

**Anders McD Sookermany**

# **On Developing (Post)modern Soldiers**

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**An Inquiry into the Ontological and Epistemological  
Foundation of Skill-Acquisition in an Age of Military  
Transformation**

**A Dissertation for the Degree of Dr.Philos  
Submitted to The Faculty of Educational Sciences,**

**University of Oslo  
2013**

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*Series of dissertations submitted to the  
Faculty of Educational Sciences, University of Oslo*  
No. 182

ISSN 1501-8962

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Cover: Inger Sandved Anfinsen.  
Printed in Norway: AIT Oslo AS, 2013.

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# Acknowledgments

Looking back on the process of doing this project, it feels as I have been on a long and almost open-ended journey into the wilderness of the academic jungle, in pursuit of a trail that would lead me to a place of greater understanding and insight (to the ontological and epistemological foundations of military skill-acquisition). Thus, as I would anticipate something also experienced by many of those who have gone before, the route taken was more a consequence of the new acquaintances made along the trail than of a meticulously developed plan to accumulate as many as possible of the pre-recommended landmarks highlighted within the prevailing discourse. In consequence, this journey has taken me to the backyards of great military battles, training grounds and educational institutions, confronted me with thought-provoking ideas and introduced me to numerous inspiring people and thinkers – all in all making this a process of (personal) academic redemption.

Despite the hardship and struggle, I am forever grateful for the opportunity invested in me by my employer The Norwegian Defence University College (NDUC). A special thanks is in place to my boss at the NDUC Norwegian School of Sport Sciences Defence Institute (NSSS/DI) over the last eleven years, Lieutenant Colonel Steinar Høgseth, without whom this project would never have been airborne. Your openness for difference, your unselfish care for your employees, and your unconditional faith in me have been of invaluable character.

I am more than indebted to Professor Gunnar Breivik who acted as my supervisor and mentor for the whole duration of this project. I could not have asked for a greater capacity and travel companion in searching for the ontological and epistemological foundation for postmodern skills. Your broad knowledge of philosophy of science together with your openness and willingness to share has made my journey an insightful and deeply intriguingly one.

I also would like to thank my colleagues at the NSSS/DI for providing an atmosphere where diversity and freethinking prevails. As such, special recognition is in order of Marius Morstad's uncompromising presence and his constantly challenge of 'scientific untalented diligence', which makes us dig deeper so as to make real progress. With you on my side, being different is easy! Likewise, I want to express my sincere appreciation to my academic partner and colleague Jørgen W. Eriksen, who has the intellectual capacity and personal capability to move people's mindset away from that which we take for granted and open our

minds to new understanding – going through this process of academic redemption would not have been as rewarding without you as my travel companion. I am also grateful to you and Magnhild Skare for covering for me while I have been living the good life putting together this thesis. Magnhild, your focused attention to the tasks at hand and ability to get the job done is of invaluable character to any professional workplace, not to say putting together and running a scientific study. May I have the great fortune of co-working with the three of you for many more years! An appreciation is also in order for my co-workers Jan Erik and Jon whom I have had many debates with about the field of physical training in the armed forces. Our discussions have made my thoughts and arguments clearer. I also would like to take the opportunity to thank the ‘crazygang’ working, or who have worked, with me in the Department of Military Skill-Acquisition: Anders Aa for meticulously arguing the value of work-physiology, Annett for your thoroughness and willingness to make progress, Bendik for giving the concept of meaningfulness a place and face in our daily discourse, Gunnar for being a role model, Hilde for taking care of business, Jarmo for enlightening me in the perspectives of others, Jørgen for your uncompromising honesty, Kari for broadening my horizon, Karianne for your eagerness to participate, Lene for providing me the space to lead and write, Magnhild for your skillful and professional attitude, Marius for always challenging my perception, May Lena for your eagerness to push further, Nils for our insightful discussions, Nina for engaging me in your critical observations, Reidar for fertilizing my insight to the corridors of pedagogy, Rune G for sharing your experience from the extreme, Rune H for the ability of taking on and execute any task given in an orderly and proficient manner, Stig for preparing the ground for those who came after and Trond for enriching me with your skillful participation; you are the true reason why we have become an academic institution and our work is appreciated – Thank you!

Furthermore, I would like to acknowledge the fundamental importance of being situated on campus of my “second” academic home institution, namely the Norwegian School of Sport Sciences (NSSS). This project would never have been initiated without the influence of my academic upbringing in the Department of Culture and Society in general and the research group ‘Sports as a Cultural Phenomenon’ in particular – a special thanks to Matti Goksøyr and Sigmund Loland for “adopting” me (the academic orphanage child) and providing me with the access and possibility of such an academic upbringing. Similarly, I would also like to thank the members of the ‘Monday morning group’ (Gunnar, Jannicke, Jens, Jørgen, Leif,

Marius, Nina, Rune, Thor Christian, Thomas and Trond) for all the inspiring discussions and invaluable comments on my writing.

Additionally, I would like to thank Lieutenant Colonel Tormod Heier, a colleague at the NDUC, for taking the time to read and comment on parts of my manuscript. Your sharp eye for structure and clarity I envy. Appreciation is also in place for the fantastic librarians Hege Udem Store, Nina Eskild Riege and Silje Skogheim at the NDUC library; you are the heart of our institution. Equally, I am ever so grateful for the professional and invaluable help with the English language I have received from Felicity Tylor-Jones. I also would like to show my appreciation towards the University of Oslo and the Faculty of Educational Sciences for the willingness to evaluate my work; I hope I am able to live up to your standards.

To my mum and dad, Liv and Mackie, thank you for entrusting me with the freedom to find my own way in life. I am confident that the seeds of my upbringing can be traced in this thesis. Ståle, Anne Marie, Hans Christian, Marianne and Trond thank you for believing in me at a momentous time in my life, without your honesty and unconditional friendship this would never have happened. I also want to thank my parents in law, Aase and Syver, for all the support you have given during these years, taking care of us during holidays and helping out with the kids when I have been travelling or needed time to write.

And at last, but far from least, Line-Anne, Elias and Aase Sofie, thank you for being there reminding me of reality – I love you! Line-Anne, your support and sacrifices means the world to me, I could not have made it without you!

Anders McD Sookermany

Oslo, August 2013



# Abstract

This thesis (*on the development of (post)modern soldiers*) is a theoretical inquiry into the ontological and epistemological basis of skill-acquisition in an age of military transformation. As such, it deals with the comprehensive restructuring of the armed forces that has taken place in developed Western countries in the aftermath of the Cold War era, and its implications on the development of soldiering skills.

Quite briefly, one can describe the transformative shift as a change from a large static invasion defense-based concept built on “civilian” conscripted volume-concerned mobilization forces with little more than basic skills, towards a smaller and more flexible expeditionary force-based defense concept dependent on ability-motivated professional military groups and units with well-developed “expert” skills.

Within the academic literature, this shift is interpreted as being one of paradigmatic character which resembles the societal change of worldview from modernity (with its association to universalism, structure and objectivity) towards postmodernity (and its responsiveness to contextuality, complexity and constructivity).

Therefore, from a pedagogical philosophical standpoint, this dissertation is, in essence, concerned with the development of soldiers in a transformational era from modernity towards postmodernity. Consequently, the main research question is formulated as being ‘*How do we develop (post)modern soldiers?*’ In driving the process three intriguingly simple yet essentially meaningful sub-questions have been put forward: 1) ‘*How do we understand [military] skill?*’ 2) ‘*What is it to be [militarily] skilled?*’ and 3) ‘*How do we acquire [military] skills?*’

In addressing the ontological and epistemological level of military skill-acquisition in this context, three aspects are investigated more closely; namely *identity* (as change in the being of a soldier), *skill* (as change in military conduct/soldiering) and *learning* (as change in how to become a soldier). The inquiry into the conception of identity implies a shift from a classic dualistic view of the human body where the mental and the physical are separated, towards a holistic view of human nature in which being a human [soldier] is expressed through an embodied presence in the world. Likewise, the investigation into the understanding of skill suggests a move from a universalist epistemology where (modern) skills are seen as being constituted of rules and maxims, towards a contextualistic understanding in which (postmodern) skill is expressed through action, judgment, valuation

and assessment. And finally, the exploration of learning signals a change from scholastic instructional principles fostered in educational institutions, towards a non-scholastic learning style (observation, copying, participation etc.) situated in the everyday practice of the workplace/community of practice.

When summarizing the main findings in this thesis it is implied that the implications of the military transformation, in regards to military skill-acquisition, propose a shift from a detached ontology, context-free epistemology and theoretical learning paradigm, towards an embodied ontology, situated epistemology and experiential learning paradigm.



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# Introduction to the Field of Inquiry

This thesis is concerned with the extensive restructuring of the armed forces as witnessed in developed Western countries over the last couple of decades, and the fundamental consequences for the development of soldiering skills.

Moreover, it uses the reorientation of NATO's defense and security policy in the aftermath of the Cold War and the consequential modernization of the Norwegian Armed Forces (NoAF) to contextualize how military forces were/are reoriented; from focusing on the characteristic skills of homeland defense towards adopting the soldiering capabilities/skills to become a supranational instrument for peace and stabilization. The basic hypothesis for the thesis is that such a shift not only demands the acquisition of a new set or type of (military) skills, but more radically it necessitates a pivotal change to the foundational aspects of how we understand soldiering as a skill.

In short, this thesis is an inquiry into the ontological and epistemological foundation of skill-acquisition in an age of military transformation.

## The Military Transformation – A Preview

The reason and requirement for the renewing of military skills must be seen as a direct consequence of the renewed portfolio of military missions, which grew out of the new types of armed conflicts observed in the aftermath of the Cold War era.

Therefore, the witnessed restructure and the development of new skill-sets within the armed forces is due to a pivotal shift in the understanding of the 'strength and relevance' of military force in a new societal and geopolitical era. The basic assumption was that large, static homeland defense structures, designed to defend territorial borders against a massive and known invader, were no longer of use. Instead one should prepare for a 'New World Disorder' where the security threat was understood to be unknown insurgence confined to regional conflicts 'out-of-area'.<sup>1</sup> This change in understanding of the utility of the armed forces "clearly indicated a fundamental transformation towards an expeditionary force structure".<sup>2</sup> A crucial difference between the two operational concepts is the relationship of

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<sup>1</sup> The phrase 'New World Disorder' is meant to contrast the phrase 'New World Order', signifying that the changes are understood to be of a rather dissolving character. I borrow it from Alexander McKenzie, 'New Wars' Fought 'Amongst the People': 'Transformed' by Old Realities? *Defence Studies*, Vol. 11, Issue 4 (2011), pp. 569-593.

<sup>2</sup> Tormod Heier, *Influence and Marginalisation: Norway's Adaptation to US Transformation Efforts in NATO, 1998-2004* (PhD-Dissertation, UiO, 2006), p. 12.

quantity and quality. Where the first is dependent on mobilizing the masses to sustain a large invasion, the latter is reliant on the ability of its soldiers and units to solve smaller and more relatively confined conflicts. In order to mobilize a whole nation the homeland force structures were built on every citizen's compulsory duty to serve his (or her) country when needed. Thus, conscription became the answer for developing basic military skills. With the introduction of an expeditionary force structure, qualities such as deployability, readiness and interoperability with sophisticated soldiers from other nations became important features. Thus, professionalism became the answer to developing matured and sustainable military skills.

So in short, one can describe the transformative shift as a change from a large static invasion defense-based concept built on "civilian"-conscripted volume-concerned mobilization forces with little more than basic skills, towards a smaller and more flexible expeditionary force-based defense concept dependent on ability-motivated professional military groups and units with well-developed "expert" skills.<sup>3</sup>

Within the armed forces community there is a widespread understanding that this transformation is of such a magnitude as to represent a paradigmatic shift when it comes to the use and development of military forces.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, there are also strong voices that view the transformation as a parallel to the societal changes we have seen in Western society over the last couple of decades, namely as a change from *modernity*, with its weight on universalism, structure and objectivity towards *postmodernity* and its responsiveness to constructivism, complexity and contextuality.<sup>5</sup>

Thus, my basic assumption is that such substantial change in how we perceive the role and identity of the military, and thereby the identity of the soldier, would have an equal impact

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<sup>3</sup> For more extensive reading on the changes seen in the Western developed democracies, I suggest reading Charles C. Moskos, John Allen Williams and David R. Segal (eds.), *The Postmodern Military; Armed Forces after the Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

<sup>4</sup> Christopher Flaherty, "The Relevance of the US Transformation Paradigm for Australian Defence Forces," *Defence & Security Analysis*, Vol. 19, No. 3 (September 2003) pp. 219-240; Sverre Diesen, "Mot et allianseintegret forsvar" ["Towards an alliance-integrated defense force"], in *Mot et avnasjonalisert forsvar? [Towards a denationalized defense force?]*, Janne Haaland Matlary and Øyvind Østerud (eds.), (Oslo: Abstrakt forlag, 2005), pp. 163-184; Sir Rupert Smith, *The Utility of Force; The Art of War in the Modern World* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, a division of Random House, Inc, 2007).

<sup>5</sup> Fabrizio Battistelli, "Peacekeeping and the postmodern Soldier," *Armed Forces & Society* 23, pp. 467 - 484; Charles C. Moskos and James Burk, "The Postmodern Military," in *The Military in New Times*, (ed.) James Burk (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994), 142; Moskos et.al. (eds.), *The Postmodern Military*; Harry Bondy, "Postmodernism and the Source of Military Strength in the Anglo West," *Armed Forces & Society* 31, (2004), pp. 31-61. For an introduction to modernity and postmodernity see: David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity*. (London: Blackwell Publishers Inc., 2000).

on the way we view, understand and consequently debate military skill(s) and the acquisition of these skill(s).

Consequently, my purpose is to show how the application of a modern versus postmodern worldview fosters two almost diametrically opposing understandings of what constitutes good military skills. So, in order for the military transformation to be successful in reaching its goal of changing the armed forces organization and culture into an expeditionary mindset it will necessitate not only a new way of doing, but also a new and different way of thinking about the way of doing. As such, on a meta level, I intend this thesis to offer a new understanding of how we as human beings should think and act in relation to military endeavors in general, and on a more basic level I will, by line of argument, propose a new ontology and epistemology that I believe are a) philosophically more valid, and b) substantially more relevant in developing postmodern soldiers.

Still, I feel it is worth underlining that by offering *my* postmodern understanding it does not mean I believe this to be the *only* perspective valid or relevant in relation to developing soldiers and armed forces in the post-Cold War era. Nevertheless, by offering and justifying its relevance and validity I believe I will prove that the old perspective is no longer suitable if we are to develop soldiers and military units with applicable military skills.

## **The Research Question(s), Aim and Perspective**

My main interest with the military transformation is connected to the way in which we perceive military skill-acquisition by consequence of such fundamental changes, or more simply put: *How do we develop (post)modern soldiers?* Such a question easily ends up debating the educational programs, training drills and exercises conducted as means of achieving a certain performance goal. However, it seems fair to assume that a change of the magnitude we are witnessing with *The Military Transformation* will have to have a greater impact on the skill-acquisition process than just a makeover of the training programs. Thus, my curiosity truly lies at the *ontological* and *epistemological* level of this question, rather than on the *didactics*. And so, this thesis sets out to be an inquiry into the ontological and epistemological foundation of skill-acquisition for developing top-quality soldiers and military units in an age of military transformation. I will argue that the old military understanding was based on a certain dualistic ontology, whilst the new military understanding is in need of a more holistic ontology. Thus, it is my intention to present an

alternative, more holistic ontology that is better suited to lay the groundwork for our understanding of the new (post)modern situation.

*Ontology* is the study of beings and their being.<sup>6</sup> So, ontology studies what it means to be. Beings are different in the way they are. Unique to human beings are that they not only are, but know that they are. They are therefore aware of their own being. They “exist”. Consequently, when you change the ontology, you change the foundation for understanding what it means to be a human being. Thus, ontology does not directly say anything about being a soldier, but presents a framework for our understanding of what it is to be a soldier. On this basis it is also possible to discuss what it means to be a good soldier. Thus a shift from a modern to a postmodern ontology will lead to a change in our conception of the *good* soldier. To put it very simply, a traditional modern ontological view presents the human being as composed of two distinct entities: body and soul, whilst, a postmodern view presents the human being as the embodiment of a unity of body and soul. Hence, a shift in ontology will have great consequences for how we understand human beings (soldiers) in military contexts.

*Epistemology*, on the other hand, is the study of knowledge, and so is concerned with questions such as, what is knowledge? How do we know what we know? And how do we acquire knowledge? A broader understanding is that “epistemology is about issues having to do with the creation and dissemination of knowledge in particular areas of inquiry”.<sup>7</sup> Hence, as with ontology, if you change the epistemology you change the foundation for understanding that which you seek to understand. Furthermore, the relationship between the epistemology concerning skill and the skill itself is so closely woven that a change in one will lead to a change in the other. Therefore, when seeking knowledge of the epistemological foundation of skill-acquisition in relation to a shift from a modern towards a postmodern worldview, this will inevitably change our understanding of what constitutes good soldiering skills. In short, a classical modern epistemology is based on a universalistic belief that action or skills should follow principles that not only could, but also should, be followed by all, whilst a postmodern epistemological view is grounded in a contextualistic view that the situation leads one to act in a certain manner. Consequently, a shift in

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<sup>6</sup> David Woodruff Smith, “Phenomenology”, *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2008, Edward N.Zalta (ed.) (<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/phenomenology/#5>). Page downloaded on February 27, 2012.

<sup>7</sup> Matthias Steup, “Epistemology”, *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2005, Edward N.Zalta (ed.) (<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/epistemology/>). Page downloaded on February 27, 2012.



epistemology will have substantial implications for our understanding of developing (post)modern soldiers.

What I am looking for are the deeper philosophical perspectives underlying the (pedagogical) practice of developing the best possible soldiers, as to make them meet the ideal of a desired soldiering role in a certain era and context. In the thesis I will use/portray the two ‘paradigmatically’ different concepts of the invasion defense-based concept as a ‘modern’ example and the expeditionary force-based defense concept as that of a ‘postmodern’ one.

Thus, to fully grasp the ontological and epistemological implications for military skill-acquisition the main research question ‘*How do we develop (post)modern soldiers?*’ needs to be further operationalized. In my search for more clarity, three intriguingly simple yet essentially meaningful sub-questions emerged. The first question ‘*How do we understand [military] skill?*’ addresses the basic nature of human skill seen in relation to a dualistic and holistic view as representations of a modern and postmodern understanding of skill in general and military skill in particular. From this grew the second question ‘*What is it to be [militarily] skilled?*’, which implies that if there is an essential difference between the modern universalist skills fostered during the Cold War era and those postmodern contextual skills needed today, would not the perception of being skilled also equally change. And consequently, the third and final question, ‘*How do we acquire [military] skills?*’, must be seen as a follow-up to the two former questions by implying that if there are substantial differences between the conscripted territorial defense concept representing the modern armed forces and the partly professionalized expeditionary forces representing the postmodern military, there ought to be an equal change in the pedagogical philosophy underlying military skill-acquisition.

By discussing these important questions, the purpose of this study is to debate the role of military skill-acquisition in a (post)modernized NATO/NoAF, as a consequence of the ongoing transformation. The aim is to sketch out a typological framework that can work as an ontological and epistemological foundation for how we understand and debate the role of military skill-acquisition in a post-Cold War era/environment/context. As such, the project is academically situated within the military sociological discourse on the *military and the*

*postmodern*, as well as within a pedagogical discourse on the *postmodern and learning* rooted mainly in educational philosophy.<sup>8</sup>

In choosing to use a typological approach, I am fully aware that it is a developmental construct that presents an ideal-type and somewhat theoretical conception of the addressed problem and, as such, is unjust to real life. Thus, it should be seen as more of a guide in helping to organize different notions of how we understand and deal with skill-acquisition, than as a *formula* for how we should view and conduct military training.

## The Disposition

The conceptual framework of the thesis is shown in Figure 1, with the horizontal lines signifying the transformational shift from modern armed forces towards postmodern armed forces, and the vertical line portraying the direction of the thesis from beginning to end. This thesis begins by introducing the ongoing modernization process of the NoAF as a Norwegian consequence of NATO's modernizing project on its way into a new millennium. The modernizing project has been labeled 'Military Transformation' and it is this transformation that is the principal research field of this thesis. However, my concerns within this field are connected to the implications/consequences it, the transformation, will have on how one should develop soldiers and military units in accordance with these substantial changes. The introduction also introduces the aim and goals of the project through a description of its research questions.

In *Chapter 1 'The Military Transformation' as a historical background* will be described, understood and explained through the political and doctrinal works put forward after the Cold War. Therefore, the main sources of information will be governmental documents, speeches and statements exhibiting the political will of transforming the armed forces, together with military doctrines found in relation to four analytical levels: the global context, the alliance context, the national context and the military context.

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<sup>8</sup> Stanley Aronowitz and Henry A. Giroux, *Postmodern Education: Politics, Culture & Social Criticism* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1991); Robin Usher and Richard Edwards, *Postmodernism and Education*; Different Voices, Different Worlds. (NY: Routledge, 1994); Stuart Parker, *Reflective Teaching in the Postmodern World: A manifesto for Education in Postmodernity* (Buckingham; Open University Press, 1997); Lars Løvlie, Klaus Peter Mortensen and Sven Erik Nordenbo (eds.), *Educating Humanity: Bildung in Postmodernity* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2003); Conrad P. Pritscher, *Einstein & Zen: Learning to Learn* (New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 2010).

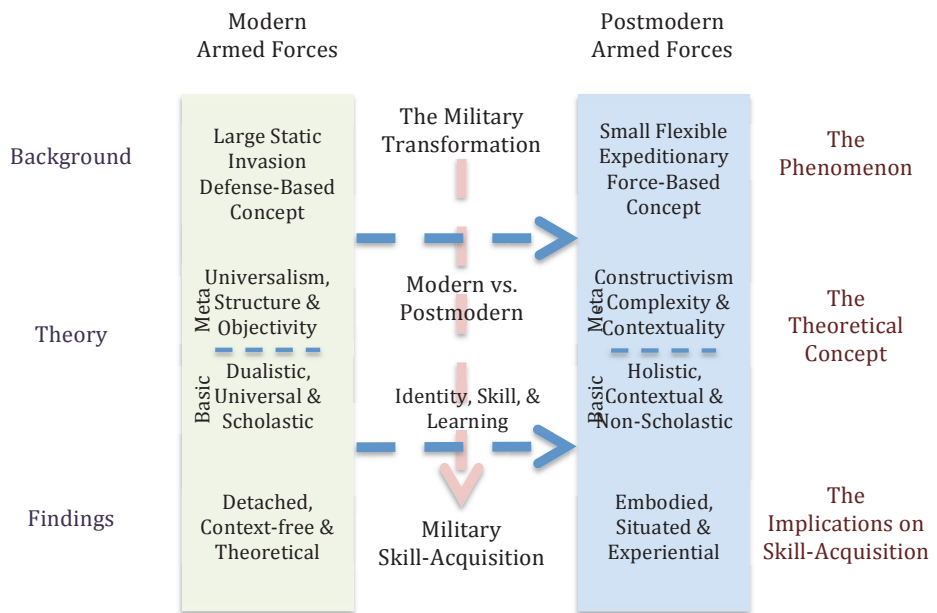


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework for the Thesis.

In *Chapter 2* I address **the idea of a postmodern military** by looking for “evidence” or traces of that which we understand to be postmodern in various kinds of literature on, or in, connection to the military in general and the military transformation more specifically.

Then in *Chapter 3* I will lay out **the thesis’ theoretical framework from a modern towards a postmodern worldview**. A central theme within the academic discourse of military transformation has been the link to a change in worldview from modernity towards postmodernity. In an attempt to tap into and contribute to this discourse, the change in worldview constitutes the meta-layer of the thesis’ theoretical framework. From this position I will elaborate the implication on identity, skill and learning as the ontological and epistemological foundation for military skill-acquisition.

In *Chapter 4* I will present **the main findings** by describing the initial assumptions and presenting the sub-questions that I have then sought to answer in the three papers. Summaries of the papers are metaphorically presented as the narrative of three (post)modern soldiers: ‘*The Embodied Soldier*’, ‘*The Skillful Soldier*’ and ‘*The Learning Soldier*’.

And finally, in *Chapter 5* I will **sum up the project and reflect on both the implications** of this study on military skill-acquisition and the way ahead in the endeavor for more

understanding and clarity. As such, I will give a résumé of the structure of the argument presented throughout the thesis, before elaborating on the consequence my work might have in application to the military. Moreover, I round off with some suggestions this study could have on military skill-acquisitional research in the years ahead.

# Chapter 1:

## 'The Military Transformation' an Historical Background

Transformation, as I see it, has (at least) two understandings when used in relation to the foundational renewing of Western developed countries' defense and security policy and the consequential restructuring and modernization of their armed forces. The first can be recognized as 'The Paradigm Shift' perspective. Here the concept of transformation is seen as reference to the qualitative/actual/factual change from one reality to another, or, from an invasion defense concept towards a flexible expeditionary defense concept. As such, this discourse addresses the presumed, identified, experienced characteristics of the old and new order, and critically debates both the degree to which the armed forces do or do not follow this path and the subsequent consequences. The discourse is therefore predominantly populated by military sociologists, political scientists and historians.<sup>9</sup> The second understanding could be viewed as 'The Process' perspective because it refers to transformation as a type of continuous process of change; hence focusing on the process rather than the outcome of the process. As such, this perspective debates the underlying aspects of organizational culture as identity (ethos and value), skill (competency and knowledge) and learning (organizational and individual), all of which need to be tackled in order to actually make the paradigmatically shift happen. Accordingly, this perspective is to a greater degree debated with foundations in philosophical, pedagogical and management research.<sup>10</sup>

It should however be mentioned that transformation, as in *The Military Transformation* (with a capital T), became a rather distinct US-led project of change within the NATO

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<sup>9</sup> Examples are Moskos et al. (eds.), *The Postmodern Military*; Anthony King, *The Transformation of Europe's Armed Forces. From the Rhine to Afghanistan*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Mary Kaldor, *New & Old Wars; Organized Violence in a Global Era* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2007); Martin van Creveld, *The Changing Face of War. Lessons of Combat, from the Marne to Iraq*. (New York, NY: Ballantine Books, 2006).

<sup>10</sup> Hermann Jung, "New Ways of Military Thinking and Acting for a Better World: New Models-Preparing Forces to Master Unavoidable Transitions", in Giuseppe Caforio (ed.), *Advances in Military Sociology: Essays in Honor of Charles C. Moskos*. Contributions to Conflict Management, Peace Economics and Development, Volume 12A, (Bingley, UK: Emerald Group Publishing Limited, 2009), pp. 353-393; Kenton G. Fasana, Using Capabilities to Drive Military Transformation: An Alternative Framework, *Armed Forces & Society*, 2011, 37, pp. 141-162; Wilbur J. Scott, David R. McCone and George R. Mastroianni, "The Deployment Experiences of Ft. Carson's Soldiers in Iraq: Thinking about and Training for Full-Spectrum Warfare" *Armed Forces & Society*, 2009, 35, pp. 460-476; George B. Forsythe, Scott Snook, Philip Lewis, and Paul T. Bartone, "Professional Identity Development for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Army Officers", in Don M. Snider and Lloyd J. Matthews (eds.), *The Future of the Army Profession*, Revised & Expanded Second Edition (Boston Burr Ridge, IL: McGraw-Hill Custom Publishing, 2005), pp. 189-209.

community around the turn of the millennium.<sup>11</sup> Still, it is important to understand that the concept of change being of a transformational character is not necessarily restricted to the same limited and defined period. Transformational changes can and will take place whether we call them that or not. When looking to *The Military Transformation* per se, there was a time of build-up towards its launch that should be taken into consideration when debating the general implications and the more precise consequences for military skill-acquisition, in a change from modern towards postmodern armed forces. Thus, the purpose of this chapter is primarily to field a historical background narrative for my own argument on developing postmodern soldiers, by contextualizing the characteristic elements of a shift from territorial homeland defense towards expeditionary forces with a global outreach.

My approach follows four distinct layers: the global context, the alliance context, the national (Norwegian) context and the military (NoAF) context.

## **The Global Context**

Historically, *The Military Transformation* (with a capital T) took place at a time in history when the world at large was witnessing major changes to the foundations of the existing World Order. On the social and economic level it coincided with a move from what was seen as the *industrial age* where emphasis was put on hierarchical bureaucracies, standardization, economic efficiency and mass market, towards what many refer to as an *informational technology age*, more open to globalization, transparency and diversity. Politically it corresponded with a movement from a Weberian World Order with the *rational-legal nation-state* as the center of gravity, towards a renewed political order where *supranational institutions* would play an increasingly important role. And finally, the transformation took place at the turn of a new millennium, merely a decade after the disintegration of the Iron Curtain, the breakdown of the Warsaw Pact, the fall of the Berlin Wall and the dissolving of the Soviet Union. All in all, these trends signaled a **new international political landscape** moving away from a clearly defined bi-polar world order (e.g. East vs. West, Warsaw Pact vs. NATO and the Soviet Union vs. the USA) towards a multipolar landscape.

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<sup>11</sup> This will be comprehensively dealt with later in the chapter.

## **New International Political Landscape**

All of these aforementioned trends paved the way for a new world order or, perhaps better termed, a *New World Disorder*. The breakup of a rather clear-cut two-block world society, which characterized the Cold War Era, left Europe open to both geographical and political reconfiguration. Many former countries, separatist and democratic movements, religious and ethnic leaders etc. saw the opportunity to create their own nation-state, to which many succeeded. Some surfaced through democratic and peaceful political change, whilst others had to go through armed conflict before a new order could be established. Yet others failed and continue to struggle with or without the use of weapons.

Due to the emergence of many new nations/states the map had to be redrawn. In Europe alone we have witnessed a change from twenty-eight to forty-nine countries in the post-Cold War period.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, the new geographical landscape surpassed the old East-West division. An apt example is the development of The European Economic Community (EEC) into the European Union (EU) in 1993. The EEC was an all-Western European supranational community founded on the principles of free commercial trade, and represented a sort of political antagonist to the communist Eastern Europe. With the assimilation into the EU the community grew from thirteen to twenty-seven member nations, with presumably more on the way. Today almost every second nation within the EU is geographically located in what used to be the Eastern Block.<sup>13</sup>

So, as the world becomes increasingly separated it also becomes more open and pluralistic, which subsequently leads to a growth in global relationships of culture, people, and economic activity (across ethnic, national, political and ideological borders).<sup>14</sup> Whereas during the industrial age it was seen as favorable to protect ones industry and manufactured goods against foreign trade competition, the information technology age makes it easier to share knowledge and work/trade across nations and borders. Consequently, there is an almost paradoxical situation of the world becoming simultaneously more divided and closely related.

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<sup>12</sup> Maps.com "Cold War Europe Map, 1946-1990," ([http://www.maps.com/ref\\_map.aspx?pid=11415](http://www.maps.com/ref_map.aspx?pid=11415)) Page accessed 30th March 2012; Europa.eu, "Countries," ([http://europa.eu/about-eu/countries/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/about-eu/countries/index_en.htm)) Page accessed 30th March 2012.

<sup>13</sup> EU Webpage (<http://europa.eu>) Page accessed 30th March 2012.

<sup>14</sup> I should perhaps underscore that I believe globalization to be as much the reason for the end of the Cold War era as the other way around.

Thus, the *modern* hierarchical and bureaucratically structured world order is heavily challenged by what seems to be disorder, but instead should be seen as merely a new but diverse world order.

## **New Defense and Security Challenges**

From a security perspective, such diffusion could be understood as a possible threat to national, political and ideological values and interests. As such, these described societal and political changes have impacted enormously on our conception of threat and danger, and consequently leave us with a completely **new set of security challenges**. Thus, the rationale for the armed forces shifts from defending territorial homeland borders, to protecting one's values and interests. An apt example is provided by the Minister of Defense to Norway, Anne-Grete Strøm-Erichsen, who highlighted this perspective in her annual address to the Oslo Military Society, entitled *Values worth Defending*, in January 2007:

Accordingly, the Norwegian Armed Forces should be based less on what we need to protect ourselves against and focused much more on what we want to protect, to guard—namely, the activities, the infrastructure, the interests, and the values on which our society is built, which we will defend both at home and abroad.<sup>15</sup>

The new world order not only described a different kind of security threat, but also perceived the meaning of a threat in a completely new way. Not as one threat, but as many different risks and challenges from different types of adversaries.<sup>16</sup>

Such an outlook was fielded by Javier Solana, at the time Secretary General to NATO, when stating “[n]ow that the Cold War is over, we are faced not with a single all-embracing threat but with a multitude of new risks and challenges.”<sup>17</sup> These ‘new’ risks and challenges were not confined to the defense of traditional territorial borders. Neither were they a war between two sovereign states nor between marionettes of the Eastern and Western Block. Moreover, they could not be solved by the large static invasion defense-based defense concepts of the Cold War. Instead, these new risks and challenges seemed to follow political ideas, religious belief, or ethnic arguments and in many cases were instigated by non-nation/government(al) groups, like Al-Qaida, Kosovo Liberation Army and Taliban.

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<sup>15</sup> Anne-Grete Strøm-Erichsen, “Verdier verd å verne” [Values worth defending] Norsk militært tidsskrift 1, 177, pp. 4–12. (In Norwegian, my translation)

<sup>16</sup> Mikkel Vedby Rasmussen, *The Risk Society at War; Terror, Technology and Strategy in the Twenty-First Century* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

<sup>17</sup> Javier Solana, Then NATO Secretary General, 25 January 1999 in NATO, What is NATO? 0787-11, NATO Graphics & Printing. [http://www.nato.int/nato-welcome/pdf/whatisnato\\_en.pdf](http://www.nato.int/nato-welcome/pdf/whatisnato_en.pdf) Page accessed 15th March 2012, p. 12.



Consequently: to prevent ethnic cleansing as seen in Rwanda; to seek out terrorists as witnessed in the Afghan mountains; to fight pirates as done in the Bay of Aden; to protect civilians and civilian-populated areas against its regime forces as experienced in Libya; to safeguard peace agreements as done in Kosovo; or to prevent new terrorist attacks on major cities as seen in New York, Madrid, and London, the new world needed new ways of addressing the diverse security challenges with which it was faced. That the threats and risks are/were global in nature and without borders, pointed towards the need for a solution incorporating a supranational security organization. In the European case, and therefore the Norwegian interest, it would be NATO.

## The NATO Context

### Cold War Era

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was founded on April 4, 1949 as an answer to the Western European<sup>18</sup> security challenges in the aftermath of World War II.

In 1949, when ideological clashes between East and West were gaining momentum, ten Western European states, the United States and Canada signed the North Atlantic Treaty. The primary aim was to create an alliance of mutual assistance to counter the risk that the Soviet Union would seek to extend its control of Eastern Europe to other parts of the continent.<sup>19</sup>

From a military perspective it is reasonable to say that NATO was formed to defend the sovereignty of Western (European) democratic states and their territorial borders against an invasion type of war from a communist imperial threat in the East.

It is, however, vital to recognize that NATO was not a union of states led by a federal leadership. Rather it was an alliance of nations supporting each other and acknowledging each *State* as a sovereign nation. Hence, its military purpose was to deal with external threats to the (individual) *State*.

The Parties will consult together whenever, in the opinion of any of them, the territorial integrity, political independence or security of any of the Parties is threatened.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> NATO of course are dealing with the security issues of the North Atlantic region. However, it came out of WWII and the challenges seen in Europe.

<sup>19</sup> NATO, What is NATO? 0787-11, NATO Graphics & Printing. [http://www.nato.int/nato-welcome/pdf/whatisnato\\_en.pdf](http://www.nato.int/nato-welcome/pdf/whatisnato_en.pdf) Page accessed 15th March 2012, p. 11.

<sup>20</sup> NATO, *The North Atlantic Treaty*, Washington DC, 1945, Article 4. [http://www.nato.int/nato-welcome/pdf/nato\\_treaty\\_en\\_light.pdf](http://www.nato.int/nato-welcome/pdf/nato_treaty_en_light.pdf). Page accessed 15th March, 2012.

So, for example, the development of NATO armed forces was primarily a national responsibility that led each nation to build a force with all the capacities of a modern war machine. It therefore follows that NATO was built on the perceptions of the Modern World. Respectively, it is arguable that NATO, anno 1949, was designed to deal with the security challenges of the Modern World. An understanding sustained, more or less, for the duration of the (entire) Cold War period.

## **The 1990s – Adaptation to a New World (Dis)order**

Conversely, with the fall of the ‘Iron Curtain’ the conceptual understanding of the world changed dramatically. Gone was the two-block society defining East and West as two separate adversary worlds, reciprocally sustained by a ‘terror-balance’. Correspondingly, this became the stepping-stone for NATO’s first new strategic facelift in the post- Cold War era.

All the countries that were formerly adversaries of NATO have dismantled the Warsaw Pact and rejected ideological hostility to the West. ... The political division of Europe that was the source of the military confrontation of the Cold War period has thus been overcome.<sup>21</sup>

It seemed as though NATO’s role was fulfilled and its mission was superfluous, so accordingly, there were voices questioning the necessity of NATO on the road to a new millennium: what was the point of NATO without its antagonist – the Warsaw Pact?

However, these voices were overshadowed by those who spoke about the end of the Cold War as the *beginning* of a new era for Europe (and NATO) with a multitude of new risks and challenges. As **NATO’s new strategic concept of 1991** states, “a great deal of uncertainty about the future and risks to the security of the Alliance remain.”<sup>22</sup> Quite so, with the disintegration of the Eastern Block, Europe once again found itself in the midst of inter- and intra-national, political, ethnic and religious turmoil, which in some cases protracted into armed conflicts. The political perspective taken by NATO was that it “must be capable of responding to such risks if stability in Europe and the security of Alliance members are to be preserved.”<sup>23</sup> However, “[t]he primary role of Alliance military forces, to guarantee the security and territorial integrity of member states, remains unchanged.”<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> NATO, “The Alliance’s New Strategic Concept.” Agreed by the Heads of State and Government participating in the Meeting of the North Atlantic Council, 07 Nov. 1991 – 08 Nov. 1991, Bullet pt. no. 1. ([http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official\\_texts\\_23847.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_23847.htm) Page accessed 21th March 2012)

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, Bullet pt. no. 5

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, Bullet pt. no. 8

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, Bullet pt. no. 40

Thus, what is ‘new’ is the view that any major aggression in Europe would be highly unlikely and would be preceded by significant warning time.<sup>25</sup> The latter offers the opportunity for the “Alliance forces [to] have different functions to perform in peace, crisis and war.”<sup>26</sup> In other words, **you prepare for territorial war, but on the way you conduct peace and crises operations out-of-area.**

The 1990s therefore marked the beginning of a fundamental change for the Alliance. From being built on a rather defined, static, territorial invasion defense-based defense concept it now, additionally, chose to take on a much broader, more flexible and mobile expeditionary role dealing with the management of crises and conflict prevention out-of-area.

However, in regards to the development of military capabilities and skills, this change did not automatically manifest itself on a national level. The member nations at the flanks, being geographically closest to Russia,<sup>27</sup> were hesitant to rearrange their large homeland defense structure towards a much smaller but more professional expeditionary force. This became evident when the new strategy was put to the test in the Balkans during the 1990s. Take for example when the Norwegian battalion combat group, declared by Norway itself as its contribution to ‘Kosovo Force’ (KFOR), arrived three months after KFOR was fully established in the operational theatre. On that occasion, General Sir Michael Jackson, the KFOR Commander is said to have remarked: “What took you so long? Have you been walking?”<sup>28</sup>

Other similar experiences from Bosnia led US Secretary of Defense, William S. Cohen, to state that:

Our experience in Bosnia ... revealed that NATO’s transformation from a fixed, positional defense to a flexible, mobile defense is incomplete. Indeed, IFOR and SFOR suggest that should we be forced to operate outside Alliance territory in the future, we should expect to do so without pre-existing communication, logistics, headquarters, or other infrastructure.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid, Bullet pt. no. 31, 43, 46

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, bullet pt. no. 4

<sup>27</sup> Norway, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Turkey, The Czech Republic and Slovakia.

<sup>28</sup> The quote has been taken from Kristin Krohn Devold, “From course change to military transformation”, New year address by Defense Minister Kristin Krohn Devold, Oslo Military Society, Monday 5 January, 2004. ([http://www.regjeringen.no/en/archive/Bondeviks-2nd-Government/ministry-of-defence/Taler-og-artikler-arkivert-individuelt/2004/from\\_course\\_change\\_to\\_military.html?id=267906](http://www.regjeringen.no/en/archive/Bondeviks-2nd-Government/ministry-of-defence/Taler-og-artikler-arkivert-individuelt/2004/from_course_change_to_military.html?id=267906) Page accessed 22 March, 2012).

<sup>29</sup> United States Department of Defense [DoD], “Remarks as prepared for Secretary of Defense William S. Cohen, to the Conference on Transforming NATO’s Defense Capabilities, Norfolk, Virginia, Friday, November 13, 1998.

An important understanding to make at this point is that most of the NATO operations during the 1990s were US-led. Operationally this meant that the European partners were to be more or less integrated into a US-expeditionary mindset. The challenge was that “the European capabilities were primarily designed for border defence,”<sup>30</sup> but also that “the retention of large conscript armies made the European armed forces unable to deploy rapidly in highly specialised operations that the US utilised in her modern warfare concepts.”<sup>31</sup>

In short, the lessons identified by the Balkans showed insufficiency in the Alliance’s capability in several areas, among these the ability to rapidly deploy, with the necessary skill-set required, and to work interoperably with other nations.<sup>32</sup> This was particularly seen as a deficiency on the European side of the Alliance. Secretary Cohen and Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs, General Henry H. Shelton, gave a joint statement on the issue in front of the Senate Armed Service Committee.

Such disparities in capabilities will seriously affect our ability to operate as an effective alliance over the long term. If the alliance is to meet future military challenges effectively, it must successfully implement the Defense Capabilities Initiative which we introduced to our alliance counterparts in the spring of 1998...<sup>33</sup>

Accordingly, for NATO to undertake its new expeditionary/mobile crises management role, it soon became obvious that the new strategic concept of 1991 needed to be re-examined to ensure that it remained fully consistent with Europe's new security situation and challenges.

## **A New Millennium – A New Era**

Thus, when the Heads of State and Government met for the summit meeting in Washington D.C. in April 1999, they did not only celebrate the Alliance’s 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, but they also issued a communiqué stating that they had “shaped a new Alliance to meet the challenges of the future.”<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Interview with Richard L. Kugler, professor at the Institute for National Strategic Studies/National Defense University, Washington D.C., June 6, 2003 in Heier, *Influence and Marginalisation*, p. 40.

<sup>31</sup> Interview with Hans Binnendijk, Director of the Center for Technology and National Security Policy/National Defense University, Washington D.C., November 18, 2002 in Heier, *Influence and Marginalisation*, p. 40.

<sup>32</sup> United States Department of Defense (DoD) (1999), “Joint Statement on the Kosovo After Action Review”, *News Release*, Washington D.C., October 14, accessible at: <http://www.defenselink.mil/releases/archive.html>.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.* The DCI will be presented later on in this chapter.

<sup>34</sup> NATO Homepage, 'An Alliance for the 21st Century', Washington Summit Communiqué issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Washington, D.C. on 24th April 1999 ([http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official\\_texts\\_27440.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_27440.htm)) Page accessed March 23<sup>rd</sup> 2012. Bullet pt. no. 2.

This new Alliance will be larger, more capable and more flexible, committed to collective defence and able to undertake new missions including contributing to effective conflict prevention and engaging actively in crisis management, including crisis response operations.<sup>35</sup>

On the same day, and in accordance with this policy, the Heads of State and Government also approved a renewed strategic concept: **The Alliance's Strategic Concept of 1999** balanced out the relation of Article 5 and non-Article 5 operations by communicating their relevance to each other.

Military capabilities effective under the full range of foreseeable circumstances are also the basis of the Alliance's ability to contribute to conflict prevention and crisis management through non-Article 5 crisis response operations. These missions can be highly demanding and can place a premium on the same political and military qualities, such as cohesion, multinational training, and extensive prior planning, that would be essential in an Article 5 situation. Accordingly, while they may pose special requirements, they will be handled through a common set of Alliance structures and procedures.<sup>36</sup>

However, it comes through rather clearly, if not stated explicitly, that the Alliance needed more focus on conducting non-Article 5 operations, such as crisis management missions out-of-area. Although “[t]he primary role of Alliance military forces is to protect peace and to guarantee the territorial integrity, political independence and security of member states”, there is a somewhat underlying (taken-for-granted) attitude towards non-Article 5 operations as being a rather normal situation. For instance, the same bullet point that asserts the primary role closes by stating that “NATO forces must maintain the ability to provide for collective defence while conducting effective non-Article 5 crisis response operations.”<sup>37</sup> The reason for this is the legacy of the 1990s and that NATO saw it as more than likely to be engaged in such missions, likewise in the years to come, while on the other hand it saw “large-scale conventional aggression against the Alliance [as; sic.] highly unlikely”<sup>38</sup> in the foreseeable future.<sup>39</sup> As such, guidelines for the Alliance's force posture enhance the characteristics of a mobile, deployable and interoperable force.

The size, readiness, availability and deployment of the Alliance's military forces will reflect its commitment to collective defence and to conduct crisis response operations, sometimes at short notice, distant from their home stations, including beyond the Allies' territory. [...]

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid, Bullet pt. no. 2.

<sup>36</sup> NATO Press release, NAC-S (99)65, from April 24<sup>th</sup> 1999. *The Alliance's Strategic Concept* (<http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/1999/p99-065e.htm>) Page accessed June 17<sup>th</sup> 2009. Bullet pt. No. 29.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, Bullet pt. no. 44.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, Bullet pt. no. 20.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid, Bullet pt. no. 16.

They must be interoperable and have appropriate doctrines and technologies. They must be held at the required readiness and deployability, and be capable of military success in a wide range of complex joint and combined operations, which may also include Partners and other non-NATO nations.<sup>40</sup>

Moreover, the concept depicted a globalized defense organization built on the qualitative strengths of every participating nation, and that “[a]lliance forces will be structured to reflect the multinational and joint nature of Alliance missions”.<sup>41</sup> Hence, the new strategy describes an alliance operating on more of a joint scale, and so uses terminology like interoperability, multinational forces, multiservice, cooperation and complementing national commitments.

Additionally, this integrated and interoperable focus was underscored by the Alliance’s launching of the US-led **Defense Capability Initiative (DCI)** only the day after presenting its new strategic concept.<sup>42</sup> In the press statement the objective of the initiative shows to be motivated by improving “defence capabilities to ensure the effectiveness of future multinational operations”<sup>43</sup> and “improving interoperability among Alliance forces”.<sup>44</sup>

The DCI should be seen as the US transformation efforts in NATO.<sup>45</sup> As such, it fields and incorporates the (US) understanding of Europe as a continent of smaller but sovereign states that cannot have a full spectrum capability force on their own, yet at the same time the necessity that Europe takes more operational responsibility by pulling together on a more complementary basis.

Our [US] goal is not to develop similar capabilities for every NATO member, since not every member needs or can afford the newest or the best fighter aircraft, long-range tanker or surveillance systems. Rather, our goal is to provide NATO forces with compatible and complementary capabilities that meet our collective requirements.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid, Bullet pt. no. 52.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, Bullet pt. no. 55.

<sup>42</sup> NATO Press release, NAC-S (99)69, from April 25<sup>th</sup> 1999, *Defence Capabilities Initiative* (<http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/1999/p99s069e.htm>) webpage accessed June 17<sup>th</sup> 2009. The DCI was launched the day after the presentation of the Alliance's new Strategic Concept, and should as such be seen as a strategic step in achieving the goals of the concept.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, Bullet, pt. no. 1.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> See for instance Heier, *Influence and Marginalisation*, for a more comprehensive read on the subject.

