



**HAL**  
open science

**”Should believe military in cooperation? Compromise,  
negotiation and military values.”**

Christophe Pajon

► **To cite this version:**

Christophe Pajon. ”Should believe military in cooperation? Compromise, negotiation and military values.”. 11th Biennial conference of ERGOMAS, European Research Group on Military and Society, Jun 2011, Amsterdam (Hollande), Netherlands. hal-04520894

**HAL Id: hal-04520894**

**<https://hal.science/hal-04520894>**

Submitted on 25 Mar 2024

**HAL** is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L’archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d’enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.

## Should believe military in cooperation? Compromise, negotiation and military values.

by

Christophe PAJON, PhD, Political Science

Address:

Research Center of the French Air Force (CReA)

“Prospective and Security Studies” Team.

Base aérienne 701

F-13 661 Salon Air

Phone : +33 (0)4 90 17 82 59

Fax : + 33 (0)4 90 17 81 89

Email : pajon.christophe@wanadoo.fr

*The contents of this article does not commit anyone else but its author and does not account in any way for the opinion of the French Ministry of Defense or for that of the French Air Force.*

\*\*\*\*\*

Multinationality is classically considered as one of the most important causes of the military profession evolution<sup>1</sup>. Beside new missions, new technologies, or new international context, (passage to all-volunteer recruitment for some armed forces), it would change the military role conceptions and the use of force. In Europe, where the security institutions network is well developed, the transformation of military identity is often used as indicator of a military culture convergence process. These organizations would be the place for a second military socialization phenomenon. Many authors have already analyzed the hypothesis of European military culture existence<sup>2</sup>. Nevertheless, this paper mainly focuses on the mechanism and principles, on which the multinationality and the security institutions are built: cooperation and its links to military values.

This paper considers European multinationality as a simple particular work context for French officers. In these situations (multinational staffs, common training, exercises or

---

<sup>1</sup> Paul Klein (1998), « Vers des armées postnationales », in Bernard Boëne, Christopher Dandeker (dir.), *Les armées en Europe*, Paris, La découverte, p. 161-169. Sven Gareis (2005), « Militärische Multinationalität », in Nina Leonhard, Ines-Jacqueline Werkner (hrsg), *Militärsoziologie – Eine Einführung*, Wiesbaden, VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaft, p. 157-175.

<sup>2</sup> Anthony King (2006), « Towards a European Military Culture? », *Defence Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 3, pp. 257–277 ; Frédéric Mérand (2003), « Dying for the Union ? Military Officers and the Creation of a European Defense Force », *European Societies*, Volume 5, n°3, 2003. Karl Haltiner (1994), « Is there a Common European Defense Identity ? The View of Officers of Eight European Countries », *Current Sociology*, 42(3), p. 71-85 ; Jean-Yves Haine (2001), *L'Europs et les identités européennes de défense*, Les documents du C2SD, n°33, 2001.

multinational operations), they have to learn how their allies are working, how they are thinking, their national and professional habits. Beyond “common sense” of an international military culture, differences and misunderstandings appear. These intercultural issues are clearly identified and military have sought to overcome them since the beginning of the 90’s, through the increasing number of multinational operations. French armed forces developed different ways to prepare officers to cope with multinationality (Reinforcement of foreign languages teaching, especially in English; exchanges with foreign academies during officer initial training, professional experiences in the career course). These efforts provide necessary tools to face some intercultural problems. However multinationality can not be reduced to language skills and mutual culture knowledge. Officers must also learn interacting in new normative environment: formal organization and procedures, but also informal rules. In other words, they have to build and to develop an intercultural skill that is capacity, after a long learning process, to reach a high level of mutual understanding with foreign officers<sup>3</sup>. Empathy, capacity of communication and understanding, flexibility with norms, tolerance to the frustration and to the stress, conflict management, reflexivity are different components of the intercultural skill. But some of these aspects can also characterize the individual capacity to cooperate in order to achieve common duty. Cooperation is the principle of any organization. The cooperative behavior varies however from an organization to the other. Then, intercultural professional context may be considered as specific situation of cooperation and officers are involved in permanent negotiation process, where rules of the game are appreciably different from those in their national administration. Appropriate behaviors are considered as enacted values and beliefs. The respect of standards attached to cooperation implies difference with traditional military values and beliefs. From this point of view, the increase of international military cooperation contributes to the change of military values.

