet wird. Zudem wird die Gefahr angesprochen, interkulturelle Kompetenz zu den eigenen Gunsten zu instrumentalisieren. In der Praxis lassen sich weniger einheitliche Auffassungen zur interkulturellen Kompetenz finden als in der Theorie. Die jeweiligen Bildungseinrichtungen verfolgen unterschiedliche Ansätze. Insbesondere bei der Begriffsbestimmung der Teilkompetenzen von Interkultureller Kompetenz, der kulturallgemeinen Skills, existieren keine einheitlichen Terminologien.

Darüber hinaus werden Gemeinsamkeiten zwischen der Bundeswehr und den U.S.-Streitkräften herausgearbeitet, so zum Beispiel eine fehlende Vereinheitlichung einer Definition von interkultureller Kompetenz für die gesamten Streitkräfte. Außerdem ist bislang in beiden Fällen interkulturelle Kompetenz als Lehreinheit für das Führungspersonal vorgesehen, was sich allerdings für die Bundeswehr laut einer vorläufigen zentralen Dienstvorschrift mit der Integration von Trainingseinheiten in interkultureller Kompetenz in der Grundausbildung zukünftig än-

dern soll. Bisher wird interkulturelle Kompetenz durch ein sogenanntes Multiplikatoren-System in der Truppe durch das im Idealfall darin ausgebildete Führungspersonal weitergegeben.

Letztlich wird ein Mangel an Vereinheitlichung für beide NATO-Mitglieder identifiziert. Dies betrifft insbesondere die verwendete Terminologie und die in Bezug auf U.S.-Streitkräfte divergierenden Definitionen von interkultureller Kompetenz in den einzelnen Teilstreitkräften. Deutsche und U.S.-Streitkräfte thematisieren sowohl kulturallgemeine Fähigkeiten als auch kulturspezifisches Wissen, jedoch mit variierender Signifikanz. Die Faktoren, die interkulturelle Kompetenz negativ beeinflussen können, werden insbesondere in der Priorisierung militärischer Handlungen gesehen. Des Weiteren wird eine Priorisierung von interkultureller Kompetenz in Auslandseinsätzen deutlich, wobei die Dokumente der Bundeswehr darauf hindeuten, dass die Signifikanz für die Organisationskultur der Streitkräfte anerkannt wird.

» Ableitung einer Typisierung für interkulturelle Kompetenz

Im darauffolgenden Teil werden die Erkenntnisse der Dokumentenanalyse mit der eingangs erläuterten Theorie der Hegemonie in Korrelation gesetzt. Während für die U.S.-Streitkräfte hegemoniale Tendenzen in Theorie und Praxis für den Einsatz von interkultureller Kompetenz konstatiert werden, sind diese für die Bundeswehr hauptsächlich nach ethischen Kriterien beschrieben. Daraufhin wird in Relation zur Hegemonie eine Kategorisierung von interkultureller Kompetenz abgeleitet: Typ I – Ethisch, Typ II – Hegemonial und Typ III – Dominant. Diesen Typen werden aus der Dokumentenanalyse deduzierte Attribute zugeschrieben, die mit Hegemonie korrelieren. Sie sind sowohl intrasomatisch als auch extrasomatisch anwendbar. Dabei wird interkulturelle Kompetenz im Rahmen von Typ I als Teilkompetenz der sozialen Kompetenz verstanden und äußert sich in Merkmalen wie einem aufrichtigen Interesse an seinem Gegenüber und seiner Kultur (intrasomatisch / extrasomatisch), im Anspruch, einen möglichst geringen ‚militärischen Fußabdruck' im Einsatzland zu hinterlassen, sowie in seiner Funktion als präventives Mittel. Typ II wird hingegen als militärisches Werkzeug betrachtet, das strategisch eingesetzt werden kann. Hier werden interkulturelle Kompetenz und insbesondere kulturallgemeine Skills wie Empathie und aktives Zuhören genutzt, um eigene Ziele durch die Überzeugung anderer mit Hilfe dieser Fähigkeiten zu erreichen (intrasomatisch). Obwohl

Typ III ebenfalls als ein militärisches Werkzeug definiert wird, ist die Dominanz vom Aufzwingen der eigenen Kultur auf die andere gekennzeichnet (intrasomatisch). Ebenso wird der zielgerichtete Missbrauch von kulturspezifischem Wissen als Kriterium benannt (extrasomatisch). Dabei wird angemerkt, dass der Übergang zwischen den Typen fließend sein kann.

» Qualitative Studien – Forschungsdesign

Die aufgestellte Typisierung von interkultureller Kompetenz wird in der anschließenden qualitativen Studie mit dem Ziel geprüft, diese zu validieren, um damit die Funktion von interkultureller Kompetenz bestimmen zu können. Darüber hinaus werden die Interviews im Hinblick auf vier Kategorien untersucht. Die erste Rubrik befasst sich mit den Dimensionen von interkultureller Kompetenz, wobei zwischen folgenden differenziert wird: Dimension A – die militärische Organisation und interkulturelle Kompetenz intern, Dimension B – interkulturelle Kompetenz in multinationalen NATO-Kontingenten in Übungen oder Missionen bzw. im Koalitionsverband und Dimension C – interkulturelle Kompetenz und NATO-Missionen in Bezug auf die Interaktion mit der lokalen Bevölkerung. In der zweiten Kategorie wird die Funktion von interkultureller Kompetenz analysiert und in der dritten Kategorie wird ein Kanon erstellt. Die letzte Kategorie wägt die von den Interviewpartnern vermittelten Vor- und Nachteile einer Standardisierung von interkultureller Kompetenz ab.
Zunächst werden relevante Interviewpassagen mit militärischem Personal, derzeit lokalisiert auf der NATO Base Allied Command Transformation, analysiert, worauf die Interviewauswertung der U.S.-Streitkräfte und der Bundeswehr folgt.

» Studienergebnisse

Eine Gegenüberstellung der Erkenntnisse der drei Studien zeigt, dass militärisches Personal, derzeit lokalisiert auf der NATO Base Allied Command Transformation, U.S.-Streitkräfte und die Bundeswehr Ethnozentrismus in Dimension C vorweisen. Darüber hinaus wurden Voreingenommenheit und Stereotypisierung in Dimension A zwischen den Teilstreitkräften für die U.S.-Streitkräfte und die Bundeswehr

festgestellt. Die Studien bestätigen die Existenz von Sexismus, Rechtsextremismus, Rassismus und Fremdenfeindlichkeit innerhalb der Streitkräfte. Zudem wurde eine allgemeine Vernachlässigung der kulturallgemeinen Skills identifiziert, die zuvor als besonders signifikant für alle Ebenen der Streitkräfte herausgestellt wurde. Des Weiteren wird verdeutlicht, dass interkulturelle Kompetenz vom Führungspersonal und von der positiven Veranschaulichung sowie der Ausbildung darin abhängt. In diesem Kontext wird darauf eingegangen, dass interkulturelle Kompetenz hauptsächlich in einsatzvorbereitenden Trainings mit Fokus auf kulturspezifisches Wissen für die U.S.-Streitkräfte und die Bundeswehr vermittelt wird. Die Qualität und die Intensität dieser Trainings variieren. Die NATO hingegen veranstaltet Einführungen in ‚Cultural Awareness', die nur einen Teil von interkultureller Kompetenz widerspiegeln. Außerdem wird für die U.S.-Streitkräfte und die Bundeswehr Inkongruenz in Definitionen und Terminologien festgestellt, die eine Evaluierung von interkultureller Kompetenz erheblich erschwert. Diesbezüglich wird darauf aufmerksam gemacht, dass wesentliche Bestandteile interkultureller Kompetenz in Trainings unterrichtet werden, die keine interdisziplinäre Verknüpfung herstellen. In der Einleitung wird dahingehend zum transversalen Lernen Bezug genommen.

» Beantwortung der Forschungsfragen

Im Hinblick auf einen NATO-Standard in interkultureller Kompetenz wird das Potenzial hervorgehoben, NATO-Mitglieder in ihren Interessen zu vereinen und somit Entscheidungsprozesse zu erleichtern. Hierdurch können Operabilität, Effektivität und Effizienz gesteigert werden. Auf der anderen Seite wird ein Standard von den Beteiligten als möglicher Zwang empfunden. Die Verantwortung zur Etablierung eines Standards wird auf nationaler Ebene verortet. Zudem wird in zwei Interviews die Ansicht vertreten, dass eine universale, homogene Militärkultur die Signifikanz von interkultureller Kompetenz schmälere. Entgegen dieser Auffassung belegen die Erkenntnisse der drei Studien, dass eine solche homogene Militärkultur nicht existiert, sondern viele variierende Kulturen innerhalb des Militärs vorhanden sind. Dessen ungeachtet überwiegen die positiven Argumente, die durch die Interviewpartner hervorgebracht wurden, und münden somit in einem Vorschlag für einen NATO-Standard in kulturallgemeinen Fähigkeiten. Dieser finale Kanon wird durch den Vergleich mit den zuvor erzeugten Kanons deduziert. Hierin sind enthalten:

Empathie, interkulturelles Bewusstsein, Kommunikationsfähigkeiten, aktives Zuhören, Flexibilität und Anpassungsfähigkeit, Interesse, Lernfähigkeit, Geduld, Perspektivenwechsel, Observationsfähigkeit, Ambiguitätstoleranz, Vorurteile suspendieren und Respekt. Damit ist die erste Forschungsfrage nach einem Standard beantwortet.

Die zweite Forschungsfrage, welche Funktion interkulturelle Kompetenz für die NATO einnimmt, wird anhand einer Tabelle verdeutlicht, wobei auf die Anwendungsfelder in den jeweiligen Dimensionen eingegangen wird. Typ I nimmt in Dimension A eine kommunikationserleichternde Funktion zwischen und innerhalb der Teilstreitkräfte durch die authentische Anwendung von kulturallgemeinen Skills ein. In Dimension B wird ihm bezüglich der Verhinderung von Konflikten sowie der Stärkung von Beziehungen eine präventive Funktion zugeschrieben. In Dimension C wird Typ I in ‚Phase Zero' angewendet, kann jedoch gleichzeitig als Zwang empfunden werden. ‚Phase Zero' umfasst Operationen, die gewaltsame Konflikte verhindern sollen. Bei Typ II handelt es sich in Dimension A um eine zielgerichtete Kommunikation und die Durchsetzung der eigenen Absichten zwischen und innerhalb der Teilstreitkräfte. In Dimension B ist Typ II ein Mittel, um Ziele der eigenen Organisation mit Hilfe von kulturallgemeinen Skills in einer Koalition erfolgreich durchzusetzen und Zustimmung zu erlangen. In Dimension C wird Typ II eingesetzt, um geheime Informationen zu erhalten. Typ II äußert sich außerdem in der Anwendung eigener kultureller Vorstellungen auf eine fremde Kultur. Für Typ III wird in Dimension A die Durchsetzung von Zielen durch Seniorität beschrieben, ohne für die Sinnhaftigkeit dieser zu werben. Kulturelle Differenzen werden ignoriert. In Dimension B geht es um das Dominieren von Koalitionspartnern durch Machtverhältnisse. Typ III wird in Dimension C der Zwang der eigenen Kultur auf die andere zugeschrieben. Außerdem wird die Ausbeutung von kulturallgemeinen und -spezifischen Skills und Wissen, um ein Gefecht für sich zu entscheiden, aufgeführt.

» Forschungsergebnisse

Des Weiteren wird für die NATO festgestellt, dass die Typen je nach Führungspersonal, Ausbildung, Position, Mission und Situation variieren und sich des gesamten aufgezeigten Spektrums bedient wird. Insbesondere Typ II wird in Dimension B hervorgehoben, wenn sich dabei auf die Koalitionsebene der NATO bezogen wird. Typ II wird hier als unabding-

bar für die Kommunikation von Zielen und die notwendige Zustimmung der Koalitionspartner herausgestellt. Im Hinblick auf die Zusammenarbeit an einem NATO HQ, Dimension A, sowie die Interaktion innerhalb multinationaler NATO-Kontingente in Übungen oder Missionen in Dimension B wird für die NATO eine Vernachlässigung von Typ I und II ermittelt, sodass Typ III die Arbeitsatmosphäre, Effektivität und Effizienz negativ beeinflusst.

Das mithilfe der kulturwissenschaftlichen Theorie der Hegemonie erstellte Drei-Typen-Modell der interkulturellen Kompetenz und seine Ableitung aus der Dokumentenanalyse werden somit anhand der Interviews validiert. Die Theorie der Hegemonie wird im gleichen Zuge um den Aspekt der Ethik erweitert.

Das Fazit verdeutlicht abschließend die Signifikanz von interkultureller Kompetenz und den Mehrwert der Forschungsarbeit, die verschiedenen Facetten und Funktionen von interkultureller Kompetenz aufzuzeigen und bei zukünftiger Lehre innerhalb der NATO zu berücksichtigen.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude to all the people who contributed to facilitating this research project and supported me in many helpful ways. The qualitative surveys largely depended on individuals who helped obtain the required official approvals, and the participation of the volunteers (who shall remain anonymous) was essential to accomplishing this integral part of the project.

However, I would like to specifically mention a few people who have given me their permission to be named and express my appreciation to them:

Astrid and Oliver Prost

Jeffrey Harper

Kay Völker

Jay Paxton

Andreas Delp

Rouven Gerland

Stephen Jung

Dr. Andreas Köstler

Dr. Friedrich Weltzien

The staff at BMVg FüSK III 3

The staff at USCENTCOM

The staff at ACT

Many thanks to Megan Squire for her help in editing parts of this paper.

Preface

Cross-cultural competence has never been on the cutting edge as much as it is now. Abuse of power, racism, right-wing extremism, and sexism have been in the spotlight of recent events. Some of the latest and tragic events in this context are the Asian hate crimes that rose exponentially during the course of the Covid-19 pandemic, which had been labeled as the "Chinese Virus" by U.S. President Donald Trump. Attacks targeting people of Asian ethnicity have been frequently reported in North America, parts of Europe, and Oceania. In addition, the killings of Black civilians by law enforcement in 2020 in the United States triggered a worldwide protest movement called *Black Lives Matter*. As a result, a series of "whataboutism" in the sense of "all lives matter" emerged, translating into a lack of empathy, perspective-taking, self-awareness, respect, and acceptance. The aforementioned traits are fundamental cross-cultural competence skills and thus correlate with a significant lack of these competencies.

A few years back in 2017, the *#metoo* movement spread on social media, raising awareness of the sexual abuse predominantly inflicted on women in the movie and TV industry by men in power. The cases were characterized by an abuse of power, superiority and inferiority, as well as a lack of respect.

In the same year, misogyny and cyber harassment involving the dissemination of nude pictures of fellow women U.S. Marines in a private Facebook group called "Marines United" caused a U.S. Congress-level scandal in the U.S. Forces. In view of these incidents that targeted the female gender, the call for cross-cultural competence with regard to the recent commencement of U.S. military and transgender people serving openly as their self-identified gender, should be addressed.

Looking at the German Forces, the case of a right-wing extremist serving as an *Oberleutnant* (first lieutenant) for the Bundeswehr eventually led to the investigation of the "Kommando Spezialkräfte" special unit (KSK). In summer 2020, several right-wing minded members of this unit were exposed, who were organized in chat groups and accountable for amassing ammunition and weapons from the German Forces.

Undoubtably, the aforementioned incidents have a major lack in common: a lack of cross-cultural competence, in particular, transversal skills or culture-general skills, which have the potential to be used as a tool

of prevention, as will be shown in this paper. Moreover, the cases described here and lack of these key skills should demonstrate that we as a society must understand that cross-cultural competence is not an optional soft skill but rather the foundation of a peaceful and effective global society, regardless whether civilian or military.

In reference to these incidents concerning the U.S. and German Forces, as well as the fact that the U.S. and Germany are members of an influential and powerful, multinational and multicultural organization called the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the question arises as to how this civilian-military alliance deals with cross-cultural competence? Due to the composition, history, and power of the organization, NATO is of crucial relevance for this topic, since it has never been examined in this regard. In particular, the discussion on how cross-cultural competence can potentially be used in different ways, in which context it is applied, how it is sometimes instrumentalized, how it can be used as an advantage, and how it becomes a tool to dominate underscores the interest in NATO, with a focus on the military side.

1 Introduction

» Kulturwissenschaften and Cultural Studies

Originating in the early 20th century in German-speaking areas, *Kulturwissenschaften* is a rather new academic discipline that has its roots in the concepts expounded by Ernst Cassirer, Aby Warburg, Georg Simmel, and Max Weber (Fauser, 2003, pp. 12–26). The subject's main characteristic is its interdisciplinary approach. Overlaps with literary studies, art history, and sociology are fundamental cornerstones of the subject: "(…) the usefulness of this convergence is that it has enabled us to understand phenomena and relationships that were not accessible through existing disciplines" (Turner, 2003, p. 9). Hence, a clear distinction between the various disciplines and methodologies is neither conceivable nor desirable, since that convergence is precisely what strengthens *Kulturwissenschaften*. Accordingly, the subject can encompass a variety of different fields of study (Johnson, 2004, p. 24). Both methods and theories from other disciplines can be adapted and applied. Perhaps one of the most popular examples is *semiotics,* which originated in linguistics and was mainly established by Ferdinand de Saussure, then subsequently further developed by philosopher Roland Barthes. According to de Saussure, the relation between a word and its meaning is a social and cultural construct. An example given by Grame Turner (2003) is the word "tree," an arbitrary name that de Saussure would call a signifier. However, a "tree" is more than a word because it conveys meaning, and beyond that, social and cultural concepts of what is considered a "tree," e.g., tall, narrow, wide, hardy, delicate, which are referred to as the signified. This can be easily applied to other words, such as "soldier." The underlying concepts of what is considered a soldier can conflict with different concepts, such as peace-building vs. combat, for example. Therefore, when analyzing verbal communication and its implied concepts, it can reveal how a group of individuals defines their world (Turner, 2003, p. 12). Therefore, semiotics is a helpful theory and tool that can be used to identify cultural conventions that are sometimes obvious and sometimes hidden in underlying concepts. When facing "other" concepts that might seem "foreign,", cross-cultural competence, i.e., the ability to appropriately interact with individuals from various cultural backgrounds different from one's own, becomes vital. These

concepts are also underlying in nonverbal communication. De Saussure claims an analogy between language and all other systems generating meaning, such as gestures, which he calls signifying systems (Turner, 2003, p. 13). Thus, considering Barthes, a word, gesture, sound, clothing style, movie, picture, or text (signifier) inherits a constructed, underlying concept (signified), which may vary from culture to culture as well and enables this "method to examine cultural specificity of representations and their meanings" (Turner, 2003, p. 14) – thus demonstrating its value for *Kulturwissenschaften* and cross-cultural competence to "understand" each other's definitions of the world, avoiding conflict and raising awareness of cultural diversity.

Furthermore, the representation and its meaning often correlate with "politics" and thus the concept of power. "Politics" is not necessarily restricted to political parties and the government, but also involves social actions in general. For example, the perception of a word and its underlying concept can be politics. The term "soldier," for instance, can connote protection and freedom. In contrast, for other cultures, societies, and groups, the term may imply "aggression" and "war." This can depend on how it is portrayed in the media, how the government presents it, and how the population, groups, and individuals experience it. If the way it is portrayed is influenced and directed to suit a specific purpose, "power" then comes into play. Thus, "The term 'politics' in cultural studies carries with it the broadest possible application: it refers to the distribution and operation of power" (Turner, 2003, p. 197). Taking a look at the English-speaking counterpart of *Kulturwissenschaften*, British cultural studies, which originated in the 1960s in Birmingham (England) at the Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS), "power" and hidden power structures became a paramount field of study in the examination of popular culture, e.g., advertisements, movies, and TV shows (see Walton, 2012).[1]

Regarding the idea of analyzing and unveiling power structures, several concepts are fundamental. One of them, the theory of *hegemony* (see Gramsci, 1992), will be utilized as a template for the empirical part. Established by Antonio Gramsci in his "Prison Notebooks" from the 1930s, hegemony deals with the theory that the masses fail to question given power constructs, and is considered a significant concept (Hall, 1980, p. 71; Kendall et al., 2001, p. 16). According to Gramsci, cultur-

[1] The latter was often discredited as "low culture" and thus widely disregarded, whereas cultural artifacts such as architecture and "fine arts" were considered "high culture" and prestigious.

al domination or leadership is not achieved by force, but by the masses' consent because the consenting group is convinced that the dominant group practices what is in everyone's interest and is thus accepted as common sense. Consequently, one group is repeatedly consenting to the rules and structures established by the dominant group (Turner, 2003, p. 54). Evidently, the established superiority and inferiority are characteristic to hegemony.

The main contributors to British cultural studies, Richard Hoggart, Raymond Williams, Edward Thomson, and Stuart Hall, were greatly influenced by the theories mentioned above (Gramsci and Barthes, for example) that had their roots in the continental parts of Europe. As a result, the concepts became an integral component of the discourse of cultural studies (see Hall, 1980, p. 71).

Comparing both *Kulturwissenschaften* and cultural studies, *Kulturwissenschaften* has a more profound interest in interactions between society and politics, too (see Grossberg, 2002). *Semiotics* can be considered a standard topic in most current introductory courses on *Kulturwissenschaften* offered by German universities (see University of Potsdam, 2020; Humboldt University, 2018). Regarding the abovementioned points, *Kulturwissenschaften*[2] and cultural studies correlate with one another and share common fields of study, notably the unveiling and dismantling of power structures, social concepts, and constructs. It is evident that since the early 1990s, the field of cultural studies has demonstrated an increasing interest in the analysis of institutions, an object used for establishing and determining power, and political formations (Turner, 2003, p. 164). Accordingly, this dissertation considers culture's potential to be "power" when it comes to cross-cultural competence (see Johnson et al., 2004, p. 11), which will become evident throughout this paper.

In summary, the aforementioned has shown that the field of cultural studies provides methods and theories to analyze these objects.

An example of a powerful, global institution that has not been examined in this context yet is the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). A civilian-military organization with an extensive kinetic defense system.

Before further addressing NATO, it appears appropriate to examine the idea of "defense" – or warfare.

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[2] For this reason, the term Kulturwissenschaften will be used synonymously with cultural studies in the following.

» Defense and Warfare

Some of the most prominent reasons for violent conflicts are resources, power, and ideology. As such, violent conflicts or "wars" have been a part of human cultures and their encounters for at least the past 12,000 years (Ferguson, 2018). It can be argued that warfare itself is a culture, albeit a distinct one.

To protect and defend resources such as territories and their people, as well as power and ideology against outside aggressors, humans may form coalitions – partnerships with common duties and objectives. Although the idea of fighting in a coalition has not changed dramatically, the way war is waged has. Whereas in former times violent conflicts were fought with simple weapons such as spears, today's warfare has reached a new stage due to technological and scientific developments. In conjunction with highly advanced weapons, new strategies and tactics have emerged. The battlefields have been extended to the Internet, and federal intelligence and weapon systems targeting cyberattacks by hackers, as well as misinformation campaigns strategically placed online, e.g., on social media platforms such as Telegram, were labeled "cyberwarfare" and "cognitive warfare." In response, armed forces such as the U.S. Forces and the German Forces launched cyber commands and NATO announced that cyber defense was a "core task of collective defence" (NATO, 2021). Thus, the term "war" encompasses various subcategories. Another example is peacekeeping missions, which began in 1948 with the United Nations first peacekeeping operation in the Middle East (United Nations, 2021). With the end of the Cold War in 1991, NATO began to engage in peacekeeping missions as well. NATO's first peacekeeping operation took place in Bosnia Herzegovina, Kosovo, and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. However, the label "peacekeeping mission" does not change the fact that violence is used against the adversary and severe destruction to the environment and its people can be collateral damage.

The aforementioned shows that as new termini and ways of thinking about war came into view in the 21st century, new military strategies were developed as well. Part of this strategy can be cross-cultural competence, as will be elaborated on in this paper, although the following section will first examine NATO and its relation to cross-cultural competence in terms of its composition.

» NATO and Cross-Cultural Competence

A multicultural alliance consisting of thirty member states, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is one of the world's leading civilian-military organizations. Both the political level, e.g., the North Atlantic Council (NAC), and the military level, e.g., the Military Committee (MC), command and forces are multinational and multicultural. Evidently, culture and diversity are a significant part of NATO's composition. With regard to military operations, NATO relies on its members' forces. When a political decision is transformed into a NATO mission, the member states deploy some of their forces for the NATO operation. In these cases, military and civil personnel may face both internal and external cultural challenges. However, not only NATO missions and exercises give rise to cultural challenges; the work with potentially thirty different nationalities within the NATO headquarters is a cultural challenge as well. The cultural challenges listed here can thus be categorized into three dimensions: cross-cultural encounters and challenges with regard to (A) the military organization internally, (B) the coalition environment (e.g. NATO meetings) or when on a mission abroad, which refers to the communication and interaction with multinational troops within one contingent or on the base/in the camp as well as "foreign" leaders, and (C) externally, when on a mission abroad and encountering the local population. Culture is thus omnipresent in various dimensions, suggesting that cross-cultural competence is a top priority.

In fact, to wage war in a "contemporary" way, NATO member United States of America and the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) began examining the benefits of cross-cultural competence (3C) in 2005 (Sams, 2014, p. v). General Raymond Odierno emphasized the need for 3C in 2012: "The best-equipped Army in the world can still lose a war if it doesn't understand the people it's fighting." (General Raymond Odierno, Chief of Staff, U.S. Army, quoted in McManus, 2012). Clearly, Odierno's statement can be viewed in the context of Sun Tzu's *Art of War* and the importance of knowledge: "If you know your opponent's weakness and how to exploit them you will never lose" (Tzu & Giles, 1910). Furthermore, in the sense of Sun Tzu, it is of "supreme excellence" to win a war without combat (Tzu & Giles, 1910). Accordingly, 3C and its components, culture-specific knowledge and culture-general skills, could be used to persuade and convince the opponent, which gives a hegemonic character to 3C and the individual applying it. Hence, 3C in a military context could be understood as a tool to "win" a war rather than to "prevent" it. Therefore,

3C can be a strategy to ensure goals and installations or maintain power in a contemporary but hegemonic manner. Consequently, it is paramount to ask:

Research Question 1
What function does cross-cultural competence have in NATO and its missions in all three dimensions?

Moreover, political leaders such as French president Emmanuel Macron have criticized the Alliance: "What we are currently expecting is the brain death of NATO" (The Economist, 2019). Macron was questioning the actions of Turkey's president, Recep Tayyip Erdogan's, to fight against the Kurdish militia YPG without NATO consent. The YPG was in combat along with NATO members and partners against the Islamic State (IS) in Syria. In ambivalent move, Erdogan was threatening to block NATO decisions if the YPG was not recognized as a terror organization (Zeit Online, 2019). For this reason, Macron critiqued the lack of definition of "terror" in NATO. As a result, it is a common practice to standardize procedures, concepts, and terms in large organizations such as NATO in order to avoid misunderstandings and foster interoperability. At NATO, these are called standardized agreements (STANAG). However, such an agreement for cross-cultural competence does not exist, which leads to the second research question:

Research Question 2
Does NATO need a standard for cross-cultural competence?

Both research questions build the foundation of the provocative question in the title of this paper *"NATO – a Wolf in Sheep's Clothing?."* This question deals with whether NATO possibly handles intercultural competence like its member state the USA, since there is no existing STANAG that provides transparency on how NATO perceives and uses cross-cultural competence. Furthermore, the lack of a STANAG could also imply that NATO knows that its member states have varying approaches when it comes to cross-cultural competence but leaves it up to the particular leadership and the situation at hand to enforce cross-cultural competence in a hegemonic manner, in order to be most effective with regard to meeting a specific objective.

» The Approach

To conclude, the main research objective of this paper is to elaborate on the function 3C has in all of the described dimensions as well as to establish a canon for cross-cultural competence in order to facilitate the development of a standard. To this end, a definition of culture in an academic and military context will be provided for the U.S. and German Forces. This section will be followed by a review of definitions of cross-cultural competence as found in the academic discourse, which will be put in relation to the review of the military discourse in the relevant chapters (see Section 5.2.2 et seq.).

Following that, the theoretical template for the empirical part – the theory of hegemony – will be presented. The subsequent section will discuss NATO, the research object, by providing a brief historical context and examining its organizational structure with respect to cross-cultural competence, both within and outside of the organization. Following this contextualization, a document analysis dealing with current regulations and coursework for 3C will provide insights into the current theory and practice of 3C in NATO and its missions as well as its members, with a focus on the U.S. and German Forces. As a result, the theory of hegemony will be applied to the analyzed documents and used to deduce a typification for cross-cultural competence according to the theory. This typification will be tested in qualitative surveys comprising interviews with military personnel currently located at NATO Allied Command Transformation as well as with U.S. and German military personnel. Moreover, the interviews will be examined in a qualitative content analysis based on Philipp Mayring (2014) and weighed against the document analysis in a comparative analysis to compile a list of reoccurring culture-general skills, and thus establish a canon for cross-cultural competence.

2 Defining Culture

"The c-word, mysterious, frightening and to be avoided" (Berry et al., 1997, p. 144). However, a definition of culture is indispensable in order to practice science. Given the heterogeneity of the dynamic and multilayered construct, various definitions of culture are to be found in the literature. It is self-evident that a prominent reason for this is a perspective-dependent approach: taking a look at culture from a psychology or sociology viewpoint is almost certainly different than regarding it from the standpoint of anthropology. However, as pointed out in the introduction, a significant benefit of *Kulturwissenschaften* and cultural studies is the ability to review, include, and adapt theories and concepts from other disciplines which would typically not be combined (Fauser, 2003, p. 9). The following interdisciplinary approach will define culture for the "academic discourse."

At the elementary level, the Latin word "*colere*" means "growing" or "cultivation," which, when referring to the cultivation of fields, is the counterpart of nature. Applying this etymological approach to culture, it can be argued that all human-made things are culture.

Sociologist Leslie White (1959, p. 3) defines culture as "an extrasomatic, temporal continuum of things and events dependent upon symbolling." This definition is more complex than the former one. However, the critical factor that "symbolling" strongly correlates with the concept of semiotics introduced by Saussure and Barthes should be highlighted. In an earlier definition of culture from 1951, anthropologist Clyde Kluckhohn explains culture as a patterned way of thinking, feeling, and reacting, which is obtained and conveyed by symbols. Despite the fact that semiotics plays a role here, too, this definition focuses on the opposite, intrasomatic factors. Moreover, traditional ideas and their associated values add another layer to the concept of culture (Minkov et al., 2013).

Additionally, the preceding definition by cultural anthropologist Alfred Kroeber et al. (1952) provides the component of "behavior." Both argue in a similar way that culture consists of transmitted behavioral patterns, values, and ideas acquired by symbols.

A different approach is taken by the cross-cultural researchers Edward Hall et al. (1990, p. 3). The authors consider culture to be communication. According to their definition, three factors determine the world of communication: words, material things, and behavior. Each world follows its system with written and unwritten rules. Hall argues that when

applying one's rules to a different system, communication is likely to become disconnected, perhaps causing misunderstandings (see high-context vs. low-context cultures in Meyer, 2014, p. 39), thereby emphasizing that communication is an essential skill for cross-cultural competence (Hall et al., 1990, p. 4). Niklas Luhmann (1984, p. 224) also describes culture as communication and as semantic, once interpretation is applied.

Moreover, the definition that follows is the first to not only add social groups to the concept, but also to distinguish between them. Although it must be mentioned that Émile Durkheim (1974, p. 1i) established the "conscience collective," a system consisting of shared beliefs and sentiments, prior to this, which correlates with the following concept. Also, Luhmann's perception of culture being the conscience of a social system (1995, p. 47) has to be noted in this context. However, a more recent definition by culture researcher Geert Hofstede (2001) claims that culture is a shared mental software that differentiates between groups, such as national societies, social groups, occupations, ethnicities, and regions. Although culture becomes a boundary here, it also demonstrates its heterogeneity.

Clearly, the abovementioned overlapping factors play a crucial role in most definitions of culture. Moreover, psychologists Theodore Singelis et al. (1999, p. 317) define two categories of culture: "subjective culture" and "objective culture." The former refers to beliefs, values, and internalized patterns, whereas the latter deals with the human-made environment, artifacts, and creations, which provides a more holistic approach.

In summary, the "academic discourse" suggests that the temporally changing and multifaceted concept of culture can be divided into three sections: *communication,* which includes language and symbols, *objective or extrasomatic things* such as tradition, events, artifacts but also media, and lastly, *subjective or intrasomatic things,* which includes patterned ways of thinking, e.g., rules and internalized systems, transmitted values, beliefs, perception of time and behavior – in short, matters of socialization. The differences in the components mentioned above set boundaries between people, which lets culture become both an inclusive and exclusive "powerful" concept. Accordingly, the collective determines which beliefs and artifacts to consider.

Furthermore, culture can be a suffix for subcategories such as subculture, regional culture, organizational culture, or war culture, which specifies the particular culture-related term, reflecting Hofstede's (2001) approach of the "software of the mind" distinguishing, for example, between national societies or social groups. Regarding NATO, this appears to be a significant part of the concept of culture since "NATO military leaders are

especially challenged, as each military or civilian organization has its own set of ranks, roles, and responsibilities" (Masakowski, 2017, p. 235). This suggests that not only does each military have its own culture, including its system of values, traditions, beliefs, artifacts, or even language, which differs from nation to nation, including their national and regional specifics, but that there are also subcultures within the military, for instance between services, e.g. the Marines and Air Force, and between ranks such as general and major. A valid example illustrating that each military has their own culture is the statement by a lieutenant colonel currently located at NATO Allied Command Transformation who was interviewed for this paper in reference to language: "I mean you wouldn't believe but the military, different militaries, have different terminologies for 'GO.' What do you mean by 'go'? When you start an operation, someone says 'go,' someone says 'standby, standby,' you know, there are different action words that people would use" (Lieutenant Colonel, Army, located at Allied Command Transformation).

The above demonstrates how crucial the definition and awareness of culture is, which leads to the question: What does culture in the "military discourse" or more precisely, within the NATO context, mean? An official definition of culture determined by NATO does not exist. However, NATO's former RTO (Research and Technology Organization) defined culture in its technical report dealing with "Multinational Military Operations and Intercultural Factors" (RTO, 2008, pp. 1–4). Notwithstanding this, a partial consensus can be determined. The RTO researchers refer to concepts derived from anthropology and sociology, such as Florence Kluckhohn and Fred Strodtbeck (1961) and their culture-defining concept of "(…) patterned ways of thinking, feeling and reacting," values, and beliefs as well as Hofstede's "collective programming of the mind" of different groups and their distinction (RTO, 2008, pp. 1–4). In their own words, the RTO research group defines culture as "the learned patterns of behavior and thought that help a group adapt to its surroundings (…) and reveals itself in the beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors of groups of people." Hence, the other dimension of culture, such as human-made things, artifacts, events, or even language, is not taken into consideration by the RTO report at this point.

Nevertheless, in a separate section, the report specifies "military culture" (RTO, 2008, pp. 8–9). While emphasizing the uniqueness of military organizations in comparison to other institutions, the perception of being different and being regarded as different from the outside world seems almost alienating. This statement is supported by Soeters' (2004,

p. 465), stating that these specific occupational cultures are mostly isolated from society (2004, p. 465). Taking the characteristics of military culture into account, they consist of ceremonial displays, etiquette, discipline, professional ethos, as well as esprit de corps (RTO, 2008, p. 9). Furthermore, this subculture is described as "conservative, rooted in history and traditions, based on group loyalty and conformity and oriented toward obedience to supervisors" (RTO, 2008, p. 9). Given the fact that culture is a dynamic concept, the report also underlines that military culture is not homogenous, which was illustrated by the quote above and the use of different action words. Thus, intercultural differences between military in multinational NATO environments and missions have to be considered at all times.

In conclusion, the "NATO discourse" provided us with overlapping definitions in comparison to the "academic discourse," which could create common ground for the following research, although it has to be emphasized that the report reviewed above does not contain official definitions by NATO, but rather the RTO's researchers' perspective on culture.

Additionally, the existence of a military culture varying from nation to nation and within the military itself was highlighted. Therefore, this paper will subsequently take a closer look at NATO members and their possibly different approaches to cultural concepts, especially cross-cultural competence. However, a definition of culture for the USA and Germany NATO members and their forces will be examined first.

2.1 The United States Armed Forces and its Definition of Culture

The United States Armed Forces comprises six services: the U.S. Army, U.S. Navy, U.S. Marine Corps, U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Air Force, and the U.S. Space Force. The latter is planned to use the same 3C curriculum as the Air Force. Each service has its own faculties and research facilities. Since the early 21st century, three of these services have reverted their attention back to "culture" in a military context.

» TRADOCS's definition of culture for the U. S. Army

TRADOC is the acronym for the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, and the name indicates that it provides the Army with training and doctrine for successful missions:

"TRADOC recruits, trains, educates, develops, and builds the Army, establishes standards, drives improvement, and leads change to ensure the Army can deter, fight, and win on any battlefield now and into the future." (TRADOC, 2019). Therefore, it should be considered the standard-setting institution for this particular branch. A standard definition for culture was given in the "Army Culture and Foreign Language Strategy" published by TRADOC in 2009. According to the paper, culture is "(…) the set of distinctive features of a society or group, including but not limited to values, beliefs, and norms, that ties together members of that society or group and that drives action and behavior" (U.S. Army/TRADOC, 2009, p. 7). In addition, further aspects specify the definition. Culture is identified as shared, patterned in people's behavior and thoughts, dynamic, internalized, learned, and traditional (U.S. Army/TRADOC, 2009, p. 7).

» AFCLC's definition of culture for the U. S. Air Force

The U.S. Air Force has established a Culture and Language Center (AFCLC) at Air University (AU), which conducts research, provides instructions, and develops the curriculum for 3C, along with implementing other measures relevant to Airmen (AFCLC, 2019). The AFCLC's report on "Military Cross-Cultural-Competence" (Selmeski, 2007) describes core concepts of culture and 3C. Culture is defined as "learned, shared, patterned, and transmitted across generations" (Selmeski, 2007, p. 3). Furthermore, culture is conceived to be multileveled, comprising a surface which includes material, verbal and nonverbal behavior, a middle layer encompassing all physical and symbolic structures, and a third, deep layer with values, beliefs, expectations, emotions, and symbols (Selmeski, 2007, pp. 3–4). Indisputably, this conception is an adaption of Schein's (1984) "iceberg model" and its three layers, and also reflects Hofstede's "onion model." Moreover, the report describes culture as holistic, dynamic, and performative, expressed in behaviors, feelings, and meanings. It also impacts the way one thinks, feels, and behaves (patterns), but can adapt to human needs (Selmeski, 2007, p. 4).

» CAOCL's definition of culture for the U. S. Marine Corps

The Center for Advanced Operational Culture Learning (CAOCL) is part of the Marines Corps University (MCU) which supports U.S. Marines in their military education. It designs and researches enhancing "operational culture" (OC) training. Accordingly, the U.S. Marine Corps University produced and published its coursework on culture and relevant components essential for the successful operation of the U.S. Marine Corps. Therefore, as Watson (2019, p. 2) argues, the concept of culture is limited to "just those elements that are relevant to military missions," in particular the Marine's missions and operational needs. This becomes evident in the training book on culture published by the MCU Press titled "Operational Culture for the Warfighter: Principles and Applications" (Salmoni et al., 2008), which is intended to be used in the classroom and as a reference book in the fleets. Although the book provides a general definition of culture, it becomes specific in operational culture. Whereas culture is described as "the shared world view and social structures of a group of people that influence a person's and a group's actions and choices" (Salmoni et al., 2008, p. 296), OC is limited to "those aspects of culture that influence the outcome of a military operation; conversely, the military actions that influence the culture of an area of operations" (Salmoni et al., 2008, p. 15). Furthermore, the authors refer to sociologist Goodenough's definition of OC consisting of a "(…) set of norms and behaviors that people switch into, or activate, given the group they are in for any given purpose" (Salmoni et al., 2008, p. 7), strongly correlating with Goffman's (1990) presentation of self in everyday life. Evidently, having a repertoire of performances that one adapts to when in a suitable environment seems to be the desirable competence of a "warfighter".

Furthermore, the training book provides five dimensions of OC, categorized in an ecosystem: the physical environment, the economy; social structure: the social structure, the political structure; and symbols: belief and symbols (Salmoni et al., 2008, p. 25).

In summary, the U.S. Army and U.S. Air Force define culture as dynamic, shared, learned, and patterned. Both consider culture to have an impact on an individual's behavior and thoughts. The U.S. Army also makes a distinction between societies or groups, such as values and beliefs, which are considered to tie the particular group together. Much like Hofstede's approach (see Chapter 2), shared beliefs, norms, or the "mental software" of a particular group of individuals distinguish them from another. Translating this concept to military culture, there can be a delinea-

tion between ally and enemy, the services, between leaders and subordinates, ranks, military personnel, and civil personnel (such as researchers). Although the U.S. Air Force's definition of culture lacks this distinction, it correlates with the idea of culture being multileveled (see Schein, 1984) or multilayered as in Hofstede's "onion model."

Even though the U.S. Marine Corps supports the idea of culture being shared, as sharing a worldview, and that culture influences one's behavior and thinking, the focus is on operational culture. In contrast to the U.S. Army and U.S. Air Force, the U.S. Marines are solely interested in OC, which means aspects of culture useful for changing the outcome of military operations. Thus, especially culture-specific components such as norms and behaviors of other cultures are prominent and need to be learned in order to "switch into" them where the situation requires. Clearly, culture becomes a tool and is more or less instrumentalized and therefore should instead be used to prevent a war than to win one.

As discussed earlier, the three services mentioned above have reconsidered culture in order to improve their pre-deployment training for military personnel. The other services, including the U.S. Navy, have continued their approach to culture as being part of their language curriculum (see USNA, 2019). Because the Naval Academy considers culture to be a component of language, culture has a different quality in comparison to the services examined here, where language, or rather communication, is considered to be a part of culture, although to varying extents.

In view of this, the various definitions and concepts of culture in a military context for the U.S. Forces substantiate that "(…) each service and organization approached (…) culture differently (…)" (Greene Sands, 2016, p. 28).

2.2 The German Armed Forces and its Definition of Culture

The "Bundeswehr" is the collective term for the German armed forces in its entirety. Divided into two sections, the armed forces and the administration, the Bundeswehr has both military and civil components, and is politically led by and subordinate to the German Federal Ministry of Defence, (BMVg) (Kauffmann, 1994, p. 249; von Bredow, 2000, p. 104).

Moreover, the armed forces have three branches: "Luftwaffe" (air force), "Heer" (army), and "Marine" (navy).

Like the U.S. DoD, the BMVg has not yet mandated an official definition for culture. However, for both the armed forces and the administration, the Bundeswehr provides leadership and civic education during seminars and basic training at the *Zentrum für Innere Führung* (ZInFü). In this regard, the major department responsible for "intercultural competence" is located at ZInFü and is called the *Zentrale Koordinierungsstelle Interkulturelle Kompetenz* (Central Coordination of Intercultural Competence/ZKIkK). The ZKIkK introduces several perspectives on culture. In general, *culture is defined here as a collective phenomenon, containing all human-made things, such as language, norms, values, habits, institutions, and symbols. (ZInFü, 2017, p. 4). Furthermore, it is a system of orientation that guides its individuals to identify with it, for example through norms, behavior, and traditions. However, these systems are dynamic since they are in constant interplay with their individuals (ZInFü, 2017, p. 4).* Aside from this universal definition, the term "culture" is divided into several categories, based on a narrow and a broad definition. In cultural studies, the narrow definition is referred to as "high culture," which deals with fine arts and other aspects. The broad definition is subdivided into two subcategories: an open and a closed view of culture – the open one considers culture to be dynamic, continually changing, and in mutual exchange. Culture is not limited to nations and territories, it can be pop culture or the culture of an Internet community, for example. (ZInFü, 2017, p. 6). In contrast, the closed view is limited to borders and refers to nations, territories, and the like. Cultural products such as customs and symbols are assigned to a particular territory or nation, contributing to the establishment of stereotypes, which ZInFü points out. Apart from this, ZInFü mainly uses three scientific approaches, which are derived from the fields of psychology, sociology, and regional studies and will be illustrated in the following (ZInFü, 2017, p. 19). The first approach is related to Hofstede's onion model. The core (1) contains the values and underlying assumptions that are not as visible as the outer layers, representing rituals (2), heroes (3), and symbols (4). Accordingly, values are the least influenceable and most unconscious component. The following layer, rituals (2), comprises collective practices that are argued to provide support and orientation in foreign environments. Heroes (3) are found in the third layer and are both fictional and real characters that are admired and valued in a particular culture. The final layer (4) consists of symbols, which can be signs, pictures, garments, gestures, language, and sounds that are used and understood by

a specific culture (ZInFü, 2017, p. 22). Another illustrative model used by ZInFü is the iceberg model (ZInFü, 2017, p. 23). Although no reference is provided, the iceberg model is presumably adapted from Edgar Schein's model of organizational culture (see Schein, 1992). The peak of the iceberg contains all visible things of culture, such as artifacts, whereas the bottom represents the invisible, unconscious things such as underlying assumptions.

