

Chapter 8 – SOCIETAL FACTORS

by

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8.1 INTRODUCTION

This report has looked at important cultural dimensions of a wide range of factors that impact multinational military operations. A number of issues, however, do not fall neatly within the parameters of the other chapters. This chapter will examine some of these topics under the general heading of “societal factors.” In particular, this chapter will explore the extent to which societal factors, which are shaped by culture, may influence a national population’s perceptions of military actions, which in turn may impact the participation and nature of involvement of some contingents in multinational military operations. Specifically, the chapter will address the following issues:

- a) The impact of conscripted as opposed to professional militaries within multinational, intercultural operations;
- b) Cross-national differences in casualty tolerance; and
- c) Differing public opinions across nations about military operations in general.

It will be argued that any or all of these societal-cultural factors may pose a particular threat to multinational military operations in a multicultural context. It is asserted that due to the ideological shift of warfare since the end of the Cold War and the increasing multinational nature of the response, intercultural factors will play a significant role in operational effectiveness and mission success or failure.

In a multinational military operation the societal factor of ideology is perhaps the lever that will drive the cohesiveness and sense of purpose among contingents. Ideology has been defined as a system of ideas or way of thinking relating to politics, society or to the conduct of a class or group (Barber, 2004). Ideology, often implicit, is used to justify actions, and tends to be maintained regardless of the course of events. To a large extent, nations that share the same ideology are able to function together, particularly in a multinational military context, and perhaps more so when they are driven by the same purpose. However, some areas of ideology may vary between nations and can become problematic in multinational military operations.

When individual national militaries converge under the banner of a multinational military force, whether it is under North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) or the United Nations (UN), they assume additional authority and responsibility in their efforts to achieve operational effectiveness with the aggregate efforts of a variety of individuated units. Due to the level of diversity among these national contingents, effective leadership becomes critical, and leaders and commanders need to build teams that are effective (see Febraro, Chapter 3). Trust becomes of utmost importance for the leader and the multinational team. As mentioned by Dzvonik (Chapter 5), a challenge is to be able to build trust across contingents and maintain that trust. Building and maintaining trust, particularly in a multinational force, is a fundamental cornerstone of multinational cooperation and teamwork (see also van Vliet & van Amelsfoort, Chapter 4). It has become increasingly common for military training and preparation to have a cross-cultural and multinational component that will take into consideration the “norms, customs and traditions of these other nations and peoples and understand that each has something valuable to offer” (Department of National Defence, 2007, p. 88). Doll and Metz (1993) assert that cooperation – between military services, between military and non-military agencies, between government and nongovernment organizations, and among nations – may not guarantee success in an operation, but its absence nearly always assures failure.

This chapter will focus on conscripted versus professional militaries, casualty tolerance, and public opinion as key areas in which cross-national or cross-cultural differences may emerge in a multinational military operation. The chapter will also focus on the ways in which these key areas may affect military operations within a multinational context and the potential impact of each of these key factors on operations. This will be presented primarily from Canadian and American research perspectives but where possible, will incorporate information regarding other countries for comparative purposes. This will be followed by a concluding discussion.

8.2 CONSCRIPTED VERSUS PROFESSIONAL MILITARIES

The debate over conscription and voluntary military service seems to hinge on the overarching concept of values. A nation's policy regarding military service will be dictated or influenced by its political and economic systems, which in turn will reflect, to a large degree, the value system of that nation. For example, the debate in the United States (US) has swung to both extremes of the pendulum: military service as dictated by the government (through conscription), and military service as decided upon by the individual (in an all-volunteer force context). Regardless of the perspective that predominates, or whether there is a compromise between the two, the ultimate goal is to generate the nation's military human resources capability to protect its national interests. Kestnbaum (2000) contends that this interrelationship between citizen and state characterizes the concept of citizen service, the origins of which are linked to World Wars I and II and the onset of the all-volunteer force (in the US) in 1973. The duty to serve is perceived by some young military personnel in the US and Canada, and indeed elsewhere, as a civic duty and a demonstration of patriotism, which, one may contend, are both value-driven. It was widely reported in the American media after 9/11, for instance, that young men and women in the US were signing up for the military as the "right thing to do" to protect their country from terrorist attacks. In other words, they were volunteering to serve.

In terms of conscription, there seems to be conflict between principles and values in determining whether the state has the right to order its citizens to perform military service during wartime or in response to crisis (through conscription), or whether individuals have the right to decide whether or not they want to volunteer for military service, as is currently the case in Canada and the US. As a third option, some nations (e.g., Israel), impose obligatory service for all citizens when they attain the age of 18 years of age, and more typically in other countries, for males within a certain age range (e.g., in Austria, between the ages of 18 and 35), as a matter of national policy during peacetime. There are a number of issues associated with each approach to military service. In the first instance, if the state can order or conscript its citizens into military service, then the question arises as to the impact of conscription on commitment, loyalty, teamwork, cohesion, and ultimately, effectiveness within a national military. Furthermore, such issues may become even more complex and may have even greater repercussions within the context of a multinational force. For example, if some nations within a multinational force adopt conscription, while others do not, this could lead to a decline in unit cohesion (Winslow, 1999; see also McKee, Chapter 2). Loyalty, integrity, and commitment are factors of military socialization that can negatively impact a unit if there is a significant discrepancy among individual national contingents' evaluations of their involvement and their purpose.