This assumption has to lead to take into account the concepts and the most classic debates of the military sociology: profession<sup>4</sup>, culture, identity or military spirit. Many definitions and discussion have been suggested by scholars. We shall prefer to lean on the notion of military values<sup>5</sup>. As elementary bricks of these various concepts, military values - principles, beliefs- will allow mobilizing the contributions of many perspectives. Our topic

---

<sup>3</sup> Tomforde Maren (2008), « Zu viel verlangt ? Interkulturelle Kompetenz während der Auslandsensätze der Bundeswehr », in Gerhard Kümmel (Hrsg), *Streitkräfte im Einsatz : Zur Soziologie militärischer Interventionen*, Nomos, Baden-Baden, p. 73.

<sup>4</sup> Caforio Giuseppe, « The Military Profession ; Theories of Change », *Armed Forces and Society*, Vol.15 No.1, Fall 1988, p. 55-69.

<sup>5</sup> Schweisguth Etienne (1978), « L'institution militaire et son système de valeurs », *Revue française de sociologie*, XIX, 1978, p.373-390 ; Boëne Bernard (1990), « How "Unique" should the Military be ? a Review of Representative Literature and Outline of a Synthetic Formulation”, *European Journal of Sociology*, XXXI (1), p. 3-59.

also belongs to debates on the change of the military profession. It could be necessary to choose a theoretical framework or to build one. Our purpose is however limited, because we are seeking only to demonstrate why the principles and the mechanisms of cooperation partially contradict military values. These theoretical frameworks naturally underly our work, but we retain only their common postulates: the existence of a gap between military and civil values<sup>6</sup>. Besides, we admit that the degree of the difference between civilian values and military values varies according to the nationality, the context and the task to achieve. This last remark aims at reminding that the values which are going to be considered as military represent the deepcore of complex system of beliefs. This system of shared values transforms the military organization into institution, even if its influence can vary within the structure. First, we will briefly identify some military values, generally and especially in the French case. We shall then try to show why some of the behavior observed within the framework of the French-German military cooperation diverge from these values.

### ***Military values, military mind and militaryness***

Military values are built from a structure of plausibility<sup>7</sup>, the civilian world. To underline that military values are specific and different from civilian is not sufficient. However, our object allows limiting interest to two groups of values admitted by the evoked various theoretical approaches and confirmed by empirical results<sup>8</sup>. Both groups are connected from the function of armed forces and results of a fusion between profession and institution<sup>9</sup>.

The first one gathers the values led by what legitimizes the existence of armed forces: the service and the defense of the country. The defense of the national interest is the priority of military institution. This purpose legitimizes the use of force in an *anarchical environment*. The hobbesian conception of International Relations shared by the officers is then close of realist theory. Military alliances between states are temporary and their goals are limited as well as trust to the partner. This limited trust becomes a reality for example when the

---

<sup>6</sup> Caforio, Giuseppe; Haltiner, Karl W.; Jelušič, Ljubica; Moelker René; Szvircsev Tresch, Tibor (2007). "Theoretical Framework of the Research." In: Caforio, Giuseppe (Ed.) (2007). Cultural Differences Between the Military and Parent Society in Democratic Countries. Contributions to Conflict Management, Peace Economics and Development, Volume 4. Elsevier: Amsterdam, 3-19.

<sup>7</sup> Peter Berger, Thomas Luckmann (1996), *La construction sociale de la réalité*, Paris, Armand Colin, p. 189.