The second approach deals with the *sociological perspective.* Here, cultural standards (attempt to generalize culture-related behavior) are categorized according to their range of belonging (ZInFü, 2017, p. 23). Moreover, space, where culture spreads, is determined by similar norms and values, practices, and is therefore not bound to national borders. Cultural standards are reflected, for instance, in gender, language, companies, and organizations, and are expressed in behavioral patterns (ZInFü, 2017, p. 23).

In contrast, the *regional studies* approach focuses on a particular area, country, town, or region to analyze all factors, especially natural, economic, and social conditions, as well as politics and population density and structure.

In summary, ZKIkK uses three scientific approaches to culture, but there are overlaps with the U.S. Forces in terms of the general definition. The ZKIkK, U.S. Army, Air Force, and Marine Corps consider culture to be dynamic, consisting of norms, patterned behavior, shared values, and beliefs, which, according to ZKIkK, makes it a "collective phenomenon." Although ZKIkK predominantly uses the term "system of orientation," none of the other definitions use that terminology. However, it correlates with the RTO's definition of culture being a learned, patterned behavior and thought, thereby helping a group adapt to its environment, which makes it a system of orientation.

After having reviewed the definition of culture for the Bundeswehr by examining the ZKIkK's approaches, this department will be discussed further in Section 4.2.2., where other approaches to culture in a German military discourse will be addressed.

3 Defining Cross-Cultural Competence

Cross-cultural competence (3C) has been theorized and researched for over 40 years. Many concepts and models have thus been established, reviewed, and listed, including in "The Sage Handbook of Intercultural Competence" (see Deardorff et al., 2009). Most of the research stresses the preventative character that 3C has to help build relationships and trust and avoid conflicts; above all is the genuine interaction with the individual from a different cultural background (see Deardorff et al., 2009, p. 269). At the same time, there is still a debate on which components comprise cross-cultural competence (Chiu et al., 2013). Therefore, a selection of definitions of 3C and what this competence entails will be examined in the following.

Tatiana Stefanenko (2012) understands 3C as a composition of "methods and procedures dedicated to evolving cross-cultural competence that leads to the adoption and understanding of the features of one's own culture, develops a positive attitude to other cultural groups and its participants, and increases the ability to understand and interact with them." Kwok Leung (2014) adds an important aspect that is often disregarded since research mainly focuses on applying 3C abroad or in scenarios primarily involving multinational encounters. According to Leung, 3C also applies to a national framework where regional differences, urban vs. rural, ethnicity, religion and other aspects play a role: "Intercultural competence is the ability to function effectively across cultures, to think and act appropriately, and to communicate and work with people from different cultural backgrounds – at home or abroad" (Leung et al., 2014). Reviewing Leung's approach to the elements composing 3C gives rise to four categories: skills, attitudes, culture, and communication. While the first category includes skills such as listening, analyzing, observing, and critical thinking, "attitudes" encompass openness, curiosity, discovery, and respect. The third category involves identity, beliefs, values, and self-awareness. Lastly, "communication" comprises nonverbal behavior, literacy, dialogue, and language. When reviewing Milton Bennett (2008) and the established components of intercultural competence, different categories can be found. Bennett determined three domains: cognitive,

affective, and behavioral. While the cognitive domain entails cultural self-awareness, culture-general knowledge, culture-specific knowledge, and interaction analysis, the affective domain deals with curiosity, cognitive flexibility, motivation, and open mindedness. The last domain, "behavioral," covers relationship building, listening and problem solving, empathy, and information gathering. Moreover, Deardorff (2009) defines three components that constitute intercultural competence: knowledge/comprehension, skills, and attitudes. Whereas the first components are interdependent, the latter is more considered to be an enhancer. These "enhancing attitudes" are respect, openness, suspending judgment, and curiosity. However, according to Deardorff, skills that can be learned and improved include listening, observing, interpreting, analyzing, evaluating, and relating. The first component, knowledge/comprehension, includes cultural self-awareness as well as a deep understanding and knowledge of culture (for example, knowing the contexts, role, and impact of cultures and people's worldview), culture-specific information, and sociolinguistic awareness (Deardorff, 2009, p. 13). Similarly, Hofstede (2010, p. 24) highlights the importance of having insights into institutions, rules, laws, and organizations in order to understand a culture as well as knowing family hierarchies and values, school systems, and idols (Hofstede, 2010, p. 25). Hofstede calls this "software of the mind," which was introduced earlier in this paper. Evidently, the author refers more to the national concept of culture than ethnic cultures or regional cultures, for example. As a result, acquiring the aforementioned insight should enable one's ability to adapt to other cultures, behaviors, and communication styles as well as to be flexible when utilizing the appropriate style of communication and behavior, and lastly, to be empathetic (Deardorff, 2009, p. 13). Cross-cultural empathy is defined as the ability to relate to an individual's situation and develop compassion (Deardorff, 2009, p. 70).

Revisiting Hofstede (2010), intercultural communication is divided into three phases: culture-specific knowledge and two culture-general components, awareness and skills (Hofstede, 2010, p. 419). The latter is based on knowledge and awareness plus practice, for example, knowing a cultural symbol (knowledge), recognizing it (awareness), and applying it (skill/practice) (Hofstede, 2010, p. 420), which correlates with semiotics. Hofstede et al. address cultural relativism, the ability to suspend judgment and to be tolerant when dealing with groups or societies from different cultures (Hofstede, 2010, p. 25). Additionally, the ability to distance oneself from one's own world view and provide emotional stability is addressed, which could be labeled tolerance of ambiguity. As can be

seen, numerous approaches to what constitutes cross-cultural competence have been proposed. Therefore, as the first key step, a valid definition for this paper will be suggested. Moreover, the perspective on 3C from the military perspective will be elaborated on along with examining which components are deemed vital in a military context. While the latter will be addressed in the relevant chapters, the valid definition mentioned above is presented below:

Cross-cultural competence (3C) is a crucial foundation for an appropriate and successful[3] *interaction between individuals from different cultural backgrounds at home or abroad.*

It has to be noted that in reference to the aforementioned definition of culture, 3C affects every cultural background, which may be related to age, gender, ethnicity, nationality, regions, professions such as those in the military or in the corporate world, and music genres such as punk and hip hop, to list just a few. Furthermore, the definition of "successful" depends on the parties involved. This implies that 3C can follow a certain objective, which can be preventative, influential, or even manipulative. While the research reviewed above primarily examined 3C from the ethical perspective in the sense of "prevention" (explicitly in Deardorff et al., 2009, and Stefanenko 2012), which entails genuine relationship-building, genuine interaction, and genuine interest in the other without pursuing hidden objectives, the following chapters will examine its different facets.

[3] The criteria of "success" and "appropriateness" are defined according to the particular concept of cross-cultural competence, and thus vary.

4 Theory

This chapter introduces a cultural studies-based theoretical framework relevant to cross-cultural competence in a military context. However, the selection of theories is not intended to be exhaustive. The following theories were chosen due to their relevance for this topic, which will become evident in the course of this paper. The leitmotif for this paper, in terms of cultural studies-based theories, is hegemony.

4.1 Hegemony

Between 1929 and 1935, the Italian communist and Marxist philosopher Antonio Gramsci wrote the *Quaderni del Cacere* while imprisoned by the Italian fascist regime. These "Prison Notebooks" form the foundation for the concept of *hegemony* used in cultural studies and several other disciplines (e.g., economics and postcolonial studies) (see Hoare et al., 2016). In the notebooks, which spanned more than 3,000 pages, Gramsci captured his thoughts on various topics, mostly ones of a political nature but also on literature, education, philosophy, and cultural and social theory (Salerno, 2004, p. 102). Of concern for this paper are his writings on hegemony. Gramsci wrote, "The state has its conception of life, and it strives to disseminate it: this is its task and duty" (Gramsci, 1992, p. 187). To achieve this task, Gramsci differentiates between two concepts, *hegemony* and *domination* (see Hall, 1983, p. 168; Adamson, 1980, p. 170). Whereas domination is the "weaker" concept of the two, expressing political leadership when in power, leading the allied, and consequently dominating the opposed through coercion, hegemony is the "stronger" concept – it is also about leadership, but focuses on the consent of the individual to follow the particular conception of life because the individual is made to believe it is the better choice (see Gramsci, 1992, pp. 136–137). Thus, hegemony is always educational (Hoare et al., 2016, p. 128). This educational process takes place within civil society, which comprises culture, private institutions, religious organizations, media, and more (Hoare et al., 2016, p. 56) and is described by Louis Althusser as the *ideological state apparatus* (Althusser, 1971, p. 142). At this point, the agents of hegemony come into play. The agents are intellectuals whose task it is to persuade the members

of the civil society in order to establish consent (Hoare et al., 2016, 126). Accordingly, the way of life Gramsci is referring to, "(…) becomes 'natural' and 'common sense'" (Salerno, 2004, p. 103), or as Howson puts it (2008, p. 4) "(…) the traditional popular conception of the world." Therefore, hegemony is constructed and achieved through intellectual persuasion (Hoare et al., 2016, p. 125). According to Stuart Hall (1983, p. 166) "(…), everyone is a philosopher or an intellectual insofar as they think (…)," and it thus "(…) requires extensive work of intellectual organization (…)" to construct a collective will/consent which is paramount to any hegemonic strategy. However, the *repressive state apparatus* (see Althusser, 1971) might be enforced, which is when "(…) authority has lost legitimacy and can only operate as power (…)" (Howson, 2008, p. 6). In this case, coercion, such as in the form of military, police, and administrative authorities, is used to achieve consent and restore its legitimacy, and subsequently, its authority. Despite that, neither coercion nor consent alone is the only component of hegemony; it is the interdependent combination of both consent and coercion that are essential to hegemony (Hall, 1983, p. 171; see Agnew, 2005, p. 2). Domination, on the contrary, does not try to persuade or achieve consent. Thus, domination is the weaker concept in comparison to hegemony since it solely uses coercion, an argument which is also substantiated in Walter Adamson's writings (1980, p. 170), "Gramsci contended (…) that only weak states need to rely very often on the threat or use of force implied in their domination. Strong states rule almost exclusively through hegemony." Hence, domination is often the momentum for the end of hegemony and is enforced when consent is lost. Notwithstanding this, Howson (2008, p. 5), Hall (1983, p. 170), and Adamson (1980, p. 174) argue that hegemony still allows a formation of thoughts differing from the collective will in subordinate spaces as long as they remain subordinate and passive by preventing unity. These spaces are located within the civil society and occupied by subaltern groups, such as women, and different ethnicities. (Howson, 2008, p. 2). Hegemony therefore has a dynamic structure and needs to be achieved each day anew (Hall, 1983, p.172).

Moreover, hegemony is not limited to national boundaries and "does not require territorial control" (Agnew, 2005, p. 16). Due to consent and the resulting cooperation, hegemony can theoretically be achieved globally. Agnew (2005, p. 15) claims that the establishment of an international community and global consensus through institutions such as the United Nations (UN) or alliances such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is, in fact, an attempt to foster hegemony. This becomes plausible

when considering that hegemony "is the 'normal' form of government, at least in industrial societies, and therefore almost infinite in its variety" (Adamson, 1980, p. 173).

Thus, the relevant question in the context of this paper is not whether NATO is a tool used to enforce hegemony, but rather if hegemony and cross-cultural competence are compatible. Accordingly, cross-cultural competence may be instrumentalized, which will be discussed after elaborating on the theory and practice of 3C in NATO.

4.2 Postcolonial Theory

Postcolonial theory turned out to be a significant compound of theories used to dismantle power constellations and constructs as well as examine the long-lasting and continuous impact of colonialism on culture and society, and as a result, became an integral part of cultural studies. Moreover, it evolved into a subject, called postcolonial studies, which combines existing theories and methods within this field of research and is taught at several universities.

Aside from that, the term "postcolonial" implies that this theory deals with the particular timeframe of colonialism and its aftermath. Specifically, it analyzes the power structures between the *colonizer*, usually European, and often generalized as "Western," and the *colonized*, sometimes referred to as the "subaltern." The latter is derived from Gramsci's theory of hegemony and more recently used by Gayatri Spivak (see Spivak, 2008). Additionally, "othering" or the "other" is used in the sense of drawing clear boundaries between people of different ethnicities, genders, and sexual orientations, which postcolonial theory dismantles. In this context, the terms "the superior" (colonizer) and "the inferior" (colonized) are often used, as also found in Frantz Fanon's writings (see Fanon, 1963).

In conclusion, in terms of this paper and cross-cultural competence, the theory can be applied to NATO military operations. When NATO and its members deploy their forces during a mission in order to provide security for its members in a foreign country, it is, first of all, a type of occupation. Second, by way of the task of the mission, the occupier is essentially entitled to act on behalf of the alliance and therefore has "power," which potentially makes the occupier superior. However, the occupier can also fail to encounter or interact with the local population on equal terms

due to cultural bias (such as judging lower educational and technical standards and housing situations) and therefore regard the "other" as inferior.

Strongly interrelated with the above is the concept of *Orientalism,* which was identified as "(…) one of the key moments in the development of postcolonial theory (…)" (Hoare et al. 2016, p. 218). The next section will elaborate on this further.

4.3 Orientalism

Orientalism was coined by Edward W. Said and deals with depictions and representations of the "Orient" by individuals whom he calls "Orientalists" and who are usually located in the "Orient's" counterpart, the "Occident" (see Said, 1979, pp. 21, 73). Those Orientalists thus view from the outside into the inside, imagining what is to them a strange world in art and literature, for example, and as a result mystifying an entire region. In this connection, Said states: "(…) Goethe and Hugo restructured the Orient by their art, and made its colors, lights, and people visible through their images, rhythms, and motifs. At most, the 'real' Orient provoked a writer to this vision; it rarely guided it" (Said, 1979, p. 22). The prior statement thus emphasizes the establishment of Occidental or Western attributions of the Orient.

Moreover, the "civilized" Occident constructed its "uncivilized" counterpart, the Orient. However, these attributions have to be agreed on in order to be reproduced and therefore rely on institutions, conventions, and codes of understandings of their effects (Said, 1979, p. 22). As a consequence, stereotypes are formed and propagated, leading to "imaginative geography and (…) dramatic boundaries (…)" (Said, 1979, p. 73). This is directly related to the concept of hegemony. Consent has to be achieved in order to establish these attributes, which are disseminated through the intellectuals. Said refers Gramsci: "Culture (…) is to be found operating within civil society, where the influence of ideas, of institutions, and other persons work not through domination but what Gramsci calls consent" (Said, 1979, p. 7). Furthermore, he states, "(…) the major component in European culture is precisely what made that culture hegemonic both inside and outside Europe: the idea of European identity as a superior one (…)" (Said, 1979, p. 14), which formed the foundation for postcolonial theory.

A simplified example of modern Orientalism is the remake of the American (Occidental) Disney movie *Aladdin* (2019), which contains an array of stereotypes: deserts, tigers, black magic, Indian-looking garments, oriental rugs, and bazaars. Moreover, practices such as cutting off a thief's hand are presented, depicting a barbaric people, which emphasizes the difference between a "civilized" and "uncivilized" people. Those imaginary geographies and foreign practices are referring to Said's statements. Aside from that, it is evident that following the 9/11 attacks, the number of Occidental movies depicting Oriental-looking protagonists as terrorists increased. However, the brief description above of a "family entertainment movie" shows that it is paramount to demonstrate how those stereotypes are ingrained in the very early stages of childhood and continue to be disseminated through feature movies for adults such as *Body of Lies* (2008), *Zero Dark Thirty* (2012), and *Lone Survivor* (2013). Therefore, this theory can sensitize individuals exposed to Orientalism and raise awareness of unconscious bias, especially, but not limited to the Middle East.

Although it is obvious that Said's theory is predestined to be used in 3C training as a facilitating method to foster cultural awareness, prevent bias and stereotypes due to reflecting Occidental techniques in media and literature, this approach is not found in any of the military discourses dealing with the practice and training of 3C, as will be subsequently be discussed.

5 The Research Object – NATO

This chapter will introduce the research object and put it in relation to cross-cultural competence.

5.1 The North Atlantic Treaty Organization

Founded by the USA in 1949 during the Cold War as a response against the "aggressor" – the Soviet Union (USSR) – the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was established to deter any attacks by the USSR by creating an extensive security network and ultimately avoiding an anticipated atomic war between the two "superpowers." To this aim, the USA joined forces with the *Western Bloc,* which then comprised twelve members: Belgium, Canada, Great Britain, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, and the United States. This commitment entailed a pledge to support and defend every member of the alliance if attacked by the USSR. When West Germany joined six years later in conjunction with the permission to establish the "Bundeswehr" armed forces again, the USSR formed an *Eastern Bloc.* The Eastern Bloc consisted of Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Poland, and Romania, and was part of the Warsaw Pact alliance. Both alliances regarded the other as a threat and thus had common objectives and interests, such as a common enemy, and an agenda to establish a strong security defense system against the counterpart through "partnerships". NATO therefore had a clear purpose and task. This purpose was questioned when the USSR, and thus the common enemy and task, was dissolved in 1991. However, NATO continued to expand its alliance, particularly to the east. As a result, NATO is constantly growing, and the objectives, demands, and interests of its members become more complex as it continues to expand. In addition, members may have different affiliations outside of NATO, which might even collide with the alliance. The example given in the introduction illustrated this problem. NATO member state Turkey was acting without NATO consent in the case of the People's Protection Units (YPG).

Consequently, to be able to align demands and objectives and define common principles and values for NATO suggests an increased need for

cross-cultural competence. To illustrate the processes and levels requiring cross-cultural competence, an organizational chart will be provided in the following section.

5.1.1 Organizational Structure With Respect to Cross-Cultural Competence

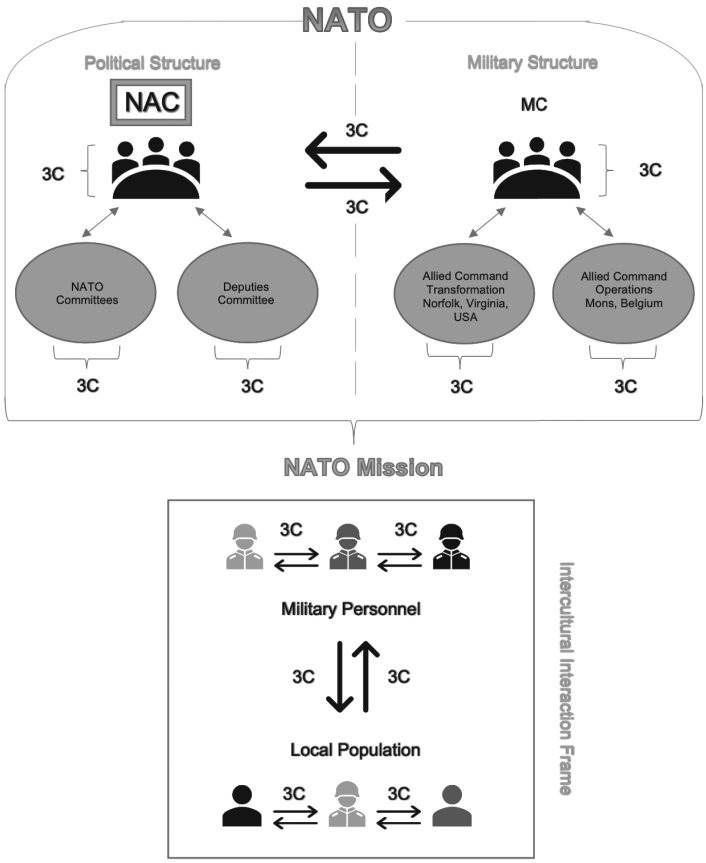

Figure 1: Cross-Cultural Competence Organizational Chart (Anne Julia Hagen)

Before elaborating further on cross-cultural competence (3C), it seems appropriate to point out the various interrelations that 3C has an impact on. This will demonstrate the significance and omnipresence the topic has both within and outside of NATO.

Since there is no organizational chart available that illustrates or describes the structure of NATO or its missions with regard to cross-cultural competence, the following simplified diagram was created by the author, which will be explained in the following.

The chart above shows that NATO is composed of two main components, the North Atlantic Council (NAC) and the NATO Military Committee (MC).[4] The former is the primary component, and so its acronym "NAC" is highlighted in a frame in the chart. The NAC is the "principal political decision-making body within NATO" dealing with the member states' concerns regarding peace and security (Stoltenberg, 2018, p. 91). Therefore, the left side of the chart represents the political structure, while the right side illustrates the military structure, with the MC being the "senior military authority within NATO" (Stoltenberg, 2018, p. 91). Given the fact that NATO consists of 30 member states, both NAC and MC accordingly have 30 representatives, all with different cultures and languages. The curly bracket on both sides next to NAC/MC indicates the importance of cross-cultural competence due to the need for intercultural communication within the two bodies. The arrows between NAC and MC depict NAC's requests for military advice and MC providing it with recommendations. At this point, 3C is especially involved on two levels: the MC has to consider cultural factors when giving its advice to NAC for military operations and also has to find a consensus in a multinational forum of discussion. The aforementioned cultural factors in military operations have to be taken into account by the Allied Command Operations (ACO), which is subordinate to the MC and "(…) responsible for the planning and execution of all Alliance operations and missions" (Stoltenberg, 2018, p. 93). The Allied Command Transformation (ACT), shown in the adjacent oval in the graphic, deals with the "(…) transformation of NATO's military structure, forces, capabilities, and doctrine" (Stoltenberg, 2018, p. 93), thereby improving military effectiveness, and is thus of interest for this paper with regard to possible doctrine in 3C. For this reason, interviews with military personnel located at NATO Allied Command Transformation were conducted to provide insights on dimen-

[4] A third principal committee is the Nuclear Planning Group, which will not be a topic of this paper.

sion A, "3C and NATO headquarters," in this case, the NATO Base in Norfolk, Virginia, as well as on the interviewees' personal experiences in dimensions B and C, which will be analyzed in the pertinent chapter. Although this paper focuses on the three described dimensions concerning 3C, it must be noted that there are more dimensions than the organizational chart shows.

In the chart, the two ovals on the right (ACO and ACT) represent multinational staff located in different countries, thus highlighting NATO's multiculturalism. The same applies to the NATO subordinate commands that are not listed here. In terms of the political structure (shown on the left side), numerous committees directly report to the NAC and provide assistance with finding consensus, standardizing, advising, and other tasks. Additionally, agencies, offices, and organizations installed by NATO, such as the Science and Technology Organization (STO), which conducts research supporting the Alliance, the Standardization Office, which fosters coherency and efficiency by "(…) identifying, developing and implementing NATO standards (…)" (Stoltenberg, 2018, p. 95), and the NATO Support and Procurement Agency, which is the central procurement and logistics provider for the Alliance, reflect the organization's multinational character and demonstrate the omnipresent need for 3C.

Moreover, 3C plays a role when NAC receives advice from the MC, discusses it in the NAC, and responds to the MC with its decision. A decision may result in a NATO mission or operation which may include measures such as international training, surveillance, combat, peacekeeping, and humanitarian relief, as illustrated by the curly bracket at the bottom of the political structure side. The most recent example of humanitarian relief is "Allied support," which is NATO's "Coronavirus response" and involves the provision of logistics[5], international airlifts, and research[6], but is limited to member and partner states. However, one example of a location that requires special support but is being overlooked is the island of Lesbos in Greece, a NATO member state. The island is having difficulty dealing with its overcrowded refugee camp that has capacity to provide shelter for around 3,000 people, but 19,000 individuals are currently taking refuge there (see MEMO, 2020). According to the Anadolu Agency,

[5] NATO's Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre is a civil emergency response center that disseminates international requests for assistance through its system and then coordinates the resulting offers of assistance (NATO, 2020a).

[6] NATO's research institute "Centre for Maritime Research and Experimentation" in Italy assisted the U.S. state of Connecticut in its forecast of the spread of the virus (NATO, 2020a).

Doctors Without Borders urged that people be evacuated immediately in order to prevent community spread of the COVID-19 virus in the camp, pointing at the lack of soap, shortage of water taps, and crowded space (MEMO, 2020).

Further examples are the AMISOM, OAE, and ISAF missions, although the latter is an exception because it was not mandated by NATO but was subsequently led by the Alliance. According to NATO (see NATO, 2010), the Alliance supports the *African Union Mission in Somalia* (AMISOM) peacekeeping mission (2007–present) by airlifting individuals willing to deploy in Somalia in order to foster peace in the country. An example of surveillance is the *Operation Active Endeavour* (OAE) (2001–2016), which monitored the Mediterranean Sea with the objective of countering terrorist attacks The last example is the "Alliance's most significant operational commitment to date" (see NATO, 2019): the *International Security Assistance Force* (ISAF), a military and peacebuilding mission conducted by NATO from 2003–2014, which aimed to assist Afghanistan in establishing a democratic state, fostering security, and countering insurgency and terrorism by building and supporting the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). All of these types of missions require cross-cultural competence, as shown in the second section of the graphic. There, located at the top, are three icons in varying shades symbolizing military personnel[7], such as military leaders from different countries and cultures. Consequently, 3C is essential when interacting with each other but also when making decisions that affect the local population and their leaders. The arrows between the icons on the top and the icons on the bottom represent the mutual need for 3C when interacting with one another. The box framing the NATO Mission is therefore called the *intercultural interaction frame*. Furthermore, the icons on the bottom (representing military personnel and local population) require 3C as well, since the local population is most likely culturally diverse, e.g., consisting of various tribes and their leaders with varying degrees of power and authority, or military personnel and military leaders with military cultures different from their own.

To conclude, 3C has been demonstrated to be an omnipresent and important competency for NATO and individuals in general. However, further investigation is needed to determine how 3C is implemented in NATO and what kind of skills 3C requires. Therefore, a definition of

[7] Civil personnel are also impacted by cross-cultural competence. However, this paper focuses on military personnel.

cross-cultural competence for the forces under examination here, as well as its components, is vital and will be provided in the following chapters.

5.2 Document Analysis

The subsequent sections will analyze official documents, coursework, pamphlets, and manuals as well as academic research.

5.2.1 A Deduction of Cross-Cultural Competence in NATO Forces

"Establishing common standards is essential for enhancing interoperability among Allies, and between Allies and partners" (Stoltenberg, 2018, p. 67). Therefore, NATO promotes common standards, called STANAGs, with the help of the NATO Standardization Office. This office created a "NATO Standardization Document Database" (Stoltenberg, 2018, p. 95), however, there are no universal guidelines for the theory and practice of cross-cultural competence (3C) to be found. Although NATO is an international organization that deploys multinational troop contingents, each member state has its own 3C curriculum. Thus, the nonexistent standard for 3C raises the question of how multinational troops operate while deployed in a foreign country.

Taking into account that 3C is essential to a successful deployment abroad (Abbe et al., 2007; ARCIC, 2014[8]), the quest for a canon of 3C in NATO is desirable. In this context, however, NATO's former Research and Technology Organization (RTO), which was later succeeded by the STO (Science and Technology Organization), submitted a report in 2008 on "Multinational Military Operations and Intercultural Factors." The joint task force consisted of researchers from Canada, the United States, Netherlands, and the Czech Republic. The report stated that "One of the most compelling [conclusions] was the call for efforts to instil greater

[8] In December 2018, ARCIC (Army Capabilities Integration Center) transitioned from TRADOC (Army Training and Doctrine Command) to AFC (Army Futures Command).

cultural sensitivity and awareness through pre-deployment programs and training for all military personnel." (RTO/NATO, 2008, p. ES 1).

Furthermore, it was emphasized that 3C did not appear to be "an integral aspect of the military training for all nations," which implies that some member states might operate on a desirable level. However, not every nation is on par. Whereas universal guidelines for 3C could have been addressed at that point, the recommendation focused on the endeavor to improve pre-deployment training. The report highlighted starting cultural awareness education during the initial basic military training and expediting joint and multinational training in order to develop skills for working with people with different cultural backgrounds. This technical report certainly demonstrates the importance of the topic and the need for 3C within joint operations and coalition assignments at home and abroad. However, it did not lead to the establishment of a universal standard for NATO members.[9] A standard, in general, is neither addressed in the military nor the academic discourse when it comes to NATO. It appears that researchers in the field of culture and cross-cultural competence in the military focus on their national frame or a particular national military branch when dealing with 3C (e.g., see Holmes-Eber, 2014; Enstad et al., 2020). A transnational approach regarding 3C has been neglected.

Nevertheless, regarding dimension A, NATO headquarters (HQ) does offer an introductory course on cross-cultural training for newly enlisted military and civil personnel who arrive at the base, although the content is limited to cultural awareness. The latest version of the PowerPoint presentation for this class for the Allied Command Transformation (ACT) American HQ is available to the author. Therefore, a content analysis of the PowerPoint presentation for ACT staff will be conducted to examine the foundation of the course.

The presentation, titled "Cultural Awareness Training," is dated July 9, 2020. It consists of 65 slides, including various pictures depicting cities, monuments, maps, national flags, and individuals (mainly in uniform), as well as written information on cultural factors. The outline contains an introduction, information on the Supreme Allied Commander

[9] Another example is language, which is a component of 3C. Of course, language is a prerequisite for verbal communication. Although English and French are officially the two main NATO languages, and English is considered the lingua franca, not all member states reach equal levels of proficiency. This difficulty has been addressed on the NATO Review website's blog: "(…) linguistic interoperability is as important to ensuring that countries are able to participate effectively in both NATO missions as any wider Alliance activities (…)" (Crossey, 2005).

Transformation (SACT) HQ, "eight cultural dimensions," and a "wrap-up."

The HQ is discussed on page 7. Ellipses surrounding the ACT logo display "29 nations," "language," "gender", "10% civilians", "rotations 3/4 years," and the branches "Army, Navy, Air Force, etc.". Considering the date when the presentation was last edited and released, it has to be noted that the number of member states is not correct, since NATO gained a new member state, Macedonia, on March 27, 2020. Moreover, it is conspicuous that the presentation is based on a single source, *The Culture Map* (2014), a commercial book by Erin Meyer dealing with the facilitation of intercultural communication in business on a global stage. Although simplification and precise information is desirable, a more extensive selection of sources and especially a review of academic literature is a requirement for most presentations on the college or high school level. Regarding the amount of research that is available on military work environments in particular, it is noticeable that none of it was taken into account in the presentation.

Aside from that, slide 13 defines "culture": "A culture itself is the set of customs, traditions, and values of a society or community, such as an ethnic group or nation" (SACT, 2020, p. 13). The definition provided correlates with the presentation's focus on ethnic or national traits, which becomes evident throughout the slides. A differentiated perspective by offering diverse approaches to the concept of culture could thus have demonstrated its dynamic and complexity. After an exercise, which is not described further, a self-evaluation follows. The subsequent slides contain questions with two diverging statements, such as "Which type of communication do you practice?" and the answers "I try to communicate in a very simple, clear and explicit way, and repeat what is important to me in order to make sure that my message is understood" or "I try to communicate in a sophisticated way. Not all my messages are directly expressed. You have to read between the lines in order to get the complete message" (SACT, 2020, p. 15). These statements polarize and motivate participants to self-reflect on their own communication style. The same process is applied for "feedback," "leadership," and "scheduling" affecting one's own cultural self-awareness.

Slide 19 introduces eight cultural dimensions: (1) Communicating, (2) Evaluating, (3) Persuading, (4) Leading, (5) Deciding, (6) Trust, (7) Disagreeing, and (8) Scheduling. These dimensions are shown as a spectrum on which the member states are placed, as illustrated in the examples below.

Figure 2 aims to demonstrate that the countries shown closer to the left end of the spectrum are precise and simple in their communication, whereas the countries located on the right end have the opposite communication style, such as implied meaning and layered communication. The intensity of one or the other characteristics decreases closer to the middle of the spectrum.

Figure 2: Low-context vs. high-context spectrum (SACT, 2020, p. 24)

Figure 3 illustrates the same principle described above for leadership. While the countries shown on the left are presented as preferring flat hierarchies (low power distance), the countries on the opposite side are shown to be in favor of high hierarchies (high power distance). The undertaking to categorize nations and deduce their cultural factors such as leadership and time perception was coined by Geert Hofstede (see 2001; 2010), who defines power distance as:

Figure 3: Low vs. High Power Distance (SACT, 2020, p. 36)

"(…) the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally" (see Hofstede, 2020a). Evidently, this concept is reflected in Meyer's book and used accordingly in the presentation examined here.

Regardless of this, the approach to place nationalities on a spectrum and therefore categorize them can be both helpful and detrimental. One the one hand, it gives individuals an idea of how a particular nation is perceived by the mainstream as well as which attributes and characteristics are assigned to a specific nationality and may prompt self-reflection. Additionally, it can sensitize individuals with regard to how to approach individuals from different cultural backgrounds. On the other hand, it

fosters nationalism, generalization, and stereotyping by assigning specific attributes to a nation and thus entailing the potential to divide and separate rather than to unify. However, the presentation provides "notes about the scales." The notes point out that the spectrum is supposed to illustrate differences, and that each culture has its spectrum (SACT, 2020, p. 20). Culture thus becomes a national factor, e.g., a Turkish or Canadian culture, and is therefore generalized while becoming an exclusive concept as discussed at the beginning of this paper. Notwithstanding this, the definition of culture given in the presentation underpins this approach, which is why a presenting a differentiated view by providing diverging approaches and definitions on culture, as argued in the introduction, could have highlighted the multifaceted construct and prevented the potential for stereotyping, nationalism, and exclusion. When examining the definition Hofstede provides in this context, he makes some key remarks:

> *Culture is defined as the collective mental programming of the human mind, which distinguishes one group of people from another. This programming influences patterns of thinking which are reflected in the meaning people attach to various aspects of life and which become crystallized in the institutions of a society. (See Hofstede, 2020b)*

Hence, culture is distinguishing, constructed by groups, arbitrary, and therefore dynamic. Comparing this with the presentation's definition, i.e., "a culture itself is the set of customs, traditions, and values of a society or community, such as an ethnic group or nation," culture appears to be static, inconvertible, traditional, and focused on ethnicity and nationality.

Moreover, Hofstede states: "Please realise that statements about just one culture on the level of 'values' do not describe 'reality'; such statements are generalisations and they ought to be relative" and also points out that "(…) not everyone in a society is programmed the same way" (Hofstede, 2020b). While the presentation mentions that "plenty of individuals are outside of their culture's spectrum," alternative approaches are lacking considering that the presentation emphasizes that it is "based on empirical research," which amplifies its legitimacy (SACT, 2020, p. 20). In fact, the categorization of nations is promoted in the final slides. The section on "questions" asks the following: "How would you classify your own country?" Here, the term "country" is on par with "culture" and thus homogenizes its population. These are followed by sub-questions such as "Would you rather arrive 10 min before the appointment starts than to be unpunctual?". The term "unpunctual" is judgmental. In some cultures, it might

be customary to arrive fifteen minutes after the anticipated meeting time while it might be normal in other cultures to arrive fifteen minutes early. Perceiving someone as unpunctual or late indicates a lack of ambiguity and frustration tolerance in terms of 3C.

Another example is "Do you rather say what you mean, or do you speak in riddles?" Cultural sensitivity, as emphasized in the RTO report, is lacking in this question. While it might be perceived as ordinary in certain cultures "to read the air" as Meyer (see Meyer, 2014) says, using the phrase "speaking in riddles" could be somewhat offensive.

In conclusion, the presentation targets various national differences between NATO member states, in particular "national" customs, which involves the risk of reinforcing stereotypes rather than dismantling them. Skills on how to cope with such differences are not incorporated here, since this presentation only focuses on cultural awareness and self-awareness, which leaves the audience "toolless." Nevertheless, cross-cultural awareness is an essential component of 3C.

Furthermore, some NATO member states have established their own theory and practice of 3C, which differ from one another due to the lack of a standard. The next sections will attempt to develop a canon for 3C and the United States Armed Forces. In the second part, the same will be done in relation to the academic discourse outside of the military discourse. Following that, the German Forces (*Bundeswehr)* and its guidelines for 3C will be presented and subsequently weighed against the U.S. Forces in a comparative analysis.

5.2.2 United States Armed Forces and Cross-Cultural Competence

The United States Department of Defense (DoD), which functions as a supervisor for the United States Armed Forces, defines 3C as a "set of knowledge, skills, and affect/motivation that enables individuals to adapt effectively in cross-cultural environments" (Abbe et al., 2007, p. vii). Air University, for example, is responsible for educating students in the U.S. Air Force and defines 3C quite differently: "The ability to quickly and accurately comprehend, then appropriately engage individuals from distinct cultural backgrounds to achieve the desired effect" (Mackenzie et al., 2013, p. 4). What is the "desired effect" – to win, to prevent, or to

influence? The definition demonstrates a hegemonic perception of 3C, indicating that 3C is a tool of influence to use to one's benefit.

Moreover, TRADOC defines "cross-cultural competence (…) a set of knowledge, skills, and attributes that enable leaders and Soldiers to adapt and act effectively in any cross-cultural environment." (TRADOC, 2009, p. 30). Similarly, the U.S. Marine Corps defines 3C in its "Language, Regional Expertise & Culture Strategy (LREC)" for 2016–2020 as the following:

"The ability to quickly and accurately comprehend and effectively interact cross-culturally. [Including] language and non-verbal communication, culture-specific knowledge and skills, and culture-general concepts and skills." (USMC, p. 27).

Despite the similarities across the definitions of 3C, the DoD's definition is not binding.

Since the DoD "has not yet mandated CCC in its professional military education," 3C training is not a compulsory class for U.S. military (Mackenzie et al., 2013, p. 3), which makes it questionable that 3C is stated as being a priority topic of the DoD since 2005 (see Gallus et al., 2014, p. v). Therefore, the educational curriculum, along with its definition of culture and 3C, depends on each specific educational facility, which means that the set of skills and knowledge for 3C may vary between the branches (e.g. Air Force, Army, Navy), but also within them. At Air University, for instance, classes in 3C are not mandatory, but starting in 2013, students could earn extra credits if they attended the class (Mackenzie et al., 2013, p. 6). This indicates that students who participated in 3C classes should possess knowledge within this particular field. Conversely, the students who did not take the class will not have expertise in 3C. However, in 2015, it was announced that 3C would be incorporated in the professional continuing education (PCE) training curriculum (AFCLC, 2015, pp. 1, 8). Students attending the PCE courses would have to take a mandatory class in 3C. What appears to be a step forward here is actually a point of critique in the RTO's research report (see Section 4.2). Only students who continue with further education would have to take a mandatory class in 3C, thereby predetermining a lack of knowledge in 3C for students not taking continuing education courses. It is striking that after more than a decade since the RTO Report was published, the research results and recommendations did not have a more significant impact on the organization of 3C as a whole within the U.S. military. It can be noted at this point that both the definitions given above and the lack of a standard are not guaranteed to have the same background when it comes to 3C. The

reason for a lack of standardization could be the ongoing debate on the content of the particular knowledge that is required for 3C, including the set of skills and abilities, which are sometimes referred to as "knowledge, skills, abilities and other characteristics," or KSAOs for short (Gallus et al., 2014, p. vii; Rodman, 2015, p. 16 et seq.). The difficulty therefore lies in operationalizing the construct of 3C (Rodman, 2015, p. 16 et seq.). Nonetheless, Gallus et al. (2014, p. vii) argue that in terms of KSAOs, there is a "consensus" among the literature originating from U.S. military institutions, which is mainly based on social science.

First, knowledge here is defined as culture-general knowledge consisting of core concepts to comprehend a different cultural setting. Thus, "the tools how to learn and think, rather than what to think" (Gallus et al., 2014, p. vi) are vital. One tool, as mentioned in the introduction, could be semiotics, particularly in the context of Barthes, to learn and practice awareness of messages, concepts, symbols, gestures, and clothes. However, Gallus et al. (2014) do not provide an in-depth explanation of such tools. Still, the pursuit for a unification of the existing literature benefiting the military discourse as well as the practitioners is addressed. Second, skills refer to the individual's capability to enhance and develop learned competencies of a physical, behavioral, or cognitive nature. The aspect of learning and developing skills is fundamental, since this ensures the possibility to improve the Forces' "success" in missions abroad. While culture-specific knowledge was not further specified, the author provides competencies for skills: self-regulation, monitoring, negotiation, interpersonal skills, verbal and nonverbal communication, and stress management are mentioned (Gallus et al., 2014). While examples could help clarify these skills, they are not provided. Third, abilities are described as a sort of individual presets that are not as evolvable as skills since they are immanent to each individual and therefore vary from one to another. However, they can play a paramount role in 3C, especially when it comes to the ability to decode nonverbal behavior, for instance. Realizing contradictions between what has been said and what is nonverbally expressed may reveal untruthfulness, which can be lifesaving in situations involving combative encounters and negotiations. Finally, other characteristics comprise aspects such as values, experiences, openness, and flexibility.

Although the KSAOs described above can potentially build a foundation for 3C, they need further explanation and illustration. Listing them in their entirety in order to devise a standard or canon should be considered a priority as well. Therefore, the primary sources establishing these KSAOs will be examined in the following.

First, differentiating between the discourses will facilitate structure and clarification before conducting the review in a second step.

The *academic discourse* applies to academic research conducted *outside* of any military research facility. It primarily consists of sociology, psychology, anthropology, and cultural studies.

The military discourse, which predominantly bases its findings on sociology, includes two subcategories: theory, which refers to research conducted in military faculties and organizations, and practice, referring to actual classes and training curricula provided by the particular branch. The military discourse will be examined in the following.

» Theory

The U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences (ARI) "is the Army's lead laboratory, conducting research, development, and analysis on training, leader development, and Soldier issues." (Abbe et al., 2007, p. v). This U.S. military research facility prepares study reports that are requested by Army leaders or organizations. The institute works on an interdisciplinary basis with other institutes and research facilities such as the U.S. Army Combined Arms Center[10] (CAC), TRADOC, and the research facilities of the U.S. Air Force, including AFCLC as well as the U.S. Marine Corps and CAOCL.

Major researchers in this field include Greene Sands (former researcher at AFCLC) and Abbe (researcher at ARI), who have authored numerous publications in the field of 3C. According to Abbe, 3C skills include the capability for self-monitoring, emotional stability, conscientiousness, and extraversion (Abbe, 2007, p. vii). Furthermore, Abbe emphasizes the culture-general approach. As stated by the author, "evidence shows that culture-general competencies contribute more to intercultural effectiveness than do more specific skills and knowledge, including language proficiency, culture/region-specific knowledge, and prior international experience" (Abbe, 2007, p. viii). However, Kerry Fosher et al., associated with CAOCL, argue in the *Culture General Guidebook* (Fosher et al., 2017, p. 5) that "(…) culture general concepts and skills are only some of the cultural capabilities relevant to military personnel" and that it is advisable to use them in conjunction with "(…) knowledge and skills

[10] The CAC is a center for leadership education. Its aim is to prepare Army officers for multinational, inter-governmental operations (CAC, 2015).

from other learning domains" (Fosher et al., 2017, p. 5). The latter refers to culture-specific knowledge, communication, and language.

Nonetheless, adopting the culture-general approach appears to be valid given the fact that "purely regional or language approaches are still fairly common in the Department of Defense" (Fosher et al., 2017, p. xv). Furthermore, a considerable argument in favor of culture-general skills is that "culture-specific information may not always be available." Also, the fact that culture is a dynamic construct that changes and that culture-general skills have a universal character and can thus be applied and practiced everywhere, makes them more retainable and consequently, a global cultural capability (Fosher et al., 2017, pp. xvi-xvii).

In another publication dated the same year, Abbe classified two categories for 3C which reflect the two approaches of culture-specific and culture-general competencies: *"knowledge"* and *"skills."* "Knowledge" here refers to cultural knowledge, cognitive complexity, category breadth, and cross-cultural schema. In contrast, "skills" refer to stress management, code-switching in conversations, perspective-taking, emotional regulation, and flexibility.

Moreover, Greene Sands argued in his essay on cultural relativism that there is a "baseline" of competencies for developing 3C, such as the skill to be culturally self-aware of one's own socialization and the impact that might have on one's intercultural understanding (Greene Sands, 2012, p. 14). This is likely to overlap with Abbe's self-monitoring skill but is much more precise in Greene Sands' essay and points out the importance of self-awareness. Suspending judgment and perspective-taking are part of the "baseline," too, although Greene Sands adds the *skill* of observation in order to be able to comprehend and validate learned cultural knowledge. It is evident that the culture general approach is preferred here as well.