<sup>46</sup> United States Department of Defense (DoD), *Strengthening Transatlantic Security – A U.S. Strategy for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (U.S. Department of Defense, December, 2000).

In the years to follow, and after the first Article 5 commitment being an out-of-area operation in Afghanistan, “most European allies came to support in principle the US led transformation and the new conceptual requirements”.<sup>47</sup>

The description of the NATO context has revealed two important aspects of the military transformation: firstly that with a strong US the NATO perspective is a powerful influence on transatlantic defense strategy; and secondly that national willingness along with priorities are pivotal to embody such a supranational strategy. This leaves us with the task of describing the military transformation from the Norwegian (national) context.

## The Norwegian Context

### Cold War Era – Alliance Dependent Territorial Defense

In the aftermath of World War II, Norway’s geographical position—having its allied NATO partners to the west and south, bordering neutral Sweden and Finland to the east and (as the only NATO member) sharing a border with the Soviet Union in the north-east—made an invasion from the far north-east the most prospective military threat scenario during the Cold War period.<sup>48</sup> Consequently, for Norway as a NATO-member it soon became clear that militarily the foremost threat to Norwegian sovereignty was perceived to be an invasion type of war, with the Soviet led Eastern Block as the defined adversary.

Accordingly, the Norwegian defense concept during the Cold War period was designed to meet such a perceived threat. The “Defense Concept” was principally, although not officially formulated until the 1990s, constructed on four main pillars.<sup>49</sup> The first pillar was a **national balanced invasion defense**. Although the expression was never given a clear definition it signaled Norway’s need for a *national* force structure that would make it possible to oppose any kind of threat and maintain a fighting capability in case of an outside attack. Therefore, the NoAF were to include most components of a modern armed force; that of to being able to operate together with its allies and to solve important peace

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<sup>47</sup> See for instance Heier, *Influence and Marginalisation*, pp. 41-42.

<sup>48</sup> Kjetil Skogrand, *Norsk Forsvarshistorie Bind 4: Alliert i krig og fred 1940-1970 [The Norwegian Defense-history – Allied in War and Peace 1940-1970]* (Bergen: Eide forlag, 2004), p. 19. (Original in Norwegian, my translation).

<sup>49</sup> Jacob Børresen, Gullow Gjeseth and Rolf Tamnes, *Norsk forsvarshistorie Bind 5: Allianseforsvar i endring 1970-2000 [The Norwegian Defense-history – Alliance-Defense in Change]* (Bergen: Eide forlag, 2004), p. 46. Børresen et.al. explains that these four pillars were used throughout the entire Cold War period, but were first systematized as main pillars in a defense concept in the 1990s (St.meld. nr 16 (1992-93) Hovedretningslinjer for Forsvarets virksomhet og utvikling i tiden 1994-98, (Oslo: Forsvarsdepartementet, 1993), p. 117).

supporting missions. But to ensure a balance, a proportional spread between a minimum of standing forces on high alert should be combined with a plan for rapid mobilization of the armed forces main body. Or, as it was stated in White Paper No. 32 (1945-46):

The best way to meet such a surprise attack is to have the defense forces standing and prepared when a crisis is occurring, even if the crisis does not seem to concern oneself. The second best way is a rapid mobilization tool.<sup>50</sup>

Norway chose the middle ground: a relatively small standing force occupied with the preparation and maintenance of its force structure and military infrastructure. As such, a large part of NoAF's mission became the force-production of soldiers for the mobilization force. In peacetime the Air Force and Navy had other tasks such as the assertion of sovereignty, intelligence and surveillance, and search and rescue, whilst the Army had the responsibility of guarding the border towards Finland and the Soviet Union.<sup>51</sup>

The second pillar was **the ability to hold the enemy until allied help arrived**.<sup>52</sup> Defending off an invasion force is traditionally understood to be closely connected with the ability to sustain attrition for some time. Thus, such a defense concept is dependent on large troop units, and history had shown precisely that fighting an invasion war was a costly enterprise in concern of human lives.<sup>53</sup> More so, one of the lessons that (at the time neutral) Norway learned from the invasion in 1940 was that a small state was in no position to defend itself over time against an invasion from a superior adversary. In 1946, already three years before Norway formally joined a defense alliance, Defense Minister Jens Christian Hauge's upcoming three-year plan stated that Norway had to be able to "hold out on its own until we get effective help from those who become our allies."<sup>54</sup> This notion then became foundational and dimensional for all Norwegian defense-planning throughout the Cold War period. Consequently, the quantity of troops was preferred over the quality of each man; and as such, a dependable force would need to rely upon the mobilization of the nation's

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<sup>50</sup> St.meld. nr. 32 (1945-46), *Plan for en første reising av Norges forsvar [Plan for a first rising of the Norwegian Armed Forces]*, (Oslo: Forsvarsdepartementet, 1946), p. 36. Quoted from Ståle Ulriksen, *Den norske forsvarstradisjonen – militærmakt eller folkeforsvar?* [The Norwegian Defense Tradition – Military Power or Popular Defense?] (Oslo: Pax Forlag A/S, 2002), p. 196 (In Norwegian, my translation).

<sup>51</sup> Børresen, et. al., *Norsk forsvarshistorie Bind 5 [The Norwegian Defense-history Vol. 5]*, p. 67.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 46.

<sup>53</sup> The number killed during WWI vary from 8,5 to 17 million people. More than 60 million people were killed during WWII (<http://www.secondworldwarhistory.com/world-war-2-statistics.asp> Page accessed 17th March, 2012).

<sup>54</sup> St.meld. nr 32 (1945-46), p. 3; Jacob Sverdrup, "Inn i storpolitikken 1940-1949" ["Into politics 1940-1949"], bd. 4 i *Norsk utenrikspolitikk historie [Norwegian foreign policy history]*, Oslo, 1996, p. 233. Quoted from Skogrand, *Norsk forsvarshistorie Bind 4*, p. 157.



primitively skilled population rather than the ability of a much smaller, specially trained and professional armed force.

Accordingly, **the conscript system** with the general compulsory military service of every (male) citizen became the third pillar.<sup>55</sup> The principle of general conscription has been embedded in the Norwegian Constitution ever since 1814. Article 109, first paragraph of the Constitution states that: “As a general rule every citizen of the State is equally bound to serve in the defense of the Country for a specific period, irrespective of birth or fortune.”<sup>56</sup> It should be said that in reality, military service has only been compulsory for the male half of the population.<sup>57</sup> The aim of conscription was to give basic military training to the civilian population so as to prepare them for a call-up in case of mobilization. During the Cold War period, Norway practiced a classic three-tier system. The first and initial tier was compulsory military service with the goal of giving the general civilian population basic soldiering skills.<sup>58</sup> The second tier was an annual reservist exercise, which aimed at sustaining a certain quality of the military skills acquired during the first tier.<sup>59</sup> The third and final tier was the actual build up whenever the cadre was mobilized for active duty.

This was clearly a system designed for giving the masses general and basic skills within predefined soldiering roles. Furthermore it was an egalitarian system based on the conception that every man is equal and can become the same soldier, and therefore perform uniformly. Thus, the skill-acquisition process resembled the factorial manufacturing processes of the industrial age; there were universal standardized predefined soldier-roles that were to be met by going through instruction handbooks or service manuals topic-by-topic, lesson-by-lesson, step-by-step.<sup>60</sup> Ulriksen provides an apt description of the role and function of the NoAF soldier in the industrial era’s mass armies:

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<sup>55</sup> Børresen, et. al., *Norsk forsvarshistorie Bind 5 [The Norwegian Defense-history Vol. 5]*, p. 46.

<sup>56</sup> Lovdata, *Grunnloven*, paragraph, 109 første ledd, [*The Norwegian Constitution*, Article 109, first paragraph.] LOV 1814-05-17 nr 00: Kongeriget Norges Grundlov, given i Rigsforsamlingen paa Eidsvold den 17de Mai 1814 (<http://www.lovdata.no/all/hl-18140517-000.html>). Page accessed on January, 13, 2013.

<sup>57</sup> The female half of the population became a compulsory part of the drafting system in 2010. The sitting Minister of Defense, Espen Barth Eide, was quoted in many national newspapers on February 10, 2012 saying that he also saw no reason why women should not be a part of the compulsory conscription system any longer. <http://www.aftenbladet.no/nyheter/politikk/Barth-Eide-vurderer-verneplikt-for-kvinner-2928228.html#.T0mBg5gdhLw>. Page downloaded on February 26th, 2012.

<sup>58</sup> During the Cold War era general compulsory service ranged from 6 months and up to 18 months (Børresen et.al., *Norsk forsvarshistorie Bind 5 [The Norwegian Defense-history Vol. 5]*, p. 359; Ulriksen, *Den norske forsvarstradisjonen [The Norwegian Defense Tradition]*, pp. 210-211).

<sup>59</sup> In principal the annual call-up was to range from a week up to a couple of weeks annually. However, it should be said that due to cost many exercises were either shortened or terminated.

<sup>60</sup> An apt example are service manuals such as *UD 17-2 Soldaten i felt [The Soldier in the Field]* (Oslo: Hærens overkommando, 1960), which describes right and wrong personal conduct in text and drawings.

At the height of the conscripted mass-army era, the role of the soldier was very uncomplicated. He was supposed to master a job and a simple weapon system, for example, a rifle. The soldier should be able to understand and obey a limited number of commands, which he could do blind-folded. It took about twelve months to educate, or more correctly, to form such a soldier. He then underwent a program of discipline and training to improve his physical condition. The task did not require any comprehensive understanding, and the training had more in common with animal training than real education. The soldier was not supposed to think; that was the officer's job. This was the basic function of the conscripted soldier in the industrial era's mass armies<sup>61</sup>

And finally the fourth pillar was **The Overall Defense**<sup>62</sup> and constituted both the military and civil contributions to the defense of Norway. Another experience from World War II, which impacted on post-war defense planning, was connected to the relationship between the military and civil agencies that in some way dealt with crises and emergency.

The last war experience has clearly shown that the quantity of the armed forces not alone are essential for a country's defense capability. Behind these must be a society that is organized so that it can wage a total war, which means that defense and business, defense and people have to work together in one powerful unit.<sup>63</sup>

In brief, its purpose was to support the nation's war effort and protect its civilian population against the adverse effect of war by installing a system that made it possible for production, supply and services to be kept at the highest possible level in times of war.<sup>64</sup>

So, in summing up the Norwegian defense concept of the Cold War era we can say that the focus was on quantity over quality.

At its peak, the military had at its disposal a force of nearly half a million men. The war structure included among others 13 brigades, more than 80 warships, over 50 coastal artillery installations and over 100 fighter aircrafts. If we include the total defense, there is basis for claiming that between 20 and 30 percent of the population was more or less directly engaged in the defense of the country against a possible attack from the Soviet Union. In addition came allied reinforcements. At the most comprehensive, over 700 allied fighters, including 200 carrier-based aircrafts, could be inserted in Norway according to plans. Over 50,000

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<sup>61</sup> Ulriksen, *Den norske forsvarstradisjonen*, p. 255 (In Norwegian, my translation).

<sup>62</sup> Børresen, et. al., *Norsk forsvarshistorie Bind 5 [The Norwegian Defense-history Vol. 5]*, p. 46. The overall Defense [Totalforsvaret] concept included the Norwegian Armed Forces, the Civil Defense [Sivilforsvaret] and civilian emergency response agencies [sivile beredskapsorganer].

<sup>63</sup> St.meld. nr. 32 (1945-46), p. 9. In Ulriksen, *Den norske forsvarstradisjonen [The Norwegian Defense Tradition]*, p. 192.

<sup>64</sup> Skogrand, *Norsk forsvarshistorie Bind 4 [The Norwegian Defense-history Vol. 4]*, p. 338.

allied troops, including 35,000 U.S. and 5,000 Dutch and British marines had Norway as a high-priority effort option.<sup>65</sup>

## Post-Cold War Era – Alliance Integrated Expeditionary Mindset

With the end of the Cold War era Norway had to reorient its security policy. The Warsaw Pact was dissolved and Russia did not seem as capable and imperialistically motivated as the Soviet Union. Thus, an invasion from the north-east no longer appeared to be such a perceivable threat.<sup>66</sup> Accordingly, NATO gradually lost interest in the northern flank and reoriented, as shown earlier, towards threats at the outskirts of central Europe. Consequently, by the end of the 1990s Norway found itself in a reversed defense and security political position. From being a NATO country defining its military capability on the support of others, Norway now had to show willingness and commitment to the alliance by supporting and adopting its new security threat and force structure, as approved at the Washington Summit in April 1999. Thus, in June 1999 the Ministry of Defense, through a White Paper report (St.meld. nr 38 (1998-1999)) to the Norwegian parliament, recommended that Norway adapt to a new foreign and defense policy foundation based on those same changes.

Since we expect that Allied troops if necessary are to sacrifice their lives in defense of Norway, and base our security on this assumption, we must for the sake of our own credibility - both politically and morally - to be willing to contribute substantially to support others.<sup>67</sup>

Though Norwegian soldiers had previously participated in peacekeeping missions outside Norway,<sup>68</sup> rhetorically, it marked an early warning of a *defense political* reorientation that was to come from a territorial homeland kind of defense towards an out-of-area expeditionary crisis management mindset. More importantly, however, are the implications that such a shift of policy would have on the major mission definition and, subsequently, the

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<sup>65</sup> Børresen, et. al., *Norsk forsvarshistorie Bind 5 [The Norwegian Defense-history Vol. 5]*, p. 47.

<sup>66</sup> St.meld. nr. 38 (1998–99) *Tilpasning av Forsvaret til deltagelse i internasjonale operasjoner [Adaptation of NoAF for participation in international military operations]*, pp. 8-15. (<http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dep/fd/dok/regpubl/stmeld/19981999/stmeld-nr-38-1998-99-2/7.html?id=319476>). (Original in Norwegian, my translation.)

<sup>67</sup> Ibid pp. 8-15.

<sup>68</sup> St.meld. nr. 38 (1998–99). Approximately 55.000 Norwegian soldiers had served in international operations abroad from the first UN peace support mission in 1947 until 1999. (Tysklandsbrigaden (Period 1947-53: no. troopers 50.000), NORMASH Korea (1951-1954: 632), UNIFIL Lebanon (1978-1999: 34.166), UNPROFOR/IFOR/SFOR Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia (1992-2006: 9.828) KFOR Kosovo (1999-: 3.500) plus observers, but it was always something other than NoAF's main task. Until the late 1990s the Norwegian contingencies were mainly set up by reservists enlisted for the tour. For the officers it was not necessarily seen as a good career move to seek international duty.) ([http://no.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liste\\_over\\_norske\\_militære\\_bidrag\\_i\\_utenlandsoperasjoner\\_etter\\_1945](http://no.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liste_over_norske_militære_bidrag_i_utenlandsoperasjoner_etter_1945))

force structure. From the outset, the MoD acknowledged in its report to parliament that Norway lacked the kind of capabilities needed for its new defense policy and this would have an impact on how NoAF were to be structured and operate.<sup>69</sup>

In the years to follow, changing political administrations accepted the new reality and followed up accordingly on this initiative by implementing NATO's new strategic concept into their long term plans for the defense of Norway. A quick look at their plans show that they all tap into the broader international discourse on the use of military force in a new era, and subsequently communicate change towards a new world (dis)order.

The first plan of the new millennium was launched by the first Stoltenberg-government (2000-2001: Labour-party) in February 2001 under the title *The Reorganization of the NoAF in the period 2002-2005*.<sup>70</sup> This report starts by pointing out the structural crises in which the NoAF find themselves.

The Norwegian Armed Forces are in a deep and lasting structural crisis. Two basic imbalances characterize the situation: the Norwegian Armed Forces' size is not in proportion to the resources provided to them, and the Norwegian Armed Forces' alignment is not suitable to solve future tasks.<sup>71</sup>

It then concludes that, "today's armed forces are not able to fill the role, which the government means a modern force should have".<sup>72</sup> And consequently, "the situation requires a comprehensive reduction and considerable change of the *whole* of NoAF's structure and organization – smaller adjustments will not be sufficient."<sup>73</sup> The government's intention with the bill was to transform the NoAF into "flexible, mobile, quickly available and modern military units that can operate together with others to solve its tasks".<sup>74</sup> This plan therefore focuses on downsizing and a structural change in capabilities, and subsequently aims to transform the NoAF from a volume-centered invasion defense force towards a much smaller capability-motivated expeditionary force, in alignment with NATO's Defense Capability Initiative.

The next long term plan came in March 2004; one year earlier than planned. It was delivered by the second Bondevik-government (2001-2005: Conservative Party, Christian

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid, pp. 8-15.

<sup>70</sup> St.prp. nr. 45 (2000-2001) *Omleggingen av Forsvaret I perioden 2002-2005* [*The Reorganization of the NoAF in the period 2002-2005*] (Oslo: Forsvarsdepartementet, 2001). (Original in Norwegian, my translation.)

<sup>71</sup> St.prp. nr. 45 (2000-2001), p. 9. (Original in Norwegian, my translation.)

<sup>72</sup> St.prp. nr. 45 (2000-2001), p. 9. (Original in Norwegian, my translation.)

<sup>73</sup> St.prp. nr. 45 (2000-2001), p. 12. (Italic in original. Original in Norwegian, my translation.)

<sup>74</sup> St.prp. nr. 45 (2000-2001), p. 14. (Original in Norwegian, my translation.)

Democratic Party and Liberal Party). The plan was entitled *The further modernization of NoAF in the period 2005–2008*,<sup>75</sup> and it states in the opening section that “the reorganization has so far been successful, and mainly gone as planned. The NoAF is on its way out of the serious crisis that constituted the background of the former long term plan.”<sup>76</sup> Furthermore, “our force-units in international operations are considered as relevant, to be of high quality and meet the demands that modern military operations entail”.<sup>77</sup> However, it also says that “NoAF’s framework conditions [rammevilkår] are constantly changing”,<sup>78</sup> and “as a consequence, the NoAF are still facing great challenges”.<sup>79</sup> Additionally, the bill takes a foundational outlook that uncertainty and, thus, change will be a continuous condition for the armed forces in the years to come. Hence, it concludes that the modernization has to be continued and that “the NoAF need to be made more adaptable, so that they can continuously adapt to the prevailing strategic conditions”.<sup>80</sup> Accordingly, a constitutional change with this plan is the labeling of the modernization process as a *transformational* process.

In efforts to create a flexible defense system transformation is a keyword. Transformation means conversion or qualitative change. Transformation is a continuous and proactive process, where innovative concepts, doctrines and capabilities are developed and integrated to improve and/or streamline the armed forces, including improving its ability to operate with their own and others' forces [...] Transformation emphasizes creativity, innovation and adaptability. To establish ability to transform in the whole of the armed forces, will be of central concern in the period 2005-2008.<sup>81</sup>

By adopting a transformational perspective of the modernization process, the government moved its focus from downsizing and structure towards the role of personnel and their competence. In other words, rebuilding an armed force where “priority is placed on deployable capacities, high mobility, responsiveness, quality and availability, rather than on the static forces with long reaction time”,<sup>82</sup> requires that “the NoAF must recruit the best suited and most motivated, and ensure that the need for competency at all levels and in all

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<sup>75</sup> St.prp. nr. 42 (2003-2004) *Den videre modernisering av Forsvaret I perioden 2005-2008* [*The further modernization of NoAF in the period 2005–2008*] (Oslo: Forsvarsdepartementet, 2004). (Original in Norwegian, my translation.)

<sup>76</sup> St.prp. nr. 42 (2003-2004), p. 9. (Original in Norwegian, my translation.)

<sup>77</sup> St.prp. nr. 42 (2003-2004), p. 9. (Original in Norwegian, my translation.)

<sup>78</sup> St.prp. nr. 42 (2003-2004), p. 9. (Original in Norwegian, my translation.)

<sup>79</sup> St.prp. nr. 42 (2003-2004), p. 9. (Original in Norwegian, my translation.)

<sup>80</sup> St.prp. nr. 42 (2003-2004), p. 13. (Original in Norwegian, my translation.)

<sup>81</sup> St.prp. nr. 42 (2003-2004), p. 13. (Original in Norwegian, my translation.)

<sup>82</sup> St.prp. nr. 42 (2003-2004), p. 16. (Original in Norwegian, my translation.)

service fields is covered.”<sup>83</sup> Furthermore, “NoAF must have personnel that combine increased specialization with an understanding of the whole. The ability and will to change must be institutionalized and rewarded.”<sup>84</sup> Thus, “access to personnel with creativity, adaptability and solid professional skills will therefore be crucial for the future Norwegian defense.”<sup>85</sup> And accordingly, one of the main signals of this bill is the consistent priority of quality over quantity.

By the time the next long term plan, *A Defense for the protection of Norwegian security, interests and values*, was produced in March 2008,<sup>86</sup> Stoltenberg was back in government (Stoltenberg II 2005 – to date), but this time as the leader of a left-center coalition (2005-d.d.: Labour Party, Socialist Left Party and Centre Party). The government’s policy platform (The Soria Moria I Declaration) stated that the High North would be the number one foreign policy priority in the years to come, and that it would strengthen presence and sovereignty assertion of the armed forces.<sup>87</sup> Even though the advocates for homeland defense could see this as a victory for the mass-army invasion defense of the Cold War, the renewed interest in the High North was not connected to a fear of a Russian invasion. This time it was linked to the natural resources in the area and the vast environmental challenges it possesses. Thus, from a defense political perspective it did not mean the reinvention of the invasion defense concept, but rather the use of NoAF’s new modernized capabilities. However, the government still saw an effective and credible NATO, based on both its collective security guaranty and its adapted policy to be foundational for Norwegian defense security policy.<sup>88</sup>

Accordingly, the “government’s main defense political goal is to further develop a defense force that is able to adapt to developments and meet the challenges in rapidly changing environments, in order to protect Norway’s security, interests and values. This requires a modern and flexible defense effort, which may participate in the full spectrum of operations, at home and abroad.”<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> St.prp. nr. 42 (2003-2004), p. 122-123. (Original in Norwegian, my translation.)

<sup>84</sup> St.prp. nr. 42 (2003-2004), p. 123. (Original in Norwegian, my translation.)

<sup>85</sup> St.prp. nr. 42 (2003-2004), p. 16. (Original in Norwegian, my translation.)

<sup>86</sup> St.prp. no. 48 (2007-2008) *Et forsvar til vern om Norges sikkerhet, interesser og verdier [A Defense for the protection of Norwegian security, interests and values]* (Oslo: Forsvarsdepartementet, 2008). (Original in Norwegian, my translation.)

<sup>87</sup> Regjeringen.no, *Plattform for regjeringssamarbeidet mellom Arbeiderpartiet, Sosialistisk Venstreparti og Senterpartiet 2005-09* ([http://www.regjeringen.no/upload/SMK/Vedlegg/2005/regjeringsplattform\\_SoriaMoria.pdf](http://www.regjeringen.no/upload/SMK/Vedlegg/2005/regjeringsplattform_SoriaMoria.pdf)) Page downloaded April 28 2012.

<sup>88</sup> St.prp. no. 48 (2007-2008), p. 16.

<sup>89</sup> St.prp. no. 48 (2007-2008), p. 17. (Original in Norwegian, my translation.)

Norway's contribution to international crisis management through the UN and NATO are still of fundamental importance. Thus, the alliance connection must also be reflected in the force structure, through the Norwegian forces to the greatest extent possible, that is based on NATO standards, in order to operate closely with allies in the entire conflict spectrum. This requires forces of sufficient quality, responsiveness, sustainability, strategic and tactical mobility, and self-protection and training standards.<sup>90</sup>

## **The NoAF Context**

Traditionally, preparing for an invasion type of war meant the structuring of a defined territorial line of defense, which would include a fixed set of infrastructure (fortification, lines of supply, mobilization equipment, etc.), a force structure based on mass-mobilization of the civilian population (the conscript system with compulsory service of every (male) citizen was of vital importance) and confidence in sufficient intelligence (providing ample time to mobilize and give the soldiers and their units adequate training). It is therefore perhaps needless to say that this defense system favored quantity of men over the quality of each man.

The 1990s marked a pivotal change for the NoAF operationally due to a combination of increased expectancy of participation in crises management operations outside of Norway, and as a consequence those soldiers being deployed were coming increasingly from the standing force, rather than mobilization forces. Until the late 1990s the majority of those who served in peacekeeping missions abroad were recruited from the mobilization force. As such, they were seen as “civilians” who volunteered for a six to twelve month period with a relatively small pre-camp before deployment into the operational area. Back in Norway they hardly set foot in a military camp before reentering their old civilian life, having had very little to do with the NoAF. As follows, the operational experience gained was only scarcely adapted into the “professional” culture of the NoAF standing force.<sup>91</sup>

## **From Attritional to Maneuver Warfare**

Consequently, in the last half of the 1990s there was already work going on within the NoAF that aimed at changing its operational doctrine in order to better meet the demands

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<sup>90</sup> St.prp. no. 48 (2007-2008), p. 19. (Original in Norwegian, my translation.)

<sup>91</sup> In some environments it was even seen as a bad career move to participate in UN peacekeeping operations, since it was deemed “irrelevant” by fellow officers – the real experience lay at the “east-front” (read Northern Norway). I myself have met this attitude at several stages in my officer career. As a young Second Lieutenant I choose to serve at Andøya, an Air Force base in the north of Norway, and was advised not to apply for a position in UNIFIL in Lebanon. This attitude, however, changed with the missions in the Balkans in the 1990s.

encountered by NoAF units during deployment in crisis management operations in this decade.<sup>92</sup> It eventually led to the first **NoAF Joint Operational Doctrine released in 2000**.<sup>93</sup> Essentially the doctrine communicated a change from a static, territorial invasion defense concept towards a more flexible, expeditionary-oriented defense concept. Moreover, it was built on a maneuver warfare perspective rather than on the premise of attrition warfare. Thus, it emphasized mission-guided leadership instead of order-based leadership; it highlighted situational orientation above preplanned orders; it accentuated decentralized management before centralized command; it called for more independency at the cost of control; it implemented John Boyd's OODA-loop as an operational concept; and it set out to foster initiative, flexibility, independency and integrity rather than authoritarian discipline as its code of conduct.<sup>94</sup> A relevant example for this thesis is how the doctrine describes mission-guided leadership:

As the basis for mission-based leadership there is a positive view of the human nature: that man is able to act independently under extreme conditions; that it may take initiatives that are beyond superiors orders and directives, and which rests on inadequate information; and that it has the ability to rapidly readjust mentally if the situation so require. If mission-guided leadership is to be something more than a figure of speech, the commanders at all levels, superiors as subordinates, through experience and joint training discover that this form of leadership is possible in practice. Also in the daily peacetime operations, must we through education, training and exercises focus on developing mutual trust between commanders at all levels. Basis for the development of this confidence is this doctrine that is to create a common language and a common understanding of the challenges we face, and what methods we should use to handle them.<sup>95</sup>

## **From Militia-Defense to Partly Professionalized Defense**

Then in 2004, a year before Sverre Diesen became Chief of Defense, he wrote an article published as part I and II in two consecutive issues of *Norsk Militært Tidsskrift* [Norwegian Military Journal] about “the military paradigm shift and its consequences for the Norwegian

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<sup>92</sup> FO, *Forsvarssjefens grunnsyn for utvikling og bruk av norske militære styrker i fred, krise og krig* [Chief of Defense's Foundation for the Development and use of Norwegian Military Forces in Peace, Crises and War] (Oslo: Forsvarets Overkommando, 20 juni 1995); TDH, *Taktisk doktrine for Hæren* [Tactical Doctrine for the Army] (Oslo: Hærstaben, 1998); Forsvarets Stabsskole, HFL 95-1 Norsk luftmilitær doktrine – Utkast [Norwegian Air-Military Doctrine - Draft] (Oslo: Forsvarets stabsskole, 1999) (My translation)

<sup>93</sup> Forsvarets Stabsskole, *Forsvarets fellesoperativ doktrine Del A – Grunnlag* [NoAF Joint Operational Doctrine Part A - Foundation] (Oslo: Forsvarsstaben, 2000)

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>95</sup> Forsvarets Stabsskole, *Forsvarets fellesoperative doktrine Del A* [NoAF Joint Operational Doctrine Part A], pp. 55-56.



armed forces”.<sup>96</sup> Here he describes the consequences he predicts along five developmental paths. The first path *from platform based to network based defense* deals with the consequences connected to the technological and operative dimension of modern warfare. The second path *from alliance-adapted to alliance-integrated defense* underlines the need of further developing the international cooperation that had taken place at the time. With the third path *reprioritizing from non-operative to operative structure* he signals a rationalization of logistical and support functions so as to spend more on operational units. The fourth path *from specific to generic exercises* addresses the challenge of educating soldiers for a broad spectrum of soldiering roles. And finally with the fifth path *from militia-defense to partly professionalized defense* he argues, “As a consequence of many of the aspects already mentioned, it will inevitably move towards a continued gradually professionalization of the NoAF”.<sup>97</sup>

Correspondingly, a revision of the first NoAF Joint Operational Doctrine from 2000 began almost simultaneously as Diesen took office as Chief of Defense. The revised doctrine was then launched in 2007, renewing the fundament of the first. Although there is a clear consecutive commonality between the doctrines, the newer is not as dichotomized as the former. Principally, it is more sensitive to the situational conditions of an operation accepting, for example, that there will still be operations that are more in coherence with attritional rather than maneuver warfare. Thus, it opens for a somewhat more nuanced approach to the use and application of military force.

This doctrine is intended as a tool for the development of a joint operational culture, starting with the individual, to give robustness in complex operations both at home and abroad. [...] Flexibility and the combined fundamentals of *effect-based-*, *network-based-* and *manoeuvrist approaches* constitute the joint operational culture that the Armed Forces wants to develop. In this context, *approach* means adopting as second nature the essence of certain theoretical attitudes at the individual level. The Armed Forces choose to focus on these fundamentals instead of describing exact procedures in order to avoid being associated too closely with

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<sup>96</sup> Sverre Diesen, ”Det militære paradigmeskiftet og dets konsekvenser for norsk forsvar I” [“the military paradigm shift and its consequences for the Norwegian armed forces I”], *Norsk Militært Tidsskrift* No. 8-9/04, Vol. 174; Sverre Diesen, ”Det militære paradigmeskiftet og dets konsekvenser for norsk forsvar II” [“the military paradigm shift and its consequences for the Norwegian armed forces II”], *Norsk Militært Tidsskrift* No. 10/04, Vol. 174. The next year, when he had taken office, a rewritten version was then published as a chapter in an anthology on the vast changes witnessed in connection to the armed forces. (Diesen, ”Mot et allianseintegrert forsvar,” [”Towards an alliance-integrated defense force”], pp. 163–184.) (My translation.)

<sup>97</sup> Ibid, p. 178. (My translation.)

definite concepts, procedures or technological solutions which can quickly become outdated.<sup>98</sup>

Another aspect of the 2007 doctrine, most relevant to this thesis, is the implementation of an entire chapter to the military profession. Its purpose is to describe the culture of the profession and the foundational values that the NoAF want to develop in order to meet challenges and solve tasks that will be encountered in the new era.

The doctrine states that “the military profession is comparable with other professions such as the legal and medical professions”.<sup>99</sup> Those who practice the profession are seen as members of a defined skill that is based on comprehensive theory and practical training. And they are given specially entrusted responsibilities, which makes them “identify with that calling and with each other. One *is*, one does not simply *work as* a lawyer, doctor or an officer.”<sup>100</sup> Moreover, the doctrine presents a clear departure from the invasion defense area, towards an understanding of participation in real life military operations as being its core business and with that the implications to the day-to-day life in the armed forces.

The core business of the military profession is the conduct of operations. This means that the values and attitudes required in the conduct of operations must also characterise our day-to-day activities.<sup>101</sup>

Clearly the new joint operational doctrine signals the qualitative change implied in the military transformation from a static, invasion defense-based armed force built on conscription, towards a flexible, expeditionary mindset dependent on professional soldiers.

## Chapter Summary and Implications

In this chapter I have looked at ‘The Military Transformation’ in order to provide a historical background to my own argumentation on developing postmodern soldiers. In brief, *The Military Transformation* with a capital T is described as being a distinct US-led modernization project within NATO at around the turn of the millennium, which was initiated to meet new global defense and security challenges witnessed in the aftermath of the Cold War era.

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<sup>98</sup> The Norwegian Defence Command and Staff College, *Norwegian Armed Forces Joint Operational Doctrine* (Oslo: Forsvarsstaben [The Defense Staff], 2007), pt. 0103, p. 8.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 157.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 157. (Italics in original.)

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, pt. 0603, p. 158.

Table 1: An Overview of the Contextualization regarding The Military Transformation (of NoAF).

	<b>Invasion defense-based concept</b>	<b>Expeditionary force-based defense concept</b>
<b>World order</b>	Rational-legal Weberian nation-state (hierarchical and bureaucratic)	Loosening of the nation-state (globalization, transparency and supranational institution)
<b>International political landscape</b>	Bi-polar (East vs. West; NATO vs. Warsaw Pact)	Multipolar (fragmentation, new states, new powers)
<b>Defense and security challenges</b>	Defending nation-state sovereignty against an (imperialistic) invasion	Protecting national and supranational interest in regional conflicts out-of area
<b>Alliance perspective</b>	Alliance dependent	Alliance integrated
<b>Alliance strategic concept</b>	Homeland defense (Article 5 operations within the alliances territorial borders)	Expeditionary mindset (non-Article 5 out-of-area operations)
<b>Norwegian (national) perspective</b>	Alliance dependent territorial defense	Alliance integrated expeditionary mindset
<b>Aim of compulsory military service</b>	Force-production for the mobilization force (based on conscription)	Force-production for service in international operations (based on professional soldiers)
<b>NoAF operational concept based on</b>	Large static invasion force-based defense with a relatively long period of mobilization	Small, flexible reaction forces with ability of rapid deployment
<b>Skill-orientation</b>	Mass-oriented basic military skills ("good-enough" competence )	Elite-oriented well-developed professionalized skills (expertise)
<b>Ethos</b>	Discipline and obedience	Initiative, flexibility and independency

My review shows that one needs to gain a greater perspective when trying to understand the foundational characteristics actually instigated by the changes. Therefore in this chapter, I have touched upon transformation as being both a paradigmatical change from one epoch to another, and a continuous process of change with focus on the process, rather than the result of the process.

In summary, I have shown (see Table 1) that within **the global context** the modernization of NATO and, consequently, the armed forces of its member nations (the NoAF included) are required to adapt to a new multipolar world (dis)order. This emerged from the breakup of the former two-block situation and led to a vital shift in the defense and security challenges, from defending the nation-state sovereignty against an imperialistic invasion, towards protecting national and supranational interests in regional conflicts outside of its territory.

Seen from **the alliance context**, my description of the historical background depicts that these global changes have had substantial implications on how NATO sees and communicates their mission and relevance in the post-Cold War era. From being an

international coalition of allies committed and organized to defending each other from invasional attack from the East (in accordance with Article 5—an attack on one is to be seen as an attack on all), the Alliance is being transformed into a supranational defense and security organization with an expeditionary mindset of high readiness for engaging in non-Article 5 operations, such as peace keeping, counterinsurgency and more traditional combat missions.

The transformation witnessed from **the Norwegian (national) context** describes a defense and security situation where the perceived threat is no longer invasion onto Norwegian home soil from the north-east, but rather emerging conflicts in far flung places with the potential risk of spreading and becoming a threat to Norwegian values and interests. In consequence, there has been a clear move in Norwegian defense and security policy from an alliance-dependent territorial defense towards an alliance-integrated expeditionary mindset.

Subsequently, when seen from **the NoAF (militarily) context** the portrayal of the historical background of the transformation illustrates an unmistakably qualitative move from a large, static, invasion defense concept based on mobilization of the civilian population towards a small and flexible expeditionary force concept based on specially trained soldiers.

In other words, this portrayal of the historical background of ‘The Military Transformation’ outlines some rather considerable implications for the development of military units and soldiers in the years ahead. In essence, taken from a pedagogical-philosophical perspective, it seems obvious that Norway and the NoAF need to develop soldiers for small mobile units with well-developed and professional skills, who can be rapidly deployed into a complex and unpredictable spectrum of possible scenarios. This stands in rather stark contrast to its legacy of providing basic military training to the entire male population, most of which would never be utilized.

As a consequence, it seems plausible to predict that the NoAF will be forced to move its focus away from the masses and towards a more elite perspective. Training will have to nurture the ability to take and hold initiative, to act flexibly and be able to execute missions on an independent level, rather than fostering a culture of submissiveness and dependence on authoritarian leadership.

Consequently, ‘The Military Transformation’ as a shift from Cold War homeland defenses towards post-Cold War expeditionary forces, raises a clear dilemma when it comes to

understanding what constitutes military skill, what is it to be a skillful soldier and, moreover, how we develop such a soldier.

This dilemma will be discussed in the following chapters, where I try to get a grip on the problem by use of the theory of modernity versus postmodernity.



## Chapter 2: The Idea of a Postmodern Military

‘The Postmodern Military’ is a conceptual framework that grew out of the ending of the Cold War era. Thus, to argue that the military transformation witnessed within NATO and its member nations could be seen in light of a transitional process from modernity towards postmodernity is, of course, nothing new.<sup>102</sup> More so, Fabrizio Battistelli in his well-cited paper from 1997, entitled *Peacekeeping and the Postmodern Soldier*, argues that:

The application of the category of postmodern to the military had already been suggested by a group of Italian sociologists, the author [Battistelli;sic] among them.<sup>103</sup>

Nonetheless, in academic discourse the term itself is foremost connected with the anthology of the same name. *The Postmodern Military: Armed Forces after the Cold War* was edited by three of the more prominent figures within the *Interuniversity Seminars on Armed Forces and Society* environment at the turn of the millennium, namely Charles C. Moskos, John Allen Williams and David R. Segal.<sup>104</sup> In their use of the term/concept, they deliberately define it in contrast to the ‘Modern military,’ and thus, understand it to imply “some significant departure from Modern forms of military organization.”<sup>105</sup>

The Modern military that fully emerged in the nineteenth century was inextricably associated with the rise of the nation-state. Though the Modern military organization was, of course, never a pure type, its basic format was a combination of conscripted lower ranks or militia and a professional officer corps, war-oriented in mission, masculine in makeup and ethos, and sharply differentiated in structure and culture from civilian society. The Postmodern military, by contrast, undergoes a loosening of the ties with the nation-state. The basic format shifts toward a volunteer force, more multipurpose in mission, increasingly androgynous in makeup and ethos, and with greater permeability with civilian society.<sup>106</sup>

The idea of the postmodern military as presented in the anthology is a theoretical and typological framework from *modern* through *late modern* to *postmodern* forms of military organization. In the anthology the postmodern idea is backed up by eleven essays describing

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<sup>102</sup> See Michele Marotta, ed., *Il militare e la complessità: sociologia e strategia nel “postmoderno”* (Roma: La Goliardica, 1990); Moskos and Burk, “The Postmodern Military,” in *The Military in New Times*, p. 142; Moskos, et.al. (eds.), *The Postmodern Military*; Bondy, “Postmodernism and the Source of Military Strength in the Anglo West”. Battistelli “Peacekeeping and the Postmodern Soldier”.

<sup>103</sup> Battistelli, “Peacekeeping and the Postmodern Soldier,” p. 483. Referring to: Marotta, ed., *Il militare e la complessità: sociologia e strategia nel “postmoderno”*.

<sup>104</sup> Moskos, et.al. (eds.), *The Postmodern Military*.

<sup>105</sup> Moskos, Charles, John Allen Williams and David R. Segal, “Armed Forces after the Cold War,” in Moskos et.al., *The Postmodern Military*, p. 1.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid*, p. 1.

transformational changes to both structural and cultural dimensions seen in twelve Western democracies, predominantly over the last couple of decades. These changes are compared to the outlined framework.<sup>107</sup> As such, it represents a substantial influence on the perception of the idea of a postmodern military. However it should be mentioned that although all the essays depict a development that moves the armed forces towards the postmodern, and in dispositional format deal with a common set of features outlined by Moskos, they are not unified in thinking that all nations see the same development on the same issues. Rather, the contributions must be seen as portraying national discourses that on an international level have that in common that they in some way convene to the characteristics of the postmodern. Which in itself reflects the editors understanding of Postmodernism.

[I]t is sufficient for our purpose to note that Postmodernism subverts absolute values and introduces a profound relativism into discourse. The operative terms are pluralism, fragmentation, heterogeneity, deconstruction, permeability, and ambiguity.<sup>108</sup>

Thus, there are at least two conclusions/lessons to be drawn from this introduction to the idea of a postmodern military. First and foremost that Moskos and colleagues, although particularly influential, are not alone in debating, and as such, defining what the idea of a postmodern military is to be. Secondly, and perhaps most interestingly, that the idea of a postmodern military is not to be found in absolute values, but rather, should be looked for within a variety of cultures, in a numerous amount of narratives, dealing with an indefinite number of issues, with an indecisive range of characteristics, from a variety of local history.

Accordingly, the following “literature review” on the military (transformation) and the postmodern idea is not meant to be an all-inclusive review of the literature on *the military and the postmodern*. If that were the case I would have to focus on those contributions that explicitly addressed the postmodern inclusively. My intention, on the contrary, has been to look for *traces* of the postmodern; such as whether there are any signs, aspects, features or characteristics of that which we see as the postmodern to be found in military literature, looking particularly for writing that describes aspects of military transformation. Thus, the aim is primarily to justify the modern/postmodern dichotomy as being a relevant and legitimate theoretical grip on understanding the foundational changes that the military transformation proposes to skill-acquisition. And secondarily, if somewhat consequently, to

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<sup>107</sup> Ibid, The book is an anthology comprising 14 contributions in which 11 describe the transformational changes as they have taken place in 12 different countries (The United Kingdom, France, Germany, The Netherlands, Denmark, Italy, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, Switzerland, Israel and South Africa).

<sup>108</sup> Ibid, p. 4.



situate my own work within the broader debate on military transformation and the postmodern.

## Postmodernism – Two Schools of Thought within the Military Academic Discourse

In regards to the debate on the usefulness of postmodernism, Harry Bondy argues that two different schools of thought have emerged.<sup>109</sup> The first, he says, is made up of those who **look for sociological and political trends** that they call postmodern. Within this school, he includes Battistelli, Burk, Coker, Dandeker, Moskos, Snider and Williams.<sup>110</sup> Focus is placed on the most evident changes we have witnessed in the aftermath of the Cold War, such as changes to the perceived threat, force structure, mission definition, type of professionalism, public attitude, spouses, gender issues, media relations, (homo)sexuality and conscientious objectors.<sup>111</sup> Bondy leaves the description by arguing that this school:

[T]end to downplay the potential of postmodern analysis as a mode of discourse applicable to the core sources of military strength in the West. Sociological trends affect Western military culture, but are not core issues.<sup>112</sup>

The second school, Bondy states, comprises those scholars that **apply postmodernism** to the cultural assumptions, behavioral patterns and institutional characteristics of the military in Western society.<sup>113</sup> This group, he argues, “marvel at postmodernism’s seemingly limitless novelty, scope and importance – but balk at serious analysis.”<sup>114</sup> And even though their shared commonality is in the application of postmodernism, “they appear to be unsure about opening the Pandora’s Box of modernism.”<sup>115</sup> This school he views as the less

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<sup>109</sup> Bondy, “Postmodernism and the Source of Military Strength in Anglo West.”

<sup>110</sup> Battistelli, “Peacekeeping and the Postmodern Soldier”; Charles C. Moskos and James Burk, “The Postmodern Military,” in Burk (ed.), *Adaptive Military: Armed Forces in a Turbulent World*, (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1998); Christopher Coker, “Post-Modern War,” *RUSI Journal* 143, 3 (June 1998): pp. 7-14; Christopher Dandeker, “The United Kingdom: The Overstretched Military,” in Moskos et al. (eds.), *The Postmodern Military*, pp. 32-50; Christopher Dandeker, “The Post-Modern Military Reconsidered: Social Change and British Armed Services in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.” Paper presented at the Cranfield University International Conference on Defence Management, Thames, UK, April 24-25, 2003; Charles C. Moskos, “Toward a Postmodern Military: The United States as a Paradigm,” in Moskos et al. (eds.), *The Postmodern Military*, pp. 14-31; Don M. Snider, “America’s Postmodern Military,” in *World Policy Journal* 17, 1 (Spring 2000): pp. 47-54; John A. Williams, “The Postmodern Military Reconsidered,” in Moskos et al. (eds.), *The Postmodern Military*, pp. 265-277; John A. Williams, “What’s Next for the Post-Modern Military?” Paper presented at the Cranfield University International Conference on Defence Management, Thames, UK, April 24-25, 2003.

<sup>111</sup> Moskos et al. (eds.), *The Postmodern Military*.

<sup>112</sup> Bondy, “Postmodernism and the Source of Military Strength in Anglo West,” p. 33.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*

prominent one, and says it includes work of Booth, Kestnbaum, Segal, Morgan, Phillips, Welch, and Ridderhof.<sup>116</sup> However, as a group, they are not as unified as the first school. They deal with a variety of issues such as: criticizing the first school for overstating the effect of post-Cold War sociological trends on Western militaries;<sup>117</sup> describing psychological effects of postmodernism on individual soldiers;<sup>118</sup> considering the effect on political power, soldier identity, discipline, and Anglo-Western hegemony;<sup>119</sup> recommending a postmodern analysis of military leadership doctrine;<sup>120</sup> and there is suggestion that analysts apply Derrida's textual deconstruction techniques to military documents.<sup>121</sup>

Bondy closes his description by stating that it is difficult to separate the two schools and that it is unnecessary to choose between them, "since a popular philosophy will inevitably influence sociological trends."<sup>122</sup> Rather, he argues that "postmodernism could be the answer to Siebold's challenge to provide a theoretical framework for core sociological issues for the military profession and civil-military relations."<sup>123</sup> And later he underlines that "[i]t is precisely the power of postmodernism to threaten our basic cultural assumptions in the academic and security domains that makes it crucial to the study of cultural transformation."<sup>124</sup>

In summary, Bondy portrays a distinction between those who use sociological and political trends as building-blocks in posting a typology of the 'postmodern military', and those who apply postmodern thinking in their analysis of the military. However, when reading Bondy's insightful and well-written paper, there still seems to be both substantial and relevant critique and support for the notion of a postmodern military that fails to surface. Thus, in the

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<sup>116</sup> Bradford Booth, Meyer Kestnbaum and David R. Segal, "Are Post-Cold War Militaries Postmodern?" *Armed Forces & Society* 27, (2001). pp. 319-342; Matthew J. Morgan, "The Reconstruction of Culture, Citizenship, and Military Service," *Armed Forces & Society* 2001, 27, pp. 373-391; J.B.R. Phillips, "Postmodernism and the implications for the Development of Leadership Doctrine in the Australian Army," *Australian Defence Journal* 135 (1999), pp. 39-44; Stephen Welch, C. Kennedy-Pipe, "What is Post-Modern About the Military?" Paper presented at the Cranfield University International Conference on Defence Management, Thames, UK, April 24-25, 2003; Phillip J. Ridderhof, "Thinking Out of the Box: Reading Military Texts from a Different Perspective," *Naval War College Review* 40, 4 (2002), pp. 83-95.

<sup>117</sup> Booth, Kestnbaum and Segal, "Are Post-Cold War Militaries Postmodern?"

<sup>118</sup> Morgan, "The Reconstruction of Culture, Citizenship, and Military Service."

<sup>119</sup> Welch, C. Kennedy-Pipe, "What is Post-Modern About the Military?"

<sup>120</sup> Phillips, "Postmodernism and the implications for the Development of Leadership Doctrine in the Australian Army."

<sup>121</sup> Bondy, "Postmodernism and the Source of Military Strength in Anglo West," p. 33.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> Guy L. Siebold, "Core Issues and Theory in Military Sociology," *Journal of Political and Military Sociology* 29 (2001), pp. 140-159. in Bondy, "Postmodernism and the Source of Military Strength in Anglo West," p. 33.