<sup>8</sup> Giuseppe Caforio, Marina Nuciari (1994), "The Officer Profession : Ideal-Type", *Current Sociology*, 42 (3), p.33-56; Joseph Soeters (1998), "Valeurs militaires, valeurs civiles : « vers le soldat communicateur »", in Bernard Boëne, Christopher Dandeker (dir.), op. cit., p 271-285.

<sup>9</sup> Jacques van Doorn (1965), « The Officer Corps : A Fusion of Profession and Organization », *European Journal of Sociology* VI (2), p. 262-282.

information exchange is partial. The loyalty towards the nation is at the origin of the loyalty towards the institution.

The second is composed by values considered as necessary to achieve military purposes: discipline, obedience, and hierarchy. These values reflect organizational principles. The existence of a centralized command and a vertical conception of the decision-making process are legitimized by the search for the efficiency in the military action, especially combat-oriented tasks. Interiorization of these rules ends in the adoption of appropriate behaviors which are evaluated during military career course.

Inspired by various theoretical approaches, these last sentences describe an archetypal complex of military values. This perspective is however going to allow us to understand in what the principles and the mechanisms of the European military cooperation<sup>10</sup>, and especially in the French-German case, diverge from these traditional military values.

### ***Cooperation and negotiation : a military purpose ?***

According to Raymond Aron, the soldier and the diplomat are considered as the symbolic characters of the interstate relations<sup>11</sup>. Their functions and their Ethos belong to different registers. If they share the same political purpose, the diplomat would possess the "art to convince", the soldier that to compel. According to this realist conception of the international relations, negotiation would rely on civilian skills. The assessment is close when the recent military operations are analyzed. Because Military have to negotiate with belligerent parties, local population and administration as well as to build bridges or networks of water conveyance, they have to develop civilian skills<sup>12</sup>. But first of all, the international cooperation can be considered itself as an ontological question for the military. It contradicts the realist vision an international *anarchical environment*, *within* States behavior can be qualified as Self-help policy in pursuit of national security and interest. The international system is in a constant state of antagonism and there is a general distrust of long-term cooperation or alliance. If military values are really closed to these main tenets of Realism

---

<sup>10</sup> Niagalé Bagayoko-Penone (2005), *Les militaires face à la construction européenne*, Paris, Les cahiers du C2SD, 2005 ; Jean-Pierre Maulny, Bastien Nivet (2008), *Les acteurs et réseaux de la politique européenne de la politique européenne de sécurité et de défense*, Paris, Les cahiers du C2SD ; Delphine Deschaux-Beaume (2009), *De l'Eurocorps à une armée européenne ? Pour une sociologie historique de la politique européenne de défense et de sécurité (1991-2007)*, Thèse de doctorat en Science Politique, Université Grenoble 2 – Pierre Mendès France/ Institut d'études politiques de Grenoble.

<sup>11</sup> Raymond Aron (1962), *Paix et Guerre entre les nations*, Calmann-Lévy p.17 et suiv.

<sup>12</sup> Delphine Resteigne, Josph Soeters, "Managing Militarily", *Armed Forces and Society*, Vol. 35, Nr 2, p. 307-332; Sebastiaan J.H. Rietjens (2008), "Managing Civil-Military Cooperation. Experiences from the Dutch Provincial Reconstruction Team in Afghanistan", *Armed Forces and Society*, vol. 34, Nr 2, p. 173-207; Boëne Bernard (2003), "La professionnalisation des armées", *Revue française de sociologie*, 44-4, p. 676.

Theory of international Relation, officers involved in cooperation process deal with a gap between their beliefs and the principles underlying cooperation.