The evolution of 3C skills is evinced throughout the various publications over the years. In 2014, Abbe's contribution on 3C skills in Greene Sands' book "*Cross-Cultural Competence for Twenty-First-Century Military*" included the following skills: *self-awareness,* which was added as a new skill after Greene Sands emphasized it in 2012; *self-regulation*, which covers emotional stability and stress management; *cultural perspective-taking; intercultural interaction,* which used to be code-switching in conversations; as well as *cultural reasoning and learning* which overlaps with Greene Sands skill of observation. Two years later, Greene Sands published "key skills" for 3C, which is a consolidation of the skills presented by Abbe and Greene Sands, although the skill of *developing empathy*

was added (Greene Sands, 2016). An explanation for empathy was not given at that point, which raises several questions: for whom should the military personnel develop empathy? For the "other", the "opponent," or other military personnel in NATO's multinational missions? Even though Greene Sands provides productive remarks and criticism, such as the quest for further explanations for this particular skill, he does not provide those explanations, either.

CACOL, however, provides definitions in the guidebook on culture-general skills. Fosher et al. (2017, p. 101) determined a skill set that was considered most relevant by U.S. military personnel, comprising observation, suspending judgment, self-regulation, and perspective-taking. "Observation" is defined as the ability to observe others' behaviors and to adapt one's own behavior accordingly. This requires the individual to be conscious about the current environment and to "question each element of a scene" (Fosher et al., 2017, p. 101). Moreover, this skill touches on the dimension of intelligence gathering since the observed information should be the foundation of any decision-making process (Fosher et al., 2017, p. 102).

Being able to "suspend judgment" enables the individual to "temporarily" suspend their value system and assumptions about the other in order to "assess the situation" objectively (Fosher et al., 2017, p. 108). The third skill of "self-regulation" deals with the ability to control oneself on the cognitive and behavioral level. Furthermore, "self-regulation" is an effective skill when the situation requires an individual to alter their behavior (Fosher et al., 2017, p. 110). At the same time, the authors of the guidebook state that "as a military professional, the goal is not to be transparent; it is to present an appropriate image of yourself for the situation at hand in order to advance your mission" (Fosher et al., 2017, p. 111). Clearly, this quote demonstrates a hegemonic approach to cross-cultural competence and its skills.[11] In fact, this approach was found to be consistent throughout the reviewed literature for the Marine Corps.

Lastly, the skill of "perspective-taking" is described as the opposite of ethnocentrism and therefore the ability to switch viewpoints (Fosher et al., 2017, p. 112).

Beside these four skills, the guidebook emphasizes that "intercultural communication skills" are culture-general skills as well. In particular, five skills for successful intercultural communication are distinguished: "leveraging communication styles", "employing effective interaction

[11] Section 4.3 will elaborate on this further.

management skills," "active listening," "managing paralanguage use and perception," and "decoding nonverbal messages'" (Fosher et al., 2017, pp. 114–129). Fosher et al. (2017, p. 114) state that for communication to be competent, it primarily has to fulfill two criteria. First, it has to be effective in terms of achieving the desired outcome. Second, it must be appropriate to suit the situation and meet the receiver's expectations. Evidently, a goal-oriented communication style is underscored here. However, the authors address the importance of being aware of other communication styles as well.

Regarding the first of the five intercultural communication skills, "leveraging communication styles," the authors point out a significant cross-cultural aspect that strongly correlates with cultural studies and Saussure's and Barthes' theories in particular.

Signs, e.g., words, convey meaning which can vary in cultural contexts. A word carries an underlying concept, an idea of what it is and how it ought to be understood. These concepts can vary from culture to culture. Moreover, Fosher et al. argue that there are implicit and explicit messages. While explicit messages are distinguished by direct communication, implicit messages are found in indirect communication that relies on shared cultural knowledge in order to be understood by the receiver (Fosher et al., 2017, p. 117). This model correlates with the communication spectrum found in Hofstede (see 2001; 2010) or Meyer's (2014) comparison of low-context vs. high-context cultures. Accordingly, low-context cultures prefer direct communication whereas high-context cultures tend to use indirect communication.

The second skill, "employing effective interaction management skills," focuses on goal-oriented behavior when communicating (Fosher et al., 2017, p. 118).

The third vital skill, "active listening," put the focus on the speaker, clarifying what has been said, e.g., by summarizing the conversation at the end, and the ability to suspend judgment (Fosher et al., 2017, p. 24). Here, the interlinking between 3C and communication becomes evident.

The fourth skill, "managing paralanguage use and perception," is described as the influence on the way to perceive the other, such as by the volume, pitch, and articulation of the voice and the rate of speech (Fosher et al., 2017, p. 24).

The last skill, "decoding nonverbal messages," entails the decipherment of body language, usage of space, time and clothes, and other aspects, which again correlates with Saussure and Barthes.

It has to be noted that in comparison to the previously reviewed literature, this guidebook deals with culture-general skills in depth by providing vital explanations and examples. Moreover, it was the only source that specified and elaborated further on the skill of "communication."

Contrasting the skill sets established by researchers working for the U.S. Army, Air Force, and Marines, it is obvious that the Marines are lacking in the skills of "empathy" and "self-awareness." Furthermore, the context and definitions provided were helpful in understanding the fine nuances between the skills described by Greene Sands vs. Fosher et al. Whereas Greene Sands interprets the skill of "observation" to be vital in order to comprehend and validate learned cultural knowledge, Fosher et al. primarily find "observation" to be essential to adapting one's behavior in line with the other's. Additionally, to merely "temporarily" suspend judgement indicates more of a facade for each situation than genuinely trying to understand the other person. Moreover, in the Marine context, the skill of "self-regulation" appears to be used to hide emotions and play a role rather than to find ways to cope with stress and regulate emotions for the benefit of health. Consequently, two contrary approaches can be determined for the U.S. military discourse: authentic understanding and interaction (ethical 3C) as opposed to goal-oriented behavior (hegemonic 3C). The former focuses on genuine connections between individuals and relationship building whereas the latter instrumentalizes these established relationships to reach a certain objective by using 3C skills to one's own advantage. However, the effect of showing empathy has been largely disregarded by Fosher et al.

The varying definitions and perceptions of 3C skills discussed above as well as the opening remarks of this chapter discussing the lack of interorganizational alignment suggest taking a look at a particular 3C training curriculum, with the key question being: How do the established 3C definitions in the research facilities of the branches (*theory*) translate to *practice* in 3C training?

» Practice

The following sample was randomly selected.

Upon reviewing the U.S. Army Cadet Command Cultural Awareness Training Mission pamphlet from 2018 based on the previously established 3C skills and definitions of culture, the lack of congruence is striking. In the pamphlet, cross-cultural competence skills are divided into

three subcategories: *cross-cultural competence, regional competence, leader/influence/function competencies*. The first category refers to the "core culture competencies," dealing with *understanding culture, applying organizational awareness, cultural perspective-taking, and cultural adaptability* (USACC et al., 2018, p. 4). It is questionable how "understanding culture" can be seen as a skill since it is a broad term that requires further explanation – what is culture, and which tools are needed to understand cultures? Although the pamphlet neither defines culture nor quotes TRADOC's definition, it describes *understanding culture* as the following:

> *Understands the different dimensions of culture, how cultures vary according to key elements such as interpersonal relations, concept of time, attitude towards interpersonal space, thinking style, tolerance and authority as well as values, beliefs, behaviors and norms; uses this information to help understand similarities and differences across cultures. (USACC et al., 2018, p. 17)*

Evidently, *understanding culture* (USACC et al., 2018, p. 4) is considered to be a more culture-specific than general term here. Moreover, which specific dimensions are addressed? Are the mentioned key elements essential to comparing cultures, or does this ability enable the individual to understand "a" culture? In an example used to explain this definition, the USACC says: "Can explain the core properties of culture (e.g., it is a facet of society, it is acquired through acculturation or socialization, it encompasses every area of social life" (USACC et al., 2018, p. 17), which refers to the concept of culture. In contrast, when taking the concept of culture defined by TRADOC into account, culture is not a facet of society but a set of distinctive features such as norms, values and beliefs tying this society or group together. To conclude, the USACC Cultural Awareness Training does not base its training curriculum on the TRADOC-established standard for culture within the U.S. Army.

The aforementioned "core culture competence" of *applying organizational awareness* is defined as:

> *Understands own organization's mission and functions, particularly within the context of multicultural, multi-actor environments; is knowledgeable about own organization's programs, policies, procedures, rules, and regulations, and applies this knowledge to operate effectively within and across organizations. (USACC et al., 2018, p. 17)*

In an example given, this skill is explained as the ability to describe to "others how a standard U.S. military organization functions (…)" (USACC et al., 2018, p. 17). This strongly refers to organizational culture and is not found as a 3C skill in any of the examined publications within the military discourse's *theory*. Furthermore, *organizational awareness* can instead be applied to knowledge and political science than to 3C. Notwithstanding this, the third of the four "core culture competencies" is *cultural perspective-taking,* which has been addressed repeatedly in *theory.*

> *Demonstrates an awareness of own cultural assumptions, values, and biases, and understands how the U. S. is viewed by members of other cultures; applies perspective-taking skills to detect, analyze, and consider the point of view of others, and recognizes how own actions may be interpreted. (USACC et al., 2018, p. 18)*

Considering the example provided, this skill of perspective-taking appears to be essential to 3C: "considers the different perspectives of the involved parties when conducting multinational meetings." (USACC et al., 2018, p.18).

However, the final skill, *cultural adaptability,* and its definition strongly correlate with the operational culture approach taken at the U.S. Marine Corps' CAOCL, culture-specific components such as norms and behaviors of "other" cultures must be adapted in order to switch into them where necessary:

> *Gathers and interprets information about people and surroundings and adjusts behavior in order to interact effectively with others; integrates well into situations in which people have different beliefs, values, and customs and develops positive rapport by showing respect for the culture; understands the implications of one's actions and adjusts approach to maintain appropriate relationships. (USACC et al., 2018, p. 18)*

Although the definition above includes observation skills, many 3C skills and KSAOs are missing within the first category. Even more striking is the fact that a U.S. Army pamphlet for cultural awareness training overlaps with the guidelines of the U.S. Marine Corps, although TRADOC and its ACFLS (Army Culture and Foreign Language Strategy) (TRADOC, 2009) are responsible for providing the doctrine here.

The second category of *regional competence* encompasses the ability to apply regional information and operate in a regional environment. For instance, knowing that you should not use the left hand or show the soles of your feet while in Afghanistan or Iraq. As suggested by Abbe (2007, p. viii), these skills are referred to as culture-specific and, according to Abbe, have proven to be less effective than culture-general skills, which are not included in the first category. Therefore, the ACFLS listed culture-specific knowledge separately under "regional competence" in its 3C concept (TRADOC, 2009, p. 11).

The last category, *leader/influence/function competencies*, contains skills such as building strategic networks, strategic agility, system thinking, cross-cultural influence, organizational cultural competence, and utilizing interpreters. Taking a closer look at the third category, it becomes clear that strategic skills take precedence over cultural skills.

This significant lack of consensus demonstrated above holds the DoD accountable. Since the definition of culture and associated concepts such as 3C did not appear to be an essential necessity to the DoD, most organizations and research facilities of the U.S. Forces have developed individual definitions and concepts. This has resulted in the individual production of course materials, including field guides and simulations (see Greene Sands, 2016, p. 37), as shown in Section 2.1. However, Fosher et al. claim that "each branch, of course, approaches the definition slightly different[ly]" (Fosher et al., 2017, p.10). This indicates divergent opinions among the research institutes and their scientists for the U.S. Forces with regard to a standardized approach to culture and 3C. Notwithstanding this, as pointed out in the content analysis of the pamphlet, even the branches are not aligned in their theory and practice. Moreover, the researchers from CAOCL state that "it also is easy to be overwhelmed by all the different and sometimes contradictory approaches, frameworks, and definitions that are codified in policy, concept papers, doctrine (…) throughout the department" (Fosher et al., 2017, p. 3).

In summary, despite the establishment of culture and 3C standards for each branch, there is no homogeneity within the particular service. This became evident when analyzing the USACC Cultural Awareness Training Mission pamphlet, which does not reflect the standard of culture and 3C established by TRADOC for the U.S. Army. Therefore, the pursuit to standardize 3C remains has not yet been successful for either the U.S. Forces as a whole as well or within the branches themselves, which was criticized by Wunderle in 2006: "(…) the Army needs additional changes above the local level to formalize and standardize cultural aware-

ness training" (Wunderle, 2006, p. 63). The initial claim that a consensus regarding 3C exists within the U.S. military (see Gallus 2014, p. vii) is therefore contradictory.

Although the DoD lacks a "policy and strategy to unify language and culture efforts" (Wunderle, 2007, p. 27), a canon for 3C within the U.S. military research facilities can be determined on the basis of the examined literature.

» A canon for cross-cultural competence in the U. S. Forces

As outlined before, these competencies are subsumed under the term "culture-general skills" in combination with "culture-specific knowledge," where applicable. The canon presents skills in the sense of the application of ethical 3C and will be explained in the sections below.

1. Self-awareness
To be aware of one's own socialization, values and beliefs, and to grasp the impact these factors might have on intercultural encounters.

For instance, in the course of working at a NATO headquarters, a variety of cultures come together. Although it is often presumed that the military personnel in NATO member states share common values, their individual cultures may vary significantly. Therefore, 3C, and culture-general skills in particular, are needed in such scenarios to ensure interoperability. Self-awareness or cultural awareness are thus indispensable and the basis for accomplishing joint tasks. Moreover, it is vital to be aware of one's own culture in order to prevent putting culture-specific expectations and values on the other culture. Regarding NATO deployments abroad, for example: NATO building a hospital on a former battlefield that is considered holy land for the local population (as is as found in cultures in Afghanistan) would indicate a lack of awareness for the other culture, the absence of culture-specific knowledge, as well as a lack of cultural self-awareness.

2. Perspective-taking
To be able to identify and understand feelings, possible concerns, and motivations of the other in intercultural situations.

3. Observation
To observe intercultural encounters in order to not only learn from the situation but also better comprehend the culture-general knowledge and understand its application.

4. Communication skills
Utilizing culture-general and culture-specific knowledge on how to act and react nonverbally, how to read symbols and apply them, and so forth.

An example from the ISAF mission demonstrates the power of symbols and how differently they can be interpreted. After a victory by a popular Western soccer team, the team's flag was run up at Camp Marmal in Mazar-e-Sharif – unaware of the fact that the same colors represented a local terror organization. Proper communication skills e.g., knowing that flags may convey a particular message, along with culture-specific knowledge such as regional expertise would have prevented this ambiguous situation.

5. Self-regulation
To maintain a rational approach to situations and cope with stress.

Especially leaders who are under the constant pressure of taking responsibility for their decisions need to be able to self-regulate themselves. Aggravation and stress can lead to detrimental decision-making and cause serious problems in negotiations or on the battlefield.

Apart from that, it can be argued that "empathy" is a competency that cannot be learned and therefore is inherent to the individual. Accordingly, empathy can be listed as an ability instead of a skill.

6. Empathy
The military discourse did not explain empathy further.

Determining which competency should receive the most attention requires further research, since a valid assessment across the Forces is not possible (Greene Sands, 2016, pp. 23–25). The reason for this is the previously mentioned lack of interorganizational alignment and standardization of the concept of culture and 3C.

In the following section, a literature review extending beyond the U.S. military discourse is provided in order to ascertain a canon for 3C here as well. A comparison can reveal missing components or inconsistencies.

Before assessing cross-cultural competence in academic literature, it has to be clarified that 3C is predominantly a term used across the DoD,

the U.S. Forces, and their research facilities. Many different labels have emerged for the same or at least highly overlapping topic, including intercultural competence, cultural awareness, and intercultural communication (Rodman, 2015, p. 16–17).

» Academic discourse

The Sage Handbook of Intercultural Competence contains key factors for intercultural competence, divided into knowledge and comprehension, skills, and attitudes (Deardorff et al., 2009). Apart from the first two categories, the latter category ("attitudes") rarely appeared in the military canon. Psychological and social skills such as respect in terms of valuing other cultures, as well as openness, i.e., being interested in other cultures and being able to suspend judgment (see Greene Sands on cultural relativism), and lastly curiosity and discovery, referring to an adventurous trait, are compiled under the category of "attitudes." These were only mentioned in the KSAOs and its interchangeable categorization of *abilities* and *other characteristics*. Although these attitudes are regarded more as "enhancers" of intercultural competence, they in fact appear to be interlinked with each other when it concerns the development of intercultural competence (Deardorff et al., 2009, p. 13). For instance, an individual with a lack of respect for other cultures is unlikely to develop interest in or curiosity about the other culture and its members. Therefore, these attitudes should rather be considered the basis.

Moreover, Deardorff lists the interdependent components "knowledge and comprehension" and "skills." The latter component includes listening, observing, interpreting, analyzing, evaluating, and relating. Cultural self-awareness is listed first under "knowledge and comprehension," followed by a deep understanding and knowledge of culture (e.g., knowing contexts, role, and impact of cultures and others' worldviews), culture-specific information, and sociolinguistic awareness (Deardorff et al., 2009, p. 13). In contrast to Abbe et al., Greene Sands, and Gallus et al., the importance of culture-specific knowledge is addressed at this point. Culture-specific knowledge is also emphasized in "Cultures and Organizations" by Hofstede et al. The authors argue that understanding culture requires insights into institutions, including rules, law, and organizations (Hofstede et al., 2010, p. 24). Furthermore, knowing how families function, how children are raised, and how their school system operates as well as knowing their idols are referred to as being prominent factors

(Hofstede et al., 2010, p. 24). Hofstede calls this "software of the mind," which was introduced earlier in this paper.

Consequently, possessing this knowledge/comprehension + skills + attitudes is desired in order to make the individual *adaptable* to other cultures, behaviors, and communication styles, *flexible* with regard to utilizing the appropriate style of communication and behavior, and lastly, *empathetic* (Deardorff et al., 2009, p. 13). Although a particular explanation of empathy in a military context could not be provided, cross-cultural empathy is defined in the academic discourse as the ability to relate to an individual's situation, to feel and think alike, and to develop compassion (Deardorff et al., 2009, p. 70). Aside from that, adaptability, flexibility, and empathy are rather a product of the formula here.

For Hofstede (2010), "intercultural communication" is divided into three phases: culture-specific knowledge and two culture-general components, awareness and skills (Hofstede, 2010, p. 419). The latter is based on knowledge and awareness plus practice, for example, knowing a cultural symbol (knowledge), recognizing it (awareness), and applying it (skill/practice) (Hofstede, 2010, p. 420), which correlates with semiotics. Like Greene Sands, Hofstede et al. address cultural relativism, the ability to suspend judgment and be tolerant when dealing with groups or societies from different cultures (Hofstede, 2010, p. 25). Additionally, the ability to distance oneself from one's own world view (objectivity) and provide emotional stability is discussed.

In summary, it is evident that in both the military and academic discourse, *awareness* is a predominant aspect. The attitudes of being able to *tolerate* and *respect* cultures different from one's own, in part subsumed under the term *cultural relativism* by Greene Sands, Deardorff, and Hofstede, as well as *empathy*, require further consideration in the military discourse, especially in terms of *practice*.

Furthermore, one significant difference between the two is the academic perspective on the culture-specific approach. "Deep knowledge" (see Deardorff et al., 2009) and "insights into institutions" (see Hofstede et al., p. 2010) of the other culture are considered essential, whereas *theory* in the military discourse stresses the culture-general approach.

To conclude, the review above has shown that the majority of skills in the military and academic discourse are overlapping. However, the weight of the culture-general component and culture-specific knowledge component differ dramatically. Moreover, the importance of attitudes or "other characteristics" in the military discourse needs to be improved. Nevertheless, the basic formula for cross-cultural competence, intercultur-

al competence, and cultural communication can be stated as "knowledge + skills + attitudes/abilities/other characteristics." In this paper, however, attitudes will be subsumed under the term "skills."

Finally, concerning the example of the USACC 2018 Cultural Awareness Training Mission pamphlet and the comparison with both military and academic findings, it is striking how the *theory* and *practic*e of the U.S. Forces differ substantially from one another. Before discussing this phenomenon further, a look at another NATO member will elaborate on the global stage. To this end, Germany and its armed forces (*Bundeswehr*) will be examined in the following. First, a review of publications in the German military discourse dealing with 3C, divided into "theory" and "practice," will be presented in order to provide a canon here as well. Following that, the findings will be compared with the results of this chapter.

5.2.3 German Armed Forces and Cross-Cultural Competence

As pointed out earlier, 3C has been assigned various labels (Rodman, 2015, pp. 16–17). In the German military discourse, 3C is termed "intercultural competence' (abbreviated as "IkK" in German). The BMVg began to acknowledge IkK as an essential component in 2008, although its importance had been addressed ten years earlier. In fact, the Bundeswehr's psychological service had drafted an intercultural awareness and orientation training in 1998, but it was never implemented (Tomforde et al., 2007, p. 169). However, in the meantime IkK has been addressed in the Bundeswehr's regulation on *internal leadership:* "*(…) Im Auslandseinsatz ist interkulturelle Kompetenz zudem eine wesentliche Voraussetzung für die Auftragserfüllung und den Eigenschutz* (...)." [(…) Intercultural competence is an integral precondition for the accomplishing the mission accomplishment while deployed abroad (...).] (A-2600/1, 6.2.1).

Reviewing the BMVg's regulations regarding the military discourse's *theory*, several sections currently deal with IkK and its definition. The most extensive definition is provided in the A-1200/15 *Landeskundliche Unterstützung* central regulation, Section 1.4 Ausbildung Interkulturelle Kompetenz, p. 115:

Interkulturelle Kompetenz (IkK) umfasst die individuelle Fähigkeit und Bereitschaft der Angehörigen der Bundeswehr, sich im Grundbetrieb und Einsatz im Bewusstsein der eigenen kulturellen Prägung mit andere Kulturen, Religionen, Lebenswelten und deren Besonderheiten angemessen

auseinanderzusetzen, entsprechende Kenntnisse und Fertigkeiten zu erwerben sowie Verständnis und Sensibilität für fremde Werte, Ansichten und Handlungsweisen zu entwickeln. [Intercultural competence (IkK) entails the individual competence and willingness of members of the German Forces to be culturally self-aware both on the home base and when deployed in order to appropriately engage with different cultures, religions, living environments, and their specific particularities. Moreover, knowledge and skills must be acquired accordingly and an understanding and awareness of foreign values, perceptions, and actions must be developed.]

Determining the critical factors based on the definition above, IkK is relevant both inside and outside the Bundeswehr and involves an open mindset as well as empathy when it comes to encountering and appropriately interacting with other cultures, their traditions, values, worldviews, religions, and practices, while developing an awareness of one's own culture. Furthermore, IkK requires a cognitive ability to learn, and ideally, to acquire specific skills and knowledge germane to IkK, which is not further elaborated on in the definition.

At this point, it has to be emphasized that although four regulations (K-9000/040, A-2600/1, A-1200/15, A-2600/7) contain and define IkK in a comparable manner, analogous to the U.S. Forces, IkK itself is neither a regulation nor a central regulation ("Zentrale Dienstvorschrift"/"ZDv").

With respect to the lack of standardization, e.g., divergent approaches to IkK teaching, lack of parameters and culture-general knowledge, which was criticized in a survey conducted in 2007 (Tomforde et al., 2007, p. 170), mandating a ZDv for IkK would set a binding standard for all employees, both civil and military. A standard would provide a common ground for the multiple Bundeswehr educational facilities that teach IkK. When the BMVg's managing department (FüSK III 3) was asked about the latest developments in this field, it was stated that a regulation for IkK is currently being drafted (see Illauer, 2020). According to the drafter of the regulation, the regulation was not politically commissioned, but instead was initiated three and a half years ago out of intrinsic motivation. The intent is to publish the regulation in 2020 to "finally" (see Illauer, 2020) provide a regulation replacing the "provisional concept for IkK" (see Illauer, 2020).

Additionally, it was highlighted that in today's context, it would be reasonable to draft this regulation. In reference to the foregoing, it is striking that first, the political decision-making level does not seem to have given IkK the importance it deserves, since the idea for the regulation was initiated by one drafter, and second, that IkK was not enough of a

priority to the managing department to be transformed into a ZDv until recently. Moreover, it is an admission that IkK is still a provisional concept within the BMVg. Therefore, this contradicts the differing opinion (e.g., Bohrmann et al., 2014) that the BMVg has perceived IkK as a paramount competence by incorporating it into several regulations.

Notwithstanding, the draft for the new ZDv for IkK is available to the author, and therefore, it will be examined in the following as part of the *theory* for a German military discourse.

» Theory

The prospective ZDv A-2620/5 "Interkulturelle Bildung in der Bundeswehr" ("Intercultural Education in the Bundeswehr" regulation, editing status September 19, 2018) aims to regulate both the learning objectives and implementation of IkK for all military and civil personnel, in particular the leadership personnel at the Bundeswehr. The regulation is supposed to be applicable in a national and international setting, referring to the Bundeswehr's internal and external structures, e.g., IkK within a multicultural Bundeswehr itself, for cooperating with other forces and their cultures, as well for deployment in a foreign country and interaction with the local population. The paper is divided into three sections: (a) *Basics*, with its categories (1) *Personality Development* and (2) *Civic Education*; (b) *Intercultural Education at the Bundeswehr* containing (1) *Basics*, (2) *Purpose of Intercultural Education in the Bundeswehr,* (3) *Task Performance of Intercultural Education in the Bundeswehr, and* (4) *Intercultural Education and Competence in Training;* and (c) *Annexes,* including (1) *Topics,* (2) *Didactics/Methods*, (3) *Implementation Regulation*, (4) *Training Resources*, (5) *Regulation and Publication References*, and (6) *Educational institutions*. The section on *Basics* (a) outlines that personality development applies to all military and civil employees and is a precondition for sustainable leadership skills in the Bundeswehr. The latter is presented as an argument that *personality development* is the duty of the leadership personnel.

Furthermore, learning and acquiring competencies is understood to be a lifelong process, which leads to the next section, (b) *Intercultural Education at the Bundeswehr*. In the first part, Section (b) 1 provides the argumentative base. In essence, five factors are presented to legitimize the need for IkK. First, current social developments are giving rise to a growing diversity in religion and culture in Germany. Second, the development of cultural competence is a joint task for society as a whole, including the

Bundeswehr. Third, combined military operations and training with partners necessitate IkK and it is essential when deployed abroad and in contact with the local population. Fourth, culture has to be considered during operational planning in order to avoid potential conflicts, and lastly, IkK is a behavioral and leadership instrument or tool.

When defining IkK, the draft provides clarification on the term "culture." Culture is defined as *the entirety of learned and practiced behavior, knowledge, values, and is shared and transmitted by its group members*. Furthermore, culture is described as a *necessary, dynamic guidance system, which is partially subconscious. Hence, culture impacts one's thinking, perception, values, beliefs, and actions. Therefore, culture encompasses affiliation, reliability, social security, norms, and attitudes, which are reflected in social systems and affect one's opinion. Culture is not bound to religious identities or ethnic groups but to differing patterns of meaning* (A-2620/5 Interkulturelle Bildung in der Bundeswehr, p. 5).

In comparison to the pre-established definitions of culture for NATO and the academic discourse, no significant differences can be determined. The three discourses understand culture as learned, shared, transmitted, and patterned behavior, revealing itself in subjective or intrasomatic things such as values, beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions, thereby defining groups.

However, two components deduced from the academic discourse were neither taken into account by the BMVg nor NATO (discourse), namely *communication* and *objective or extrasomatic things*.

Following this pattern, it appears that it is the culture-general factors as found in the definitions of 3C/IkK that are applied. In contrast, culture-specific factors such as language or artifacts are not reflected within a definition of culture for the Bundeswehr (BMVg draft regulation) or NATO (discourse). The latter definition is in high contrast to the description of IkK provided in the prospective regulation, where the acquisition of regional and language-specific knowledge is considered an indispensable addition (A-2620/5 Interkulturelle Bildung in der Bundeswehr, p. 6). Culture-specific factors play a predominant role in the draft regulation, which suggests a revision of the provided definition of culture to incorporate the two components established in the academic discourse.

Apart from that, the draft regulation defines *IkK as the competence to adequately engage with otherness and diversity concerning oneself*. Furthermore, *a positive predisposition towards human diversity, identities, and their way of life* is addressed *to communicate with others respectfully. An awareness of one's own identity, patterns of meaning, and guidance system is a precondition for avoiding bias*. Moreover, a set of preconditions for IkK that

can be acquired is provided*: tolerance, acceptance, mental stability, empathy, openness, courage, and resilience*. Comparing these components with the established canon of 3C in the academic and U.S. military discourse, the lack of proper categorization in the draft regulation definition becomes evident.

Notwithstanding this, it is apparent that cultural self-awareness is most paramount in all discourses. Furthermore, culture-specific knowledge is found to be important in both the academic discourse and the BMVg draft regulation. Contrasting the attitudes such as respect, openness, curiosity, and cultural relativism, it is evident that they overlap with the draft's definition presented above. While cultural relativism is not included it could be seen as being on a par with acceptance and tolerance. Moreover, when comparing the previously determined skills of listening, observing, analyzing, interpreting, evaluating, relating/developing empathy, and emotional stability, some of them – emotional stability and empathy – are found under the draft regulation's "*preconditions*" in combination with attitudes.

Weighing this against the established 3C canon for the U.S. Forces as well as considering the academic discourse and the draft regulation, a second factor becomes noticeable once again: the terminology used is not uniform. Whereas self-awareness in the context of culture does not appear to be much different from cultural self-awareness, tolerance can imply various things. Therefore, a proper definition of each skill, as was compiled for the U.S. Forces, is imperative in order to avoid confusion. Communication skills, as discussed earlier, include the ability to analyze and interpret symbols.

Another example is self-regulation. This skill can be equally applied to emotional or mental stability. Moreover, perspective-taking is correlated with cultural relativism or acceptance and tolerance. However, it is questionable if this can be considered common knowledge and if the similar but different terms can be used interchangeably, particularly in the case of acceptance and tolerance.

It must be noted that the lack of uniform categorization and terminology furthers the lack of a standard and increases the unnecessary complexity, leading to confusion and misunderstandings, especially in a military context where clear communication is indispensable.

Nonetheless, when contrasting the U.S. Forces canon for 3C with the draft regulation, a few other factors are addressed by the BMVg, including openness and courage. In conclusion, the majority of the components are overlapping, but differ drastically when it comes to terminology.

Proceeding with the examination of the draft regulation, Section (b) 2 once again emphasizes the relevance of IkK for civilian and military leadership personnel, its instillment on all levels, and that IkK is a long-term learning process. Furthermore, this section specifies that IkK should be acquired on a cognitive, affective, experience-based, and behavior-based level.

Section 3 introduces the *Zentrale Koordinierungsstelle Interkulturelle Kompetenz* (ZKIkK) and outlines its responsibilities, which are first and foremost the development and coordination of IkK. Additionally, this office is in charge of providing the Bundeswehr with coursework and resources on IkK. The ZKIkK will be discussed in detail later on in this paper.

In the next section, the concept of IkK training is explained. It is divided into three steps: *basics, further education, and specialization* (A-2620/5 Interkulturelle Bildung in der Bundeswehr, p. 7). Step 1 aims to raise the participants' awareness of IkK at the very start of their service – in the first three months of the standardized training. The goal is to foster basic competence and the willingness to interact with various identities and different world views. Among other topics considered essential, e.g., historical and political basics, there is a focus on the term "culture" as well as on strengthening cultural self-awareness. In this step, three hours of training are designated for topics related to IkK. Step 2 provides the participants with one hour of IkK training to enable the participants to be aware of the impact that other cultures might have on their thoughts and actions, e.g., culture clashes, and to strengthen the knowledge previously acquired in step 1.

Further topics include culture and diversity dimensions as well as communication basics (A-2620/5 Interkulturelle Bildung in der Bundeswehr, p. 8). The third and final step focuses on applying the acquired knowledge in specific situations and targets the leadership level. Topics such as the leadership process, specific intercultural and social situational training, and support options from the IkK network are addressed in four hours of IkK training conducted annually (A-2620/5 Interkulturelle Bildung in der Bundeswehr, p. 9).

Apart from the training described above, further education in IkK may be possible in the course of the person's career, depending on the type of seminars offered at the various educational departments of the Bundeswehr. In the case of multinational combined operations, such as deployments abroad or joint training missions, IkK is integrated into the preparation program, is supported during the mission, and then assessed

afterward. A country-specific preparation course in IkK is planned for deployments. However, leading military personnel would have ideally acquired both culture-general and culture-specific knowledge at the ZKIkK beforehand.

Nonetheless, the draft regulation points out the factor of resources with regard to the transmission of IkK, especially *time*. It states that the significance of the topic has to be put in relation to the tasks of the Bundeswehr and its operational readiness (A-2620/5 Interkulturelle Bildung in der Bundeswehr, p. 12). Consequently, IkK is as vital as the individual in charge allows it to be, which has a major impact on the degree of knowledge about IkK.

In summary, it has to be emphasized that the BMVg's draft regulation for IkK describes the ideal scenario for teaching IkK. Considering the constraints on IkK due to operational readiness issues and/or other topics being prioritized, a great dissonance between theory and practice is very likely.

Before taking a look at *practice* and the various educational facilities of the Bundeswehr that offer IkK seminars, further approaches in the German *military discourse* will be reviewed.

Maren Tomforde (2010, p. 268) is a former researcher at the Bundeswehr's leading research center, the *Zentrum für Militärgeschichte und Sozialwissenschaften der Bundeswehr* (Center for Military History and Social Sciences/ZMSBw), and is currently a lecturer in ethnology at the Bundeswehr Command and Staff College (FüAkBw). Tomforde defines culture from an ethnological perspective. Referring to ethnologist Edward Burnett Tylor (1871), Tomforde defines culture as *being a complex whole, including knowledge, belief, morals, arts, tradition, and habits. Furthermore, it is a collective phenomenon, shared by individuals living in the same social environment, and constitutes itself of an intersection of common features* (Tomforde et al., 2007, p. 165). At the same time, in reference to Max Weber, Tomforde points out that culture is a product of social groups, e.g., nations, organizations, and clubs, as well as of social action.

Although this definition includes extrasomatic and intrasomatic factors, communication, such as language or symbols as established in the academic discourse, is not taken into account. Given the fact that communication is germane to IkK, it should be reflected in the definition of culture.

However, Tomforde considers intercultural competence to be a key skill for the 21st-century military in the Bundeswehr, since culturally appropriate behavior in areas of deployment has been found to have a stabilizing impact and supports a mission's success, while a lack of inter-

cultural competence may cause the reverse (Tomforde et al., 2007, p. 165). As an example, Tomforde addresses the significance of IkK for previous missions such as Kosovo and Afghanistan, where contact with the local population was essential to obtaining intel about planned attacks or information on warlords (Tomforde et al., 2007, p. 165).

Defining IkK, Tomforde describes it as a *competence to interact with members of other cultures with a higher degree of understanding, generated throughout a longer learning process* (Tomforde et al., 2007, p. 166). Moreover, it is a subskill derived from social competence, enabling individuals to encounter something unknown without bias.

In another publication (Baumer, 2002, p. 107 et seq.), Tomforde presents necessary skills and components pertinent to IkK: *cultural self-awareness, flexibility in norms, stress, ambiguity and frustration tolerance, empathy for members of other cultures as well as knowledge about other cultures*.

These and other components are divided into three categories: (1) *connotation (such as behavior, flexibility, nonverbal behavior), (2) cognition (knowledge, e.g., awareness, culture-specific knowledge, language), and (3) affect (motivation, empathy, interest in others, and openness)*. In addition, Tomforde highlights that IkK training has to incorporate both culture-general and culture-specific knowledge.

A different approach is taken at Bundeswehr University Munich (UniBwM). Reviewing the publications of the lecturers there, it is primarily the "Handbuch Militärische Berufsethik" (Bohrmann et al., 2014), a guide for military work ethics, that is the first to undertake an attempt to define culture and intercultural competence from a cultural studies perspective.

Friedrich Lohmann, professor of ethics and theology at UniBwM, defines culture as *the construction of life or a part of life conveyed through actions, making culture become a habit* (Bohrmann et al., 2014, p. 105). Aside from this sociological definition, which has a resemblance to Pierre Bourdieu's "habitus," Lohmann explains culture as the counterpart of nature, derived from the term *colere*, meaning to cultivate and to care (Bohrmann et al., 2014, p. 99) as was discussed in Chapter 2. Furthermore, he quotes Heinrich Rickert (1915), who considers culture to be the objectivation of the human mind becoming visible in arts. The idea of a universal culture term with historical-social roots, as mentioned by Niklas Luhmann (1995), is addressed as well. After examining this cultural studies perspective of culture being a universal, social construct consisting of human-made things, Lohmann proceeds to discuss the concepts of culture determining identity, and nationality (Bohrmann et al.,

2014, p. 100). In Lohmann's view, culture in terms of nationality becomes "natural." The attribution of stereotypes and other characteristics forms a social culture with its traditions, habits and other aspects. Thus, it legitimizes the approach to gain culture-specific knowledge on the one hand, and on the other to learn culture-general knowledge with regard to skills such as communication and empathy. The latter is what Lohmann considers most relevant for IkK: "Interkulturelle Kompetenz erschöpft sich nicht in einem Wissen über andere Kulturen – das sogar missbräuchlicher Verwendung offen steht, sondern sie impliziert eine integrale Haltung der gesamten Persönlichkeit" (Bohrmann et al., 2014, p. 108).

It is not sufficient to merely obtain culture-specific knowledge since the attitude integral to one's personality is of greater importance. According to Lohmann, this attitude is shaped by *self-education, self-distance, being unbiased, interest in the other person, empathy, the ability to communicate, respect for the unknown person's beliefs and culture, self-relativization, humility, tolerance of ambiguity, flexibility, and willingness to learn*, thereby composing the skillset for IkK (Bohrmann et al., 2014, p. 108).

Moreover, this quote points out an essential factor that was already addressed in Sun Tzu's philosophy of war. Culture-specific knowledge can be instrumentalized and used to the benefit of the one who possesses it, making IkK not only a tool of prevention but also an improper influence. Lohmann argues that applying IkK in the proper way dissolves the "soldierly" image of the enemy. Consequently, where there is no enemy, there is no war, transforming all NATO missions into peace missions. However, violence can be enforced for the "own good" of the other people, including in "peace missions."

Lohmann's admonition to not exploit IkK coincides with the viewpoint of Uwe Ulrich, the former IkK coordinator at the ZKIkK, who states that this competence should not be understood as a means to an end (Ulrich, 2011, p. 100). Furthermore, Ulrich supports the approach adopted in the Bundeswehr to not perceive IkK as an advantage in combat or self-protection but rather as a tool to interact with the other genuinely (Ulrich, 2011, p. 100).

Defining culture, Ulrich takes an anthropological point of view that culture is the human-induced alteration of nature for an appropriate purpose. Moreover, he defines culture as a system of orientation which the individual being born into it uses as a point of reference. It is dynamic and partially subconscious, containing norms and values affecting one's actions, thinking, perception, and beliefs. It provides a sense of community, security, and reliability (Ulrich, 2011, p. 101). Referring to the iceberg

model, he compares the visible peak with architecture, rituals, fashion, symbols, and language.

In contrast, the invisible bottom part of the iceberg encompasses concepts of values, their interpretation, and the patterns of thinking. Ulrich points out that when individuals from different cultures meet, the dissonance between the invisible part, as shown in the iceberg model, is what causes conflicts without awareness. Therefore, he lists four skills (Ulrich, 2011, p. 102):

1. Tolerance of ambiguity
Tolerance of ambiguity is the ability to endure the tension between opposites. The precondition is the willingness to step out of one's comfort zone and encounter the unknown without prejudice.

2. Empathy
The willingness and ability to put oneself in the other's position.

3. Role distance
The ability to reflect between self-image and how others perceive oneself.

4. Communication skills
Taking content and relationship factors into account, verbal (language) and nonverbal (gestures and facial expressions) are the basis of communication.

Furthermore, Ulrich considers *teachability* and *cultural self-awareness* to be significant aspects. The focus on both common features and differences in a particular culture is emphasized.

Contrasting the examined prospective draft regulation for IkK with Tomforde's, Lohmann's, and Ulrich's approaches, it is evident that the sociological and anthropological/ethnological perspectives are predominant in the definition of culture and IkK. When comparing the IkK skills identified by these four sources, overlaps can be found. However, the lack of congruence in terminology is once again striking.

» A canon for cross-cultural competence in the German Armed Forces

Nonetheless, a canon for the military discourse can be established as follows.

First and foremost, the skill of *cultural self-awareness and awareness in order to avoid bias* is of utmost importance in all skillsets. Furthermore, *communication/language, empathy, and openness/interest/teachability* are predominant skills. Partially overlapping skills are tolerance of ambiguity and frustration, mental stability, flexibility, and culture-specific knowledge. Moreover, each of the three sources (Tomforde, Lohmann, and Ulrich) provides unique skills – tolerance, acceptance, courage, resilience, self-relativization, humility, role distance, and motivation – but they cannot be considered for a canon here. Moreover, it has to be emphasized that only one source (see Ulrich, 2011) defined each particular skill.

» Practice

The following section will now address the Bundeswehr's most relevant educational institutions with regard to its *practice*.

» Zentrale Koordinierungsstelle Interkulturelle Kompetenz (ZKIkK)

The ZKIkK, established in 2008 (Lohmann, 2014, p. 97) and integrated into the *Zentrum für Innere Führung*, is tasked with coordinating all actions related to the development of IkK (A-1200/15, p. 116). Furthermore, the ZKIkK is in charge of the details, revision, and production of new target group-specific coursework and equipment for IkK for career and deployment-relevant training and further education; it is also responsible for promoting the discourse within the Bundeswehr and the collaboration with foreign forces (A-1200/15, p.117). In general, the ZKIkK is supposed to ensure the fundamentals of a deployment-independent basic qualification in IkK for all Bundeswehr personnel (ZInFü, 2017, p. 40). According to Ulrich (2011, p. 107), the ZKIkK gives advice on devising IkK training programs for other departments. The basis for the content created by the ZKIkK is the definition of IkK found in the BMVg regulations (such as A-1200/15) and the provisional "Vorläufiges Konzept zur Stärkung und

Vermittlung Interkultureller Kompetenz in der Bundeswehr" concept (see BMVg, 2010).

Moreover, the ZKIkK offers four-day on-site IkK seminars designed for military/civil leadership personnel. Leading military personnel comprise all superiors who have an impact on the leadership, training, and education of Bundeswehr military personnel, e.g., commanders, naval officers, captains, lecturers, as well as leadership level staff in the civil sector (Lohmann, 2014, p. 97; ZInFü, 2017, p. 2). After the four-day-seminar, the participants become IkK disseminators ("*IkK-Multiplikatoren*"). According to regulation A-2600/1, this entails the task of training staff in IkK in preparation for multinational deployments to enable them to engage respectfully and behave confidently with staff from other nations as well as the local population. Based on this regulation, military leaders can be defined as experts since it is their responsibility to convey and disseminate IkK within the subordinate levels. Indeed, it is questionable if one can be considered an expert in IkK after just a four-day seminar, a point which has already been critiqued. Tomforde (2010) emphasized the compressed character of the seminars, which were minimized as "crash courses." Furthermore, it remains unclear as to when exactly the expert is supposed to disseminate IkK. In view of this, interviews conducted on the topic of IkK with leading military personnel of the German Forces will be discussed later on in order to examine its educational content, application, and function.

However, the ZKIkK can be considered the prominent department within the Bundeswehr in terms of IkK, since it provides the fundamental teaching material and aids for this topic. Given the fact that in addition to the ZKIkK, the Bundeswehr universities, the FüAkBw, and the Bundeswehr's Academy of Information and Communication[12] also offer seminars and training on IkK. Ulrich's call (2011, p. 107) to discuss and agree on unified curricula points the way ahead here.

In the seminars, participants are supplied with literature published by the ZKIkK. One of the key publications is the "Einführung für Multiplikatoren und Multiplikatorinnen" (ZInFü, 2017), an introduction for disseminators (ZInFü, 2017), which will be examined in the following due to its significance.

In the publication, IkK is defined in a military context as a leadership competence and therefore is a sub-competence of social competence consisting of a variety of skills, including *communication, empathy, role distance,*

[12] ZMSBw, SKA, ZGeoBw, and ZOpKomBw.

tolerance of ambiguity, and *reflexivity* (ZInFü, 2017, p. 26). Additionally, the relevance of cultural self-awareness/awareness is emphasized. This approach is intended to help ensure the goal set by the ZKIkK to foster acceptance of the foreign individual and its culture in order to facilitate communication (ZInFü, 2017, p. 26). Since IkK is considered a part of leadership competence, the publication approaches the significance of IkK from a leader-related perspective, but at the same time also points out the lower priority given to subordinate military personnel in the regard. Nevertheless, the paper calls for instilling IkK on all levels throughout the entire Bundeswehr in order to foster confidence when interacting interculturally (ZInFü, 2017, p. 1). At the same time, the limitation to simple "Dos and Don'ts" and the use of field guides called "*Taschenkarten*" are not regarded as sufficient measures or as a substitute for seminars (ZInFü, 2017, p. 2).