<sup>124</sup> Ridderhof, "Thinking Out of the Box: Reading Military Texts from a Different Perspective."

following part of this chapter I will try to fill this gap with some of the descriptions/findings that I understood to be relevant from my own reading on the subject.

## **Critique and Support for a Postmodern Interpretation of the Military**

In the following section I will display some of the explicit and implicit signs or “evidence” of that which could be seen as a critique and support for the idea of a postmodern military. In doing so I will briefly tap into different academic and military discourses that directly cast light on either the concept of the modern/postmodern military or on those who address the characteristics associated with the modern/postmodern concept, but without necessarily pertaining to the modern/postmodern dichotomy or its conceptualization. Thus, what I am looking for are the signs supporting or opposing an understanding that the transformative changes we have witnessed over the last couple of decades actually foster those foundational aspects which make *The Military Transformation* a (post)modernizing process rather than a modernizing project.

### **Critique of the Idea of a ‘Postmodern Military’**

Moskos and colleagues argue that the idea of a postmodern military is a developmental construct that in an ideal-type manner points towards “some future point by which past and present trends can be identified and appraised.”<sup>125</sup> Moreover, Moskos himself was explicit in stating that he was presenting a model and not a prophecy, and that any typology does injustice to reality.<sup>126</sup> Consequently, it should come as no surprise that the postmodern ideal in face of reality meets substantial opposition.

When looking for traces of an opposition to the idea of a postmodern military, there is one matter in particular that keeps arising: the relationship between the official defense and security policy for change and the subsequent implied shift in military culture, and the way in which the military culture is described by those who have studied it. Traces of this opposition are found in a variety of writings, on a magnitude of topics, addressing different levels of military culture, from various parts of the world.

A good starting point is with Bradford Booth, Meyer Kestnbaum and David R. Segal, who in their article, *Are Post-Cold War Militaries Postmodern?*, argue that even though the

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<sup>125</sup> Moskos, “Toward a Postmodern Military,” p. 14.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

military operates in a postmodern world, it does not necessarily mean that the military organization itself is postmodern. Rather, they say, it seems to display “those qualities distinctive of modernism: rational, calculated, structural adaptation to environmental change.”<sup>127</sup> Different studies from the beginning of the new millennium support Booth et al.’s call for caution in describing the military as being postmodern in its execution of military force. Wong, for instance, found when studying company commander experience that “the [US] Army values innovation in its rhetoric,”<sup>128</sup> but in action they still adhered to the traditional bureaucratic and hierarchical values of the past.

Put bluntly, the Army is relying on a leader development system that encourages reactive instead of proactive thought, compliance instead of creativity, and adherence instead of audacity. Junior officers, especially company commanders, are seldom given opportunities to be innovative; to make decisions; or to fail, learn, and try again.<sup>129</sup>

When studying the elevated junior officer attrition in the US Army and how it related “to the army’s vision for the future”<sup>130</sup> Lewis discovered that “[t]he deteriorating trends in the ESQC factor components of experience, skill, and quality control are at odds with what the architects of army transformation have in mind.”<sup>131</sup> As reference for the new army vision he points towards the US Army Training and Doctrine Command Pamphlet 525-5, which maps out the vision of *Force XXI Operations* that in some sense could be seen to incorporate those values that we regard as postmodern: constructive, complex, contextual and plural. Among many other aspects regarding leader development the vision proclaims that:

Leaders must exploit the potential to be found in military organizations that are flatter, internetted, and where quality soldiers with expanded and timely information are able to reach their full potential for initiative and action within the overall intent when given that opportunity. [...] They must have such intuitive skills as vision, innovation, adaptability, and creativity and the ability to simplify complexities and clarify ambiguities all while operating under stress.<sup>132</sup>

Likewise, Liora Sion argues from a Dutch perspective that there is a tension between public opinion that expects the armed forces’ role conception to become more peacekeeping-

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<sup>127</sup> Booth, et.al., “Are Post-Cold War Militaries Postmodern?”

<sup>128</sup> Leonard Wong, *Stifling Innovation: Developing Tomorrow’s Leaders Today*, (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2002), p. 3.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>130</sup> Mark R. Lewis, “Army Transformation and the Junior Officer Exodus,” *Armed Forces & Society* 31, No. 1 (2004), pp. 63-93.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 82. ESQC stand for ‘Experience,’ ‘Skill,’ and ‘Quality Control.’

<sup>132</sup> United States Department of the Army, *Force XXI Operations: A Concept for evolution of Full-Dimensional Operations for the Strategic Army of the Early Twenty-First Century*, US Army Training and Doctrine Command Pamphlet 525-5 (Fort Monroe, VA: US Army Training & Doctrine Command), Chapter 4.

oriented and the army's cultural self-imagery portrayed through "traditional rhetoric of violence and war making."<sup>133</sup> Consequently, Sion concludes that:

Conformity to Dutch society's peace perceptions can conflict with the army's actual activity and its institutional image, which contains two major elements: a masculine image and a culture of violence. Combat units find it difficult and even undesirable to make the necessary transformation to peace missions and to abandon a combat-oriented self-image. Although peace missions are almost the only option left for the army, soldiers still follow the combat model. For them, combat not peacekeeping is what makes the army relevant and legitimate.<sup>134</sup>

From a Norwegian perspective, Ståle Ulriksen has criticized the NoAF for having low competency and being too technically oriented, and so claimed that the NoAF in the 1990s was largely a (modern) "facade". He argued that its real purpose was not to be militarily operative, but rather, to be politically correct in the sense of being the state's "instrument of power in a way that it maintained and continued the central values and symbols in the Norwegian nation-building."<sup>135</sup>

If the maneuver-concept should be implemented fully, it will be necessary to give soldiers better training. Also the private soldier must understand the purpose of the mission, at least at company level. He must have knowledge of tactics, and thus be able to make his own assessments on the battlefield. In the Norwegian army all activity at team level is combat technique, thus only the mechanical performance of the rehearsed tactical movements. In the Norwegian Army not even the team leader is to think for himself and make his own assessments.<sup>136</sup>

This notion is supported by the two junior army officers, Tor-Erik Hansen and Otto Løvland, who in an article from 2000 on the introduction of a maneuver-oriented Norwegian defense doctrine argue that "leaders at the lower levels have little ability and possibility to make independent tactical decisions."<sup>137</sup>

This understanding is to some extent further supported by some of the findings made by Jørgen W. Eriksen in relation to his Ph.D. project *Soldiers' Reach for Optimized Performance*, where he followed a Norwegian ranger team unit in their preparations for

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<sup>133</sup> Liora Sion, "'Too Sweet and Innocent for War?': Dutch Peacekeepers and the Use of Violence," *Armed Forces & Society* 32, No. 3 (2006), pp. 454-474.

<sup>134</sup> Sion, "'Too Sweet and Innocent for War?'," p. 471.

<sup>135</sup> Ulriksen, *Den norske forsvarstradisjonen [The Norwegian Defense Tradition]*, p. 241.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 256. (Original in Norwegian, my translation.)

<sup>137</sup> Tor-Erik Hansen and Otto Løvland, "Taktikk; stridsdriller eller tenkning?" ["Tactics; Battle-drills or Thinking?"] *Norsk Militært Tidsskrift*, vol. 170, no. 1, 2000, p. 40. (My translation)

deployment into Afghanistan and their post-training.<sup>138</sup> During his defense he argued (based on his findings) that the learning culture of the NoAF was based on a classical cognitive and deductive instructional learning perspective, whilst the operational experience advocated a much more experienced-based inductive and experiential learning mode.

In an article entitled *A Norwegian Expeditionary Mindset?* Torunn L. Haaland debates the consequences of the transformation in relation to role perception. Her argumentation could be taken as support for an ongoing '(post)modernization' process towards making the NoAF a true expeditionary force where "military personnel are now willing to go anywhere at relatively short notice."<sup>139</sup> Yet on the other hand, she maintains that the NoAF is still deeply embedded in a modern understanding of military force where, "mindsets and core values have remained quite stable."<sup>140</sup> Thus, she concludes that:

All in all, the Norwegian armed forces have taken several important steps in becoming an expeditionary force. However, much remains. There is still much to be done to streamline the organization – its force structure, force production procedures, acquisition procedures, personnel policy, and so on into a force that is sustainable in constant deployments to operations far away.<sup>141</sup>

In summary, there are undoubtedly traces of substantial and relevant critiques of the idea of a postmodern military that should be taken into consideration when making an inquiry into the ontological and epistemological foundations of military skill-acquisition.

## **Support for the Idea of a 'Postmodern Military'**

Even though these examples provide valid evidence that should make us cautious towards the idea of the military becoming postmodern, there are also a great number of academic studies and valid examples of military writings and conduct that show the military and its surrounding culture as adapting to the postmodern mode.

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<sup>138</sup> Jørgen W. Eriksen, *Soldiers' Reach for Optimized Performance*, PhD-Dissertation from the Norwegian School of Sport Sciences (Oslo: Norwegian School of Sport Sciences, 2011); Jørgen W. Eriksen, "From Expert Skills towards Optimized Performance" in Eriksen, *Soldiers' Reach for Optimized Performance*.

<sup>139</sup> Torunn Laugen Haaland, "A Norwegian Expeditionary Mindset?" In Henrik Fürst and Gerhard Kümmel (eds.) *Core Values and the Expeditionary Mindset: Armed Forces in Metamorphosis* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2011), p. 174.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid*, p. 174.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid*, p. 175.

### ***Civil-military Diffusion of Values, Knowledge and Skills***

An important feature of the idea of the postmodern military is its civil-military relationship, in the sense of civil-military diffusion of values, knowledge and skills, and its impact on security and defense policy.

One aspect worth noting is the relationship between **threat and risk**. An interesting and highly relevant example is provided by Mikkel Vedby Rasmussen who looks at the diffusion of societal trends between the military and civilian society when addressing the perception of danger and security. A notable change in the way society seems to understand danger is connected to the distinction between a modern concept of computable dangers (threat) and a late modern, reflexive concept of risk.<sup>142</sup> In his book, *The Risk Society at War*, Rasmussen defines the two concepts like this:

A threat is a specific danger which can be precisely identified and measured on the basis of the capabilities an enemy has to realise a hostile intent. ... A risk is a scenario followed by a policy proposal for how to prevent this scenario from becoming real.<sup>143</sup>

Rasmussen argues that during the Cold War era the Soviet Union and the Red Army's tanks and nuclear missiles constituted what is here seen as a threat. He goes on to say that the Soviet threat could be assessed in the terms of the Kremlin's ends and the means the state had at its disposal to realize these ends. As such, this understanding of danger is viewed in a means-end rational framework, which has its roots back in the seventeenth century when modern strategy started to see warfare in a means-end rational context.

After the Cold War and at the beginning of the twenty-first century, the perception of danger was no longer connected (locked on) to the Soviet Union and its Red Army. Now the West faced new types of dangers from a globalized world, with terrorism, the spreading of weapons of mass destruction, new military technologies, new great powers and the introduction of new military doctrines as some examples. Rasmussen argues that these trends are better understood within a risk perspective, rather than from a threat position. From a risk perspective the best one can hope for is to manage or pre-empt a risk; one can never achieve perfect security because new risks will arise as a 'boomerang effect' of defeating the original risk.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> Rasmussen, *The Risk Society at War*, p. 1.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid, p. 1 and 2.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid, p. 2.

Based on a social-anthropological study of Danish KFOR soldiers, Katrine Nørgaard found traces of what could be interpreted as support to Rasmussen's (post/late modern) view of risk and security. She argues that there are two parallel and mutually connected tendencies in peacekeeping operations. One is "a transition from a centralized and bureaucratic type of management to a decentralized risk management, which allows the individual soldier to control himself".<sup>145</sup> The other is "a transition from a territorially defined discourse of security to a value-oriented discourse of security, which turns the construction of a civil/military "trust capital" and political cooperation into a military security issue".<sup>146</sup>

An interesting offset of these global trends is how they manifest into official **security and defense policy** on both supranational and national level. Tormod Heier provides an apt example in his Ph.D. thesis, which explores from a political science perspective how Norwegian security and defense policy was influenced by US transformation efforts in NATO during the years 1998-2004.<sup>147</sup> As presented in the first chapter of my thesis, the US-led transformation of NATO can be interpreted as being a fundamentally qualitative change from those elements that define the modern view (universalism, structure and objectivity) towards the characteristics associated with the postmodern view (contextualism, complexity and constructivism). It should also be said that relinquishing nation-state sovereignty for a supranational organization like NATO could in itself be seen as a character trait of the postmodern. Thus, in summing up his findings Heier states the essence of Norway's security and defense policy between 1998 and 2004 to be:

A quest for allied attention through constructive participation in as many as possible of the United States' transformation initiatives directed towards Europe; portraying Norway as a credible ally that takes her transatlantic commitments seriously; striving for recognition by actively participating in allied reforms rather than displaying reluctance; and lastly, to balancing ideals and interests as much as possible to smooth out potential friction between allied expectations and domestic demands.<sup>148</sup>

Similarly from a political science stance, Haaland provides a related example with her Ph.D. thesis which explores role perceptions in the NoAF after the Cold War.<sup>149</sup> She states that "[t]he fundamental changes in the international system and the many conflicts of the 1990s

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<sup>145</sup> Katrine Nørgaard, *Tillidens teknologi. Den Militære ethos ogviljen til dannelse* [The Technology of Trust. The Military Ethos and the will for Bildung] (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Copenhagen, 2004), p.217.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid*, p.217.

<sup>147</sup> Heier, *Influence and Marginalisation*.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid*, p. 238.

<sup>149</sup> Torunn Laugen Haaland, *Small Forces with a Global Outreach. Role perceptions in the Norwegian Armed Forces after the Cold War* (PhD-Dissertation, UiO, 2008).



left Norway with little choice but to gradually adapt its military force to new challenges.”<sup>150</sup> From fully focusing on the homeland defense and seeing expeditionary forces abroad as a distraction with little relevance to its main task, it was changes to Europe’s geopolitical situation in particular that impacted hugely on the likes of participation in multilateral military operations abroad. Consequently, Haaland argues that “[a] striking difference from the 1990s is that it is now fully acknowledged that participation in international operations improves the quality of the participating units.”<sup>151</sup> But in contrast to Heier she does not see the changes as being primarily a diffusion on the organizational level, rather, she advocates “[i]nstitutional learning has improved, but as a general impression, the learning primarily takes place out in the force production units, and depends more on individuals than on institutionalised learning processes.”<sup>152</sup>

This last observation, that learning is being decentralized and a result of individual relationships is precisely what Matthew J. Morgan encounters when exploring “the dynamics of the members of postmodern society and their likely impact on military service”.<sup>153</sup> His argument is that change comes as a consequence of interaction on the individual and personal level rather than on an organizational and institutional one – “if the military is postmodern, perhaps the individual soldier is the one making it so”.<sup>154</sup> Though Morgan’s article balances the pros and cons of postmodern influence on military service, it comes across advocating postmodern society as having had a noticeable influence on military service, particularly in relation to leadership.

The collapse of authority structures in postmodern society has had visible effects on military organization. Human resources issues have become especially cogent for senior military leadership in recent years. While difficulties have emerged because of these developments, it may lead to better and more effective models of leadership for the armed services.<sup>155</sup>

A subsequent and relevant matter to the civil-military diffusion of values, knowledge and skills is how these changes are manifested into the **motivation and meaning** of soldiers’ participation in military operations.

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<sup>150</sup> Ibid, p. 243.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid, p. 261.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid, p. 261.

<sup>153</sup> Morgan, “The Reconstruction of Culture, Citizenship, and Military Service,” p. 374.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid, p. 374

<sup>155</sup> Ibid, p. 381.

Battistelli, who studied the motivational pattern among Italian soldiers who served in Albania and Somalia, wanted to find out “whether soldiers in the post-modern volunteer force will be sufficiently motivated by noneconomic factors to undertake nontraditional military missions like peacekeeping.”<sup>156</sup> In his search for some clarity he divided the motivational aspect into three cohorts: a) the Paleomodern, they who want “[t]o be useful for others”<sup>157</sup> and “[t]o strengthen the country’s image at the international level.”<sup>158</sup>; b) the Modern, those who wish “[t]o earn some extra money”<sup>159</sup> and “[t]o learn things that could be useful to one’s career or on one’s return to civilian life.”<sup>160</sup> and c) the Postmodern, those who seek “[t]o satisfy a desire for adventure,”<sup>161</sup> and “[t]o have a meaningful personal experience.”<sup>162</sup> He concludes by stating that:

In both Albania and Somalia, soldiers with paleomodern motivations (those which appeal to social solidarity and patriotism) constitute a minority of about 14%. Soldiers with modern motivations (appealing to salary and professional training) follow, constituting a large minority of 40% in Albania and 33% in Somalia. Soldiers with postmodern motivations (appealing to adventure and personal experience) are the dominant group, with 45% in Albania and 53% in Somalia. Motivations aimed at the self rather than others are, therefore, prevalent. It is important, however, to distinguish whether the orientation to self is based on utilitarian (modern) or expressive (postmodern) undertones.<sup>163</sup>

An interesting observation in Battistelli’s findings is that the underlying reasons for the distribution between paleomodern, modern and postmodern motives seem to be the recruitment into the armed forces.

In highly demanding missions, such as the one in Somalia, not surprisingly, the highest level of satisfaction was expressed by soldiers who embraced postmodern motives. Postmoderns, after all, are the ones who seek adventure and new experience. Postmoderns are more numerous now among the draftees and tend to reflect the progressive increase in postmaterialist aims and attitudes that is taking place among the young in Italy and in other advanced societies.<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>156</sup> Battistelli “Peacekeeping and the Postmodern Soldier,” p. 467.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 471.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 481.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 481-482.

Jonathan Bennet, Rolf P. Boesch and Karl W Haltiner also reported similar findings from studying the motivational aspects of participation in a Swiss company deployed to Kosovo in 2001 and 2002. Among others they found that “the identification with the mission tasks and the feeling of making a valuable contribution to reaching Swisscoy’s aims were of paramount importance.”<sup>165</sup> Moreover,

The Swisscoy volunteers were truly interested in their mission and identified with its objectives. They did not seek an escape from their lives at home and were not juvenile adventures. The belief in the meaningfulness of tasks and the usefulness of their job were the main motives for volunteering and the ‘apparent benefits of the mission’ – both for the soldiers themselves as well as for the local population – and the ‘attractiveness of personal assignments’ – that is, the inherent meaningfulness of tasks and the usefulness and variation of assignments – were the most important predictors of the level of motivation.<sup>166</sup>

### ***Ways of Waging War, at the Militarily Operational Level***

Changes in the security and defense policy have had inevitable consequences on the military operational level. What follows is another feature of the postmodern military: the demands of fostering a **multidimensional quality** in relation to military conduct, in the sense of ways of waging war. Frank G. Hoffman, claims “[i]t is not just that conventional warfare or interstate conflict is on the decline, there is a fusion of war forms emerging, one that blurs regular and irregular warfare.”<sup>167</sup> Hoffman’s understanding of ways of waging war seems to be fundamentally both complex and configurative and, as such, harbors a postmodern outlook.

We may find it increasingly impossible to characterize states as essentially traditional forces, or non-state actors as inherently irregular. Future challenges will present a more complex array of alternative structures and strategies. We will most likely face hybrid challengers capable of conducting Hybrid Wars. *Hybrid Wars can be waged by states or political groups, and incorporate a range of different modes of warfare including conventional capabilities, irregular tactics and formations, terrorist acts including indiscriminate violence and coercion, and criminal disorder.*<sup>168</sup>

Another who advocates this sort of pluralism and flexibility is Terrence R. Dake, who in his keynote address to the RAND urban operations conference in 1999 highlights this same

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<sup>165</sup> Jonathan Bennet, Rolf P. Boesch and Karl W Haltiner, “Motivation and Job Satisfaction in the Swiss Support Company in Kosovo”, *International Peacekeeping*, vol. 12, no. 4 (2005), p. 565.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 572.

<sup>167</sup> Frank G. Hoffman, *Conflict in the 21st Century: The Rise of Hybrid Wars* (Arlington, VA: Potomac Institute for Policy Studies, December 2007, No. 46), p. 7.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 58. (Italics in original)

notion when referring to the Commandant of the Marine Corps scenario of *The Three-block War*. “In simple terms we believe a marine will be engaged in humanitarian assistance at sunrise, peacekeeping at noon, and conventional combat at sundown. These three activities will all occur within a three-block area on the same day.”<sup>169</sup> This is supported by Giuseppe Caforio who maintains that “[t]he military today has to execute different operations (humanitarian assistance, peacekeeping, combat, reconstruction, nation building, etc.) simultaneously rather than sequentially.”<sup>170</sup> Thus, it seems that the transformational changes incline towards a new soldiering ethos, presumably built on a postmodern ontology and epistemology.

### ***Military Culture***

Consequentially, these aforementioned signs of the idea of a postmodern military do impact the understanding of military culture as it is expressed through a change in ethos, role perception and official military strategic documents.

Several scholars worldwide have studied **identity and role perception** in a transformed military. A common feature is that they portray the soldiering role as being multiple and diverse, and even hybrid.

Sabine Mannitz has studied the ways in which soldiers in the reunited Germany make new sense of their contemporary tasks and roles. Her findings support a postmodernification view in the sense that diversity is fostered in distinction to uniformity.

Surveys over the past ten years concerning the changing self-images of soldiers in Germany show, amongst other things, a diversification of the role concepts, and a “hybridization” of the professional identity of the soldier. The “hybrid” soldier is one who combines a number of competing competences and features within himself/herself, and is able to adjust the required “tool” to the most different mission environments.<sup>171</sup>

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<sup>169</sup> Terrence R. Dake, “The City’s Many Faces: Investigating the Multifold Challenges of Urban Operations,” Appendix G in R.W. Glenn (ed.) *Proceeding of the RAND Arroyo-MCWL-J8 UWG urban operations conference*, April 13-12, 1999. [http://www.rand.org/pubs/conf\\_proceedings/CF148/CF148.appg.pdf](http://www.rand.org/pubs/conf_proceedings/CF148/CF148.appg.pdf). (page accessed on 04 November 2012), p. 216.

<sup>170</sup> Giuseppe Caforio, “Asymmetric Warfare: An Introduction,” in Giuseppe Caforio (ed.), *Advances in Military Sociology: Essays in honor of Charles C. Moskos*. Contributions to Conflict Management, Peace Economics and Development, Volume 12A, (Bingley, UK: Emeralds Group Publishing Limited, 2009), pp. 261-266.

<sup>171</sup> Sabine Mannitz, “Redefining Soldierly Role Models in Germany,” *Armed Forces & Society*, October 2011; vol. 37, 4: pp. 680-700, p. 690.

Haaland also found multiple soldiering roles when studying role perception in the NoAF after the Cold War. Based on her reading of Huntington,<sup>172</sup> Janowitz,<sup>173</sup> and Moskos,<sup>174</sup> coupled with her own empirical findings she developed a four-role typology: The Warrior, The Homeland-defender/Citizen-soldier, The State Employee and The Mercenary.<sup>175</sup> Haaland underlines that all four roles presumably exist simultaneously on both an individual and organizational level, but that the relative importance of each role may shift.

Additionally, there are also smaller studies that show a similar tendency. For instance, Bjørnstad found traces of postmodern values in an interview-based study with eleven soldiers in the Telemark Battalion<sup>176</sup> —the first and (still) only all-professional battalion in the NoAF designed to be Norway’s army contribution to NATO’s Rapid Reaction Force. He describes the battalion as “a flexible elite-oriented expeditionary force, with a clear distinction to the mass-oriented static invasion defense,”<sup>177</sup> and thus argues that “[i]n response to the need for a transnational military integration, the Telemark battalion anno 2004 are constructing a representation of itself that stands in stark contrast to traditional Norwegian defense units in terms of professionalism and application.”<sup>178</sup>

Such a turn in role perception is also witnessed as having an equal impact on **the military ethos or ideal of good soldiering**. For instance, Sir Rupert Smith advocates “[n]ow we need innovators, intelligent, practical, imaginative and bold, capable of operating successfully in novel circumstances.”<sup>179</sup> This understanding is echoed by Dake when following up on his previously mentioned description of the three-block war; he rhetorically went on to ask how do we develop such a soldier? And answered:

One answer lies in recruiting and another in professional development. We must continue to recruit high-quality men and women of character. We must not lower our standards. The

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<sup>172</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations* (London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1957).

<sup>173</sup> Morris Janowitz, *The Professional Soldier: A Social and Political Portrait* (New York: The free Press, Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1960).

<sup>174</sup> Charles C. Moskos Jr., “From Institution to Occupation: Trends in Military Organization,” *Armed Forces & Society*, Vol. 4, No. 1, November 1977, p. 41-50; Charles C. Moskos Jr., “Institutional/Occupational Trends in Armed Forces: An Update,” *Armed Forces & Society*, Vol. 12, No. 3, Spring 1986, p. 377-382. And as mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, Moskos also made a vital contribution at the turn of the century when arguing that the evolution of armed forces had progressed into the postmodern world (Moskos et.al., *The Postmodern Soldier*).

<sup>175</sup> Haaland, *Small Forces with a Global Outreach*.

<sup>176</sup> Thor Christian Bjørnstad, “Fra soldater av folket til soldater for staten,” [“From Soldiers of the People to Soldiers for the State”] *Sosiologi i dag [Sociology Today]*, Vol. 41, no. 1, 2011, pp. 5-31.

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid*, p. 14.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid*, p. 15.

<sup>179</sup> Rupert Smith, “Thinking about the Utility of Force in War amongst the People”, *Oslo Files on Defence and Security*, no. 04 (2007), p. 41.

challenges a young NCO will face in the three-block war demand intelligence, creativity, resilience, and a strength [sic.] of character. These traits and characteristics must be nurtured and developed through a demanding training and education curriculum. Such a curriculum must emphasize leadership, integrity, courage, initiative, decisiveness, mental agility, and personal accountability. We must provide our NCOs with the training and education that will enable them to successfully negotiate the obstacles of the three-block war.<sup>180</sup>

This is furthermore supported by studies conducted in the field. In a study of the Operation IRAQI FREEDOM environment entitled *Developing Adaptive Leaders: The Crucible Experience of Operation Iraqi Freedom*, Leonard Wong found that the junior officers are becoming innovative, flexible and adaptable due to their experience on the ground. Thus he concludes that:

... the complexity, unpredictability, and ambiguity of postwar Iraq is producing a cohort of innovative, confident, and adaptable junior officers. Lieutenants and captains are learning to make decisions in chaotic conditions and to be mentally agile in executing counterinsurgency and nation-building operations simultaneously. As a result, the Army will soon have a cohort of company grade officers who are accustomed to operating independently, taking the initiative, and adapting to changes.<sup>181</sup>

When looking for support for the idea of the postmodern military it is not only academic and empirical evidence that becomes relevant. Written sources, such as **doctrines, official field guidance, and commander's intent**, also become significant expressions of a certain mode of desired military conduct. Thus, seen in relation to the military transformation, one wonders if they (doctrines etc.) are written in a modernist (functional and technical rationalist) manner conveying the epistemology of universal laws and principles, or whether they break with this tradition and come in different formats using a multitude of layers and expressions, and as such could be said to be written in a postmodern mode?

Harald Høiback, touches upon this matter in his Ph.D. thesis, *On the Justification of Military Doctrine: Past, Present and Future*, when debating the role of culture as practice and discourses.<sup>182</sup> He argues for a 'reciprocity between the scholars' discourse and the discourse in the field', and more specifically he advocates that "[w]ords and concepts used by doctrine writers ought to develop words and concepts used by the practitioners in the

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<sup>180</sup> Dake, "The City's Many Faces: Investigating the Multifold Challenges of Urban Operations," p. 217.

<sup>181</sup> Leonard Wong, *Developing Adaptive Leaders: The Crucible Experience of Operation Iraqi Freedom* (USA, Carlisle, PE: The Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College, 2004), p. v.

<sup>182</sup> Harald Høiback, *On the Justification of military Doctrine: Past, Present and Future*. PhD thesis, University of Oslo, 2011, pp. 150-156.

field, and vice versa”.<sup>183</sup> Consequently, Høiback argues that “perhaps the best doctrines are those that are presented within a greater story. ‘Thick’ stories that give necessary details for casuistry.”<sup>184</sup> His argument is that “[i]nstead of providing rules, principles, and imperatives, a doctrine can present particular cases that the military decision makers can use as a grinding stone or a springboard for their own judgment.”<sup>185</sup> And he adds that “[i]n fact, with a closer look, many of the most distinguished generals of our own time turn out, in fact, to be great storytellers.”<sup>186</sup>

An apt example, also mentioned by Høiback, is the 2006 edition of the US Army and Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual, which very strongly emphasizes (postmodern) attributes such as managing complexity, being flexible, ability to adapt and cultural awareness.<sup>187</sup> The Foreword signed by the two generals, David H. Petraeus and James F. Amos, who catalyzed it, undoubtedly signals the idea of a postmodern military.<sup>188</sup>

A counterinsurgency campaign is, as described in this manual, a mix of offensive, defensive, and stability operations conducted along multiple lines of operations. It requires Soldiers and Marines to employ a mix of familiar combat tasks and skills more often associated with nonmilitary agencies. The balance between them depends on the local situation.<sup>189</sup>

Unquestionably, such a description/narrative is more in tune with the postmodern call for contextualism than the modern strive for universalism. More so, Petraeus and Amos follow up by calling for a situated leadership, since achieving such balance will require “leaders at all levels to adjust their approach constantly”,<sup>190</sup> so as to “ensure that their Soldiers and Marines are ready to be greeted with either a handshake or a hand grenade while taking on missions only infrequently practiced until recently at our combat training centers.”<sup>191</sup> Furthermore, the two generals also accentuate complexity and constructivity (over structure and objectivity) when calling for soldiers and marines to expect to take on the role perception of both nation builders and warriors.

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<sup>183</sup> Ibid, p. 152.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid, p. 166.

<sup>185</sup> Ibid, p. 164.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid, p. 166.

<sup>187</sup> David H. Petraeus and James F. Amos, *The United States Army and The United States Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual*, (Kissimmee, FL: Signalman Publishing, 2006), p. iii.

<sup>188</sup> Lieutenant General David H. Petraeus at the time served as the Commander of the U.S. Army Combined Center, whilst Lieutenant General James F. Amos served as the Deputy Commandant to Combat Development and Integration in the US Marine Corps.

<sup>189</sup> Petraeus and Amos, *The United States Army and The United States Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual*, p. iii.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid.

They must be prepared to help reestablish institutions and local security forces and assist in rebuilding infrastructure and basic services. They must be able to facilitate establishing local governance and the rule of law. The list of such tasks is long; performing them involves extensive coordination and cooperation with many intergovernmental, host-nation, and international agencies.<sup>192</sup>

Thus, Petraeus and Amos conclude that “[c]onducting a successful counterinsurgency campaign requires a flexible, adaptive force led by agile, well-informed, culturally astute leaders.”<sup>193</sup>

When serving as ‘Multi-National Force-Iraq Commander’, Petraeus fielded a counterinsurgency guidance consisting of twenty-five bullet points derived from the COIN Field manual. An interesting observation is that it is free from objective, instrumental and technical step-by-step *jargon*. Rather it is written in the narrative, in a personal and contextual manner, recognizing the complexity of the task and calling for the individual soldiers’ emotional involvement to the mission. It states the vision/mission, but leaves the responsibility and specifics of the task solving to those who are to do the work. In fact, the twenty-second bullet point “Exercise Initiative” underscores this notion and can serve as an example of the matter:

In the absence of guidance or orders, determine what they should be and execute aggressively. Higher level leaders will provide a broad vision and paint “white lines on the road,” but it will be up to those at tactical levels to turn “big ideas” into specific actions.<sup>194</sup>

Furthermore, the guidance fosters such “postmodern” values as transparency (“Allow those who will follow you to ‘virtually look over your shoulder’.”<sup>195</sup>), individual and unit integrity (“Integrity is critical to this fight. Don’t put lipstick on pigs. Acknowledge setbacks and failures, and then state what we’ve learned and how we’ll respond.”<sup>196</sup>), situatedness (“You can’t commute to this fight. ... Living among the people is essential to securing them and defeating the insurgents.”<sup>197</sup>), cultural understanding (“Understand the local culture and history. ... Understand how local systems and structures ... are supposed to function and how they really function.”<sup>198</sup>), flexibility (“Never forget that what works in an area today

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<sup>192</sup> Ibid.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid.

<sup>194</sup> David H. Petraeus, “Multi-National Force-Iraq Commander’s Counterinsurgency Guidance”, in *Military Review* (September–October 2008), p. 4, Bullet point no. 22.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid, p. 4 Bullet point no. 17.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid, p. 4, Bullet point no. 19.

<sup>197</sup> Ibid, p. 2, Bullet point no. 2.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid, p. 3, Bullet point no. 14.



may not work there tomorrow, and that what works in one area may not work in another.<sup>199</sup>) and risk (“Develop concepts ... in anticipation of possible opportunities, and be prepared to take risk as necessary to take advantage of them.”<sup>200</sup>) to name but a few.

Thomas E. Ricks, whose studies of the US effort in Iraq are presented in two compelling books ‘Fiasco’ (covering the period 2003-2005) and the latterly named ‘The Gamble’ (covering the years 2006-2008), attributes much credit for the success in Iraq after 2006 to Petraeus and his embracing attitude towards difference and critical thinking, and consequently, to his strategy (for ‘winning the civilian population’).<sup>201</sup>

Since early 2007 a new military order has directed American strategy. Some top U.S. officials now in Iraq actually opposed the 2003 invasion, and almost all are severely critical of how the war was fought from then through 2006. At the core of the story is General David Petraeus, a military intellectual who has gathered around him an unprecedented number of officers with both combat experience and Ph.D.s. Underscoring his new and unorthodox approach, three of his key advisers are quirky foreigners—an Australian infantryman-turned-anthropologist, an antimilitary British woman who is an expert in the Middle East, and a Mennonite-educated Palestinian pacifist.<sup>202</sup>

## Chapter Summary

In this chapter I have traced the literature for signs and characteristics of the idea of a postmodern military. The purpose has been to display the origin and condition of what might be seen as the discourse on the military and the postmodern, so as to situate my own work within this framework. As such, this chapter works as a kind of “literature review”, however, it should be restated that it was not meant to be an all-inclusive review of the literature on the military and the postmodern. Rather, it should be seen as an abstract of my own reading on the subject, thus, in an analytic structuralist perspective it became rather eclectic. Conversely, this in itself reflects a postmodern diverse and plural approach to gaining knowledge.

That said, the chapter shows a relatively substantial amount of articles, papers, manuscripts, studies, doctrines and other writings dealing with numerous different topics on many levels, which could be said to either support or oppose the idea of a postmodern military. Bondy

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<sup>199</sup> Ibid, p. 3, Bullet point no. 14.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid, p. 4, Bullet point no. 24.

<sup>201</sup> Thomas E. Ricks, *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2006); Thomas E. Ricks, *The Gamble: General David Petraeus and the American Military Adventure in Iraq, 2006–2008* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2009).

<sup>202</sup> Ibid, p. Front flap of book cover.

argued that these could be divided into two schools. The first comprising those who looked for the characteristics so as to deliberate or sketch out typologies such as the modern versus postmodern military. The other group constituted those who tried to apply the idea of the postmodern onto the military. They showed themselves to be less uniformed than the first group but covering a wider range of topics.

In sum, I have shown that there is valid opposition fielded against the idea of a postmodern military. Based on my reading, the opposition is seen foremost in relation to the gap between the political and doctrinal urge for developing armed forces and soldiers that are intuitive, flexible, diverse and adaptable, and the traditional military culture of embracing authoritarian leadership and obedience. However, I believe that traces of the idea of an emerging postmodern military are substantial, covering topics such as civil-military diffusion of values, knowledge and skills, ways of waging war on the operational level and military culture itself. Moreover, my impression is that these traces are of such crucial dimension that they cannot be overlooked.

Thus, what remains is to expand upon the consequences of the transition from a modern to a postmodern worldview/military relating to the specific research questions raised in this thesis.

## Chapter 3: Postmodernization – The Theoretical Framework

As shown in chapter 1, since the end of the Cold War period NATO armed forces have gone through a significant and substantial change. In fact, the transformational changes have been of such magnitude that many have spoken of a new *Revolution in Military Affairs* (RMA).<sup>203</sup> Accordingly, there is a widespread understanding within the armed forces community that *The Military Transformation* represents a *paradigmatic* shift when it comes to the use and training of military forces. For instance, Christopher Flaherty argues, with a strong reference to the reformation of US defense strategy laid out in the *US Quadrennial Defense Review Report* of 2001,<sup>204</sup> that there has been a paradigmatic shift within military affairs from a threat-based ‘Classical Paradigm’ to a capabilities-based ‘Transformation Paradigm.’<sup>205</sup> Another advocate of such a view is Sir Rupert Smith who claims that “[i]t is now time to recognize that a paradigm shift in war has undoubtedly occurred [...] The old paradigm was that of interstate industrial war. The new one is the paradigm of war amongst the people.”<sup>206</sup> Mary Kaldor, though careful with the use of the word paradigm, argues that she “share[s] the view that there has been a revolution in military affairs, but it is a revolution in the social relations of warfare, not in technology.”<sup>207</sup> Thus, she argues that “during the [sic.] last decades of the twentieth century, a new type of organized violence developed.”<sup>208</sup> Her understanding is clearly that “the ‘new war’ argument does reflect a new reality.”<sup>209</sup> In turn this led to distinguish between what can be understood as the paradigm of that which she calls New and Old wars. And as earlier mentioned the former Norwegian Chief of Defense, General Sverre Diesen, also maintained that the transformation is of such a magnitude that we are talking of a shift in paradigm. Diesen characterized the

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<sup>203</sup> See for example David Jablonsky, *The Owl of Minerva Flies at Night: Doctrinal Change and Continuity and the Revolution in Military Affairs*, (Carlisle Barracks, PA: US Army War College, 1994); Elliot Cohen, “A Revolution in Warfare,” *Foreign Affairs*, Mar/Apr 1996, 75, 2; Fredrik W. Kagan, *Finding the Target: The Transformation of American Military Policy* (New York: Encounter Books, 2006); Max Boot, *War Made New: Technology, Warfare, and the Course of History, 1500 to Today* (New York: Gotham Books, 2006); Thomas L. McNaugher, “The real Meaning of Military Transformation,” *Foreign Affairs*, Jan/Feb 2007, vol. 86, Issue no. 1, pp. 140-147.

<sup>204</sup> United States Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report*. September 30, 2001. Page downloaded June 4th 2012 (<http://www.defense.gov/pubs/qdr2001.pdf>).

<sup>205</sup> Flaherty, “The Relevance of the US Transformation Paradigm for Australian Defence Forces”.

<sup>206</sup> Smith, *The Utility of Force; The Art of War in the Modern World*, p. 5.

<sup>207</sup> Kaldor, *New & Old Wars*, p. 4.

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid*, p. 1.

<sup>209</sup> *Ibid*.

transformation by calling it “a shift from a small militia-based defense to a partly professionalized defense force.”<sup>210</sup>

However, there are voices within the military discourse who argue that military transformation could also be seen as an *evolutionary* process, in which the military organization adapts over time to changes in the world order. An advocate for such a view is Max Boot, who argues that “[h]istory indicates that the wisest course is to feel one’s way along with careful study, radical experimentation, and freewheeling war games. Thus, paradoxically, revolutionary transformations often can be achieved in evolutionary increments.”<sup>211</sup> Another prominent scholar within the military discourse who has outlined the evolutionary, reciprocal relationship between the military and larger-scale social changes within the broader society is Moskos.<sup>212</sup> He holds that over the last 100 years changes to military organizations have gone through three distinctive eras: starting with the modern (pre-Cold War) era of 1900-1945, with its focus on enemy invasion, mass army conscription and defense of the homeland; via the late modern (Cold War) era of 1945-1990, with nuclear threat, the building of a large professional army and support of the NATO alliance; to a postmodern (post-Cold War) era since 1990 where threat is perceived to be sub-national (e.g. ethnic violence and terrorism), our own force structure is a small professional army, and the military missions are seen as post-war conflicts (e.g. peacekeeping, humanitarian).<sup>213</sup>

In sum, there are good, valid arguments for understanding *The Military Transformation* as being a fundamental and revolutionary shift in military conduct from conscription, mass-army and homeland defense, towards professionalism, elitism and an expeditionary mindset;

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<sup>210</sup> Diesen, “Mot et allianseintegrert forsvar” [“Towards an alliance-integrated defense force”].

<sup>211</sup> Boot, *War Made New*, p. 467.

<sup>212</sup> Moskos does not use the term ‘evolution’ in describing the organizational changes witnessed over the last hundred years; this is my understanding of his developmental construct.

<sup>213</sup> Moskos, “Toward a Postmodern Military: The United States”, Chapter 2, pp. 14-31. In outlining his typology, Moskos himself uses eleven dimensions that he calls *Forces Variable*. These are: Perceived Threat (which changes from; enemy invasion in the Modern era (M), via nuclear war in the Late Modern era (LM) towards sub-national conflicts in the Postmodern era (PM)); Force Structure (from mass army, conscription (M), via large professional army (LM), towards small professional army (PM)); Major Mission Definition (from defense of homeland (M), via support of alliance (LM), towards new missions, e.g. peacekeeping and humanitarian (PM)); Dominant Military Professional (from combat leader (M), via manager or technician (LM), towards soldier-statesman, soldier-scholar (PM)); Public Attitude toward Military (from supportive (M), via ambivalent (LM), towards indifferent (PM)); Media Relations (from incorporated (M), via manipulated (LM), towards courted (PM)); Civilian Employees (from minor component (M), via medium component (LM), towards major component (PM)); Women’s Role (from separate corps or excluded (M), via partial integration (LM), towards full integration (PM)); Spouse and Military (from integral part (M), via partial involvement (LM), towards removed (PM)); Homosexuals in Military (from punished (M), via discharged (LM) towards accepted (PM)); Conscientious Objection (from limited or prohibited (M), via routinely permitted (LM), towards subsumed under civilian service (PM)).

and at the same time, as an adaptation to the evolutionary changes we have seen in Western society over the last couple of decades, namely as a change from *modernity*, with its weight on universalism, structure and objectivity, towards *postmodernity* and its responsiveness to constructivism, complexity and contextuality.

Either way, the change *from a modern towards a postmodern society* seems to be a conceptual framework relevant for understanding *The Military Transformation* (with a capital T) currently taking place in Western armed forces. Although I have only focused on the changes seen in NATO, it should be mentioned that the same changes have been witnessed throughout those we think of as Western democratic countries.<sup>214</sup> In this sense, the military transformation of NATO and its member nations should perhaps be understood more as a *postmodernization* process as opposed to a modernization project.

## **From a Modern towards a Postmodern [Military] Worldview**

So far in this thesis I have portrayed the military transformation as being a qualitative change which is moving away from those fundamentals that we see as constituting the modern, and conversely, is advocating a turn towards the idea of a postmodern military. Still as yet, I have barely addressed the meaning of that which we perceive as either the modern or postmodern; and I have therefore touched only indirectly upon the implications this understanding will evoke. Thus, this chapter will open with a presentation of my understanding of the modern and postmodern view, so as to lay out a basis for the following inquiry into the implications that such a move will have on the ontological and epistemological foundation of skill-acquisition.

### **The Modern View**

Modernity stems from the Age of Enlightenment, for which the principle idea was that through science, technology and rationality man was to become the master over nature; “L’homme est maître et possesseur de la nature” as René Descartes (1596–1650), one of the great thinkers of this era, described it.<sup>215</sup> As such, the meaning of the term enlightenment is closely connected with the critique and, thus, the emancipation of (the medieval) traditional explanations of “truth” founded in various aspects of religious belief as “superstition,

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<sup>214</sup> Moskos, et al. (eds.), *The Postmodern Military*.

<sup>215</sup> René Descartes, *A Discourse on the Method*. A new translation by Ian Maclean. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), part 6.

enthusiasm, fanaticism and supernaturalism.”<sup>216</sup> Consequently, enlightenment could be seen as a secularization process that gave way for new ideals of humanism. For example, Immanuel Kant (1724–1804), another prominent figure of the age, defines enlightenment as humankind's release from its self-incurred immaturity: “immaturity is the inability to use one's own understanding without the guidance of another.”<sup>217</sup>

From enlightenment grew *Modernity* as a worldview and *Modernism* as a movement “[g]enerally perceived as [being] positivistic, technocratic, rationalistic, [and] universal”<sup>218</sup> and recognized through “the belief in linear progress, absolute truths, the rational planning of ideal social orders, and the standardization of knowledge and production.”<sup>219</sup> Harvey argues that “the modern artist had a creative role to play in defining the essence of humanity,”<sup>220</sup> because “[t]he successful modern artist was one who could find the universal and the eternal.”<sup>221</sup> On the project of modernity he states, with support in Habermas, that it “amounted to an extraordinary intellectual effort on the part of enlightenment thinkers ‘to develop objective science, universal morality and law, and autonomous art according to their inner logic.’”<sup>222</sup>

According to Descartes, the investigator in foundational philosophical research ought to doubt all propositions that can be doubted. The investigator determines whether a proposition is dubitable by attempting to construct a possible scenario under which it is false. In the domain of fundamental scientific (philosophical) research, no other authority but one's own conviction is to be trusted, and not one's own conviction either, until it is subjected to rigorous skeptical questioning.<sup>223</sup>

Thus, we can assert that with reason (logos) – rather than morals (ethos) or feelings (pathos) – being the epistemological foundation for truth, universalism (as an ethical perspective that emphasizes the well-being of humanity and the general, above that of concern for the individual man), structure (as an organizational, systematical and standardized approach

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<sup>216</sup> William Bristow, "Enlightenment", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2011 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2011/entries/enlightenment/>. Page accessed June 5th 2012.

<sup>217</sup> William Bristow, "Enlightenment", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2011 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2011/entries/enlightenment/>. Page accessed June 5th 2012.

<sup>218</sup> Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity*, p. 9. Harvey quotes the editors of the architectural journal *PRECIS* 6 (1987, 7-24).

<sup>219</sup> Ibid.

<sup>220</sup> Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity*, p. 19.

<sup>221</sup> Ibid, p. 20.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid, p. 12.

<sup>223</sup> Bristow, "Enlightenment".

towards progress), and objectivity (as an independent and impartial standard for science/conduct) become core features within the grand narrative of modernity.

Consequently, on an epistemological level, Enlightenment brought about a scientific revolution "in which the criterion of the truth is not sensory but intellectual and deductive."<sup>224</sup> Within philosophy/science this paved the way for an epistemological position that is labeled rationalism (from the Latin word *ratio* meaning reason). Rationalists argue that there is a limited set of foundational (and universal) axioms, which logically result in all else that could be called true knowledge.<sup>225</sup> A classic example is Descartes dictum: *I think, therefore I am (cogito ergo sum)*, which he uses as a universal foundation for deducing new insight about the world – including that about God and the physical world. Thus, rationalism is predicting and explaining (behavior/sensor experience) based on logic.

Whereas the founding fathers of rationalism logically justified their beliefs from a “top-down” approach (with the axioms being taken as undisputed truths), the critical rationalists of the twentieth century argued that the “axioms” could not themselves be taken as absolute, rather they should be seen as hypothetical beliefs from which one deduces consequences, which in turn are rigorously tested against our experience. Thus, we could say they took a “bottom-up” approach.<sup>226</sup> Methodologically this became the foundation for *hypothetic-deductive method* within science, which aims at epistemological progress by going through a logical and systematically structured process of deduction to either verify or falsify the raised hypothesis (e.g. by using *modus ponendo ponens* and *modus tollendo tollens* arguments<sup>227</sup>). Hempel’s work on the “Covering-law model”,<sup>228</sup> and Popper’s theory on empirical falsification are two good examples that communicate the scientific mode of explanation within the critical rationalism perspective.<sup>229</sup>

... the fate of a theory, its acceptance or rejection, is decided by observation and experiment  
– by the result of tests. So long as a theory stands up to the severest tests we can design, it is

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<sup>224</sup> Vernon J. Bourke, "Rationalism", p. 263 in Dagobert D. Runes (ed.), *Dictionary of Philosophy* (Totowa, NJ: Littlefield, Adams, and Company, 1962).