Interviews with French officers bring to light such a gap, in particular through the speeches legitimizing the cooperation. Then, to resolve this tension, the officers consider that the cooperation belongs to a different world. Latent conflicts could be noticed during the interviews. Certain violent expressions have even been recorded. The annoyance was sometimes noticeable in the comments. However, just like the resistances noticed in the French officers I've met to the use of the term failure for describing the result of certain actions of cooperation, the concept of "conflict" referred to by the researcher during the inquiry has been often rejected. The cooperation would be in essence the antithesis of conflict. Its voluntary character would ban the generation of conflicting situations. The officers working quite regularly with their partners prefer to use the terms of « tensions », « deadlocks », or even « difficulties ». This perception seems to be particularly widespread in the French officers being noticeable at the level of the cooperation piloting units. When they take part in negotiations – sometimes difficult – representing their army, they do not see their action as aiming at the defense of their national interests, on the contrary. Sometimes, the speeches reveal a clearer break: an action of cooperation will be qualified as "politics" or as "symbolical" by the military actors, when it seems non-logical according their military values. This tends to underline the existence of two different spheres, two "orders" or "regimes of justification" according to the terminology proposed by Luc Boltanski and Laurent Thévenot<sup>13</sup>.

In this sphere of cooperation, the interviewed officers admit specific behaviors. On the one hand, the international background justifies in the officers' interviews the use of the adjective « diplomat » or « diplomatic » in order to qualify certain self-censorship attitudes or behaviors. It is about maintaining good relations, viewed as essential for the success of cooperation projects. Individuals will avoid therefore stating their opinion on a certain subject in the presence of their partner, thinking that they may cause doubts or increase the suspicions. Nevertheless, the trust is the rule. « Transparent and honest » are among the qualifiers which have been used several times in order to characterize the relations between the French and the German within the military cooperation process. In order to support these allegations, officers subject to interview insisted on the documents and information directly

---

<sup>13</sup> Luc Boltanski, Laurent Thévenot (2003), *De la justification. Les économies de la grandeur*, Paris, Gallimard.

addressed to the partner, without « screening » or censorship. The triad transparency/frankness/communication appears as an instrument in the quest of compromise.

The cooperation would rely on an implicit principle of symmetry. This equality principle also seems to require smooth negotiation mechanisms, as it is not about trying to impose a solution, as this is the case of one of the partners having a dominant position. The agreement cannot be therefore obtained but through a progressive connection of the positions of each of them. The mutual respect between the partners also relies on the independence postulated by each of them and on their possibility of not pursuing one or other forms of cooperation.

In this system of cooperative games, officers who negotiate have to develop a particular skill. They indeed have to discover the solution accepted by both parts. Their skills correspond at the same time to the control of the negotiation process and to the knowledge of partner's preferences, orientation and expectations of the partner. They have also to anticipate actors who can appear in the negotiation at several levels. It is a question of reaching as fast as possible a balance between expectations: a compromise. The compromise is not reached by the only multiplication of sets but also by the belief of the actors in the necessity / efficiency of the method of the compromise in the making-decision process. This method is commonly associated to democratic values, which are opposed to military values.

The process of negotiation represents finally a challenge for some officers. They experiment what Fritz Scharpf calls the «dilemma of the negotiator»<sup>14</sup>. Whereas they have to militate for the cooperation and convince their administration of the importance of certain projects, they also have to negotiate and maintain an equal distribution of costs and gains between the partners. They become “policy brokers” of whom the role « consist in looking for acceptable solutions between groups which can find an advantage to cooperate even if they do not pursue the same objectives and do not have no same interests »<sup>15</sup>. Officer who acts effectively is not inevitably the one who believes in a French-German community of fate, but rather the one who knows the best the rules of the game of the negotiation and the partner<sup>16</sup>. These officers-policy brokers can see sometimes their loyalty questioned. Their colleagues consider that they are too much “bound” to the success of cooperation projects and lose sight of their mission, the service of their country. They set then « the risk of appearing as

---

<sup>14</sup> Fritz W. Scharpf (1997), *Games Real Actors Play. Actor-Centered Institutionalism in Policy Research*, Boulder/Oxford, Westview , p. 117.