Furthermore, the differences within a multinational force can be compounded by differences within national contingents, as in the case of Germany, in which conscription is practiced for males and volunteerism is practiced for females. Italy practiced conscription for males until the end of 2004 and since then, it has relied on professional volunteer troops comprising both males and females to make up its military force. The extent to which culture-based problems could penetrate a multinational force based solely on the practices of conscripted versus volunteer (or professional) military service is heightened by the fact that numerous countries that participate in multinational forces have adopted each approach.

As mentioned, the option of an all-volunteer force, like conscription, raises the issue of satisfying the human resources requirements for an effective military. Further, when individuals volunteer for military service, it is generally expected of them that there will be a commitment, a sense of loyalty, camaraderie, a willingness to be part of the team, and ultimately a desire to contribute to the effectiveness of the military operation. However, once again, the question arises as to what impact there may be within a multinational force if some of the contingent nations have an all-volunteer force, while others have conscription, or some form of obligatory military service. For example, Denmark requires a minimum service of 4 months and a maximum of 1 year and is among 26 nations with a maximum of 1 year or less. Some nations require service for longer than 18 months (e.g., North Korea, Iran, and Egypt), and others have a limited service of 18 months (e.g., Ukraine and Columbia). Others practise selective conscription (e.g., China, Indonesia and Mexico) and still other nations practise a combination of compulsory and voluntary service (e.g., Singapore, South Korea, Bermuda, and Kuwait). The US (e.g., during the Korean and Vietnam Wars) and Canada (during the Second World War) have also engaged in a combination of both types of service. The diversity in economic and social conditions of individual national contingents, whether conscripted or from all-volunteer forces, may be problematic for the commander and for mission success, which has been acknowledged among military contingents internationally. In outlining lessons learned from Somalia operations with multinational contingents under the aegis of the UN, for instance, Allard (1995) suggests that because multinational forces are ad hoc coalitions of the willing, planners must recognize the reduced tempo with which a coalition force conducts peace operations. Allard further cautioned that different national capabilities and international differences (e.g., related to conscripted vs. professional militaries) may also affect both the planning and the reality of peace operations.

Segal and Tiggie (1996) identified five social trends in American society that, in the mid-20th century, reached a turning point and challenged the relationship between the individual and the state, as well as the nature of the American military organization, with implications for compulsory versus voluntary military service. He identified these trends systematically as:

- a) A movement away from the “large force-in-being” with the capability to respond to full-scale war at any time;
- b) The ideological shift from missions of war to missions of peacekeeping or fighting small wars as a response to technological change;
- c) A shift in focus from national interests to individual benefits and the welfare state;
- d) The ongoing demand in industrialized societies for democratic growth and the expansion of citizens’ rights (e.g., all-volunteer military vs. conscripted military); and
- e) The implications of the “baby boom generation” and their limited family size, leading to a potential shortage of youth for military service.

The social trends that Segal and Tiggie (1996) identified are all related to the conclusion of the Cold War, the change in ideologies that encompassed the recognition of an emerging global village, and the interdependence of nations, the global division of labour, and the increasing reliance on multinational forces to buttress challenges to world peace. According to Segal and Tiggie, the ultimate shift brought about by these social trends (except, perhaps, the trend towards smaller family size and a potential shortage of youth for military service) pointed directly to a movement away from making war, to one of making peace at the international level and, importantly, to the reliance on developing military capability through the all-volunteer method.

Moskos (2001) used the institutional/occupational paradigm to explain the emerging problems of recruitment and retention in the context of an all-volunteer military. An institution, according to Moskos, attains its legitimacy from its values, norms, and purpose, which place the institution above and beyond the self-interest of the individual for a presumed “higher good.” Members of the institution are regarded as responding to a calling that separates them from the rest of society. In the case of the military,

role commitment is diffused to coincide with the expectation of performing tasks as opposed to being limited to specific specialties. In terms of compensation, Moskos explained that whereas the civilian sector is governed by marketability, compensation in the military institution is determined by rank and seniority. However, each of these characteristics of the military institution may make recruitment and retention a challenge in the context of an all-volunteer force. Further complicating the situation for countries such as Australia, the US, and Canada are the changing characteristics of labour markets aided by the retirement of the baby-boom generation and the escalating levels of social differentiation and ethno-cultural diversity (Leuprecht, 2006).

Despite these potential challenges, militaries in most industrialized countries generally consist of all-volunteer personnel who have been drawn to the military for a variety of reasons, the most salient of which, presumably, is patriotism. There are, however, other motivating factors that may draw individuals to military service, including personal gain in terms of personal development, adventure, educational opportunities, and job security. In the case of Canada, for instance, there is evidence to suggest that some enrollees at the Royal Military College of Canada (RMC) are attracted by the availability of a subsidized quality education, by the discipline, and by the adventure that may come with officer training after graduation (Browne, 2006). This appears to be the case in spite of the fact that graduates are required to serve an obligatory period of 5 years of service in the Canadian Forces (CF) after graduation (Browne, 2006). Nevertheless, the psychology behind this arrangement is that although the officer cadet may have the intention of leaving the CF after the obligatory 5 years, it is generally hoped that socialization, training, and the adventure associated with the military profession will convince them that the military is indeed a noble career and so entice them to stay. Nevertheless, this is not to suggest that young men and women are consistently lining up to join the military. Leuprecht (2006) contends that with the aging baby-boom generation and the steady decline in birth rate that has been observed for approximately the past 50 years, labor force requirements and military enrolments in Canada will have to depend on increased immigration levels. In a multinational force context, young officers in component national militaries will have had very different experiences, particularly those officers from countries in which the economy can neither support such benefits nor such opportunities. Such differences among contingent nations could easily threaten group cohesion and morale, and ultimately, operational effectiveness.