<sup>225</sup> Filosofileksikon, "Rasjonalisme" ["Rationalism"], (Oslo: Zafari Forlag, 1996) pp. 462-463.

<sup>226</sup> Dagfinn Føllesdal, Lars Walløe and Jon Elster, *Argumentasjonsteori, språk og vitenskapsfilosofi [Theory of Argumentation, Language and Philosophy of Science]* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1997), p. 47.

<sup>227</sup> Filosofileksikon, pp. 383-384. *Modus ponendo ponens* is a valid argument of the type; If p (the premise) implies q (the consequent), and p is true, then it can logically be concluded that q is true (If p, then q, p therefore q). *Modus tollendo tollens* is a valid argument of the type; If p implies q, and q is false, then it can logically be concluded that p must be false (If p then q, not q, therefore not p).

<sup>228</sup> Carl Gustav Hempel, "Explanation in Science and History," in R.C. Colodny (ed.) *Frontiers of Science and Philosophy*, (Pittsburgh: The University of Pittsburgh Press, 1962), pp. 9-19.

<sup>229</sup> Karl R. Popper, "Science: Conjectures and Refutations", in Karl R. Popper *Conjectures and Refutations: The Growth of Scientific Knowledge* (London & New York: Routledge Classics, 2002) pp. 43-77.

accepted; if it does not, it is rejected. But it is never inferred, in any sense, from the empirical evidence. There is neither a psychological nor a logical induction. Only the falsity of the theory can be inferred from empirical evidence, and this inference is a purely deductive one.<sup>230</sup>

Consequently, knowledge derived from a rationalist perspective is understood as being objective.

Accordingly, within modernity true knowledge is understood to be of a universal, structured and objective character that could be applied by all. As such, knowledge was to serve as means of utility in society's strive for progress – as in *modernization*. The industrial revolution, with its attention on hierarchical bureaucracies, standardization, economic efficiency and the mass market as means of seeking control over the production line (and thus labor productivity), is perhaps the clearest feature of this era. Whilst *Weberian bureaucracy*, with its focus on administrative hierarchical structures that are governed by rules and written documents,<sup>231</sup> *Taylorism* with its emphasis on human efficiency and incentive systems,<sup>232</sup> and *Fordism's* reduction of the human personality to the strict criteria of technical rationality,<sup>233</sup> are three strong examples of how the principles of modernity have been more or less scientifically systematized or structured into everyday human work practice.

Consequently, we can assert that in enlightenment's strive for control over nature, the ideal or 'grand narratives' of modernity are focused around universalism, structure and objectivity. This in turn leads to a concept of uniformity where the desired identity is to become alike, adapt to the norm, and therefore be as the rest – but preferably a better version of the norm.

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<sup>230</sup> Ibid, p. 72.

<sup>231</sup> Weberian bureaucracy, named after Max Weber. "Weber essentially argues that bureaucracy constitutes the most efficient and (formally) rational way in which human activity can be organized, and that it is indispensable to the modern world." (Richard Swedberg, *The Max Weber Dictionary: Key Words and Central Concepts* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005) pp. 18-21.) (Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*. Translated by A.M. Henderson and Talcott Parsons (London: Collier Macmillan Publishers, 1947).)

<sup>232</sup> Taylorism, named after the mechanical engineer Fredrick Winslow Taylor, was one of the first management theories that tried to employ science to management. Consequently, it has been seen as synonymous with Scientific Management. Taylor's main goal was to improve economic efficiency, especially through labor productivity (Taylor, Frederick Winslow, *Shop Management*, (New York, NY, USA: American Society of Mechanical Engineers, 1903); Taylor, Frederick Winslow, *The Principles of Scientific Management*, (New York, NY, USA and London, UK: Harper & Brothers, 1911)).

<sup>233</sup> Fordism is "a model of economic expansion and technological progress based on mass production: the manufacture of standardized products in huge volumes using special purpose machinery and unskilled labour" (Tolliday, Steven & Zeitlin, Jonathan. *The Automobile Industry and its Workers: Between Fordism and Flexibility*, (New York: St.Martin's Press, 1987) pp. 1-2.).



## The Postmodern View

Talking about the concept of *Postmodernity* is a rather challenging and almost self-contradictory task. Or as Usher and Edwards put it:

... the term 'postmodernism' notwithstanding, is not really a 'system' of ideas and concepts in any conventional sense. Rather it is complex and multiform and resists reductive and simplistic explanation and explication.<sup>234</sup>

However, the term itself points towards an understanding of that which comes after modernity, or as Featherstone puts it: "If 'the modern' and 'the postmodern' are generic terms it is immediately apparent that the prefix 'post' signifies that which comes after, a break or rupture with the modern which is defined in counterdistinction to it."<sup>235</sup> Thus, the postmodern, can be seen as a 'revolutionary' break with the existing *paradigm* of modernity. When we think of change in a revolutionary perspective, change is commonly understood to be a fundamental change that takes place in a relatively short time span. In relation to the concept of a 'worldview' the concept of revolution is perhaps most commonly connected with change in socio-political institutions, such as the dethroning of kingdoms or overthrowing of governments. Hence, a revolution signals a sort of abrupt change in a social order. But the term and concept is also used in other fields, like the sciences. An apt example is the *Kuhnian paradigm shift*, which is the scientific labeling of fundamental change to basic assumptions within a dominant theory of science.<sup>236</sup> Kuhn's point was that a paradigm shift, or a "scientific revolution" occurs when we encounter anomalies that cannot be explained by already accepted beliefs/understandings (paradigms). An important aspect here is that, in his view, the paradigm is not equal to a theory, but rather is constituted of the total worldview in which it exists, together with all of the implications that follow. Hence, those who support the notion of the postmodern being a paradigmatic break from the modern, argue that there is a qualitative difference between the two paradigms "and that this break is the condition of a new and distinct 'social totality'".<sup>237</sup>

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<sup>234</sup> Usher and Edwards, *Postmodernism and Education*, p. 1.

<sup>235</sup> Mike Featherstone, *Consumer Culture and Postmodernism*, (London: Sage Publications, 2007) p. 3.

<sup>236</sup> Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996). Kuhn uses the term 'Normal Science' as to describe the research firmly based upon the scientific achievements that is recognized within a given scientific community as the prevailing worldview or paradigm.

<sup>237</sup> Usher and Edwards, *Postmodernism and Education*, pp. 8-9. Among those who see it as a paradigmatic break are: Featherstone, *Consumer Culture and Postmodernism*; Jean Baudrillard, *Symbolic Exchange and Death* (London, UK: Sage Publications, 1993); Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*. Translation from the French by Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984).

Consequently, to speak of postmodernity is to suggest an epochal shift or break from modernity involving the emergence of a new social totality with its own distinct organizing principles.<sup>238</sup>

Both Baudrillard and Lyotard, for instance, talk of the postmodern as a break from industrialized modernity towards a post-industrialized society. “Baudrillard stresses that new forms of technology and information become central to the shift from a productive to a reproductive social order in which simulations and models increasingly constitute the world so that the distinction between the real and appearance becomes erased.”<sup>239</sup> Lyotard, on the other hand, grapples with “the effects of the ‘computerization of society’ on knowledge and he argues that the loss of meaning in postmodernity should not be mourned, as it points to a replacement of narrative knowledge by a plurality of language games, and universalism by localism.”<sup>240</sup> So, in a sense, both Baudrillard and Lyotard point towards a configurative plurality grounded in the local and/or contextual as the ‘distinct organizing principles’ for a postmodern worldview. Accordingly, the postmodern break with the modern belief in a universalistic epistemology is replaced with a personal and contextualized involvement in defining the “truth”. Correspondingly, Lyotard argues that the works of the postmodern artist or writer “are not in principle governed by preestablished rules, and they cannot be judged according to a determining judgment, by applying familiar categories to the text or to the work. Those rules and categories are what the work of art itself is looking for. The artist and the writer, then, are working without rules in order to formulate the rules of what *will have been done*.”<sup>241</sup> Consequently, Lyotard concludes that the “*Post modern* would have to be understood according to the paradox of the future (*post*) anterior (*modo*).”<sup>242</sup>

Others, however, argue that postmodernity can and should be understood as the result of a more “evolutionary” process emerging from, or, as a continuation of modernity.<sup>243</sup> When applying an ‘evolutionary’ perspective to change, change is understood in terms of an open-ended process where continuous adaptation to changes in the environment one lives in is of existential importance. Evolutionary theory is foremost associated with biological evolution,

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<sup>238</sup> Featherstone, *Consumer Culture and Postmodernism*, p. 3.

<sup>239</sup> *Ibid*, p. 3. Featherstone’s interpretation of Jean Baudrillard, *Simulations* (New York; Semiotext(e), 1983),

<sup>240</sup> Featherstone, *Consumer Culture and Postmodernism*, p. 3. Featherstone’s interpretation of Lyotard, 1984.

<sup>241</sup> Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*, p. 81. Italics in original.

<sup>242</sup> *Ibid*, p. 81. Italics in original.

<sup>243</sup> F. Jameson, “Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism”, *New Left Review* 146:53-93; Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity*; Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (Stanford University Press, 1991); Zygmunt Bauman, *Liquid Modernity* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2000).

Darwin's work 'on the origin of species' and the illustrious slogan 'survival of the fittest'.<sup>244</sup> Stephen Hicks, Professor of Philosophy, in a lecture on Philosophy of Education and Pragmatism gives a condensed and simplified, but rather apt description of biological evolution:

What we know from biological evolution is that species are not fixed, species are subject to change, species live in an environment that in itself is subject to dramatic changes, as a consequence so does species that are not able to adapt to environmental changes, those ones die out and go extinct, those who are able to adapt sufficiently to the new environment will stay in existence, but then over time they themselves will change their features in order to maintain, keep in tune, rather, with the change in environment.<sup>245</sup>

Evolutionary theory or understanding is not, however, exclusive to biology or other nature sciences for that matter. Rather, it is picked up and applied within both the humanities and social sciences. For instance, Pragmatists want us to see the whole of the universe as a subject of an evolutionary process, where some things come into existence and others go out of existence. Thus, the principal point within evolutionary thinking is that one sees the world not as being fixed, rather it is subject to continuous change. Consequently, the environment in which life exists is constantly changing, and those who adapt survive and those who don't become extinct.

Giddens' version of a developed, radicalized 'late' or 'high' modernity,<sup>246</sup> and Bauman's description of a constantly reshaped, flowing, 'liquid' modernity,<sup>247</sup> can be seen as illustrative narratives of such a view. Consequently, postmodernity could/should be better seen as a different side of modernity, rather than as something other to modernity.

I also conclude that there is much more continuity than difference between the broad history of modernism and the movement called postmodernism. It seems more sensible to me to see the latter as a particular kind of crisis within the former, ...<sup>248</sup>

A different view is based on the notion of 'periodization' itself being a modernist perspective.<sup>249</sup> Thus, there are those like Lyotard and Foucault, who do not argue the change

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<sup>244</sup> Charles Darwin, *On The Origin of Species By Means of Natural Selection or the Preservation of favoured Races in the Struggle for Life* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1869).

<sup>245</sup> Stephen Hicks, *Philosophy of Education*, Part 9: Pragmatism, Section 3, Pragmatic Philosophy (III), Evolution, Skepticism, and Democracy. Lecture downloaded from YouTube June 13th 2012, (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dFRbaAYJ8vo&feature=related>)

<sup>246</sup> Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity*.

<sup>247</sup> Bauman, *Liquid Modernity*.

<sup>248</sup> Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity* p. 116.

<sup>249</sup> Couzens Hoy, D. (ed.) 'Foucault: Modern or Postmodern', in J. Arac (ed.), *After Foucault: Humanistic Knowledge, Postmodern Challenges*, (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1988); Lyotard, 1986-7:209 in Featherstone, *Consumer Culture and Postmodernism*, pp. 3-4.

from modernity to postmodernity in terms of epochal or periodic changes.<sup>250</sup> Instead they see them as oppositional attitudes that can be and are indeed constantly present in any epoch or period. In this sense it is more meaningful to talk about a postmodern *moment* or *mode* than a postmodern *era*.

... “postmodern” is probably a very bad term because it conveys the idea of a historical “periodization”. “Periodizing”, however, is still a “classic” or “modern” ideal. “Postmodern” simply indicates a mood, or better a state of mind.<sup>251</sup>

Nevertheless, a common and somewhat core theme within postmodern ventures/perspectives sees the commonly accepted ‘truths’ of modernity as the condition from which to seek emancipation. Accordingly, it is the ‘grand narratives’ (e.g. the universal truth based on technical rationalism) of modernity that are deconstructed in an effort to reconstruct/create a new (not better or higher, but another or different) set of personal and local situated meanings.

So, we are left with a concept of postmodernity that cannot be defined through a narrow description of its uniformed characteristics, rather, it seems to carry the distinction of a position that by virtue is ‘different’ from the traditional ones.<sup>252</sup> This idea aligns with Løvlie who argues for the use of postmodernism as an index term for “a different position which in fact makes difference itself its point of view”.<sup>253</sup> Or as Usher and Edwards, inspired by Couzens Hoy, describe it: “In postmodernity, it is complexity, a myriad of meanings, rather than profundity, the one deep meaning, which is the norm.”<sup>254</sup>

Postmodernity, then describes a world where people have to make their way without fixed referents and traditional anchoring points. It is a world of rapid change, of bewildering instability, where knowledge is constantly changing and meaning ‘floats’ without its traditional teleological fixing in foundational knowledge and the belief in inevitable human progress.<sup>255</sup>

This leads to an understanding of the postmodern view that is responsive to contextualism, complexity and constructivism.

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<sup>250</sup> Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*; M. Foucault, ‘What is Enlightenment?’ in P. Rabinow (ed.) *The Foucault Reader*, (Harmondsworth: Peregrine Books, 1986).

<sup>251</sup> Lyotard, 1986-7:209 in Featherstone, *Consumer Culture and Postmodernism*, pp. 3-4.

<sup>252</sup> Usher and Edwards, *Postmodernism and Education*, p. 7.

<sup>253</sup> Lars Løvlie, ‘Postmodernism and Subjectivity’ in Steinar Kvale (ed.) *Psychology and Postmodernism*, (London: Sage Publications, 1992), p. 120; in Usher and Edwards, *Postmodernism and Education*, p. 7.

<sup>254</sup> Usher and Edwards, *Postmodernism and Education*, p. 10. (Inspired by: Couzens Hoy, D. (ed.) ‘Foucault: Modern or Postmodern’, in J. Arac (ed.), *After Foucault: Humanistic Knowledge, Postmodern Challenges*, (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1988)).

<sup>255</sup> Usher and Edwards, *Postmodernism and Education*, p. 10.

In conclusion, there seems to be substantial argument that a shift from a modern towards a postmodern worldview, if understood, accepted and implemented, will impact significantly on an ontological and epistemological level of (any/all) human conduct. Moreover, it also seems evident that when in times of transformation from one towards the other, such a change should have equal impact on how we perceive the understanding and acquisition of new skills.

Thus, if we accept that *The Military Transformation* (presented as a shift from large static invasion defense-based armed forces towards small flexible expeditionary defense-based armed forces) represents a shift from the modern towards the postmodern (in carrying out military skills), then, there ought to be some fundamental implications to the ontological and epistemological foundations of how we perceive military skill-acquisition in times of (and as a consequence of) transformation. Consequently, what follows is an attempt to make visible how the implications of the transformation, in light of a modern and postmodern view, will alter our foundational understanding and conception of military skill-acquisition. I will do this by debating identity, skill and learning as three relevant features of skill-acquisition in relation to a modern and postmodern view.

## **Identity, Skill & Learning in Light of a Move from the Modern towards the Postmodern**

In addressing the ontological and epistemological level of change in relation to (military) skill-acquisition, three aspects seem to emerge as especially relevant features to investigate more closely; namely *identity* (as change in the being of a soldier), *skill* (as change in military conduct/soldiering) and *learning* (as change in how to become a soldier).

I believe that an inquiry into the three named aspects and their relation to the modern-postmodern dichotomy will provide relevant insight for the three simple, yet foundational, questions that have emerged from my main field of interest *on developing (post)modern soldiers*: How do we understand (military) skill? What is it to be (militarily) skilled? And how do we acquire (military) skill?

### **(Post)modern Identity – From Dualism towards Holism**

The understanding of the soldier as a human body is of great interest to the conceptual intention of the military transformation, since it is the individual [the soldier] who is to bring the transformation to life through his/her military (bodily) conduct within the military

community of practice of which he/she is a member. In a sense, the soldiers and their units are literally tasked with embodying the State's willingness to use force when necessary. Thus, within the context of this thesis, bringing to life the will of the State must be understood as embodying the State's intentions in (post)modernizing the armed forces. Within this framework, the 'embodiment' (of the (post)modern identity) must therefore be understood as the knowledge, skills and values instilled in the soldier in the form of attitudes and character traits, which are expressed as human (soldier) actions that reflect this new ideal of soldiering.

The interesting question in this context is thus whether the transition from an invasion defense force, with its focus on mass learning, to a flexible expeditionary force that endorses professionalism and expertise, promotes a new soldier ethos. My thesis is that not only is this the case, but that these changes are so fundamental in nature that if the (post)modernization of the armed forces (including the NoAF) is to be successful, a shift in the current view of the (military) human body is required. Thus, my concern at this point is to link the transformation debate to a selected view of the human body, and thereby to a (post)modern soldiering ethos.

A foundational aspect in relation to human identity is the *mind-body* relationship. This is a philosophical discourse that (at least within western philosophy) can be traced back to Plato and Aristotle's "Classic view".<sup>256</sup>

[T]he "classic view," is that the human subject begins, by virtue of his body, as something in the world, as one thing in the midst of others; and that, by virtue of his mind, he has the capacity to raise himself from this status to the status of being identified with the unity of the world itself. But insofar as a man achieves the higher status, he forsakes the lower.<sup>257</sup>

Samuel Todes argues that Plato saw these two states as being in opposition to each other, and that the body, as one part of the human subject, was drawn towards the lower state, whilst the mind, as another part, was drawn towards the higher state "requiring him in general to subdue rather than meet the claims of the body"<sup>258</sup> – mind over body. Consequently, Plato saw the mind-body separation as two entities (of the human subject) belonging to two different worlds.

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<sup>256</sup> Samuel Todes, *Body and World/Samuel Todes; with Introduction by Hubert L. Dreyfus and Piotr Hoffmann*, (Cambridge, MA and London, UK: The MIT Press, 2001).

<sup>257</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>258</sup> *Ibid.*

Furthermore, Todes argues that in comparison to Plato, Aristotle “believes there is less conflict between the demands raised by a man’s mind and those raised by his body.”<sup>259</sup> Thus, unlike Plato, Aristotle advocates a more moderate understanding of rational life, and argues that the relationship between mind and body are mutually adjusted – “neither being wholly subjected to the other.”<sup>260</sup>

In essence, these two paths of understanding have developed into two distinctively and somewhat competing positions within modern philosophy – namely Cartesian dualism and Phenomenological “holism”. In the following section I will describe the different perceptions of the body that emerge from these two views and argue that the former sets the ideal of the modern man, whilst the latter could be said to resonate the perception of the postmodern human being.

### ***Cartesian Dualism – The Modern Belief in Mind over Body***

*Cartesian Dualism*, named after René Descartes its foundational entrepreneur, separates the mental [res cogitans] from the physical [res extensa] and elevates thought as being detached from the body and nature. This is powerfully articulated through the before mentioned dictum: *I think, therefore I am (cogito ergo sum)*. Descartes argued that the body works like a machine: it has the material properties of extension and motion and obeys the laws of physics. By contrast, he described the mind as a non-material entity that lacks extension and motion, thus not obeying the laws of physics. In his view, the rational mind controls the body, although the body may influence the mind when it acts out of passion (in contrast to the rational).

Descartes arrived at this understanding of the human subject through the deduction of what he saw as the notion of *human necessity* on the basis of *cogito* as a foundational and universal axiom.

... I thought I should ... reject as absolutely false anything ... of which I could have the least doubt, in order to see whether anything would be left after this procedure which could be called wholly certain.<sup>261</sup>

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<sup>259</sup> Ibid, p. 12.

<sup>260</sup> Ibid.

<sup>261</sup> Descartes, *Oeuvres de Descartes [Discourse on Method]*, ed. Charles Adams and Paul Tannery (Paris: L. Cerf, 1897-1913) p. 31. In Todes, *Body and World*, p. 297.

Basically, Todes argues that Descartes' deduction of human necessity was an identification of those aspects of human life "which the human subject is unable to dispense with, try as he may, because he needs it even to undertake the act of dispensing with anything."<sup>262</sup>

By the argument of the *cogito* the necessary (indubitable) existence of the human subject was demonstrated by showing that even the human attempt to dispense conceptually with this existence presupposes it.<sup>263</sup>

As a result of his discovery of the human necessity, Descartes defined the human subject as solely a "thinking substance".

I conclude that I was a substance whose whole essence or nature was only to think, and which, to exist, has no need of space nor of any material thing. Thus it follows that this ego, this soul, by which I am what I am, is entirely distinct from the body and easier to know than the latter, and that even if the body were not, the soul would not cease to be all that it now is.<sup>264</sup>

Thus, an important consequence of Cartesian dualism is that within philosophy the human subject ceased to be seen as a thing or substance *in* the world, but rather became a pure thinking entity.

I could imagine that I had no body, and that there was no world nor any place that I occupied, but I could not imagine for a moment that I did not exist.<sup>265</sup>

Accordingly, this perception shapes our everyday understanding of the body in its relation to the characteristics of modernity, such as hierarchy, bureaucracy, reductionism, alienation and instrumentalism. The hierarchical aspect has already been addressed through the lens of Descartes and his mind over body and thought over action rational. The bureaucratic perspective reveals itself in two ways. Firstly as the human body's place in the world(order), and secondly through the imagery of the body as an entity that can be successively divided into smaller and smaller parts. A search on the word 'body' in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* clearly illustrates this point:

**human body**, the physical substance of the human organism, composed of living cells and extracellular materials and organized into tissues, organs, and systems. ... Human beings are, of course, animals—more particularly, members of the order Mammalia in the subphylum Vertebrata of the phylum Chordata. Like all chordates, the human animal has a bilaterally symmetrical body that is characterized at some point during its development by a dorsal

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<sup>262</sup> Ibid, p.13.

<sup>263</sup> Ibid, p.13. Italics in original.

<sup>264</sup> This citation is taken from Todes, *Body and World*, p. 14.

<sup>265</sup> Descartes, *Oeuvres de Descartes [Discourse on Method]*, p. 31. In Todes, *Body and World*, p.15.



supporting rod (the notochord), gill slits in the region of the pharynx, and a hollow dorsal nerve cord. Of these features, the first two are present only during the embryonic stage in the human; the notochord is replaced by the vertebral column, and the pharyngeal gill slits are lost completely. The dorsal nerve cord is the spinal cord in human beings; it remains throughout life.<sup>266</sup>

The bureaucratic perspective runs the risk of fostering a reductionist view where the human body is reduced to mere biology – an organism that can only be “truly” observed through an instrumental device like the microscope. In principle, this in turn alienates the body by detaching it from the self; it becomes something you have or reside in, rather than something you are; and as such, makes it an objective instrument, a tool, for the intellect.

As an object, similar to other objects, the body could be placed within a coordinate system. The object format made it possible to observe the body in relation to quantifiable objectives as mass, form, size, and motion.<sup>267</sup>

Consequently, the objectivized and alienated body is easily associated with the image of a machine. Descartes himself explicitly described it as a machine that was “made by the hands of God”.<sup>268</sup> Therefore, when describing how the body functions it is a rather common approach to illustrate its entities and characteristics as mechanical parts and systems.

The human body is a machine consisting of many different, interconnected machines. Each machine (heart, lungs, intestines, etc.) runs at its own individual speed, but all function in a specific, predetermined relationship to each other. In this sense, the body is analogous to the most complicated man-made machines, such as automobiles, tape recorders, or space capsules, which consist of many separately functioning components that are mechanically linked together, each of which, in itself, is a complete machine.<sup>269</sup>

The point that should be stressed here is the relationship between the dualist view taken on the body and that of nature sciences and causation. The dualist approach, as it is depicted through Cartesian machines, suggest that the body works like “a material system that unfolds purely according to the laws of blind physical causation”<sup>270</sup>, but with the addition

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<sup>266</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/275485/human-body>. Page accessed on October 11th 2012.

<sup>267</sup> Gunn Engelsrud, *Hva er KROPP [What is BODY]* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 2006), p. 23. (My translation)

<sup>268</sup> Michael Wheeler, “God’s Machines: Descartes on the Mechanization of Mind,” Draft of chapter that appears in Husbands, P., Holland, O. and Wheeler, M., (eds.) *The Mechanical Mind in History*, (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2008), pp. 307-330.

[https://dspace.stir.ac.uk/bitstream/1893/657/1/wheeler\\_gods\\_machines\\_STORRE.pdf](https://dspace.stir.ac.uk/bitstream/1893/657/1/wheeler_gods_machines_STORRE.pdf). Page accessed on October 11th 2012.

<sup>269</sup> *The Body As Machine or Why We Are Affected By Vibrational Influences* (The Anstendig Institute, 1982). <http://www.anstendig.org/BodyAsMachine.html>. Page accessed on October 11th 2012.

<sup>270</sup> Wheeler, “God’s Machines: Descartes on the Mechanization of Mind”.

that “certain norms and incorrect functioning apply.”<sup>271</sup> As such, Wheeler argues that the “Cartesian machines, including all bodily machines, are explicable as norm-governed systems.”<sup>272</sup>

The concept of the objective and instrumental body being submissive to norm-governed systems is a notion that has been of great interest to sociologists. Among many topics, they connect the relationship between identity and the objective body to the likes of collectivism (as in shaping the body as means of constructing collective identities),<sup>273</sup> self-control (as in the struggle to achieve control over one’s own body by introversion, self-restraint and self-repression),<sup>274</sup> discipline (as in social control through punishment to the body),<sup>275</sup> and domination (as it is depicted through, for instance, hegemonic masculinity).<sup>276</sup> A quote from the Israeli sociologist Orna Sasson-Levy works well as a representation of these perspectives.

As one of the main mechanisms of discipline, punishment is often inflicted directly on the body, through recurring “stretcher hikes,” carrying heavy loads, crawling on thorns, doing dozens of push-ups or hundreds of sit-ups, and more. Physical punishment inscribes on the soldier’s body the fear of military discipline and the dread of authority, until he internalizes military principles and they become a part of who he is.<sup>277</sup>

In summary, we can assert that Cartesian dualism as a marker of human identity emphasizes intellect as the essence of being human, and thus, in some sense “dehumanizes” the body as being an object or instrument of human intellect. Moreover, what follows from its rationale is that human conduct in general and bodily skills are epistemologically a consequence of norm-governed systems.

### ***Phenomenological “Holism” – The Postmodern Living-Bodies-in-the-World***

The phenomenological view of the body is often described with reference to the French philosopher and existentialist Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908-1961,) whose foundational thesis is that the body is our means of accessing the world and that human beings must be

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<sup>271</sup> Ibid.

<sup>272</sup> Ibid.

<sup>273</sup> M. Furman, “Army and War: Collective Narratives of Early Childhood in Contemporary Israel.” In E. Lomski-Feder and Eyal Ben-Ari (eds.), *The Military and Militarism in Israel Society* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1999), pp. 141-169.

<sup>274</sup> Orna Sasson-Levy, “Individual Bodies, Collective State Interests: The Case of Israeli Combat Soldiers”, *Men and Masculinities* 10, (2008), pp. 296-321, p. 304.

<sup>275</sup> Michel Foucault, *Discipline and punishment: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage, 1975), p. 138.

<sup>276</sup> Raewyn W. Connell, *Gender and Power: Society, the Person and Sexual Politics* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1987).

<sup>277</sup> Sasson-Levy, “Individual Bodies, Collective State Interests”, p. 304.

seen as *living-bodies-in-the-world*.<sup>278</sup> In this context, the concept of the “living-body” refers to the (existentialist) perception that life is lived within and through the body, as a whole (human being) that is interwoven into every aspect of the surrounding world. Thus, phenomenology, as described by Merleau-Ponty, tries to put “essence back into existence, and does not expect to arrive at an understanding of man and the world from any starting point other than that of their ‘facticity’.”<sup>279</sup> This is conveyed through the motto of phenomenology as it was declared by its grounding father, Edmund Husserl (1859-1938): *Wir wollen auf die “Sachen selbst” zuruckgehen*. In essence, this signifies a phenomenon as being that which shows itself in itself.<sup>280</sup> For Merleau-Ponty, returning “[t]o things themselves is to return to that world which precedes knowledge.”<sup>281</sup> Thus consequently, he also sees phenomenology as:

[A] philosophy for which the world is always ‘already there’ before reflection begins—as ‘an inalienable presence; and all its efforts are concentrated upon re-achieving a direct and primitive contact with the world, and endowing that contact with a philosophical status. It is the search for a philosophy which shall be a ‘rigorous science’, but it also offers an account of space, time and the world as we ‘live’ them. It tries to give a direct description of our experience as it is, without taking account of its psychological origin and the causal explanations which the scientist, the historian or the sociologist may be able to provide.<sup>282</sup>

As such, the phenomenological position bears distinct criticism from both modern rationalism, in general, and Cartesian dualism, in particular, where the body is merely something that is possessed, a tool to be used when acting. Whereas phenomenological “holism” sees the individual as both an organism and a person, both biology and culture, both body and thought, all in one entity.<sup>283</sup>

An important aspect of Merleau-Ponty’s *living-bodies-in-the-world* is that humans must be viewed as being integrated into a world. It is insufficient to view the body from a purely individual perspective. The body/human is located in the world and its existence is therefore contextual. This means that the individual must be viewed in the context of the world in which he or she lives and, correspondingly, that the world in which the individual lives must

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<sup>278</sup> Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception* (New York: Routledge, 1962).

<sup>279</sup> Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, p. vii.

<sup>280</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962). See also A.J. Steinbock, “Back to the Things Themselves. Introduction.” *Human Studies*, 20, 1997, pp. 127-135

<sup>281</sup> Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, pp. ix-x.

<sup>282</sup> *Ibid.*, p. vii.

<sup>283</sup> Anne B. Leseth, “Hvordan kan vi forstå kropp?” [“How can we understand body?”], in *Kropp, bevegelse og energi i den grunnleggende soldatutdanningen*, ed. Reidar Säfvenbom and Anders McD Sookermany (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 2008), pp. 37-45.

be viewed from the perspective of the individual, which in this case implies a socio-cultural view of the body.

A foundational influence on Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of the body comes from the German philosopher and ontologist Martin Heidegger's (1889-1976) seminal work on *being (and time)*. Heidegger's significant contribution is related to the understanding of what it means 'to exist'. When talking of human existence or being as a human entity, Heidegger uses the term 'Dasein' that literally means *being-there/there-being*. "This entity which each of us is himself [...] we shall denote by the term 'Dasein'".<sup>284</sup> When writing about the mind-body relation, it is, however, relevant to point out, as Wheeler does, that Heidegger's "Dasein is not to be understood as 'the biological human being'. Nor is it to be understood as 'the person'."<sup>285</sup> Rather, as Haugeland argues, it should be seen as "*a way of life shared by the members of some community*".<sup>286</sup> Heidegger describes this as an interactive relationship between a human being and the world.<sup>287</sup> His argument is that humans are not removed from the world, but instead are in the world, and it is precisely by being-in-the-world that they understand it. Tjønneland described Heidegger's view of the world as follows:

Humans are not distanced from the world, but rather are always joined into the world. The world forms part of our manner in the same way that we can talk about the carpenter's world, the philosopher's world, the stamp collector's world, etc. Humans' being in the world is shaped by their understanding and performing activities in integrated contexts of meaning within a time structure in which humans are constantly forming historical syntheses.<sup>288</sup>

Thus, Heidegger understands Dasein as Being-in-the-world.

Being-in is not a 'property' which Dasein sometimes has and sometimes does not have, and *without* which it could just *be* just as well as it could be with it. It is not the case that man 'is' and then has, by way of an extra, a relationship-of-Being towards the 'world'—a world with which he provides himself occasionally. Dasein is never 'proximally' an entity which is, so to speak, free from Being-in, but which sometimes has the inclination to take up a 'relationship' towards the world. Taking up relationships towards the world is possible only

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<sup>284</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 27.

<sup>285</sup> Michael Wheeler, "Martin Heidegger", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2011), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), (<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/heidegger/>). Page accessed January 13, 2013.

<sup>286</sup> John Haugeland, "Reading Brandom Reading Heidegger," *European Journal of Philosophy*, 13:3, December 2005, p. 423.

<sup>287</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time* describes the relationship as a subject-subject, rather than subject-object relationship, in which the individual's surroundings are considered an object.

<sup>288</sup> Eivind Tjønneland, "Martin Heidegger", *Vestens tenkere. Bind III: fra Freud til Baudrillard [The thinkers of the West. Volume III: from Freud to Baudrillard]*, ed. Trond Berg Eriksen (Oslo: H. Aschehoug & Co (W Nygaard), 4 opplag, 1998), pp. 190–209, p. 193 (In Norwegian, author's translation).

*because* Dasein, as Being-in-the-world, is as it is. This state of Being does not arise just because some entity is present-at-hand outside of Dasein and meets up with it. Such an entity can ‘meet up with’ Dasein only in so far as it can, of its own accord, show itself within a world.<sup>289</sup>

Heidegger argues that (in relation to our human practices/conduct) there are two modes of being (in which Dasein relates to entities within the world).<sup>290</sup> The first he calls *Zuhandenheit* (readiness-to-hand). Dreyfus, in his *Commentary on Heidegger’s Being and Time*, calls it availability and describes it as “the way of being of those entities which are defined by their use in the [equipmental] whole”.<sup>291</sup> Thus, this mode relates to entities, for example equipment, by using them. But for them to be ready-to-hand they must be used in such a way that the user does not notice it – as in the sense that the awareness of the user is moved more and more towards the task for which the equipment (in-hand) is used. As such, the equipment becomes embodied in the user, in a way that it is perceived as an increment to their body. Thus, this is the type of being that takes place in-doing as a form of (bodily) absorbed intentionality or coping. When, however, the entity or equipment in question ceases to be useable it becomes *unready-to-hand* – its function within the given world has either been broken or is not yet grasped. The second mode is *Vorhandenheit*, (presence-at-hand). This mode relates to what we know of things within the world, by deliberate thought. For something to be treated as present-at-hand it must be consciously observed as it occurs. Accordingly, Dreyfus terms this mode occurrentness and describes it as “[t]he way of being of objects, understood as isolated, determinate, substances”.<sup>292</sup> Thus it is the mode of cognition, and, as such, it deals with beings by (mindfully) looking at them and describing their properties – hence, it can be characterized as representational intentionality.

With a clear reference to the mind-body relationship, Eriksen argues that Heidegger’s distinction of being in *readiness-to-hand* and *presence-at-hand* can be regarded as similar to the epistemological distinction of *knowing-how* and *knowing-that* identified by Dewey:

We may...be said to know how by means of our habits... We walk and read aloud, we get off and on street cars, we dress and undress, and do a thousand useful acts without thinking of them. We know something, namely, how to do them...If we choose to call [this] knowledge...then other things also called knowledge, knowledge of and about things,

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<sup>289</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 84. Italics in original.

<sup>290</sup> Ibid, chapter III.

<sup>291</sup> Hubert L. Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-world: A Commentary on Heidegger’s Being and Time* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991), p. 63.

<sup>292</sup> Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-world*, p. 40.

knowledge that things are thus and so, knowledge that involves reflection and conscious appreciation, remains of a different sort.<sup>293</sup>

The core feature of the epistemic separation between knowing-that and knowing-how is analogous to the distinction between theoretical knowledge (propositional knowledge of and about things) and practical knowledge (which is tacit, implicit and difficult to verbally communicate). Thus, from an ontological and phenomenological point of view, knowing-how is knowledge that resides in the body as habits and skillful-coping on the basis of ongoing activity, while knowing-that is a kind of procedural type of knowledge that is coupled with the intellect of being.

When dealing with the phenomenology of perception, Merleau-Ponty uses the word habit (*l'habitude*) to describe a kind of *bodily* knowledge. He maintains that it is as *bodies-in-the-world* that human beings are capable of sensing and thereby experiencing their lives.<sup>294</sup> Merleau-Ponty's understanding of the body is not the corporal objective body we are accustomed to when thinking in the dualistic sense of mind and body. Rather, it is the *lived body* or the *body-subject*. Thus, he argues that it is not in thought or in the objective body that we find the home of habits (*l'habitude*), but in the body itself.<sup>295</sup> In his book, he uses an example of someone who is skilled at using a typewriter to demonstrate the epistemological foundation of habits. Merleau-Ponty argues that those who are skillful with typewriters have no knowledge of the place of each letter among all the others on the keyboard, nor have they acquired a conditioned reflex for each one. Instead, Merleau-Ponty says that:

[Habit] is knowledge in the hands, which is forthcoming only when bodily efforts is made, and cannot be formulated in detachment from that effort. The subject knows where the letters are on the typewriter as we know where one of our limbs is, through a knowledge bred of familiarity which does not give us a position in objective space.<sup>296</sup>

This bodily perspective implies that the relationship between knowledge and the specific human being who has the knowledge is of essential importance in understanding skill and who is skilled. Grimen says that practical knowledge is characterized by a way in which

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<sup>293</sup> John Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct: An Introduction to Social Psychology*, (New York: Modern Library, 1922), pp. 177-178.

<sup>294</sup> Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*.

<sup>295</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 167.

<sup>296</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 166. Øyvind Førland Standal (*Relations of meaning. A phenomenologically oriented case study of learning bodies in a rehabilitation context*. Ph.D. dissertation from the Norwegian School of Sport Sciences, 2009) gives an example through an experiment you can do on yourself to in order to see how this is so: "Can you tell which finger you use to press the letter F on the key board of your computer? Most people, who are somewhat proficient at typing, wouldn't. But if they sit down by their keyboard, the finger will find the letter immediately without the intervention of thought."

form and the matter of knowledge cannot be separated from those who have it and from the situations in which it is learned and used.<sup>297</sup> Therefore, the person with practical knowledge [who is skilled] is not entirely replaceable. On the other hand, Grimen says that theoretical knowledge is the same, independent of who has it, what it is used for and where it is applied; and is therefore replaceable.

A phenomenological view of the body, incorporating the distinction of knowing-how and knowing-that, is applied by Dreyfus and Dreyfus in their five-stage phenomenological skill-model (from novice to expert).<sup>298</sup>

It seems that beginners make judgment using strict rules and features, but that with talent and a great deal of involved experience the beginners develops into an expert who sees intuitively what to do without applying rules and making judgments at all ... Normally an expert does not deliberate. He does not reason. He does not even act deliberately. He simply spontaneously does what has normally worked and, naturally, it normally works.<sup>299</sup>

Dreyfus and Dreyfus' understanding of expertise, as in skillfulness, comes from being fully engaged or absorbed in coping with everyday situations, very much alike Merleau-Ponty's l'habitude and Heidegger's Dasein. Thus, we can assert that they advocate skillful-coping as "the basis of our understanding of the world and ourselves."<sup>300</sup> Accordingly, what stands out as important from all three "is that this mode of being is non-mentalistic; usually we respond to the world not as minds but as embodied copers".<sup>301</sup>

...nothing – not even propositional content – mediates our relation to everyday reality; that, at a level of involvement more basic than belief, we are directly at grips with the things and people that make up our world.<sup>302</sup>

In conclusion, when debating the mind-body relation we can claim that phenomenological "holism" as a perspective on human identity highlights human existence as living-bodies-in-the-world. Consequently, this points towards an understanding of being skilled as being based on an epistemology that views skill as a sort of everyday human conduct that is bodily, intuitive, habitual and personal, and thereby away from an epistemology rooted in

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<sup>297</sup> Harald Grimen "Profesjon og kunnskap" ["Profession and knowledge"] in *Profesjonsstudier* [*Studies of Professions*], eds. Anders Molander og Lars Inge Terum (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 2008, pp. 71-86).

<sup>298</sup> Eriksen, *Soldiers' Reach for Optimized Performance*, p. 16.

<sup>299</sup> Hubert L. Dreyfus and Stuart E. Dreyfus, "What is Moral Maturity? Towards a Phenomenology of Ethical Expertise." In J. Ogilvy (ed.), *Revisioning Philosophy* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1992), pp. 111-113).

<sup>300</sup> Hubert L. Dreyfus, "What Could be more Intelligible Than Everyday Intelligibility? Reinterpreting Division I of Being and time in the Light of Division II." *Bulletin of Science, Technology & Society*, 24 (3), 2004, 265-274, Sage Publications.

<sup>301</sup> Eriksen, *Soldier's Reach for Optimized Performance*, p. 11.

<sup>302</sup> Dreyfus, "What Could be more Intelligible Than Everyday Intelligibility?", p. 54.

cognitive or conscious deliberation as a basis for skillful practice. Seen in relation to the military transformation, there seems to be a strong correlation between the (objectified) soldier identity of the classic invasion defense-based concept, which fosters an instrumentalized ability to take and execute any given orders, and that of modernity's relationship to the mind over body concept of Cartesian dualism. Likewise, there appears to be a notable parallel between the emphasis found in the flexible expeditionary force-based defense concept on the (subjectified) soldier's ability to take and hold initiative, and to act flexibly based on independent decision-making, and that of the postmodern understanding of human beings as living-bodies-in-the-world.

In essence, we can assert that the expeditionary force-based defense concept requires that both the (postmodern) soldier be viewed as a whole person, and that the soldier's values, cultural background, heritage and training be woven into the practical exercise of the soldiering profession. A key point is that the soldier's physical, mental and social characteristics can no longer be considered as detached from one another, as implied by a dualistic view of the human body.

### **(Post)modern Skill – From Universalism towards Contextualism**

How the concept of skill is perceived is of great importance to the military transformation, because, it is precisely the enabling of soldiers and their units to take on and handle a variety of tasks and situations by applying their (militarily) *skills* in a post-Cold War era that is the essence of the military transformation. And as such, military skill must be understood in context of the military transformation's aim of (post)modernizing the armed forces.

Within the framework of this thesis, military conduct or soldiering is understood as the application of military skills. Consequently, the quality of the military skill (of the (post)modern soldier) must be seen as the basic character trait of military expertise. As such, it should be seen as a consequence of the ontological and epistemological foundations ingrained in the existing/prevaling military ethos, and subsequently, the standard by which soldiers are to be judged in response to the aim of developing top quality soldiers.

The relevant question here is whether the change from the *modern* armed forces of the Cold War period that were trained and structured to fight an invasion type of war (e.g. conventional large-scale conflict),<sup>303</sup> that fostered skills of a general and basic character

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<sup>303</sup> This implies a “‘big’ or ‘garrison’ mindset – a hierarchal, rigid, dogmatic way of thinking that valued technical know-how and expected obedience to orders from those at the end of the chain of command”



requires a different understanding of skill than the *postmodern* armed forces of the post-Cold War era that train and structure their forces in accordance with a more expeditionary mindset,<sup>304</sup> where emphasize is put on skills that are of a more situated and contextual mode.

My assumption is that the foundational (ontological and epistemological) understanding of that which constitutes a skillful soldier is scarcely debated within the military communities of practice in general, and that discussions arising from the military transformation have been mostly about what types of skill are needed.

A common way of understanding *skill* is by making a distinction between general and specific skills. In this sense, Kantian universalism and Aristotelian contextualism can be seen as two competing ethical/epistemological positions.<sup>305</sup> The first position argues that actions should follow rules and maxims that not only could, but also should, be followed by all – hence, universalism. The latter, on the other hand, takes the opposite position and argues that the situation leads one to act in a certain matter – hence, contextualism.<sup>306</sup> As such, this coarse-grained distinction seems to be well-suited for developing a typology of an epistemological foundation for understanding skill in relation to the ongoing military transformation (from modernity towards postmodernity).

Before continuing I should say a little about what I mean when I talk about skills. A common understanding of *skill* is the mere ability to do something well.<sup>307</sup> Nonetheless, the term *skill* has its etymological origins in the concept of *knowledge*, *understanding* and *judgment*, such as in the ability to separate or judge well.<sup>308</sup> Hence, the concept of *skill* is

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(Patricia M. Shields, *21<sup>st</sup> Century Expeditionary Mindset and Core Values: A Review of the Literature*. (<http://ecommons.txstate.edu/polsfacp/53/>) Page accessed August 1st, 2010.)

<sup>304</sup> Menaker and colleagues argue this mindset requires soldiers to be “mentally prepared to deploy anywhere in the world on short notice,” have “the critical-thinking skills to adapt quickly to a rapidly changing operational environment,” appreciate and work “cooperatively with other members of a joint team,” and possess “sufficient knowledge of the culture in the area of operation to be able to interact with the local populace”. Ellen Menaker, Jo MacDonald, Arnold Hendrick, and Debra O’Connor, *Training a Joint and Expeditionary Mindset*. ARI Contractor Report 2007-04 (United States Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences, 2006), iii, Accessed December 17th 2012, (<http://www.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a460138.pdf>).

<sup>305</sup> Kantian universalism and Aristotelian contextualism have their out spring in ethical thinking, as they seek to view the moral sides of human action. My concern, however, is to use these perspectives as an epistemological foundation for my argument.

<sup>306</sup> Lars Lovlie, “Of Rules, Skills and Examples in Moral Education.” *Nordisk Pedagogik* 13, (1993), pp. 76-91, p. 77.

<sup>307</sup> Jonathan Crowther (ed.), *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary of current English*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995, Fifth edition 3<sup>rd</sup> impression), p. 1109.

<sup>308</sup> *Webster’s New World College Dictionary*. 2009. Your Dictionary. April 23, 2009.

<[www.yourdictionary.com/skill](http://www.yourdictionary.com/skill)>Etymology: ME, discernment, reason < ON skil, distinction, akin to skilja, to cut apart, separate < IE base \*(s)kel-, to cut (> [shield](#), [shell](#)): basic sense “ability to separate,” hence

essentially about having the wisdom and ability to apply this [wisdom] in terms of doing, meaning that we can describe *being skilled* in the sense of *doing* right or wrong, good or bad. However, when addressing the *epistemological* foundation of being *skilled*, as I am doing in this thesis, we then have to search for the type of knowledge which forms our view on what it is to *do* something right or wrong, good or bad (in general and more specifically in relation to a universalistic vs. contextualistic view).

### ***Universalism – The Modern Ethos of Understanding Skill***

Universalism is an ethical position that emphasizes well-being of humanity and the general, above consideration of the individual. From this perspective, we can derive that universalism emphasizes objective rules and maxims that are justified if they satisfy universal or “transcendental” principals.<sup>309</sup> Such a maxim is Kant’s categorical imperative:

Act only according to that maxim by which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law.<sup>310</sup>

This shows that a universalistic position is normative in the sense that it sets a [moral] standard for behavior that human beings are expected to follow in their daily life. This underscores the notion that rules, procedures, maxims or norms must be acquired before one applies them in action.

In other words, the *norm* of good skill performance must be known before the execution of a skill otherwise you would not know what a good skill is, and therefore could not perform one. In one sense, you would not know what to do. As a foundation for understanding skill, universalism therefore puts weight on verbalized theoretical knowledge as a basis for skill execution. For this reason, theoretical knowledge must be understood as deducting rules, procedures and maxims that are commonly presented in handbooks, instructional manuals and so on, in a systematic step-by-step fashion, often related to a certain level of skill performance.

Consequently, when seeking to understand *skill* from a universalistic perspective, it not only follows that one seeks to describe any skill by rules and maxims, but also that one explains

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“discernment” (<http://www.yourdictionary.com/skill>) Downloaded on April 25th 2009. In the Norwegian language, the term *skille* means something that divides or creates a distinction.