<sup>15</sup> Olivier Nay, Andy Smith (2002), « Les intermédiaires en politique. Médiation et jeux d'institutions », in Olivier Nay, Andy Smith, *Le gouvernement du compromis*, Paris, Economica, p. 13.

<sup>16</sup> Rudolf Avenhaus, William Zartman (2007) (eds), *Diplomacy Games Formal Models and International Negotiations*, Berlin/Heidelberg/Berlin, Springer.

«potential traitors» to the eyes of their interlocutors as to the eyes of those who appointed them »<sup>17</sup>.

***Multinationality : hierarchy versus networking.***

French-German cooperation and its underlying principles are sharply different from certain traditional military values. The divergence does not limit itself to a conception of behaviors of the States on the international scene. It also infers questions concerning the internal organizational principles to the national military administrations such as the uniqueness of command original and the vertical conception of the decision-making process. During our study on the French-German cooperation, we observed a functioning in network embedded in formal structures. Decision process is partially characterized by its horizontality. More than an organizational mode, the network becomes an actor.

First, the French-German military cooperation generates situations in which formal cooperation tools, such as communication procedures (information exchanges or subordination), were not the only practical devices. The working background conditions lead to use of informal procedures, deemed by the parties involved as more effective. These habits or behaviors, which are non-standardized, mostly depend on the professional evolution of individuals. They are mainly of two types: the development of an informal network and the shaping of the official hierarchical chain. The development of interpersonal relationships network with foreign officers can be a part of the task. It is particularly the case for military attachés. Existence of such networks will enable officers to obtain the most relevant and latest information on a certain topic. Direct and indirect friendly connection (the friend of a friend) will guarantee to a certain extent the rapidity and quality (frankness, unofficial information, etc.) of the reply. Equally, daily « horizontal » exchanges by phone calls or emails among officers directly in charge of one of the working sub-groups of French German Military Cooperation Group (FGMCG-Navy, -Air, etc.) also involve a functional rule. In exchange, the use by the latter of their network of contacts (within their army just like in that of the partner), developed during their career, show the existence of informal mechanisms of information collection, and sometimes of piloting as well. For instance it will lead to French officer to directly call a French exchange officer or a German officer working in a German staff in order to obtain the information required for a project. Or it is foreseen that this action is basically made by means of the French military mission of the Embassy of France in Berlin. This

---

<sup>17</sup> Olivier Nay, Andy Smith, op. cit., p. 20.