In correlation with the ZKIkK's scientific approaches to culture, the sociological and psychological approaches form the basis for culture-general concepts. In contrast, the regional studies approach is the basis of culture-specific concepts. In its publication, the ZKIkK thus promotes attending training in both fields: culture-general and culture-specific. The culture-general field emphasizes cultural self-awareness as well as awareness for other cultures, and the norms, values, and cultural standards that impact their thoughts and actions – with the aim to avoid stereotyping, which is then the basis for the culture-specific training. The training prepares participants for a particular culture, its cultural standards, language and practices, which should be taken into consideration in deployments abroad to the extent feasible for the mission (ZInFü, 2017, p. 41). The ZKIkK does not see any obstacles in learning culture-general and culture-specific knowledge, but addresses the importance of potential corrections and the development of attitudes after returning from intercultural interactions (ZInFü, 2017, p. 37), which is pointed out in the explanation of the IkK training concept. Here, three steps are paramount: preparation for the deployment abroad, support by intercultural advisors during the deployment, and post-assessment of the deployment in terms of IkK (ZInFü, 2017, p. 49).

Consequently, the these steps are only relevant to military personnel who are being deployed and is part of the six-stage training curriculum. The first stage deals with *Basics* – training which all military personnel receive when they start their career. The second stage expands on IkK within the Bundeswehr and is taught throughout the pertinent departments. The first two stages are thus compulsory, whereas the other four

stages are not. The content of the third stage, which concentrates on deepening the knowledge of IkK, depends on the course or class. The fourth stage then targets certain positions with regard to multinational assignments and therefore focuses on knowledge specific to an assignment in a particular country, region, and culture. The fifth stage aims to intensify IkK, especially for deployments, and includes the three steps mentioned above. The last and sixth stage is solely intended for specialization in IkK to train Intercultural Advisors ("*Interkulturelle Einsatzberatung*"/IEB) for deployments.

Furthermore, a method called "SPATEN," developed by Alexander Thomas (1995), is introduced to handle intercultural interactions. Each letter represents an action: S – stop bias, P – specify the irritation, A – isolate other factors, T – reflect on own expectations, E – define own cultural standards, N – look for possible foreign cultural standards.

» Führungsakademie der Bundeswehr (FüAkBw)

A significant difference between the ZKIkK and the FüAkBw (Bundeswehr Command and Staff College) is their target groups. Whereas the ZKIkK focuses on and educates leadership personnel as disseminators in IkK, the the FüAkBw concentrates on a "significantly broader target group" (Ulrich, 2020).

The FüAkBw centers its IkK education on field-grade officers, although the seminars are also open to civil personnel on the executive level (see FüAkBw, 2019). In addition to the FüAkBw's "Land Forces," "Air Forces," "Naval Forces," "Medical Service and Health Sciences," "Cyber" (comprising the "Joint Operations," "Cyber and Information Domain Service" and "Joint Support and Enabling Service" areas), and "Management" faculties, the "Political/Strategic Studies and Social Sciences" faculty lists "culture, ethics, psychology" and "regional studies" under its primary research and teaching objectives. Here, one seminar dealing with culture, called "intercultural competence," can be found under "Training field 5000 – individual leadership skills" (as of November 2019). The primary focus of the 5-day seminar is the knowledge transfer of IkK basics and skills to enhance the participants' leadership behavior in a multinational setting (see FüAkBw, 2019). Beginning in 2020, a new training field called "Leadership flexibility in culturally diverse settings" will be offered. According to the coordinator, it is considered a pilot train-

ing field and is neither compulsory nor graded (Tomforde, 2020). It is planned to be a three-day seminar offered twice a year (Tomforde, 2020).

Regarding the content of these seminars, the former coordinator of the development of the ZKIkK (2009–2013) and currently a lecturer at the FüAkBw states that the Command and Staff College does not have an official definition of culture or IkK (see Ulrich, 2020). Notwithstanding this, the topic is approached from various scientific angles that depend on its prioritization for the particular training field (Ulrich, 2020). Unfortunately, the readiness to provide information was very limited; therefore, a standard skillset or any skills regarding IkK could not be compiled for the FüAkBw.

» Bundeswehr colleges

At the two Bundeswehr universities, Helmut Schmidt University Hamburg (HSU) and the University of the Bundeswehr Munich (UniBwM), students may attend optional key competency weekend seminars and training in IkK as an additional qualification throughout their course of study. Reviewing the seminar's topics reveals a culture-specific approach, with sessions focusing on subjects such as Intercultural training USA; Intercultural training: successfully communicating with the Chinese; and Communication and negotiation in an intercultural context – Arabic countries (see UniBwM, 2019). In addition, it is possible to obtain a B.A. in Intercultural Communication and Conflict Studies from the Human Sciences Department at the Bundeswehr University in Munich; the program is geared towards officers and future officers (see UniBwM, 2019).

After having reviewed the various approaches concerning IkK in *theory* and *practice* in a German military discourse and having introduced the departments that deal with the topic and what training they offer, both sides can now be compared. *Theory*: the BMVg's current regulations address an open mindset, empathy, and self-awareness with regard to IkK. In contrast, the BMVg draft regulation defines preconditions, instead of skills, for IkK, including tolerance, acceptance, mental stability, resilience, courage, and respect as well as teachability to learn skills and culture-specific knowledge, making it confusing to figure out what is considered a skill and what a precondition. Notwithstanding this, a canon was determined for the German military discourse, determining the skills that overlap with each other: *cultural self-awareness, communication/language,*

empathy, openness/interest, and teachability. Contrasting this canon with the ZKIkK's *practice* shows that it lacks the skills of role distance, tolerance of ambiguity, and reflexivity, but included two other skills: teachability and openness.

In summary, there is a striking divergence with respect to the statements concerning a definition of IkK in the Bundeswehr. At the same time, ZInFü refers to a definition found in a provisional concept that is generally valid in the Bundeswehr, which, according to ZInFü, implies a consensus for all departments. The FüAkBw distances itself from adopting one particular definition.

After having compared theory and practice in both forces (German and U.S. Forces), it is evident that there is neither a national nor an international standard providing universal guidelines. A consensus for defining the various skills is lacking, suggesting that NATO needs to establish a standard for IkK/3C. This would avoid confusion and facilitate clarity in an environment where 3C ensures interoperability.

However, when contrasting the U.S. Forces with the German Forces in terms of 3C/IkK, other common features and differences could be determined.

Neither of the DoDs has mandated a regulation for 3C nor established a standard. However, the BMVg is currently drafting a regulation. Furthermore, colleges that target personnel on the leadership level offer seminars in 3C, which are in both cases not mandatory and not graded, thereby hindering an assessment of the students' knowledge and, in contrast to the RTO's criticism, focus on leader education. Although, in the case of the German Forces, those leaders are supposed to disseminate their knowledge of 3C/IkK to their subordinates. Additionally, most seminars have a "crash course" character. However, both military forces address culture-general and culture-specific knowledge, albeit with varying importance and divergence. A differing and inconsistent approach between the U.S. Forces and German Forces could be demonstrated.

Moreover, neither of them provided a consensus on terminology and definition of culture and 3C/IkK. Additionally, the lack of interorganizational alignment and standardization of the concept of culture and 3C has been addressed on both sides (see Greene Sands; Ulrich). Furthermore, there is a critical dissonance between theory and practice, especially in regard to the constraints put on 3C due to prioritization. A striking example is the approach in the German Forces to develop genuine interest in and empathy for members of other cultures, which was stressed by Ulrich (2011) and Lohmann (2014). In contrast, the opposing approach taken

by the U.S. Marine Corps focused on operational culture, where empathy is not considered relevant. Rather, those components that one has to "switch into" in order to change the outcome of a military operation are considered vital.

Although it is clear that both nations considered deployment abroad to be the dominant reason for fostering 3C, the German military discourse explicitly considered 3C/IkK for internal and external dimensions. In this case, 3C is referred to for multinational staff within the Bundeswehr when they are engaging with foreign partners on training missions and during deployments as well as with the local population in a foreign country. Although the leadership personnel in the German Forces are designated to disseminate their knowledge of 3C to their subordinates, it was not possible to trace how that is implemented. Thus, the RTO's call to instill 3C on all levels and have a comparable degree of 3C expertise in the NATO member curricula can neither be deemed met for the U.S. or German Forces, nor for NATO as a whole.

Apart from this, the accessibility to the topic of 3C for the U.S. Forces that is facilitated by numerous publications available online has to be highlighted. On the contrary, such accessibility for the German Forces was an obstacle to overcome.

5.3 Cultural studies and Cross-Cultural Competence in a Military Context

After having examined the field of cross-cultural competence in a military and academic context, it is now possible to apply the theories and methods introduced earlier in connection with the previous findings. As shown in the chapters above, cultural studies as a discipline has been widely disregarded when it comes to 3C. However, it can be applied on primarily two different levels:

(1) 3C skills from a cultural studies-based perspective, and (2) 3C conceptions from a cultural studies-based perspective. The first level considers the identified 3C skills and puts them in relation to the theories discussed, which will demonstrate their usefulness. In contrast, the second level focuses on the different conceptions of 3C while applying the theory of hegemony.

(1) Regarding culture-general skills, cultural self-awareness has been distinguished as the preponderant skill for 3C. In this context, postcolonial theory can raise awareness about the dualism between superiority and inferiority and, as a result, foster interaction as equals. Furthermore, postcolonial theory emphasizes the existence of a "Western template," which refers to specific patterns in behavior, such as thought, clothing style, gestures, forms of government, TV, and art. These patterns are prominent in cultures in the "Western hemisphere." They can be forced on other cultures to either demonstrate power in a colonial sense or to supposedly solve a problem in a foreign country. An example of the latter is the equipment left over from the ISAF mission in Afghanistan: Sieff (2013) reports that most of the "Humvees" the U.S. Army provided to the Afghan Army to fight the Taliban are no longer combat-ready for several reasons. First, the Afghan Army lacks the trained human resources to repair the vehicles, and second, the Afghan Army does not have the replacement parts for the American military trucks. Even though it was the mission's main objective to train the Afghan Forces and assist in rebuilding the government, it thus did not meet the essential aspects of this goal. Since the vehicles are vital for the Afghan Army, the training needed to repair them is imperative. The Afghan Army was provided with American equipment that it was not familiar with and consequently was not able to utilize for long. Furthermore, in conversations with military personnel in the German Forces, it was noted that it became customary to dismantle certain parts of the Allied equipment in order to sell the parts since there was no use for the vehicles in disrepair.

Proceeding with the other determined skills, *cultural relativism*, *perspective-taking*, and *acceptance*, the theory of Orientalism (see Said, 1979) can identify existing stereotypes and reveal social constructs, while merging the culture-general and culture-specific approach. Consequently, it can raise awareness with regard to suspending judgment (cultural relativism) based on stereotypes learned through media and society, and makes it possible to take different perspectives, be unbiased, and accept other cultures. One example exemplifying both the postcolonial template of superior and inferior and the formation of stereotypes based on media is the comparison of the local Afghan population with Star Trek's ruthless and brutal Klingons. This reference is popular among the German military personnel in the Afghanistan context (Krysl, 2007, p. 183). Obviously, this analogy epitomizes the stereotype of Afghan nationals being uncivilized and barbaric.

Therefore, *intercultural communication* plays a crucial role, too. Semiotics, as discussed in the introduction, can be used as a tool. First of all, this theory helps raise the awareness that words (as found in the academic discourse for "cultural competence" under *sociolinguistic awareness*), as well as clothes and gestures (referring to *cultural-specific knowledge*) have underlying concepts which may differ significantly from one's familiar concepts. Second, it addresses the ability to identify those concepts and act accordingly.

(2) On the second level, as discussed in the preceding chapters, 3C, and consequently IkK, can be used in a hegemonic manner. However, it became clear that NATO and its members used varying conceptions of 3C. While the U.S. Air Force (see Section 4.2.2) understands 3C in a hegemonic sense as "the ability to quickly and accurately comprehend, then appropriately engage individuals from distinct cultural backgrounds to achieve the desired effect" (Mackenzie et al., 2013, p. 4), the U.S. Army has a contradictory approach: "gathers and interprets information about people and surroundings and adjusts behavior in order to interact effectively with others; integrates well into situations in which people with different beliefs, values, and customs and develops positive rapport by showing respect for the culture (…)" (USACC et al., 2018, p. 18). Here, "adjusted behavior for effective interaction" points towards hegemonic use of 3C but on the contrary, also indicates possible proper use of 3C through "showing respect," although "showing" does not imply authenticity. Furthermore, NATO includes indispensable components of 3C in its current Joint Air Power Strategy (JAP) under bullet point 29, "Training," albeit without naming 3C explicitly: "Interoperability through *language skills* and *cross-cultural awareness*, including federated strategic understanding by the persistent leveraging of *regionally specific expertise*, will support JAP's ability to operate effectively across the joint force" (NATO, 2018b). Evidently, "effectiveness" is the paramount aspect in terms of NATO's approach to 3C in the JAP strategy, making it latent hegemonic.

On the other hand, the urge for an "ethical" usage of 3C, which was described as genuine interest in the other without pursuing a particular objective, as well as "good" intentions were stressed in the military discourse of the German Armed Forces. Lohmann addressed the possible misuse of 3C/IkK and specifically culture-specific knowledge, which can be instrumentalized and used against the other (Bohrmann et al., 2014, p. 108). In addition, the former coordinator of the ZKIkK emphasized that 3C/IkK should not be used as a tool or as an advantage in combat

or self-protection but rather to genuinely interact with the other (Ulrich, 2011, p. 101).

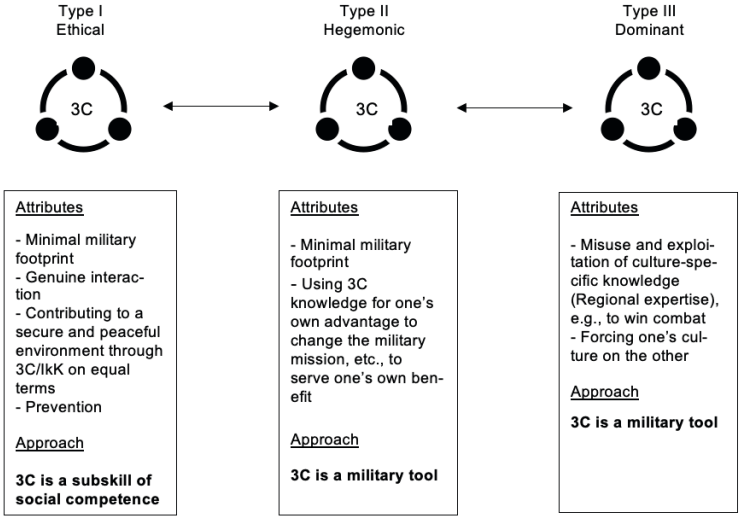

Figure 4: Typification of Cross-Cultural Competence (Anne Julia Hagen)

As a result, the derivation of the differing approaches to 3C across the U.S. and German Forces, as well as NATO strategies in relation to cultural studies, can be categorized into three different types. These types can be used in a hybrid form with varying intensity, mainly aiming at deployment abroad, but can also be used to refer to multinational staff settings in a military environment.

The categories above illustrate the significant differences between the three types, but also their common features. A crucial difference is the "approach." Whereas "ethical 3C" is considered a *subskill of social competence*, "hegemonic 3C" and "dominant 3C" are considered to be *military tools*, which fundamentally changes the quality of 3C. The third type of 3C was added in reference to Gramsci's concept of hegemony, which suggests that as soon as consent is lost (hegemonic 3C), "dominant 3C" would be enforced. Accordingly, domination implies the use of violence in an external setting, such as combat, enhanced with culture-specific knowledge (extrasomatic things) to control the opposed group or use it in an internal setting, e.g., a coalition environment, the forcing of cultural values and beliefs on the other group (intrasomatic things). However, domination

would still be enforced for the other's "own good" in order to either pursue a common goal or to foster security and peace for the community. When changing the perspective, the other will supposedly have a different opinion about the above, which will be allowed by the dominant group as long as the opposed group remains subordinate.

As demonstrated throughout the document analysis, the use of the 3C type varies between the armed forces, from branch to branch, and within each branch. Still, a trend can be determined, which is a hybrid form of 3C Type I and II with a tendency towards Type II for the United States Armed Forces, and predominantly a Type I approach for the German Armed Forces. The examined NATO material was not sufficient enough to determine a trend at this point. Due to the lack of standard described above, it is likely that none of the established types will prevail, which will be analyzed in the interviews. Aside from that, for clarity of purpose, 3C or cross-cultural competence will always be used in this paper in association with Type I unless specified otherwise (i.e., as Type II/III).

Based on these findings, two hypotheses arise:

1. *The United States Armed Forces provide an extensive amount of literature and research conducted for several military branches, which implies a high level of importance. Given the fact that the impact and effect of 3C is regarded as vital, 3C is mainly considered a military tool (Type II) and has therefore received recognition and acceptance within the military, whereas*

2. *the German Armed Forces mainly consider 3C to be a component of social competence (Type I), which "discredits" its importance for military operations.*

6 Methodology

6.1 Qualitative Research vs. Quantitative Research

Both qualitative and quantitative research aim to answer research questions. Whereas quantitative research gains its validity primarily from numeric data, qualitative research provides insights into dimensions that are not accessible to quantitative research. With regard to conducting interviews, these dimensions in particular include the ability to have in-depth-conversations, ask concrete questions, and capture pitch, volume and tone as well as gestures and facial expressions. Since less data is collected with qualitative research, it is not representative. However, qualitative methods such as grounded theory and qualitative content analysis can function both inductively and deductively and prove or disprove established hypotheses. Qualitative content analysis will be used for the examination of the interviews conducted for this paper.

6.2 Interviews

The interviews conducted for this dissertation do not reflect official statements from NATO, the German Armed Forces, or U.S. Armed Forces; they instead represent personal opinions based on the interviewees' experience working within a military environment. In compliance with the guidelines for conducting the survey at ACT, the German Forces (BMVg), and American Forces (USCENTCOM[13]), the interviewees will remain anonymous. For NATO, this includes anonymity of identifiable national traits of the respondents. Furthermore, it must be emphasized that the interviews are only analyzed with respect to cross-cultural competence and the objective is not to elaborate on political factors or contextualize the interviews in a political and strategic framework.

The following section will outline the research design and conceptualization before presenting the analysis.

[13] United States Central Command.

6.2.1 Research Design and Conceptualization of Interviews

» Research Design

To gain a holistic approach to the topic of cross-cultural competence, interviews with active military personnel at NATO Allied Command Transformation were conducted. In addition, interviews were conducted with active military personnel from two NATO member states, Germany and the U.S., who were not currently on duty for NATO. The three srveys focused on four aspects:

» Part I – Dimensions of Cross-Cultural Competence

As illustrated in the organizational chart (Figure 1), there are many dimensions in NATO that are affected by 3C. However, this paper focuses on three of them in particular: (A) 3C and NATO HQ, U.S. Forces, and German Forces (3C and the respective military organization internally); (B) 3C in multicultural NATO contingents while on a mission or training exercise abroad; and (C) 3C and NATO missions abroad with regard to interaction with the local population.[14] As shown in the literature review, dimensions A and B have generally been neglected in theory and practice. In contrast, dimension C was found to be of most significance, giving rise to numerous surveys, research, and concepts for this specific dimension.

Interview excerpts will be applied for dimension A to illustrate the use of and need for 3C in the North American NATO headquarters, Allied Command Transformation (ACT), the U.S. Forces, and German Forces. Additionally, the findings will be put in relation to the prior literature review. Dimensions B and C will be dealt with both in combination and separately and elaborated on using past NATO missions as examples.

» Part II – Function of Cross-Cultural Competence

In conjunction with the theory of hegemony, it was possible to develop a typification for 3C while deducing the attributes for each type from the reviewed literature. The three determined types, "ethical 3C," "hegemonic

[14] For the analysis of the German and U.S. Forces, dimension A will focus on the application of 3C within the forces.

3C", and "dominant 3C," will be applied in a qualitative content analysis following the approach used by Philipp Mayring (2014). In alignment with this typification (Figure 4), applicable statements by the interviewees will be labeled (coded) according to the type of 3C. Consequently, the typification can be weighed against the statements of the interviews and thus be tested as well as provide insight into possible hybrid forms.

» Part III – Canon for Cross-Cultural Competence Skills

It is germane to this topic to compile a list of 3C skills that were deemed imperative by the interviewees. A definition of each skill will also be given. The skills will be categorized for NATO, U.S. Forces, and German Forces, and will be compared to the canon derived from the literature and finally weighed against each other.

» Part IV – Standardization of Cross-Cultural Competence

This final section will discuss the arguments given by the interview partners in favor of and against a standard for 3C as well as examine the possible reasons hindering a standardization. Although strong arguments were presented throughout this paper, which evidently indicated the need for a 3C standard, a "reality check" seemed appropriate in order to present the varying perspectives as well as weigh them against each other.

» Conceptualization

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the original method of conducting face-to-face interviews in person had to be adapted. The interviews were thus held virtually via online platforms such as Skype and GoToMeeting or by phone. Some of the platforms allowed videotaping, which was enabled for those who had the necessary equipment, whereas the remaining interviews were audio recorded and then transcribed. The interview was conceptualized as a semi-structured interview with guiding questions in order to provide the opportunity for further communication. The questionnaire contained twenty questions and took an average of 90 minutes to complete. Since the survey was volunteer-based, the interviewees had to be recruited through various channels. In the case of NATO, the NATO

HQ SACT provides an internal communication platform called "connect" where topics and requests can be posted. A solicitation notice that outlined the requirements was published by the department in charge once the survey request had been officially approved. Interview volunteers were required to be military personnel with NATO mission experience and an officer rank. In total, six individuals volunteered for NATO, comprising Army, Navy, and Air Force personnel with NATO ranks OF-3 to OF-4 and OR-8 to OR-9. Considering the 1,173 personnel currently enlisted at ACT (see NATO, 2020b), of which the majority is military personnel, the number of volunteers seems low. However, it has to be taken into account that not all of them might have met the requirements. Another variable is how many individuals use the internal "connect" platform to get information. However, it may also demonstrate a lack of interest in participating in a volunteer-based survey on cross-cultural competence.

The process of recruiting volunteers for the German Armed Forces had to be designed differently since there is no intranet or platform to advertise volunteer-based surveys. Due to having established prior contact with individuals working at the BMVg and obtained the official registration and approval of the qualitative survey for the German Forces, it was possible to acquire volunteers here by word-of-mouth.

Six interviewees volunteered, consisting of Army, Navy, and Air Force personnel, four of whom held the NATO rank OF-4, one with OF-5, and one with OF-2.

The interviews with military personnel in the U.S. Forces were conducted with the support of U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM). The survey was registered and approved by the DoD at the Pentagon. A total of six interviews were conducted with two Navy, one Air Force, and two Army members as well as one member of the Marine Corps. The interviewees hold NATO ranks OF-3 to OF-6 and were selected and personally asked to volunteer by the designated point of contact for this survey. Due to the different methods used to recruit the interviewees, a comparison cannot be made between NATO and the two member states with regard to engagement and eagerness. However, the requirements for the survey participants remain comparable in ranks and NATO experience.

Furthermore, the interviews are transcribed in verbatim, a non-modified transcription style that captures word by word utterances, including clippings, slang, and remarks such as laughter and pauses. Excerpts used within the paper have been edited for grammar and readability purposes. Moreover, the interview excerpts with German Forces were translated from German to English.

6.2.2 Interview Analysis

The interview analysis comprises three surveys and is divided into three parts. The first part discusses the survey conducted with military personnel located at the NATO Allied Command Transformation. The second part examines excerpts from the interviews with the U.S. Forces located at the United States Central Command, while the third part analyzes the statements made by the interviewees in the German Forces located at the Federal Ministry of Defence (Germany).

There are three terms that appear to be relevant in a military environment and are frequently addressed by military personnel in the following interviews: *effectiveness, efficiency,* and *interoperability*. To clarify their meaning, a short definition will be provided in the following.

While effectiveness refers to the "successful"[15] outcome of an action, efficiency describes the process of achieving the desired outcome. This process involves resources such as time and money, which can be called "input." If the input is low, the efficiency is high. The term "interoperability" is correlated with this word pair. Interoperability can be defined as the capability of military personnel and military equipment to operate with each other. In a military environment, the degree of interoperability is thus pivotal to achieving the desired effect, i.e., to be successful and effective.

6.2.2.a NATO – ACT

Part I – Dimensions of Cross-Cultural Competence

Dimension A – Cross-Cultural Competence and NATO headquarters Example: Allied Command Transformation

Allied Command Transformation (ACT) is the NATO headquarters in North America located in Norfolk, Virginia; it has a regular rotation of military personnel every three to four years. According to ACT's website, the Command aims to educate and train "thousands of Army, Navy, Air Force, and civilian men and women each year" (ACT, 2021). To this end, ACT manages multinational exercises and pre-deployment training for NATO. In effect, ACT's objective is to "homogenise the Alliance's military

[15] Success is defined here as meeting the predefined goals.

culture, develop necessary competencies and skills to ensure interoperability in the cognitive dimension of the Alliance capability" (ACT, 2021)[16]. Furthermore, ACT "contributes to the definition of standards in many areas such as individual training (…)" in order to foster "the Alliance's unity of action (…)" (ACT, 2021). ACT thus focuses on improving the military's future effectiveness.

Considering the above, it stands to reason that ACT is the governing body where 3C could and should be implemented. Therefore, it appeared valid to conduct a survey at ACT with the current military personnel based at this headquarters in order to examine the theory and practice of 3C. As demonstrated in the document analysis, the theoretical background in the introduction seminars for newcomers at ACT focused on cultural awareness training, which was shown to be only one component of 3C and consequently does not entirely cover the concept. Given the interviewees' statements that the seminars and introduction courses at ACT tended to be scheduled for the last days of the introduction week and that the essential aspects were dealt with during the first few days, it might not be surprising that the participants have a lack of expertise in 3C. It was mentioned that those seminars held later in the week were skipped even though they were mandatory, or that key personnel could not attend due to immediate duties. Moreover, the content was sometimes described as insufficient or lacking depth.

It is thus self-evident that there is a lack of 3C at ACT, which becomes visible in cultural generalizations and stereotyping, for instance.

A staff officer located at NATO Allied Command Transformation recalls:

"(…) if you speak the same language, they directly think you have the same culture. But I have a completely other culture than the French" (Staff Officer, Major, Army, located at NATO Allied Command Transformation). A lieutenant colonel amplifies this statement with respect to his current position at ACT as well as previous experiences gained during other national assignments:

> *(…) even if you have people whose English is their first language. Canadian, American, Australian, New Zealand would be the classic*

[16] After the survey was submitted to ACT for approval, it was stated that it was not ACT's aim to homogenize the Alliance's military culture. Consequently, the phrase and explicit word choice "homogenise" should be removed from the website. However, as of May 16, 2021 the website has not been altered. The phrase remains valid.

> *examples. There are cultural differences, and you need to be aware of these because the same as you get to know any team member, and every member of a team is different. (Lieutenant Colonel, Army, located at NATO Allied Command Transformation)*

A more serious case in point from the NATO perspective is the decrease in work efficiency due to the lack of 3C. A woman senior master sergeant based at NATO Allied Command Transformation described a concise example:

> *One of our main leaders that I work for is from [specific nation omitted due to privacy reasons], and it is difficult to have conversations with him (…). When walking together, he always walks in front of me, and I walk behind him, so I have to get used to that because that's normal for that culture. I had to catch up on what [this] culture meant in order to have better communication with him [emphasized] and to get things done because I thought it was very difficult to talk to him when his head was turned the other way or he would not even look at me. (…) I found ways to have him communicate back with me and show me some respect as well, and now (…) it's getting better. (Senior Master Sergeant, Air Force, located at NATO Allied Command Transformation)*

Despite this situation, the senior master sergeant was still able to apply 3C. Culture-general skills such as tolerance of ambiguity, interest in the other culture, and communication skills, as well as culture-specific knowledge were applied. The interviewee asked for a conversation to explain her cultural background in order to improve communication and effectiveness at work. Consequently, it has to be noted that ACT's goal to homogenize military culture has not been achieved at this point.[17] Moreover, a standard for culture-general skills could be helpful to avoid scenarios as the one illustrated above. Further indicators of a lack of 3C and thus a heterogenic military culture are found in statements such as the follow-

[17] In discussions with the Command's designated release authority, it was also noted that the aim to homogenize military culture as mentioned on the ACT website relates to the annual education and training of thousands of Army, Navy, Air Force, and civilian men and women through Article 5-level joint exercises, small-scale exercises, and pre-deployment training. Through this training, the Alliance develops the necessary competencies and skills and ensures interoperability in the cognitive dimension of Alliance capability.

ing: "If we see someone that is not practicing 3C or does not apply these competencies, then we should correct that, but it's not practiced at ACT" (Command Sergeant Major, Army, located at NATO Allied Command Transformation). In general, communication appears to be an underestimated factor at ACT:

> *(…) in the last few weeks, I've seen a lot of [internal communication] that is written very complex, very hard to understand. I'm struggling as a native English speaker, and I got the same background, culture as the writer, and I look at it. I think, well, if I'm struggling, then anyone who doesn't have any of the shared things that I got, is going to really struggle. (Lieutenant Colonel, Army, located at NATO Allied Command Transformation)*

A command sergeant major emphasizes the above with the following statement:

> *It happens many times in meetings that everyone says 'yes', and we finish [but] nothing happens [afterward]. People think they understand the message, but in the end, they go out without having the message. That can happen in international environments because people sometimes try to pretend they understand it because they have a high level of language skills and qualifications in the country. If I ask myself whether I really understood the message, I often have to say 'no', so I have to ask 'sorry, I didn't get it' and even our leadership has to learn [that] here because they are coming from their own environment with two, three, four stars (…). (Command Sergeant Major, Army, located at NATO Allied Command Transformation)*

These statements attest to the need for culture-general skills and knowledge. Therefore, it is a positive sign that most of the interviewees call for the implementation of 3C in dimensions A and B:

> *(…) look at what we did externally; look at all that cultural awareness training we had externally. How important that was to make sure when you patrol into a village, we don't do XYZ because we know that alienates (…). And I would turn that and say that is now what we need to be doing internally. We need to be doing it for all those areas, gender, race, ability, disability, national background, language, and make as much effort on that internally as we did ex-*

ternally. (Lieutenant Colonel, Army, located at NATO Allied Command Transformation)

In correlation to the above statement, a senior master sergeant points out that 3C classes are paramount in dimension A:

(…) when you're in a staff setting (ACT), you spend most of your day in staff meetings on project boards or doing customer service. You are communicating more in the aspect of 'hey, you know we are trying to accomplish a goal' versus trying to survive and find the enemy, this might be my last day (…). Because you could be here from three to four years versus six months to a year, so it is different. I wouldn't put more emphasis on the operational side than I would on the administrative side or corporation side of the house. I think at that level, you do need these types of [3C] courses because you're here so long with each other (…). (Senior Master Sergeant, Air Force, located at NATO Allied Command Transformation)

Findings

The interviews confirm that ACT has introduced cultural awareness training, which is merely one aspect of cross-cultural competence. Furthermore, the examples above demonstrate that the absence of 3C may currently be hindering effectiveness and efficiency. Therefore, the effort in 3C that has been made externally (dimension C) has to be enforced for dimensions A and B as well.

If it is ACT's aim to homogenize NATO's military culture, a standard in 3C is indispensable.

Dimension B – Cross-Cultural Competence in multicultural NATO contingents while on a mission/training exercise abroad

The following interview excerpts highlight the significance of 3C in multicultural contingents and missions abroad. Whereas the first two quotations are positive examples of applying 3C skills, the last one amplifies ethical 3C education.

When a staff officer was on duty abroad with a working group, he found himself in a situation that required the application of culture-general skills. Confronted with the customs of a Romanian colonel, the staff officer recalls:

> *And about 10 meters, 20 meters long, he takes my hand. So a man taking a man by the hand is for me a completely another signal. But I knew if I took my hand away, it would be an insult for him. I figured it must be normal for him and his culture. I didn't know. And so I imagined myself, me as an officer walking to a whole line (…) with all soldiers saluting and doing that? But I know he did it to show he knew me well. (Staff Officer, Major, Army, located at NATO Allied Command Transformation)*

In particular, the situation described above epitomizes culture-general skills. These can be identified as *tolerance of ambiguity*, the ability to tolerate a culturally-rooted behavior different from one's own, which, in this case, is a man taking another man's hand; *perspective-taking*, the ability to try to understand the situation from the other's point of view, which is indicated by the staff officer reflecting on the possible reason for the colonel taking his hand; *empathy,* to develop compassion, which is expressed by the consideration that taking his hand away may offend the colonel; and lastly *acceptance,* the ability to be in accord with the situation without prejudice, which is demonstrated by the staff officer complying with the act.

Obviously, the staff officer did not have enough culture-specific knowledge to prevent his astonishment. The argument given by Fosher et al. (2017, p. xvi-xvii) that culture-specific information may change and might not always be available is pivotal here. As a result, culture-general skills were used to navigate the situation. Therefore, it is evident that universal skills which can be applied globally in every scenario should be considered an advantage as well as a precondition when facing culturally ambiguous situations.

Another scenario focuses on the combination of culture-general and culture-specific skills. A navy commander from a NATO nation recounts an encounter with individuals from Eastern European countries:

> *I remember when we were visiting a foreign country with our ship, (…) and the officers of these countries are quite reluctant to speak in English, even if they knew how to speak in English. It was seen as the language of the adversaries. So we spoke in German, and they were more than happy to speak in German than to speak in English, and so we tried to speak in this language. (…) It was an example of how you have to take into consideration the feeling of your counterparts (…). (Commander, Navy, located at NATO Allied Command Transformation)*

In this case, combining culture-specific knowledge, the history of the region, and language skills with the culture-general skill of empathy, i.e. to be compassionate and understand the other's perspective, facilitated the communication process in the situation described above. Additionally, showing and appreciating the effort to speak in the other language can impact the sentiment of both parties. In contrast, a lack of 3C education may cause tensions between parties. The following example is referring to the NATO-led operations Maritime Guard (1992–1993) and Sharp Guard (1993–1996), which were deployed to secure the Adriatic Sea. The interviewee was part of these missions from 1992–1996, and thus the time period has to be taken into consideration.

> *(…) when we did the blockade operations in the Adriatic Sea, the ships were from all nations. (…) But one issue that they had is, whoever planned this search grid for the different ships to make sure that no smuggler got through, somebody that planned the search grid parked a Greek frigate in search grid A and in search grid B, you had a Turkish frigate. What do you think happened? They were more busy playing chicken at sea with each other and pointing at each other with their fire control radars, rather than doing their job and trying to actually find the smugglers.*
> *So whoever made that plan just looked at the list of ships and applied them to the search grid and somebody, a European, that obviously wasn't, would have looked at this and known that to park a frigate from Turkey next to that sector should be avoided.*
> *In the end, some cooler heads prevailed, and eventually, the Turkish ship was put all the way in the North, and the Greek ship was put all the way in the South. So, they were so far away from each other that they couldn't tangle with each other anymore. (Senior Master Sergeant, Air Force 2, located at NATO Allied Command Transformation)*

It has to be taken into account that the equipment might have made it necessary to plan the search grid accordingly. Sufficient background information is lacking at this point. However, 3C has to be expected from both the planner and the commander and crew of the two ships. Regardless of the historically and politically rooted tensions between the two parties, culture-general skills such as tolerance, acceptance, empathy, and perspective-taking become paramount in such scenarios.

Moreover, this example emphasizes the need to agree on a standard for 3C. Additionally, the implementation of such a standard must be fostered in order to maintain operational readiness, which is indeed one of NATO's fundamentals.

Findings

The interview excerpts analyzed here attest to the high relevance of 3C in the examined dimension. In particular, 3C was found to impact NATO's operational readiness and effectiveness. Furthermore, the significance of culture-general skills could be highlighted, which correlates with the findings of the document analysis.

Dimensions B and C

Since the following applies to both dimensions B and C, it is discussed separately here.

An Army staff officer located at NATO Allied Command Transformation provides an example of a joint exercise he oversaw during his deployment for the NATO Kosovo Force (KFOR) peacekeeping mission. It must be noted that this example refers to personal experiences that happened around 2010.

> *One of the last exercises we did was high in the mountains, minus 10 degrees Celsius, very cold, windy. There were the Americans as a unit who played the victims in a car crash with some people. It looked very authentic. The entire team came, the French ambulance with the Moroccan police – international. Suddenly, two buses were coming from the mountains with people coming from Serbia. I assumed them to be Serbian Kosovars because we were in that part. (…) Our ambulance, a huge one, was blocking the road. They (the Serbians) looked outside and saw the accident and assumed it was a real accident. (…) I told the teams, 'Don't say it's an exercise. Say it's real. Then we won't have a problem.' We finished the exercise. The victims were getting evacuated and put in the ambulance. The French driver tried to start the ambulance, but it didn't [start]. As a result, the Serbians were getting out of their buses because they didn't understand why the ambulance was still blocking the road. Although it was minus 10, I felt the temperature rising because if it's Serbian Kosovars, it's that southern blood of [pchuuu] making a lot of noise, a lot of gestures, and*

> *I was sure they had arms in their buses. That's their way of [life], it's a little bit like the American, have your gun, have your freedom. All my soldiers were also armed. If something happens and somebody gets frayed, firing could start. And there were two American translators, civilian contractors, speaking perfect Serbian. So I told them to deal with that problem and to explain the situation because they speak the language. (…) I turned around and saw the discussion between what I think was the Serbian leader and the two American contractors about to escalate. (…) seeing them (translators), they were saying like 'we are here from our culture, we help you, so we have to be pleased'. I instead was trying to get into the leader's cultural situation and tried to solve the problem with my limited vocabulary. I didn't say, 'This is my culture, I am superior, you have to wait.'*
>
> *I realized, speaking the language is fine, but cultural awareness is more. (…) And honestly, before that, I thought speaking multiple languages is opening doors, but it's not that. It's being able to accept another one's culture as equal. Not to say my culture is less or more but equal, we are equal. (…) You have some moments in life where you realize certain things, and you change your opinion completely, and that was one of these moments. (Staff Officer, Major, Army, located at NATO Allied Command Transformation)*

The above narrative demonstrates how crucial culture-general skills are. In fact, culture-specific skills such as speaking the same language were less critical in this case than *cross-cultural awareness,* understanding one's cultural background and acknowledging the other's. Furthermore, mutual *respect* facilitated *communicatio*n, despite the fact that the staff officer did not possess sufficient language skills. Moreover, the example indicates that semiotics was unconsciously applied by recognizing signs and gestures as well as interpreting them accordingly.

Additionally, this example points out that civilian contractors need to receive 3C training as well as follow the same guidelines as military personnel when it comes to 3C. Therefore, a standard would be advisable.

Aside from that, the scenario can be seen in correlation with post-colonial theory. The contractors drew a line between "themselves" and the "others." When emphasizing that NATO is bringing "good" to the country, an expectation of gratitude arose that was not fulfilled. This scenario can lead to frustration for the party that has these expectations. At the same time, the other party could feel dominated in the sense of a superiority-inferiority constellation, which may cause conflict. Furthermore,

the example showed that each individual runs the risk of making cultural generalizations, homogenizations, and stereotyping.

The last excerpt from the same interviewee highlights the divergent national approaches of 3C when interacting with the population of the country of deployment.

> *We were in the most dangerous part of Kosovo, and I had a concealed weapon. Whereas in the northern part where it was safe, very safe, Americans were fully armed, weapon ready. That doesn't give you bonding with the people. You have to contact them. Don't scare them. And if you think you are not safe, have somebody in the back, looking at your back, who is fully armed, but yourself, if you're fully armed, helmet on, weapon, you will not talk to somebody like that. But again, that's part of the American culture. It's nothing new. And now you want to talk about cultural skills in NATO. The starting position is already very different. (…) because some nations have certain skills embedded in their culture, others don't have that. (Staff Officer, Major, Army, located at NATO Allied Command Transformation)*

Although the interviewee points out the dramatic difference in how the various forces approach the local population during a coalition's mission, he does not see a 3C standard as being a solution. From his perspective, every culture provides a different starting point, which makes achieving common ground difficult. Notwithstanding this, a combined approach appears to be the principal strategy to ensure interoperability and effectiveness.

Dimension C – Cross-Cultural Competence and NATO missions abroad with regard to interaction with the local population

Some interviewees consider 3C to be more important when deployed abroad:

"Probably (3C) is more important externally because internally, within NATO, we are quite similar in behavior and we are also training from the very beginning to work together so we can accept that kind of cultural difference among us quite easily" (Commander, Navy, located at NATO Allied Command Transformation). This statement stands in stark contrast to the interviews with an Army lieutenant colonel, an Air Force senior master sergeant, and an Army command sergeant major from different

NATO nations, who emphasize the importance of 3C dimensions A and B. However, the interviewee argues:

> *(…) when you are abroad, and you are confronting other peoples in a war, a war environment, this procedure of cross-cultural engagement is much more difficult and much more important to follow because you don't want to hurt anybody, and you don't want to give them a bad feeling. (…) also because the cultural differences are much bigger. (Commander, Navy, located at NATO Allied Command Transformation)*

The interviewee considers military personnel located at NATO Allied Command Transformation to be more homogeneous than heterogeneous, which is why he emphasizes the importance of applying 3C when in contact with the local population abroad.

Clearly, 3C plays a significant role in dimension C, which was highlighted in the document analysis and became evident in the following example of an Air Force senior master sergeant who was deployed in Afghanistan in 2011:

> *We got a briefing from [identifiable national quote] counter intel before we were deployed, which was standard for all the troops. (…) So in this case, what happened was that the American PR (…), came up with the idea of saying like hey let us do a soccer tournament with the locals here, between the soldiers and the locals in order to get people together and everything which initially is a fantastic idea. Then the not so fantastic thing that happened was that they took a soccer ball and printed the Afghan flag on it. So they are kicking the soccer ball with the Afghan flag through the dirt, and just to add to this, you know what's on the Afghan flag. The first verse of the Quran, so you see where the initial 3C competence was great, but the rest of the competence was not that great because the execution was not great. (Senior Master Sergeant, Air Force 2, located at NATO Allied Command Transformation)*

The example above once again illustrates the need for 3C. In fact, there was no 3C present at all; neither culture-general nor culture-specific knowledge and skills were applied. Culture-specific knowledge would have prevented the idea of printing the Afghan flag on the ball, and culture-general skills such as communication were lacking. For instance, the

locals could have been consulted in advance to find out whether it would be a good idea to print the flag on the ball. Furthermore, the scenario described here indicates a lack of cultural awareness and the tendency to apply one's value system to the other culture. The latter can be shown in the following example that took place in Afghanistan as well:

> *The women were going to take water from a valve. They were walking about six miles there and back every day to bring the water. Of course, 'Western' guys wanted to help, so let's make a valve here in the village. And what happened? It ruined their life because that was their free time from their husbands [laughing], from their house, and they had their own time to talk. As a result, they were not happy. We didn't know their culture. (Command Sergeant Major, Army, located at NATO Allied Command Transformation)*

Nevertheless, efforts have been made to compensate for the lack of 3C:

> *So that was changed. When we realized the lack of cultural competency within the Western forces, General McChrystal ordered us to identify what exactly they [Afghans] need and how to handle it. We were pushing something they [Afghans] didn't understand. They didn't value. So that was the kind of breaking point, and I guess at that time, it was successfully changed for a short time (…). (Command Sergeant Major, Army, located at NATO Allied Command Transformation)*

However, the second statement shows that the implementation of 3C depends on leadership. The document analysis for the German Forces indicated that 3C is tied to resources as well as to the degree of significance that the individual in charge assigns to 3C. Consequently, alternating leadership will most likely give rise to major discrepancies in the application of 3C, thus impacting the function and significance of 3C due to a lack of a standard.

The enforcement of 3C Type II by General McChrystal in Afghanistan changed the counter-insurgency operations (COIN). In the 2009 "Tactical Directive" for the ISAF mission, the commander ordered that "any entry to an Afghan house should always be accomplished by Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF), with the support of local authorities, and account for the unique cultural sensitivities toward local women" (NATO/ISAF, 2009). In this case, culture-general and cul-

ture-specific skills are addressed by fostering communication with the local population and forces in order to integrate them into the process. Cultural awareness and knowledge, such as cultural and religious beliefs, have to incorporate the knowledge of how local women can be approached in a way accustomed to their particular society, for example. In addition, the Tactical Directive specified that ISAF forces were prohibited from entering or firing into or upon religious or historical sites, among other changes. The measures were taken to prevent the alienation of the local population and gain their support in fighting the Taliban.