<sup>309</sup> Kant makes a distinction between objects that can be experienced and transcendental principals for something to be experienced as an object (Filosofleksikon, 1996, p. 556).

<sup>310</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/99359/categorical-imperative>. (Downloaded on the April 21st, 2009).

the execution of the same skill as a deliberate following of the same rules and maxims.<sup>311</sup> Accordingly, this implies that skill execution should be viewed as a form of analytic information processing – hence, cognitivism.

An interesting observation in this regard is that such a description of skill fits very well with different skill models in understanding the lower levels of skill. Fitts,<sup>312</sup> Fitts & Posner<sup>313</sup> and Schmidt,<sup>314</sup> who within the field of *motor learning and human performance* have developed skill models with three phases, define the beginner phase as the *cognitive phase* (the two others being the associative and the autonomous phase). The same is also the case with the Dreyfus and Dreyfus phenomenological five-stage model on skill-acquisition (*from novice to expert*).<sup>315</sup> In their model they describe the lower stages (i.e. novice, advanced beginner and competent) as a form of cognitive and deliberate practice (e.g. information processing). From this, it then seems plausible to assert that skills based on a universalistic epistemology should be understood as being of a rough, general and/or unsubtle character, and thus have the characteristics of less-developed skills.

The argument from the universalists is that the universalistic standpoint is the only view that can prevent subjectivism and particularism, since it is the only perspective that holds a point of view of all.<sup>316</sup> The argument against a formal type of universalism is that norms and maxims are tested against principles and not against real-life situations.<sup>317</sup> When one then takes into account that life is much richer and diverse than stringent principles can portray, universalism encounters severe barriers in the application to real and practical life.<sup>318</sup>

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<sup>311</sup> Hubert L. Dreyfus and Stuart E. Dreyfus, *Mind over Machine: The Power of Human Intuition and Expertise in the Era of the Computer* (UK: Basil Blackwell Ltd, 1986); Steen Wackerhausen, "Det skolaske paradigme og mesterlære" [The scholastic paradigm and apprenticeship] in *Mesterlære; Læring som social praksis* [Apprenticeship: learning as a social practice], Klaus Nielsen and Steinar Kvale (eds.), (København: Hans Reitzels Forlag, 1999, pp. 219-233), p.226.

<sup>312</sup> P. M. Fitts, "Perceptual-motor skill learning," in: A. W. Melton, (ed.) *Categories of human learning*. (New York & London: Academic Press, 1964), pp. 244 – 286.

<sup>313</sup> P. M. Fitts and M. I. Posner, *Human Performance*, (Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company, 1967).

<sup>314</sup> R. A. Schmidt, *Motor Control and Learning – A Behavioral Emphasis*, (Illinois: Human Kinetics Publishers, 1988); R. A. Schmidt, *Motor Learning & Performance – From Principles to Practice*, (Illinois: Human Kinetics Books, 1991).

<sup>315</sup> Dreyfus and Dreyfus, *Mind over Machine*. In the early 80s, the Dreyfus brothers conducted studies about the acquisition of practical skills. Their studies included the teaching of pilots, tank drivers, military officers, chess players, car drivers, and adults who were learning a second language. Independent of the different practices, they identified five specific features within the learning process, which they called the "five stages of skill-acquisition." The model describes the different characteristics and horizons of understanding the five stages: Novice, Advanced Beginner, Competent, Proficient and Expert.

<sup>316</sup> Løvlie, "Of Rules, Skills and Examples in Moral Education." p. 77.

<sup>317</sup> Ibid.

<sup>318</sup> Simon Priest, and Michael A. Gass, *Effective Leadership in Adventure Programming*. (University of New Hampshire, Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, 1997), p. 16.

Understanding what it is to be *skilled* from a universalistic view then puts an emphasis on the notion of something being right or wrong, in the sense that there is an objective standard for good and bad practice that is possible to formulate in a verbal and theoretical manner. Being able to follow a set of rules or guidelines in the exercising of a particular skill would then imply a conscious deliberation as the foundation of [skillful] practice. Being good or skilled then implies that one acts according to a verbalized description (rules, procedures, maxims etc.) that constitutes the skill.

### ***Contextualism – The Postmodern Ethos of Understanding Skill***

On the other hand, contextualism takes its starting point from real-life situations. This in turn points to the fact that contextualism is based on an ethical perspective that every situation is unique and needs a nuanced and situational, adapted approach. In real life, the contextualist will do this by deriving moral principles from past experience through a comparison of comparable ethical problems and then by using these experiences/realizations on new challenges.

As an experienced-based epistemology, contextualism can be traced back to Aristotle who argued that it is through action that we acquire/develop moral virtue and not the other way around – that virtue leads to good action(!):

...but the virtues we get by first exercising them, as also happens in the case of the arts as well. For the things we have to learn before we can do them, we learn by doing them, e.g. men become builders by building and lyre-players by playing the lyre; so too we become just by doing just acts, temperate by doing temperate acts, brave by doing brave acts.<sup>319</sup>

Aristotle took this view a step further when describing how any virtue or art can be raised up or destroyed as a consequence of how one exercise ones skill:

...men will be good or bad builders as a result of building well or badly... This, then, is the case with the virtues also; by doing the acts that we do in our transactions with other men we become just or unjust, and by doing the acts that we do in the presence of danger, and by being habituated to feel fear or confidence, we become brave or cowardly.<sup>320</sup>

From a contextualist perspective, the application of moral principles/virtue to real-life situations replaces universalism's focus on justifying universal principles as grounds for validating its moral principle.<sup>321</sup> This means that instead of objective rules and procedures,

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<sup>319</sup> Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 28-29 (II03a31).

<sup>320</sup> Ibid, p. 29 (II03b11).

<sup>321</sup> Løvlie, "Of Rules, Skills and Examples in Moral Education." p. 77.

the contextualist holds that one's actions are governed by feelings, intuition and experience.<sup>322</sup> For that reason, it is plausible to argue that contextualism is closely related to an integrated and somewhat holistic view of human nature. As a consequence, contextualism is particularly sensitive to an individual's subjective experience of what is seen to be good conduct in a given situation and therefore not very normative in the traditional Kantian sense – because there is not one correct solution for all, but rather a spectrum of graspable situational possibilities dependent on the abilities of the individual in question. Looking at it from this viewpoint, one's abilities will be narrowly connected in general to one's previous life experiences and more specifically to experience in similar situations. Because of this, both an individual's past and future experiences will be of vital importance within this perspective.

Contextualism as a perspective for skill performance therefore emphasizes practical experienced-based knowledge as the basis for skill-acquisition. In this perspective, practical experienced-based knowledge can be understood as being dialectic in an organism-environment system. As mentioned in the previous section, Heidegger described this as an interactive relationship between a human being and the world.<sup>323</sup> Skill is therefore a consequence of an individual's *being-in-the-world*, and military skill must be seen as a consequence of the soldier's being in a military world – the soldier's world.

When we seek to understand *skill* in light of a contextualistic perspective, it is then implied that one cannot describe skill entirely and precisely without some form of reference to the real situation in which the skill is executed. Thus, we need some perceptual experience of the skill execution to be able to describe, understand and explain it.

This converges very well with descriptions of different skill models in their higher stages. Fitts,<sup>324</sup> Fitts & Posner,<sup>325</sup> and Schmidt<sup>326</sup> view the most developed skills as being automated in the sense that humans react in an autonomous way to a specific situation based on a large amount of previous experience. The same applies for the upper stages of the Dreyfus and Dreyfus skill models (i.e. proficient and expert), in which they view skills as an intuitive and experience-based practice:

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<sup>322</sup> The German word *Fingerspitzengefühl* is exceptionally well-suited for describing this as a sort of feelable and nuanced skill that is situated in your hands – as compared to a more general skill steered by an analytical brain.

<sup>323</sup> Heidegger, *Being and time*. Heidegger describes the relationship as a subject-subject, rather than subject-object relationship, in which the individual's surroundings are considered an object.

<sup>324</sup> Fitts, "Perceptual-motor skill learning".

<sup>325</sup> Fitts and Posner, *Human Performance*,

<sup>326</sup> Schmidt, *Motor Control and Learning*; Schmidt, *Motor Learning & Performance*.

We usually don't make conscious deliberative decisions when we walk, talk, drive, or carry on most social activities. An expert's skill has become so much a part of him that he need be no more aware of it than he is of his own body.<sup>327</sup>

As such, it seems reasonable to argue that skills that echo a contextualistic epistemology should be viewed as being nuanced and situated, thus embodying the individuality of well-developed skills.

Contextualists argue that their view should be followed because it is the only view that gives full value to real-life experiences, and is therefore the only perspective that is valid in this application. The argument against contextualism is that too much emphasis is placed on the subjective understanding of the individual, in such a way that the larger society's norms of good and correct conduct are put at risk of falling apart. Consequently, from this perspective, there is a risk of placing the interest of the individual above the interest of society.

In summarizing this section about how we understand skill in relation to a modern and postmodern worldview, we can state that a universalistic view leads to an understanding of skill that emphasizes skill as being a type of analytic information processing based on cognitive deliberation, in which rules, maxims and preplanned procedures play a defining role. On the other hand, a contextualistic view leads to an understanding of skill to be a sort of ongoing, habitual activity based on intuitive and experience-based practice, in which a situation and its practitioner's perceptual and emotional involvedness in skill execution plays a key defining role.

Thus, applied to the armed forces and military transformation, it seems more than plausible to claim that the invasion defense-based concept, grounded on a cadre of mobilization forces with relatively little and mostly basic skills acquired through standardized intensive mass training, is deeply embedded in a universalistic epistemology. Whilst a flexible expeditionary-based defense force, built on professional units with a substantial amount of experience from real-life military operations, carrying a broad and nuanced set of skills acquired through active participation in a wide range of different (learning) contexts, is rooted in a contextualistic epistemology.

Essentially, we can claim that a transformation of the armed forces towards an expeditionary ethos involves an acceptance of the (postmodern) soldier as being situated in

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<sup>327</sup> Dreyfus and Dreyfus, *Mind over Machine*, p. 30.

a given community of practice, where the qualitative norms and standards of good soldiering – as the execution of military skill(s) – are embedded in the conduct of military doing. As a consequence, different military communities of practice will, within the framework of the overall doctrine, adopt and develop their own nuanced way of doing – a qualitative signature if you may. Thus, a momentous understanding is that a soldier's skill (or expertise) cannot be seen as detached from the person or unit performing the skill, as is implied from a universalist view.

### **(Post)modern Learning – From Scholastic towards Non-Scholastic Learning**

Transformation is essentially about *change*, change in terms of who we are, what we do, how we do that we do, and so forth. Thus, transformative change addresses the foundation of our culture of doing and being, as the two previous sections about identity and skill have clearly shown. However, there will be no transformative change in the armed forces' doing and being unless the individual within the organization is able to understand, accept and incorporate the new (postmodern) ethos into his or her everyday practice. Hence, at some stage in any process of change there will be an aspect of learning, whether actively or passively undertaken.

Moreover, with the fundamental type of change from a modern towards a postmodern military it is reasonable to believe that the understanding of *learning* itself is influenced by the same revolutionary change. Consequently, the understanding of learning in relation to a modern versus postmodern view becomes crucial in (post)modernizing the armed forces. It follows that the evolving question in relation to this thesis becomes: How do we *acquire* [(Post)modern military] skills?

A key feature in relation to understanding the field of learning is the *theory-practice* connection. It should be said that this is a narrative/discourse that fosters a multitude of sub-narratives, such as the discussion of whether learning is: the result of an academic endeavor or the consequence of once experience as a human being; something taking place in designated educational institutions (like schools) or in the reality of life; being based either on abstracted conceptualization of life or the concrete phenomena of life; enabling one to derive general or specific knowledge; steered by the control of a teacher/pedagogue or gained by freedom to explore and apply; aimed to produce uniformed competency or

diverse skills; and whether learning is the commodity of a centralized policy or the response to de-centralized needs, to name but a few.

In substance this debate is not new, on the contrary, it seems to have been part of pedagogical understanding and discourse ever since the time of Confucius and the ancient Greeks. In newer/modern history it is perhaps most visible in the works of the American educational philosopher and pragmatist John Dewey, who, more than a century ago, in his epic work on the *Child and the Curriculum* stated:

“Discipline” is the watchword of those who magnify the course of study; “interest” that of those who blazon “The Child” upon their banner. The standpoint of the former is logical; that of the latter psychological. The first emphasizes the necessity of adequate training and scholarship on the part of the teacher; the latter that of need of sympathy with the child, and knowledge of his natural instincts. “Guidance and Control” are the catchwords of one school; “freedom and initiative” of the other. Law is asserted here; spontaneity proclaimed there. The old, the conservation of what has been achieved in the pain and toil of the ages, is dear to the one; the new, change, progress, wins the affection of the other.<sup>328</sup>

Essentially, the two perspectives have, within educational literature, grown into two rather distinct paradigms, if you may, of learning. The first may be termed the scholastic paradigm and is associated with learning being institutionalized, whilst the other is the non-scholastic paradigm and is affiliated with the kind of learning taking place in everyday life.

In regards to the relationship of military transformation and learning, my assumption is that there is a lack of necessary emphasize within the broader debate, which, in my opinion, has been dealing largely with the characteristics (describing the paradigms) of the past and future order of military force, and thus, to a lesser extent with the issue of how to get from one stage to the other. Neither do I believe that the issue has been adequately addressed, at least from a Norwegian standpoint, among those within the armed forces who are responsible for turning doctrine into action.<sup>329</sup> Mainly, I believe that among those who participate in the transformation debate there are insufficient thorough investigations into the foundational aspects/understandings of pedagogy, with which to form a sort of theoretical framework to debate learning in relation to the aims of the ongoing (post)modernization, so as to give its participants some ‘dry land’ from which to work.

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<sup>328</sup> John Dewey, *The Child and the Curriculum* (Chicago, IL and London, UK: The University of Chicago Press, 1902), p. 10.

<sup>329</sup> I should say that there are great examples to the contrary, such as the US COIN manual to name one.



Thus, in the following section I will describe the scholastic and non-scholastic paradigms on learning and argue that the former fosters the ideals of the modern, whereas, the latter is more prone to meeting the condition(s) of the postmodern.<sup>330</sup>

### ***Scholastic Learning – The Modern Mass-Production of Uniformed Competence***

Scholastic learning, as we know it today, carries the epistemological foundation of modernity through its virtue of being based on objective, generalized and abstracted knowledge that is distributed to the masses in a cost-effective enterprise. Or as Usher and Edwards argue: “Education in both structural and processual terms is, in all its various forms, intimately connected with the production, organisation and dissemination of knowledge.”<sup>331</sup>

Thus, they argue that educational theory and practice as we (historically) have come to know it, at least within the developed Western society, “is founded on the discourse of modernity”.<sup>332</sup>

Historically, education can be seen as the vehicle by which modernity’s ‘grand narratives’, the Enlightenment ideals of crucial reason, individual freedom, progress and benevolent change, are substantiated and realised.<sup>333</sup>

In other words, we can assert that education, as we know it, is the tool for developing ‘modern’ human beings; individuals that are rational, objective and willing to succumb to authority in modern society’s strive for progress.

At the core of this process is enlightenment’s/modernity’s belief in true knowledge as being the commodity of Cartesian rationalism. So, the scholastic understanding of knowledge is that it is objective and presented as general facts or information that are of universal character/relevance and possible to reduce into smaller parts, which, subsequently, can be applied as norms and principles to human conduct in everyday life.

Accordingly, Wackerhausen, when debating the scholastic paradigm of learning, rhetorically asks what the scholastic tradition has to offer, and answers “it offers a scholastic education, that is to say an education, where the core elements are knowledge and rules, or

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<sup>330</sup> Parts of this chapter can be found as an earlier version in Norwegian in my Masters thesis. (Anders McD Sookermy, *Fra vernepliktig rekrutt til ekspertsoldat. Ferdighetslæring i det nye Forsvaret* [From *Conscripted Recruit to Expert Soldier. Skill-Acquisition in the New Norwegian Armed Forces*], (Master thesis, Norwegian School of Sport Sciences, 2003).

<sup>331</sup> Usher and Edwards, *Postmodernism and Education*, p. 3.

<sup>332</sup> Usher and Edwards, *Postmodernism and Education*, p. 2.

<sup>333</sup> Ibid.

principles.”<sup>334</sup> He then goes on to state that “since education is assumed to create competence, the implied or contained conception of competence is based upon the notion that it is constituted by these very same elements: knowledge and rules (principles).”<sup>335</sup>

From an epistemological point of view, this implies that the scholastic tradition views learning/education as the assimilation of universal, objective and context-free facts (knowing-*that* type of knowledge), and that its theories of learning are closely connected to Cartesian dualism and its mind over body perspective. As such, they are often described as being cognitive theories, which by nature foster theoretical learning/studies.

In essence, these types of theory put emphasis on the individual’s mental processes, understood as internal cognitive structures, and perceive learning as transfers to these cognitive structures. Wenger states that the pedagogical focus of these kinds of theory are directed towards the dissemination and transfer of information through communication, explanation, corresponding, contrasting, inference and problem solving.<sup>336</sup> This is supported by Priest and Gass who state that the learning theories that are classified within cognitive learning are based on a rational and ideal epistemology, where learning puts emphasis on searching, analyzing, retaining and recalling the abstract symbols of information.<sup>337</sup> This means that memory-studies are central to cognitive learning. In connection with a study of teaching plans of many large US companies, Østerlund explains cognitive learning as being memory-studies that are characterized by being cumulative processes:

... memory-studies is central to a theory that sees learning as a cumulative process where individuals gradually internalize more and more complex and abstract quantities. Questions about learning and teaching in particular ends up being about what skills and elements of knowledge one should introduce students to, in what form and in what order, to strengthen the individuals encoding, storage and recall.<sup>338</sup>

The most common forms of cognitive learning are those learning methods we associate with education in schools. Here learning has been institutionalized into a Weberian educational

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<sup>334</sup> Wackerhausen, “Det skolaske paradigmet og mesterlære” [“The Scholastic Paradigm and Apprenticeship”], p. 221. (Original in Danish, my translation).

<sup>335</sup> Ibid. (Original in Danish, my translation).

<sup>336</sup> Etienne Wenger, “A Social Theory on Learning”, *Communities of Practice – Learning Meaning and Identity* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 3-11. (2002, p 159)

<sup>337</sup> Priest & Gass, *Effective Leadership in Adventure Programming*.

<sup>338</sup> Carsten Østerlund, “Learning Across Contexts: A Field Study of Salespeople’s Learning at Work”, *Skriftserie for Psykologisk Institut*, 21, 1 (Århus Universitet, Danmark, 1996), p. 43. Quoted from Jean Lave, “Læring, mesterlære, sosial praksis” [“Learning, Apprenticeship, Social Practice”] in Nielsen and Kvale (eds.), *Mesterlære [Apprenticeship]*, p. 39.

industry, designed to accommodate large groups of learners in a cost and time effective manner.

As a consequence, learning follows a set time-schedule, which basically enables both the educational authority, through its governmental regulations, to define the subjects that are to be taught and prioritize the time spent on each of them so as to meet (national) requirements and standards,<sup>339</sup> and the teacher, through his/her educational plans, to determine how and what should be highlighted in each subject.

This follows from one of the fundamental ideas of school teaching: that by breaking down the complexity of reality, one makes it easier for the learner to learn or acquire the intricate skills necessary to deal with reality. As such, one adopts a progressively step-by-step approach to learning. In essence, this leads to a bureaucratization of learning described here by Dewey:

Subdivide each topic into studies; each study into lessons; each lesson into specific facts and formulae. Let the child proceed step by step to master each one of these separate parts, and at last he will have covered the entire ground.<sup>340</sup>

Accordingly, the pedagogical idea is that learning should be viewed as a formative process in which the pedagogue shapes the learner by giving him or her the *correct* knowledge, information and virtues.<sup>341</sup> And therefore as Dewey points out, it is the learner's duty to receive and accept, and their function is fulfilled when he or she has become obedient and willing to learn.<sup>342</sup>

In summary, as a product of 'enlightenment' *scholastic* learning is coherently built on the characteristic structures of modernity: hierarchical bureaucracies, standardization, economic efficiency and the mass market, with the assembly line as a particularly relevant metaphor of an educational delivery system, where teachers become operators in educational factories,<sup>343</sup> and "[k]nowledge – of whatever kind – is seen as commodity to be packaged, and transmitted or sold to others".<sup>344</sup> Viewing the concept of education in light of modernity

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<sup>339</sup> Curricula say something about which subjects are to be taught and how many hours each subject is to have in a year/week.

<sup>340</sup> Dewey, *The Child and the Curriculum*, p. 8.

<sup>341</sup> Gunnar Breivik, *Sug I magen og livskvalitet* [The gnawing feeling and quality of life] (Oslo: Tiden Norsk Forlag A/S, 2001).

<sup>342</sup> Dewey, *The Child and the Curriculum*, p. 8.

<sup>343</sup> Carr, W. and Kemmis, S. *Becoming Critical: Education, Knowledge and Action Research*. (London: Falmer, 1986), pp. 15-16.

<sup>344</sup> Stuart Parker, *Reflective Teaching in the Postmodern World: A manifesto for Education in Postmodernity* (Buckingham; Open University Press, 1997), p. 15.

through the assembly line metaphor, leads to an understanding of knowledge as something to be passed on in ('factory'-) schools, and split up into studies, modules, subjects, lessons, facts and formulas, and consequently taught in a systematic step-by-step manner.

In other words, good 'products' of the [modern] 'factory-school' are students filled with the 'correct' knowledge, which indicates that students have been able to assimilate the teachers' systematical step-by-step delivery of cumulative 'facts'. This is supported by a view of teaching as being "simply the technical mastery of a set of discrete procedures, achievement of which is readily manifested as a corresponding set of discrete behaviours",<sup>345</sup> and "that the techniques by which the problems of teaching are to be solved are universally applicable to any teaching and learning context: to any child, by any teacher, in any school whatsoever".<sup>346</sup>

Thus, when aiming at a description of scholastic learning, Nielsen and Kvale's rather condensed definition seems fittingly descriptive and purposeful: "Formal, verbal and textual instruction in classrooms and schools, detached from practice."<sup>347</sup>

### ***Non-Scholastic Learning – The Postmodern Approach towards Difference***

Since educational theory and practice, as we historically know it, is founded on the discourse of modernity it is "particularly resistant to the postmodern 'message'".<sup>348</sup> Accordingly, the aims of postmodern education/pedagogy include both the ambition to deconstruct the 'grand narratives' of modernity and to 'educate' individuals that are capable of deconstructing it. So, the end point of postmodern education is to develop "what we might prefer to call a cultivated, literate and ironic human being; a citizen of postmodernity".<sup>349</sup>

Wackerhausen describes non-scholastic learning as being 'action' in the sense of active practice participation, personal experience, observation, and more.<sup>350</sup> As such, non-scholastic learning is the antithesis of school education. Therefore, we can assert that where scholastic learning acquires knowledge, skills and attitudes through artificial situations in the classroom, non-scholastic learning of the same knowledge, skills and attitudes take place

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<sup>345</sup> Parker, *Reflective Teaching in the Postmodern World*, p. 15.

<sup>346</sup> Ibid.

<sup>347</sup> Nielsen and Kvale (eds.), *Mesterlære [Apprenticeship]*, p. 289.

<sup>348</sup> Usher and Edwards, *Postmodernism and Education*, p. 2.

<sup>349</sup> Parker, *Reflective Teaching in the Postmodern World*, p. 152.

<sup>350</sup> Wackerhausen, "Det skolestiske paradigmet og mesterlære" ["The Scholastic Paradigm and Apprenticeship"], p. 182.

in the real world. To paraphrase/rephrase Rasmussen's criticism of scholastic learning, we can say that where school is separated from production, non-scholastic learning takes place on the production line; where teaching in schools is conducted as verbal transmission without particular regard to the potential of its surroundings, non-scholastic bildung takes place in a community of practice where one's efforts have a direct impact on the final product; where classes are age divided and therefore do not provide the opportunity to learn from older and more competent comrades, the non-scholastic approach to learning transpires precisely across generations and skill-levels where it is part of the practice to learn from each other; where students in schools risk being penalized for sneak-peeking at comrades who are better than themselves and subsequently copy their work, the non-scholastic environment encourages those who have not mastered a skill to observe and imitate those who have mastered it; and finally where traditional scholastic education focuses too much on the individual and not enough on the opportunities of his surroundings/world and the social factors, non-scholastic learning is based on the importance of a social community.<sup>351</sup>

One way of understanding the learner within this perspective is rooted in the Age of Romanticism and the French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who believed that human beings were born with an internal need to learn.<sup>352</sup> Thus, Breivik argues that the pedagogical challenges therefore lie in the facilitating so that learning can take place within the individuals themselves.<sup>353</sup> The learning process, he goes on, is "ordered" in an organic and continuous fashion, almost like a growing process in which the learner seeks out new situations, acquires new skills and adapts to new knowledge. In a way, the pedagogue becomes a facilitator, midwife and mentor, while it is the learner him or herself who is leading the process. For this reason, the "master" will mostly act as a "coach" who demonstrates, gives advice, asks questions and gives critique.<sup>354</sup> Whereas Dewey says that guidance is not an external imposition, rather, "[i]t is freeing the life-process for its own most adequate fulfillment."<sup>355</sup>

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<sup>351</sup> Jens Rasmussen, "Mesterlære og den almene pædagogik" ["Apprenticeship Learning and the General Pedagogy"] in Nielsen and Kvale (eds.), *Mesterlære [Apprenticeship]*, p. 168. Rasmussen outlines the factors as a visualization of the criticisms raised against scholastic learning. I have used this as a starting point to highlight differences between this and non-scholastic learning.

<sup>352</sup> Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Émile. Or Treatise on Education*. Translated by William H. Payne, (New York: Prometheus Books, 1896).

<sup>353</sup> Breivik, *Sug I magen og livskvalitet [The gnawing feeling and quality of life]*, p. 130.

<sup>354</sup> Donald A. Schön, *Educating the Reflective Practitioner: Toward a New Design for Teaching and Learning in the Professions* (London: Jossey Bass, 1987).

<sup>355</sup> Dewey, *The Child and the Curriculum*, p. 17. (Italics in original.)

A different approach to viewing the learner within the postmodern perspective is connected to existentialism<sup>356</sup>, a philosophical school rooted in the works of Søren Kierkegaard, which emerged during the twentieth century with philosophers such as Heidegger, Jaspers, Marcel and Sartre. This approach, in contrast to the former, does not follow a principle of continuance, rather it applies a dis-continuance perspective in which strong and intense situations/experiences make up the reasons or foundations for change. These are situations or experiences that do not necessarily need to have anything to do with each other.

Thus, within non-scholastic pedagogies, it is the learner's task to seek out new knowledge and develop new skills; and their role is undertaken when they are able to take the initiative and act in a flexible manner based on reflective and critical independent decision-making. For this to be, pedagogy will have to be both pluralistic and eclectic in all its aspects. Therefore, the pedagogical approaches of postmodernity view learning as a *behavioral change of a continual and adaptive character* that results from a contextual influence. Knowledge will have to be continually expanded and the individual will never be fully trained, as the surroundings and skills required for performing the various tasks undergo a constant state of change. As such, we can anticipate the use of deconstruction, emancipation, vocabulary, dialogue, plurality and aesthetics as educational strategies for the creation of 'new' meaning/knowledge.

## **Experiential Theories**

Within the non-scholastic paradigm of learning, experiential theories are understood as a response to the cognitive theories of the scholastic paradigm.<sup>357</sup> They, the experiential theories, tend to be holistic in nature, just by incorporating cognition and behavior with conscious perception and reflection on experience.<sup>358</sup>

John Dewey (1859-1952) is considered the father of modern experiential learning.<sup>359</sup> He was one of many educational philosophers who in the early 1900s helped to change the educational pattern of society. His slogan '*Learning by Doing*' became famous as a characterization of his thinking. Dewey believed that education had to be real - as life itself

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<sup>356</sup> Breivik, *Sug I magen og livskvalitet* [*The gnawing feeling and quality of life*], p. 131.

<sup>357</sup> Carl R. Rogers, "Hvad er læring?" ["What is Learning?"] in Knud Illeris (ed.) *Tekster om læring* [*Texts on Learning*] (Gylding: Roskilde universitetsforlag, Naranya Press, 2000), pp. 115-119, p. 116.

<sup>358</sup> Priest & Gass, *Effective Leadership in Adventure Programming*, p. 15; David A. Kolb, "Den erfaringsbaserede læringsproces" ["The Experiential Learning-process"], in Illeris (ed.) *Tekster om læring* [*Texts on Learning*], pp. 47-66, p. 48; Rogers, *Hvad er læring?* ["What is Learning?"], p. 117.

<sup>359</sup> Priest & Gass, *Effective Leadership in Adventure Programming*, p. 14; Illeris, (ed.) *Tekster om læring* [*Texts on Learning*], p. 120.

- and not as a preparation for life. He saw the role of the teacher as giving students the opportunity to learn about things they were interested in rather than teaching them the established curriculum.<sup>360</sup> Students should be taught to solve problems in collaboration with others rather than memorizing facts in competition for the best grades. And he believed that a democratic process encouraged a free and critical thinking, while accepting that authority choked all questioning.<sup>361</sup>

One of Dewey's main concepts is the relationship to what determines whether a learning experience has value or not.<sup>362</sup> Dewey based the value of learning from all experience in the principles of interaction and continuity. Interaction refers to the ability of the experience to balance the factors that may affect the learning with the learner, such as subjective, objective, external and internal factors, in such a way that the learner is able to extract the optimum learning-potential from the experience. While continuity refers to the degree to which the experience is able to contribute positively to the future learning of the learner, in other words, the extent to which the learner is able to generalize the experience in the long term.<sup>363</sup>

In a comparison of two possible ways to learn a language, Coleman highlights the practical expression of experiential learning, and thus also Dewey's two principles.<sup>364</sup> The first is the way a child learns her first language; by being in the environment where the language is used. Here the child herself will try and fail and finally succeed in making itself understood and to be understood by others. The other approach is cognitive and typical of the way a second language is taught in schools. Here, one learns by memorizing grammatical rules and the meaning of words, not through lived experiences but as a translated cognitive meaning of the first language one has learned. The big difference, says Coleman, is that the experiential learning anchors every word on a rich base of experience. One remembers the word or phrase because of the feeling it gave when it was understood and triggered a reaction in the others. Jespersen argues that this type of memory relies on what he calls the body-in-action.<sup>365</sup> Here he finds support in the French philosopher Henri-Louis Bergson (1859-1941), who strongly advocated a belief in experience and intuition over rationalism

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<sup>360</sup> Dewey, *The Child and the Curriculum*.

<sup>361</sup> John Dewey, *Experience and Education* (New York, NY: Macmillan, 1938).

<sup>362</sup> Dewey, *Experience and Education*.

<sup>363</sup> Priest & Gass, *Effective Leadership in Adventure Programming*, p. 14.

<sup>364</sup> James S. Coleman, "Experiential Learning and Information Assimilation: Toward an Appropriate Mix", *Journal of Experiential Education*, no. 2, Vol. 1, 1979, pp. 7-8.

<sup>365</sup> Ejgil Jespersen, "Idrettens kropplige mesterlære" ["Sport's Embodied Apprenticeship"] in Nielsen and Kvale (eds.), *Mesterlære [Apprenticeship]*, p. 147.

and science. Bergson terms this type of memory "motor habit" as opposed to "memory-image" (which is based on image recognition).<sup>366</sup> Bergson argues that one can remember the past without reproducing it in any identifiable representation system and therefore describes motor habit as being bodily movement (motor-mechanisms) rather than a representation.

Rogers, who also supports the experiential approach, has identified four elements that are part of experience-based learning.<sup>367</sup> The first element is the *quality* of personal involvement, which he explains to be that the whole human being, both the emotional and cognitive aspects, are included in the learning. The second element he brings up is *personal involvement* in itself, which he justifies by arguing that even though the driving force or stimulation comes from the outside, the sensation to discover, to reach out, to grasp and understand comes from within. Then, he points to the need for *common validity* as the third element, which is important for the learner as it affects his behavior, attitude and maybe even the whole learner's personality. The fourth and last element Rogers refers to is related to the learner's *own assessment of the importance of learning*. This aspect reflects the fact that it is the learners themselves who know if the learning meets its needs; whether it leads towards that of which it is desired to gain knowledge. Thus, Rogers states that the placement of the evaluation virtually rests with the learner and the essence of it is its meaning. He concludes by claiming that when experiential learning takes place, the meaning for the learner is part of the whole experience.

Another who also places great emphasis on experience in connection with learning is Kraft. With basis in the work of Dewey, he has described the following requirements for learning:

- 1) Individuals need to be involved in what is being learned, 2) learning through experience inside and outside of the classroom, and not through teachers is vital, 3) learning must be immediately relevant for learners, 4) learners must live and act for the present as well as the future, 5) learning must assist learners in preparing for a changing and evolving world.<sup>368</sup>

## **Apprenticeship**

The clearest directions of experience-based learning theory found in the situated-knowledge tradition are the many *apprenticeship*-like learning forms that describe the asymmetric

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<sup>366</sup> Henri-Louis Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, Translated by Nancy Margaret Paul and W. Scott Palmer (New York, NY: The Macmillan Company, 1911), pp. 86-105.

<sup>367</sup> Rogers, "Hvad er læring?" [What is Learning?], pp. 116-117.

<sup>368</sup> R. Kraft, "Toward a Theory of Experiential Learning", in R.J. Kraft and M. Sakofs (eds.), *The Theory of Experiential Education* (Boulder, CO: Association for Experiential Education, 1985), pp. 4-35. Quoted from Priest and Gass, *Effective Leadership in Adventure Programming*, p. 14.



relationship between someone who is proficient in the profession (master) and someone who is seeking proficiency in the profession (apprentice).<sup>369</sup>

Despite this clear distinction between master and apprentice, apprenticeship is not a definite form of learning with only one particular expression. The Danish psychologist Klaus Nielsen and his Norwegian colleague Steinar Kvale (1938–2008) point out in their book *Mesterlære – læring som sosial praksis* [Apprenticeship – Learning as a Social Practice] that apprenticeship may be expressed in various forms, and describe everything from statutory institutional structures in the area of craft apprenticeships (traditional apprenticeships) to more metaphorical relationships in which a novice learns from a person who is more experienced in the area.

Mention can also be made of the fact that apprenticeship-like learning primarily arises in what can be referred to as day-to-day production. Hence, there is no clear distinction between that which is learning and that which is application of what has been learned. This is so because the learning party in an apprenticeship learns through participation in a community of practice in which he or she is trained in a particular profession through, for example, observation, imitation, personal experience, guidance and evaluation, systematized in a specific social structure.<sup>370</sup> As such, the knowledge will be silent at the same time as the use of language as a communication channel will be subordinate to the bodily communication that exists in the situation.<sup>371</sup>

Thus, Nielsen and Kvale define apprenticeship as:

Learning through participation in a community of practice, where the master and the apprentice have reciprocal obligations, in a specific social structure over a longer period of time.<sup>372</sup>

Nielsen and Kvale also point out another way of understanding the various apprenticeship-like forms of learning. They believe that by differentiating between the things that advance the learning process (i.e. between the master and the community's practice structures) it is

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<sup>369</sup> Klaus Nielsen and Steinar Kvale, "Mesterlære som aktuell læringsform" ["Apprenticeship as learning practice"] in Nielsen and Kvale (eds.) *Mesterlære [Apprenticeship]*, pp. 11–31.

<sup>370</sup> Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger, *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

<sup>371</sup> See Michael Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1958).

<sup>372</sup> Nielsen and Kvale, *Mesterlære [Apprenticeship]*, p. 290.

possible to operate with a distinction between what they refer to as *person-oriented apprenticeship* and *decentered apprenticeship*.<sup>373</sup>

### **Person-Oriented Apprenticeship**

In the person-oriented approach, the central factor is the relationship between the master and the apprentice, as in practice it is the master who, through his or her reflections and actions, makes the learning visible to the apprentice. By making visible the skills that are to be learned, and thereby serve as a means of identification for the apprentice, the master will serve as a role model for the apprentice. As the learning process progresses, the master-apprentice relationship will develop from a personal one into a structural identification, in which it is no longer the master's personality, but rather his or her relationship with the profession that is significant.<sup>374</sup>

The traditional apprenticeship is often criticized for being too authoritarian, and thus promoting mechanical reproductive learning without independent critical reflection.<sup>375</sup> This may be due to an overly strong focus on learning forms such as imitation and observation, and an understanding on the part of the critics that acquiring a critical attitude is something that takes place through direct verbal dissemination and discussion.<sup>376</sup> In real life, it is natural for the apprentice, over time, to serve under several masters with differing attitudes, values and professional solutions for solving tasks. The apprentice will thus be able to develop a critical faculty while solving his or her tasks, because he or she is given the opportunity to observe and imitate the solutions of different masters. The apprentice will therefore be able to develop a wide repertoire of possible solutions to a problem through the assessment of his or her masters, and in the long term assimilate the best from each master and so develop his or her own style.<sup>377</sup>

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<sup>373</sup> Nielsen and Kvale, "Mesterlære som aktuel læringsform" ["Apprenticeship as learning practice"] pp. 16–18.

<sup>374</sup> Lave and Wenger, *Situated Learning*.

<sup>375</sup> Nielsen and Kvale, "Mesterlære som aktuel læringsform" ["Apprenticeship as learning practice"] p. 15; David A. Kolb, *Experiential Learning in Culture and Process of Adult Learning*, Mary Thorpe, Richard Edwards, and Ann Hanson (eds.) (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1993), pp. 138–156.

<sup>376</sup> "In studies on the learning of Nobel prize winners, it is emphasised time and again that a scientific attitude is only acquired to a limited degree from books or through direct dissemination. It is often acquired indirectly and slowly, through the day-to-day practice of research in close personal interaction with more experienced researchers. Critical reflection in scientific work is thus disseminated less through instructions than through the power of example." Nielsen and Kvale, "Mesterlære som aktuel læringsform" ["Apprenticeship as learning practice"] pp. 21–22.

<sup>377</sup> A. Bandura, Social learning through imitation, in *Nebraska Symposium on Motivation*, M. R. Jones (ed.) (Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1962), p. 255; A. Bandura, *Social Foundation of Thought and Action: A Social Cognitive Theory* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1986), pp. 142–181.

## Decentered Apprenticeship

In the decentered perspective on apprenticeship, the primary focus is directed at the apprentice's participation in a specific social *community of practice*.<sup>378</sup> We can therefore understand decentering to mean a move from individuals who live in isolation to communities of practice in which the apprentices themselves constitute a network of relationships.

Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger are two of the learning researchers who have most comprehensively developed theories relating to apprenticeship as learning in communities of practice. In 1991, they published the book *Situated Learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*, which provides a new and more integrated view of learning as a social practice. In their view of learning, they move away from an exclusively personal epistemology and over to the view that learning is an integrated part of a generating social practice in the world in which one lives.

Through historical studies of apprenticeship, Lave and Wenger have found that "situatedness" is something entirely different from a simple empirical property of everyday activities. Rather, they believe that they have found a general theoretical perspective which involves a relational view of knowledge and learning, that the activities of the community of practice are negotiated by its participants, and that learning is driven by both engagement and dilemmas. When this perspective is taken as the starting point there is nothing that will not be situated. Consequently, emphasis must be given to an overall understanding that involves the entire person. Lave and Wenger therefore believe that it is important to see skill-acquisition as an integrated part of the creating social practice in the lived world.<sup>379</sup>

Situated learning may, at first glance, very much resemble apprenticeship as we know it from craft apprenticeships. However, with closer look, it becomes clear that the person-oriented master-apprentice relationship in traditional apprenticeship is, in Lave and Wenger's theory, replaced by a more social approach to learning; the master becomes part of the social community of practice in which the apprentice is able to find his or her professional identity through *learning in doing*. Thus the decisive factor for the apprentice is the community and not the master alone. The consequence for the acquisition of skills is a form of de-individualization, which occurs when the attention in the learning process is directed at how the learning resources in the community can best be structured:

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<sup>378</sup> Wenger, *Communities of Practice*, pp. 3–11.

<sup>379</sup> Lave and Wenger, *Situated Learning*, p. 35.

To take a decentered view of master–apprentice relations leads to an understanding that mastery resides not in the master but in the organization of the community of practice of which the master is a part.<sup>380</sup>

Inspired by the decentering and de-individualization represented in the situated learning theory, Kvale and Nielsen have searched for learning resources and barriers that exist in the apprentice’s social community of practice. In their work on identifying learning resources, they have expanded the theory relating to situated learning by adding to it what they describe as a *minimalistic perspective on learning*.<sup>381</sup>

The result of adding a minimalist perspective to the situated learning theory is what Kvale and Nielson refer to as a *landscape for learning*. By using *landscape* as a metaphor, they seek, like Lave and Wenger, to focus more attention on the learning resources of the surrounding world (the learning landscape), than on the individual apprentices. This also comprises the minimalist perspective, in that the orientation towards the resources of the learning landscape enables them to refrain from developing inner cognitive/mental structures/representations and processes to explain the diversity within the apprentice’s relationship with the world. Thus, they are following Heidegger, who describes this as a subject-subject relation between the human and the world,<sup>382</sup> and Merleau-Ponty in that it is as *bodies-in-the-world* that man knows himself.<sup>383</sup> What follows is Kvale and Nielsen’s supposition that an exhaustive description of the learning resources of the landscape and of ways of occupying this landscape will reduce the need to postulate inner cognitive explanations of learning.

Their contribution is therefore an attempt to use and further develop the existing resources present in the learning landscape before adding new external tools for creating learning. Furthermore, they try to create an alternative to what they call an educational colonization of natural learning environments.<sup>384</sup> Examples of this are: isolation of learning from the situations where that which has been learnt is later to be applied; and the belief that learning

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<sup>380</sup> Ibid, p. 94. This fits well with how Nielsen and Kvale define apprenticeship as situated learning: “Learning that takes place by participation in different social situations in day-to-day life, rather than simply the teacher-pupil relationship. Learning is linked to the development of personal qualifications for participating in different, specific action contexts in social practice.” See Klaus Nielsen and Steinar Kvale, *Mesterlære* [Apprenticeship], p. 289.

<sup>381</sup> Kvale and Nielsen, “Landskab for læring” [“Landscapes for Learning”] in Nielsen and Kvale (eds.) *Mesterlære* [Apprenticeship], pp. 237–260.

<sup>382</sup> Heidegger, *Being and time*.

<sup>383</sup> Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*.

<sup>384</sup> Nielsen and Kvale, “Mesterlære som aktuel læringsform” [“Apprenticeship as learning practice”] p. 239.

cannot take place without teaching. Kvale and Nielsen therefore propose what they call an ecological doctrine to advance learning:

Be cautious about placing new scholastic elements in a cultural learning landscape before the environment's inherent learning resources have been investigated and an attempt has been made to develop them further.<sup>385</sup>

On the basis of ecological doctrine, Kvale and Nielsen identify and describe four main elements that they believe to contain both resources and barriers in the learning landscape: learning within the community of practice; learning as the development of a professional-identity; learning without formal teaching; and evaluation through practice.<sup>386</sup>

The first element is labeled *Learning within the Community of Practice*. The apprenticeship takes place in a social practice, which is characterized by common skills, knowledge and values, as for instance within a craftsmanship guild. By participating in the community's real line of production, the apprentice gradually acquires the central skills, knowledge and values that bring him from a peripheral position in the community, to one day himself becoming an adequate master.

The second element is called *Learning as the Development of a Professional-Identity*. By learning the many skills of a profession the apprentice builds his professional identity. The learning of the various skills is a step on the way to mastering the profession. By serving with different masters the apprentice will be able to gain the best from different masters and thus create his own style; in this way creating something new.

The third element addresses *Learning Without Formal Teaching*. There is very little direct teaching in a traditional skill that uses apprenticeship, as most of the knowledge transaction takes place as observation. This presupposes a stable and differentiated social structure, in which it is possible to observe the individual work.

The fourth and last element is *Evaluation through Practice*. In the apprenticeship, evaluation is an ongoing process as the work of the apprentice is a part of the production. In this way the apprentice is provided with feedback about how the product works in real life.

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<sup>385</sup> Ibid, p. 239 (My translation).

<sup>386</sup> Kvale and Nielsen, "Landskab for læring" ["Landscapes for Learning"] pp. 237-260; Klaus Nielsen and Steinar Kvale "Vandringer i praktikkens læringslandskab," ["Travels through the practical learning landscape"], in *Praktikkens læringslandskab: At lære gennem arbejde* [The practical learning landscape: learning through work], Klaus Nielsen and Steinar Kvale (eds.) (København: Akademisk Forlag, 2003), pp. 16–38.

The product of the master functions as the *norm* for good standard. After an ended training period in the traditional apprenticeship the apprentice submits to a final examination.

In conclusion, *non-scholastic* educational/pedagogical practice derived from the postmodern moment is embedded into a multitude of situated social practices, and, as such, its narratives are sensitive to the Heideggerian being-in-the-world, and Merleau-Ponty's understanding of human beings as living-bodies-in-the-world. Thus, experiential theories of learning, like the apprenticeship, "where a multiplicity of styles coexist while offering the potential for an endless plurality of statements through their cultural and aesthetic currency, their intertextuality and their susceptibility to re-inscription under new stylistic gestures or novel iconographies,"<sup>387</sup> seem to be an apt metaphor of postmodern educational practices.

Seeing the concept of learning through the metaphor of apprenticeship enables an understanding of learning that is no longer connected to a universal and definite (globalized) structure, rather, the life-long process of gaining knowledge "will consist of a narrative affiliation of activities, topics, discussions, conversations, canon and novelty."<sup>388</sup>

Consequently, we can summarize this section on *learning* by stating that scholastic learning is characterized by its formal, verbal and textual communication through instruction. And as such, it has a strong link to institutionalized education that aims at giving large groups of the population basic knowledge and skills as preparation for life to come. Non-scholastic learning, on the other hand, focuses on participation in the daily practice of a profession with the aim to solve real-life situations through well-adjusted solutions that demand individual and group skills that are innovative, flexible and applicable. As such, it seems plausible to claim that the distinction of scholastic versus non-scholastic learning can be said to correspond with both the dualism versus holism, and universalism versus contextualism perspectives laid out in the former sections.

Thus, in relation to the military discourse on skill-acquisition in times of transformation, we can claim that the concept of the large and static invasion defense force, which focused on mass learning of basic military skills for the civilian population, as a foundation for an eventual (but rather unlikely) mobilization, can be primarily linked to a scholastic paradigm of learning. Likewise, the concept of the professionalized, flexible expeditionary defense forces, in which applicable skills for smaller and selected groups are emphasized, is largely connected to an experienced-based non-scholastic paradigm of learning.

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<sup>387</sup> Parker, *Reflective Teaching in the Postmodern World*, p. 149.

<sup>388</sup> *Ibid.* 152.

## Chapter Summary

The aim of this chapter has been two-fold. Firstly, it works as a description of the modern and postmodern worldview, so as to situate and conceptualize the theoretical framework of this dissertation. Secondly, as consequence of, and in distinction to, the description of *The Military Transformation* in Chapter 1 and the portrayal of the idea of a postmodern military in Chapter 2, this chapter shows how applying the perspective of either modernity or postmodernity on the understanding of identity, skill and learning, in foundation and effect, will alter our understanding of military skill-acquisition.

In conceptualizing the framework, the modern view is described as being closely connected to man's strive for control over nature through objective cognitive deliberation, where knowledge and truth are seen as universal entities found in rather causal structures. The postmodern, on the other hand, is described, in essence, as being different from the modern through personal involvement in the complexity of real life, thus, it finds knowledge and truth in the contextual understanding in which personal meaning is constructed.

As a result, when applying the modern postmodern dichotomy to identity, skill and learning, my inquiry suggests that the implications to the ontological and epistemological understanding of military skill-acquisition are somewhat fundamental.