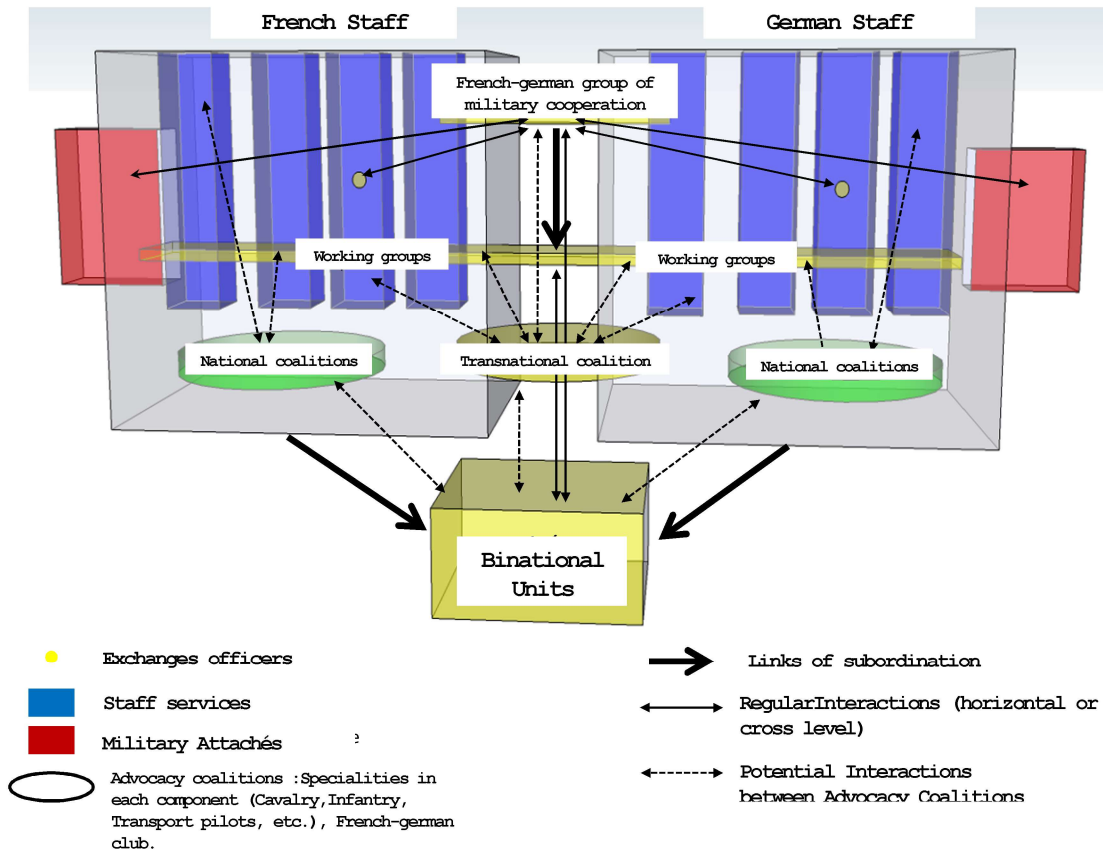


technique is equally used nowadays within national general staffs, as well as, for example in the case of the French, the information requests among services depending on different offices or divisions should also comply with certain formalism. The information exchanged during these contacts may refer to the fact of being aware of the opinion of a certain service (of its own management or of the partner's management) regarding a future project or decision to convince them to adopt a certain attitude. The network becomes therefore an influential factor.

Other diagonals (cross-level) "connections" complicates the model of the two-level diplomacy built by Robert Putnam. It complicates the meshing of the network. In our case, it can be relations between a member of one national administration and one from higher rank in the administration of the partner. These situations often arouse reactions of resistance. Indeed, the omitted partner is sometimes forced to accept an option different from the one that he defended during a negotiation. This choice is imposed on him by his own national hierarchy. These indirect strategies can find their source in the existence of pre-existent personal relations.

Then, it was possible to notice the existence of network consisted of officers who were repeatedly involved in the French-German cooperation. Convinced of the importance of the French-German cooperation, they constitute transnational advocacy coalition: a " French-German club ". This transnational club as collective actor promote french-german projects or a "certain" idea of the cooperation. Nevertheless, it would be presumptuous to speak about "proselytism".

Interactions models observed in the French-German military cooperation illustrate the possible organizational impacts of the multinationality. Once again we can underline a clear difference between these behavioral standards and the military values previously evoked.



## Conclusion

Through the French-German case, we sought to demonstrate that the multinationality not only required the development of an intercultural skill. Officers involved in this kind of activity have also to adopt behavior suited to the cooperation and to develop specific modes of interactions. These behavioral standards represent enacted civilian values which the actors of the military cooperation have to respect. However our result of the difference between the underlying values in the cooperation and the traditional military values does not lead to conclude that the multinationality changes the military values.

If we consider the above quoted military values as component of a military habitus, we can suggest that the officers immersed in a multinational context have to deal with a

phenomenon of hysteresis<sup>18</sup> of the habitus. According to Pierre Bourdieu, this term refers to situations in which an agent, who has been socialized in one social context, keeps dispositions, even if it became unsuitable, for example, after a rough evolution.

---

<sup>18</sup> Pierre Bourdieu (1978), « Classement, déclassé, reclassement », *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, 24, p. 2-22.