> *Our strategic goal is to defeat the insurgency threatening the stability of Afghanistan. Like any insurgency, there is a struggle for the support and will of the population. Gaining and maintaining that support must be our overriding operational imperative – and the ultimate objective of every action we take. (NATO/ISAF, 2009)*

The interviewee stresses this dramatic change:

> *(…) when he [McChrystal] ordered to take the helmets off, the sunglasses off, when we encountered people, and weapons weren't pointed at people all the time. It's the little things. So what happened? When you go to another country to help people to build up their democratic country but, if we behave like an occupying force, not asking questions, dictating, pointing weapons, we will not show our human side. They won't see the other culture. They will see an occupying force only. (Command Sergeant Major, Army, located at NATO Allied Command Transformation)*

Postcolonial mechanisms are addressed here. NATO could be perceived as an occupying force in a Middle Eastern country if personnel do not apply 3C (Type I-II), so 3C has to be taken into account. On the one hand, another interviewee underlines NATO's capability with regard to 3C:

> *For example, they [military personnel located at NATO Allied Command Transformation] also write their name on the uniform in Arabic characters, or they try to use female officers when they have to deal with female personnel because it is not considered appropriate for them to see their women speaking with our men; or they are planning to install, for example, hospitals in order to get in contact with the population, not in a war manner but in a more civilian way. So*

> *I know that this kind of attention is very important, especially in operational activities. In our sector, they are less urgent, but are still practiced. (Commander, Navy, located at NATO Allied Command Transformation)*

On the other hand, the interviewee implies that 3C varies in importance depending on the person's position. And according to another interviewee, the same applies to the type of the mission: "(…) if you're going to be out doing humanitarian efforts then yes [3C is indispensable] but if you're just support at the main location and you have no contact with other nations doing the same thing you're doing, I would say no (…)" (Senior Master Sergeant, Air Force, located at NATO Allied Command Transformation).

Findings

Although the interviews reflect the significance of 3C in deployments abroad, it is conspicuous that most of the interviewees emphasized the need to apply 3C internally, especially culture-general skills (dimensions A and B). Whereas the former correlates with the findings of the document analysis, it is evident that the desired implementation and application of 3C internally has been neglected in the curricula and literature, which focuses solely on cross-cultural awareness training. As a result, there is disunity with respect to the emphasis of 3C in dimensions, types of missions, and positions. However, it could be determined that 3C has a vast impact on NATO's operational readiness and effectiveness. Furthermore, both the document and interview analysis indicate that the implementation and application of 3C are leadership-dependent, which entails function (3C Type) and significance. Moreover, dimension C demonstrates the presence of postcolonial mechanisms within NATO forces, such as applying "Western" value systems to other cultures and an occupying force appearance when 3C is not applied (Type I-II). Finally, if it is ACT's aim to homogenize NATO's military culture, then a standard in 3C is essential.

Part II – Function of Cross-Cultural Competence

Type I: Ethical 3C

It became evident in the interviews with military personnel located at NATO Allied Command Transformation that 3C was at first considered

Type I. Type I entails a genuine interaction with the "other" and a minimal "military footprint" in deployments, which applies in internal settings, for example in staff settings such as ACT, in terms of the careful handling of comrades of different cultural backgrounds. The latter was addressed by an Army lieutenant colonel as the potentially damaging "wake" that is left behind if 3C is not considered while working with individuals from other cultures. Furthermore, equality and respect are cornerstones of 3C Type I, and the interviews reflect on these aspects. A Navy commander states, "I have just learned from my life. It is the sensitivity to respect the fact that other people can also have a different mind structure than you, and you have to respect that unless it is crossing your principles or your most sacred value."

Approaching 3C from an ethical perspective was highlighted by one of the interviewees:

"(…) the teaching point for [identifiable national quote] [some forces] is understanding this dimension more from an ethical point of view (…) because understanding someone's ethics can go a long way" (Senior Master Sergeant, Air Force 2, located at NATO Allied Command Transformation).

In the course of the interviews, the participants were asked about the potential of 3C being instrumentalized, which was negated by one of them: "If you're using something to win, then it's a weapon system, or in the loosest term it's a weapon. 3C is not a weapon. It's the way I would look at it" (Senior Master Sergeant, Air Force 2, located at NATO Allied Command Transformation). The latter indicates that the definition and usage of 3C are individual, since NATO does not have a standard or guideline in place.

3C was also approached from the aspect of effectiveness while catering to the individual needs of people from various backgrounds.

"I would understand this as the ability to interact effectively, without causing offense or losing a relationship, in doing so, strengthening the bond between people. Some of the best people I have worked with are those that realize 'one size does not fit all' and adjust their behavior accordingly" (Lieutenant Colonel, Army, located at NATO Allied Command Transformation). Although it is important to work effectively, this effectiveness is not achieved regardless of the price. In correlation with 3C Type I, the sensitivities of individuals from other cultural backgrounds are taken into consideration to foster and maintain interpersonal relationships. Therefore, a critical factor in this statement is the adjustment of one's behavior in line with the other based on having cultural awareness.

However, the borders between 3C Type I and Type II become blurred when considering the following statement made by the same interviewee:

> *Really, what I'm trying to do is to prevent misunderstanding. I'm trying to prevent problems, [so that] what we are trying to achieve is done as best we can. There are so many influencing factors outside of my control, anything that I deal with, that I focus only on those that I can actually affect some form of change (…). (See Lieutenant Colonel, Army, located at NATO Allied Command Transformation).*

Here, 3C becomes paramount to maximize efficiency in a military working environment and to pursue one's goal. The latter correlates with the definition of 3C Type II, which entails a minimal "military footprint" while using 3C knowledge to impact or change, for instance, an individual's perception and opinion or a mission's outcome in relation to one's goal.

Type II: Hegemonic 3C

It is plausible that in a military working environment, 3C knowledge and skills are used in order to work effectively with one another and to regulate all controllable factors to the benefits of one's goal. Thus, it is not surprising that 3C Type II was found in every interview.

According to an Army staff officer, it is an obvious consequence that the goal dictates the mission:

> *Of course, as the military, we are there for mission goals, so everything we do, we should do to support that goal. (…) Firstly, having cultural awareness, of course, it prevents problems. Secondly, it makes sure that what you want to achieve, you achieve it better because the other one understands it better. So saying it's only for prevention, or only an instrument to get our goal, yeah, as military everything you do should be towards your goals of your operation. Otherwise, what are you doing there? (Staff Officer, Major, Army, located at NATO Allied Command Transformation)*

The following two statements reflect the Alliance's aim.

"(…) NATO is for peace actually (…). However, we want to see security around us and security for our nations based on common values" (Command Sergeant Major, Army, located at NATO Allied Command Transformation). When applying the previously discussed concept of he-

gemony postulated by Gramsci, the above statement has to be assigned to 3C Type II. This is underscored through the subsequent statement, "(…) our goal in NATO is not to fight, it's to secure the world, make sure our next generations (…) have the world in a secured way, and our values are standing" (Command Sergeant Major, Army, located at NATO Allied Command Transformation). This correlates with the idea of a minimal military footprint as well as, in the sense of hegemony, to persuade the other to secure their agenda. Moving from an external perspective to the internal, an interviewee from the Air Force states: "I would think it [3C] is more of an influence, yes, to get to a common goal. People will use whatever they need to 'OK we need to get this off the table what do you want me to do?'" (Senior Master Sergeant, Air Force, located at NATO Allied Command Transformation). This excerpt is referring to a staff setting and substantiates that 3C Type II is practiced regardless of the environment. It may be used in all three dimensions that are discussed in this paper: (A) cross-cultural competence in NATO headquarters that can be applied to NATO staff settings in general, (B) cross-cultural competence in multicultural NATO contingents while on a mission or training exercise abroad, and (C) cross-cultural competence and NATO missions abroad with regard to interaction with the local population.

Concerning dimensions B and C, the following statement from a Navy commander in a NATO nation draws a clear line between the usage of 3C Types II and III when the commander was asked if 3C could be used as a tool of prevention or influence:

> *Also to prevent, but also to influence because if you have a good cultural comprehension of the other, it is easier to communicate, to make clear each other's ideas, and when you have a frank discussion with your counterparts, it is easier to understand each other and to know what each other is expecting from the other. (…) you cannot work without comprehension; we are not a colonial force that is going there just to destroy something and to return home. (…) when we are deployed, we are also trying to rebuild the country, to make peace-building, not only peacekeeping. Usually, we also invest in rebuilding the country, in building up schools, hospitals, and we have to take into consideration what their values are because you are not going to build a church in Afghanistan, for example. (Commander, Navy, located at NATO Allied Command Transformation)*

Type III: Dominant 3C

Whereas the above statement underlines the consideration of local values while rebuilding a country according to the Alliance's goal, e.g., establishing democracy, 3C Type III does not consider the other's values or cultural background. 3C Type III instead forces one's cultural values and beliefs on the other, which was indeed observed for dimension A, the ACT headquarters:

> *(…) we have lots of U. S. high ranking officials here. 'Hey, well (…) this is what we have to do because we're in the United States' and so a lot of [other nationalities say] 'oh OK,' some of the things that go on 'OK, we can do it your way.' So I think it's a lot of influence when it comes to particular cultures, [some] are stronger in getting things they want versus other cultures as far as the combinations that we deal with (…). And I see it in staff meetings. It's surprising [laughing]. (Senior Master Sergeant, Air Force, located at NATO Allied Command Transformation)*

With regard to the prior statement, when the interviewee was asked whether culture-specific knowledge – such as knowing the political power constellations of the other nation – is used to impose one's own culture, the question was affirmed. It was striking that independently of one another, two other interviewees emphasized similar scenarios. Concerning dimension B, a lieutenant colonel of the Army stated that "Some feel that other factors define the dominant culture. For example, in a military context, whoever is the largest contingent often feels that their culture should prevail, and everyone else should adjust to them." Similarly, a senior master sergeant of the Air Force points out that "(…) whomever the lead nation is, the lead nation dictates the 3C" in a multinational mission or training and "(…) that group is going to try to push their values onto that group. I can tell you that from my own experience" (Senior Master Sergeant, Air Force 2, located at NATO Allied Command Transformation). The interviewee continues, "(…) because we are talking host country (USA), I have had issues in the past that if that nation is over-represented then they tried to do it their way and that's something that was by default happening in a lot of units if you have too many of one nationality" (Senior Master Sergeant, Air Force 2, located at NATO Allied Command Transformation).

The above excerpts demonstrate that as soon as a particular cultural group is in the majority, their culture is forced on the minority, so evidently, 3C Type III can be observed here.

Regarding dimension C, which deals with the interaction between the Armed Forces and the local population in the country of deployment, there was no sign of 3C Type III being enforced. Nonetheless, one of the interviewees assumed that 3C Type III might be used in special operation forces (SOF): "Anything SOF will probably, depending on the type of SOF you're looking at, special operation forces will probably tend to weaponize it (3C) and that I'm thinking more covert ops stuff" (Senior Master Sergeant, Air Force 2, located at NATO Allied Command Transformation).

Findings

The above coding of the interview excerpts and their examination shows that, in particular, 3C Type III prevailed in dimensions A and B. This underscores the need for cross-cultural competence Types I-II and the accompanying education at NATO, in this case, at ACT as well as in multicultural contingents during missions abroad. Regarding these findings, it is not surprising that military personnel located at NATO Allied Command Transformation themselves call for a shift of focus, which became evident in Part I. Moreover, the lack of 3C Type I within ACT was mentioned: "There is more focus on external cultural engagement and sensitivity than there is internally" (Lieutenant Colonel, Army, located at NATO Allied Command Transformation). The significant prevalence of 3C Type III may be founded on both fact and the assumption that 3C is "a topic that just seems to be accepted that is either a national responsibility, or you've already got it, and you already understand it. It is not really at the fore" (Lieutenant Colonel, Army, located at NATO Allied Command Transformation). It appears to be presumed that military personnel located at NATO Allied Command Transformation have 3C skills (Type I-II), which is why follow-up training or refresher seminars are not mandated at the headquarters. However, the latter would indeed be appreciated by some interviewees: "I think people come here with the best intentions but not so much integrate those best intentions once they get comfortable in the seat or they see no one else is doing the right thing as far as the 3Cs. That's why I say I think we need a continuum [in 3C education through seminars]."

An assessment of 3C skills concerning dimension A would be advisable, along with the accompanying, reconciled education. However, in order to implement this, NATO/ACT would need a standard or guideline.

Apart from this, the typification of 3C deduced from the literature could be verified through the accordingly coded interview excerpts. Still, it has to be noted that there is a lack of dimension C evidence to confirm this practice in a current setting for Type III. Moreover, the line between Type I and II seems to be dynamic, whereas the line between Type II and III seems static.

Part III – A Canon for Cross-Cultural Competence Skills in NATO

With the aim of establishing a canon for 3C skills based on the interviews with military personnel located at NATO Allied Command Transformation, the interviewees were asked which particular culture-general skills they considered crucial. Furthermore, skills could be deduced from the interviewees' statements that were not explicitly named, but still described and identified as vital by the interviewees and therefore labeled. The compiled list of skills will be weighed against the established canon from the literature review.

Five of six interviewees found communication to be the basis that can be differentiated into specific communication aspects.

1. Communication

Verbal Communication

» *Language skills*

This entails the ability to speak a language and verbally express oneself "clearly" (as suited to the cultural situation) in order to deliver a message successfully. This includes the sender's ability to align their use of vocabulary with the receiver's. For instance, acronyms for specific military terms might not be understood by civilians, and that needs to be taken into account in a conversation. Therefore, successful verbal communication is receiver-oriented.

Interpersonal Communication

» *Active listening, interest, empathy, perspective-taking*

A senior master sergeant describes interpersonal communication as follows:

"Language skills, engaging in the conversation, asking, having that interpersonal relationship with the other cultures. Sometimes you have to be able to communicate with them on a personal level too, so you feel comfortable" (Senior Master Sergeant, Air Force, located at NATO Allied Command Transformation).

The above statement highlights the importance of relationships, which requires more than delivering a message the way it is intended to be understood by the receiver. To maintain that interpersonal relationship, interpersonal communication skills are needed that are, in fact, culture-general skills. According to the interviewee, these skills particularly include interest and empathy, as well as active listening and perspective-taking, which is underscored by a command sergeant major:

> *(…) assertive communication takes active listening. It's the will to consider the other's side, not only mine. How to cooperate, how to work together, how to understand the other party. Assertive communication takes lots of other skills, which are already cross-cultural competencies. (Command Sergeant Major, located at NATO Allied Command Transformation)*

Thus, having cross-cultural competence and applying culture-general skills, as mentioned above, automatically implies interpersonal communication skills.

Nonverbal Communication

» ***Sending and receiving underlying messages in sign systems***

In the sense of Barthes' semiotics and Hofstede's intercultural communication theory, successful communication, in which the receiver receives the message as intended from the sender and vice versa, requires the ability to recognize signs. Those can be clothes, emblems, gestures, and facial expressions. Moreover, the person has to be able to assign them accordingly to their intended meaning in order to understand the message. The latter might require culture-specific knowledge. One interviewee explains: "(…) how to detect certain values, knowing those values of the other cultures if you attend a mission, what's the basics, so you can interpret certain things" (Staff Officer, Major, Army, located at NATO Allied Command Transformation).

Written Communication

» *Clear and simple language*

Some interviewees felt that even with the same cultural background and the same native language as the writer, written communication can be challenging to understand. Consequently, it is necessary to eliminate ambiguity, ambivalence, complexity, as well as the usage of rare terms in order to foster understanding. The second most vital skill was identified as cross-cultural awareness.

2. Cross-Cultural Awareness

The interviewees defined cross-cultural awareness as being aware of one's own culture as well as the unconscious biases that involves. Furthermore, it is the ability to recognize and acknowledge a culture different from one's own and to suspend judgment based on identified biases.

3. Acceptance

Acceptance builds upon cross-cultural awareness and is described by the interviewees as the ability to accept one's own culture as well as the other culture. Without acceptance, the differences between the cultures will become a hurdle. One of the interviewees stated that these differences are actually enrichments that can only be regarded as such if they are accepted.

4. Respect

All interviewees highlighted that mutual respect is paramount, especially since it was mentioned that some military personnel feel superior. Thus, the ability to encounter one another at eye level erases superiority, fosters equality, and facilitates communication. The interviewees underscored this skill for all three dimensions.

5. Flexibility

Flexibility was defined as the skill to recognize a situation that requires adjustments in behavior and to react accordingly in a timely fashion. This could be as simple as identifying one's audience when giving a speech and adapting the vocabulary accordingly, without effort.

6. Adaptability

Adaptability comprises the ability to be open, to change habits (which could be temporary), to get acquainted with other customs, and so on, as well as to practice them. One of the interviewees gave an example that refers to dimension A: "(…) we are not going to be able to move forward

with all these changes when people remain in the mindset of 'I'm still in my own country, I'm in my own military culture, and this and that. Everybody still wants to be in their little box and still try to make things happen" (Senior Master Sergeant, Air Force, located at NATO Allied Command Transformation).

7. Empathy/Sensitivity

Most interviewees identified empathy or sensitivity as the ability to detect "nuances" in communication and to react accordingly but also act proactively. Furthermore, it was explained that "sensitivity is, I might not take offense over something, someone else might take offense over it or sensitivity in that, I might absorb things in a certain way, then you may not absorb things in the same way" (Lieutenant Colonel, Army, located at NATO Allied Command Transformation). This statement points at mindfulness and the need to take the other's sensitivities into account.

The following skills were unique to individual interviewees.

8. Perspective-taking

One of the interviewees explained perspective-taking as "that opportunity to see what I am like or how I come across through someone else's eyes (…)" (Lieutenant Colonel, Army, located at NATO Allied Command Transformation).

9. Suspending Judgment

One of the interviewees explained that this means being able to shed your national skin and look at the situation from all angles. This implies the ability to be objective, unbiased, and therefore not judgmental.

10. Observation Skills

The ability to observe a situation – whether it be an individual interacting or signs and billboards that one can infer information from – in order to understand the cultural environment and react accordingly.

11. Suspend Cultural Generalization

The ability to go beyond a checklist of culture-specific knowledge and to individually react or engage with a person of another culture was described by one of the interviewees as the following:

"(…) you have to take into account the other side, the subculture or the person. Just because somebody is in a certain culture does not imply that they behave like this and that. Maybe he, as a person, is something

completely different. Even if you think you are in a culture, you have to be aware that it's still a person that might have a completely another opinion. Maybe he has something against his own culture" (Staff Officer, Major, Army, located at NATO Allied Command Transformation).

12. Curiosity

This skill was found to be the foundation of 3C by one of the interviewees since "if you are not interested to know the others, you are not sensitive to respect them" (Commander, Navy, located at NATO Allied Command Transformation).

13. Humility

Humility is a skill that was described as the awareness that there are numerous perspectives to see the world, and none of them are right or wrong. The interviewee explained further that people have to understand that they are not "the center of the civilization" (Commander, Navy, located at NATO Allied Command Transformation).

14. Patience/Endurance

It was stated that patience and endurance are essential to understanding other cultures and their systems. People need time to dedicate to cross-cultural competence in order to learn and practice it.

Three culture-general skills were determined to be vital for a canon in the military discourse and they overlap with the canon of the academic discourse: empathy, cross-cultural awareness, and communication skills. This overlap suggests that these skills are of great significance. Furthermore, "observation skills" and "perspective-taking" overlap with the U.S. Forces' canon as well as with "curiosity" with "interest" in the canon for the German Forces. However, this does not negate the importance of other culture-general skills, but rather underlines the complexity of cross-cultural competence and attempts to provide guidance on which skills to focus on first.

Indeed, culture-general skills were determined by some interviewees based on 3C. Others found culture-general and culture-specific skills to be intertwined. Nonetheless, the following examples illustrate the importance of culture-general skills:

> *(…) even if you know all the values of the one culture, you can't even work with that because you don't know the consequences, the results of the values, because you just know the values as a checklist, but what does that mean? (…) if you don't have that (culture-general skills), then the*

> *rest, specific things, are just going to be a waste of time. (Staff Officer, Major, Army, located at NATO Allied Command Transformation)*

A commander in the Navy states:

> *(…) the best way is to give this culture-general approach in order to be flexible and to react according to the situation. It is better than teaching particular information on the single theater because you can find yourself in so many different situations, other cultures, that it is better to have a general toolbox, where to find the answer to engage appropriately with other people. (Commander, Navy, located at NATO Allied Command Transformation)*

Part IV – Standardization of 3C

This part discusses the interviewee's statements regarding a standard in 3C for NATO. Whereas the document analysis provided strong arguments in favor of a 3C standard, such as interoperability and 3C evaluability through interorganizational alignment, divergent views can be found within the qualitative survey conducted at ACT.

On one side, a standard resulting in a STANAG (standardization agreement) for NATO members is regarded by some interviewees as first, a national responsibility, second, not implementable, and third, as interfering with the operational readiness of the Alliance. In reference to the first point, a staff officer states that:

> *NATO training of soldiers is not a NATO responsibility. That's a national responsibility. (…) NATO is responsible for the things that we need in our headquarters and that are not taught in nations. So, teaching soldiers how to shoot, work in a culture that's national. Training officers how to work on typical NATO headquarters procedures, that's a NATO problem. So, you will not find a NATO course on cultural things. That will always be a national course. (…) Standardization, again, that's not NATO, that's the nations. NATO as a headquarters, we don't standardize. (Staff Officer, Major, Army, located at NATO Allied Command Transformation)*[18]

[18] This statement is incorrect, since NATO is responsible for any personnel training that does not fall under national responsibilities. Furthermore, it is NATO's aim to standardize in order to foster interoperability.

In contrast, another interviewee argues that:

> *When a soldier is assigned to NATO, it's the nations' responsibility to make sure he's/she's ready to fulfill his/her duty. However, any additional training or requirements that are generated because of a task he's/she's been given throughout his/her execution of his/her duties in NATO are NATO's responsibility. (Senior Master Sergeant, Air Force 2, located at NATO Allied Command Transformation)*

Therefore, it is apparently not clear to interviewees where the responsibility for 3C lies, which leads to opposing opinions among the military personnel located at NATO Allied Command Transformation.

Furthermore, the implementation of a 3C standard is considered unachievable because every NATO member would have to agree to a standard. A staff officer argues that even if a standard would be achieved,

> *(…) this is an agreement, and now the nations have to decide whether they are going to implement it or not. Even a standard, they can say, I am not going to implement this, or I only implement that and those paragraphs. Even if they don't do it, there is no police around saying, 'oh, you didn't do it, now you have to pay a fee'. (Staff Officer, Major, Army, located at NATO Allied Command Transformation)*

A standard is a guideline, a consensus on how things are run in order to ensure consistency and comparability. In NATO, a STANAG is agreed on by the military committee, which comprises representatives of all 30 member states. The STANAG is used as a tool of implementation for kinetic and non-kinetic military activities, and 3C would fall under non-kinetic military activities. Furthermore, a STANAG guides the implementation for appropriation of capabilities through the NATO Defence Planning Process (NDPP) (J. Paxton, personal communication, March 17, 2021). The NDDP "provide[s] a framework within which national and Alliance defence planning activities can be harmonised to enable Allies to provide the required forces and capabilities in the most effective way" (NATO, 2018a).

If the member states do not comply with the established standards, it invalidates their existence. Consequently, standards have to be maintained and implemented. Furthermore, a standard requires resources. The interviewee assumes that due to the high costs of implementing NATO standards, some member states might agree at first and then claim to imple-

ment them over time, which can be, however, indefinite: "(…) but if you want NATO standards, it's going to cost more. They are going to say, 'oh no, leave those standards, and later we will adapt' and so on" (Staff Officer, Major, Army, located at NATO Allied Command Transformation). Moreover, he compares the implementation of such a standard with the usage of the one of the operational languages of NATO.

"It's going to be something like the knowledge of English[19]. The operational language of NATO. All officers and most of the NCOs have to be able to speak English. I challenge you to go into an operation (…)" (Staff Officer, Major, Army, located at NATO Allied Command Transformation). He makes a valid point that the level of proficiency in English varies vastly, which has been criticized in the past by Mark Crossey (2005).

This rather pessimistic view certainly underscores that standards are vital, and an element of control is needed to ensure the implementation. Notwithstanding the above, the same interviewee believes that another factor impacts the implementation of a 3C standard, that fact that the definition of cross-cultural awareness varies from individual to individual: "(…) of course, cultural awareness for an American is completely different than for a Belgian or for Frenchman, it depends on your own culture. So having a definition, maybe, but what would we do with it?" (Staff Officer, Major, Army, located at NATO Allied Command Transformation), which is why NATO needs a standard, including definitions for the particular skills, in order to establish common ground and avoid misconceptions. A similar concern is raised by a Navy commander: "(…) each nation has its way to deal with this matter and they are quite different from each other, so it's difficult to build a standard" (Commander, Navy, located at NATO Allied Command Transformation).

Moreover, the interviewee is in favor of the idea that 3C education has to take place in the broader society: "(…) it (3C education) is not just limited to the military. It is something that has to be perceived in all societies, not just on the military side. It is important in school and research, in the market, so it is a general issue not only a military one" (Commander, Navy, located at NATO Allied Command Transformation).

Furthermore, the interviewee points out that since 3C education has to be taught in society, and the military is reflecting that, further 3C training is not necessarily needed in the military. Undoubtedly, 3C is ideally immanent to society since it is germane to every facet of life. However,

[19] Official NATO languages are English and French.

recent events such as the killing of racial and ethnic minorities in the U.S. have proven that society has not accomplished that task yet. Education is the cornerstone of 3C and has to be implemented in theory and practice. Institutions such as military academies thus need to implement 3C skills and knowledge now rather than waiting for generations to come that might have cross-cultural competence in order to ensure that military personnel are on an appropriate and comparable international level of 3C for the military today. NATO cannot be an exception.

Aside from that, some interviewees raised concerns regarding NATO's operational readiness if a 3C standard would be implemented. This additional criterion could limit the force in terms of its available military personnel:

> *(…) if you say you need this [standard] before you can go on an operation, that is going to be an extreme burden on the soldiers, meaning less potential soldiers are going into operations, and the number of military personnel goes down. I'm not sure if that is going to be an advantage. Although I agree that you need cultural competence, that's going to limit. (Staff Officer, Major, Army, located at NATO Allied Command Transformation)*

The interviewee is suggesting that a NATO standard in 3C would not be beneficial. Nonetheless, several non-kinetic requirements are in place for national pre-deployment training (J. Paxton, personal communication, March 17, 2021). Here, the consideration of "gender" partially overlaps with 3C.

On the other hand, a 3C standard is considered to foster equality, interoperability, effectiveness, confidence and competence in behaving sensibly and assertively, and evaluability in the lessons learned process.

The aspect of equality becomes evident in the numerous statements of interviewees propounding that as soon as one nation is in the majority, their culture prevails. For example, one of the interviewees states that it is either "the dominance of certain nations (that hinders a standard)" or "generally, the culture [that] is set by the leader you work for" (Lieutenant Colonel, Army, located at NATO Allied Command Transformation). Furthermore, he highlights that "The introduction into ACT, and other places, does not provide enough emphasis on the cultural challenge" (Lieutenant Colonel, Army, located at NATO Allied Command Transformation). In his view, it is necessary to agree on terms and definitions as well as what they mean, which leads to 3C benefiting interoperability. That 3C fosters interopera-

bility in missions abroad (dimensions B and C) is underscored in multiple statements, such as the following:

> *Now, if you're doing a NATO operation and you're having a NATO standardization agreement, that means whatever you're doing in that arena needs to be matched against that STANAG. So by all means, yes, I think it would be an excellent thing to have a reference. Because right now, a lot of the stuff is made up as it goes as well as common sense, and it's based on national guidelines; like I said earlier, it depends on what nation is planning any given operation. (Senior Master Sergeant, Air Force 2, located at NATO Allied Command Transformation)*

Notwithstanding this, the significance of 3C for dimension A has been demonstrated in this paper. A command sergeant major underscores it: "(…) the key question is interoperability and also how we respect each other. We are a multicultural organization. That means we are not only multinational but even our services, branches have their own cultures, so it applies to every dimension" (Command Sergeant Major, Army, located at NATO Allied Command Transformation). However, the interviewee asserts that NATO has "no common way how to do business" with regard to 3C (Command Sergeant Major, Army, located at NATO Allied Command Transformation), thereby resulting in a lack of efficiency, which he explains as follows:

> *(…) the integration process (of newcomers) is very long. When they come here, it takes half a year to learn how to operate here (ACT) because it is difficult to get a common understanding of NATO and cross-cultural competencies. First, we have to develop relations; otherwise, we have no understanding. (…)*
> *It means that we receive good quality people from the countries, but we cannot use their good quality work for sometimes more than six months. It's not only the culture, it's about other data issues as well, but from my point of view, this keeps us a little away from being effective all the time. (…) So if we have a NATO way, we can identify competencies, we can prepare people for that. (Command Sergeant Major, Army, located at NATO Allied Command Transformation).*

Here, the interviewee explicitly calls for NATO to define its values in reference to 3C, which he believes all NATO member states should share

since they operate as an Alliance. Education for military personnel would be based on these "NATO values." Ideally, every individual arriving at one of NATO's headquarters would possess these values in order to be time efficient when considering the three-to-four-year turnaround.

That education and training are crucial is stressed by another interviewee: "(…) what you need to do with these (3C) courses is, you need to equalize the shortfalls from whatever the nation's people are sending you, so whatever their education has covered, you're filling the gaps" (Senior Master Sergeant, Air Force 2, located at NATO Allied Command Transformation). Otherwise, the different perceptions or even the lack of them will cause difficulties, according to the Army command sergeant major. In fact, it gives rise to a lack of confidence and competence in behaving sensibly and assertively in cross-cultural encounters. A good illustration of the above is the statement by an Air Force senior master sergeant relating to military personnel arriving at the ACT headquarters in Norfolk:

> *(…) NATO is in different countries, so you have to understand the country that you're in and the people you are going to be working with. And they do not prepare people. Because I have picked up people from the airport and they are just like 'I don't know what to do. Where am I?' Some of them just had a 48-hour notice coming here because some countries do not prepare or even make sure they have sponsorship as well, so it's one of those works in progress because they say you are still military-minded, in the sense of all you have to do make it happen. You adapt and overcome, adapt, and overcome. I think every country thinks that about everything [laughing]. (Senior Master Sergeant, Air Force, located at NATO Allied Command Transformation)*

The described "learning by doing" mentality appears to be relatively common, particularly in dimension A, since the focus on culture-specific skills and knowledge for dimension C neglects the education in culture-general skills. A standard would instead provide each individual with the necessary confidence and competence to behave sensibly and assertively, as one of the interviewees substantiates: "And if you point things out, then most of the time you get brushed off because there is no standard. No vehicle can transport what you're saying or that gives [backup] to what you're going up against" (Senior Master Sergeant, Air Force 2, located at NATO Allied Command Transformation).

Moreover, cultural generalizations and the assumption that military personnel in NATO member states are similar benefit the sentiment that 3C is redundant for dimension A, which is evident in this excerpt:

> *We have kind of a common culture together. We know we are long term allies, so we can accept some difficulties that we might have with each other. For example, in politics, it happens that countries' politics are not always aligned with each other, but we can accept this. We know that we are working for a long-term commitment. So we are not insisting on a temporary political issue. (Commander, Navy, located at NATO Allied Command Transformation)*

Considering the constant growth of the Alliance, another interviewee remarks that:

> *NATO is starting to branch out, and so if you branch out, you need to make sure that you branch it out in a way that everybody can understand what is going to happen with me working with certain cultures. And I think that would kind of help the connection with people. Because if people can't connect, you cannot get anything done. (Senior Master Sergeant, Air Force, located at NATO Allied Command Transformation)*

The above excerpt emphasizes building and maintaining relationships that have been addressed before, and also highlights the fact that relationships are essential for a good cooperation.

Finally, the last aspect that became evident throughout the interviews is the opportunity to evaluate 3C if a standard is established and implemented:

> *The question that I always have is the implementation because I can almost guarantee that there is a bunch of debriefing and a bunch of data collecting going on, but a lot of that is not being implemented because there is no standardization. There is no standard, like in the 3C case, there is no standard that we can fall back on. (Senior Master Sergeant Air Force 2, located at NATO Allied Command Transformation)*

Obviously, the data collection and evaluation process, which is primarily carried out in the Joint Analysis and Lessons Learned Centre (JALLC) in

Portugal, could benefit from the comparability once a standard is in place. As a result, it would be possible to analyze the significance of specific 3C skills as well as determine which skills could be improved. This correlates with Greene Sands' assessment of the U.S. Forces theory and practice of 3C, which asserts that the lack of interorganizational alignment impedes the evaluation of 3C.

Based on the above, individual recognition of every military personnel and/or the improvement of particular 3C skills could be reflected in reports, as one of the interviewees suggests:

> *I would really like to see the recognition of people who demonstrate good cross-cultural competence and that to be reflected in NATO standard performance reports. Most military people get a sheet of paper that tells you how well you've done, a bit like a school report, and you get it, and you go 'ahh'. I would argue that as an organization, what we should be doing is reaching out to all the nations, bringing people in and those that demonstrate very good and extensive cross-cultural competence we should be bringing back because some nations send their very best officers and other nations less. If we keep sending people who may not be entirely suited to a multinational, multicultural environment, then the organization itself will suffer. (…) I don't think to the best of my knowledge that we do much assessment on people's cultural ability or cultural competence skills. (Lieutenant Colonel, Army, located at NATO Allied Command Transformation)*

Therefore, the assessment of 3C would be both appreciated by military personnel and the headquarters itself since it would benefit its effectiveness and efficiency. However, as explained in the document analysis, 3C education decreases when the operation tempo increases. This can be evidenced in the conducted interviews as well:

> *(…) many things go in phases. So if you have a high OP tempo (operation tempo), I'm not trying to belittle this, but a lot of the quote-unquote 'little projects' like that get put over to the sideline. (…) Unless there is a need for it, people will not touch anything that creates extra work, in all honesty. (Senior Master Sergeant, Air Force, located at NATO Allied Command Transformation)*

In summary, there are opposing views among NATO's military personnel on how to deal with 3C; however, all of the interviewees view 3C as vital.

6.2.2.b United States Armed Forces – USCENTCOM

In the following, selected excerpts from the interviews with the U.S. Forces will be analyzed and coded utilizing the same method applied for the initial interviews.

The views expressed in the document are those of the author and the individuals cited; they do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Department of Defense or its components.

Part I – Dimensions of Cross-Cultural Competence

Dimension A – Cross-Cultural Competence and U.S. Forces internally
Example: United States Central Command

The survey of the U.S. military personnel was conducted with the support of the United States Central Command (USCENTCOM), based in Tampa, Florida. The mission of the Command is to "direct and enable military operations and activities with allies and partners to increase regional security and stability in support of enduring U.S. interests" (USCENTCOM, 2021). To achieve this mission, military personnel from all branches of the U.S. Forces work jointly at this location. Furthermore, joint exercises, for example, military exercises with all branches of the U.S. Services, such as the U.S. Air Force and U.S. Army, aim to build "warfighting capabilities" (USCENTCOM, 2021). The need for these exercises is outlined by a brigadier general in the U.S. Air Force:

> *The U.S. Forces, the Army, and the way we fight our nation's wars now, you are not ever going to go to a place where you won't be supported by some other service. And all of these will come together at what we would call a CT node, a command and control node somewhere, some command hosts it. When the leadership is operating and we need to be able to communicate with all these services, as I'm applying [3C] to the joint military context, it's mostly about understanding other people's rank, terminology, and so on. (Brigadier General U.S. Air Force)*

This statement highlights the correlation between 3C and interoperability.

In addition, another interviewee emphasizes that beyond knowing rank structures and branch-specific terminologies, values and objectives can also differ from service to service:

> *Within the U.S. Forces one hundred percent, cross-cultural understanding of what they value, their ethos, what drives them is a huge problem, and it will be. Even just cross-culturally in the United States, the U.S. is a melting pot; it's built on immigration. (…) It's a problem across our services that we need to keep working towards and then individually just the melting pot of the U.S. (Lieutenant Commander U.S. Navy)*

Here, 3C is underlined as a crucial competence for the U.S. Forces internally in order to ensure cross-cultural understanding between the subcultures of the branches, for instance, Army culture compared to Marine Corps culture, but also the culture that an individual brings into the organization. However, these are generalizations, of course, and subcultures exist even within the military branches. This can be demonstrated by the following statement: "[the] culture inside the Army is also varying among most branches. So we had culture clashes in our own house" (Lieutenant Colonel U.S. Army). That there is a culture marked by tradition and history in the military branches which instills pride can be corroborated by a statement from a U.S. Marine:

> *There's definitely a culture in the Marine Corps that everyone thinks theirs is the best, but the Marines know theirs is the best [laughing]. There is a history in the Marine Corps. (…) One thing that is very Marine Corps-specific is that we always gather every year on the Marine's birthday. (…) On November 10th, we always celebrate our birthday, and every Marine will say 'happy birthday Marine', (…) and we celebrate the history of the Marine Corps in certain battles and certain people that received a Medal of Honor and things along those lines and it's something that we're proud to be a part of. My personal opinion, I don't see the other services have the rich legacy that the Marine Corps holds. (…) and then I take that a step further, why we say we're always the best is because we can be deployed in every aspect of operation, from land, sea, and air, and we just work with what little we have to accomplish a lot.*

Here, the indicated potential for superior thought structures and actions would call for 3C training. A member of the U.S. Navy military confirms that members of the different military branches focus on culture-defining characteristics for each branch:

> *(…) due to history of the service and what we value and these different services value, I mean there's more similar than there is different but we like to zero in on those differences and really bring those forefront because it's certainly a moment or matter of pride for the organizations that 'oh we do this and you don't do that, you have your idiots and we got it figured out'. Similar to a sibling rivalry or like a more professional sports rivalry. We got this figured out even though we're doing the same thing as in 'we're just doing it better'. (Lieutenant Commander U.S. Navy 2)*

Accordingly, the same interviewee points out that:

> *(…) being able to understand how the Army sees things and how the Marines see things and how that leadership will see and view different things is critical help. You understand how you can best serve. For instance, I worked for a Marine right now, several Marines, several levels, so understanding how that leader's culture shaped them, and what is going to be an issue to that person helps me better support that leadership. (Lieutenant Commander U.S. Navy 2)*

The above statement illustrates that 3C positively impacts effectiveness, efficiency, and interoperability. However, the culture-general skill of "cross-cultural awareness" is vital to sense these cultural differences in order to act accordingly. An excerpt from one of the interviews indicates that the interviewee appears somewhat unaware in this regard:

> *I would just categorize as U.S. Forces in general. (…) we all play a different role, but in the end, it's all the same mission and there's opportunities for interaction no matter where you are because as joint, you can come to any branch and operate as a staff member in that role regardless of your service, your service component. (Major U.S. Marine Corps)*

Indeed, military personnel must be able to work "joint". 3C plays a role in how efficient the transition from one branch to the other is and how

effectively the work can be carried out, a fact which is supported by the responses from the majority of interviewees.

An example of successfully applying 3C, in particular Type II, was provided by a brigadier general who addressed the "orchestration" of the latest National Defense Strategy. According to the interviewee, the leadership had been sensitive and empathetic as well as assertive in communicating the aim of the new strategy to the involved parties, including leadership personnel from all the U.S. military branches, and thus generated the necessary buy-in to write and implement the strategy (Brigadier General U.S. Air Force).

However, a fundamental lack of 3C can be seen when it comes to sexism and racial inequalities within the U.S. Forces. In recent years, incidents within the U.S. Forces such as the "Marine photo scandal" (see Cox, 2017) demonstrated a crucial gap in this skill set. In a private Facebook group named "Marines United," nude photos as well as the ranking and sometimes names of female fellow Marines, active duty and retired, were posted to the 30,000-member audience (see Cox, 2017). As the interviewee recounts:

> *(…) social media sites and websites ranking women in terms of who they've interacted with and postings of a sexual nature, a lot of comments were made. So there is a wide-range sweeping investigation behind how the Marines Corps was handling that situation (…) on these postings, [they talked about] whether they thought that [the women] were attractive enough. They would say that, for instance, so and so is attractive or I had 'special' relations with so and so and then post that on the social media sites. Very unprofessional. (Major U.S. Marine Corps)*

A lack of respect for and acceptance of female fellow Marines as well as an absence of empathy and sensitivity becomes preponderant in the case described above. As the *New York Times* reports, the U.S. Marine Corps has 16,650 women Marines in its military branch, commensurate to 9 percent of the 185,000 Marines in total (Gibbons-Neff, 2020). The Marine Corps is the military branch with the lowest proportion of women military personnel (Gibbons-Neff, 2020). This data indicates that the predominantly male "U.S. Marine culture" still has a major conflict with women entering its culture and thus becoming a part of shaping it in the future. However, it also has to be taken into consideration that the 30,000 Marines engaged in that particular group on social media would only ac-

count for about 20 percent of male Marines if they were all active-duty personnel. The investigation by the Naval Criminal Investigative Service found that 89 individuals in the Facebook group were potentially involved in the postings, 67 of whom were active-duty or reserve Marines at the time (Browne, 2017). A year after the scandal, 55 members of the Marines Corps were identified as being involved in the incident, seven Marines were court-martialed, six were expelled, and 42 received minor punishments such as rank degradation or temporary salary cuts. Consequently, none of these individuals are in a command position now (PBS News Hour, 2008). Furthermore, interviews with former male U.S. Marines showed that some drill instructors were instilling misogyny in the junior military personnel (PBS News Hour, 2008). General Robert Neller, the former Commandant of the U.S. Marine Corps, stated in a TV interview that he had not been aware of the situation (PBS News Hour, 2008). This example demonstrates a crucial lack of cross-cultural competence at the higher leadership levels. In turn, this case underscores the need for 3C to be taught to military personnel early on, right when they enter the service. Junior military personnel should go through a basic training in 3C, as should the instructors. However, 3C needs to be exemplified and mediated from leadership down to the subordinate levels as well.

In general, the existence of sexism and racism within the Forces was confirmed by most interviewees to varying degrees. Some female military personnel felt favored because of their gender (Lieutenant Colonel U.S. Army). One interviewee additionally stressed at the same time that "women in leadership will just take some time to be respected, culturally" with reference to the Army (Lieutenant Colonel U.S. Army). This statement highlights that sexism is a general problem within the U.S. Forces and not limited to one service, branch, or department.

With regard to the issue of racism, when the active military personnel were asked whether racism exists within the U.S. Forces, most answered that they thought it did. Only one interviewee, who had already retired in 2015 in the rank of Air Force lieutenant colonel and was thus not part of the interview analysis, claimed that racism did not exist within the military. On the contrary, a report on racial disparities in the Air Force published in December 2020 revealed differences between Black and White military personnel in the Air Force (see Air Force, 2020). One of the most compelling findings was that "Black airmen are more likely to face disciplinary action than their White peers. Specifically, Black service members

were 74% more likely to receive Article 15s[20] and 60% more likely to face courts-martial than White service members" (Air Force, 2020, 6). The report stated that the "data alone cannot provide insight on the cause of the racial disparity in Air Force discipline, and further analysis is required" (Air Force, 2020, p. 6). In addition, the review of law enforcement did not indicate any racial bias. However, the report showed that Black military personnel in the Air Force believe that racial bias exists there, particularly in the discipline and developmental opportunity processes (Air Force, 2020, p. 6). Furthermore, the report emphasized that although racial disparities had been confirmed, it did not necessarily correlate with racial bias and racism (Air Force, 2020, p. 6). Nevertheless, racism has been witnessed by some of the interviewees: "I've seen racism. (…) What I saw was a group within the Navy, a cultural group, an ethnic group, an Asian Pacific Islander group, who were very exclusive and racist to anybody outside of that (…)" (Lieutenant Commander Navy 2).

To dismantle stereotypes, foster communication and an open mindset, cross-cultural competence can be used to train military personnel for the purpose of preventing racism. An interviewee states: "(…) here is the benefit to cross-cultural competency, to help stem back and make sure that you're being aware of when you're having those thoughts of something that could be seen as unfair or sexist or racist. I think the soft self-realization, that's the hardest part (…)" (Lieutenant Commander Navy 2).

Findings

Current and future military assignments will require interagency, coalition, and joint work. Numerous organizational cultures will therefore be involved. These cultures contain cultures within themselves, for example, the U.S. Forces has a Navy culture and an Army culture, whereas these branches in turn have varying cultures from branch to branch along with each individual adding their own culture. 3C is thus an omnipresent topic. Furthermore, 3C was found to be having an impact on the interoperability of the Forces as well as the internal effectiveness and efficiency. In addition, the existence of particular cultures in the different services partially determined superiority structures as well as an exclusive concept of culture, as highlighted in relation to Hofstede's definition of culture.

[20] Article 15 incidents that do not require judicial hearings can be handled by the commander, who decides whether or not the individual is guilty and receives punishment.