In relation to the role of identity the inquiry implies an abandonment of a classic dualistic view of the human body where the mental and the physical are separated. The soldier ideal for the future must instead be based on an integrated view of human nature in which being a human [soldier] is understood as being expressed through an embodying and implementing presence in the world. Consequently, the military transformation should be seen as a transition from a clearly defined physical and objectified soldier, to a more mobile and subjectified soldier, whose individual, shifting-value preferences will be expressed in his or her exercise of soldiering skills.

Equally, in understanding the epistemological foundation of skill, there seems to be valid arguments for a loosening of the emphasis put on universalist epistemology where (modern) skills are seen as being constituted of rules and maxims, which are to be taken as being both guidelines in the execution of a skill and the evaluation of its performance in hindsight. Instead the soldiering ethos should, to a larger degree, be based on a contextualistic understanding in which (postmodern) skill is expressed through action, judgment, valuation and assessment; and being skilled is seen as a consequence of how good or bad you are at

solving practical tasks. Subsequently, the military transformation and its relation to the understanding of skill, should be viewed as a shift from rule-governed skill execution (a type of information processing activity based on analytic cognitive deliberation where rules, maxims and preplanned procedures play a defining role), towards involved participation in a community of practice (as a sort of ongoing habitual activity based on intuitive and experience-based practice, where the situation and practitioner's perceptual and emotional involvement in the skill execution play a key defining role).

Then finally, when understanding learning, it seems that a (post)modernization process would move the focus of learning away from a broad and general introduction to military skills for the civilian masses, towards an emphasis on a situated and applied approach to military skill learning. Accordingly, the military transformation on a pedagogical level should be viewed as a shift in focus from scholastic instructional principles fostered in educational institutions, towards a non-scholastic learning style (observation, copying, participation etc.) situated in the everyday practice of the workplace/community of practice.

In summing up this chapter on the theoretical framework from a modern towards a postmodern worldview in relation to *The Military Transformation*, it seems more than fair to argue that the transition from a large static invasion defense-based concept towards a flexible expeditionary defense-based concept resembles society's evolution from modernity with its focus on universalism, structure and objectivity, towards postmodernity with its responsiveness to contextualism, constructivism and complexity. Accordingly, there also seems to be a valid assertion to treat/label the *modernization* of NATO's defense and security policy with the restructuring of its national armed forces at the turn of the century as a *postmodernization* process rather than a modernization project.

Moreover, military transformation should be understood as being more than a change from one type of skill-set to another (e.g. invasion defense skills vs. expeditionary skills). Rather, it should be recognized as a foundational change to the philosophy of the armed forces.



## Chapter 4: Findings

### Research questions and introduction of papers

In the introduction to this thesis I stated that, going into this project, my interest with the military transformation involved the consequences it would have on how one perceives military skill-acquisition in what could be argued as a postmodern moment. Simply put, the main research question was formulated to be: *How do we develop (post)modern soldiers?* However, as I displayed in the former chapter, applying a postmodern perspective to [transformational] change acquires a critical view towards the current and established understanding of the field in question. Thus, embarking on such a journey is about seeking emancipation from the old, prevailing (and often taken-for-granted) ‘grand narrative’ by means of deconstructing and reconstructing the understanding of it; in this case ‘it’ being military skill-acquisition. So when addressing the research question, it is not sufficient to only focus on that which is to be (the postmodern), one also needs to tackle the past (that being the modern). Furthermore, it should be restated that my focus has not been directed towards the *didactics* of learning, but rather to look for, and hopefully, reveal the true ontological and epistemological foundations of a new military order of conduct for skill-acquisition.

### Initial Assumption and Sub-questions

Accordingly, the main research question needed an operationalization to capture these aforementioned intentions. Upon elaboration I found three simple but important sub-questions that stood out as being essentially relevant and reciprocally coherent to my project. The first addressed the nature of our general understanding of human skill and more precisely that of military skill. Thus, question #1 became ‘*How do we understand [military] skill?*’ The second sub-question evolved from the first in the assertion that if the old modern concept of military skill was ontologically and/or epistemologically different from the new concept of skill, would this not then change what it was to be skilled? Therefore, question #2 became ‘*What is it to be [militarily] skilled?*’ And finally, if the foundational aspects of skill and/or being skilled are different in an invasion-based defense concept (representing the modern) versus a flexible expeditionary-based defense concept (representing the postmodern), would this not imply that there should also be a corresponding pedagogical philosophy, even an alternative paradigm, for acquiring these different skills? So, sub-question #3 became ‘*How do we acquire military skills?*’

To respond to these questions idealistically, and perhaps rationally, it would seem that one ought to tackle them sequentially and one-by-one. Reality, however, has its own way of guiding you through such a mission. Thus, in many ways, it was the struggle of answering the third question that led to the revelation and undertaking of the two former questions. Furthermore, the three papers, though significantly different, do also overlap. To some extent all three papers provide answers to each sub-question, although from three angles and with different emphasis. As such, they all address different existential sides of ‘The (Post)modern Soldier’. Simply speaking, the first paper provides the most foundational outlook in an attempt to understand how the two “paradigms” view human nature and the body. In its pursuit, Paper I, uses a dualism versus holism approach to field the void. Thus, this paper tilts towards the former sub-questions, which in my project as a whole work to set up a dichotomic typology that serves as a foundation for the rest of the project. The second paper, which is the most balanced regarding the three sub-questions, builds on the first paper when elaborating on the concept of skill in a universalism versus contextualism framework. The third paper primarily underscores the latter sub-question, in an approach to reformulate and show a new, alternative way of thinking and doing skill-acquisition in military communities of practice, based on the findings of the two previous papers.

## **The Papers – The Narratives of Three (Post)modern Soldiers**

In this chapter I will present the papers that drove me towards a deeper clarity of the main topic of my project. As a result, I hope to bring together the different outlooks of the individual papers as a coherent whole. As a communicative construct, when presenting the project and the papers, I have come to talk of them – the three papers – as ‘*The Narratives of Three (Post)modern Soldiers*’: ‘*The Embodied Soldier*’, ‘*The Skillful Soldier*’ and ‘*The Learning Soldier*’.

### ***Paper I: The Embodied Soldier***

In this first paper I explore, from a Norwegian perspective with a global outreach, the implications of the ongoing military transformation in relation to how we understand the view of human nature and the body, and the implications this may have on what constitutes good soldiering skills within (post)modernized armed forces. As such, the study is a “paradigm” discussion of the invasion-based defense concept on the one hand, and the expeditionary-based defense force concept on the other.

Table 2: The Epistemological Foundation of Soldiering Skills seen in Light of the Perspectives of the Traditional Invasion Defense-Based Concept and the Contemporary Flexible Expeditionary Force-Based Defense Concept.

	<b>Invasion Defense-Based Concept (Modernity)</b>	<b>Expeditionary Force-Based Defense Concept (Postmodernity)</b>
Military paradigm	Volume Concerned Mobilization Forces	Ability Motivated Professional Military Communities of Practice
View of epistemology (View of knowledge)	Nature Sciences (Rational and Reductionist, whole -> part -> part -> etc.)	Phenomenological, Hermeneutical and Socio-cultural (holistic and integrated)
View of leadership structure	Hierarchic (based on formal positions)	Decentralized (based on experience and skill)
View of organizational structure	Bureaucratic (static or fixed formation)	Configurative (under constant development or flexible formation)
View of human nature and the body	Dualistic (Mind and/over Body)	Holistic/Integrated (Living-bodies-in-the-world)
View of skill-performance	Instrumentalist (rule-guided)	Situational and Contextual (experience-based)
View of performance level	Competent ("Good-enough") practice	Expert practice
View on the community of practice	Conscript/Mobilization	Professional/Active duty (INTOPS)
View of soldier identity	To <i>serve</i> as a soldier	To <i>be</i> a soldier

I start the paper by claiming that in relation to the military transformation, the understanding of the soldier as a human [being and] body is of essential character, all the time. It is the individual [soldier] who through his/her military [bodily] conduct is to implement the political and strategic intentions invested in the transformation. In other words, the essence of soldiering is literally to embody the State's willingness to use force when necessary. So in this sense, the soldier's role is all about embodying the State's intentions in [post]modernizing the armed forces. Accordingly, 'embodiment', in the paper, is understood as the knowledge, skills and values instilled in the soldier in the form of attitudes and character traits, which are expressed as human [soldier] actions that reflect this new ideal of soldiering.

The paper then links the invasion defense-based concept to the modern era and thus claims it to be a product of modernity, whilst connecting the flexible expeditionary force-based defense concept to the postmodern era, therefore, arguing that it encompasses the attributes of postmodernity. The paper goes on to show how these two operational concepts promote two different views of the human body. Firstly, the invasion defense paradigm, based on modern values such as objectivity, structure, hierarchy, bureaucracy and uniformity is explained as being rooted in Cartesian dualism which separates the mind from the body,

thus, alienating or de-humanizing the soldier. From this perspective the body is viewed as an instrument or a machine, which in turn devaluates it as being replaceable or even dispensable. Respectively, the flexible expeditionary concept is responsive to postmodern values like personal expertise, contextualization, decentralized leadership, and diversity, and is therefore argued as being sympathetic to phenomenological and sociocultural perceptions, which see human beings from an integrated holistic viewpoint. This leads to an understanding of human beings [soldiers] as being living bodies in the world. From a military point of view soldiers are re-humanized, and so, seen and valued for who they are. A more comprehensive overview of the findings are summarized in Table 2.

So what conclusions does this paper draw in response to the question of whether the transition from an invasion defense-based concept with its focus on mass learning, towards a flexible expeditionary force-based defense concept that fosters professionalism and expertise, promotes a new foundation for the acquisition of military skill? What is understood is that the transformational changes to the armed forces are so fundamental in character that if the (post)modernization of the NoAF is to be successful, a shift in the view taken of the [military] human body will be required.

### ***Paper II: The Skillful Soldier***

The second paper builds on the developmental construct established in the first paper. Moreover, the aim of the paper is to sketch out a typological framework useful as an epistemic foundation for different skill perspectives. Accordingly, within the greater project of the dissertation, the purpose of this paper is to bring conceptual clarification to the concept of skill, as it is seen in relation to modern and postmodern modes of armed forces.

The paper is divided into three parts in accordance with the three identified sub-questions: a) how is military skill defined? b) what it is to be militarily skilled? And c) how is military skill acquired?

In the first part *Universalism* and *Contextualism* are introduced as two opposing ethical/epistemological positions for defining ‘skill’. The first position finds support in the *Kantian categorical imperative* and argues that that actions should follow rules and maxims that not only could, but also should, be followed by all – hence, universalism. On the contrary, the second position, which is rooted in *Aristotelian virtue ethics* asserts that the situation leads one to act in a certain manner – hence, contextualism. Thus, in relation to

Table 3: An Overview of the Typological Sketch of the Epistemological Foundation for How We Can Understand and Debate Military Skill-acquisition

	<b>Universalistic Epistemology (Invasion defense-based concept)</b>	<b>Contextualistic Epistemology (Expeditionary force-based defense concept)</b>
	Modernity (universalism, structure and objectivity)	Postmodernity (constructivism, complexity and contextuality)
Military paradigm	Volume concerned mobilization forces	Ability-motivated professional military communities of practice
View on the soldiering ethos	Individual submission for authority	Ability to take and display initiative, flexibility and independency
View on human behavior	A following of rules and maxims	A response to context
View on knowledge as a basis for skill execution	Verbalized knowledge (theory-based)	Habitual knowledge (intuitive and experience-based)
View on the human nature and body	Dualistic (Mind and/over Body)	Holistic/Integrated (Living bodies in the world)
View on skill execution	Analytic information processing (based on cognitive and deliberate practice)	Ongoing habitual activity (based on intuitive and experience-based practice)
View on skill performance	Lower levels (rough, general and/unsubtle)	Higher levels (nuanced, explicit and situated)
View on pedagogical approach for skill-acquisition	Scholastic learning (rational/analytical deliberation)	Non-scholastic learning (perceptual and emotional involvement)
View on learning context	Disconnected from real-life practice (i.e. in school and out of theater training, drills and maneuvers)	Active practice participation in real-life situations (i.e. in theater operations)
View on learning	Behavioral change of permanent character	Behavioral change of continual and adaptive character

understanding ‘skill’ this set-up enables a framework that makes a distinction between what are seen as general and specific skills. Accordingly, the set-up is argued to be well-suited as an epistemological foundation for understanding skill in relation to the ongoing military transformation – from volume-concerned mobilization forces towards ability-motivated professional military communities of practice.

In the second part, seeking an understanding of what it is to be ‘skilled’, I draw a distinction between being skillful as a commodity of acquired *theoretical knowledge* and the habitual consequence of experience leading to *practical wisdom*. From an epistemological point of view the first category can be described as the type of knowledge we learn in schools, which is normally verbal and theoretical. The second category, on the other hand, is the type of knowledge one acquires through doing or practice in real-life situations, which is tacit, implicit and difficult to verbally communicate. Accordingly, this distinction has obvious

connections to the discourse of universalism versus contextualism, and, therefore, is regarded as both relevant and valuable in understanding what constitutes skillful soldiers in relation to the military transformation.

Finally, in the third part, which deals with the acquisition of ‘skill’, I follow up on the two former parts by applying a pedagogical division complementary to universalism and contextualism, namely that of the scholastic and non-scholastic learning paradigm. In brief, we can say that scholastic learning is characterized by being formal, verbal or textual in terms of its introduction in classrooms and schools and, thus, disconnected from practice, thereby it appears closely connected to a universalistic epistemology. Conversely, non-scholastic learning is characterized by being the direct opposite; it is based on active practice participation, personal experience, observation and so on. Non-scholastic learning is fittingly viewed as being strongly rooted in a contextualistic epistemology.

A more extensive summary of the total findings are presented in Table 3.

### ***Paper III: The Learning Soldier***

This, the third paper, takes its starting point where the former paper ends; by trying to find out how military skills are acquired. However, this paper is different from the previous two as it only addresses the ontology and epistemology for developing future military communities of practice, hence, flexible expeditionary forces. More precisely, this paper aims to elaborate on how situation dependent skills can be learned. Thus, the paper seeks to link the ongoing military transformation with the growing debate about practice-centered learning in general, and more specifically about apprenticeship-like forms of learning, such as *situated learning*.

As stated many times already, one of the main goals of the ongoing military transformation has been to enhance the operational status of the individual soldier and their units, so they can be deployed to conflict areas where and when the need arises, with capabilities best suited to the situation. Accordingly, (post)modernized soldiers will at any given time have to possess well-developed and applicable military skills. The assumption and assertion taken in this paper is that these types of skills – situation dependent skills – are best developed in and through the performance of the same skills. Seen from an ontological and epistemological perspective this imply that we adopt an understanding of skill-acquisition in which acquiring/learning of practical military skills must take place in conjunction with the environment of real-life military operations. This is an understanding of skill-acquisition

that builds on the famous motto of the American educational philosopher and pragmatist John Dewey (1859–1952), ‘Learning *by* doing’, and on more recent thinking about learning as being a situated social practice as ‘Learning *in* doing’.<sup>389</sup>

As a methodological grip, this paper uses Steinar Kvale and Klaus Nielsen’s metaphor of the learning landscape as a framework to identify and describe the learning resources and barriers of the military landscape. Kvale and Nielsen identified four essential aspects of learning as a social practice, which they labeled: learning in the community of practice; learning as professional-identity development; learning without formal teaching; and evaluation through practice.<sup>390</sup>

In applying their metaphor to the military as a community of practice I relabeled their aspects in coherence with a military context. The first aspect I relabeled ‘Learning in military communities of practice’. Here, it is argued that experiential learning forms, for example apprenticeship-like learning, emphasize learning through participation in a particular community of practice. Thus, it seems reasonable that observation and opportunities to participate in different military practice situations, in which participants from several communities of practice and generations are present, will be important learning resources in this respect.<sup>391</sup> Correspondingly, I show how a lack of opportunities to operate together with more experienced soldiers could be a barrier to skills acquisition, in that soldiers are not given the opportunity to observe the skills of others or to try out their own in real operations.

The second aspect is addressed and relabeled ‘Learning as the development of a military identity’. In this section it is claimed that putting emphasis on the community of practice, rather than on the individual, will lead to an understanding of learning as being the development of a professional identity, because the learner (soldier), through participation in the military community of practice, will gradually assimilate the knowledge and attitudes

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<sup>389</sup> See, for example, Lave and Wenger, *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation*, which was one of the first books published by Cambridge University Press in a continuing series entitled *Learning in Doing: Social, Cognitive and Computational Perspectives*.

<sup>390</sup> Kvale and Nielsen, “Landskab for læring” [Landscapes of Learning] pp. 237-260); Nielsen and Kvale ”Vandringer i praktikkens læringslandskab,” [Travels through the practical learning landscape]. (My translation)

<sup>391</sup> In their book on how real-life experience shaped good leaders in different eras, Warren Bennis and Robert J. Thomas [*Geeks & Geezers: How Era, Values, and Defining Moments Shape Leaders* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press), p. 176] emphasise learning across generations, organisations, and cultures. “Building and maintaining networks across generations, organizations, and cultures is a way to learn continuously and to leverage the insights of people who have a genuine interest in your growth and success.”

emphasized by the particular environment in its utilization of skills.<sup>392</sup> Therefore, basing a military learning culture on apprenticeship thinking may lead soldiers to adopt a specific military identity characterized by the norms and values of the particular military community of practice to which they belong. Accordingly, it is argued that the challenge faced by a modernized defense force will be to contribute to a military practice that incorporates the expectations set out in various national and supranational steering documents.<sup>393</sup> At the individual level, it is, in particular, the development of a military identity founded on the ability to take initiative and act flexibly on an independent basis which appears to be the educational ideal that will have to form the basis for the acquisition of skills in [post]modernized professional military communities of practice.<sup>394</sup>

In applying Kvale and Nielsen's third aspect, it is relabeled 'Learning of the military skill without formal teaching'. Here, it is taken almost as a precondition that when learning takes place in participation of practice there is an implicit message that learning, as in the apprenticeship, is not predominantly associated with formal teaching. It is more likely that learning will take place in a variety of practice situations, in which no professional teachers are present and no direct teaching is provided. Thus, it is advocated that the learning of military skills on the basis of this learning perspective challenges soldiers, instead, to make use of the resources that are already present in the military community of practice, which, it is claimed, involves such possibilities as learning through exercise, practice, imitation and identification, bodily learning, instrument learning, and learning through teaching by others. Subsequently, it is suggested that learning through practice may be hindered if the practice presents little challenge and lacks meaning, or if exercises and training lack realism.

The fourth and final aspect is relabeled 'Learning through evaluation in military practice'. Here, learning is argued to be a commodity of the relationship between how the learner (soldier) evaluates his/her action in relation to a perceived norm or standard. This makes the soldier's reflection before, during and after the skill-execution a powerful tool for learning. Thus, it is identified and discussed how learning as evaluation in communities of practice

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<sup>392</sup> Lave and Wenger, *Situated Learning*.

<sup>393</sup> From a Norwegian perspective, I am thinking particularly of documents such as: *The Alliance's Strategic Concept* (NATO Press release, NAC-S(99)65) which describes the strategic aims of the NATO alliance; the Ministry of Defence (MoD) military strategic document *Strength and Relevance: strategic concept for the Norwegian Armed Forces*, which describes the overarching goal of the MoD regarding how the NoAF are to operate; the NoAF Code of Conduct, which is the NoAFs' own document describing the values that are expected to guide the use of military power; and the NoAF Joint Operational Doctrine, which describes how the NoAF are to develop and apply military force.

<sup>394</sup> Wong, *Stifling Innovation*, p. 2.



Table 4: An Overview of the Military Transformation’s Implication on Military Skill-Acquisition

	<b>Invasion Defense-Based Concept (Modern)</b>	<b>Expeditionary Force-Based Defense Concept (Postmodern)</b>
Ontology	Detached (Mind and/over Body)	Embodied (Living-bodies-in-the-world)
Epistemology	Context-free (Universalistic)	Situated (Contextualistic)
Learning paradigm	Theoretical (Scholastic Paradigm)	Experiential (Non-Scholastic Paradigm)

will take place primarily through immediate comments and hints from the surroundings, be it colleagues, superiors, bystanders and others who are able to influence the soldier’s perception of quality in his or her skill-execution. It is therefore claimed that the ability to learn from one’s own experience (and others) could become an important tool for learning. And consequently, although implicitly stated, the lack of a performance culture which allows for a sort of ‘trial and error’ approach, and instead focus on bureaucratic and authoritarian control could work as an antagonist, and thus, be a barrier for the development of soldier and unit initiative, flexibility and independency – the presumed qualities of good postmodern soldiers and units.

## Chapter Summary

In summing up the three papers constituting the basis of this dissertation, ‘*On developing (Post)modern Soldiers*’, I have metaphorically portrayed them as being narratives of three (post)modern soldiers – namely ‘*The Embodied Soldier*,’ ‘*The Skillful Soldier*’ and ‘*The Learning Soldier*’.

Consequently, the findings of the three papers suggest that the implication of a military transformation responsive to a modern towards postmodern viewpoint of military skill-acquisition, is a move from an ontology based on Cartesian dualism, with an epistemology grounded in a universalistic understanding of true knowledge and taught in a scholastic manner, towards that of an ontology built on phenomenological holism where the epistemology is founded on a contextualistic interpretation/construction of (meaningful) knowledge and acquired through meaningful participation in everyday-life as living-bodies-in-the-world.

In summary, as shown in table 4, my findings imply that the military transformation’s proposition to military skill-acquisition is a shift from a detached ontology, context-free epistemology and theoretical learning paradigm, towards an embodied ontology, situated epistemology and experiential learning paradigm.



## Chapter 5: Summing up the Project and Reflecting on its Implications

In this, the final chapter of the thesis, I will try to pull together the different layers in order to lift the project out of the three separate papers and make/display a larger whole – that of the idea of *The Postmodern Soldier*. I will do this, firstly, by summing up the structure of the general argument presented in the dissertation, so as to reunite with the rationale for the overall project and make space for some meaningful reflections, and hopefully even find some possible closure at the end of the journey. Thus, with this in place, I will then go on to point out some of the consequences I believe my findings will, or should, have in application regarding the military transformation as an ongoing postmodernization process. To close, I will share some reflections on the implications this study might have in regards to research on developing postmodern soldiers in the years to come.

### The Structure of the Argument

Foundational to my argument “On Developing Postmodern Soldiers” has been recognizing the importance of **global changes** in worldview, all over the western hemisphere, in the move from *modernity* towards *postmodernity*. In short, it can be described as a revolutionary move in evolutionary increments from the modern world with the *raison d'état* as its moral imperative, towards a new world (dis)order characterized by the tearing down of all kinds of borders – physical, social or mental. (Thus, the modern world was recognized as situated within Weberian nation-state monopoly with emphasis on state sovereignty, hierarchy and bureaucracy. The postmodern social order, on the other hand, does not “emphasize sovereignty or the separation of domestic and foreign affairs.”<sup>395</sup> Instead it builds on openness and transparency, across any kind of borders.)

An essential feature of this global trend, especially in relation to this thesis, was the breakup of a rather clear-cut two-block world society that characterized the Cold War era. Not only did it change the face of the earth through the dissolving of old nation-states and the emergence of new nations (and borders), but also by ending “the political systems of three centuries: the balance of power and the imperial urge”.<sup>396</sup>

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<sup>395</sup> Robert Cooper, *The Breaking of nations: Order and Chaos in the Twenty-First Century* (Atlantic Books: London, 2004) p. 27.

<sup>396</sup> *Ibid*, p. 16.

The Cold War brought together the system of balance and empire and made the world a single whole, unified by a single struggle for supremacy and locked in a single balance of terror. But both balance and empire have today ceased to be the ruling concepts in Europe and, as a consequence, the world no longer forms a single political system.<sup>397</sup>

Conversely, the disintegration of the Iron Curtain and the two-block society paved the way for a more open and pluralistic world society, which subsequently, led to a growth in global relationships of culture, people and economic activity across ethnic, national, political and ideological borders.

On a **societal level of change** this meant that the change in worldview facilitated new ways of being, living and doing. Whereas modern life saw the likes of rationality, objectivity and uniformity as an ideal of human and societal progress, the postmodern embraced diversity, openness and transparency as its standard. Thus, in a Kuhnian sense, the societal change embeds a paradigmatic change on the ontological and epistemological level of being human.

As I have portrayed with this thesis, these changes also manifested themselves on a **security and defense policy level of change**. In the modern era, security and defense policy focused on state sovereignty and territorial homeland defense, while new policies developed in the aftermath of the Cold War find themselves increasingly submitting towards supra-national defense-integration commitments and out-of-area operations. Accordingly, ‘The Military Transformation,’ as the supranational (post)modernization process of NATO, and subsequently its member nations such as Norway, fosters a pivotal change on military conduct.

Moreover, military transformation became almost a synonym for **militarily (institutional) change**. That is to say, a change from the emphasis during the Cold War period on large, static and capacity-intensive invasion defense systems, towards smaller, configurative and capability-motivated expeditionary defense forces. Thus, in essence the change promoted a move away from a quantity-driven armed forces structure based on “good-enough” competency, in favor of a quality-focused force structure where experienced-based expertise became its renewed ideal of (military) conduct.

Such changes to the institutional level also found expression in **changes on the militarily operational level**. In brief, the changes on this level could be described as the principal abandonment of the mobilization of a civilian cadre into predefined units, with a limited number of defined tasks, trained for attritional warfare as its instrument of (conducting) war.

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<sup>397</sup> Ibid, p. 16.

Instead, adopting the principle of preparing professional units for participation in international joint (cross-service) missions, to be ready to take on a multitude of assignments, conducting hybrid warfare.

The expectation that a military force should be capable at any time, to go anywhere, to deal with anything, impacts hugely on the **military role perception and identity** of the soldier and his or her community of practice. Thus, change on this level implies that developing soldiers and their units is not focused around one single role perception (by itself or in sequel) but, rather, as a maturity process of enabling a holistic role identity which embeds a variety of contextual skills, enabling them to act out a multitude of roles (e.g. humanitarian, peacekeeper, warrior, homeland defender, etc.) when needed.

In summary, these aforementioned changes have a momentous impact on the level of **military culture/ethos**. Whereas the modern invasion defense fosters a military culture/ethos based on authoritarian leadership and obedience (in the sense of being able to instrumentally take and execute a given order), the more postmodern expeditionary force needs to nurture a culture/ethos that develops soldiers who are adaptable, thus enabling them to take and hold initiative in a flexible manner, based on independent decision-making. Or as it is stated in the NoAF Joint Operational Doctrine of 2007 (NoAF JOD07):

Today's complex operations can never be fully covered by manuals and rules of engagement. Our ability to fulfill our tasks depends rather on individuals whose judgment is well developed and mature.<sup>398</sup>

In a sense, this is where this project started; with the curiosity towards how such soldiers *whose judgment is well-developed and mature* are developed. Thus, we can say that the aim of this project has been to follow up on the changes, described above, by sorting out the implication for the level of **military skill-acquisition** – in the sense of becoming a good soldier in a *postmodern* moment/era. When addressing issues of learning, as military skill-acquisition obviously is, it is easy to start debating the didactics (the whats, hows and whys). However, my initial assumption, and therefore also course of action, was a different one. I believed the foundational understanding, or background, of the question '*how do we develop postmodern soldiers?*' was of such deep and foundational substance that I had to go beyond the didactics – I wanted to find out if and how the military transformation (essentially) proposed a different ontological and epistemological foundation for military

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<sup>398</sup> Norwegian Defence Command and Staff College, *Norwegian Armed Forces Joint Operational Doctrine*, paragraph 0614.

skill-acquisition. Thus, my work/dissertation is best understood as being an inquiry into the ontological and epistemological foundation of (military) skill-acquisition in the age of military transformation.

## The Consequence in Application

As stated earlier in the thesis, Moskos, when fielding his typology of the modern, late modern and postmodern military, was careful in pointing out that it was a developmental construct, based upon observations of the past deducing ideal-typical characteristics at a “future point by which past and present trends can be identified and appraised”.<sup>399</sup> Thus, he underscored the typology as being a model and not a prophecy. Accordingly, he advocated caution in its application.

Our concern is to grasp the whole, to place the salient facts within a framework that will enable us to study the main trends of institutional development in military organization. The typology, in other words, is offered as a guide to systematize current research findings. We must avoid using it mechanically to bring closure to our thinking about these matters. Its use, rather, is to help bring focus to ongoing research and if need be, to set the stage for revising the analytic framework we are about to present.<sup>400</sup>

Like Moskos, I believe the conceptual framework of my thesis, along with its findings, to be a **developmental construct** based on ideal-typical characteristics, and as such, it is not intended to present a prophecy, but rather, to challenge the existing analytical framework of how we understand and debate military skill-acquisition in the age of military transformation.

Thus, the typology (with its findings) presented in this thesis is not meant to, and therefore, should not be ‘mechanically’ applied by the armed forces as a sort of blueprint for its conduct in the years ahead. However, I believe there is substantial support and verification in the argument given throughout the thesis that the ontology and epistemology of the modern era are insufficient as *the* foundational understandings of *developing postmodern soldiers*. As such, the thesis as a whole presents an alternative way that should be deemed relevant when understanding and debating military conduct. And so I believe there are valuable aspects from this thesis that should be taken in consideration where and whenever learning is debated within a military context.

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<sup>399</sup> Moskos, “Toward a Postmodern Military,” p. 14.

<sup>400</sup> Ibid, p. 14.

## On the Military ...

If I were to accentuate a couple of aspects that I believe to be of pivotal importance if the ongoing transformation is to be a genuine *postmodernization* process, as opposed to just a modernization project, it would be hard to get past the **role of language** in deconstructing and reconstructing meaning and, likewise, the **role of education** in making sure that the individual within the institution is in tune with its new ethos – that of diversity and difference.

### *... Language*

Within the postmodern mode there is a strong belief that the way we think and speak is a major influence on the way we do or act.<sup>401</sup> As I have shown, this notion finds resonance within military discourse as well: ‘how war is fought depends, at least in part, on the concepts of war held by those who participate in it: “the idea of war itself is a major factor in the way in which it is waged”’.<sup>402</sup>

Consequently, when revolutionary changes take place, as *The Military Transformation* is destined to do, language seems to become key in communicating the distinction of new meaning. For instance, transformation seen as a Kuhnian shift of paradigm, in essence, signals a break from mainstream thought (e.g. that of the invasion defense paradigm) in favor of a new worldview (e.g. that of the expeditionary defense paradigm), where the common accepted beliefs and understandings of the prior are no longer relevant in describing the new situation/order/phenomenon. Thus, to communicate such a shift, ultimately, necessitates an appropriate/nuanced language that is able to describe the new order/paradigm in a way that distinguishes it from the past, yet at the same time, is capable of transferring the relevant gestalt of the new order/paradigm in a way that enables the recipient to make adequate sense of it, so as to be able to instigate the necessary actions needed to live out the new identity. In essence, language should be seen as the tool for creating new narratives, which means that it holds the opportunity to deconstruct and reconstruct/create new and different narratives or meaning. Thus, in relation to military skill-acquisition, embodying the new ethos of the expeditionary mindset involves the ability

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<sup>401</sup> See for example Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, Corrected edition translated by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), and Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*.

<sup>402</sup> Johann Sommerville, ‘Ideas of War,’ *The London Review of Books*, Vol. 10, No. 19, 27 October 1988, quoted in Richard M. Swain, ‘The Hedgehog and the Fox: Jomini, Clausewitz, and History,’ *Naval War College Review*, vol. 43, no. 4 (Autumn 1990), p. 168. Cited from Høiback, *On the Justification of military Doctrine*, p. 151.

to communicate the nuances of postmodern soldiering in a way that makes it intuitively understandable not only to its own community of practice, but also to those who task them with their missions and assignments. Bear in mind that the characteristics of (postmodern) missions and assignments are likely to be constantly evolving, require ongoing adaptation to the situation, and thus, demand a continuous focus on developing new skills. Subsequently, a military grounded in the postmodern moment should relentlessly seek to refine its language so as to discover and exploit new meaning in developing soldiers and units that are able to deal with the dynamic challenges they face in the operational theatres around the globe.

Then, if nothing else, this thesis has shown that by the use of language it is possible to deconstruct the common image and purpose of the soldier as an institution and human being (embedded in a specific conceptual view), and thus, (through the use of a different view) enable a reconstruction of the meaning of being a soldier through the use of a distinctively new and different language.

### **... Education**

Moreover, in doing so, the thesis also displays the true virtue of the postmodern concern/inquiry, namely that of questioning anything that is taken-for-granted. Or as Usher and Edwards put it: “To be located in the postmodern is precisely to question all-encompassing perspectives.”<sup>403</sup> This then leads me to the second aspect I would like to accentuate – **the role of military education**.

As this thesis has shown, the introduction of the flexible expeditionary-based defense concept changes the ideal of a good soldier from one who was seen as willing to succumb to authority, accepting and conducting a narrowly defined role/function developed through drills, leaving him or her with little intrinsic value, towards a soldier ethos based on the ability to take initiative, act flexibly and independently in circumstances that are unfamiliar, chaotic, rapidly changing and where applying military power is seen as being based on the fact that “individual judgment is well developed and mature”.<sup>404</sup> This change encompasses an understanding of the soldier as having the ability to be critical towards whatever presents itself to him or her, in any given situation.

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<sup>403</sup> Usher and Edwards, *Postmodernism and Education*, p. 28.

<sup>404</sup> Norwegian Defence Command and Staff College, *Norwegian Armed Forces Joint Operational Doctrine*, paragraph 0614.



Therefore, in connection to military education, we can assert that to develop a postmodern military would be to cultivate critical and reflective thinking in the soldier. Accordingly, soldiers would need to learn to question the world as it is presented, especially that which is taken-for-granted or ‘given’.

“To think in a postmodern way is to actually question the appropriateness of ‘application’ in the relationship of theory, thought and analysis to practice. The value of being located in the postmodern is the greater possibility for disruption of the ‘given’; and in education there are far too many givens in need of disruption.”<sup>405</sup>

Seen in relation to the military transformation, it follows that military education has an important task in developing soldiers and officers that are able to unmask the epistemological foundation of the invasion defense-based concept as a valid framework for developing military capabilities in the twenty-first century. Or as John I. Alger, in his book *The Quest for Victory*, points out when looking for the “principles of war”:

Where did the principles come from? Whose principles are they? What, if any, is their value? Such questions have been rarely asked, and when they have been asked, the conclusions have been shallow, misleading, and in many cases incorrect. Perhaps the principles have been so convincingly presented in the primers of the military profession that they become intuitively accepted by all who deal with military theory.<sup>406</sup>

As such, the importance of military education in *postmodernizing* the military is that of being allowed/“forced” to participate in academic debates, discussions and textual deconstructions, so as to discover the deeper meaning and consequence of different theoretical perspectives and personal views held by oneself or others. Thus, *engaged* playing with vocabulary and language will give the soldier-*students* the ability to view a situation from different angles/perspectives.

In contrast to traditionally passive, discovery/acquisition models of learning, in which the learner comes to know the text, postmodern learning involves coming to control the text, to be able to dismantle its rhetorical structure and refashion its themes to a new, preferred purpose.<sup>407</sup>

As such, on a larger scale it will help to develop soldiers and military units that through dialogue, narratives and metaphors will be able to understand the fundamentals of applying

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<sup>405</sup> Usher and Edwards, *Postmodernism and Education*, p. 31.

<sup>406</sup> John I., Alger, *The Quest for Victory: The History of the Principles of War* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1982), p. xix.

<sup>407</sup> Parker, *Reflective Teaching in the Postmodern World*, p. 148.

military force in a nuanced, differentiated and plural way, to a multitude of different contexts.

To sum up, we can say that the role of education is to make visible the nuances and differences of military paradigms and practice. Nevertheless, this conclusion points in the direction of the need for knowledge of precise military understanding and conduct, which in turn leads to the role and purpose of more research within the field.

## **Implications on Military Skill-Acquisitional Research**

If we are to, more or less, accept the findings in this thesis, we also must accept that the military transformation, in a rather pivotal way, has changed the concept of military conduct. Thus, what we know about soldiering from research that takes the modern ontology and epistemology of military conduct as its implicit and foundational view is that it seems to be less valid in fostering/developing skillful soldiers in the years ahead.

However, accepting the postmodern standpoint also means that we should treat all knowledge or science with profound skepticism and engaged critique – which will include my own findings and elaborations, together with any prophecy towards the future (scientific or not). Accordingly, there seem to be valid and relevant arguments for more research into the field of developing skillful postmodern soldiers (and units).

Principally, I see at least two viable paths that may be essential to explore in future military skill-acquisitional research. The first would be to encourage further research in the direction set out in this dissertation, which implies there are still issues to tackle and (critically) investigate in relation to the idea of a postmodern soldier, so as to gain a more profound understanding of the ontological and epistemological foundation of postmodern military skill-acquisition than we have today. A second direction of interest would be to endorse research that *looks for (harder) evidence*, which indicates that a developmental construct (like my own research) only gets us so far in developing a foundational framework for understanding skill-acquisition in a postmodern era.

## **More Critical Investigation into the Idea of a Postmodern Soldier**

Even though my project was definitely not the first to dig into the idea of a postmodern soldier, I still believe it to have opened up some new territory within the discourse, which is worth consideration in future research in the field. With reference to this dissertation, and the need for more critical investigation, there should be reasonable argumentation in favor

of digging deeper into the narratives of the three postmodern soldiers already identified, and, in addition, to seek out other different and diverse soldiers (narratives).

### ***The Three Postmodern Soldiers Revisited***

A driving force in my construction of the postmodern soldier was the critique of the modern soldier as an apt understanding for developing applicable soldiers in the age we live. As such, it could be argued that my perception of the postmodern soldier carries a somewhat unbalanced view in its favor. Thus, there is bound to be relevant and legitimate critique of its appropriateness that could, or even should, be confronted in an open discourse.

For instance, in '*The Embodied Soldier*' it is argued that, among other qualities, the (post)modernization process involves a re-humanization process in terms of viewing human conduct and the body. As the paper is written, this seems to be portrayed as an unquestionably good thing. But is it so clear-cut? Military affairs in general, and war, in particular, are perhaps above all recognized by such character traits as violence, lethality and danger – all seemingly good reasons for de-humanizing the individual soldier conduct. So, could there be reasonable arguments proposed against such a development. To be able to deconstruct and reconstruct has the perquisite that we know what we are trying to dismantle. Thus, it would be extremely valuable to identify these opposing arguments, in order for them to be addressed in an open space, and be debated and dealt with accordingly.

Another example worth noting is connected to *The Skillful Soldier* construct. Here I used a universalism versus contextualism typology to define the boundaries of what conceptualizes being skillful in modern or postmodern military organizations. The way in which the argument is put forward seems to show these as the only two positions. Interestingly and intriguingly, however, the postmodern view advocates diversity and difference. Thus, should we have to choose one perspective, or should we not expect there to be room for both perspectives, side-by-side? If so, how is this to be? Consequently, to take the postmodern view seriously would mean looking for other typologies, characteristics or fundamentals that equally could shed valuable light on this construct?

Yet another reflection worth mentioning is related to *The Learning Soldier*. Here I have portrayed postmodern learning in relation to an apprenticeship model of learning, namely the metaphor of the learning landscape outlined by Kvale and Nielsen. A prerequisite of good communities of practice seems to be the actual existence of relevant competence within, or in reach of, the community, and that the culture within the community is open to

new impulses, therefore ensuring adaptability with which to meet new challenges. Yet, what if there is no expertise or even experience present in the everyday practice of the community, who is then to set the standard? Or, what if the culture in itself is not open-minded and adaptable to change; then what do we do? Are we still to advocate apprenticeship as the way ahead? Such challenges are likely to be met when confronted with reality, therefore, the venture to gain more knowledge and wisdom in this area should be seen as vitally important.

### ***Any More Soldiers?***

A dissertation is a limited endeavor, thus, there are bound to be many fields left unexplored or only opened as for others to carry on; as is the case with this project.

One of the main issues with this thesis has been to look for an *epistemological* foundation for skill-acquisition. Throughout the project in general and in ‘*The Skillful Soldier*’ in particular, I have used a dichotomic separation between theoretical and practical knowledge. This is a rather simple and unsubtle construct that has been purposeful in fielding my proposition (for the need of a new epistemology in relation to the changes put forward by the transformation). However, if the new (dis)order – contemplated in the flexible expeditionary-based defense concept – is to be seen as attributing the postmodern characteristics like contextuality, complexity and constructivism, then we should most certainly anticipate that the epistemology will encompass a much more diverse and multifaceted understanding of its knowledge than that of being either theoretical or practical. Such taxonomies already exist in the literature of other professions. For instance, in an attempt to explain the knowledge in ‘The Learning Economy’, Bengt-Åke Lundvall and Björn Johnsen divided knowledge into four categories: know-what, know-why, know-who (when and where) and know-how.<sup>408</sup> Such taxonomy, they said, “should make it easier to analyse the institutional set-up of the learning economy.”<sup>409</sup> Accordingly, I believe it would be relevant and a good investment of time to take a closer look at what kind of knowledge is foundational for the postmodern soldier’s skill-acquisition and skill-performance. As such, it would make up the narrative of ***The Knowledgeable Soldier***.

A corresponding, but distinctively different, issue is the role of *education* in developing postmodern soldiers. Not surprisingly, in the process of writing ‘*The Skillful Soldier*’ one of

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<sup>408</sup> Bengt-Åke Lundvall and Björn Johnsen, “The Learning Economy.” *Journal of Industry Studies* 1, no. 2 December: pp.24-32.

<sup>409</sup> Ibid, p. 27.

the reviewers addressed this issue. If non-scholastic learning is preferable over scholastic learning, what then will be the role for military academia in the future? Has it lost its value, and thus, should be dismantled, or perhaps it could instead be deconstructed and given new meaning; and as such, still play a vital and important role in developing tomorrow's soldiers? I should say that I myself believe military academies will have an even greater role to play in the future than in the past, though the role will be different precisely because of the task of developing postmodern soldiers – who need to be able to take initiative and act flexibly on an independent level. To be able to do this, I believe, they have to be cultivated in the art of being critical, reflective and nuanced – all aspects of the postmodern and virtues fostered through higher education. This is a notion supported in the educational philosophy literature on education and the postmodern.<sup>410</sup> Hence, such a project could contemplate the narrative of *The Educated Soldier*.<sup>411</sup>

### **... looking for (harder) evidence**

My project was not set out to be an empirical one; therefore, I do not know to what degree my developmental construct and deliberations reflect the perceived understanding of military skill and skill-acquisition, let alone the ontology and epistemology of it within different parts of the armed force community. However, testing the idea of the postmodern soldier against the reality of real-life experience and understanding I would consider to be a more than a relevant path forward.

Such an empirical study could easily be conceptualized around the same foundational questions used in this thesis (How do we understand military skill? What is it to be militarily skilled? And, how do we acquire military skills?), and conducted through field observations and follow-up interviews. I believe such an approach would enable the

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<sup>410</sup> Usher and Edwards, *Postmodernism and Education*; Parker, *Reflective Teaching in the Postmodern World*; Løvlie, et al., (eds.), *Educating Humanity*.

<sup>411</sup> And there are definitely other most relevant issues/narratives that could be dealt with. Based on the findings and the literature read, cited and not cited in this dissertation, I can at least name '*The Ethical Soldier*' with the following keywords; Abu Graib, "The Strategic Corporal" (Charles C. Krulak, "The Strategic Corporal: Leadership in the Three Block War," *Marines Magazine*, January 1999), "Should Soldiers Think Before they Shoot" (Jørgen W. Eriksen, "Should Soldiers Think before They Shoot?" *Journal of Military Ethics*, Vol. 9, no. 3, 2010, pp. 195-218); '*The Humanitarian Soldier*' (deconstructing The Warrior Ethos, (Military Review, "Special Edition on The Army Profession and Ethics." In cooperation with the Centre for the Army Profession and Ethics, *Military Review*, September 2010); The Promise of the Blue Helmets; Norway The Land of the Nobel Peace Prize (Håkan Edström, Nils Terje Lunde and Janne Haaland Matlary (eds.), *Krigerkultur i en fredsnaasjon: Norsk militærprofesjon i endring [A Warrior Culture in a Peace Nation: Norwegian Military Profession in Transition]* (Oslo: Abstrakt Forlag AS, 2009)), and '*The Supranational Soldier*' (The new NATO, World Police, Towards an alliance-integrated defense force (Matlary and Østerud (eds.), *Mot et avnasjonalisert forsvar? [Towards a denationalized defense force?]*).

respondents (soldiers, officers and political decision-makers) to elaborate their own thoughts on military skill-acquisition in general and more precisely on identity, skill and learning through the use of their personal and communal language. In consequence, we could gain substantial knowledge about different military communities of practice's cultural and lived understanding of military skill-acquisition, which in relation to the more ideal and thus theoretical perspective laid out in this thesis, would most certainly constitute some new and relevant challenges that need to be encountered on the way towards greater understanding of developing postmodern soldiers.

Taking into consideration that the postmodern condition is especially receptive to the likes of difference, plurality, complexity, ambiguity etc., the study should try to capture some of this essence by sampling narratives from a diverse cohort of military communities (land, sea, air; operational, maintenance, staff), in different periods of service (before, during and after participation in military operations) and from a range of contexts (school, garrison and operational).

### ***In the operational environment***

Seen from a non-scholastic learning perspective, learning takes place in the doing of the community of practice. From a military perspective this then implies that skill-acquisition is a commodity of the military praxis, the conduct of military skills, in the operational theatre. As such, an empirical study of how learning is perceived and actually takes place in the operational environment would be of immense value to the understanding and professional debate of military skill and skill-acquisition.

### ***In the Garrison environment***

The non-deployed, professional armed force is normally situated in a 'garrison-environment'. This is its training arena, the place for preparation and evaluation, before and after deployment. It is not unusual for soldiers and their unit to spend a five-to-one time ratio in the garrison environment versus deployment into an operational theater. Subsequently, we can expect that much time is used in developing, what are perceived to be, the necessary skills for the next assignment outside of the theater. Moreover, we can clearly assert that how the soldier and unit understand the nature of military skill and skill-acquisition must be of vital importance for how it prepares and evaluates, and thus, makes the necessary adjustments to enable future success. In the postmodern military, contextuality, that of the ability to be and act flexibly and adaptively to the situation, is

deemed pivotal. Thus, preparing and training at home, “out-of-area,” seems to be a contradiction in terms. Therefore, what follows is the potential for future research regarding the relation between the operational environment and the training environment. Accordingly, research that seeks a deeper understanding of the resources and barriers of the training field appears to be of great relevance.

### ***In the military academic environment***

Traditionally, military education, and thus, soldiers’ and, especially, officers’ foundational military learning takes place in a military school context, where military theory and doctrine hold up the high ground. Consequently, school staff in general and faculty members, like teachers and instructors in particular, have a strong influence on the military recruits/cadets/students. Thus, we can assert that knowledge of their understanding of military skill and skill-acquisition would be rather pivotal when setting out on a transformational process of the magnitude we have witnessed over the last couple of decades.

A second issue to explore within military academies is the curricula. As one reviewer challenged me in the reviewing process; “to what extent does the content of military education today reflect lacunae in (the much-needed) contextualism? Does the curriculum reflect a tension between invasion-defence ideas and more contemporary expeditionary-force imports? To what extent can those tensions be seen as caused by a new professional philosophy?”<sup>412</sup> I recognize these as essential questions that should not be left un-tackled. Accordingly, to examine the curriculum (of their course plans) for its content in relation to the transformation seems to be an essential and reasonable endeavor for any research establishment in search of further knowledge on military conduct in the twenty-first century.

### ***In the “lobby”***

‘The Military Transformation’ is a supranational defense and security political project. Even though its implications towards military skill-acquisition are most strongly felt at the armed forces level and lower in the hierarchy, it still is owned, nurtured and defended at the top of the defense and security policy level. Thus, the legitimacy of the idea of the postmodern

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<sup>412</sup> Reviewer #2, to “The Skillful Soldier.”

soldier truly lies at the hands of the political decision-makers. Consequently, their voice of understanding is an influential one, and should be addressed accordingly.