In contrast to the institutional model, in which patriotism may play a strong role, Moskos (2001) stated that the legitimacy of an occupation in the civilian sector is derived from the market forces of supply and demand. Any effort to utilize such labor market analyses to reclassify a military, for instance, would be premised on the core assumptions of cost-effectiveness and, in addition, would be more focused on monetary compensation and a parallel compensatory relationship between the skill differences of individual service members. Additionally, unlike the institutional concept, the occupational model serves self-interest and not a presumed “higher good” (although, as seen earlier, civilian values such as job security are also factors in military recruitment and retention). Still, the econometric approach for analyzing the military, according to Moskos, downplays the noneconomic and value dimensions of military institutions. Since the econometric approach focuses on that which is measurable, it ignores the inherent qualities of the military, such as duty, honour, country before self, courage, and integrity. Once again, the implications of the occupational model, or civilianization of the military, may be particularly acute in the context of an all-volunteer force.

Moskos (2001) made further differentiations between the military institution and civilian occupation and indicated the impact of each model on its members. For the conventional military, membership, in spite of differentiation of tasks, is of utmost importance, whereas for civilians in an occupation, identity hinges on similarity of work, regardless of the organization in which it takes place. Perhaps this distinction is indicative of the role of military ethos and the commonality of purpose which, for the most part, exists across nations and militaries (see Elron, Shamir, & Ben-Ari, 1999, on the notion of a common “military culture”). Consequently, in the context of multinational military forces, membership, not tasks, facilitates the harmonization of a multiplicity of military contingents and can enhance military effectiveness.

However, in spite of this harmonization, Soeters' (1997) study of the value orientations of 13 military academies indicated the important role that culture, and in particular, the compatibility of the cultures involved, can play in the formation of multinational military organizations. Soeters also pointed out that some national cultural combinations (e.g., Dutch/English or Dutch/German) are more harmonious than others (e.g. Norwegian/Italian). Implicit in this is the notion that the more distinct the cultural features among multinational contingents, the greater the likelihood of conflict, tension, and low morale within and between units and contingents. Soeters warned that insufficient attention to the role of culture, therefore, may result in mission failure, particularly in multicultural contexts.

Moskos' (2001) institution/occupation model in the 1970s predicted a number of trends that have since developed, in part due to the political and social changes that have taken place, particularly the collapse of the Soviet Union. With the end of the Cold War came a dramatic shift from mass conscript militaries throughout Western Europe to volunteer forces (Moskos, 2001). Indeed, the "post-modern military," that is, the military that has emerged since the end of the Cold War and that has been shaped by volunteerism and civilian societal trends (particularly technological and cultural change), seems more integrated with civilian society than its predecessors prior to and during the Cold War period. Moskos further described fundamental changes to military operations, including the increasing reliance on multinational forces whose legitimacy is sanctioned by authorities external to the nation-state. It is the onset of these changes that has given impetus to the development of several current trends, described by Moskos as: perceived threat, changes in force structure, the dominant military professional, compensation, media relations, civilian employees, the role of women, the spouse and the military community, and sexual orientation in terms of gays and lesbians in the military. Although some of these trends have been dealt with elsewhere (see McKee, Chapter 2), a brief discussion of each trend will follow below.

Perceived threat may be defined in the contemporary context as interstate violence as perpetrated by, for example, a number of former Soviet and African states, constructed on the premise of "ethnic cleansing" or ethnic struggles, respectively. Since the terrorist attack on the US on September 11, 2001, perceived threat now seems to include a threat to world peace. Consequently, military institutions now train to engage in operations other than war, which are usually commanded under the structure of multinational forces and authorized by international organizations such as the UN or NATO. This increasingly popular military structure signals a change from the state-to-state military operations of the past. Military operations in the current security environment are constructed according to a group-to-state design that often involves many nation-states, in terms of physical attack and in terms of physical response and support. Hence, there is an increasing dependence on multinational forces in response to unconventional warfare, which generates a more urgent need for effective intercultural relations in order to achieve mission success within the context of a multinational force structure.

Force structure, according to Moskos (2001), changes as the nature of the perceived threat changes. The historical dependence on large conscripted forces shifted to a large standing army of conscripts, as Moskos describes it, in the US during the Cold War period. Subsequently in 1973, in response to opposition to the Vietnam War, conscription was replaced with an all-volunteer force, and a more professional structure was injected into the US military. The end of the Cold War, however, seemed to have reduced the urgency of a large military and a reduction in size during the 1990s appeared to be adequate to meet needs. The Canadian military during the 1990s experienced a similar reduction in its force strength, which was also traceable to the end of the Cold War.

The *dominant military professional*, Moskos' (2001) third identified trend, relates to the change in the type of soldier of the past to the more contemporary professionally versatile soldier. The new professional mindset still has the warrior aspect of soldiering inculcated but is part of an officer corps that is more skilled in diplomacy, media relations and international diplomacy. Importantly, these skills facilitate the medium through which a member of the military officer corps can transfer and adapt to a position in the military elite class.