Only members who agreed on individuals trying to enter that particular culture were accepted, and that became evident for women in the Marine Corps. Sexism within the U.S. Forces could thus be identified. This underscores the importance of culture-general skills in this regard, which include acceptance, openness, respect, and empathy. Such skills should be taught right from when military personnel start their career as well as exemplified and mediated by the leadership. Lastly, racism plays a role in the U.S. Forces as well, and can be addressed through 3C training and prevented by applying culture-general skills such as cross-cultural awareness and suspension of judgement in order to avoid bias.

Dimension B – 3C in multicultural NATO contingents while on a mission/training exercise abroad/3C and U.S. Central Command with regard to interaction with coalition partners (NATO)

Dimension B deals with U.S. military personnel interacting with coalition partners such as NATO.

Aside from 3C being a crucial component for joint work between the various U.S. military branches at USCENTCOM, 3C plays a significant role in communicating objectives and building relationships in coalition meetings. The interdependence of the following aspects within the context of 3C is emphasized by a brigadier general in the Air Force:

> *Nothing is going to get done ultimately without full buy-in. So if that's the case then it just shows you how it's absolutely vital to have this cross-cultural competency from an international perspective and so I would just take this assertion further and say nothing is going to be done in this world that doesn't involve a coalition, just as no mission will be executed without the interagency, so civilian agencies and military, and then in the military context, no mission will be executed without it being joint [the support of the other services]. (Brigadier General U.S. Air Force)*

Beyond planning exercises, USCENTCOM deals with security assistance, combined training and education, and humanitarian aid, among others. The official website states: "This level of activity mandates maintaining access to facilities and building strong relationships with regional leaders" (USCENTCOM, 2021). Whereas the majority of interviewees highlighted the significance of 3C for the coalition environment, only two perceived 3C as a priority at USCENTCOM. A lieutenant commander in the Navy

stated that "it is one of our highest, if not our highest priority. That's how I feel. And it's shown every day, even during these Covid-times, that we just continue to try to meet up, keep working together [in coalition exercises]" (Lieutenant Commander U.S. Navy). Moreover, the interviewee highlights that "at CENTCOM our whole purpose is partnership and relationship building, exercising, making a scenario 'hey what will we do if this was the problem, if this was the situation' and coming together and making solutions" (Lieutenant Commander U.S. Navy). In addition, the interviewee mentioned voluntary classes dealing with 3C. However, the nature of the coursework is predominantly culture-specific and focuses on the history of a particular country, as the interviewee recounted.

Also highlighting the priority of 3C, a lieutenant colonel in the Army states that "in our office (…) so everything we do is really embedded in a cultural sensitivity" (Lieutenant Colonel U.S. Army). To illustrate that cultural sensitivity, the interviewee provides an example:

> *We have several classified exercises such as 'Eager Lion' where I work with Jordan. I think in 2019 we had forty-two countries participate. Big demonstration of capabilities, military strength, working together, and again in a low stress environment just to make sure that it's good to practice, it's good to humanize everybody we work with, have an appreciation of culture. So I think with what we do, it's very, very, very culturally sensitive because we're not forcing U.S. objectives on anybody." (Lieutenant Colonel U.S. Army).*

The latter part of the statement, to not "force U.S. objectives on anybody," appears to be a balancing act when exercises become missions, as a brigadier general points out:

> *(…) it was a U.S.-led coalition or the most, as we say, skin in the game, the most deputy, the most resources, they were probably U.S. resources. It's still a coalition, but as the American in the room, you are kind of in a position of more influence, more authority because of that, but still we are going to have a more successful operation if you are bringing people together as best as possible. So it's okay sometimes to state your claim on something, to stand your ground to tell a coalition environment 'look fellas, this is where we are going to do business, at the end of the day'. But for the most part, I think that young leaders, in particular, will bail out early on that leadership challenge*

> *and will not want to put in the hard work that is to get the entire coalition on board. (Brigadier General U. S. Air Force)*

Regardless of the positive sentiment toward 3C detected in the majority of the interviews, the importance of 3C training for personnel at USCENTCOM becomes evident in the bias against NATO members found in statements such as the following: "So there are some [NATO members] that naturally don't necessarily like Americans," which can affect relationships and thus effectiveness (Lieutenant Colonel U.S. Army). Moreover, the need for cross-cultural awareness, self-reflection, and suspending cultural generalization is addressed by the same interviewee:

> *NATO partners, we make the presumption in America, I say we and I'm going to generalize, that everybody here that would make the comparison that because they speak English such as the UK, Canada, they speak English, so we're the same. I had a general officer from the UK come and talk about that we're not the same. He said the Canadian citizens are very different, Americans are different, English are different, we're all very different. I thought 'well yeah but how different are we?' I lived in Buffalo. Canadian border is right across the street. Lots of Canadian friends, so I think NATO partners are awesome to work with and am going in with a kind of respect for how we're different. (Lieutenant Colonel U. S. Army)*

Notably, this self-reflective statement only refers to the native English speaking NATO member states, although the majority of NATO members are European and thus more diverse in their use of language. However, the interviewee pointed out the crucial aspect that even if individuals share the same language, they do not necessarily have the same cultural background, thus illustrating that language is not automatically an indicator for a particular culture. This awareness becomes vital, for instance, when individuals make jokes in such a culturally-distinct manner that it is predominantly only encoded by individuals sharing the same cultural background:

> *So there were a couple of times that my team was interacting with NATO partners and they didn't quite understand that we were just having a little fun whereas they almost took it seriously. That could have gone very bad but fortunately, a chief knew better and she helped them navigate through that. (Major U. S. Army)*

The above excerpt emphasizes the need for 3C in order to prevent conflicts and positively affect relationships.

On the contrary, a major in the Marine Corps believes that 3C was neither a benefit nor a disadvantage to the mission since the interviewee does not consider 3C critical to fulfilling an assignment:

> *(…) in a NATO coalition partnership in Afghanistan, when I was there, a few years back. (…) that mission we were operating with particularly the Brits. We had different nations accomplishing a mission, but did it take a cultural understanding to accomplish that mission? No, I don't think it did because it was the standard in the field that you're in that we knew how to work together, if that makes any sense. It didn't hinder the mission nor did it enhance it because we did or did not understand someone's culture. There was a different standard, if that makes any sense. (Major U.S. Marine Corps)*

The interviewee is a pilot and indeed, the aviation branch has a standard that is valid internationally. However, the encounter between a woman pilot with Indian[21] military personnel required tolerance and flexibility when the female captain was working on an exercise: "I happened to fly a couple of times on a 'search and rescue' and we were working with Indian aircraft and maybe they might not respond to me, but they responded to my male copilot" (Lieutenant Commander U.S. Navy). Despite this, the interviewee reported that after the encounter she felt that the Indian pilots seemed to be willing to work with her again and that she hopes these encounters foster trust between female and male pilots.

Another example provided by a lieutenant colonel while working on an exercise in the NATO partner country Kuwait indicates cultural ignorance, and a lack of sensitivity, empathy, and cross-cultural awareness: "(…) even my boss went in and insulted the Kuwaitis by saying well if you guys could work a longer workday, you could get more done" (Lieutenant Colonel U.S. Army). Working at a pace that is not familiar can be frustrating on both sides. The expectations by the individual used to accomplishing tasks faster remain unfulfilled, whereas the other person might feel rushed and pressured. It is crucial in this case to be cross-culturally aware, understand that there could be a different work ethos, and also practice tolerance of ambiguity, which is a key skill needed to cope with

[21] India is considered a "major non-NATO ally" because it is neither a member nor a partner of the alliance but is in a partnership with the U.S.

the situation and diffuse any frustration. Another interviewee underscores the foregoing:

> *(…) kind of really realize that all it takes is a little bit of effort and understanding how people work. What their command structure is and really the cool thing is that we can all learn how to do that and build this force together. Usually, there is nothing that we can't do, like a worldly partnership perspective. It's mostly taking the time and it takes time to learn how others are. It's a little frustrating, sometimes there's growing pains but it's worth it in the end. (Lieutenant Commander U. S. Navy)*

Aside from that, some interview excerpts show a tendency towards a superiority-inferiority constellation:

> *(…) we as a U. S. military are more inclined to acquiesce to our partners such as NATO partners and play to their speed. OK, this is how you guys do it, is this is what you're comfortable with, alright we will start there. Maybe they're not as proficient in something that you are or something like that. (Lieutenant Commander U. S. Navy 2)*

Who determines what is "proficient" or "too slow?" This correlates with the characteristics of a hegemon as well as postcolonial structures.

Findings

USCENTCOM's objective is to build relationships and trust with local individuals in order to secure the defined goals in the "area of responsibility." In this context, some excerpts from the interviews indicated a superiority-inferiority approach, whereby the U.S. took on the superior role. Moreover, cultural bias, generalization, and stereotyping between U.S. military personnel and coalition partners such as NATO could be identified on both sides. 3C was thus found to be significant for coalitions, in particular for communicating objectives and building relationships. Here, culture-general skills were especially addressed. Notably, the interviewee with the highest rank reinforced their importance, while it was expressed that younger leadership personnel tend to value 3C and culture-general skills less. This correlated with the finding that some interviewees highly value 3C and consider it pivotal to be effective in dimension B, while others view it as an optional enhancer and "not mission-critical." The

main reason for the latter was identified by an interviewee as a universal military standard for certain positions which would void the need for 3C. Furthermore, the interviews indicated that if there is 3C training, culture-specific education is targeted as well as some cultural awareness training.

Dimension C – 3C and NATO missions abroad – regarding interaction with the local population

In correlation with dimension B and the concept of superiority and inferiority, a U.S. Air Force brigadier general highlights the risk of thinking superiorly:

> *One of the things that we know from the intelligence community is that we have the tendency to, I think the term that they use is 'mirror image', to look at others and prescribe or project our own reasons for doing things onto them and not really understand that culturally. They might be doing different things for different reasons. I have to say, operationally, I've always been very critical when people look at what an adversary is doing and say 'oh, I can't believe they are doing that. How dumb. Why would they do that?' Well just because they don't do it like you doesn't mean that they don't have a good reason for doing it. So there is a danger of not being in tune with somebody else's or an adversary's motivation just as there is a danger in not understanding the people that are on your side and their motivations, you know, the coalition. (Brigadier General U. S. Air Force)*

The excerpt above outlines the problem of applying one's value system or conception of the world on the other, which can lead to misunderstandings and conflicts or disadvantages in a combat scenario. It further illustrates an assumption of having the superior value system in comparison to the counterpart. Additionally, as the interviewee explains, this applies to both dimensions B and C but can evidently be applied to dimension A as well. To overcome such ethnocentric behavior, 3C is vital in order to enable the individual to be cross-culturally aware, self-reflect, suspend judgment, and avoid bias. However, one interviewee emphasizes the difficulty of having an open mind when deployed abroad, as illustrated in an experience from the ISAF mission in Afghanistan: "The U.S. military brings everything, right? We bring the base, we bring the U.S. to whatever we go to, and we don't allow our service members to get into those cultures and experience

that. It's just not what we do, we are going to find a way to bring the U.S. mindset" (Lieutenant Commander U.S. Navy 2).

Furthermore, in dimension C, 3C Type I appears to be occasionally considered an obstacle instead of a benefit:

> *We are always trying, within the context of Afghanistan, to be incredibly respectful to the Afghan Pashtuns, wherever you're operating, but you are also confined because there's sometimes, for instance, an operational element to whatever you want to respect is the thing that's just in the way. It's like OK, now we have to weigh. (Lieutenant Commander U. S. Navy 2)*

It has been repeatedly expressed that 3C is a balancing act, as indicated in the statement above. However, 3C is not given the benefit of the doubt since "sometimes it [3C] gets kind of moved past because the objective was deemed to be more important" (Lieutenant Commander U.S. Navy 2). According to the interviewee, other factors impacting 3C are time and space: "And so in combat you don't always have the time, space, and resources to take it into such deep consideration and that's when things get ugly. (…) but the fact that it's being debated and deliberated shows that it's still brought into the operational planning" (Lieutenant Commander U.S. Navy 2). Another interviewee confirms that 3C is an "operational variable" that can be a constraint:

> *It's called operational variables, and it considers the political, military, etc., many variables of the culture we are operating in that could influence or impact the mission. (…) it potentially builds constraints in geo operation either dictated by headquarters or determined by your intel [intelligence] team such as 'hey, this probably wouldn't make sense to do because you are going to aggravate the entire neighborhood and you are going to turn the people against you. (Major U. S. Army)*

The following example provided by an Army lieutenant colonel stresses the significance of 3C for these "operational variables":

> *The Frenchman [French military personnel], this is why I'm bringing him up. He told me a story. He was in a part of Africa. I think it was Congo where he had worked with the indigenous population. The U. S. was going through leadership changeover and this young man, he's a major, had worked really hard to establish this relation-*

> *ship with this leader locally. So he introduced the U.S. guy, who had his sunglasses on and gloves on and the U.S. guy refused to take his sunglasses off or his glove off because he said 'I don't know what this guy has. I don't want to get sick.' So he did that formal introduction and the French major said 'He's ruined the whole operation. The [local leader] lost trust for us, he did not like that guy, all because of a simple gesture to shake his hand and to make eye contact, which seems very easy.' And the major had explained this to him, and he decided that he didn't want to take it off. (Lieutenant Colonel U.S. Army)*

In fact, culture-general skills such as respect, empathy, suspending judgement, avoiding bias, interest, and openness are crucial in scenarios such as those mentioned above. The same interviewee underlines the significance of these skills by highlighting the difference between militaries and civilians: "I work with [Kuwaiti] militaries. It's very different from working with civilians in Kuwait, for example" (Lieutenant Colonel U.S. Army), which requires flexibility and adaptability.

Evidently, the interviewees above were in extensive contact with individuals with cultural backgrounds different from their own, and thus 3C could be deemed vital. However, there are positions that might require less 3C than others. As one interviewee states, 3C would be an enhancer for his position as a pilot but would not be mission-critical, and therefore not necessary. The interviewee explained that he had no contact with the local population in the country of deployment. When asked whether there were locals on the base, the interviewee explained:

> *There was a little bit [of interaction on the local base in Afghanistan], but did it take something to understand the culture to accomplish the mission then the answer would be no. It's a nice-to-have because they come onto the base to serve the food or open a bazaar for the U.S. personnel to buy the local merchandise. Yes, I would want to make sure that I stuck out my left hand. But did it take something cross-culturally to understand them to adhere to my will to purchase XYZ. (Major U.S. Marine Corps)*

Obviously, 3C appears to be of less importance in the above statement. Nevertheless, 3C should be applied holistically since the experiences and interactions that the locals have with U.S. military personnel will be transmitted to their families, neighbors, and village, city, or region, for example. One bad impression, one incident can indeed impact an entire mission.

Therefore, the following statement by a brigadier general should be emphasized: "(…) to be effective, I have to have this competency [3C] in the internal and the external" (Brigadier General U.S. Forces).

Findings

It became evident that there are opposing views on the significance of 3C in dimension C. Despite this, 3C is considered an "operational variable" because its impact is vital, according to one interviewee in particular. The extent to which 3C will be taken into account then depends on resources such as time and space, but also leadership. Thus, although 3C might be advisable, it is still not applied everywhere it could be. In this respect, one interviewee understood 3C as a "nice-to-have" rather than a necessity or tool. Two interviewees found that 3C could be tailored based on the needs of the position. It is debatable whether tailored 3C is the solution. Clearly, the collected data indicates that a baseline or standard in 3C for all military personnel is preferable in order to ensure the same starting point for everyone, foster comparability and thus facilitates improvement. Moreover, as individuals progress in their professional careers, further 3C training should be implemented with the option for it to be tailored to the position or situation.

Nevertheless, the majority identified 3C as important for all positions with respect to interaction with the local population in a country of deployment. At the same time, some addressed possible constraints attached to 3C. The latter appeared to correlate with 3C Type I. Furthermore, ethnocentricity was addressed in the context of a superiority-inferiority constellation. Finally, culture-general skills could be identified as vital.

Part II – Function of Cross-Cultural Competence

Type I: Ethical 3C

Five of six interviewees were in favor of genuine interaction with individuals from different cultures, as emphasized by a major in the Army: "If you don't truly accept another person for their culture, that will contradict communication. They will see that. Instantly, that relationship will be dead and crushed. It's not going to be a genuine interaction." Although this statement is referring to dimension C, it was also highlighted that 3C Type I is a contributing factor for dimensions A and B. For instance, a

lieutenant colonel states that "whether that's U.S., a person from New York, and a person from Florida, [you have to] establish some of the factors that we have in common because my goal at the end of the day with cross-cultural competence is to understand a different perspective and going into it you have to have an open mind." For dimension B, a Navy lieutenant commander underscores Type I in NATO missions: "We deploy all the time with foreign ships from Germany, the Netherlands, Great Britain, and France, the NATO countries. It's so important that they feel valued as members of our strike group, too." In contrast to the findings of the document analysis that the U.S. Marine Corps' *theory* with regard to 3C is founded on an operational culture which solely focuses on the skills relevant to accomplish a mission, and thus negated empathy as a skill, a Marine states that: "You need to have an ethical appreciation and understanding in order to come together as a team in order to accomplish your goals" (Major U.S. Marine Corps). Moreover, in relation to Type III, the interviewee added that "it might work initially, but in this day and age you are not going to benefit from dominating someone's culture and have them bend to your will because it's only a short-term goal," which highlights the value of Type I (Major U.S. Marine Corps). However, it must be mentioned that the same interviewee emphasized a substantial lack of 3C education for his position in the Marine Corps, which indicates no exposure to the concept of operational culture that was highlighted in *theory*.

On the one hand, the ethical approach immanent in statements such as "to really care about their culture" (Lieutenant Colonel U.S. Army) and "we're going back to civilian life at some point, we go back a little more worldly, a little more understanding, that's a good thing" (Lieutenant Commander U.S. Navy 2) was preponderant. On the other hand, self-reflective statements such as "You want to help, right? That can be manipulative though. I guess what I want is probably in itself kind of manipulative. I want to help you. Why does the other need help? I was trying to be ethical, definitely" (Lieutenant Commander U.S. Navy 2) addressed Type I as a matter of perspective. Indeed, the aspect of "helping" depends on the perspective, the cultural lens one is looking through, and can turn into forcing one's own cultural beliefs on the other. Consequently, communication in the sense of Type I is vital, as a lieutenant commander in the Navy pointed out when addressing the 3C typification: "I agree with your three types. I would hope that everyone would approach it with Type I, ethically, just be friends, let's understand what we all need, let's talk, let's work it out together." Whether it is considered Type I depends on the leadership. If the leadership values 3C Type I, subordinates are expected to do the

same, as the lieutenant commander states. To foster 3C Type I, the lieutenant commander's leadership decided to continue to plan joint exercises during the COVID-19 Pandemic with the other U.S. branches as well as with NATO members and partners. Given the pandemic, meetings were conducted virtually and only executions of exercises were cancelled. This approach let the parties stayed connected and in touch. In the interviewee's opinion "Those things need to be a priority over buying a new ship, for example. Whatever it might be. Having that as a much higher priority."

Type II: Hegemonic 3C

There can be an inconspicuous transition between Type I and Type II, as a statement by a Navy lieutenant commander illustrates: "You can't have a selfless view or motivation to everything you do. You would hope you could, but there are times where this is what your goal is and this is what your end state is, and hopefully you can use your relationships that you made to make it happen" (Lieutenant Commander U.S. Navy). The significance of building relationships and, in particular, trust to facilitate a goal is addressed by all interviewees. An Army lieutenant colonel states:

> *So whatever they thought an American is, I'm that representative and it's that much more important for me to behave the best way possible. You could fall back and not even worry about it because they are all NATO members or partners, but it's still highly important because we're still trying to build those relationships. Even though they're NATO, we still want them to have a good view of Americans and how we represent ourselves in our level of professionalism. (…) we're building that trust (…). (Lieutenant Colonel U.S. Army)*

While Type I does not have a motive, Type II is goal oriented and the actions taken pursue a specific objective such as building trust, and thus establishing influence. The latter, in particular, is evinced in the statement given by a brigadier general in the Air Force:

> When I'm mentoring young leaders, I have always rejected some people [who] say 'Well, I'm just going to tell it like it is and speak the truth to power, if you don't like it so what'. I just think that this is ignorant and banal because when you say something like that, you don't care about being hurt. You don't want to do the hard work that is to figure out how can I connect with this other organization, how can I get them to understand. That's the key. Real leadership is being able to generate that buy-in.

And to be able to articulate a vision and generate goodwill and understand those things and that's hard to do sometimes. And it doesn't mean to just bend your principles and be something you are not. That means figure out to talk, find common ground, align interests as best as possible, communicate over a shared set of principles, and focus on those things. (Brigadier General U.S. Air Force)

The motive here is generating buy-in. Therefore, culture-general skills such as cross-cultural awareness, observation skills, decoding nonverbal behavior, active listening, adaptability, and empathy can be used in favor of the desired outcome. The interviewee confirmed that observing nonverbal behavior is also crucial to be able react accordingly. In the following example provided by the brigadier general, he demonstrates the need for culture-general skills as well as how to enforce Type II. As the head of a multinational coordination center, the interviewee often communicates with coalition partners such as NATO members. In reference to a discussion with a NATO member, he states:

> *I had a particular nation that I keep out of this now, it has a very small equity in the coalition operation but had some significant concerns. But no matter how small the equity is, I took the time with that individual trying to understand those concerns and accommodate those worries and to communicate these back to our own government. I think it helped the relationship and it expressed that if the other members of the coalition have a problem, we have the time to listen and to work it out. We will do it for the benefit of the cohesion in the long run. (Brigadier General U. S. Air Force)*

The interviewee implies that although the U.S. has a bigger equity in the coalition and potentially could be dominant and enforce Type III, he prefers to use Type II since in his opinion, it benefits long-term relationships. hegemony is only possible if the other parties consent, and that consent has to be renewed on a regular basis. At the same time, he emphasizes that "the leader needs to view [3C] as a manner of influence. Again, it's not about understanding everybody else so that everybody's needs are put in front of yours. It's about accommodating those needs and ensuring your needs are good as well." He adds that "it's not losing sight of your mission as well and the space that you need" and that "accommodating is important but now I'm the person that can actually state claim to 'ok, this is what I need now, here is why this is important to you'." In summary, Type II is necessary for "(…) being able to advocate for your organization

cross-culturally" (Brigadier General U.S. Air Force), and that is valid for all dimensions. An example here is being aware of differing objectives and terminologies within the U.S. Forces. Moreover, being able to adjust the language to the specific audience when communicating with other U.S. branches and using culture-general skills, as the brigadier general puts it, "to advocate" for one's own organization (Brigadier General U.S. Air Force). To "advocate" or "this is why this is important to you" correlates strongly with a hegemony's characteristic of convincing the other and willingly receiving their consent. Similarly, another interviewee states: "It helps different cultures find that common ground and once they have common ground you can build from there, you can build persuasiveness, build influence (…)" (Major U.S. Army). Furthermore, the interviewee explains that:

> *If you have a relationship, you want to understand what point of view they are coming from. That's when you build influence because then you know how to navigate and speak with them and you use that relationship to essentially your advantage, you understand their understanding of where you come from. You can understand how to not ruin that relationship in the future and influence it that way. (Major U. S. Army)*

The above excerpt amplifies the impact and significance of Type II with regard to ensuring that one's objectives are achieved in all dimensions. However, several concerns about younger generations of leaders rather choosing dominance and enforcing Type III were expressed, as can be seen in the statement given by a brigadier general:

> *I can speak for the United States, I just fear that at times we have younger leaders that don't want to put in the hard work. They want to look at the problem differently. They consider it a nuisance to be flexible and adjust how they are acting, thinking, and talking about things. Instead, I think those are strengths. You are going to be much stronger as an organization (…). (Brigadier General U. S. Air Force)*

Evidently, the previous excerpts were particularly dealing with dimensions A and B. Looking at dimension C, hegemonial components such as educating the other in the way the hegemon desires are found in interview excerpts focusing on the ISAF mission in Afghanistan: "(…) hegemonic, I certainly have seen that, especially in the context of Afghanistan. When

we're training a new military, we want them to be like the U.S. military" (Lieutenant Commander U.S. Navy 2).

That this was not accomplished became evident in the lack of skills needed to repair the U.S. military equipment, as discussed earlier. However, the education and training that the hegemon provides may lead to a dependent relationship.

Type III: Dominant 3C

As a lieutenant commander in the Navy states: "I guess all three types definitely need to be used at different times. The third one is the most abrasive and certainly, you shouldn't use that tool if you don't have to. But at the end, hopefully it's the least used tool" (Lieutenant Commander U.S. Navy). This opinion was shared by all interviewees. Moreover, it was evident that the U.S. was regarded as the hegemon with the power to switch between these modes, for instance in dimension B:

> *The key is knowing when to exercise [Type III]. I think sometimes, believe it or not, U.S. officers are almost overly coached to be apologetic. We just want to make sure that you're okay, do you go along with this, etc. And I'm telling you, I've been in coalition operations for years. I've actually had foreign partners tell me straight to my face 'Why do you care what country says what?' and I always say, 'Well I care because I want them on board just like anybody else'. 'Okay, but at the end of the day you can just do what you want and everybody has to follow it'. Okay, yes, I know that, but when time and conditions present themselves, I'm always going to try to align interests, generate buy-in as best as I can. People understand who has the power. When you need to, you just tell people what you are going to do and you get on board or you leave I guess. You need to know and meter that when it's really necessary. (Brigadier General U.S. Air Force)*

Comparably, a lieutenant colonel in the Army states:

> *(…) when it hits the fan, the U.S. is going to go ahead and continue to go and dominate but that's not the goal. The goal is for the U.S. not to have to be present. So, learning the way of our partners that is tailored to help them be successful is more important than the U.S. pushing their way. So I think the U.S. way is not always the way. But given the lack of participation from some of the partners, some-*

> *times it is pushed a little bit more because we have no choice. But the goal is to kind of help build some of our partners up.*[22] *(Lieutenant Colonel U. S. Army)*

Looking at dimension C and the ISAF mission in Afghanistan, the application of Type III can be determined from experiences shared by a Navy lieutenant commander who describes the dominant behavior of a member of the U.S. military toward members of the Afghan military:

> *You're going to do what I need you to do because it's my jet and we're paying for it. And that 'we are paying for it element' is the power tool, so you're just going to deal with it. That's the one I've seen a lot. (…) for instance, we were much less inclined to hear their argument. I'm talking about operations. I'm talking about going out at night. I think there was more that notion of 'we're just not going to use our toys, you're going to have to figure out how to do it on your own'. And it wasn't safe without a partner, the U. S. partner, in a lot of those operations. So that operation wouldn't happen, but I can't give you a number. (Lieutenant Commander U. S. Navy 2)*

The fact that the U.S. provides a significant amount of military equipment and expertise puts it in a powerful, sometimes superior position. Exploiting this superiority is both seen skeptically and occasionally as inevitable:

> *What I don't like is what I've seen particularly in an international environment and I admit, I think I see this a lot on Americans at times 'Well, this is what we're doing, this is the military operation, you need to get on board'. Speaking frankly, candidly, in my opinion, in my experience with coalition operations with NATO operations, sometimes that's appropriate. (Brigadier General U. S. Air Force)*

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[22] From the U.S. perspective, the lack of participation becomes visible in unequal defense contributions by NATO members. For instance, Germany as a NATO member has been criticized in the past years by the U.S. leadership for not contributing enough. Whereas the German leadership pursues disarmament as an ultimate goal, the U.S., as a NATO member, expects appropriate defense contributions from each member.

Findings

The data provided in the interviews validated the established 3C typification. The majority of the interviewees were in favor of 3C Type I. However, some of them were simultaneously applying Type II as well, which became evident in self-reflective comments. Type I was shown to be practiced in dimensions A and B. Furthermore, Type II was found to be practiced in all dimensions and was thus the most popular tool. In particular, culture-general skills are used to advance one's objective and generate buy-in. In addition, the majority regarded Type III as the least preferable tool due to ethical and effectivity reasons that would only cater to short-term effects. Yet, while an increase in Type III application in dimension B was observed for younger generations of leaders who were presumed to choose the least effort, it was also found in dimension C. However, its utilization was deemed to be necessary sometimes and thus a balancing act – "the key is knowing when to exercise that" (Brigadier General U.S. Air Force). This correlates with some of the interviewees' sentiment and observation that the priority of 3C Type I decreases significantly as soon as operation tempo increases, which could particularly be found in dimension C. Regardless of that, it became evident that personnel should switch between these types according to the situation, which was more linked to leadership styles (Lieutenant Commander U.S. Navy). Consequently, 3C is both leadership- and situation-dependent, as highlighted by a brigadier general in the Air Force: "(…) what's my leadership style? Whatever gets the job done (…). I will tap whatever mode I need to. If you decided that you're leadership brand 'x' and you calcify that position, you are going to miss out opportunities."

Part III – A Canon for Cross-Cultural Competence Skills for the U. S. Forces

After explaining the term "culture-general skills" to each interviewee, the participants were asked to name the skills they consider most crucial for 3C. As in the other surveys, some of the skills were deduced from the descriptions given by the interviewee, such as the statement by an Air Force brigadier general:

> *I think we can always use rank and giving orders in the military. When you're dealing with combat or something like that you can al-*

> *ways tap that, you can always tell people what to do because you have the authority. 'I don't have time, just do it'. But you and I both know that that has far less staying power as in the moments of peace, where you are able to explain and generate buy-in. To do that, you have to be emotionally intelligent because you can't just stay at the top of the hurricane and say 'This is the way it's going to be. This is the nature of this organization'. But how can I connect to them? That's an important skill in a joint environment, in an interagency environment, in an international environment. Just a level of sensitivity, or understanding of another organization's culture so that you can be heard.*

This quote highlights the significance of empathy that is described here with the collective term "emotional intelligence," which entails empathy, sensitivity, and understanding. Moreover, the interviewee points out the value of this culture-general skill by linking empathy to successful communication and more impactful decisions as well as their executions within all dimensions. Additionally, the interviewee states that this skill can be "coached." In his opinion, individuals who have introvertive personality traits might have to develop this skill in particular:

> *I think those people have to recognize that their radars are not as in tune and I think that they have to work on that skill. I think it's a trait that can be learned or exercised. To some it comes more naturally than others. But I think the biggest thing is putting it on people's radar.*

The latter underscores the correlation with culture-general skills. "Putting it on people's radar" emphasizes the ability of self-awareness. However, some find it hard to teach these skills, as an Army lieutenant colonel says: "I think for the general skills, I've heard it's hard to teach some of those general skills if you're not naturally empathetic or in tune or a people person, I suppose. And I think those are difficult in our branch." This lieutenant colonel works as a civil affairs officer, whose job "focuses largely on culture sensitivity." Furthermore, Civil Affairs Support Detachment teams that operate on squad levels of twelve individuals abroad focus on "civil information management," where information concerning a population's sentiment toward the U.S. and its military is gathered and forwarded to the responsible positions. Civil affairs officers can thus function as a mediator and bridge. In addition, the U.S. Army states on its website that skills such as "civil affairs," "cultural awareness," and "foreign language fluency"

will be "learned" through the position and are not listed as requirements (U.S. Army, 2020).

In contrast, the lieutenant colonel recounts that, similar to her statement on the teachability of culture-general skills,

> *(…) some leaders have said you can't teach civil affairs. They actually have it or they don't. We go through an assessment selection to be civil affairs. You have to go through a course. Don't quote me on this, but the failure rate was high. As high as for the reserve component up to 60% at some point. We were sending people and they're getting kicked out because they didn't have some of those general skills naturally. So I don't know which attributes you can really teach. Certainly awareness (…). (Lieutenant Colonel U.S. Army)*

Considering the prior established correlation between culture-general skills and effectiveness in the survey of military personnel located at the NATO Allied Command Transformation, it is pivotal to address the lack of culture-general skills, as mentioned in the lieutenant colonel's statement above. However, the aim of this paper is not to prove the teachability of culture-general skills, although research strongly suggests that these skills ought to be practiced and therefore potentially enhanced and are thus teachable (see Kahn, 2013; Gilar-Corbi et al., 2018; Earley, 2004).

In the following, the deduced and compiled culture-general skills are listed according to their priority and frequency as found in the interviews. Where applicable, a definition of the skill provided by the interviewees is given.

1. Empathy/sensitivity

The majority of the interviewees highlighted empathy as a crucial skill.

A Navy lieutenant commander states: "(…) being empathetic to a different culture's point of view (…) understand why they think the way they think" (Lieutenant Commander U.S. Navy 2). That empathy is linked to "understanding" becomes apparent in the brigadier general's statement:

> *When I'm mentoring young leaders, I have always rejected some people say 'well, I'm just going to tell it like it is and speak the truth to power, if you don't like it so what'. I just think that this is ignorant and banal because when you say something like that, you don't care about being hurt. You don't want to do the hard work that is to figure out how can I connect with this other organization (…).*

Being empathetic thus goes beyond the aspect of "understanding." Therefore, half of the interviewees mentioned sensitivity, which correlates with compassion. Notwithstanding this, it was made clear that most of the interviewees do not understand empathy as "a matter of catering to the sensitivities" (Major U.S. Marine Corps) but rather to "be firm with what we believe, not just organization wise (…)" without "pushing objectives" (Lieutenant Colonel U.S. Army).

2. Cross-Cultural awareness

The second most frequently addressed skill is cross-cultural awareness. A major explains:

> *(…) understanding their viewpoint, not taking it personally, understanding that how they communicate might not necessarily be just an insult to me, it's just how they communicate, very blunt and upfront. That's usually the hardest part; knowing when somebody being sincere is not trying to insult you, it's rather a cultural thing (…). (Major U. S. Army).*

Here, "understanding" is linked to the awareness that there is a variety of communication styles, which may differ from one's own. In addition, the aspect of self-awareness was pointed out.

3. Active listening

"Active listening" is on par in prevalence with "cross-cultural awareness." It is described as "actually listening to your partner and what it is they are saying, not just verbally but non-verbally, and what their whole thought process is behind what they are communicating" (Major U.S. Army).

4. Adaptability/flexibility

Half of the interviewees mentioned the need for adaptability, with one interviewee pointing out flexibility as a need. Flexibility and adaptability become vital in the example given by a brigadier general in the U.S. Forces: "You have to then ask yourself 'Ok, why doesn't anyone understand this?' (…) Change the way you are talking about it, the arrangement of facts. Change your focus on the areas where this other organization you're dealing with has equity in this" (Brigadier General U.S. Air Force).

5. Interest
"Interest" was considered to be equally as important as "adaptability." An interviewee explains, "seeking knowledge, if you are not hungry for finding out or becoming educated, you won't even know what you don't know (…)" (Lieutenant Commander U.S. Navy).

6. Teachability
Teachability is in correlation with the aforementioned skill, but was not explained further.

7. Suspending judgement
A Navy lieutenant commander describes the skill to suspend judgement and avoid bias at the same time: "(…) putting your ego aside because the way you do it is not necessarily the best way and just because that's the way you've always done it, isn't the way you should do it in the future (…)" (Lieutenant Commander U.S. Navy).

8. Respect
Respect was emphasized by two interviewees.

9. Tolerance of ambiguity
One statement pointed towards "tolerance of ambiguity": "Having specific skills to not be offensive, understand that there is a dichotomy a lot of times between what we're experiencing and expecting (…)" (Lieutenant Colonel U.S. Army).

10. Communication skills
Nonverbal communication was addressed as a focus of several seminars.

11. Patience
One interviewee emphasized the importance of being patient while working with different cultures.

Weighing these skills deduced from the interviews against the canon established in the military discourse for the U.S., the following overlaps can be identified: empathy, cross-cultural awareness, in particular self-awareness, and communication skills. Partially overlapping are patience as well as active listening. Regarding the academic discourse, multiple overlaps could be determined: cross-cultural awareness, in particular cultural self-awareness, listening and active listening, empathy, flexibility

and adaptability, respect, and suspending judgment; partially overlapping are openness, curiosity, and interest.

Aside from that, culture-general skills are acquired in classes that are not designated as 3C, which impedes their evaluation. This became evident throughout the interviews and entailed different names for the same concepts/skills as well as classes such as "negotiation" seminars without linking the cross-cultural component and thus cognitively limiting the taught skillsets to a certain domain.

Along with culture-general skills, five interviewees underscored the value of culture-specific knowledge. Language skills were especially highlighted by four interviewees, followed by the history and geography as well as traditions and habits of a particular culture. Clearly, these statements were focused on pre-deployment training for the country of deployment. However, the quest to incorporate current data such as social media habits was addressed.

Excursus on 3C Education

At this point, it is appropriate to examine the information provided by the interviewees from the U.S. Forces regarding their 3C education. This is particularly compelling for the U.S. Forces, since the document analysis revealed pivotal contradictions in approaching 3C between the military branches as well as inconsistency within the branches. Consequently, in contrast to the surveys of German military personnel and military personnel currently located at the NATO Allied Command Transformation, the interviewees with U.S. military personnel concerning 3C education will be examined separately in this excursus.

To begin with, five of six interviewees pointed out that the U.S. itself is a multicultural state. However, as addressed by multiple interviewees, most of the junior military personnel have not been significantly exposed to other cultures within the U.S. until they enter the military. Thus, one interviewee states that "(…) from an American standpoint, cross-cultural competence is a weakness. As I mentioned, we get plenty of soldiers that have never left their town, never left their state, and now we are going to send them to another country and expect them to understand what kind of culture they are in" (Major U.S. Army). While highlighting the significance of 3C education for deployment abroad, this statement also addresses the relevance of 3C for the U.S. Forces internally. Only one interviewee disagreed with the latter:

> *Internally, and by internally I mean the U. S. Forces, I don't see any benefit because you don't need that to thrive in your position to understand what all the forces go through culturally. However, at the same time, I think that there's significant benefit and an enhancement understanding the 3C. (Major U. S. Marine Corps)*

Regarding the acquisition of 3C knowledge for all military personnel, the Marine adds: "I don't see everyone's specific benefit based on the role that they play and the job position that they have" (Major U. S. Marine Corps). These statements are in stark contrast to a comment made by an Air Force brigadier general:

> *I think (…) it should be laced in just everything we do. In a military context, trust me when I tell you, absolutely no operation, whether combat, contingency, peacetime, whatever it is: nothing will ever be done by one organization, one service. It will always be an amount of organizations. Whether it be coalition in an international context, interagency, so civilian and military, or joint within the military. That will always be the standard. So, to be more effective, then you have to have this competency [3C] of which you're speaking. (Brigadier General U. S. Air Force)*

Evidently, the aspect of applying 3C on all levels is addressed. Five of six interviewees were in favor of 3C education on all levels. This correlates with the RTO report's call to instill 3C knowledge and skills on all levels. Indeed, a gradual education in 3C is regarded as vital, as illustrated by a brigadier general:

> *(…) there are three levels of training: there is the tactical level training, which is, as I understand, the fighter pilot knowing how to fly with other Air Forces and speaking the same language. Then there is the operational level training, which is knowing how to organize, train, equip, employ forces in kind of a midlevel management role. Lastly, the strategic level training, which is, as I understand, how to align that national interest, focus on agreement in areas of policy, to develop strategies and supporting plans that generate buy-in from as many stakeholders as possible. That's the three levels with the tactical level being early in your career and the strategic level later. However, the cross-cultural piece has to be baked into all of these levels.*

Nevertheless, an implemented gradual approach to 3C education could neither be found in the document analysis nor in the experience reports of other interviewees. In fact, the focus of 3C education is still solely on leadership roles, since 3C education is mainly integrated at the military colleges that by default are higher education institutions targeting officer ranks of lieutenant or higher.[23] In contrast, one interviewee from the Navy argues that "I think the emphasis should be on the most junior. I think if you are a senior member in this organization, you're going to be exposed to some level of academics, post high school level so you're going to get exposed to some kind of humanities courses, some kind of culture" (Lieutenant Commander U.S. Navy 2). Certainly, 3C and 3C education is still crucial for the higher leadership ranks – especially when taking the following into consideration: "Senior leaders, particularly in the military, put in these positions, they're confident because they've been very competent in something over many years. They are almost walking into the room thinking: I have the answer, I know what we need to do, (…) [although they might have to take a step back to look at the whole picture]" (Brigadier General U.S. Air Force). Comparing this statement to a comment made by an Army lieutenant colonel located at the NATO Allied Command Transformation, the congruence is notable:

> *(…) a lot of military are very inherently arrogant that they don't need [3C] because we were full of success, we got loads of success, we've been very senior. (…) They've been very successful to get there but may have not ever actually realized what they are leaving in the wake behind them. The best officers I see at the senior levels really do get this and they have been very much in the minority in my time. (Lieutenant Colonel, Army, located at the NATO Allied Command Transformation)*

Coming back to the junior military personnel, as initially stated by an Army major, these personnel generally had no prior cross-cultural encounters, which is not addressed until they reach the officer career gate:

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[23] For instance, officer ranks in the Army start with first lieutenant and second lieutenant, continue with captain, major, lieutenant colonel, colonel, brigadier general, major general, lieutenant general, general, and finally the top of the branch, the General of the Army.

> *I think the capstone of the international piece is really, what we call Senior Service College. So the point right before you become colonel where you are in a resident graduate program that is approximately consisting of twenty or thirty percent international officers in the U.S. program. That kind of adds the international component. So I would say [inaudible] from the professional standpoint probably fairly significant academic exposure to the concept (Brigadier General U.S. Air Force).*

This is also the case in the other branches, as explained by a lieutenant commander in the Navy:

> *They have billets saved aside and protected for people that got sent up to that location [USCENTCOM] knowing that they will get that experience [cross-cultural exposure]. (…) I would have never been able to do this job if I hadn't been selected for the screening that I have because it's not available to people who wouldn't be going to this leadership position so in that regard, I think they do it purposefully; cross-cultural competence is not the only target but a big portion of it.*

Therefore, early 3C education is a significant aspect that is currently solely focused on leadership positions or individuals who are deployed. The following statement thus has substantial validity: "I would say junior soldiers really don't understand the greater scheme of it sometimes, and especially if they received training that's just 'death by PowerPoint', do this, don't do that. They might not fully grasp the importance of it" (Major U.S. Army).

To elaborate further on 3C education as well as the coherence with the branches' *military discourse*, each branch will be dealt with separately as follows:

U.S. Army

The *military discourse* examined in the document analysis for the U.S. Army indicated an ambivalent approach to 3C, promoting and teaching both 3C Type I and Type II. Accordingly, both types could be found in the interviews with military personnel in the Army. However, there was a prominent dichotomy between prioritizing culture-specific knowledge and culture-general skills in 3C education. Although a researcher from the Army Research Institute (ARI) (Abbe, 2007, viii) declared culture-general skills to have "more intercultural effectiveness" than culture-specific knowledge,

the interviews with military personnel in the Army demonstrate that first, 3C education is mostly restricted to pre-deployment training, and second, that training only focuses on culture-specific knowledge for the region or country of deployment.

Aside from that, certain positions, such as civil affairs officers, receive more in-depth 3C education. This correlates with the idea of 3C being tailored to the position, which emerged in several interviews. In fact, this is partially comparable with the German model of a "cultural deployment advisor" (IEB), who should have expert knowledge in the culture-specific domain. However, the positions that are not deemed to receive in-depth 3C education were mostly taught through web-based programs or by instructors who lacked proficiency in the subject, as expressed by an interviewee: "I think the program could benefit from a more formal instructor (…) someone who was trained to be a trainer, essentially. So they have that training and know how to instruct, they have an awareness of the culture they are teaching about, for instance" (Major U.S. Army). The aforementioned "death by PowerPoint" (Major U.S. Army) is therefore a critical concern with regard to the effectiveness of those classes. On the contrary, the experiences of the interviewee who is a civil affairs officer vary vastly, as she states that 3C is "the most important thing" to her branch (Lieutenant Colonel U.S. Army).

One interviewee was able to recall aspects of the classes. Concepts addressed in the academic discourse as well as in the NATO cultural awareness training are taught, including the communication spectrum found in Hofstede (see 2001/2010) and Meyer's (2014) low-context vs. high-context cultures model. Furthermore, it became clear that some of the culture-general skills are taught in classes detached from the cultural component and are thus not automatically linked as being significant for cross-cultural encounters, a fact which was highlighted by military personnel from the German Forces as well. One example given here was negotiation classes, but also the overall ethos of the Army that incorporates values that partially overlap with culture-general skills, such as respect and integrity[24]. These values ought to be instilled at the onset of every soldier's career, in basic combat training. When asked where culture-general skills could be mediated, one interviewee suggested a "new way to teach Army values is thinking of it in Army values through the lens of cross-cultural competency" (Major U.S. Army). Since resources such as finances and

[24] The seven core values of the U.S. Army are loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, and personal courage (U.S. Army 2021).

time were frequently addressed as possibly having a negative impact on 3C education, this approach seems feasible. In particular, the time factor becomes prominent when training in other domains, such as combat skills, are prioritized and 3C training is either limited or even neglected. This is evident in the following statement:

> *(…) in my experience there wasn't the expectation for any kind of cross-cultural communication or involvement. The majority of soldiers, it might seem like wasted time for them (…) I would think because perhaps their rank, they're too low to really be interacting with similar rank of other cultures. (…) Maybe more of the time-saver. To get those soldiers training in other skills that would more likely be used and just give them a brief rundown of what may occur when you meet with other cultures. (Major U. S. Army)*

Finally, regarding the aforementioned aspects, the inconsistencies in 3C education are congruent with the findings in the Army's military discourse. Moreover, the interviews showed that 3C knowledge is not evaluable, as addressed by Wunderle (2006) and Greene Sands (2016). It is noteworthy that despite the timespan of fifteen years spent drawing attention to this problem, there have been no momentous changes or developments in the U.S. Army.