To sum up, military skill-acquisitional research that sets out to go *looking for harder evidence* in some kind of protraction of this dissertation implies that we test the idea of the postmodern soldier against reality, in the sense of uncovering what conceptions of identity, skill and learning are to be found among soldiers, military leaders and perhaps even those at the top of the defense and security political level.



## Epilogue

When embarking on this project '*On Developing (Post)modern Soldiers*' I was intrigued by the pedagogical challenges that *The Military Transformation* was bound to impose on the military skill-acquisitional level. My own military and educational background, however, told me to be skeptical and cautious in expecting the skill-acquisitional changes to be more than merely didactical. Thus, my aim was to make an inquiry into the ontological and epistemological foundations of skill-acquisition by investigating relevant conceptions like military identity, skill and learning, in the hope of finding new meaning that could work as a foundation for debating how to develop postmodern soldiers in the age of military transformation.

In hindsight this thesis should, in essence, be seen as an effort to deconstruct old meaning (skill-acquisition in the invasion defense era) and to reconstruct new (skill-acquisition in the expeditionary defense era), so as to enable a more nuanced and knowledgeable debate on the development of postmodern soldiers among scholars, politicians, strategists, practitioners and others who have an interest in the field in question.

Essentially, my study shows that the ontological and epistemological foundation of, respectively, the invasion defense-based concept (as an expression of modern armed forces) and the expeditionary force-based defense concept (as the manifestation of the postmodern armed forces) depicts two almost diametrically different understandings of that which constitutes good military skills. In consequence, I believe the dissertation as a whole proposes a new ontology and epistemology that are philosophically more valid and substantially more relevant in developing postmodern soldiers. However, inline with the postmodern ethos, it should be mentioned again that my suggestion of a new understanding must not be seen as the only viable path ahead, thus my writing, together with any other proposals, should be met with equal skepticism and critique as I myself have fielded towards the modern in this dissertation.

Therefore, at the end of this project, there seems to be valid argumentation for understanding the military transformation as a (post)modernization process and, likewise, relevant claims for more knowledge of the implications this instigates for armed forces communities around the globe.



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## Errata

The **acknowledgments** have been updated and layout for the complete dissertation has been accustomed to fit the general description put forward in “Råd for oppsett og layout av manus” [Advice for the setup and layout of the manuscript] sent out by the Faculty of Educational Sciences.

In the **Introduction to the Field of Inquiry** there has been made two corrections.

- 1) In the original manuscript footnote no. 1 (page 1) said: “The phrase ‘New World Disorder’ is meant to contrast the phrase ‘New World Order’, signifying that the”. This has been corrected to the following text: “The phrase ‘New World Disorder’ is meant to contrast the phrase ‘New World Order’, signifying that the changes are understood to be of a rather dissolving character. I borrow it from Alexander McKenzie, ‘New Wars’ Fought ‘Amongst the People’: ‘Transformed’ by Old Realities? *Defence Studies*, Vol. 11, Issue 4 (2011), pp. 569-593.”
- 2) In the original manuscript on page 7, the last paragraph (“And finally in *Chapter 5* ...”) is printed twice. This is corrected by deleting one of them.





## Part II

### Papers:

#### Paper I

Anders McD Sookermany, “The Embodied Soldier – Towards a New Epistemological Foundation for Soldiering skills in the (Post) Modernized Norwegian Armed Forces,” *Armed Forces & Society* Vol. 37, No. 3, July 2011, pp. 469-493.

(<http://afs.sagepub.com/content/37/3/469.abstract>), (as doi:10.1177/0095327X10372594)

#### Paper II

Anders McD Sookermany, “What is a Skillful Soldier? An Epistemological Foundation for understanding Military Skill-Acquisition in (Post) Modernized Armed Forces.” *Armed Forces & Society* Vol. 38, No. 4, October 2012, pp. 582-603.

(<http://afs.sagepub.com/content/38/4/582.short>), (as doi:10.1177/0095327X11418320)

#### Paper III

Anders McD Sookermany, “Learning in Doing – Skills acquisition in [Post-] Modernized Military Communities of Practice.” *Defence Studies* Vol. 11, No. 4, Winter 2011.

(<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14702436.2011.642195>)







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# The Embodied Soldier: Towards a New Epistemological Foundation of Soldiering Skills in the (Post) Modernized Norwegian Armed Forces

Anders McD Sookermany<sup>1</sup>

## Abstract

The transformation of the Armed Forces is changing our understanding of what *good* soldiering skills are. The ongoing (post) modernization process aims to develop military communities of practice that are ready, willing, and able to serve and fight anyone, anywhere, and anytime on a regular basis. As a consequence, many Western countries such as Norway are witnessing a radical shift from an invasion defense-based concept grounded on conscription toward a more flexible expeditionary force-based defense concept that emphasizes professionalism. As such, it follows the typology of a change from a modern to a postmodern military. The understanding of the soldier as a human body is of great interest in this context since it is the individual (the soldier) who is to bring this transformation to life through his or her military (bodily) actions/skills within the military community of practice of which he or she is a member. This study describes and interprets the consequences of the ongoing

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<sup>1</sup> Norwegian Defence University College, Norwegian School of Sport Sciences, Defence Institute, Oslo, Norway

## Corresponding Author:

Anders McD Sookermany, Norwegian School of Sport Sciences, Defence Institute, PO Box 4014, Ullevaal Stadion, 0806 Oslo, Norway  
Email: anders.sookermany@nih.no

Armed Forces & Society

37(3) 469-493

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DOI: 10.1177/0095327X10372594

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military transformation with regard to the view of the human body so as to better understand the epistemological foundation for good soldiering skills.

### Keywords

transformation, soldiering skills, the embodied soldier, postmodernity, body

## Introduction

In the areas to which Norway gives priority, we will be among the best in NATO. As a small country, we are unable to do everything or to have many troop units. However, the units that we do have are to be of top quality. (Kristin Krohn Devold 2003)

This is how the former Minister of Defense, Kristin Krohn Devold, in her annual New Year's address<sup>1</sup> to the Oslo Military Society on January 6, 2003, described one of the three main defense policy goals and priorities for the Norwegian Armed Forces (NoAF) in the years to come.<sup>2</sup> Her statement should be understood as an affirmation of the top North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) meeting in Washington, DC, in April 1999, which launched the U.S.-led Defense Capabilities Initiative (DCI).<sup>3</sup> One of the main objectives of this initiative was to acknowledge that not every member nation needed to be good at everything but rather to become more compatible and complementary. Or, as was stated by the Clinton administration:

Our goal is not to develop similar capabilities for every NATO member, since not every member needs or can afford the newest or the best fighter aircraft, long-range tanker or surveillance systems. Rather, our goal is to provide NATO forces with compatible and complementary capabilities that meet our collective requirements.<sup>4</sup>

After the November 2002 NATO Summit in Prague, the DCI was followed up by the Prague Capabilities Commitment (PCC), where the "NATO Heads of State and Government agreed to firm, country-specific targets and deadlines for improving existing and developing new capabilities in specific areas."<sup>5</sup>

A highly important emphasis of both the DCI and the PCC is the focus on capabilities rather than capacities, which in a sense shifts the focus from the platforms (as capacities) managed by soldiers to the individual soldiers and their military units that manage the platforms, in addition to what their abilities are as individuals and units in relation to their platforms. This, at least from a Norwegian perspective, implies a paradigmatic shift in the development of military forces from volume-concerned mobilization forces to ability motivated professional military communities of practice. Consequently, a conceptual shift from volume to ability also fosters a shift in the understanding of what is perceived as good military practice. Within a *volume*-concerned paradigm, you tend to view good (competent) practice as being "good enough" practice, where an *ability*-motivated paradigm

would understand good practice as being expert practice.<sup>6</sup> Hence, the (military) quality is seen as a feature of the situated (military) human being and his or her communities of practice.<sup>7</sup> In short, the DCI and PCC should therefore be viewed as NATO's modernization project, with the aim of strengthening the alliances' operability (integrated military capability).<sup>8</sup> As such, it is at the heart of the ongoing military transformation of many Western countries, including Norway.<sup>9</sup> In Norway, the process has been precisely seen and labeled as a paradigmatic change from a volume-focused *invasion defense-based concept* toward a quality-driven *flexible expeditionary force-based defense concept*.

A shift from quantity to quality, as in a change from emphasizing the larger hierarchical and bureaucratic systems to a more decentralized and situated understanding of military organizations, could be seen as a mirroring of the foundational changes we have seen especially in developed Western societies over the last two decades. These "evolutionary" changes in society are often communicated through the labeling of a change from *modernity*, with its focus on universalism, structure, and objectivity toward *postmodernity* and its emphasis on constructivism, complexity, and contextuality.<sup>10</sup> In this sense, the military transformation of NATO and its member nations should perhaps be understood more as a postmodernization process as opposed to a modernization project.

The understanding of the soldier as a human body is of great interest in this context since it is the individual (the soldier) who is to bring the transformation to life through his or her military (bodily) actions within the units of which he or she is a member. In a sense, this is manifested through the essence of their task as soldiers, which is to literally embody the state's willingness to use force when necessary. Thus, in the context of this article, bringing to life the will of the state must be understood as embodying the state's intentions in (post) modernizing the armed forces. Within this framework, "embodiment" must therefore be understood as the knowledge, skills, and values instilled in the soldier in the form of attitudes and character traits, which are expressed as human (soldier) actions that reflect this new ideal of soldiering. Thus, the interesting question in this context is whether the transition from an invasion defense-based concept, with its focus on mass learning, to a flexible expeditionary force-based defense concept that endorses professionalism and expertise, promotes a new foundation for the acquisition of military skill. My hypothesis is not only that this is so but that these changes are of such a fundamental nature that if the (post) modernization of the armed forces such as NoAF is to be successful, a shift is required in the view taken of the (military) human body. As a result, my concern at this time is to link the transformation debate to the selected view of the human body, and thus to a new epistemological foundation for developing good soldiering skills.

I will do this by first describing the Norwegian context in light of the ongoing military transformation from a *modern* toward a more *postmodern* NoAF. In doing so, I will use the operational paradigms of an *invasion defense-based concept* as an example of the modern era and its counterpart in the *expeditionary force-based*

*defense concept* as an example of the postmodern military to show the (post) modernizing process of NoAF. The aim of the methodical framework laid out here is to facilitate a militarily discursive background for my argument for a new epistemological foundation for soldiering skills.

I will then go on to show how the two operational paradigms promote two differing views of the human body. I will argue that the invasion defense-based concept was primarily based on a rational dualistic view, in which a clear distinction is made between mind and matter and between the mental and the physical. I will then go on to argue that the (soldier) body cannot be reduced to a physical mass steered by a mental thought process and that an integrated view that incorporates phenomenological and sociocultural perspectives and considers the individual as a whole situated in the lived world provides a better description of the soldier within the expeditionary force-based defense concept.

In presenting my argument, I hope to show how such an adjusted view fits into the development of a culture of expertise, thereby offering an opportunity to transition from merely competent “*good enough*” practice to expert practice and enabling the political will to develop soldiers of top quality.

## **The Norwegian Context—From a Modern toward a Postmodern NoAF**

In the introduction to this article, I argued that the military transformation of NATO could be seen as an “evolutionary” process from modernity toward postmodernity, which of course is nothing new.<sup>11</sup> Charles C. Moskos is one who has done just this in describing the changes in the organization of the military. He argues that over the last 100 years, the “evolution” of military organization has gone through three distinctive eras starting with the modern (pre-cold war) era of 1900–1945, with its focus on enemy invasion, mass army conscription and defense of the homeland, via the late modern (cold war) era of 1945–1990, with the nuclear threat, the building of a large professional army and support of the NATO alliance, to a postmodern (post-cold war) era since 1990 where the threat is perceived to be subnational (e.g., ethnic violence and terrorism), our own force structure is a small professional army, and the military missions are seen as post-war conflicts (e.g., peacekeeping and humanitarian).<sup>12</sup>

With his description of the modern, late modern, and postmodern military, Moskos is attempting to outline the reciprocal relationship between the military and large-scale social changes within the broader society. His concern has been to construct a framework that can help us grasp the whole, so that we can “place the salient facts within a framework that enable us to study the main trends of institutional development in military organization.”<sup>13</sup> In his analyzation, he makes use of a typology based on certain dimensions through which change is expected to occur. He is explicit in pointing out that he is fully aware that any typology does injustice to reality, and that he is presenting a model and not a prophecy. As he sees it, the



postmodern military is a developmental construct based on historical studies of the United States and Western European nations.

One should mention that the idea of a postmodern military has been disputed. One good example is Bradford Booth, Meyer Kestnbaum, and David R. Segal, who in their article, *Are post-cold war militaries postmodern?*, argue that even though the military operates in a postmodern world, it does not necessarily mean that the military organization itself is postmodern. Rather, they say, it seems to display “those qualities distinctive of modernism: rational, calculated, structural adaptation to environmental change.”<sup>14</sup> Different studies at the beginning of the new millennium support the call of Booth et al. for caution in describing the military as being postmodern in its execution of military force,<sup>15</sup> but there are also newer studies that can be taken as a type of support for this postmodern perspective.<sup>16</sup> In addition, some of the official guidance given to soldiers in the field on how to conduct themselves can in some circumstances be understood to reflect a postmodernistic view.<sup>17</sup> Moskos himself was also keen to underscore that we should not use his model/typology without skepticism and stated that “We must avoid using it mechanically to bring artificial closure to our thinking about these matters. Its use, rather, is to help bring focus to ongoing research and, if need be, to set the stage for revising the analytic framework we are about to present.”<sup>18</sup>

The concept of postmodernism is a challenging one since the mere use of the term in an article that tries to make a sound and rational argument for a certain viewpoint could be seen as a contradiction in terms. The reason why I chose to still use it in this article is a rather pragmatic one: (1) I find the typology outlined by Moskos to be of help in situating my own arguments for a new epistemology for understanding good soldiering skills and (2) I believe that skillful behavior is somewhat different from person to person, unit to unit, and situation to situation and cannot therefore be developed primarily through a rational, calculated adaptation to environmental change (objectiveness) but rather through a human situatedness in a meaningful world (subjectiveness).

### *From an Invasion Defense-Based Concept toward an Expeditionary Force-Based Defense Concept in the NoAF*

As previously stated in the introduction, the changes in NATO’s strategic concept, particularly the DCI and PCC, are and continue to have a great impact on the Norwegian defense and security policy. In recent times, Norway’s geostrategic position as the north flank of the alliance has to a large degree dictated the military debate in Norway.<sup>19</sup> In agreement with the alliance’s overall goal, the defense of Norwegian and NATO territorial areas had the highest priority during the cold war period.<sup>20</sup> For Norway, this meant that we were to be able to mobilize large troop units in predefined areas to hopefully hinder enemy advances until the reinforcement of allied forces was in place.<sup>21</sup> To solve this task, NoAF has focused its attention on the force-production of soldiers for the mobilization force, which at its height was

comprised of more than 230,000 men.<sup>22</sup> This was accomplished by giving basic military training to the civilian population through general compulsory military service.<sup>23</sup> For Norway, the changes in NATO's strategic concept therefore means that the focus of the alliance is shifting from the relatively quiet and stable northern areas to regions characterized by armed conflict and chaos far away from our national borders.<sup>24</sup> As a consequence, Norway is about to go from being a nation that is used to receiving alliance forces to becoming a nation with military capabilities, as we have seen over the last decade or so in the Balkans, Iraq, and in the current war in Afghanistan.<sup>25</sup> Because of this, there is a good reason to anticipate that Norway's participation in these types of operations represent a sort of normalcy in the years to come.<sup>26</sup>

In the daily conduct of NoAF, such a movement from national to international engagement mean a shift from force production for the mobilization force to force production for service in international operations (INTOPS).<sup>27</sup> In other words, Norway and NoAF now have an expanded responsibility to produce soldiers for small mobile units with specialized skills, who can be rapidly deployed into a complex and unpredictable spectrum of possible scenarios, rather than to give the entire male population basic military training that they probably never get the chance to use.<sup>28</sup> As a consequence, NoAF is forced to move its focus away from the masses toward a more elite perspective, in which the task will be to develop up-to-date soldiers (read expert soldiers) out of ordinary Norwegian youth. NoAF's reaction forces for the Army, Navy, and Air Force are already developed for this purpose and have been deployed to various UN- and NATO-led missions.

The impact of this military transformation on NoAF implies a movement from armed forces mainly based on mobilization of the civilian population to a system that focuses on professional soldiers. The former Norwegian Chief of Defense, General Sverre Diesen, has described it as being a change *from a militia defense to a partly professionalized defense*. This attitude is backed up in the latest *NoAF Joint Operational Doctrine*, where a point is made of the fact that "one is, one does not simply work as a lawyer, doctor or an officer."<sup>29</sup>

Therefore, one of the most important goals of the ongoing military transformation of NoAF is to enhance the operability of our soldiers—in the sense of being capable of solving any given military task—so that they can be put to use in conflict areas where and when the need arises, with capabilities best suited for the situation.<sup>30</sup> In short, this means that our soldiers at any given time have to possess well-developed and applicable military skills.

The trends that I have outlined here are summarized in Table 1. Even though I have not strictly followed Moskos' outline from a modern via a late modern to a postmodern military, nor used his defined set of *force variables* directly, I do believe that there are enough similarities here to make the assumption that the transformation of NoAF fits in very well with his typological framework on the "evolution" within military organizations. For that reason, I think it is fair to say that the changes I have described within the Norwegian context points away from the concept of

**Table I.** An Overview of the Contextualization Regarding the Ongoing Military Transformation of Norwegian Armed Forces (NoAF)

	Invasion Defense-Based Concept (Modernity)	Expeditionary Force-Based Defense Concept (Postmodernity)
Military/strategic aim	Territorial defense	Conflict management
Strategic concept based on	Operations within the alliances' territorial borders	Out-of-area operations
Operational concept based on	Large static invasion defense with a relatively long period of mobilization	Small, flexible reaction forces with ability of rapid deployment
Aim of compulsory military service	Force production for the mobilization force (based on conscription)	Force production for service in international operations (based on professional soldiers)
Foundation for skill-acquisition	Mass oriented ("good enough" competence)	Elite-oriented (expertise)
Skill-orientation	Basic military skills	Specialized skills

*modernity* and more *toward* what we from a broader perspective have accepted as being *postmodernity*. The methodical framework of this section should thereby facilitate a theoretical background for my argument for a new epistemological foundation for soldiering skills (in NoAF).

## The Invasion Defense-Based Concept's Philosophy Concerning Action

Modernity stems from the Age of Enlightenment, whose principle idea was that through science, technology, and rationality, man was to become the master over nature, "L'homme est maître et possesseur de la nature" as René Descartes, one of the great thinkers of this era, described it. The industrial revolution, with its weight on hierarchical bureaucracies with the aim of seeking control over the production line, is perhaps the clearest feature of this era. In its striving for control over nature, the ideal of modernity became to control humans and their behavior. As I will demonstrate, this seems to be a good fit as an epistemological foundation for the invasion defense-based concept of military arms.

A characteristic feature of the philosophy underpinning the invasion defense-based concept was that individual soldiers were treated as objects, that is, as numbers or functions, and individuals were not seen as having any intrinsic value. Because all soldiers who occupy a particular position in a particular branch were to receive

almost the identical training, and so in theory had the same competence, it was thought that any soldier could be replaced by another without the function being affected in a physical way. A consequence of this thinking was that no specific value was attached to specific personal qualities, and in fact, efforts were made to erase these qualities through drills and authoritarian leadership.<sup>31</sup>

Accordingly, in the era of the invasion defense-based concept, the *physically robust* soldier was the measure of the force's fighting power. This view of human nature, and therefore of the human body, inherent in this approach is strongly rooted in Cartesian dualism, which separates the mental (*res cogitans*) from the physical (*res extensa*) and elevates thought as being detached from the body and nature. This is eloquently expressed in the dictum: *I think, therefore I am (cogito ergo sum)*. Cartesian dualism is named after the previously named French philosopher and mathematician René Descartes (1596–1650), who divided human beings into mind and body. He argued that the body works like a machine. It has the material properties of extension and motion and obeys the laws of physics, or as the social anthropologist Gunn Engelsrud puts it:

The object format made it possible to observe the body in relation to quantifiable objectives as mass, form, size, and motion. As an **objectum**, the body was understood as something that is **before** a reflecting subject. The body itself is thereby outside that which has to do with reflection.<sup>32</sup>

By contrast, Descartes described the mind as a nonmaterial entity that lacks extension and motion, thus not obeying the laws of physics. In his view, the rational mind controls the body, although the body may influence the mind when it acts out of passion. Even though Descartes truly meant to separate the mind from the body, he still saw man as a balanced individual, consisting of both mind and body.

Within the armed forces, Cartesian dualism has found expression in the strict hierarchical rank and organizational structure, in which authority was linked to an individual's office and function within the organization—the more senior the position, the higher the rank and the more power held. Seniority within an organization meant a greater amount of intellectual and less physical work, meaning in practice the individual in question moved further and further away from the practice of (physical) soldiering skills. This is consistent with the emphasis of dualism on thought over action.

This hierarchical organizational culture was also reflected in the invasion defense-based concept's development of a bureaucratic structure and was especially visible in the fixed departmental structure in which each department was divided into subsidiary operational units. For example, an army battalion was divided into companies, each of which was divided into troops, which were then divided into teams, which in turn consisted of individual soldiers with clearly defined functions. An infantry squad might consist of a squad leader, a deputy squad leader, four riflemen, and two machine gunners. This bureaucratic structure was supplemented by

values, knowledge, and skills that had been adapted to the different levels and functions. For this reason, soldiering skills were used within the framework of plans and drills for a given level. *The battalion in attack* and *individual skills* are examples of this. This bureaucratic structure was applied at each of the four military operational levels: political-strategic, military-strategic, operational, and tactical.<sup>33</sup> The four levels were developed during the period between the First and Second World Wars and were used to ensure that military forces were used as effectively as possible.

This suggests that the invasion defense-based concept applied the principles of an assembly-line industry, which has been an important part of our culture since the industrial revolution. In his book, *The Utility of Force—The Art of War in the Modern World*, the former deputy head of NATO's forces in Europe, British General Sir Rupert Smith, states that the invasion defense-based concept falls under a military theory he describes as industrial warfare.<sup>34</sup> From this view, it seems fair to make the assumption that the concept of the invasion defense fits well with the ideological concept of modernity.

### *Mind over Body—Soldiers' Bodies as Objects*

Cartesian dualism (mind over body) has also found expression in the invasion defense-based concept through the division of soldiering skills into different performance areas, and different basic techniques and skills, which in turn were split into even smaller units. Physical training, fitness and capacity, marksmanship, and combat skills formed the core of what was required of a good soldier,<sup>35</sup> and the physical entrance requirements of the various military training institutions became one of the armed forces' central selection criteria. An interesting consideration in this context is that a clear distinction was made between the entrance tests used to establish the candidate's physical condition and those used to establish his or her mental condition. The tests were developed independently of each other by different expert institutions and implemented without any significant coordination among the institutions. Accordingly, the tests clearly express the position of Cartesian dualism within the military.

In linking physical practice to a dualistic view of the human body, however, armed forces such as NoAF run the risk of becoming too reductionist. A good example of this problem is provided by the subject of "physical fostering."<sup>36</sup> Physical fostering has traditionally had a strong focus on physical fitness and has been reduced to physical capacity, aerobic endurance, and the maximization of oxygen uptake. For that reason, it has ended up being strongly linked to the results of physical tests such as the 3,000 meter run. Consequently, physical fostering has become synonymous with the terms "physical fitness" and "physical capacity," which refer to an individual's physical performance level at any given time.

The terms "physical fitness" and "physical capacity" are clearly rooted in traditional, biological, and physiological knowledge. The term "physical fostering" is therefore understood as primarily referring to the development of the physical body, that is, to

the means of improving an individual's physical fitness. The focus is not on the process (*engaging in* training) but rather on the result (*being* physically fit). The aim of physical fostering is to increase a soldier's base level of fitness, thereby increasing their ability to perform the duties of both peacetime and war.<sup>37</sup> The focus of physical fostering as a basis for fitness has contributed to a reduction of the soldier to something approaching an objective resource (the objective body), which if necessary could be replaced by another objective body, as long as the objective criteria were satisfied.

The concept of the objective body brings attention to the role of the body in military discipline, which is emphasized by the French philosopher Michel Foucault, who saw the body as an object of power and the direct locus of social control. He argued that "the military apparatus explores and studies the soldier's body to break it down and rearrange it according to its needs."<sup>38</sup> In an invasion defense-based context, those needs must be seen as acquiring the robustness to endure the physical hardship of prolonged combat. Still, for conscript forces such as NoAF, real-life military experience is a rarity. Due to the lack of this type of experience, a common way of installing physical robustness was accomplished by disciplining the body through punishment. The Israeli sociologist Orna Sasson-Levy describes it in this manner:

As one of the main mechanisms of discipline, punishment is often inflicted directly on the body, through recurring "stretcher hikes," carrying heavy loads, crawling on thorns, doing dozens of push-ups or hundreds of sit-ups, and more. Physical punishment inscribes on the soldier's body the fear of military discipline and the dread of authority, until he internalizes military principles and they become a part of who he is.<sup>39</sup>

This then points toward an epistemological foundation for good soldiering skills, within the invasion defense-based concept, built on a truly masculine hegemonic identity, where going through intense physical stress prepares *boys* for combat conditions—thus making them *men* (soldiers).

In a military context, "masculinity is determined primarily by a healthy body, not a healthy mind,"<sup>40</sup> which underscores the fact that those who undergo military training and become combat soldiers have the proper body as opposed to those who have the wrong body, specifically "the fat soldier, the lazy soldier, the 'crybaby,' or the soldier who is too small."<sup>41</sup> A reason for this is given by Bordo, who argues that fat enrages and disgusts us because it symbolizes laziness, as well as a lack of self-discipline and passivity.<sup>42</sup> In other words, the fat soldier represents the opposite of everything military and the physically robust soldier.

### *The Invasion Defense-Based Concept's Philosophy Concerning Skill*

The ideal of the physically robust soldier would appear to derive its meaning from definitions of skill adopted by a Western political culture with its roots in the Enlightenment. This culture uses the logic of "hard" science: each individual

(soldier) can be divided into different clusters, which can then be individually influenced. It is not uncommon for physiological literature to define skill by means of formula-like sentences. A particularly clear example of this is Harry W. Johnsen's classical mathematical formula:  $Skill = Speed \times Accuracy \times Form \times Adaptability$ .<sup>43</sup> This clearly illustrates the division of skill into different aspects, each of which can be addressed, measured, and quantified in a training scenario so as to influence the overall *skill*, measured along physical imperatives.

The challenge presented by this approach has been to identify the various basic skills that comprise soldiering skills in order to address them adequately on an individual basis. In the context of physical fostering, much of the physical training has been seen as foundational training for other types of military training. One consequence of this has been that *physical* and *military* training in NoAF has been carried out by different people. In accordance with this, the subject of physical fostering has been partially disconnected from the rest of the soldiers' training program, even though military training (e.g., field marches and close combat training) in itself could and should be understood as physical fostering. In many cases, the subject of physical fostering has even been organized and taught outside of the day-to-day departmental structure. Separate athletic departments have administered (and continue to administer) this function, which is more or less coordinated with their various operational units. This highlights a key aspect of the invasion defense-based concept and mental–physical dualistic thinking: physical training is understood to be an individual process, disconnected from the rest of training (though with substantial importance for military training). A further result of this is the development of standardized physical fitness tests that assess a soldier's physical capacity (physical robustness). These tests have a scientific basis and contain clearly defined minimum standards that are commonly known to be fairly easy to attain. In the real life of the invasion defense era (at least in the NoAF), these standards—which must be met by every soldier—have become the goals that physical training and the education of soldiers are geared toward achieving. It therefore seems fair to say that this perspective on skill supports a view of competence as merely being “good enough” practice.

A criticism of this approach in understanding skill is that it does not give any particular emphasis to the environment. In fact, it appears to seek to separate skill from the surrounding environment to influence the skill in a universalistic, or non-situational, manner. I would assert that a lack of focus on the environment in the context of exercising skills would be a crucial error in modern military operations since the spectrum of challenges in the operational theater is so vast.

## **The Expeditionary Force-Based Defense's Living Bodies in the World**

As I have already touched upon, the concept of *postmodernity* is a rather problematic/difficult one. The term itself points to an understanding of that which comes



after modernity and could be seen as a “revolutionary” break with the existing paradigm of modernity.<sup>44</sup> At the same time, *postmodernity* can be understood as the result of a more “evolutionary” process emerging from modernity. As such, it should be seen more as a different kind of modernity rather than as something other than modernity.<sup>45</sup> Despite this, there are some shared commonalities of what postmodernity is all about, with one being how we understand and use language as a way for sharing meaning. As a tool for communication within postmodern practice language, dialogue and the concept of discourse are closely connected, which ultimately points in the direction that *meaning* is a result of constructivism. Another aspect of postmodern understanding is the acceptance of the world as a fundamentally pluralistic and diverse entity, which is why cultural complexity plays a central role in many postmodern discourses. A third characteristic of postmodernity is the perception that every situation is unique, thus every situation needs to be dealt with in a unique way, all of which points toward an epistemological foundation built on constructivism, complexity, and contextualism.

There is good reason to argue that the ideological foundation of postmodernity seems to work well with the expeditionary defense-based concept of military arms. By contrast to the invasion defense-based concept that is based on replaceable bodies with much the same competence, it is thought that flexible expeditionary force-based defenses should to a much greater degree consist of groups of soldiers with different general and specific abilities. The aim when assembling a troop contribution to a given military operation is to put together the most suitable groups.<sup>46</sup> This makes the departmental structure of the expeditionary force-based defense more flexible and responsive to complexity (configurative) than it would be with a fixed formation. The development of specialist abilities requires time, and soldiers require a certain degree of continuity of service.<sup>47</sup> Therefore, in this context, a group can be defined as a military community of practice, consisting of individuals situated in a defined context with particular skills who as a community are able to solve the military tasks assigned to them, when and where they are needed with the necessary means.<sup>48</sup> Accordingly, in contrast to the invasion defense-based concept, whose goal is to erase individual characteristics, the expeditionary force-based defenses seek to develop individuals’ unique qualities. As stated in NoAF’s Joint Operational Doctrine of 2007:

Today’s complex operations can never be fully covered by manuals and rules of engagement. Our ability to fulfill our tasks depends rather on individuals whose judgment is well developed and mature.<sup>49</sup>

Military leadership is then seen as being decentralized<sup>50</sup> in the sense that it is executed at the lowest possible level by soldiers (ground force commanders)<sup>51</sup> with the right type of experience and skills to carry out the mission with the necessary feeling and power to maximize the outcome (i.e., knowing when and in what way to apply hard or soft skills based on situational circumstances and the unit’s ability).



Because of this, the (post)modern NoAF's view of soldiers should no longer be based on a classic dualistic view of human nature, which distinguishes between those who think and those who act. Individuals are expected to think and act simultaneously in current operations and expected to do so in future operations, regardless of their level within the organization.<sup>52</sup> That being the case, the differences between the military operational levels described above are not as clear in the practical conduct of military assignments. In practice, any action, regardless of the level at which it is taken, will have consequences at a higher or subordinate level,<sup>53</sup> meaning that a soldier's actions have consequences beyond the immediate situation, and it is insufficient for the soldier to merely be *physically* robust—he or she must also be capable of understanding the context and acting in an appropriate manner. As stated by Sir Rupert Smith:

Now we need innovators, intelligent, practical, imaginative and bold, capable of operating successfully in novel circumstances.<sup>54</sup>

If we then add to this the context-complexity of the contemporary operational theater as situated in countries characterized by a multiethnic population mix with the associated cultural diversity and distance, and at times consisting of chaotic conditions involving a high degree of unpredictability, the “enemy” is more likely to be a “non-state” entity such as al-Qaeda or the Taliban, than a state-based military operation.<sup>55</sup> As a consequence, the military assignment portfolio becomes correspondingly complex and the deployed military units most likely have to conduct missions that they are neither configured for, nor have trained for nor have previously executed.<sup>56</sup> It is no longer possible to view soldiering skills as a fixed quantity, as a drill maneuver that has been trained for and can be implemented in any given situation. Each new operation differs from previous ones, as the new circumstances and surroundings involve different perspectives, aims, and means.<sup>57</sup> Nevertheless, it is important to recognize the vital importance of a common understanding and that action drills and habits form the basis for good skill levels within a professional community of practice.<sup>58</sup> It is these habits that provide a basis for situational improvisation.

Sir Rupert Smith emphasizes this point in his especially apt description of modern warfare in *The Utility of Force—The Art of War in the Modern World*, which provides a good explanation of the philosophy behind the (post) modernization of the Western defense forces, including NoAF. Sir Rupert argues for the abandonment of the old industrial style of thinking in the context of carrying out modern military operations. He states:

And each force is specific—to a period, to a state, to a war, to a single theatre of war, possibly to a battle. Even a standing force is specific: a result of the factors of the time of its formation. For at base, it must be understood that battle is an event of circumstance, and therefore every element of force must be understood as a product of the circumstances in which it was created or used.<sup>59</sup>

This change in perspective in terms of what it means to be a soldier, shifting the focus from compulsory military service to professionalized forces, implies the personal involvement of the individual in the practice of being a soldier. Being a soldier becomes more than a service. It becomes a professional skill, and the exercise of this skill makes the soldier a practitioner of a particular set of situated abilities that incorporate his or her unique knowledge and skills within a community of practice.<sup>60</sup> Thus, it seems to be a reasonable proposition that the concept of the expeditionary defense-based force is in sync with the ideological concept of postmodernity.

### *Living Bodies in the World—Soldiers' Bodies as Subjects*

The ongoing modernization of the armed forces as expressed in political and military strategic planning documents indicates that there is a need for a new epistemological foundation for the soldier of the future. This foundation, in contrast to the invasion defense-based concept's dualistic view of human nature, needs to be based on an integrated view of human nature that incorporates, among other things, personal values, cultural background, education, training, and heritage into the practice of being a soldier. This ensures that the physical robustness of the soldier is no longer separated from his or her other characteristics. Accordingly, robustness cannot be understood or trained separately but instead must be described and interpreted as something integrated into everything the soldier undertakes and that grows or withers in accordance with the assignments and challenges the soldier faces. The picture of the (post)modern soldier presented so far suggests that the robust soldier is the one who is able to take initiative and act flexibly and independently in situations marked by conflict and chaos. In other words, robustness is neither physical nor mental, but is both, plus much more, always, and simultaneously.

This adjustment of perspective requires a more phenomenological and sociocultural view to be taken of the body. The phenomenological view of the body is often described with reference to the French philosopher and existentialist Maurice Merleau-Ponty whose foundational thesis is that the body is our means of accessing the world, and that human beings must be seen as *living bodies in the world*.<sup>61</sup> In this context, the concept of "living" refers to the perception that life is lived within and through the body. The adjustment described above is therefore a criticism of the view that the body is merely something that is possessed, a tool to be used when acting. Rather, an individual is both an organism and a person, both biology and culture, both body and thought, all in one entity.<sup>62</sup> So, if a professionalized and flexible defense force adopts an integrated view of human nature, the soldier's body have to be seen as something that the soldier is, has, and does, all at the same time. This implies that being a soldier is the embodiment of the political power to force one's will on someone else.<sup>63</sup> If political willingness is defined as the willingness to defend a set of values, for example, Norwegian values, then being a soldier is about embodying the defense of those values.<sup>64</sup>

An important aspect of Merleau-Ponty's thesis about *living bodies in the world* is that humans must be viewed as being integrated into a world and that it is insufficient to view the body purely from the perspective of the individual. The body/human is located in the world, and its existence is therefore contextual. This means that the individual must be viewed in the context of the world in which he or she lives and, correspondingly, that the world in which the individual lives must be viewed from the perspective of the individual, which implies a sociocultural view of the body.

The German philosopher Martin Heidegger is a proponent of this view, describing an interactive relationship between a human being and the world.<sup>65</sup> His argument is that people are not removed from the world, but rather are in a world, and it is precisely by being in that world that they understand it. Tjønneland described Heidegger's view of the world as follows:

Humans are not distanced from the world, but rather always joined into a world. The world forms part of our manner in the same way that we can talk about the carpenter's world, the philosopher's world, the stamp collector's world, etc. Humans' being in the world is shaped by their understanding and performing activities in integrated contexts of meaning within a time structure in which humans are constantly forming historical syntheses.<sup>66</sup>

Skill (i.e., the practice of a profession) is therefore a result of an individual's *being in the world*, and military skill must be seen as a consequence of the soldier's being in a military world—the soldier's world.

Accordingly, within an expeditionary force-based defense concept, we can define the soldier's world as the professionalized military community of practice of which he or she is a member.<sup>67</sup> The core activity of the military community or profession is the conduct of military operations.<sup>68</sup> Thus, it is in the operational theater where the embodiment and implementation of the values, knowledge, and skills of the community of practice takes place in the form of military action.

Modern operational theaters are typically situated in distant locales, which feature chaotic conditions and a great deal of uncertainty. The countries in which these operations occur are often characterized by a multiethnic population and cultural diversity. Given that today's military operations routinely take place in areas occupied by civilians, it is clear that soldiering skills have to be exercised in a rather complex environment (operational theater), which must be mastered. Hence, a relatively small incident could easily have political and/or regional consequences, which in turn could dramatically alter the political, social, cultural, and military contexts, thereby demonstrating that military skill acquisition has to be organized in a more integrated manner. Mental, social, and physical preparation must strengthen each other and be coordinated in pursuit of an overall understanding of what constitutes good soldiering. One element of good soldiering will then be the ability to operate with excellence in a context of conflict and chaos.

One example is provided by the experience of the Norwegian forces participating in the PRT<sup>69</sup> operation in Meymaneh, Afghanistan. In early February 2006, the Norwegian camp came under relatively heavy fire as a direct result of the publication of cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed by the Norwegian media. Up to that point, lightly armed Norwegian soldiers had patrolled the streets of Meymaneh in small units without experiencing any particular threat. Yet, within just a few hours, the situation had changed dramatically due to changes in the environment in which the soldiers were operating.<sup>70</sup> Changes in the environment necessitate changes in tactical dispositions that lead to changes in methods of operation. Such changes require individual soldiers to be able to understand and evaluate their skills in light of the situation. As such, defining skill is also about defining the environment, as it is important to note that the environment must be defined as the world in which the soldier in question is operating. A key factor in that soldier's education is therefore the specialist community of practice of which he or she is a member.

### **The Expeditionary Force-Based Defense Concept's Philosophy Concerning Skill**

An essential ability of the soldier of the future will be the ability to continuously adapt to his or her surroundings in an ever-changing environment.<sup>71</sup> The ability to change one's pattern of behavior to let the situation guide your actions will thus be a vital skill of (post) modern military units.<sup>72</sup>

The Danish military researcher Katrine Nørgaard provided an excellent discussion of this issue in a feature article published in the Danish newspaper *Politiken* on September 7, 2004. In her article, she describes the Danish soldiers' use of combat and contact skills:

In order to deal with this paradox between security and openness, the Danish soldiers do not only employ various military combat skills, for example when carrying out house searches or dealing with major disturbances and mass demonstrations. They also employ a number of trust-building contact skills, for example when conducting social patrols to remote mountain villages, escorting emergency aid convoys and providing security for the conduct of free, democratic elections.<sup>73</sup>

These two approaches appear to be very different with regard to the application of military power. One involves the use of physical force to stop a disturbance, while the other involves soldiers showing compassion to encourage dialogue and gain respect, though this dual approach is not unique to Danish soldiers. Another example is that of the Norwegian troops who, during their participation in Kosovo Force (KFOR 1999–2004), performed tasks ranging from hostile mass service assignments to friendly social patrols, often involving visits to the homes of the local population.<sup>74</sup> A similar situation can be observed in relation to U.S. troops participating

in Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), in which young leaders are expected to be warriors, peacekeepers, and nation-builders, all at the same time.<sup>75</sup>

The increased focus on live operations as part of the profession of soldiering, and the fact that these operations take place in conflict areas involving foreign cultures, makes cultural understanding a key soldiering skill. A former soldier in the Norwegian KFOR stated the following during a discussion about his experience of being a soldier in a foreign culture:

My greatest advantage as a soldier in Kosovo was that I had grown up in Holmlia.<sup>76</sup>

Holmlia is a suburb of Oslo with a multiethnic population. The soldier's point was that the fact that he grew up in Holmlia gave him a personal understanding of many different cultures, which was of great assistance to him in his duties as a soldier in Kosovo. He did not need to deal with as many cultural barriers as many of his fellow soldiers, and his experience was not acquired through a teaching program. Rather, he had obtained it by living alongside of and being present and taking part in other cultures as a whole and living person. It was as a body that he smelled, tasted, saw, heard, and felt the culture in a way that made it part of his own, no longer foreign and presenting a distraction that disrupted his focus. Being part of a multiethnic culture had become normal to him and thus part of his being in the world.

This insight leads to an understanding of skill as something that is deeply rooted in personal identity and expressed through actions. Skill must therefore be seen as something that involves the whole human being and the context in which the individual is situated.<sup>77</sup> In this view, quality and competence have no limits, which implies that there is always more to learn, and that being good means striving for excellence.

In contrast to the invasion defense-based model's understanding of skill as merely being competent "good enough" practice, this expeditionary force-based defense concept is a step forward in attaining an understanding of true competence as *expert* practice.

The outline of a new epistemological foundation of soldiering skills (seen in light of the perspectives of the traditional invasion defense-based concept and the contemporary flexible expeditionary force-based defense concept) is summarized in Table 2.

## Conclusions

In this article, I have sought to describe and interpret the consequences of the ongoing military transformation of the armed forces within Western developed democracies, with regard to the view of the human body so as to achieve an understanding of the epistemological foundation for good soldiering skills. In doing so, I have used the Norwegian situation as an operational background, emphasizing its change from the classic invasion defense-based concept to a flexible expeditionary force-based defense concept. In an attempt to place my argument within ongoing

**Table 2.** The Epistemological Foundation of Soldiering Skills Seen in Light of the Perspectives of the Traditional Invasion Defense-Based Concept and the Contemporary Flexible Expeditionary Force-Based Defense Concept

	Invasion Defense-Based Concept (Modernity)	Expeditionary Force-Based Defense Concept (Postmodernity)
Military paradigm	Volume-concerned mobilization forces	Ability motivated professional military communities of practice
View of epistemology (view of knowledge)	Nature sciences (Rational and Reductionist, whole → part → part → etc.)	Phenomenological, hermeneutical and socio-cultural (holistic and integrated)
View of leadership structure	Hierarchic (based on formal positions)	Decentralized (based on experience and skill)
View of organizational structure	Bureaucratic (static or fixed formation)	Configurative (under constant development or flexible formation)
View of the human nature and body	Dualistic (mind and/over body)	Holistic/integrated (living bodies in the world)
View of skill-performance	Instrumentalist (rule-guided)	Situational and contextual (experience-based)
View of performance level	Competent (“Good enough”) practice	Expert practice
View on the community of practice	Conscript/mobilization	Professional/active duty (INTOPS)
View of soldier identity	To serve as a soldier	To be a soldier

Note: INTOPS = International operation.

research, I have argued that this continual transformation, at least as seen from the Norwegian perspective, could be understood in light of an “evolutionary” change from modernity, with its emphasis on universalism, structure, and objectivity toward postmodernity, in which constructivism, complexity, and contextuality are given more weight as ideals for human conduct.

With this in mind, I have argued that the introduction of a flexible expeditionary force-based defense concept alters the established ideal of a good soldier. The objective is no longer the ability to exert physical power but rather the ability to generate advantageous movement in a deadlocked situation using a variety of hard and soft (military) skills. Viewing the individual soldier as a physical object in a fixed structure is therefore irreconcilable with the new orientation of armed forces such as NoAF. The philosophy that underpins expeditionary force-based defense concepts requires that both the (post) modern soldier be viewed as a whole person, and that the soldier’s values, cultural background, heritage, and training be woven into the practical exercise of the soldiering profession. Thus, a key point is that a soldier’s physical, mental, and social characteristics can no longer be considered as detached from one another, as implied by a dualistic view of the human body.

The modernization of NoAF means the abandonment of the classic dualistic view of the human body where the mental and the physical are separated. The soldier ideal for the future must instead be based on an integrated view of human nature in which being a human (soldier) is understood to be expressed through an embodying and implementing presence in the world. Consequently, the military transformation process is a transition from a clearly defined physical and objectified soldier to a more mobile and subjectified soldier, whose individual, shifting value preferences be expressed in his or her exercise of soldiering skills.

In conclusion, as I see it, there are clear indications that the transition from the classic invasion defense-based concept (based on a dualistic view of the human body), to a flexible expeditionary force-based defense concept (emphasizing an integrated view of the human body), is facilitating a corresponding transition in relation to the epistemological foundation for good soldiering skills—from competent, “good enough” practice to expert practice. A change in the view of the human body such as I have argued for in this article thus enables NoAF to satisfy the state’s desire for Norway to be the best in its areas of operation. Nevertheless, it should be emphasized that the adoption of an integrated view of the human body will have major consequences for and present vital challenges in relation to how training in military skills is seen and implemented.

However, only a change of this type enables armed forces such as NoAF to increase their efforts to make expert practice the standard and abandon the established competent, “good enough” practice, thereby developing soldiers and military units of top quality.

### **Declaration of Conflicting Interests**

The author declared no potential conflicts of interests with respect to the authorship and/or publication of this article.

### **Funding**

The author received no financial support for the research and/or authorship of this article.

### **Notes**

1. Former Minister of Defense, Kristin Krohn Devold, “Hva vi vil og hvor vi skal: Mål og prioriteringer i forsvarspolitikken i 2003” [What we want and where are we heading: defense policy goals and priorities in 2003] *Bilag til Forsvarets Forum*, 1, 2003, p. 4 (In Norwegian, author’s translation).
2. Even though this article takes the Norwegian situation as its starting point, I strongly believe and intend it to be relevant outside Norway.
3. NATO Press release, NAC-S (99)69, from April 25, 1999, *Defence Capabilities Initiative* (<http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/1999/p99s069e.htm>) Web page accessed June 17, 2009. The DCI was launched the day after the presentation of the Alliance’s new Strategic



- Concept and should as such be seen as a strategic step in achieving the goals of the concept. NATO Press release, NAC-S (99)65, from April 24, 1999. *The Alliance's Strategic Concept* (<http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/1999/p99-065e.htm>) page (accessed June 17, 2009).
4. U.S. Department of Defense. *Strengthening Transatlantic Security—A U.S. Strategy for the 21st Century* (U.S. Department of Defense, December, 2000).
  5. NATO Press release, (2002) 127, from November 21st 2002, *Prague Summit Declaration* (<http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2002/p02-127e.htm>) page (accessed June 17, 2009); *Prague Capabilities Commitment (PCC)* ([http://www.nato.int/cps/en/SID-00E7CECF-2ADD0BC4/natolive/topics\\_50087.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/SID-00E7CECF-2ADD0BC4/natolive/topics_50087.htm)) page (accessed June 17, 2009).
  6. See Hubert L. Dreyfus and Stuart E. Dreyfus, *Mind over Machine: The Power of Human Intuition and Expertise in the Era of the Computer* (UK: Basil Blackwell Ltd, 1986) for a phenomenological discussion on the difference of having mere competence and expertise. And Steinar Kvale, "Forskere i lære," *Mesterlære: Læring som social praksis* ["Scientists in apprenticeship," *Apprenticeship: Learning as a social practice*], eds. Klaus Nielsen, and Steinar Kvale (København: Hans Reitzels Forlag A/S, 1999), p. 193.
  7. Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger, *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991). For a good read on the understanding of experience versus volume as compared to quality within a military context see Mark R. Lewis, "Army Transformation and the Junior Officer Exodus," *Armed Forces & Society* 31, 1 (2004): 63-93.
  8. NATO Press release, NAC-S (99)69, *Defence Capabilities Initiative*; and NATO Press release, (2002)127, from November 21, 2002, *Prague Summit Declaration*.
  9. For more extensive reading on the changes seen in the Western developed democracies, I suggest reading Charles C. Moskos, John Allen Williams, and David R. Segal, ed., *The Postmodern Military; Armed Forces after the Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).
  10. For an introduction on postmodernity see David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity*. (London: Blackwell Publishers Inc., 2000).
  11. Fabrizio Battistelli ("Peacekeeping and the postmodern Soldier," *Armed Forces & Society* 23, 467-84) argues in his article from 1997 that "The application of the category of postmodern to the military had already been suggested by a group of Italian sociologists, the author [Battistelli;sic] among them." See Michele Marotta, ed., *Il militare e la complessità: sociologia e strategia nel "postmoderno"* (Roma: La Goliardica, 1990); See also Charles C. Moskos and James Burk, "The Postmodern Military," in *The Military in New Times*, ed. James Burk (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994), 142; Charles C. Moskos, John Allen Williams, and David R. Segal, ed., *The Postmodern Military; Armed Forces after the Cold War*; Harry Bondy, "Postmodernism and the Source of Military Strength in the Anglo West," *Armed Forces & Society* 31 (2004), 31-61.
  12. Charles C. Moskos, "Toward a Postmodern Military: The United States" in *The Postmodern Military. Armed Forces after the Cold War*, chap. 2, 14-31.
  13. *Ibid.*, 14.