Compensation, as one of the new trends, has undergone drastic change over the years. Moskos (2001) indicates that there is a noticeable difference in compensation for the drafted armed forces compared to the all-volunteer force. Moskos points out that in 1999 dollars, the per capita cost in 1964 (i.e., the last year of the peacetime draft) of an active-duty member who was single was \$29,140 per year. In 2000, compensation (plus allowances) for a private was \$23,666 per year. Further emphasizing his point, Moskos explains that during the draft years, a master sergeant made seven times more than a private, and that in 2000, the comparative difference had decreased to only twice as much. Consequently, according to Moskos, the all-volunteer force is less expensive in terms of compensation and benefits than was the conscripted armed force.

Moskos (2001) describes *media relations with the military* in conventional wartime as a time when the media was an integrated element of the military, to the point where media personnel wore military uniforms. These relations have drastically changed to the point where the media has become an independent entity that usually establishes itself somewhere in close proximity to the theater of operations, even before the military arrives. This change in relationship and independence has shifted control of military news from the military to the now independent media, where the immediacy of news reporting is facilitated by new technologies. Moskos also suggests that there is a dramatic difference between the militaries of the Cold War and post-Cold War periods, the first of which has generally provided the context for many military films depicting positive images of the military as opposed to the negative images associated with today's American military, in particular.

The increasing role of *civilian employees* in the military is a trend that is emerging as a consequence of low-level jobs being transferred from the military to civilian employees, thus freeing up military personnel for other responsibilities. Moskos (2001) asserts that the integration of civilian employees is a reflection of the increasing reliance of the military on more technologically complex weapon systems, and the concomitant need for associated experts. In addition, much of the logistics responsibilities are contracted out to civilian employees who have become very involved in military functions.

Women's role in the US military is another trend identified by Moskos (2001), who utilizes it to highlight developing trends in contemporary armed services. As a microcosm of the larger society, the integration of women in the military is consistent with changing patterns in the labor force, where women are consistently found in more non-traditional roles and in some cases functioning at increasingly higher levels. Although the US has limitations regarding the roles that women can perform in the military, all positions in the Canadian military, including the combat arms, have been open to women since 2001, when the last restriction (to service on submarines) was removed (Davis & McKee, 2004). In other nations, particularly where compulsory service is mandated (e.g., Israel), gender integration has been more fully realized than in, for example, the US case.

Moskos (2001) highlights *spouse and military community* as a trend that impacts the military. In the 1950s the military was an organization in which the young drafted men were, for the most part, unmarried. This trend significantly turned around with the all-volunteer force where soldiers are more likely to be married compared to their civilian counterparts, resulting in budgetary concerns in terms of housing and medical expenses, particularly for male commissioned officers where membership included wife and family. This extension perhaps carried with it expectations for the wife to undertake a role in military social functions but this seems to be changing as female spouses are increasingly taking employment outside the home.

Homosexuality in the military is one of Moskos's (2001) trends that is still the subject of some debate in the US context. Embedded in the US policy of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" is the suggestion that with some level of discretion gays and lesbians can be part of the US military, but they must not be open about their sexual orientation. This suggests that the US military lags behind the wider US society in which homosexuals may be more open about their sexual orientation; and indeed in Canada and other nations

(e.g., the United Kingdom) homosexuality is relatively more accepted in both the military and the wider society.

The last trend that Moskos identifies concerns *postmodernism and the military*. He provides evidence to suggest that postmodernism has arrived, so to speak, at the military's doorstep. Moskos looks at postmodern developments such as the US Army contracting a consultant to replace the "masculinist vision" with an "ungendered vision" of military culture, the 1997 discharge of a female pilot from the Air Force for an adulterous affair with the civilian husband of an airwoman, and other charges relating to insubordination and making false statements. As one aspect of postmodernism, Moskos points to acknowledgement of religious diversity where Native American Indians were allowed to use the peyote plant in religious services. These are only some indications of the postmodern trends that have caught up with the military and that have brought it more in tandem with the wider society.

As discussed earlier, the post-Cold War context has had significant implications for conscription. Countries such as the US, France and Australia, for example, have had to some extent adopted and enforced policies of conscription at some point during their history. Canada, on the other hand, has never adopted conscription in the true sense. Canada has, during times of war, enlisted personnel to serve at home as a replacement for military personnel deployed overseas to participate in war. However, due to the small size of their militaries, countries such as Australia and Canada will not likely have the capacity or resources to deploy simultaneously large contingents of military forces to numerous countries, as has been the case with the US. This was borne out in the case of Australia in the 1990s when there was some concern about the strain that the deployment to East Timor had created for the Australian Regular Army (Brown, 1999). In the 1990s conscription was suggested in Australia to address the potential shortage of service personnel. Brown points out that there were important deterrents against this, however, including the economic cost in terms of salary and the surplus of personnel that this policy would have generated if, for instance, all 18-year-olds had to serve 2 years of obligatory service. Even selective conscription, according to Brown, would have augmented the Regular Army by approximately 35,000, or 11,000 more than capacity. To avoid the challenges of such a surplus, voluntary enlistment for the Regular Army, rather than conscription, was utilized.