Furthermore, 3C education and training in the U.S. Army is predominantly impacted by two factors: *leadership* and prioritization as well as *resources,* such as time, equipment (e.g., web-based seminars or instructors), and monetary constraints. However, for those who received 3C training, the culture-specific approach was consistent, albeit in contrast with the military discourse.

U.S. Air Force

There is not enough data from the document analysis to fully compare it with the experiences of interviewees from the U.S. Air Force. However, the interviewees' insights on 3C education for leadership positions indicated that 3C classes are not mandatory and that knowledge is rather acquired through cross-cultural exposure, such as through interacting with international students on campus. This correlates with the findings of the document analysis that 3C classes at Air University are voluntary and only became mandatory in recent years for individuals advancing to specific leadership courses. In addition, a U.S. Air Force brigadier general

stated that some of the 3C skills are acquired and discussed in scenarios not specifically linked to cross-cultural competence: "I think in a variety of different ways it's been discussed. (…) two contexts: one being joint, from a military standpoint, and two, being interagency and the ability to speak joint or to speak interagency is considered to be important in particular for senior officers. I think this compromises what cross-cultural competency probably is."

U.S. Navy

The document analysis for the U.S. Navy could not provide extensive data. However, the analysis identified a prioritization of culture-specific knowledge, in particular language combined with geographical information and habits of a certain cultural group. Thus, it became evident that there is a different school of thought in the Navy: culture is seen as intertwined with language.

Examining the interviews, it became clear that the Navy has mandatory classes dealing with 3C in pre-deployment trainings:

> *I'm in the Navy, every deployment (…) we have specific classes that we have to attend. There's school, too, that you can sign up for and especially the more higher ranking you get, the more leadership responsibility you have, they make sure that you're [cross-culturally] aware. Yes, so in the Navy it was mandatory. (Lieutenant Commander Navy)*

Whereas the document analysis for the Navy indicated a strong prioritization of language, language training was not a priority in pre-deployment trainings, which might correlate with the previously addressed time constraints regarding operation readiness that apply to all branches. Regarding the intensity of the pre-deployment training, another interviewee highlighted something that was addressed as a "crash course character" in the *military discourse* of the German Forces:

> *I can't think of a particular set of training or a class that really would be like a broad scope on all this [culture-general skills and culture specific knowledge]. You just kind of get a quick, maybe like an afternoon of cultural stuff before you go somewhere, usually. So there is not really a basic training in cross-cultural competence. Lucky if you got an in-person-analyst to share their experience, more likely going to be*

> *like a web-based computer-based scenario. (…) sometimes defaulting to that web-based, computer-based approved by the military, so it's good enough, someone looked at it. (…) I do wish it would be improved. (Lieutenant Commander U. S. Navy 2)*

It is noteworthy that the two U.S. Navy interviewees with the same rank have two vastly opposing views on how 3C education is carried out. Even though the first interviewee confirms that 3C is highly valued within the Navy, the second expressed that "it is valued, but not invested in" (Lieutenant Commander U.S. Navy 2). The latter is made apparent in the lack of 3C in the Navy curricula, which the interviewee describes:

> *If you're talking about the training, integrating it into a curriculum, it just takes a lot, it takes a push from leadership and the leadership was busy fighting wars and they need to understand that their troops are going to be proficient in the arts of combat and safety and all those things. It is part of it, but it was not going to be a priority over certain things. So that's why we got the web-based training and after that 'guys it's important, this is important, pay attention' but were they getting anything out of it? (Lieutenant Commander U. S. Navy 2)*

The excerpts indicate diverging perceptions about the quality and prioritization of 3C training for the U.S. Navy. It appears that there is no standardized curriculum. However, the main consistency here is the focus on culture-specific knowledge, although language is not a significant part of it, in contrast to the findings of the *military discourse.* Nonetheless, around 200 positions explicitly dealing with in-depth culture-specific knowledge were offered. The program ran from 2011 to 2019. Once this position was achieved after completing a four-year education for a particular region, the individuals would usually remain in their function as "sociocultural analysts." Yet, this position was regarded by an interviewee as a "career killer" since individuals who were not on their regular military promotion path would not be as competitive with their peers (Lieutenant Commander U.S. Navy 2).

U.S. Marine Corps

3C Type II with a Type III tendency was determined in the *military discourse* for the Marine Corps: "As a military professional, the goal is not to

be transparent; it is to present an appropriate image of yourself for the situation at hand in order to advance your mission" (Salmoni, 2008, p. 111).

3C in general was replaced with the concept of "operational culture" that lacks empathy and self-awareness. The argument was founded on the assumption that these culture-general skills do not advance a mission. In fact, these skills can be instrumentalized and used to the benefit of a mission, as will be demonstrated in the interviews with military personnel in the German Forces. Additionally, a more current guidebook by Fosher (Fosher et al., 2017, p. 5) highlighted the significance of both culture-general skills and culture-specific knowledge for the U.S. Marines. In contrast to the coursework and the distinct approaches to 3C, the Marine interviewed was unfamiliar with the concepts of operational culture, culture-general skills, and culture-specific knowledge since he did not attend classes in this field. Moreover, the interviewee stated that cross-cultural competence is not well known, which he believes is due to 3C not being mission-critical:

> *I would say that regardless of Marines, Air Force, Navy, I think in general as a force that it's not well known, in my opinion. I don't think that it's something that is taught specifically. There is a sensitivity towards it, but I don't think it's taught specifically. (…) it would fall back on this very little specific education towards it. It's tailorable but as a broad general education wise I don't think that that's something that we are learning about.*
> *I would say that it's just a general ignorance. It's not seen as something that's mission critical to utilize to achieve success. I still think, I fall back on: it's an enhancement and that's kind of my general overall opinion. It's something that is beneficial to have. (Major U. S. Marine Corps)*

Despite this, the interviewee stated he was familiar with cultural-awareness and sensitivity and that these aspects were transmitted in an informal setting instead of a class setting. Furthermore, there is no appropriate point in time to teach 3C according to the interviewee, which could explain the lack of mandatory 3C education and even operational culture which was explicitly tailored to the Marine Corps:

> *(…) going through basic training or things along that line, if there's an opportunity there for 3C, personally, I don't think it would be beneficial. I think that a lot of individuals are just trying to sur-*

> *vive the grueling aspects of what they're going through because it's (…) going through certain types of exercises on a daily basis and [3C education] is just going to go in one ear and out (…) that's kind of where our detriment lies because we can't catch everybody all at one time because after you go through your basic training, you go into all different aspects of your specific training. And you never really catch everyone all at once. So I don't think there's benefit to that generality at the beginning because it's not tailored to those topics. (Major U.S. Marine Corps)*

However, the interviewee points out that he would be in favor of 3C being tailored to the positions that benefit from it, since he considers 3C as an enhancer. In conclusion, his position as a pilot was either not deemed to be benefiting from 3C training, classes are only voluntary and not well advertised, or the U.S. Marine Corps does not currently have any 3C training in place. Furthermore, the interviewee evidently does not see any benefits for 3C training in dimension A, as he explains in the following statement:

> *There's no reason to have the external cross-cultural competency working with other forces. And then internally, and I say internally as a U.S. force, I don't see any benefit either because you don't need that to thrive in your position to understand what all the forces go through culturally. However, at the same time, I think that there's significant benefit and an enhancement in understanding the 3C. (Major U.S. Marine Corps)*

The main argument is that one "can still function" without 3C and that it is not "mission critical" (Major U.S. Marine Corps). Notwithstanding this, the interviewee received some culture-specific training before being deployed to Afghanistan in "geography, language, religion, the history" (Major U.S. Marine Corps).

The interviews demonstrate a significant gap between the findings of the *military discourse* and what is actually implemented. Putting the lack of 3C training as described by the U.S. Marine in relation to the previously discussed "photo scandal" highlights its significance and necessity.

Having looked at each branch and its 3C education and training separately, the incoherence between and within the branches found in the document analysis is reflected in the interviews. It appears that in-depth 3C-training tends to be reserved for special positions such as civil affairs officers and sociocultural analysts. In addition, the aspect of

regularly maintaining and revising coursework in order to reflect current developments and changes was mentioned: "I'm taking one [class] right now, actually for this other senior leader program that I'm in, 'Personality Evaluation'. The date on this coursework is 1970. Okay, so that's how old this is. It describes what kind of leader you are" (Brigadier General U.S. Air Force). Furthermore, 3C education is mostly incorporated in pre-deployment training targeting dimension C. Dimensions A and B seem to be of lesser importance. In reference to working with NATO members, an interviewee recounts:

> *(…) most recently in actually working with some NATO and coalition partners, I never received any formal training for that. There was a little bit just about rank structure and how to interact with other cultures from the military perspective, but nothing truly in depth as far as how we are going to work with other cultures. (Major U. S. Army)*

Still, the interviewee added that culture-general skills such as empathy were addressed in this informal instruction.

To underscore the significance of 3C for all dimensions and to enforce 3C training, the idea to incorporate 3C into performance reports was suggested, which correlates with the demands made in the interviews with military personnel located at the NATO Allied Command Transformation:

> *It's overlooked. It's an assumed kind of skill that is important but overlooked by the mechanisms by which we raise and mentor officers. (…) we talked about this competency and how important it is. We are not holding people accountable in those performance reports and that's the way to do it. We hold people accountable on other things, we ask about qualities of officership and certainly basic things like integrity and those types of things, diversity, and upholding all those professional conduct standards, so why not this? (Brigadier General U. S. Air Force)*

Moreover, the interviewee emphasizes that if 3C was a priority, it would be measured in the performance reports as suggested, which he states is not the case in the Air Force yet:

(…) I can certainly speak to the Air Force, there is no mandatory section of an officer's performance report that speaks to this cross-cultur-

al competency. (…) I'll translate, on our side perhaps 'jointness', 'interagency', that capability. We rate officers, particularly in early years, largely based on key basic officer skills. But if you really want to implicate a culture that recognizes that need, trains, mentors, coaches in that regard, then you have to incorporate that into performance reports. That officers are rated on their ability to generate buy-in, to be collaborative. (…) it's just the way bureaucracies go, if you start to throw that out there, that's how you get rated or promoted by how you get rated in those things, then people will rush to the sound of the tree and [laughing]. (Brigadier General U.S. Air Force)

Accordingly, it is understandable that incorporating 3C into performance reports is considered challenging at this point:

> *"It would be kind of hard to evaluate cross-cultural awareness on a solider, saying are you good at it or not when they haven't really received an opportunity to do so. (…) Right now, I think it's an add-on, a nice-to-have and at this time it makes sense to keep it there rather than directly evaluating somebody based on that. (Major U.S. Army)*

Obviously, standardized 3C training for all must be implemented first in order to evaluate these skills in performance reports later on. However, overlapping skills are already taken into account in evaluation processes in the Navy, for instance, as another interviewee recounts:

> *Navy has 'Command Management Equal Opportunity' where you are graded on that every year. And part of that too is teamwork skills, or communication is a big part of it. And if someone ranks you lower on a scale because you said things that were offensive or you brought people the wrong way or you got a reputation for not being that way, it would feed one hundred percent into your future evaluations. The lower score you get, the lower will you be competitive with other people. So you are constantly evaluated on your team building skills, open-mindedness, leadership skills, equal opportunity, like priority, decision-making type stuff. It's just not, there is no box that's necessarily for that [3C] one thing. (Lieutenant Commander Navy)*

Although not "every job that you have would necessarily have that piece [3C] to it" as the interviewee states, raising awareness for 3C by adding this box on a performance report could be beneficial (Lieutenant

Commander Navy). At the same time, this statement indicates that the priority of 3C is seen more in dimensions B and C than in dimension A: "If you are a flight instructor, your job is to make a new pilot. That's typically a U.S.-only type job, but it could be non-applicable in that job (…)" (Lieutenant Commander Navy).

In conclusion, putting these findings in relation to NATO, the varying prioritization of incongruent 3C education and training for the U.S. Forces calls for standardized training; for example, basic training that at least individuals who work on NATO assignments or missions have to complete beforehand. The next section will examine the interviewees' opinions on such a standard.

Part IV – Standardization of 3C

Initially, every interviewee was in favor of standardizing 3C. However, the implementation of such a standard appeared questionable to some. As one interviewee stated: "I think as an organization as a whole, we're just too big to ensure that everyone has that baseline understanding" (Major U.S. Marine Corps). Indeed, with 1,400,000 active-duty military personnel, the U.S. Armed Forces rank third in a global comparison (Statista, 2020). Thus, it would require the leadership to mandate 3C in order to start implementing a standard, as another interviewee argues: "Anytime the message is consistent from the top, at the highest level, such as the Department of Defense, it's a good thing. If they say we want all leaders to have these core attributes, please implement this into your service. That would be a good thing" (Lieutenant Commander U.S. Navy). However, this statement further indicates that 3C is primarily regarded as a leadership competence.

Other advantages of having a standard are seen in it being a parameter that enables evaluation and improvement: "I think it's always helpful, particularly in the military, this is a large bureaucracy, you have to have something by which you can measure that competency, you have to be able to define that so you can work toward it and then you have to measure your progress" (Brigadier General U.S. Air Force). However, another impeding factor is obtaining financial support to offer standardized 3C training to all military personnel. Here, the benefit of 3C is especially relevant for military personnel who will be deployed (dimension C):

> *(…) considering it is our focus that we will deploy to a foreign nation, there should be a baseline foundational training about the cultural competencies, absolutely. (…) but not all soldiers are really expected to eventually deploy, they are expected but oftentimes they don't make it that far so it's difficult to really include that in a curriculum when you're investing in them without knowing how far they're really going to go. (Major U. S. Army)*

Similarly, another interviewee states: "I think that there's some people only in service for four years and they never deploy, so it is not a cost benefit to that because some people just stay in state for their service" (Major U.S. Marine Corps). In fact, three interviewees underlined that since not everyone will deploy or not every position would require 3C, financial resources have to be distributed accordingly. At the same time. it was pointed out by one of these interviewees that cross-cultural competence is affecting the U.S. Forces internally (dimension A): "There were a lot of soldiers in my time that were from one town and they never left that town until they joined the Army, so they don't know what it's like to even deal with somebody, say from another state, and they might not understand even those microcultural differences" (Major U.S. Army). Evidently, this is an argument for standardized 3C training for all military personnel regardless of being deployed or not, which correlates with the following statement: "(…) it [3C] should be so universally valued in all things that you do, fully inculcated into the cultural organization. That is a competency that's needed in all things" (Brigadier General U.S. Air Force). Moreover, the fact that U.S. military branches operate mainly in cooperation with the other U.S. branches is another considerable factor in terms of a 3C standard for the U.S. Forces as a whole:

> *(…) nothing will ever be done by one organization, one service. It will always be an amount of organizations. Whether it be coalition in an international context, interagency, so civilian and military, or joint within the military. That will always be the standard. So, to be more effective, then you have to have this competency of which you're speaking. (Brigadier General U. S. Air Force)*

Another interviewee shares this sentiment:

> *(…) when we deploy, we typically are dealing with the other branches as well so we should all have the same standard and it should be*

> *some kind of joint level training which we have access to online. Joint learning classes and so that would make sense to become a priority at least for when we deploy, but maybe an initial course just coming up into the Army. (Major U. S. Army)*

Taking this a step further, the interviewees were asked whether it would be beneficial to establish a 3C standard for NATO which would apply to its member states. All interviewees saw a benefit in having a NATO standard in 3C, as the following excerpt shows: "it would make sense that the standard would always be the same, no matter what branch, and then of course similarities with European NATO allies and U.S. Forces" (Major U.S. Army). Moreover, the interviewee argues:

> *To have that standard and, how about this, they actually have the same standard and NATO soldiers receive the same kind of training that American soldiers receive, they have the same kind of training in regard to the general competencies. I don't think it's a bad idea. I think, when I speak of NATO, I speak of European, obviously we are NATO, I don't know what kind of training European NATO nations are actually receiving on dealing with other cultures. (Major U. S. Army)*

Furthermore, a NATO standard in 3C "would be a good level of amplification if you will" as another interviewee argues (Lieutenant Colonel U.S. Army). Indeed, a NATO standard in 3C would highlight its significance and raise awareness of this competence for NATO members that do not have any training in this field yet. However, agreeing on a standard within the NATO arena can be a complex and sometimes less effective process, as emphasized in the following excerpt:

> *I don't want to portray this as something negative about NATO, but at the strategic level NATO is by design through their governance, how they make decisions, focused on collaboration and making sure that everybody is heard and all partners are equal and everybody's needs are met. What ends up happening is, sometimes you will see NATO decisions that are less effective. You start with a goal way up here and then you get all the way down to the point where everybody finally agrees on something and all of a sudden the decision is really not that effective. (…) I always look at this process and think, 'wow' it is actually fairly impressive that this senior, civilian ministry level,*

> *I actually have been in that room, I think it was remarkable how diplomatic and kind and courteous and the way new partners, smaller partners are treated like older partners. Everybody's voice is heard. Heard so much so that the body collectively is perhaps not as effective as it could be. (Brigadier General U. S. Air Force)*

On the other hand, once a standard is achieved, the interviewee states that "(…) the advantage is perhaps we can drive to more impactful decisions. Perhaps we can align interests in a better way, bring more members close" (Brigadier General U.S. Air Force).

To conclude, a standard in 3C is generally considered beneficial for several aspects, which first and foremost is a mutual understanding of how 3C is defined and what it entails, thus fostering interoperability. Furthermore, it facilitates effectiveness, efficiency, evaluability of 3C training, and improvement. As a result, the question is if this standard should be enforced at the onset of a professional military career, such as during basic military training, and then gradually develop through 3C training on a regular basis or if this standard should solely apply to leadership personnel[25] and thus be acquired in leadership courses. However, it became clear that merely educating military personnel that will deploy is the least beneficial approach, since 3C training is limited to culture-specific training targeting the particular country of deployment. Moreover, it may be neglected or inadequately taught due to time constraints and lack of resources, whether that is the lack of a suitable instructor or not having the capability to test the essential knowledge in 3C. Finally, the most beneficial approach appears to be to implement a standard at the very beginning where possible, since the findings demonstrated that 3C is crucial in all dimensions. Furthermore, it also became evident that leadership personnel must have further 3C training, which is why a gradual progression in 3C education over the course of one's military career could be advisable.

[25] Leadership personnel applies to both commissioned and non-commissioned (enlisted) officers. However, commissioned officers have greater authority and outrank enlisted military personnel.

6.2.2.c German Armed Forces – BMVg

The final survey examines the German Forces with regard to the application and function of 3C as well as a possible canon and standard for it.

Part I – Dimensions of Cross-Cultural Competence

Dimension A – 3C and German Forces internally

Here, dimension A focuses on the significance and application of 3C within the German Forces. Dimension A entails the interactions between military personnel in the same forces, regardless of whether they are deployed or assigned to the home base.[26]

Most interviewees recognized that 3C is important internally, although cultural diversity has not been a concern for the German Forces yet, as expressed by the following interviewee:

> *Intercultural competence within the corps is still crucial. (…) when I was still in the corps, it wasn't a real problem; well, what means real? It wasn't a problem. You didn't notice who had what cultural background during day-to-day business. I think it doesn't matter which cultural background you have. (German Forces, Lieutenant Colonel, Army 3)*

Another interviewee confirmed:

> *I just came out of an assignment for the Panzer Division. There, we indeed had soldiers of various religions. I would say that in day-to-day business, there is mutual regard. Also, there is no stigmatization or stereotyping due to being different or having different beliefs. (German Forces, Lieutenant Colonel, Army 3)*

Standing in contrast to these statements are the cases concerning 744 suspected right-wing extremists in the German Forces that are documented by the German Military Counterintelligence Service (MAD), twenty of whom are enlisted in the Special Forces Command (KSK) (Tagesschau, 2020). Accordingly, the German Minister of Defense, Annegret Kramp-

[26] Civil personnel could be included as well, but are not the subject of the survey.

Karrenbauer, issued an order to restructure the KSK after the right-wing extremists and the disappearance of 48,000 rounds of ammunition and 135 pounds of explosives had been revealed (Zeit Online, 2020). Thus, the importance of 3C has to be underlined once more, in this case, particularly for the forces internally. Additionally, one interviewee pointed out that 3C is vital in interpersonal communication among comrades, highlighting the importance of culture-general skills (German Forces, Lieutenant Colonel, Army 2). Culture-general skills instill respect and openness toward cultures different from one's own. Therefore, culture-general skills are paramount in the battle against a right-wing school of thought.

An interviewee acknowledged and emphasized 3C's significance for dimension A:

> *(…) within Germany, within the domestic base regarding the allegations of racism and the debate about right-wing extremism, regarding migrants but also the diversity of the armed forces, and that is true, at that time, I had seven different nationalities in my company, and that was fifteen, sixteen years ago. Meanwhile, it is even more diverse now. So, you must be able to apply intercultural competence skills on the domestic base. It is a dual impetus: intercultural competence with regard to the composition of the forces, and then missions and training abroad. (German Forces, Lieutenant Colonel, Army 1)*

Aside from that, some statements revealed the need for 3C among the various branches and divisions with regard to bias and stereotypes, as described in the following: "(…) they were such armored infantryman. You shoot coming from the front and Panzer Marsch, right?" (German Forces, Lieutenant Colonel, Army 2).

In general, stereotypes between the branches could be noted several times, reinforcing the significance and need to apply 3C for the German Forces in dimension A. Therefore, the same interviewee's argument that an identical uniform and national emblem would have a bonding effect loses its validity. However, the primary group principle might still apply in some cases (see Cooley, 1956).

Moreover, it became evident that some interviewees were either solely focusing on 3C in correlation with missions abroad or considered 3C for dimension C more critical than for dimension A. In contrast, a few found it to be equally important.

Findings

In summary, the following could be determined for dimension A: Although the interviewees acknowledge the importance of 3C for dimension A, the priority to apply 3C in dimension C became evident. However, there are stereotypes and bias between branches and positions as well as several cases of right-wing extremism, which is why culture-general skills can particularly be deemed as vital.

Dimension B – 3C in multicultural NATO contingents while on a mission/training exercise abroad

Communication and 3C seem to have an inseparable bond, which is reinforced in the following statement by a colonel in the Air Force:

> *The German chief of staff of the Resolute Support Afghanistan headquarters managed and interacted with over thirty different nations working together. Even within bigger allied states, the differences in human interaction were immediately apparent. Often, he had to mediate between civilians and military personnel with a lesser degree of intercultural competence, especially during human interactions between smaller and bigger states. (German Forces, Colonel, Air Force)*

This quote illustrates four significant aspects. First, being deployed abroad inherently entails interactions with numerous people from different cultural backgrounds. Second, the lesser the degree of 3C on the levels below the chief of staff, the more the leadership has to mediate. This mediation would be unnecessary if all personnel had a comparable degree of 3C, reinforcing the call for 3C education on all levels addressed by the RTO. Third, the colonel mentioned civilians. Civil personnel work together with military personnel, thereby highlighting the importance of 3C in civil and military interaction (also called "interagency"), as addressed in the prospective regulation for intercultural competence for the German Forces. Lastly, mediation in human interactions between smaller and bigger states was mentioned, which correlates with several NATO interviewees who said that bigger states tend to force their culture on smaller states.

Moreover, if 3C is lacking and mediation is not available, the result is often frustration. A commander in the Navy explained:

> *(…) if you are working with international staff or somewhere else on the base, it is also a matter of fact regarding internal procedures that you will reach your limits. Meaning that one nation has a different*

> *perception of time or a word, and so on. You have to be flexible. (…) And this can be, honestly, very frustrating. If you know procedures that don't take long at home, the same procedures may take longer in an international assignment because things vary. Language barriers exist, as well. The official language is mainly English, but language expertise is not always a given. And all these minor things add up. (German Forces, Commander, Navy)*

As elaborated on earlier, cultural self-awareness and tolerance of ambiguity are two culture-general skills that could help manage or even prevent frustration. Cultural self-awareness makes the individual aware of their cultural specifications. In this case, having the awareness that processes are completed faster at the home base combined with the tolerance of ambiguity that it may take longer when working with individuals from various cultural backgrounds prevents work frustration but is also vital to precluding stress, misunderstandings, and conflicts. The varying speed in accomplishing tasks resonates well with the statement by an interviewee in the NATO survey. The statement by the NATO command sergeant major in the Army highlighted the skill of "patience."

Furthermore, the German Navy commander pointed out the ability to be flexible and adapt, another essential culture-general skill. However, the lack of one particular culture-specific skill, knowledge of the English language, is frequently addressed.

In contrast, a captain shares a different perspective on the application and training of 3C and especially on culture-general skills on all levels:

> *(…) I think, for most, it is redundant because they will not apply 3C [culture-general skills] in everyday official use. Many are only in contact with their German community when deployed, and yes, there, it wouldn't hurt, but in many areas of training, everyday use is not a given. The user acceptance or the willingness to listen wouldn't be there. (German Forces, Captain, Army)*

Furthermore, the captain explained that the German Forces and their concept of *Innere Führung*,[27] which can be translated to "internal lead-

[27] Innere Führung is the cornerstone of the German Forces. It is a moral and ethical concept referring to the idea of the "Staatsbürger in Uniform" ("citizen in uniform"). This implies that military personnel are part of society and that they should reflect on and even question orders from their leadership if they are not aligned with the German Grundgesetz (Basic Law). This refers to the separation from

ership and civic education," countervail training in culture-general skills. "Basically, we already have [culture-general skills] in the area of internal leadership. Meaning that to some extent, we've already dealt with that" (German Forces, Captain Army).

Although *Innere Führung* potentially covers aspects of culture-general skills, the instillment of the concept itself in the German Forces has been critically regarded, such as in the survey conducted by Dörfler-Dierken and Kramer in 2014, "Innere Führung in Zahlen":

> *Der Kenntnisstand zur Inneren Führung variiert sehr stark über die Dienstgruppen hinweg. Insbesondere die Mannschaften und die Unteroffiziere o.P. schreiben sich selbst wenig oder gar keine Kenntnis der ZDv 10/1 Innere Führung zu. (Dörfler-Dierken et al., 2014, 21)*

The survey examined the popularity and knowledge of the central regulation of *Innere Führung* within the German Forces. The results indicated that the knowledge varied greatly between the ranks. In particular, junior NCOs (60%) did not know anything concrete or had not heard of *Innere Führung* before (Dörfler-Dierken et al., 2014, 21). Thus, the survey called for improvements in the education of military personnel. However, it has to be noted here that the Dörfler-Dierken survey focused on the popularity of the central regulation "ZDv 10/1 Innere Fürhung," which does not include the knowledge and practice of what *Innere Führung* entails for the German Forces in everyday life. Parallels can be drawn with the RTO report calling for the instillment of 3C on all levels. It appears that "ethical topics" are being pushed aside in order to concentrate on military-focused education.

Nevertheless, the military is a hierarchical construct where command and obedience are necessary to the extent of the limits of *Innere Führung*. Thus, commands have to make sense and should be questioned and not blindly followed if they conflict with the German Basic Law. In this regard, the interviewee contradicts himself:

the Wehrmacht's blind obedience witnessed throughout World War II. The Innere Führung concept was implemented under former Defense Minister Helmut Schmidt in the ZDv 10/1 regulation. Since 2014, the central regulation has been called ZDv A-2600/1.

> *In principle, it is a military, very hierarchical environment, where we have command and obedience. The easiest way is someone gives an order and does not really have to explain its sense. On the empathetic level, you would have to ask how he is receiving and interpreting that order. Would he be following the order contently or not at all. These questions don't arise in day-to-day business. There, we just have commands. It is simply expected, in the sense of obedience, to take these measures. (German Forces, Captain, Army)*

This statement is in great contrast to the quote by a U.S. brigadier general who emphasizes the value of emotional intelligence, which entails empathy, sensitivity, and understanding to make impactful decisions and execute them.

Moreover, the interviewee argues that the military, in general, has a universal code that facilitates communication among various military members.

> *Even though there are different nations in NATO, there is a shared character repertoire on the staff officer level, a common self-conception regarding professionalism. That means if you receive an order, you do it. Also, the officer training is not much different from those of other countries. (German Forces, Captain, Army)*

The statement emphasizes the misconception of the military being homogenous. Furthermore, from the interviewee's point of view, the obedient structure voids the application of 3C between military personnel from other countries. Indeed, specific military characteristics such as command and obedience, uniforms, and the cultivation of military traditions such as ceremonies, e.g., getting a military tattoo, are common features in most militaries. However, command and obedience are enforced differently among countries, for example in the Turkish military as compared to the German military. Some nation's uniforms do not signify experience through insignia or emblems, and ceremonies are carried out differently. Consequently, every military has its own culture and subcultures and is not homogenous, as shown in Chapter 2. Therefore, 3C is advisable in every dimension.

The following example presents a major contrast to the captain's statement. It emphasizes the significance of culture-general skills and culture-specific knowledge when interacting with military personnel from other countries.

An interviewee referred to the ISAF mission in Afghanistan:

> *There are newly joined member states and countries that are not NATO members but partners that play a role in joint missions. For instance, [specific other nation][28]. I believe they were responsible for the security personnel at the base, and here you did not really have an idea about how to interact with them. The language barrier was very high, and there was no mutual knowledge about customs and so on. But still, you are deployed with them and in doubt, regarding military security, even in a field where it's about life and death. So that was always a little problematic and biased on both sides. (German Forces, Lieutenant Colonel, Army 1)*

The universal military code mentioned by the captain cannot be confirmed here. Instead, culture-specific knowledge, such as knowing about traditions and customs, can provide one another with a feeling of safety, since the "other" seems more relatable. Besides, culture-general skills, such as openness, tolerance, acceptance, tolerance of ambiguity, empathy, respect, and suspending judgment, can prevent stereotyping and prevent bias, which can also contribute to feeling safer in extreme situations, as described by the interviewee.

Aside from that, culture-specific knowledge is primarily addressed when certain customs have to be taken into consideration, as illustrated in the following statement dealing with the KFOR mission:

> *We encountered that with other contingent members of different nationalities and their characteristics as well. That can be religion. For example, when we dealt with Bosnian Forces and they celebrated cultural or religious festivities, we considered that accordingly. We didn't assign them to a task during that timeframe. (German Forces, Lieutenant Colonel, Army 3)*

Findings

The interview excerpts demonstrated that less 3C on the subordinate levels necessitates more mediation from the leadership. Moreover, a lesser degree of (applied) 3C skills leads to frustration. Therefore, the cul-

[28] In the following, "specific other nation" will refer to a nation other than the German one, and is omitted due to privacy reasons.

ture-general skills of tolerance of ambiguity and cultural awareness were highlighted for dimension B. However, culture-general skills are not sufficiently taught, since culture-specific ones are the focus. Furthermore, divergent opinions on the need to teach culture-general skills underscore this finding. In particular, the perception of the military being a universal culture contributes to the neglect of culture-general skills.

Moreover, a striking overlap with the NATO interviews emphasizes that "bigger" states and their culture prevail over "smaller" states.

Dimension C – 3C and NATO missions abroad, regarding interaction with the local population

The importance of 3C while interacting with people from different cultural backgrounds becomes apparent in the following example from the ISAF mission in Afghanistan.

> *(...) a leader of a patrol talked, so to say improperly, with the presumed village elder. Standard questions were reeled off, and the conversation quickly turned inappropriate while the leader stood standing wearing full armament and sunglasses and so on. The interaction took place without any cultural awareness where I, as the observer in this case, had to say on the go, 'oh man!'. And you could see their subdued behavior. Such things on this level happen relatively often. (German Forces, Lieutenant Colonel, Army 1)*

This statement demonstrates a lack of cultural awareness and the absence of culture-specific skills. Culture-general skills become vital in this scenario. Observing how individuals' behaviors differ from one's own culture, e.g., how the elders interact, how they are dressed and equipped, what their body language says, could help the situation by allowing the person to be flexible and understand the observed behavior. If the elder is not armed and if power is associated with armaments, it could be beneficial to carry concealed weapons in order to attempt a mutually respectful conversation on a level playing field. Another crucial point is the aforementioned "checklist" approach. It is important to be patient and not rush through standard questions with the aim of retrieving the desired information as soon as possible. In this regard, empathy is a critical skill. Being empathetic towards the other makes the individual go beyond the standard questioning and also learn about family status and events, for instance. On the next visit, the person could then follow up on the obtained information.

As a result, a relationship might develop. The establishment of authentic human connections is vital in the sense of 3C Type I.

Showing empathy and applying culture-specific knowledge is demonstrated in the example provided by an Army lieutenant colonel:

> *We updated each other regularly with the Afghans about the current status. That was on the staff officer level. I mean, it makes a difference whether it is Ramadan or not. Can we invite people, what can we offer to drink, to eat, and at what time of day? How can we greet one another? Can we shake hands? And these things were vital. De facto, we dealt with that weekly. I would say that there was much consideration. I couldn't say that someone acted inconsiderately with other nations. (German Forces, Lieutenant Colonel, Army 3)*

Comparing this statement with the previous example of speaking to the elder while wearing full military gear highlights the interviewees' different perceptions that depend on individual experiences and education. It also shows that 3C is neither omnipresent nor is it absent. How seriously 3C is taken depends on its function. For 3C Type I, the amenability fades once the measures taken become contradictory:

> *(...), of course, some measures may not be taken seriously if the intercultural competence requirements are set too high. During Ramadan in Afghanistan, we had plenty of these examples. It was even announced for crew soldiers that they could not drink if an Afghan was present during the day. The idea was to demonstrate that if the locals aren't allowed to drink, they won't drink either. Hence, some of those points were critiqued. But these are more the exceptions. (German Forces, Lieutenant Colonel, Army 3)*

The contradiction is mainly derived from one principle mentioned in most interviews with the military personnel in the German Forces. When asked to define 3C, most interviewees underscored that 3C does not mean giving up one's own identity and culture.

The above example attests to a disproportionate relationship between cross-cultural competence and preserving one's own culture and identity.

Findings

Dimension C highlighted the individual and authentic approach to foster human connections, which was pointed out by critically reflecting on some conversations that took a "checklist" approach. Thus, empathy and patience were considered vital. However, in general, a lack of 3C can be determined. Moreover, the acceptance to comply with requirements justified with culture-specific knowledge decreases if the requirements contradict the principle of preserving one's own identity and culture.

Part II – Function of Cross-Cultural Competence

The general conclusion deduced from the document analysis, that 3C is perceived mainly as 3C Type I among the German Forces, became evident throughout the interview process. However, when the interviewees were asked whether 3C could be instrumentalized or become a military tool, which would indicate Type II-III, a consensus could be established. Regarding dimensions B-C, the 3C Type depends on the mission's goal and can be applied preventively, manipulatively, and/or dominantly. For example, one interviewee stated that you have to differentiate between a military and a peacekeeping mission, but "as soon as the situation is cleared, you can switch to the other mode" (German Forces, Lieutenant Colonel, Army 2).

Regardless of the type of mission, another interviewee argued that 3C Type I is a "precondition, but if I have a certain order to fulfill and I can generate the results easier by applying [3C Type II], then definitely" (German Forces, Captain, Army).

However, it has to be emphasized that the application or instrumentalization of 3C in a manipulative manner (Type II) does not imply malicious intentions, although it can be used in that way. In the following example, a female officer deployed as an IEB demonstrated cross-cultural competency by applying culture-general and culture-specific skills and convincing the counterpart in favor of her goal at the same time:

> *(…) in this case, Afghan girls were supposed to attend school. There were specific projects for this, and due to the influence of the advisors [IEB], approval was obtained [by the locals for the girls to receive education]. (…) she couldn't speak the language, but she had studied in this field, including additional training in operations and com-*

> *munications, so she knew exactly how she had to proceed. (German Forces, Lieutenant Colonel, Army 1).*

Here, the IEB used 3C Type II to achieve her goal to pave the way for the Afghan girls' education.

Notwithstanding this, problems can be expected when "somebody violently forces one's culture on the other in a negative sense" (Type III) (German Forces, Lieutenant Colonel, Army 2).

In the following categories, the coded interview excerpts will be analyzed further with regard to their function.

Type I: Ethical 3C

Only one interviewee highlighted the significance of culture-general skills and acknowledged that 3C was not limited to culture-specific knowledge: "(…) in my opinion, intercultural competence is also interpersonal competence, empathy" (German Forces, Lieutenant Colonel, Army 2).

The participant felt that, in his opinion, the importance of culture-general skills would prevail. Moreover, the general tenor that 3C is predominantly a tool of prevention can be illustrated in the following example: "[3C] is definitely a tool of prevention, the prevention of unwanted misinterpretations, behaviors, and actions. Therefore, it is indispensable for all communication of deployed soldiers" (German Forces, Lieutenant Colonel, Army 1).

Additionally, a captain confirmed this approach by stating that the objective is to "not cause any harm or make cultural faux pas (…)" (German Forces, Captain, Army).

3C is first and foremost considered Type I, as can be seen in a Navy commander's statement:

> *(…) well, intercultural competence is indispensable for the forces nowadays. (…) But I wouldn't say that it is indispensable for mission success. (…) There are many situations where I don't need intercultural competence; instead, I want to achieve the exact opposite. (…) The use of kinetic violence and weapons is precisely the opposite. (German Forces, Commander, Navy)*

This reveals two crucial aspects. First, the interviewee understands cross-cultural competence as 3C Type I, since he does not see the potential of 3C being instrumentalized and applied in the sense of Type II

and III. Second, 3C is paramount for the forces, but applying it to help achieve the mission's goal depends on the specific mission. A lieutenant colonel also mentioned that 3C (Type I) would apply to peacekeeping and peace-building missions. Furthermore, he emphasized that the "mode" would have to switch according to how the mission developed. On the one hand, 3C Type II would be used to acquire information and convince the other to achieve the mission's goal. On the other hand, 3C Type III would instrumentalize culture-general skills in combination with culture-specific knowledge and the violent force of one's culture over the other in order to enforce the goal.

However, one interviewee remarked that "it still lacks a little in humanity (…)" (German Forces, Lieutenant Colonel, Army 2).

It is apparent that 3C is perceived as an authentic set of skills that enables the individual to genuinely and "adequately" interact with the other according to the situation in order to foster effective communication by building rapport and human connections. Furthermore, specific principles for 3C education in the German Forces that are highlighted in the document analysis were manifested in the interviewee's understanding of 3C. The primary principle is that 3C is approached ethically and considered a social competence and, therefore, is associated with 3C Type I. On the contrary, the interviews underscored the call to improve social competence, particularly culture-general skills such as empathy.

Type II: Hegemonic 3C

Notwithstanding the foregoing, 3C Type II could be determined in the interviews as well. An example given by a captain illustrates the importance of 3C in dimension C for particular special operation teams such as psychological operations (PSYOPs) "that have to interact with the local population and create specific products for certain addressees in the civilian population (…) with a certain message, narrative. They have to know if that is appealing to the locals in order to not make a cultural faux pas" (German Forces, Captain, Army).

Hence, 3C can be utilized to convey the message the way it was intended and convince the recipient in favor of the sender. An example of this can be the distribution of leaflets.

This correlates with the statement provided by a commander that "(…) of course, you can influence someone and control the other side [with 3C Types II-III]" (German Forces, Commander, Navy).

However, the interviewee added that this is still done in a benevolent manner, but suits the purpose, the mission's goal, which is characteristic of 3C Type II. A lieutenant colonel confirmed this approach:

> *When considering my profession, job, and work in military intelligence (MilMwler), one aspect is obtaining information through goal-oriented conversation. (…) you are trained accordingly in order to be able to operate in every environment. To answer your question, yes, you can instrumentalize intercultural competence. (…) We always have to consider the mission's goal; we are still the military. It hinges on effective operations. If I have good operations, I have good results. (German Forces, Lieutenant Colonel, Army 2)*

Accordingly, intelligence is another crucial domain in dimension C. 3C Type II can be vital for operational planning when intelligence is needed. Obtaining pivotal information for the mission depends on the cross-cultural competence of the individual seeking the information. A lieutenant colonel gives a pertinent example:

> *(…) I consider intercultural competence to be part of a useful but necessary tactic to achieve an objective. Regardless of being outgoing and having an empathetic nature, whether I was socialized to act like that or I'm just reeling it off. Thus, I do think that it entails perils that you act manipulatively. Speaking from my perspective, the function and job I had, of course was I manipulative. Yes, I do simulate a friendship even though I cannot stand the person because of his divergent morals and ethics. (…) but he has such specific information that is vital for tactical operations. (…) you have to put those feelings aside. (German Forces, Lieutenant Colonel, Army 2)*

Culture-general skills are applied in order to retrieve information for "the greater good." According to Type II, the information would include details on planned violence against allies, for instance. In general, if the actions of one side clash with the principles of the other side, the hegemonic side will try to convince the other side, gain information, and prevent actions.

Regarding dimensions A-B, the application of 3C Type II could be seen as well. One interviewee stated that small talk, interest in the other culture, and the exchange of cultural specifications between military personnel could be a "door opener" both in a natural and manipulative way (German Forces, Lieutenant Colonel, Army 3).

To reinforce the latter, one interviewee recalled, "in the beginning, everything is always fine. Everyone is nice to each other. But after some time, the play-acting becomes exhausting for many, so you start to realize that some people fall back into their old patterns" (German Forces, Lieutenant Colonel, Army 2).

Type III: Dominant 3C

The application of Type III could be determined for dimensions B and C. One statement by an Army lieutenant colonel indicated a correlation with a finding of the conducted NATO interviews, that if one nation is either in a leading position or outnumbering the rest of the group, their culture prevails.

> *In North Afghanistan, we have a multinational headquarters that Germans lead. In our daily routine, you could often witness a lack of acknowledgement of the individual customs of a nation and interpersonal communication. Especially the leadership level OF-4, OF-5 did not act considerately. In principle, there was some sort of politeness, awareness of the basic code of conduct. However, each nation, also within the coalition, had its customs, and they were not always taken into consideration. That starts with a polite manner and how the person imposes their individual way of working on the others. There were various situations where you thought, 'well, that certainly doesn't come across well' (…). (German Forces, Lieutenant Colonel, Army 1)*

It is striking that the leadership level NATO rank OF-4 to OF-5 is addressed here. These ranks consist of lieutenant colonel and colonel positions that comprise the main group of interviewees participating in the conducted surveys. According to the document analysis for the theory and practice in the German Forces, the leadership level should be the most educated military personnel when it comes to 3C. Examples here are the pre-deployment training and the "*Multiplikatorenausbildung*," the training to become an "IkK (intercultural competence) disseminator." As mentioned in Section 4.2.3 on the German Armed Forces and Cross-Cultural Competence, central regulation A-2600/1 mandates training staff in 3C in preparation for multinational deployments. Disseminator training should be attended by leading military personnel. When asked whether all military leadership personnel have to complete this training,

an interviewee confirmed that "you could in principle say that, correct" (German Forces, Lieutenant Colonel, Army 1).

Even more conspicuous is that merely 50 percent of the interviewees attended the training, which aims to enable leaders to disseminate their knowledge in 3C to subordinates and apply it. This finding is consistent with another interviewee's statement, who said that he "couldn't claim that there would be an extraordinary number of military personnel that completed a disseminator training" (German Forces, Lieutenant Colonel, Army 3).

Several interviewees tried to explain the lack of disseminators. A Navy commander stated, "there are many things intended for the training's portfolio, but due to various reasons, they cannot be executed" (German Forces, Commander, Navy 2).

According to the interviewee, impacting factors are time, lack of classes, duties that take precedence, or physical absence. A lieutenant colonel's statement supported the abovementioned aspects and addressed the factor of personnel capacity:

> *(…) when you look at the troops' daily lives, they have foreign liabilities, training liabilities, inspection stage ten, and so on (…). A variety of orders and tasks with insufficient personnel may contribute to the fact that it hurts to let somebody attend the disseminator training. (…) Disseminator training is essential, but the personnel capacity has to match, too. (German Forces, Lieutenant Colonel, Army 2)*

Aside from that, it was added that personnel who viewed as unpopular are frequently sent to such trainings. The statement was referring to outsiders who were deemed outsiders due to their different behavior or perceived lack of skills.

However, the other 50 percent who attended the training found it constructive and effective, especially if the training was enhanced with personal experiences of military personnel or previously deployed attachés.