Thus, the social system from which a military force is derived, including its values, culture, and ideology, determines to a large degree the size of a military force and its method of mobilization. Such factors also shape the relationship that exists between a society and its military. Moreover, the ideological cultures from which the contingents in a multinational force are derived will have implications for the effectiveness of multinational military operations. While members from all-volunteer cultures may join their respective militaries out of a personal willingness to participate, members from conscripted cultures, as the term suggests, are compelled to enlist. This could have enormous consequences in terms of loyalty, truth, duty, honour, and all the other values that shape military ethos, both within and among nations in a multinational force. Thus, as discussed earlier, the all-volunteer military that has become popular since the end of the Cold War may experience some cultural challenges when functioning under a multinational force in which conscripted military contingents are also participating. Similarly, if national contingents that are derived from cultures that enforce conscription must function with contingents from cultures that have all-volunteer militaries, then unit performance may be jeopardized due to the perceived inherent conflict in the concepts of conscription and all-volunteer service. As will be discussed in the next section of this chapter, it is this cultural conflict that could play a significant role in the extent to which the public will accept and tolerate casualties in military operations.

8.3 CASUALTY TOLERANCE

As with conscription and other military related areas, national cultural differences can lead to differences in attitudes regarding casualties. Smith (2005) refers to attitudes towards casualties (either casualty aversion or casualty tolerance) as the "casualty factor" and contends that concern over casualties,

particularly in democratic societies, has grown so strong that it plays a vital role in the decision making of nations regarding whether to curtail or initiate military action or to participate as part of a multinational coalition or alliance. The casualty factor is a broad concept that can appear in the literature in different forms including casualty aversion, casualty fear, casualty dread, and casualty phobia (van der Meulen & Soeters, 2005). However, the importance of the casualty factor, regardless of the term used to describe it, dates back to the mid-19th century with the creation of the International Committee of the Red Cross to care for the wounded, both military and civilian, in wartime. Casualty tolerance in military terms implies that a number of casualties are expected and permissible. However, as will be discussed, casualty tolerance is often conditional. Casualties seem to be an implicit aspect of war, since the nature of war is defeating the enemy by any means possible, including lethal means. There is therefore an expectation that people will be wounded or may die in operations. Indeed, unintended civilian casualties have been sometimes framed as “collateral damage.”

Burk (1999) asserts that public support for US participation in military missions rapidly decreases if American casualties ensue. He supports his argument with the case of the Somalia peacekeeping mission where public support was initially strong but quickly decreased after 18 soldiers were killed in the streets of Mogadishu. Burk also argues that the public’s intolerance for casualties limits the extent to which the US government can be effective in its use of armed force in defending US national interests and in its role in securing peace around the world. In distinguishing between public tolerance or intolerance of casualties, Burk (p. 56) provided the following: “[T]he casualties hypothesis states that American public opinion at present will not support the deployment of military forces abroad if that deployment results in the lives of American soldiers being lost.” He makes a distinction between such public support and the perceived fluctuation of support that inherently encompasses potential casualties. He continues: “It is a strong claim that should be distinguished immediately from a related but substantively weaker claim that public support for military operations takes the risks of casualties into account.”

According to a Rand research brief (see Boettcher & Cobb, 2006), a study that examined the relationship between US casualties and public support for military intervention indicated that the public’s aversion to US casualties in some military interventions was related more to a decline in public tolerance for casualties than to the merits of the operations. Even among those who support military interventions such as war, the real impact may be experienced when casualties occur and, to some extent, when casualties touch an individual or community at the personal level. For instance, Canadian support for the NATO mission in Afghanistan has fallen, to some extent, with the rise in casualties.

In the US, the public may play a significant role in political military decision making in terms of the level and duration of a military mission. According to Johnson (2001), commentators suggest that because of the American “casualty-avoidance mindset,” political leadership in the US will undoubtedly experience political risk as a consequence of supporting military operations that generate casualties. In Johnson’s view, this challenge is premised on acknowledgement of the level of influence that public opinion in the US has on decisions regarding military involvement. Nevertheless, Johnson suggests that casualty tolerance is affected by a number of factors including the media, mission objectives, and perceived threat to US vital interests. One other highlighted area is referred to as the “family factor,” that is, the need for the state to convince families that sending off their loved ones to war zones, where they are likely to be in harm’s way and where there is a potential for loss of life, is indeed worth the potential personal loss.

To further support his argument, Johnson cited an address to the National Press in 1984 by Casper Weinberger, the former US Secretary of Defense. Johnson (2001) points to six underlying conditions for employing American troops appropriately as articulated by Casper Weinberger, the most prominent of which was “vital national interest” as opposed to “national interest,” a distinction he considered pivotal to understanding the casualty avoidance mindset of the American public. Differentiating between the two concepts, Johnson explains that a vital national interest is directly linked to the peace and security of the US and suggested that when vital national interest is threatened, the security of the US would be at risk.

In further linking this distinction to the acceptance of casualties, Johnson invoked military ethos in terms of the commitment to fight and even die in defence of vital national interests. To further validate his argument, Johnson drew on the importance of water to humans as being analogous to the need for oil in some countries. Consequently, Johnson saw the free flow of oil from the Middle East as vital to the peace and security of the US, and in defending such a vital national interest argued that public support (or the lack thereof) should not compromise US involvement in the Middle East.

In contrast to vital national interest, national interest relates to principles set out in the US Declaration of Independence and the Constitution and includes economic freedom, individual liberty, and human rights. Although backed by political and economic support, these interests may not be seen as worthy of fighting a war and the subsequent loss of lives. Put differently, the American public would not necessarily support foreign intervention in the promotion of national interest since threats to national interest do not pose a threat to the peace and security of the US. Likewise, the American public plays a role in determining what is deemed to be of vital national interest, as it is the public's validation that will help to define it.

Hyde (2000) contends that, due in large part to the *perception* that the American public has an aversion to casualties, dictators, terrorists, and allies alike are challenging the status of the US as a superpower. Hyde describes the notion of US public casualty aversion as a misconception, and further argues that included in the public's formula for support or rejection of a military operation is its ability to weigh the costs against the benefits and prospects for success, aided by the ability of civilian leadership to present their arguments in "a positive ends-and-means" context. Hyde also asserts that the presumed casualty aversion of the American public blankets the real casualty aversion held by civilian and military elites, which has threatened the US status as a superpower. Accordingly, the casualty aversion of civilian elites negates coercive diplomacy and undermines deterrence while the casualty aversion of senior military elites siphons away bold decision making and aggressive planning and ultimately destroys the military ethos. It is Hyde's contention that inappropriately attributing casualty aversion to the public compromises US foreign policy and US military credibility.

At least until the recent war in Iraq and the conflicts in Afghanistan, casualties at both the military and the civilian levels had been decreasing since the end of World War I and World War II (e.g., in Korea and Vietnam; Cochran, 2007). In view of this decrease, a humane component to warfare, in terms of limiting casualties, has surfaced. As a result, and as mentioned, there is a perception that public aversion to military and civilian casualties now plays an important role in decision making in terms of military intervention (Johnson, 2001). In analyzing civilian attitudes towards casualties during the Iraq War, Cochran contends that approval of the US president decreases when public opinion suggests that the US should enhance its efforts to protect civilians and when the public thinks that the US has failed to limit civilian casualties. Although some survey respondents felt that the US was doing as much as it could and that the US was successful in limiting civilian casualties, other survey responses indicated that attitudes changed as the war progressed. Cochran suggests, however, that there are more questions to be answered, including whether attitudes change in response to actual absolute numbers of civilian casualties or in response to highly publicized events regarding civilian casualties.

Although research indicates that casualties have been an important concern for centuries, not all nations, including western democracies, respond to the casualty factor in the same way. For example, Suter (2003) states that the Australia, New Zealand, United States (ANZUS) Security Treaty signed by the three nations guarantees mutual support in the event of an attack on any of its signatories. However, after the Australian loss of lives in Vietnam in the 1960s that resulted from supporting the US, a rift developed between the public and the Australian Defence Force and lasted for a number of years. Suter further explains that as a close ally, Australia had fought alongside the US in every war that the US had fought during the 20th century, a practice that has carried over into the 21st century. However, Suter (2003) also notes that Australia's military support for the US intervention in Iraq brought about the largest anti-war rallies in Australian history. It is important to understand, nevertheless, that attitudes toward the casualty factor can

change over time, as the public fully supported the Australian troops once they were committed to the war. This indeed suggests that there is a political dimension to the casualty factor, which shapes and reshapes it to reflect changing public opinion, foreign policy, and political and economic ideology.

The cases of Iraq and Afghanistan may further illustrate this point. At present, the multinational military presence in both of these countries is exposed to a number of non-military personnel who fill roles external to the military and may include international agencies, the media, and distributors of humanitarian aid. The role of the media provides a running account of events as they take place, to the point where reports of casualties are transmitted sometimes even before formal military announcements are made, which could easily influence the tolerance level and public opinion in regard to casualties. One of the major concerns for the public is the cost of these wars in terms of human casualties, the wounded, and monetary output. For example, in relation to the War in Iraq, duration and costs seem to have impacted the public's tolerance for the war and the accompanying costs, particularly human casualties. Although support for the troops remains high in the US, support for the war itself has been declining. In its early stages, the war received high levels of public support. Ostensibly, the basis for the war was Iraq's potential to launch an attack on the US with weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). This approach generated much legitimacy for the war, as it was specifically linked by the US government to the attacks and atrocities of 9/11. Any perceived additional threat to the US dispensed in the vocabulary of terrorism elicited both public interest and public support, and the war in Iraq generated and sustained both for some time. However, that support has decreased substantially over time. At both the societal and political levels there has been much debate about the justification for the war and the associated human and monetary costs. The debate generally revolves around US military casualties, including the wounded and maimed, and to a lesser extent, Iraqi civilian casualties. It is also contended that the longer a war is prolonged, even one initiated on the basis of "terrorism," the more costly it becomes, and in the case of the US, particularly more so because of an economic decline. This situation leads to more questions from the public as to the legitimacy and costs of the war, both militarily and monetarily.

Moreover, and as suggested above, a key aspect of the issue of casualty tolerance in the context of multinational military operations involves differences among participating nations with regard to casualty tolerance (van der Meulen & Soeters, 2005). If different nations within a multinational force have different levels of casualty tolerance (which are likely related to their cultural values, as well as their support regarding a specific mission), then there may be tensions within a multinational force. For example, tensions may revolve around the issue of whether the mission should continue or not, or whether a national contingent should pull their troops or contribute additional troops to a mission. Regarding Canada's mission in Afghanistan, for instance, the media and popular discourse suggests that the country has taken more than its "fair share" of military casualties, and some in Canada believe that other nations should share more of the casualty burden. Similarly, Canadians' support for the mission in Afghanistan has been described as "soft" and shifting, particularly in relation to the rising number of Canadian casualties (National Public Radio, 2007). An important point to be made here is that the level of tolerance for casualties is shaped, to a large degree, by the ways in which it is presented by competing forces that disseminate information both externally and internally and that, as will be discussed in the next section, help to determine public opinion about military intervention.