Still, one pivotal factor impacts the quality of the training's effectiveness, which became evident in several statements. The education is not standardized, which gives the disseminator freedom in terms of what and how he or she disseminates information. Consequently, the skill set and knowledge of the subordinates with respect to 3C depends on the disseminator's discretion.

> *(…) of course, I disseminated the points as long as they seemed plausible and reasonable to me in reference to my training. Again, there is no binding concept from the employer, like you have to disseminate precisely this and that. (German Forces, Lieutenant Colonel, Army 1)*

When it comes to the compulsory pre-deployment training, there was a predominant focus on culture-specific knowledge in the interviews, which the document analysis had indicated beforehand. The interviewees' tendency to perceive culture-specific knowledge as more critical than culture-general skills is related to the 3C education they received. Thus, the lack of culture-general skills in the above quote correlates with the 3C education in the German Forces and its prioritization of culture-specific knowledge.

In reference to the lieutenant colonel's previous quote (German Forces, Lieutenant Colonel, Army 1), his experiences in Afghanistan demonstrated that in this context, it is not the lack of cultural awareness, but rather applying 3C Type III to use one's leadership position (power) to force one's own cultural specifications – in this case, the way of operating – on the other. Here, cultural conditions were knowingly disregarded, and the individual conditions were forced on the other.

A similar example can be assigned to both dimensions B and C. It deals with cultural festivities.

A lieutenant colonel provided an example from an ISAF deployment in Afghanistan.

> *It was some holiday in [specific other nation], and they celebrated that at the camp. The [specific other nation] had a stage, and they had flown in some permissive girls from [specific other nation]. [Specific other nation], carefully spoken, they looked very, very permissive. They dressed accordingly, and of course, Afghan translators were invited as well. They must have thought that is everyday life. (…) the elders seemed to feel sort of harassed, and one translator approached me, 'Is this normal where you're from?'. (…) from my perspective, this was a typical example of how to not apply any intercultural competence. Well, there was none, no intercultural competence at all. (…) usually, precisely that is the problem with these deployments abroad. You have a more hedonistic country. They are always in a party mood and like to celebrate, and in my opinion, we lack intercultural competence at that point since that is something you shouldn't do there.*

> *(…) you have to consider how people behave who are actually guests in that country. We aren't occupying forces; we are there based on an invitation from that country. There are specific manners that I cannot abandon just because I have a higher position now, which is that the deployed soldier earns more money abroad than at home. You cannot act as the new guiding culture (…). (German Forces, Lieutenant Colonel, Army 2)*

This example underscores once more that 3C is a balancing act. On the one hand, it has to be considered that many assignments entail a deployment for six months on a base, which develops its own culture. In this case, festivities can be a welcome change to the strenuous work away from home. However, the conditions and sensitivities of the local population and the multicultural military personnel also have to be considered. According to the lieutenant colonel's account, the situation lacked cultural awareness, empathy, and respect, indicating 3C Type III. Moreover, the interviewee expressed embarrassment and a lack of 3C towards the local Afghans who were present, which implies that he understands 3C according to Type I.

Another example of an operation that took place in Afghanistan affects dimension C and demonstrates the application of Type III through a cultural decision made by NATO members that was enforced on another culture.

> *(…) in Afghanistan, there was an operation (…). This operation was about the [specific other nation] burning all the poppy fields with a Bunsen burner. Afterward, the United Nations told the Afghan farmers 'listen, cultivating opium is wrong; instead, you will get 500 EUR from us and will now grow crops and watermelons.' (German Forces, Lieutenant Colonel, Army 2)*

Forcing one's cultural beliefs on a different culture, e.g., the perception of what is right or wrong, may cause complications and might be a solution for short-term effects instead of long-term ones. The latter was confirmed by a lieutenant colonel who had contact with an Afghan farmer affected by the operation:

> *Well, and then he tells me, 'I have five hectares, and I receive 500 USD from the United Nations. But if I use these five hectares to cultivate opium, I get 15,000 USD. With that money, I can feed my kids, and so on.' So, he doesn't really care. This is one typical example where*

> *you have to be able to respond to those needs and problems. (German Forces, Lieutenant Colonel, Army 2)*

Applying the divergent cultural template of NATO members could not solve the situation, which in the eyes of NATO was seen as a problem. The interviewee stated that applying culture-general skills, especially empathy, would be the better approach. The significance of culture-general skills was addressed by a Navy commander who witnessed both 3C Type I-II and Type III while on a deployment in Kosovo during the K-For mission.

> *I experienced both sides. On the one hand, one person was behaving quite ignorantly and demonstrated that 'we are NATO, we want this and that' and that didn't work out at all. On the other hand, there was one that showed sensitivity, and that worked out very well. It is paramount, and I want to underline that we cannot go somewhere and say 'ok, we are NATO, we do good'. You have to approach the people properly, engage, and go as far as sitting down to eat together and drink tea. No matter if you're in Africa, in Kosovo, or Afghanistan. (German Forces, Commander, Navy)*

Findings

The interview analysis of the German Forces verifies the established 3C types and their application in dimensions B and C. Moreover, it could be demonstrated that the 3C type depends on the mission and its goal, but also, for example, on special operation teams and their objective. This means that if a mission is a peace-building mission, 3C Type I does not automatically apply because different teams with different "sub-goals" will apply different types of 3C accordingly, with the aim of contributing to the mission's goal. Therefore, military or peacekeeping missions are heterogeneous with regard to their application of 3C. Moreover, it could be inferred that 3C Type II is vital for operational planning since applying 3C Type II to obtain information for military intelligence is essential.

Additionally, 3C Type I and the application of culture-general skills were pivotal for dimensions B and C. However, 3C Type I is not applied as would be necessary. Due to the lack of data regarding dimension A, it is impossible to make a statement concerning the application of 3C types here. Finally, some statements correlated with the NATO interviews in that 3C is dependent on leadership and resources. Moreover, Type III

was detected in dimension B for both NATO and the German Forces in connection with dominating military groups from different nations.

Part III – A Canon for Cross-Cultural Competence Skills for the German Forces

Although the interviewees were explicitly asked to list their individually prioritized 3C skills, many skills were not listed, but rather indirectly referred to through specific statements. This also shows that in some cases, the interviewees could not specifically name several skills due to a lack of theoretical knowledge of 3C. The skills are described and pointed out by the interviewees instead.

A commander in the Navy explains how he understands 3C: "To me, this is the capability to 'arrive' from a foreign culture in another culture regardless of the objective. (…) It is the ability to adapt or behave in such a manner that doesn't cause any irritation in the other system. It also entails individual access to a culture" (German Forces, Commander, Navy).

This statement alludes to particular culture-general skills such as *flexibility, openness,* and *empathy*, expressed through the capability to "arrive" in another culture and find access to it. *Adaptability* is another skill that the interviewee considers essential in order to avoid conflicts arising from different cultural backgrounds. Adaptability also entails *observation*, the ability to watch and study the social interactions of members of the other culture, for example, and adapt to the observed behavior. Moreover, the interviewee noted that having cross-cultural competence does not require the individual to renounce his or her own culture, which can also be associated with cultural self-awareness.

However, the interviewee also specifically named skills that he considers vital: the capability to learn, self-reflection, openness, patience, and sensitivity/empathy.

In the following, all culture-general skills identified in the interviews with the German Forces are listed to clarify how the interviewees define them. The very first skill is empathy, which was highlighted by five of six interviewees. The order reflects the relevance and frequency of the skills mentioned by the interviewees.

1. Empathy/Sensitivity

Empathy was also described as "the sensitivity you have to display" (German Forces, Commander, Navy). Moreover, it was specified as the ability to be aware of "how something comes across" (German Forces, Captain, Army) and "that you can put yourself in the other's shoes" (German Forces, Lieutenant Colonel, Army 3). Additionally, two interviewees pointed out that empathy involves the ability to read nuances and be tactful: "You have to have great tact. Many cultures dislike the cool practicality that Europeans have. (…) That's what we learn in practical training, empathy. And eventually, you become capable of developing empathy. The success of each contingent's mission depends on this capability" (German Forces, Lieutenant Colonel, Army 2).

Regardless of the generalizations made in this statement, it is a crucial factor that the interviewee says that empathy can be developed and learned through training. This particular interviewee completed different 3C training and education than the other interviewees. Therefore, it is understandable that the following interviewee with the same rank understands empathy as an individual trait: "(…) certainly, you can read and learn most things beforehand, but individual social traits enhance this. That means you also need general social competence, something like empathy (…)" (German Forces, Lieutenant Colonel, Army 1).

Nevertheless, while the interviewee still considers empathy to be an essential part, he understands it as an individual ability instead. This correlates with the KSAOs and "The Sage Handbook of Intercultural Competence" approach, which postulates that there are other characteristics and abilities apart from knowledge (culture-specific) and skills (culture-general). However, this paper differentiates solely between culture-specific knowledge and culture-general skills. The latter implies other characteristics such as empathy, since it can be developed and trained and can therefore be regarded as a skill.

2. Tolerance of Ambiguity

As a captain put it, "it's not only about, let's say, cultural nuances, it's also about a certain tolerance limit. And this has to be trained because, of course, there are always misunderstandings in day-to-day business. So you need to have this very high tolerance limit" (German Forces, Captain, Army).

Aside from misunderstandings arising from cultural diversity, processing things in a timely fashion or holding someone to their word can be cultural expectations that cannot be applied to others. "It is possible

that I spoke to an Afghan inappropriately and didn't realize it. That happens. After a certain time, you become frustrated if you don't get what you were promised, especially with that German impatience" (German Forces, Lieutenant Colonel, Army 1).

This example illustrates what happens if there is a lack of tolerance of ambiguity. The interviewee became frustrated and upset, which affected the conversation with the local Afghan. In this sense, tolerance of ambiguity is the "capability to deal with cultural diversity" (German Forces, Colonel, Air Force).

3. Openness

Openness was defined as "a basic interest towards other cultures (…)" (German Forces, Captain, Army).

A Navy commander remarked that openness towards other cultures and unfamiliar situations is an aspect that needs to be trained (German Forces, Commander, Navy). Similar to empathy, openness is defined as an attitude in "The Sage Handbook of Intercultural Competence" (see Deardorff, 2009), but it can be defined as a skill since it can be trained and applied.

4. Cultural Self-awareness/Awareness

According to an interviewee, cultural self-awareness is the "self-reflection and the awareness of your own cultural specifications without putting your cultural identity aside (…)" (Forces, Lieutenant Colonel, Army 1).

Furthermore, it is "a clear compass, where you can locate yourself and other cultures; this is my culture, this is another culture" (German Forces, Captain, Army).

5. Flexibility and Adaptability

Flexibility here means "to learn something new, comprehend and approach new situations" (German Forces, Captain, Army). Furthermore, a commander pointed out that flexibility entails the capability to work in different modes with regard to pace and working style – in other words, to adapt to the situation.

6. Patience

Patience was referred to as not putting a time limit on how long a task, the process of obtaining information, or developing a relationship will take.

7. Respect
In the interviews, respect was associated with "(…) diversity, the respect towards individuals thinking differently" (German Forces, Lieutenant Colonel, Army 2) and with valuing other cultures (German Forces, Lieutenant Colonel, Army 3).

8. Teachability
Teachability was viewed as the ability to learn on a continuous basis.

9. Self-reflection
Self-reflection here is the "capability to develop and to correct yourself (…)" (German Forces, Commander, Navy).

10. Suspending Judgment/Cultural Relativism
Suspending judgment was defined as the "elimination of a degrading way of thinking" (German Forces, Lieutenant Colonel, Army 2). Bias, stereotypes, and ethnocentrism must be drastically decreased, according to the interviewee.

11. Tolerance
This was viewed as the capability to tolerate cultural diversity.

12. Self-esteem
No definition was provided throughout the interviews.

13. Observation Skills
No definition was provided throughout the interviews.

14. Emotional Stability
No definition was provided throughout the interviews.

15. Communication/Language
The trait of being able to speak the other's verbal and nonverbal language.

When comparing the 3C skills compiled here with the established canon in the document analysis for the German Forces, several overlaps can be identified: *empathy, cultural self-awareness and awareness, openness/interest, teachability* as well as *communication/langua*ge. Additionally, the partially overlapping skills in the document analysis can also be deduced from the interview analysis: *tolerance of ambiguity, mental/emotional stability,* and *flexibility/adaptability* (shown in parentheses). Therefore, the

remaining skills – patience, respect, self-reflection, suspending judgment, and observation skills – cannot be considered for a canon for the German Forces. However, tolerance and self-esteem match the other unique skills found in the *theory*, which are courage and resilience for self-esteem. Aside from that, it must be pointed out that these culture-general skills are somewhat randomly taught in various training sessions instead of in a designated 3C seminar. Thus, it is not feasible to evaluate the 3C culture-general skills among the forces, which was the same case for the U.S. Forces.

Part IV – Standardization of 3C

Five of six interviewees agreed on the practicability of a standard for 3C in the German Forces. One interviewee emphasized that "a regulation has to be issued to have a systematization and enforce it structurally for day-to-day business; primarily to educate young people instead of warning them. The education function of what is right or wrong. And I think that an institution such as the German Forces is accountable" (German Forces, Lieutenant Colonel, Army 2).

The interviewee expressed the importance of having a standard instilled at the very beginning of one's military career – a basic level of 3C for everyone and applicable in every dimension. Regarding education, another interviewee remarked that it is vital to ensuring uniform teaching:

> *(…) standardization is helpful when consistency is needed. Concerning intercultural competence, 3C must be taught uniformly instead of divergent approaches on the same topic for various addressees in different training centers. That would be problematic to compare. It is especially essential for deployment and the leadership that everyone has the same background. (German Forces, Lieutenant Colonel, Army 1)*

In general, "a standard as a tool of orientation is desirable since actions can be compared (…) and discrepancies can be addressed" (German Forces, Colonel, Air Force).

However, a possible decrease in flexibility is seen as a disadvantage of having a standard (German Forces, Colonel, Air Force). Nonetheless, a lieutenant colonel shares a different perspective that "no matter whether it is a commander, battalion commander, or brigadier general, they usually

have a certain flexibility to implement that accordingly" (German Forces, Lieutenant Colonel, Army 3).

The interviewees were also apprised that the Center for Civic Education and Leadership (ZInFü) is the coordinating department (ZkIKK) for the development and training of 3C education and training for the German Forces. Moreover, the interviewees were asked to give their opinion on why a standard has not been mandated. The following statement was frequently reflected in informal conversations with other members of the forces:

> *(…) the Center for Civic Education and Leadership has, per se, a high significance because of the concept of Innere Führung (internal leadership), which is especially regarded as important at the (German) Ministry of Defence (BMVg) and thus has a lobby. One could say that. However, ZInFü is a small department, and its lobby cannot prevail in the various branches. One has to say that as well. The department is way too small for that to happen. Also, in the context of Innere Führung, there is a major discrepancy between expectation and reality and, I would say, is not as highly regarded. (German Forces, Lieutenant Colonel, Army 1)*

The excerpt demonstrates that further efforts have to be undertaken to implement 3C across the forces and the ministry. The department would need a more powerful lobby and a more respected standing. Concerning a lobby, it could be argued that the lack of a 3C standard benefits the leadership, which is expressed by an Army lieutenant colonel "(…) I have to repeat it, no standard means, of course, that I have sufficient flexibility. That's what the one or the other commander appreciates" (German Forces, Lieutenant Colonel, Army 3).

Regardless of that, one interviewee pointed out the importance of understanding a standard as a dynamic guideline that has to be individually applied, referring to the aforementioned "checklist" approach. Furthermore, from his perspective, a standard in 3C would require "implementing an element to continuously reflect and improve yourself" (German Forces, Commander, Navy).

This correlates with another interviewee's approach that once a standard in 3C is established, continuous training in 3C becomes necessary: "it's nice to have a great regulation, but you have to regularly provide practical training for it (…)" (German Forces, Lieutenant Colonel, Army 2).

However, two interviewees remarked that there must be a differentiation between the military personnel's position and scope of duties. According to the two interviewees, some positions require more education in 3C than others, so a standard is indispensable. The foundation could be the starting point to develop 3C skills further and broaden 3C knowledge. This raises the question of which 3C skills are most relevant and sufficient for basic 3C training?

The significance of culture-general skills has been demonstrated throughout the paper. Thus, the canons for 3C established in Part III could serve as a guideline. The skills listed in parentheses could be considered for further education in 3C. However, the prospective regulation for intercultural competence in the German Forces has already stipulated prerequisites that are, in fact, culture-general skills: *tolerance, acceptance, mental stability, empathy, openness, courage,* and *resilience*. Nevertheless, many of the skills are overlapping, although the established canons suggest a supplement.

Regarding the culture-specific skills, basic 3C training should include the cultural "dos and don'ts" as well as the specifics that each interviewee emphasized. Additionally, basic language skills other than English was desired by several interviewees, in order to engage in "small talk" with the local population in their native tongue or to ensure the interpreter's independence. In contrast to some statements arguing that culture-general skills would be redundant, a standard in 3C and culture-general skills is vital for all dimensions. Concerning dimensions A and B, one interviewee underscored the need for including 3C in the general basic training:

> *(...) From my perspective, 3C should already be included in general basic training. I have to add that when young people go to the Bundeswehr, the Bundeswehr will leave its mark on them if you can still recruit them. (…) And I think implementing that in the basic general training is essential, especially regarding what the military counterintelligence is reporting about right-wing radicalism, right-wing and left-wing music against the foundation of a free and democratic basic order. (German Forces, Lieutenant Colonel, Army 2)*

This statement illustrates the significance of 3C for the German Forces internally and correlates with the prospective regulation examined in Section 4.2.3.

For dimension C, another interviewee pointed out why 3C and culture-general skills are paramount on all levels:

> *In the end, the forces are reflected on all levels of deployment. On the lowest tactical level, which refers to the basic soldier, we interact with the local population. Per se, we do have here the lowest level of education on both sides, which gives rise to the highest potential for misinterpretations or misconceptions. Simultaneously, the higher levels, such as the disseminators and decision-makers, can lead to significant damage if that doesn't work well. (…) It is similar to the political level. When the head of states don't get along with each other (…) and act like a bull in the china shop, that doesn't really foster cooperation either. (German Forces, Lieutenant Colonel, Army 1)*

The interviewee emphasized that 3C is vital on all military and civilian personnel levels as addressed in the prospective regulation for the German Forces. Additionally, he highlighted the impact of 3C on the political level.

In summary, the majority of interviewees were in favor of a standard in 3C. With respect to statements such as "(…) regardless of the country-specific pre-deployment training, 3C could indeed be represented more prominently in the day-to-day business" (German Forces, Lieutenant Colonel, Army 3), it is now of utmost importance that the responsible department (FüSK III 3) fosters the implementation and application of its central regulation.

6.2.3 Findings – Interview Analysis

» NATO – ACT

The survey on 3C conducted with military personnel located at NATO Allied Command Transformation was able to collect essential data. In the following, significant findings will be highlighted in a summary. Next, the findings from the interviews with the U.S. and German Forces will be presented. All three surveys will be weighed against each other and compared with the results of the document analysis.

The first part examined the three determined dimensions of 3C in a NATO context: (A) 3C and NATO HQ; (B) 3C in multicultural NATO contingents while on a mission/training exercise abroad; and (C) 3C and NATO missions abroad with regard to interaction with the local population.

Overall, it became evident that 3C is vital in all three dimensions to ensure interoperability. Findings in dimension A demonstrated that 3C education at ACT solely focuses on cultural-awareness training, which is only one component of 3C. As a result, the neglect of dimensions A and B for 3C in theory and practice resulted in a considerable negative impact on operational readiness and effectiveness. Lastly, culture-general skills were identified as paramount for all dimensions.

In the subsequent part, the previously established model of 3C types – I "Ethical," II "Hegemonic", and III "Dominant" – were verified and proven to be practiced within the three dimensions. The examples illustrated for dimensions A and B indicated a prevalence of Type III that had a major impact on work atmosphere and effectiveness. Moreover, the interview excerpts demonstrated that 3C is currently leadership-dependent, which determines how 3C Type I is used and thus its function.

Dimension C revealed the use of postcolonial mechanisms within NATO forces, such as applying one's value system to other cultures and having the appearance of an occupying force when not applying 3C (Types I-II).

Furthermore, in the third part, the previously determined canons of the academic discourse and military discourse were compared with the findings of the survey at ACT with the objective of establishing a final canon for culture-general 3C skills in NATO. The result is a canon that contains *cross-cultural awareness, communication skills, empathy, flexibility,* and *adaptability.* Other relevant skills are *observation, perspective-taking,* and *interest/openness*.

The final part discussed a standard for 3C in NATO. Most interviewees substantiated the findings of the document analysis in favor of a standard for 3C, although some of the interviewee's opinions differed. The main factors impeding a 3C standard were postponements of the implementation of 3C due to the prioritization of operations, financial reasons, 3C being considered a national responsibility, 3C not being implementable in NATO, and lastly, 3C interfering with the operational readiness of the Alliance. Nevertheless, the factors in favor of a 3C standard – equality, interoperability, effectiveness, confidence, ability to behave sensibly and assertively, as well as evaluability in the scope of a lessons learned process – were preponderant.

» U. S. Forces –USCENTCOM

Regarding the first part, the data collected from the interviews conducted with U.S. military personnel at USCENTCOM showed that current and future assignments require cross-cultural competence in all dimensions. At the same time, the findings stressed culture-general skills and particularly empathy in all dimensions. However, a lack of those skills could be derived from the interviews, which became evident through reported sexism and racism in dimension A, bias, cultural generalization, stereotypes in dimension B, superiority tendencies in dimensions B and C, and ethnocentricity in dimension C. Despite the overall positive sentiment toward 3C, opinions differed as to whether 3C is necessary in every dimension and for every position. For instance, 3C is a considered an "operational variable" in dimension C, which was reported to be occasionally perceived as a constraint. As a result, the interview findings indicated that 3C is not applied everywhere it could be, which correlates with the other dimensions. Determining factors for applying 3C were found to depend on the general leadership, the individuals executing their job, the mission or assignment at hand, time, space, as well as the actual quality and content of the 3C training. Regarding the latter, a focus on culture-specific knowledge was demonstrated for all dimensions, and was especially the case for pre-deployment training. Thus, it became evident that the significance of 3C for dimension A is being neglected, at least from an educational standpoint. On the contrary, 3C was found to be a crucial competence for dimension B, as it was reportedly vital to communicating objectives, building and impacting relationships, and preventing conflicts. Accordingly, 3C was found to positively affect interoperability in the U.S. Forces as well when working with NATO partners and also to foster efficiency and effectiveness in all dimensions. Finally, 3C was predominantly understood as a key leadership competency instead of a foundational skill for all military personnel.

The second part of the survey dealt with the established 3C typification and validated its application by the U.S. Forces. Although U.S. military personnel mainly considered 3C Type I for all dimensions, it became clear that some of the interviewees unconsciously might have acted according to Type II by applying their value system to the other. Especially in dimension C, 3C Type I could be perceived as a constraint. For example, the application of Type I decreases significantly as the operation tempo increases. Thus, flexibility in consciously and unconsciously switching between 3C types in accordance with the situation could be observed.

However, it was stressed that young leadership personnel tend to lack this flexibility and remain in one mode instead, in particular Type III. It is unclear whether this correlates with a gradual increase in 3C training as the person advances in their professional career and if the person was not sufficiently familiar with the concept at that point, or if it correlates with a Type III educational approach. As mentioned, in-depth 3C training is designated for leadership personnel, which underlines the aim to instill 3C education for all military personnel right from the start. Moreover, 3C Type III was clearly the least favorable tool due to ethical and effectiveness reasons, since it would only result in short-term effects. However, Type III 3C was found to occasionally be necessary to use. Part II demonstrated that the potential and three-dimensionality of 3C is not clear to everyone. The potential of using 3C culture-general skills in Type II to advance one's objective and generate buy-in was only acknowledged by one interviewee. Nevertheless, Type II 3C was found to be practiced in all dimensions and was thus the most popular tool. In the third part, a final canon was established for the U.S. Armed Forces by determining overlaps between the U.S. military discourse in the document analysis and the findings of the interviews with the U.S. military personnel. The culture-general skills for the canon are empathy, cross-cultural awareness (particularly self-awareness), and communication skills. Partially overlapping skills were patience and active listening. A subsequent excursus on 3C education and training for the U.S. Forces in relation to a 3C standard demonstrated a varying prioritization of incongruent 3C education and training approaches, such as inconsistent use of terminology or teaching content related to culture-general skills in classes that are not designated as 3C without linking the cross-cultural component and thereby cognitively limiting the taught skillsets to a certain domain, and lastly, not including any 3C education or training at all. This finding strongly correlated with the findings of the document analysis. However, the main consistency between all branches was the aspect of culture-specific pre-deployment training and a focus on leadership. Language skills were considered preponderant, although it became clear that language cannot be an indicator for a certain culture and is rather a facilitator for communication purposes. Moreover, a need for up-to-date and revised coursework was addressed.

Overall, each interviewee was in favor of a NATO standard for 3C. The apparent benefits of such a standard were identified, including impactful decision-making processes (thus boosting effectiveness and efficiency), evaluability of 3C training and outcome as well as improvement in this area, and creating a common ground to foster unity and interopera-

bility. Finally, the collected data indicated that a standard or baseline in 3C should be taught and instilled at the very beginning of one's professional military career, as the case of sexism and misogyny in the U.S. Marine Corps demonstrated. In addition, further 3C training should be implemented on a regular basis during the course of one's professional career, with the option for it to be tailored as appropriate.

After having summarized the findings of the survey with the U.S. Forces, it is now possible to answer the hypothesis based on the document analysis for the U.S. Forces:

(1) The United States Armed Forces provide an extensive amount of literature and research conducted for several military branches, which implies a high level of importance. Given the fact that the impact and effect of 3C is regarded as vital, 3C is mainly considered a military tool (Type II) and has therefore received recognition and acceptance within the military.

Both the document and interview analysis showed that 3C is predominantly considered important and even indispensable by the higher ranks. However, the collected data does not indicate that 3C is mainly considered a military tool in the sense of Type II and thus has been accepted in the military. In fact, most interviewees understood 3C according to Type I. However, by reflecting on their actions it became evident that some of the interviewees unconsciously applied Type II. As discussed in the interview analysis, self-awareness training should enable individuals to act consciously. Moreover, the interviewee with the highest rank emphasized the use of Type II but at the same time highlighted that there is a continuous switching between types to fit the situation. Notwithstanding this, the benefits of 3C generally acknowledged by the majority of the interviewees indicated acceptance and recognition on the whole.

» German Forces – BMVg

The first part examined the three determined dimensions of 3C for the German Forces as a NATO member: (A) 3C and German Forces internally; (B) 3C in multicultural NATO contingents while on a mission/training exercise abroad; and (C) 3C and NATO missions abroad with regard to interaction with the local population.

Most interviews confirmed the significance of 3C for all dimensions. However, a clear tendency on the part of the interviewees to prioritize di-

mension C became evident, although dimension A revealed stereotyping and bias between branches and positions as well as cases of right-wing extremism. In addition, the focus on 3C education for the leadership level was shown to increase the time for mediation between subordinate personnel of different cultural backgrounds, which became evident in dimension B. This was found to correlate with a high potential for frustration. The lack of 3C in culture-general skills in particular could be determined as the cause of this. This lack relates to a prioritization of culture-specific knowledge in pre-deployment and disseminator training that targets dimension C. As a result, the integration of 3C in the general basic training was addressed to ensure a comparable level of 3C for all military personnel, correlating with the draft regulation for intercultural competence for the German Forces. Consequently, 3C is not yet comprehensively applied in all dimensions.

The second part dealt with the established 3C typification. All types could be verified through the interviews. The interviews indicated that German military personnel considered cross-cultural competence as Type I. In particular, empathy and genuine interpersonal communication with the other was highlighted. However, it was also remarked that these culture-general skills need to be improved. Type II was deemed vital for operational planning because it can be used as a tool to gather intelligence. The interviews also demonstrated the use of 3C Type II to achieve a particular goal through persuasion. Moreover, Type III was especially evident in dimension B, thus impacting the work atmosphere. The lack of applying culture-general skills is reflected in the disunity among the interviewees with regard to which degree the skills are relevant. However, a final canon in culture-general skills for the German Forces was derived from the interviews and document analysis. The skills here are *empathy, cross-cultural awareness, openness/interest, teachability,* and *communication/language.* Partially overlapping skills were *tolerance of ambiguity, mental/emotional stability, and flexibility/adaptability*, which can be considered as well.

Regarding a standard, the majority of interviewees were in favor of a central regulation in order to foster evaluability, interoperability, and effectiveness. However, a standard would require flexibility as well as revisions when applicable. Furthermore, the integration of 3C education, including culture-general skills, in the general basic training as addressed in the draft regulation was found to be a good starting point. Still, it has to be emphasized that both its implementation and recurring 3C training are essential to ensuring and maintaining a desirable level of 3C among the Forces on all levels. In the current situation, the function and applica-

tion of 3C depend on the resources of the German Forces, the individual teaching 3C, the discretion of the disseminators and leadership level, as well as on the particular objective of a mission or part of mission.

After having summarized the findings of the survey with the German Forces, it is now possible to answer the hypothesis based on the document analysis for the German Forces:

(2) the German Armed Forces mainly consider 3C to be a component of social competence (Type I), which "discredits" its importance for military operations.

Both the document and interview analysis indicate that 3C is predominantly considered Type I. Nevertheless, 3C is still regarded as an important factor in dimension C for military operations. However, it became evident that 3C is more of a variable that is often assigned a lower priority than other factors that are deemed more combat-relevant. Consequently, the hypothesis could generally be validated.

6.2.4 Research Results

When contrasting the findings of each survey, many similarities can be identified. Some of the interviewed military personnel from NATO, U.S. Forces, and German Forces exhibited ethnocentricity in dimension C. Moreover, interviews with the U.S. Forces and German Forces revealed bias and stereotyping between military branches, which relates to dimension A. In the same dimension, there was a profound lack of 3C as was evidenced by reports of sexism in NATO[29] as well as sexism and racism in the U.S. Forces and right-wing extremism in the German Forces. This neglect of culture-general skills as well as their significance for all three dimensions holds the forces and in particular their leadership accountable. The data from all three surveys indicated that 3C is leadership-dependent and should be positively exemplified. However, 3C education mainly targets culture-specific pre-deployment training for the U.S. and German Forces. NATO, in contrast, conducts cultural-awareness and culture-specific training which only focuses on particular aspects of 3C. Furthermore, it became evident for both the U.S. and German Forces that 3C-relevant content taught in non-designated 3C classes was not linked to cross-cul-

[29] In the case of NATO, racism was identified in dimension B.

tural competence, thereby cognitively limiting some culture-general skills to a certain educational domain. In addition, inconsistent use of terminology complicates the evaluability of 3C for the U.S. and German Forces. In comparison to the U.S. Forces, where each military branch has its own approach to 3C and 3C training, which also differed within some branches, the interviews with the German Forces indicated more coherency. This finding reflected the results of the document analysis which found that the U.S. Forces lack interorganizational alignment and hinder the evaluation of 3C.

While the document analysis for the German Forces indicated an anticipated transformation of 3C education by integrating 3C training in the basic training for all military personnel, the U.S. and German Forces do not currently have any 3C included in their basic training. In both cases, 3C is either a matter of pre-deployment education, sometimes of significantly different qualities or reserved for leadership positions. Despite this, the relevance of 3C on all levels was generally acknowledged by all 18 interviewees. Especially members of NATO and the U.S. Forces addressed the inclusion of 3C in military performance reports. However, both parties agreed that only an already established standard for 3C would make the evaluation and rating of 3C in performance reports beneficial. In general, all three surveys indicated that a standard was considered beneficial, particularly if it was mandated by NATO. All three surveys also showed a preponderance of benefits for a NATO standard in 3C. In fact, it was found that a 3C standard could bring NATO members closer in terms of aligning interests and facilitating decision-making processes in the coalition environment, and thus improve effectiveness, efficiency, and interoperability. On the contrary, some of the military personnel located at NATO ACT considered such a standard to be a constraint, unachievable and more of a national responsibility. Furthermore, all surveys indicated the existence of military cultures that are not necessarily aligned with one another. However, in each survey, a minority of respondents indicated they thought a universal military culture would eliminate the need for a standard in 3C since it was not deemed mission critical but rather a "nice-to-have." Moreover, 3C Type I was perceived a potential constraint in dimension C, as the survey with U.S. and German Forces revealed. Nonetheless, all surveys demonstrated that first, the established 3C typification applies to all dimensions, and second, 3C types vary depending on the leadership, 3C education, assignment, mission, and situation. For the interviews with the U.S. Forces, the most popular tool was identified as Type II, which was applied in all dimensions. On the one hand, Type II

was considered vital in dimension B in order to communicate objectives and generate buy-in in a coalition environment such as NATO. However, all interviewees except for one preferred Type I, although some of them unconsciously applied Type II. On the other hand, the findings of the interviews with the German Forces stressed Type II in dimension C for the purpose of gathering intelligence.

It has to be highlighted that the findings of the document analysis for the U.S. Forces did not strongly correlate with the findings of the interviews. Thus, there is a clear discrepancy between what is officially announced and how it is actually implemented. This became evident for NATO Allied Command Transformation as well. Here, ACT's official website highlighted a homogenization of the military culture, which was negated by the designated release authority at ACT. However, the main similarity concerning the U.S. Forces is a tendency towards Type II, whereas the U.S. Marine Forces took a significantly different approach to 3C. While the document analysis indicated more of a Type II-III approach, especially for dimension C, the interviews demonstrated the opposite. Type III and a neglect of 3C Type I could be determined for NATO in dimensions A and B, whereas the U.S. Forces more fell into the Type I-II category here.

The findings for the German Forces indicated a predominant perception of 3C according to Type I, which correlated very highly with the 3C education and training examined in the document analysis. Overall, it became evident that the interviewees from the U.S. and German Forces particularly stress 3C for dimension C, but the majority also acknowledged 3C's relevance to dimensions A and B.

Evidently, the interviewed military personnel acknowledged the value of 3C even though its three-dimensional potential had not been understood by most of the interviewees yet. Moreover, there were contradictory views in the conducted surveys as to whether 3C is sufficiently invested in.

Using the data collected from the qualitative surveys, the initial research question can now be answered:

Research Question 1

Which function does cross-cultural competence have in NATO and its missions in all three dimensions?

Disregarding the finding that 3C types can and should be switched between, as well as the fact that there can be fluid transitions between the types, a general template for the application of 3C according to each dimension could be derived from all three surveys. The following chart illustrates the range and function of each type according to dimension A – cross-cultural competence within the organization, dimension B – cross-cultural competence in multicultural NATO contingents while on a mission or training exercise abroad and within the coalition environment, and dimension C – cross-cultural competence in regard to interaction with the local population abroad.

The color scheme used represents an "ethical traffic light." Since green stands for "go," this color in the chart symbolizes that Type I – Ethical 3C – can be applied in every dimension. While the cells for dimensions B and C are colored green, the cell for dimension A remains white. This distinction indicates that in general, the data in the colored cells was obtained and validated in the conducted surveys whereas the white cells represent the data derived from the document analysis and the theory of hegemony.

Keeping the traffic light analogy, the color yellow/orange stands for "proceed with caution" or "be prepared to stop". For this reason, this color was selected to represent Type II – hegemonic 3C, as this type entails motives and objectives that are not necessarily "bad," but the potential for instrumentalization and manipulation inherit to this type validates the approach to "proceed with caution." Moreover, this implies an increased need for self-reflection and awareness in this category when using Type II.

Accordingly, the color red, which stands for "stop", indicates the least favorable type of 3C from an ethical perspective, Type III – Dominant. Moreover, Type III was found to correlate with short-term goals and effects, whereas Types I-II correlate with long-term goals and effects.

Cross-Cultural Competence (3C)	Dimension A	Dimension B	Dimension C
Type I	Communication between military branches and interagency with various cultures (e.g., p. 139; p. 168) Promotes sense of inclusivity by applying culture-general skills such as empathy and perspective-taking	Prevent conflicts by applying culture-general skills; foster relationships (e.g., see p. 97; pp. 105–106; p. 139)	"Phase zero" (pre-combat, prevent crisis); development assistance; humanitarian missions; peace missions; relationship building; possible constraint for military missions (e.g., see p. 107; pp. 136–137; pp. 175–177)
Type II	Assertively communicating, e.g., objectives, orders; convince, educate subordinates Communication between military branches and interagency with different internal cultures (e.g., see p. 125)	Communicating objectives in a coalition environment and generating buy-in from partners; relationship building (e.g., see pp. 131–132; p. 134; pp. 142–143)	Gathering intelligence; applying one's own cultural objectives to local society, e.g., education, school for girls, training local police force, etc. (e.g., see pp. 101–102; p. 177; pp.179–180)
Type III	Solely using rank structure and seniority to enforce objectives; ignorance, disregarding micro-cultural differences, e.g., gender, age groups, ethnicity, etc. (e.g., see p. 172)	Dominating coalition partners and enforcing one's own objectives due to a greater number of resources, e.g., outnumbering a group in a multi-national contingent, equipment, etc. (e.g., see pp. 108–109; pp. 144–145)	Forcing cultural believes and objectives on the other culture(e.g., p. 184) Using culture-specific knowledge gained through intelligence to win combat

Figure 5: Function of 3C Types in Dimensions A, B, and C

The second research question presented in the introduction examined whether or not NATO would need a standard for 3C:

Research Question 2
Does NATO need a standard for cross-cultural competence?

As the analyzed data indicates, a standard (STANAG) for NATO in 3C would be beneficial on the whole. Preponderant factors to consider with regard to a standardization of 3C include a positive impact on interoperability, effectiveness, and efficiency by bringing NATO members closer and aligning interests, facilitating the decision-making processes in the coalition environment, enabling evaluability and comparison, and thus optimization of 3C training and culture-general skills.

Comparing the canons established for NATO, U.S. Forces, and German Forces for culture-general skills suggests a NATO standard for cross-cultural competence:

German Forces – Cross-Cultural Competence Canon	NATO – Cross-Cultural Competence Canon	U.S. Forces – Cross-Cultural Competence Canon
Empathy	Empathy	Empathy
Cross-Cultural Awareness	Cross-Cultural Awareness	Cross-Cultural Awareness
Openness/Interest	(Interest)	X
Teachability	X	X
Communication/Language	Communication Skills	Communication/Language/Active Listening
(Tolerance of Ambiguity)	X	X
(Mental/Emotional Stability/Role Distance)	X	X
(Flexibility/Adaptability)	Flexibility/Adaptability	Flexibility/Adaptability
X	(Observation Skills)	X
X	(Perspective-taking)	X
X	X	(Patience)

Figure 6: Comparison of for 3C canons for NATO, German Forces & U.S. Forces[30]

[30] To establish the canons, each party's theory and practice were compared. The overlapping skills were compiled and finally contrasted with the findings of the associated survey. Only recurring skills were add-ed to each canon. The skills in parentheses were partially overlapping.

Five skills in particular could be highlighted: *empathy, cross-cultural awareness, communication skills* (including *active listening), flexibility and adaptability,* and *interest*. Moreover, *tolerance of ambiguity* correlating with *mental/emotional stability/role distance* as well as *teachability*, *patience*, *observation skills,* and *perspective-taking* could be considered significant. Other relevant skills that were not included in each established canon but overlapped with the skills of the other canons are *suspending judgment* and *respect*.

As a result, a suggested cross-cultural competence standard for NATO and its members is comprised of the following culture-general skills:

- Empathy
- Cross-Cultural Awareness
- Communication Skills/Active Listening
- Flexibility/Adaptability
- Interest
- Teachability
- Patience
- Perspective-taking
- Observation Skills
- Tolerance of Ambiguity
- (Suspending Judgment)
- (Respect)

7 Conclusion and Outlook

Revisiting the title of this thesis, NATO is indeed a wolf in sheep's clothing – or at least it can be. The demonstrated lack of a standard in cross-cultural competence and interorganizational alignment gives NATO's members the leeway to decide whether they define 3C according to Type I, II, or III. However, a standard might not change the inherit potential in 3C, since it could be demonstrated that the application of 3C types changes frequently in accordance with the individual, the situation, the assignment, and the mission at hand. Regardless of this, as it became evident throughout this paper, the highest leadership level needs to set a positive example with the hope that others will emulate it.

The value of this paper thus lies in three crucial aspects. First, the qualitative surveys conducted with military personnel currently located at NATO Allied Command Transformation and with military personnel in the U.S. and German Forces highlighted the significance of 3C for the three established dimensions: A – 3C and the military organization internally; B – 3C in a coalition environment/multicultural NATO contingent while on a mission/training exercise abroad; and C – 3C and NATO missions abroad with regard to interaction with the local population. As a result, an investment in 3C training comparable to dimension C in dimensions A and B was emphasized by the collected data. To illustrate these dimensions, an organizational chart with respect to NATO and 3C was created.

Second, until now 3C has predominantly been perceived from an ethical standpoint in both the academic and military discourse. However, the findings demonstrated that 3C has two additional layers, as the typification into Type I – Ethical, Type II – Hegemonic, and Type III – Dominant illustrates. This typification was developed by applying Antonio Gramsci's theory of hegemony to the document analysis, deriving the above types with their varying approaches, and then adding the ethical component that became evident in the numerous essays contained in *The Sage Handbook of Intercultural Competence* by Darla Deardorff et al. (2009). The established typification enables individuals to have a clear understanding of what type of 3C is used or can be used and which function the three types have in the three dimensions.

Lastly, contrasting the available 3C-relevent documents from NATO, U.S. Forces, and German Forces with the data collected from the three conducted surveys led to the formation of a canon for 3C in

culture-general skills and resulted in a suggested standard for NATO and its members. Moreover, it highlighted 3C Type I and II's positive impact on effectiveness, efficiency, and interoperability.

However, it should be taken into account that this research provided qualitative data. Therefore, it would be desirable for future research to substantiate the results by using quantitative methods to maximize their validity or supplement the findings. In this context, data accessibility has to be considered. A preferable research scenario would involve the support of the highest levels at NATO in order to facilitate access to the required material. Moreover, looking at 3C training from a pedagogical perspective, the findings of the interviews indicated that teaching and learning 3C should not be restricted to a certain educational domain, as that can cognitively limit the skillsets learned in their field of application. Instead, as mentioned in the preface, the idea of transversal skills and learning in phenomena rather than by topic appears to merit further investigation in order to improve 3C training and education.

Furthermore, this research demonstrated that cultural studies can deliver beneficial results and reveal new perspectives on the topic of cross-cultural competence in a military field by combining cultural studies-based theories with social science-based methods while touching on adult education, international relations, and military organizations. Thus, the quote by Turner (2003, p. 9) given in the introduction, "(…) the usefulness of this convergence is that it has enabled us to understand phenomena and relationships that were not accessible through existing disciplines," can be highlighted once again. At the same time, this paper extended the field of cultural studies by examining a civilian-military organization. In addition, the theory of hegemony was transformed into a tool by establishing the 3C typification, while a third aspect, "ethics," was considered to complement Gramsci's theory. It furthermore illustrated that theories such as Orientalism and postcolonial theory can be applied to the benefit of 3C education, and thus can be transformed from a theory into a tool as well. Moreover, to forge a bridge between the concept of semiotics addressed in the introduction and cross-cultural competence, this paper showed that the term "cross-cultural competence" had an underlying meaning for most interviewees. This meaning or concept of what 3C entails varied mainly between Type I and II, making it evident that how 3C is perceived depends on the cultural understanding of each individual and their socialization. In the sense of semiotics, the established typification of 3C in Types I, II, and III thus enables an individual to understand the other's approach to cross-cultural competence.

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This book examines the function of cross-cultural competence (3C) for NATO in a military context while focusing on two member states and their armed forces: the United States and Germany. Three dimensions were established to analyze 3C internally and externally: dimension A, dealing with 3C within the military organization; dimension B, focusing on 3C in a coalition environment/multicultural NATO contingent; and dimension C, covering 3C and NATO missions abroad with regard to interaction with the local population.

When developing the research design, the cultural studies-based theory of hegemony constructed by Antonio Gramsci was applied to a comprehensive document analysis of 3C coursework and regulations as well as official documents in order to inaugurate a typification for cross-cultural competence.

As a result, 3C could be categorized as Type I – Ethical 3C, Type II – Hegemonic 3C, and Type III – Dominant 3C. Attributes were assigned according to each type. To validate the created typification, qualitative surveys were conducted with NATO (ACT), the U.S. Armed Forces (USCENTCOM), and the German Armed Forces (BMVg). In general, the function of each 3C type in the various dimensions could be determined.

Lastly, a comparative study of the document analysis and the qualitative surveys disclosed a large discrepancy in part between doctrine and actual implementation concerning the NATO Forces. In addition, a canon for culture-general skills, a crucial component of 3C, could be deduced. Here, a NATO standard in the form of a standardization agreement (STANAG) was suggested to foster interoperability, effectiveness, efficiency, and an ethical approach.

ISBN 978-3-86956-527-9 Online