8.4 PUBLIC OPINION

Boettcher and Cobb (2006) suggest that there are three distinct parts to a primary policy objective that are predictive of public opinion for launching a military intervention. They identify these parts or sections as the top, the middle, and the bottom. The top section is indicative of missions to restrain an aggressive and threatening adversary, the middle section refers to regime change and democracy building, and the third section pertains to humanitarian missions. According to Boettcher and Cobb, the level of public support that each type of mission will generate in the US decreases from the top to the bottom sections. For example, Boettcher and Cobb argue that threatening terrorist aggression towards the US will

immediately generate public support and, as has been the case regarding Iraq in the aftermath of 9/11, critics advocating withdrawal will be perceived as “surrendering to the terrorists.” However, as discussed earlier, public response to military intervention can change over time and may differ across nations, a fact which has special significance for multinational military operations.

Indeed, the variation in public response to military operations depends on a number of factors. Moskos (1971) traces the evolution of public response to military operations from the Second World War, to the Korean War, to the Cold War period, and to the Vietnam War. World War II, for example, gained the full support of the American public, a level of support which has been unmatched for any other war in which the US has been involved since. In the face of high numbers of casualties, the obliteration of Hiroshima and Nagasaki was perceived as a strategy to shorten the war and reduce American casualties. On the other hand, the Korean War generated some ambivalence towards the involvement of the US. Moskos claims that ultimately, the stalemate of the conflict contributed to negative accounts of troop behavior, prisoner-of-war collaboration, lack of troop motivation, and the deterioration of military discipline. These attitudes seemed to have spilled over into the Cold War period during which time the military was again submerged in political controversy that revolved around the issues of military leadership and the institutional responsibility of the military. Moskos contends that this eventually led to negative portrayals of the military and, as the anti-war movement gained momentum, criticism from cultural elites and intellectual circles were directed at the military system generally. Both the legitimacy of the war and military service were being questioned, and it is asserted by Karsten (2001) that this situation led to the demise of the draft.

Public opinion of the military tends to fluctuate between two extremes. On the one hand, the military is perceived as a reflection of societal values and is dependent on civilian policy makers, while on the other hand, the military is perceived as reflecting values that are different from society and as possessing an independent influence that it ultimately imposes on the wider society. According to Moskos (1971), neither perception is totally false; however, he suggests that the issue is the interpenetration and institutional autonomy of the military and civil society. Although there is some recognition of the interdependent relationship of the military and civilian spheres the debate is much broader than implied.

In Canada, for instance, the military is guided by societal and functional imperatives (i.e., the civil/military interface) that surround it with a tension that is linked to its unique characteristics as a profession of arms. It is differentiated from Canadian society while simultaneously securely embedded within the same Canadian society, of which it is perceived as a microcosm, shaped by the wider values, norms, and belief system (Duty with Honour: The Profession of Arms in Canada, 2003). In other words, the military functions under two competing structures. Under the societal structure, the military must maintain a level of professionalism and effectiveness and must reflect Canadian values and norms in defending the nation and its interests, and to do so, it has to be fully integrated into Canadian society. Under the military functional structure, the military is characterized as distinct from Canadian society because of the military factor that creates its uniqueness. These two competing imperatives are further entrenched by the twin oversight of civil and military authorities, that is, a Chief of Defence staff – military authority, and a Minister of Defence – civilian authority (Duty with Honour: The Profession of Arms in Canada, 2003).

The role of the CF in operations is shaped by the public’s perceptions of the military in Canada, and it is expected to represent the value system of Canadian society. The value system by which the CF is judged is inherently different from that of the US military and this links back to differences in culture, history, economy, and polity as well as the difference in international status of the two countries. The CF has for the most part been in a support role during war and has been better known for its peacekeeping, nation building, and humanitarian work. Canada is not known for declaring war on any nation, as is the case with the US as recently as in 1990 with the Gulf war or *Desert Storm*, or more recently, the Iraq war or *Operation Iraqi Freedom*, in which Canada is not a contributing ally. The war in Afghanistan sees the CF in a combative role under the auspices of the UN and NATO. Public opinion on this engagement by

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the CF has been generally high as the war itself has been under the functional authority of the UN and NATO. Nevertheless, with the sustained engagement of the CF and the extension of its role there, coupled with increasing numbers of lives lost, public opinion and support have fluctuated since the beginning of the conflict.

Historically, the role of the CF in multinational military operations has been quite different from that of the US, as it has focused more on operations other than war such as peacekeeping, peacemaking, and humanitarian relief operations (Wood, 2007-2008). However, the overarching role of the CF has expanded and now includes combat. The role of the CF has more recently been characterized as participating in what is known as the “Three Block War.” This concept, coined by former US Marine Corps Commandant Charles Krulak (1999), suggests that during a combat operation, while establishing stability to conflict areas, military units may also have to perform humanitarian roles, and at the same time engage in war-fighting in the same city in three different locations or city blocks (Horn, 2006). This changing, more complex, role of the CF is acknowledged as part of the transformation that the organization has been undergoing. For example, Gosselin (2007-2008) points out that the CF culture is slowly changing to one focused more on operations, and that this culture change will lead to a change of identity in the CF. It remains to be seen what the impact will be on public opinion.

For a multinational force, differences in public opinion about military intervention could have serious implications and may even threaten a mission. Such implications are tied to the fact that a multinational force is made up of a number of individual national contingents and to the fact that public opinion can be quite diverse in reflecting cross-cultural and cross-national differences in perceptions about military interventions. For example, international public opinion polls indicate that there are cross-national and cross-cultural differences in attitudes towards international security and specific military interventions. A BBC World Service poll (2007) of 23,000 people conducted across 22 countries in September 2007, for instance, found that the majority of citizens polled across the world (67%) thought that US-led forces should leave Iraq within a year. Similarly, 61% of Americans, 65% of Britons, 63% of Australians, and 63% of South Koreans thought that US forces should withdraw from Iraq within a year. Further, among Canadians, a total of 67% felt that the US should withdraw its forces either immediately (32%) or within a 1-year time frame (35%). In contrast, Kenya (46%), the Philippines (47%), and India (47%) did not have majorities favoring withdrawal within a year. Thus, there seem to be both differences and similarities across nations and cultures regarding public opinion towards the war in Iraq, as has been the case for other conflicts.

8.5 CONCLUSION

Military operations pose a number of problems when a military has to bring its various service environments together to achieve the objectives of a mission. This is in large measure due to the fact that each service environment develops a culture that is specific to its service. In Canada, for instance, although each service environment functions under the umbrella of the Canadian military, when working as joint operations, service environment-specific cultures may collide and cause some conflict, whether in regard to training or even camaraderie. However, such cultural differences may be overcome, relatively easily, through the overriding commitment to military ethos and loyalty to a nation in defending its interests (English, 2004).

In a multinational force, cultural differences among the various national contingents may be magnified, particularly when the contingents are from countries with vastly different societal-cultural practices, languages, religions, histories, political systems, belief systems, and economies. Cross-cultural training is of paramount importance in order to emphasize the commonalities among national contingents and to work to harmonize differences in terms of recognizing the contribution of individual contingents to mission success. The role of these contingents and the success of the mission as it progresses will

undoubtedly impact the public support that each contingent receives back home. Distributed leadership among nations may facilitate mission effectiveness, as commitment and loyalty to the mission itself remain important factors in mission outcome.

As discussed in this chapter, societal-cultural factors may influence whether or not a nation practices conscription or relies upon an all-volunteer force to generate its military human resources, whether its public will tolerate casualties, and the extent to which public opinion will support military missions. Implicit in the word conscription is the absence of the freedom to choose. Historically, in times of war, some countries relied on conscription to satisfy their military human resource needs, while others employed a variation of conscription. The US and Canada, though culturally aligned to some extent, have both employed various forms of conscription, but for different purposes. Other nations, such as Australia, Israel, France, Spain, Italy, and Germany, have also adopted conscription, guided by their cultures, histories, economies, and political systems. The all-volunteer force that recognizes the rights of the individual is now relied upon in both the US and Canada to generate their military human resource requirements. Although research indicates that societal-cultural factors inherent in these two approaches to military mobilization could result in tension and threaten cohesion in a multinational military context, good leadership and how it is applied may be able to resolve many of the issues, particularly through the concept of military ethos, which is shared by many cultures and nations (Elron et al., 1999).

Casualty tolerance, as indicated in this chapter, is flexible and fluctuates with the duration of a military operation and its associated costs. The Iraq War is a case in point, particularly from the perspective of the US where tolerance for casualties initially seemed high and has decreased over time. Similarly, the public response to Canada's role in Afghanistan has fluctuated over time, in part due to shifts in casualty tolerance. This is perhaps understandable given the humanitarian, peace support, and combat roles that the Canadian military has traditionally played. The same can be said for other nations that have been playing key roles in Afghanistan or Iraq. The UK's tolerance for casualties has been mixed and has seemed premised on its overwhelming support for the war itself. Australia's approach to participating in multinational forces conveys a level of tolerance for casualties that may be at odds with other national contingents that suffer great losses. Nevertheless, it has been suggested that the view of casualties displayed by the Australian public in recent history is reflective of the significant role that the Australian public plays in the country's foreign policy.

Indeed, national public opinion regarding military interventions, much like casualty tolerance, is culturally contingent and changes over time. In terms of the wars in Afghanistan and in Iraq, there seems to be internationally shared (although not unanimous) public opinion that makes both wars unpopular. This is a cross-cultural reaction that indicates that the publics of national contingents will, to a large degree, help to determine the extent of their nation's military involvement, the force strength that it will have, and the duration of the stay in the war-torn country. It can even determine a change in a nation's current role. Public opinion is a key societal indicator of whether foreign policy is effective and influences the way in which leaders will respond to the reaction of the people. If national contingents do not have the support of their populations back home, then their role in the multinational military force can become problematic, not only for their government, but also for the mission at hand, its leadership, and ultimately for mission effectiveness and outcome. Cross-cultural education and training for national contingents, designed for international military cooperation, may alleviate many of the cultural issues that members of a multinational team may experience. Such education and training should also provide a better understanding of societal-cultural differences and values that can be derived from cross-cultural, cross-national teams working to achieve a common outcome.

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