14. Bradford Booth, Meyer Kestnbaum, and David R. Segal, "Are Post-Cold War Militaries Postmodern?" *Armed Forces & Society* 27 (2001), 319-42.
15. See Leonard Wong, *Stiffling Innovation: Developing Tomorrow's Leaders Today* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2002), 2; Mark R. Lewis, "Army Transformation and the Junior Officer Exodus."
16. See Leonard Wong, *Developing Adaptive Leaders: The Crucible Experience of Operation Iraqi Freedom* (Carlisle, PA: The Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College, 2004); Fabrizio Battistelli, "Peacekeeping and the Postmodern Soldier;" Katrine Nørgaard, *Tillidens teknologi. Den Militære ethos og viljen til dannelse* [The Technology of Trust. The Military Ethos and the will for Bildung] (Ph.D. afhandling. Institutt for Antropologi, Det samfundsvitenskapelige Fakultet, Københavns Universitet, 2004).
17. See David H. Petraeus, "Multi-National Force-Iraq Commander's Counterinsurgency Guidance," in *Military Review* (September–October 2008), 2-4; David H. Petraeus and James F. Amos, *The United States Army and The United States Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual* (Kissimmee, FL: Signalman Publishing, 2006).
18. Moskos, "Toward a Postmodern Military: The United States," p. 15.
19. *Forsvarssjefens Forsvarsstudie 2000. Sluttrapport. [Norwegian Chief of Defense, Defense Study 2000. End Report]* (Oslo: NoAF Supreme Command, June 22, 2000).
20. St. meld. Nr. 38 (1998–99) *Tilpasning av Forsvaret til deltagelse i internasjonale operasjoner [Adaption of NoAF for participation in international military operations]*, 8-15.
21. *Forsvarssjefens Forsvarsstudie 2000. Sluttrapport. [Norwegian Chief of Defense, Defense Study 2000. End Report]* (Oslo: NoAF Supreme Command, June 22, 2000).
22. During the height of the invasion defense-based concept era, in the 1970s and 1980s, the Norwegian mobilization force consisted of approximately 230,000 soldiers, while the corresponding number today is approximately 83,000 and still dropping. Equally, the peacetime organization numbered approximately 35,000 officers and privates (more than 20,000 were conscripts) in the 1970s and 1980s, while today NoAF have approximately 23,000 service personnel, of which the conscripts make up less than 10,000.
23. The principle of general compulsory military service has been embedded in the Norwegian Constitution ever since 1814.
24. St. prp. nr. 42 (2000–2001) *Omlegging av Forsvaret i perioden 2002–2005 [The NoAF renewal from 2002–2005]*; St. prp. nr. 45 (2003–2004) *Den videre moderniseringen av Forsvaret i perioden 2005–2008 [The further modernization of NoAF in the period 2005–2008]*. St. meld. Nr. 38 (1998–99) *Tilpasning av Forsvaret til deltagelse i internasjonale operasjoner [Adaption of NoAF for participation in international military operations]*; Forsvarsdepartementet, *Styrke og relevans: Strategisk konsept for Forsvaret [Strength and Relevance: strategic concept for NoAF]* (Oslo: Royal Norwegian Ministry of Defense, 2004).
25. St. meld. Nr. 38 (1998–99) *Tilpasning av Forsvaret til deltagelse i internasjonale operasjoner [Adaption of NoAF for participation in international military operations]*, 14-5.
26. Norwegian Defence Command and Staff College, *Norwegian Armed Forces Joint Operational Doctrine* (Oslo: The Defence Staff, 2007), paragraph 0603.

27. NOU 2000:20 (2000). *Et nytt Forsvar*. Innstilling fra Forsvarspolitisk utvalg, oppnevnt av regjeringen 16. juli 1999. Avgitt til Forsvarsdepartementet 29. juni 2000. [A new NoAF Report from Defense political panel, appointed by the government on July 16 1999. Submitted to the Royal Ministry of Defense on June 29 2000] (Oslo: Statens forvaltningstjeneste, Informasjonsforvaltning, 2000). See also Inspector General of the Army Roar Jens Haugen, confirms in *Forsvarets Forum årsbilag for 2003* [*Forsvarets Forum, annual supplement for 2003*] (p. 7) that the actual purpose of compulsory military service is to secure competent people for international operations, rather than to build departments in Norway's own mobilization force.
28. NOU 2000:20 (2000). *Et nytt Forsvar*. [A new NoAF]. And Norwegian Defense Command and Staff College, *NoAF Joint Operational Doctrine*.
29. Norwegian Defense Command and Staff College, *NoAF Joint Operational Doctrine*, paragraph 0601.
30. Forsvarsdepartementet, *Styrke og relevans* [*Strength and Relevance*], p. 12.
31. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and punishment: The birth of the prison* (New York: Vintage, 1975), 138.
32. Gunn Engelsrud, *Hva er KROPP* [*What is BODY*] (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 2006), 23 (In Norwegian, author's translation).
33. The Norwegian literature only deals with the four highest levels of strategy, but the English literature offers a fifth level: the technical strategy level. See E. N. Luttwak, *Strategy: The Logic of War and Peace* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1987), 120; and Brian Steed, *Armed Conflict: The Lessons of Modern Warfare* (New York: Presido Press Book, 2002), 13-14.
34. Sir Rupert Smith, *The Utility of Force: The Art of War in the Modern World* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2007).
35. William S. Lind, in *Maneuver Warfare Handbook* (Colorado: Westview Press), identifies what he calls basic techniques: marksmanship, map reading, and physical fitness. William C. David, in "Developing a Supercharged Battalion," in *Kunnskap om idrett* 3, 4 (1999): 101-26, defines the core performance areas as mental toughening and physical fitness, marksmanship, and maneuver live fire exercises. Former Norwegian Chief of Staff General Sigurd Frisvold, in "Fysisk fostring på terskelen til et nytt årtusen" [Physical fostering at the dawn of a new millennium] in *Konferanserapport konferansen for fysisk fostring 1999*, ed. Anders McD Sookermany (Oslo: Norges idrettshøgskole Forsvarets institutt, 2000), 44-7, adopts a similar division, talking about combat skills, marksmanship, and physical fostering.
36. NoAF has officially called the subject area that deals with all types of physical activity, athletics, and sport including physical education *physical fostring*.
37. Forsvarsdepartementet, *Tjenestereglement for Forsvaret Gruppe 43. Fysisk Fostring i Forsvaret* [Service Regulations for the Norwegian Armed Forces Group 43. Physical Fostering in the Norwegian Armed Forces] (Oslo: Forsvarsdepartementet, January 1, 1993).
38. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and punishment*, 138.
39. Orna Sasson-Levy, "Individual Bodies, Collective State Interests: The Case of Israeli Combat Soldiers," *Men and Masculinities* 10 (2008), 296-321, 304.

40. W. Arkin and L. R. Dubrofsky, "Military Socialization and Masculinity," *Journal of Social Issues* 34, 1, 151-69, in Orna Sasson-Levy, "Individual Bodies, Collective State Interests," 303.
41. Orna Sasson-Levy, "Individual Bodies, Collective State Interests," 306.
42. S. Bordo, *Unbearable weight*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), in Orna Sasson-Levy, "Individual Bodies, Collective State Interests," 307.
43. Harry W. Johnson, "Skill = Speed × Accuracy × Form × Adaptability," *Perceptual Motor Skills* 13 (1961): 163-70.
44. David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity*.
45. Giddens argues that we have not gone past modernity and that what we understand as "postmodernity" rather should be understood as "high or late modernity," which again is similar to Bauman's understanding of "liquid modernity." See Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity, Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991); Zygmunt Bauman, *Liquid Modernity* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000).
46. This must be considered the ideal situation. Real-life experience shows us that, for example, NoAF faces great difficulties in recruiting enough personnel to man the force structure that Norway has committed to within the NATO alliance.
47. Patricia Benner, *From Novice to Expert: Excellence and Power in Clinical Nursing Practice* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1986); K. Anders Ericsson, "The Influence of Experience and Deliberate Practice on Development of Superior Expert Performance" in *The Cambridge Handbook of Expertise and Expert Performance*, ed. K. Anders Ericsson, Neil Charness, Paul J. Feltovich, and Robert R. Hoffman (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), chap. 38, 683-703; and Mark Lewis, "Army Transformation and the Junior Officer Exodus."
48. Forsvarsdepartementet, *Styrke og relevans [Strength and Relevance]*, 12.
49. Norwegian Defence Command and Staff College, *NoAF Joint Operational Doctrine*, paragraph 0614.
50. *Ibid.*, paragraph 0623–0625. See also NATO, *Allied Joint Doctrine, Allied Joint Publication-01(B)* (NATO, December 2002), paragraph, 0408.
51. Jørn Erik Berntsen and Ole Boe, "Tanker om militært lederskao i kritiske situasjoner" [Thoughts about military leadership in critical situations], in *Tanker om militært lederskap i utvikling [Thoughts about military leadership under development]* (Oslo: Krigsskolen, 2008), pp. 21-29.
52. Norwegian Defence Command and Staff College, *NoAF Joint Operational Doctrine*, paragraphs 0623–0624.
53. NATO, *Allied Joint Doctrine, Allied Joint Publication-01(B)*, paragraph, 0203.
54. Sir Rupert Smith, "Thinking about the Utility of Force in War amongst the People," *Oslo Files on Defence and Security* 4 (2007), 41.
55. Wilbur J. Scott, David R. McCone, and George R. Mastroianni, "The Deployment Experiences of Ft. Carson's Soldiers in Iraq; Thinking about and Training for a Full-Spectrum Warfare," *Armed Forces & Society* 35, 3 (2009): 463.
56. *Ibid.*, 462.

57. This understanding has been confirmed in several conversations with Norwegian soldiers who have served in multiple operational areas such as the Balkans, Iraq, and Afghanistan. See also David H. Petraeus, "Multi-National Force-Iraq Commander's Counterinsurgency Guidance," 2-4.
58. B. P. McCoy, *The Passion of Command: The Moral Imperative of Leadership* (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps Association, 2007).
59. Smith, *The Utility of Force: The Art of War in the Modern World*, 20.
60. The concept of professionalism should be understood here in the sense of implying a culture of expertise, which is characterized by both a high degree of skills and being a community of practice.
61. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception* (New York: Routledge, 1962).
62. Anne B. Leseth, "Hvordan kan vi forstå kropp?" [How can we understand body?], in *Kropp, bevegelse og energi i den grunnleggende soldatutdanningen*, ed. Reidar Säfvenbom and Anders McD Sookermany (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 2008), 37-45.
63. See Carl von Clausewitz's famous thesis on war, in *On War* (London, UK: David Campbell Publishers Ltd, Everyman's Library 1993 (1832), p. 99): "War is not merely an act of policy but a true political instrument, a continuation of political intercourse, carried on with other means."
64. Former Minister of Defense Anne-Grete Strøm-Erichsen ("Verdier verd å verne" [Values worth defending] *Norsk militært tidsskrift* 1, 177, 4-12), said the following in her annual address to the Oslo Military Society, entitled *Values worth defending*, in January 2007: "Accordingly, the Norwegian Armed Forces should be based less on what we need to protect ourselves against and focused much more on what we want to protect, to guard—namely, the activities, the infrastructure, the interests, and the values on which our society is built, which we will defend both at home and abroad (In Norwegian, author's translation)."
65. Martin Heidegger, *Being and time* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962) describes the relationship as a subject–subject, rather than subject–object, relationship, in which the individual's surroundings are considered an object.
66. Eivind Tjønneland, "Martin Heidegger," *Vestens tenkere. Bind III: fra Freud til Baudrillard* [*The thinkers of the West. Volume III: from Freud to Baudrillard*], ed. Trond Berg Eriksen (Oslo: H. Aschehoug & Co (W Nygaard), 4 opplag, 1998), 190-209, 193 (In Norwegian, author's translation).
67. The term *community of practice* is taken from Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger, *Situated Learning Legitimate Peripheral Participation*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).
68. Norwegian Defence Command and Staff College, *NoAF Joint Operational Doctrine*, paragraph 0603.
69. A Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) is a small unit consisting of military ISAF forces and civilian participants (UN, local, and/or international development assistance organizations).

70. K. Klevberg, "Be som du aldri før har bedt!: Refleksjoner rundt feltpresttjenesten før, under og etter stridshandlinger i Meymaneh, Afghanistan 7. februar 2006" [Pray as you have never prayed before!: Reflections on the army chaplain service before, during and after combat in Meymaneh, Afghanistan, February 7 2006], *PACEM* 10, 1, 51-61.
71. David H. Petraeus, "Multi-National Force-Iraq Commander's Counterinsurgency Guidance;" Leonard Wong, *Stifling Innovation*; and Norwegian Defence Command and Staff College, *NoAF Joint Operational Doctrine*.
72. Wilbur J. Scott et al., "The Deployment Experiences of Ft. Carson's Soldiers in Iraq."
73. Katrine Nørgaard, "Klapjagt på danske soldater" [Battue on Danish Soldiers], *Politiken*, September 7, 2004 (In Danish, author's translation).
74. Bård Mæland, *Skadeskutt idealisme: Norsk offisersmoral i Kosovo* [*Wounded idealism: Norwegian officer morale in Kosovo*] (Bergen: Eide Forlag, 2004).
75. Leonard Wong, *Developing Adaptive Leaders*, 4.
76. Anders McD Sookermary, *Fra vernepliktig rekrutt til ekspertsoldat: Ferdighetslæring i Det nye Forsvaret* [*From Conscript to Expert Soldier: Military Skill Acquisition in the New Norwegian Armed Forces*] (Oslo: Gan Forlag AS, 2005), 147. This stands in stark contrast to a statement by a junior U.S. officer participating in Operation Iraqi Freedom, who described the cultural barrier as follows: "The complexity of their culture—just dealing with their culture—has been overwhelming. That is where I run into the biggest problems right now." Leonard Wong, *Developing Adaptive Leaders*, 8 (In Norwegian, author's translation).
77. The US Marine Corps Colonel B. P. McCoy (*The Passion of Command*, p. 25) puts a great deal of emphasis on the principle of habit as the very foundation of training.

## Bio

**Anders McD Sookermary** is the head of the Department of Military Skill-Acquisitions at the Norwegian Defence University College, Norwegian School of Sport Science, Defence Institute. His War College education is supplemented with a Master Degree in sports philosophy. He is currently working on a PhD thesis about skill-acquisition in (post)modern military contexts. He is the author and editor of several books.









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# What Is a Skillful Soldier? An Epistemological Foundation for Understanding Military Skill Acquisition in (Post) Modernized Armed Forces

Anders McD Sookermany<sup>1</sup>

## Abstract

How do we understand military skill/skills, what is it to be militarily skilled, and how do we acquire military skill/skills? Answering these three questions is essential to understanding the ongoing military transformation of developed Western countries. Universalism and contextualism (two competing ethical/epistemological positions) are used to sketch out a typological framework for explaining how different military paradigms/concepts treat “good” soldiering. Universalism is strongly connected with the traditional military paradigm of static invasion-based defense, while contextualism is connected to flexible expeditionary force-based defenses of the twenty-first century. Transformative changes over the past decade illustrate the value of the contextualist paradigm, suggesting that the universalist paradigm may no longer be useful for a twenty-first century expeditionary force.

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<sup>1</sup> Norwegian Defence University College, Norwegian School of Sport Sciences, Defence Institute, Oslo, Norway

## Corresponding Author:

Anders McD Sookermany, Norwegian School of Sport Sciences, Defence Institute, PO Box 4014 Ullevaal stadion, 0806 Oslo, Norway  
Email: anders.sookermany@nih.no

Armed Forces & Society

38(4) 582-603

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DOI: 10.1177/0095327X11418320

<http://afs.sagepub.com>



## Keywords

soldiering skill, transformation, universalism, contextualism, skill acquisition

## Introduction

The goal of making armed forces more capable of conducting military operations in a post-Cold War environment is an essential objective of the ongoing military transformation.<sup>1</sup> This *Military Transformation* represents a *paradigm* shift in the use and training of military forces.<sup>2</sup> This transformation is akin to “evolutionary” changes in Western society from *modernity*, universalism, structure, and objectivity toward *postmodernity*, contextualism, constructivism, and complexity.<sup>3</sup> Evidence of this transformation is perhaps most highly visible in transnational, national, and policy documents and doctrines, which have adopted postmodern epistemologies in military organizations.<sup>4</sup> Militaries have shifted their approach from large static invasion defense-based concepts (conscription mobilization forces) toward smaller and more flexible expeditionary force-based concepts, dependent on ability-motivated professional military communities of practice.<sup>5</sup> Consequently, this transformation has affected what constitutes a skillful soldier, as well as how the development of soldier skill occurs. This raises three important questions with respect to skill in modern and postmodern epistemologies: (1) how is military skill defined, (2) what is it to be militarily skilled, and (3) how is military skill acquired?

This article attempts to sketch out a typological framework useful as an epistemic foundation for different skill perspectives. This framework is then used as a developmental construct that presents theoretical ideal solutions to the addressed problem. The overall aim of this article is to present ideal-typical alternatives of how we understand and deal with skill acquisition.

This article begins by sketching military transformation trends from modern to postmodern armed forces. This article then uses a Norwegian context to explore universalism and contextualism, using three fundamental questions: (1) how is military skill defined, (2) what is it to be militarily skilled, and (3) how is military skill acquired. Finally, this framework indicates that universalism is strongly connected with an outdated military paradigm, while contextualism provides a better starting point for understanding flexible postmodern expeditionary forces.

## The Military Transformation

During the Cold War, military organizations were structured to fight invasion wars (e.g., conventional large-scale conflict). This implied the need for a “‘garrison’ mindset and a hierarchal, rigid, dogmatic way of thinking that valued technical know-how and expected obedience to orders from those at the end of the chain of command.”<sup>6</sup> As a result, the development of “skillful soldiers” centered on skills of a *general* and *basic* character such as, physical fitness and mental toughness,

marksmanship, and combat techniques.<sup>7</sup> Thomas Rathsack uses the Danish special forces as an ideal example of the skillful soldier of this era.

Great demands are therefore put forward to a ranger, with particular focus on good skills in patrolling techniques and tactics, self-discipline, and quick-wittedness. Also asked [of a ranger] is a good moral, discipline and stamina, in addition to a high degree of ability to cooperate, often under harsh conditions, during education as well as in deploying into different operations.<sup>8</sup>

Skillfulness was, thus, viewed as a universal ability, which any soldier should be able to perform regardless of the situation or context. Consequently, the notion of skillfulness placed little emphasis on specific operational environments.

With the end of the Cold War, new functions/missions (e.g., peacekeeping, humanitarian, stability, counterinsurgency operations) emerged, which led military organizations to structure and train their forces in accordance with an expeditionary mindset. Menaker et al. argued, the expeditionary mindset required soldiers to be “mentally prepared to deploy anywhere in the world on short notice,” to have “the critical-thinking skills to adapt quickly to a rapidly changing operational environment,” to appreciate and work “cooperatively with other members of a joint team,” and to possess “sufficient knowledge of the culture in the area of operation to be able to interact with the local populace.”<sup>9</sup> Accordingly, the development of skillful soldiers now emphasized *situated* and *contextual* considerations. For example, in 1992, the UN Secretary General asked the Netherlands to participate in the United Nation Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC).

[t] was clear that the marines needed a new mission-oriented training program . . . From this period on, training focused more and more on subjects like cultural information, intercultural communication, negotiation techniques, specific topographic information, knowledge about ethnic and national groups and political players.<sup>10</sup>

Thus, skillfulness is defined as a contextual ability, which implies that “each force is specific—to a period, to a state, to a war, to a single theatre of war, possibly to a battle. Even a standing force is specific: a result of the factors of the time of its formation.”<sup>11</sup>

## How Is Military Skill Defined?

A common way of understanding skill is by making a distinction between general and specific skills. In this sense, Kantian universalism and Aristotelian contextualism can be seen as two competing ethical/epistemological positions.<sup>12</sup> The first position argues that actions should follow rules and maxims that could/should be followed by all (universalism); the second, on the other hand, takes the opposite position and argues that action should take into account the situation (contextualism). These

distinctions are well suited as a basis for a typology with epistemic foundations that can be used to understand skill in relation to the ongoing military transformation from modernity to postmodernity.

## The Norwegian Context

From the perspective of Norwegian Armed Forces (NoAF), a distinct feature of the modern era and the core activity of the invasion defense-based armed forces was the universal indoctrination of the civilian population with basic military skills during 1 year of compulsory conscription.<sup>13</sup> During this era, military skills were mostly characterized by a standardized set of individual and/or unit behaviors, acquired through out-of-theater training, drills, and maneuvers that were expected to be executed in a relatively inflexible and automatic manner during military operations. This implied a soldiering ethos grounded in the notion of individual submission to authority. Ulriksen described the role and function of the NoAF soldier of the industrial era's mass armies in this way:

At the height of the conscripted mass-army era, the role of the soldier was very uncomplicated. He was supposed to master a job and a simple weapon system, for example, a rifle. The soldier should be able to understand and obey a limited number of commands, which he could do blind-folded. It took about twelve months to educate, or more correctly, to form such a soldier. He then underwent a program of discipline and training to improve his physical condition. The task did not require any comprehensive understanding, and the training had more in common with animal training than real education. The soldier was not supposed to think; that was the officer's job. This was the basic function of the conscripted soldier in the industrial era's mass armies.<sup>14</sup>

In contrast to the invasion defense-based concept, in which the male population was given basic military training that would never be put into practice, soldiers within the flexible expeditionary forces develop contextually based military skills that *are* likely to be used in real-life situations.<sup>15</sup> There is a significant difference between the field-training environment and the operational theatre, which alters the core ethos of soldiering from performing basic military techniques toward handling a multitude of complex situations. The key assumption underlying this approach is that the operational context becomes dynamic and, hence, military skill requires adaptability within continuously fluctuating military environments.<sup>16</sup> This implies a soldiering ethos based on initiative, flexibility, and independence. For example, Leonard Wong argued that U.S. junior officers in Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) appear to embody these principles:

Lieutenants and captains have conducted missions for which they never trained, executed operations that have outpaced Army doctrine, shifted constantly from adrenaline-pumping counterinsurgency to patience-demanding nation-building, and

**Table 1.** The Skillful Soldier—An Overview of the Contextualization Regarding the Ongoing Military Transformation of NoAF

	Invasion defense-based concept (modernity)	Expeditionary force-based defense concept (postmodernity)
Military/strategic aim	Territorial defense	Conflict management
Strategic concept based on	Operations within the alliances' territorial borders	Out of area operations
Operational concept based on	Large static invasion defense with a relatively long period of mobilization	Small, flexible reaction forces with ability of rapid deployment
Aim of compulsory military service	Force production for the mobilization force (based on conscription)	Force production for service in international operations (based on professional soldiers)
Foundation for skill acquisition	Mass-oriented ("good enough" competence)	Elite-oriented (expertise)
Skill orientation	Basic military skills/techniques	Handling of a multitude of complex situations

received very little detailed guidance or supervision in the process. The result of this experience is a cohort of junior officers that is learning to be adaptable, creative, innovative, and confident in their abilities to handle just about any task thrown at them.<sup>17</sup>

Table 1 summarizes the primary features of the military transformation from a Norwegian perspective.<sup>18</sup> The epistemic divide between universalism and contextualism seems like a good starting point for a typological framework in the analysis of the military skill-acquisition debate.

## Universalism

The ethical position, universalism, emphasizes the well-being of humanity and the consideration of the general welfare before the individual. Universalism emphasizes objective rules and maxims, which are justified if they satisfy "transcendental" principals.<sup>19</sup> Such a principle is Kant's categorical imperative to "act only according to that maxim by which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law."<sup>20</sup> Thus, the universalistic position is normative in that it sets a moral standard for behavior, which individuals are to follow in their daily lives. Hence, procedures, maxims, or norms must be acquired before one applies them in action. Stated differently, the *norm* of good skill performance must be known before the execution of a skill. As an epistemic foundation, universalism therefore puts weight on verbalized theoretical knowledge. This perspective emphasizes deductive rules, procedures,

and maxims, which are commonly presented in handbooks, instructional manuals, and so on, in a systematic step-by-step fashion, often related to a certain level of skill performance.

As a result, it seems arguable to say that universalism is closely connected to a rational and dualistic view of the human nature that follows Descartes dictum: “I think, therefore I am (Cogito ergo sum).” Cartesian dualism, which is at the core of modernity, separates the mental (*res cogitans*) from the physical (*res extensa*) and elevates thought as being detached from the body. Thus, universalism could be viewed as supporting a cognitivistic epistemology in which we see mind over body.<sup>21</sup>

Consequently, when seeking to understand *skill* from a universalistic perspective, it not only follows that one seeks to describe any skill by rules and maxims but also that one explains the execution of the same skill as a deliberate following of the same rules and maxims.<sup>22</sup> Accordingly, this implies that skill execution should be viewed as a form of analytic information processing—hence, cognitivism. Interestingly, such a description of skill fits very well with different skill models in understanding the lower levels of skill. Fitts, Fitts and Posner, and Schmidt, who developed skill models within the field of *motor learning and human performance*, identified three phases. They define the beginner phase as the *cognitive phase*, the middle phase as the *associative phase*, and the final phase as the *autonomous phase*.<sup>23</sup> The same is also the case with the Dreyfus and Dreyfus phenomenological five-stage model on skill acquisition (*from novice to expert*).<sup>24</sup> Their model describes the lower stages (i.e., novice, advanced beginner, and competent) as a form of cognitive and deliberate practice (e.g., information processing). From these models, it seems plausible to assert that skills based on a universalistic epistemology are of a rough, general, and/or unobtrusive character, usually found in the early phases of skill development.

Universalists argue that only their view can prevent subjectivism and ethnocentrism, since it is the only perspective that holds a universal point of view.<sup>25</sup> The argument against a formal type of universalism is that norms and maxims are tested against principles and not against real-life situations.<sup>26</sup> Since life is much richer and more diverse than formal analytic principles can portray, universalism encounters severe barriers in the application to real and practical life.<sup>27</sup>

## Contextualism

On the other hand, contextualism takes its starting point from real-life situations and is based on an ethical perspective that every situation is unique and needs a nuanced and situational adapted approach. The contextualist deduces moral principals from past experience through a comparison of similar ethical problems and then applies these experiences/realizations to new challenges. As an experience-based epistemology, contextualism can be traced to Aristotle who argued, it is through action that we acquire and develop moral virtue not the other way around—that virtue leads to good action(!):

... but the virtues we get by first exercising them, as also happens in the case of the arts as well. For the things we have to learn before we can do them, we learn by doing them, e.g. men become builders by building and lyre-players by playing the lyre; so too we become just by doing just acts, temperate by doing temperate acts, brave by doing brave acts.<sup>28</sup>

Aristotle takes this view a step further by describing how any virtue or art can be raised up or destroyed as a consequence of how one exercise ones skill:

... men will be good or bad builders as a result of building well or badly ... This, then, is the case with the virtues also; by doing the acts that we do in our transactions with other men we become just or unjust, and by doing the acts that we do in the presence of danger, and by being habituated to feel fear or confidence, we become brave or cowardly.<sup>29</sup>

From a contextualist perspective, the application of moral principles/virtue to real-life situations replaces universalism's focus on justifying universal principals as grounds for validating its moral principle.<sup>30</sup> This means that instead of objective rules and procedures, the contextualist holds that one's actions are governed by feelings, intuition, and skills.<sup>31</sup> For that reason, it is plausible to argue that contextualism is closely related to an integrated and somewhat holistic view of human nature that follows Rousseau's dictum "I feel, therefore I am." As a consequence, contextualism is particularly sensitive to an individual's subjective perspective of what is good conduct in a given situation, and hence not normative in the traditional Kantian sense—because there is no single universally correct solution, but rather a spectrum of graspable situational possibilities dependent on the abilities of the individual in question. Furthermore, one's abilities are narrowly connected to one's previous life experiences in general and from similar situations more specifically. Because of this, both an individual's past and future experiences are of vital importance.

Contextualism, as a way to conceptualize skill performance, emphasizes practical experienced-based knowledge as the basis for skill acquisition. Practical experienced-based knowledge is viewed as a dialectic in an organism–environment system. Heidegger describes this as an interactive relationship between a human being and the world.<sup>32</sup> His argument is that humans are not removed from the world, but instead are in the world, and it is precisely by being in the world that they understand it. Tjønneland described Heidegger's view of the world as follows:

Humans are not distanced from the world, but rather are always joined into the world. The world forms part of our manner in the same way that we can talk about the carpenter's world, the philosopher's world, the stamp collector's world, and so on. Humans' being-in-the-world is shaped by their understanding and performing activities in integrated contexts of meaning within a time structure in which humans are constantly forming historical syntheses.<sup>33</sup>

Skill is therefore a consequence of an individual's *being-in-the-world*, and military skill is a consequence of the soldier's being in a military world—the soldier's world.

When *skill* is understood from a contextualist perspective, it cannot be entirely and precisely described without some reference to the real situation in which the skill is executed.

This converges with higher stages in skill models. Fitts et al. view the most developed skills as being automated in the sense that humans react in an autonomous way to a specific situation based on significant previous experience. The same applies to the Dreyfus and Dreyfus skill model, where higher level skills are intuitive and experience-based: “We usually don’t make conscious deliberative decisions when we walk, talk, drive, or carry on most social activities. An expert’s skill has become so much a part of him that he need be no more aware of it than he is of his own body.”<sup>34</sup> As such, it seems reasonable to argue well-developed skills echo a contextualistic epistemology, which is nuanced, explicit, and situated.

The contextualists argue that theirs is the only perspective that values real-life experiences and is, therefore, the only perspective that is valid in this application. The argument against contextualism is that it puts too much emphasis on the subjective understanding of the individual in such a way that threatens society’s norms. Consequently, there is a risk of putting the interest of the individual above the interest of society.

In summary, a universalistic view leads to an understanding that emphasizes skill as being a type of analytic information processing based on cognitive deliberation, in which rules, maxims, and preplanned procedures play a defining role. On the other hand, a contextualistic view leads to an understanding of skill as an ongoing habitual activity based on intuitive and experience-based practice in which a situation and its practitioner’s perceptual and emotional involvedness in skill execution plays a defining role. What then does it mean to be skilled?

## What Is It to Be Militarily Skilled?

*Skill* is commonly understood as the mere ability to do something well.<sup>35</sup> Nonetheless, the term *skill* has etymological origins in the concepts of *knowledge*, *understanding*, and *judgment*, such as in the ability to separate or judge well.<sup>36</sup> Hence, the concept of *skill* is essentially about having the wisdom and ability to apply this (wisdom) in terms of doing. Thus, *being skilled* can be described as *doing* right or wrong, good or bad. However, addressing the *epistemological* foundation of *skill* involves the search for the type of knowledge which forms our view on what is to *do* something right or wrong, good or bad (in general and in relation to a universalistic vs. contextualistic view more specifically).

## Theoretical Knowledge versus Practical Wisdom

The core feature of the epistemic separation between *knowing-that* and *knowing-how* is analogous to the distinction between verbal/theoretical knowledge and practical knowledge, which is tacit, implicit, and difficult to verbally communicate.<sup>37</sup>



Accordingly, this distinction has obvious connections to the discourse of universalism versus contextualism.

*Skilled* from a universalistic view emphasizes being right or wrong in the sense of an objective standard for good and bad practice that is possible to formulate in a verbal and theoretical manner. For example, following a set of rules or guidelines, while exercising a particular skill set, implies a conscious deliberation as the foundation of (skillful) practice. Being skilled then implies that one acts according to a verbalized description (rules, procedures, maxims, etc.) that constitutes the skill. This is exactly how Dreyfus and Dreyfus described how the novice (lowest stage) evaluates their skill performance: "The beginning student wants to do a good job, but lacking any coherent sense of the overall task he judges his performance mainly by how well he follows learned rules."<sup>38</sup> Furthermore, they argue that advanced beginners (Stage 2) and more competent practitioners (Stage 3) often experience a sense of being overwhelmed by having to follow a vast number of context-free rules and situational maxims. The most common way of overcoming this problem is to adopt a hierarchical procedure of decision making based on an analytical process of plan development, which differentiates more important aspects from the less important ones.<sup>39</sup> Rational deliberation is used in analytically identifying the important aspects, which makes use of *knowing-that* type of knowledge. Skilled or skillful behavior is then judged through perceptions of success in the execution of a self-developed plan.

Militarily speaking, this seems to be in harmony with the era of the invasion defense-based concept, in which each soldier only served for a relatively short time (and rarely experienced combat/real live military operations), and consequently never became an experienced soldier. Accordingly, this meant that being skilled was seen in relation to how good the individual soldier was in executing a predefined skill according to a step-by-step approach described in instruction manuals and handbooks, rather than how well the soldier applied the skill to/in a real-life situation. The same applied to military units. For example, units were evaluated through periodic inspections in which a fixed set of predefined features were checked such as how many soldiers/subunits met the minimum standardized score, the degree to which the unit had control over personal and unit equipment, and so on. Furthermore, without real military operations to test skills, successfully passing inspection became the goal of military training, followed by military skill acquisition.

The epistemic distinction between the *concept* of knowing-how and knowing-that was first introduced by John Dewey in his book, *Human Nature and Conduct*, in which Dewey called attention to what he termed "ongoing activity":

We may . . . be said to know how by means of our habits . . . We walk and read aloud, we get off and on street cars, we dress and undress, and do a thousand useful acts without thinking of them. We know something, namely, how to do them . . . If we choose to call [this] knowledge . . . then other things also called knowledge, knowledge of and about things, knowledge that things are thus and so, knowledge that involves reflection and conscious appreciation, remains of a different sort.<sup>40</sup>

Dewey's description captures what it is to be skilled from a contextualized point of view. Within the contextualist school of thought, there is no uniform expression describing this type of practical knowledge. Instead, different actors have different expressions, which contextualists argue may be better suited to problem resolution in a particular context. Heidegger used the term *skillful-coping*, which he saw as the normal way of dealing with everyday situations, rather than the deliberate practice which people resort to when faced with a problem.<sup>41</sup> In contrast, Merleau-Ponty uses the word habit (*l'habitude*) to describe a kind of *bodily* knowledge. In his book *Phenomenology of Perception*, he builds on Heidegger's notion of *being-in-the-world* and maintained the view that it is as *bodies-in-the-world* that human beings are capable of sensing and thereby experiencing their lives.<sup>42</sup> Merleau-Ponty's understanding of the body is not the corporal objective body we are accustomed to when thinking in the dualistic sense of mind and body. Rather, it is the *lived body* or the *body-subject*. Thus, he argues that it is not in thought or in the objective body that we find the home of habits (*l'habitude*) but in the body itself.<sup>43</sup> He used an example of someone who is skilled at using a typewriter to demonstrate the epistemological foundation of habits. Merleau-Ponty argues skilled typists have no knowledge of the place of each letter among all the others on the keyboard nor have they acquired a conditioned reflex for each one. Instead:

[Habit] is knowledge in the hands, which is forthcoming only when bodily efforts is made, and cannot be formulated in detachment from that effort. The subject knows where the letters are on the typewriter as we know where one of our limbs is, through a knowledge bred of familiarity which does not give us a position in objective space.<sup>44</sup>

This bodily perspective implies that the relationship between knowledge and the knower is of essential importance to understanding skill and who is skilled. Grimen argued that practical knowledge is characterized by form and the matter of knowledge cannot be separated from those who have it and from the situations in which it is learned and used. Therefore, a skilled person with practical knowledge is not entirely replaceable. On the other hand, Grimen argued that theoretical knowledge is the same, independent of who has it, what it is used for, and where it is applied. Theoretical knowledge is therefore replaceable.<sup>45</sup>

All this points toward an understanding of being skilled that is based on an epistemology that views skill as an everyday human conduct, which is bodily, intuitive, habitual, and personal. Epistemology rooted in cognitive or conscious deliberation is, therefore, problematic as a basis for skillful practice.

This is consistent with the skill model of Dreyfus and Dreyfus who argued that skill execution at the lower stages is based on deliberate rationality, while the higher stages reflect a bodily (intuitive/habitual) know-how: "When things are proceeding normally, experts don't solve problems and don't make decisions; they do what normally works."<sup>46</sup> Within the universalist paradigm, expertise is developed when rules and facts that constitute knowledge are sufficiently developed and have become

unconsciously automated. Dreyfus and Dreyfus argued that such an understanding demands that the expert must always think about what he does when acting, which implies an understanding of mind over body. Nevertheless, their own skill model implies that, when a skill is acquired, one does not need to follow any rules, whether conscious or unconscious, or have any form of mentally representative symbols of the skill in mind. The body just acts according to the demands of the situation (i.e., body over mind) in the way that Merleau-Ponty describes a human's notion of action as a constant activity stream in reaction to our perception of the situation (intentional arc).<sup>47</sup>

The universalist epistemology has a strong connection with a *knowing-that* type of knowledge, while the contextualist epistemology is more connected to a *knowing-how* type of knowledge. In praxis, this separation suggests a conceptualization of "being skilled" either as a rule-governed, nonsituational, detachment from the environment in which the skill is executed, or as having real practical knowledge (wisdom). Thus, the Dreyfus skill model explains skill at lower stages using universalist epistemology (i.e., knowing that), while using contextualist epistemology at the higher stages of skill development (i.e., knowing how). How does this impact the way we understand the acquisition of skills?

## How Is Military Skill Acquired?

Based on the distinction between universalism and contextualism, it is possible to divide pedagogic approaches into two superior directions or schools of thought in the acquisition of military skill. These are commonly understood as the theoretical approach and the practical approach. Pedagogical philosophical discourse unfolds between scholastic versus nonscholastic learning paradigms (or theoretical framework). In brief, the scholastic paradigm is characterized by verbal or textual formalism, which is disconnected from practice in its introductory stages. It is, therefore, more closely connected to a universalistic epistemology.<sup>48</sup> The nonscholastic paradigm is the direct opposite and is characterized by active practice, participation, personal experience, observation, and so on, which is more strongly rooted in a contextualistic epistemology.<sup>49</sup>

## Scholastic versus Nonscholastic Learning within the Military (NoAF)

During the invasion defense-based era, the core purpose of military skill acquisition was closely connected to the conscript system and the maintenance of a relatively large mobilization force (which "hopefully" never had to be used in a real-life situation). This meant that military training had to be organized to accommodate large groups with little (if any) prior military training or operational experience. Thus, the focus of military training and skill acquisition was mainly directed toward giving cohorts of the male population some lessons in basic military knowledge and skills

on a yearly basis. Consequently, skill acquisition during the invasion defense period became a type of institutionalized mandatory *education*, based on a bureaucratic and hierarchical epistemology. In the daily life of the armed forces, this meant that knowledge was something that was to be passed on in schools and split up into studies, modules, subjects, lessons, facts, and formulas, which was, consequently, taught in a systematic step-by-step manner. Furthermore, the learning environment was clearly divided between those who were in a position of possessing the knowledge (i.e., the instructor/officer) and those who were in a position to receive it (i.e., the conscript/soldier). This concept stemmed from the Age of Enlightenment in which the dominant pedagogical ideal was that learning is a formative process. Under this process, the pedagogue shapes the learner by providing *correct* knowledge, information, and virtues. The learner experiences learning as an external influence<sup>50</sup> and is, therefore, seen as a superficial being, whose experience is shallow and shall be expanded and given depth. Therefore, it is the learner's (soldier's) duty to receive and accept. Their function is fulfilled when he or she has become obedient and willing to learn.<sup>51</sup> Accordingly, this educational tradition views learning as a *behavioral change of permanent character*. The epistemic implication is that learning is a fixed quantity. In other words, when something is learned, it has been learned, and does not need to be learned again. This implies that learning is about the assimilation of objective, context-free facts, which is precisely how skill-acquisition models, such as the Dreyfus model, describe learning at the beginner's stage:

During the first stage of the acquisition of a new skill through instruction, the novice learns to recognize various objective facts and features relevant to the skill and acquires rules for determining actions based upon those facts and features. Elements of the situation to be treated as relevant are so clearly and objectively defined for the novice that they can be recognized without reference to the overall situation in which they occur.<sup>52</sup>

The learning philosophy of the invasion defense era can, thus, be said to resemble the modern emphasis on theoreticalized knowledge as the foundation for good human behavior, which results in an educational process correlated with the mass production of an assembly-line industry.<sup>53</sup>

As militaries move toward the expeditionary defense-based concept, the core purpose of skill acquisition is undergoing a radical change. In today's world, the acquisition of skill is directly related to the ability to conduct and participate in military operations in foreign, complex environments that pose a significant risk to individual soldiers. Hence, acquiring military skill is becoming a matter of both professional ability and personal interest. Furthermore, the emphasis on building an expeditionary, rather than a mobilization force, accentuates smaller and more experienced units and soldiers over time. As a result, the focus of military training and skill acquisition is shifting toward providing professional units with contextual knowledge and skills (i.e., both basic and specialized) required to operate in a given theater, which establish the necessary means toward achieving both the operational

goals and political aims of the campaign. Consequently, military skill learning is becoming a type of experience-based skill-acquisition process, which is grounded in a situation-oriented epistemology. In the day-to-day practice of the armed forces, this implies that knowledge is something that is situated and acquired through the conduct of situated skill execution. A contemporary example is the introduction of what has been termed “Female Engagement Teams.” These all-female units are used to contact the female population, who are culturally isolated from male contact.

The all-female unit of forty-six Marines is the military’s latest innovation in its rivalry with the Taliban for the populace’s loyalty. Afghan women are viewed as good intelligence sources, and more open to the basics of the military’s hearts-and-minds effort—hygiene, education, and an end to the violence.<sup>54</sup>

Adaptation is a way of obtaining knowledge and increasing operability. Within this perspective, learning is not something that necessarily takes place in schools, but rather is an integral part of active participation in a community of practice.<sup>55</sup> Thus, military skill acquisition becomes learning *by* or *in* doing the job.

An interesting aspect of communities of practice is that there is now fixed division between those who are skilled and not. An expert in one field can be a novice in another, while at the same time knowledge and skills are the subject of a constant evolution. Sometimes this process is revolutionary, altering the possessor of the knowledge and skills relevant to a given challenge. Within this paradigm, one can assert that knowledge, skills, and their qualities are limited only by those who put them to use. This understanding of the learner is rooted in the Age of Romanticism and the French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who believed that human beings were born with an internal need to learn.<sup>56</sup> The pedagogical challenges, therefore, lay in facilitating the learning process.

The learning process is “ordered” in an organic and continuous fashion, almost like a growing process in which the learner seeks out new situations, acquires new skills, and adapts to new knowledge. In a way, the pedagogue becomes a facilitator, midwife, and mentor, while the learner leads the process. For this reason, the “master” will mostly act as a “coach” who demonstrates, gives advice, asks questions, and provides critique. Thus, it is the learner’s (soldier’s) task to seek out new knowledge and develop new skills. Their role as a soldier is undertaken when they are able to take initiative and act in a flexible manner based on independent decision making. Therefore, this pedagogical approach views learning as a *behavioral change of a continual and adaptive character* that results from a contextual influence. Knowledge will have to be continually expanded, and soldiers will never be fully trained, as the surroundings and skills required to perform the various tasks undergo constant change. This means that skill acquisition is inextricably connected to one’s personal experience in terms of a perceptual and emotional involvement in meaningful situations, which is how the Dreyfus skill model views learning at the higher stages:

Then the resulting positive and negative emotional experiences will strengthen successful perspectives and inhibit unsuccessful ones, and the performer's theory of the skill, as represented by rules and principles, will gradually be replaced by situational discriminations. Proficiency seems to develop if, and only if, experience is assimilated in this embodied, atheoretical way.<sup>57</sup>

As such, the learning philosophy of the expeditionary defense-based force is related to postmodernity with its focus on constructivism, complexity, and contextualism.<sup>58</sup> The military transformation from an invasion defense-based concept (grounded on conscription and mobilization) toward a flexible expeditionary force-based concept (focusing on professionalism and participation in live military operations) should also shift from a scholastic to a nonscholastic approach to skill acquisition. Yet, understanding how both play an essential part in developing good professional soldiers is vital. Scholastic learning provides a broad approach to a common topic, while nonscholastic provides soldiers with a practical understanding of how to apply skills (practical wisdom) in real-life situations.

It is crucial to the understanding of the military transformation that the general mass learning of the invasion defense era will be insufficient for creating applicable soldiering skills for real-life operations in a defined operational theater. Participation in live military operations across the globe over the past decade underscores the need for a more contextualized approach. As stated in the NoAF Joint Operational Doctrine of 2007, "Today's complex operations can never be fully covered by manuals and rules of engagement. Our ability to fulfill our tasks depends rather on individuals whose judgment is well developed and mature."<sup>59</sup> At the same time, formalized general military education will probably be of more importance than ever since so much of modern soldiering is about communicating across different borders on a man-to-man basis. This type of operational climate necessitates a broader understanding of the operational theater.<sup>60</sup> Moreover, a contextual approach will foster a sense of self-reflectivity necessary for adaptation in a changing environment.<sup>61</sup> However, formal education is still important as students connect theory to situational awareness of the contemporary operational climate. Only by connecting theory to experience will students be able to achieve a meaningful and critical relationship with the study of military affairs, necessary for developing maturity and wisdom. For theory to become wisdom, it must be tested against operational experience. Therefore, educational curriculum must be formulated to support a contextualized view of skill acquisition and tempered by personal experience.

## Conclusion

The concern of this article has been to develop a typology with an epistemological foundation for understanding military skill acquisition within the context of the ongoing military transformation witnessed in many Western developed democracies over the last two decades. The transformation runs parallel to "evolutionary"



changes from *modernity* with its weight on universalism, structure, and objectivity, toward *postmodernity* and its responsiveness to constructivism, complexity, and contextualism. Moreover, the characteristics of an invasion defense-based concept grounded in conscription and mobilization resembles that of modernity, while the features of a flexible expeditionary defense-based concept with its focus on professionalism and participation in live military operations resembles that of postmodernity. Consequently, a dichotomy between universalism and contextualism seems useful for framing a typology of the epistemological foundation of skillful soldiers (Table 2 presents an overview of the typological sketch).

*How to understand the concept of skill*, utilizes an epistemology rooted in universalism and is guided by normative or moral principles that are universally applicable. According to this perspective, *skill* is defined by verbally deduced rules and maxims. In many skill-models, this epistemology is found at the lower skill levels. Here skill execution is usually seen as a type of information-processing activity based on analytic cognitive deliberation, where rules, maxims, and preplanned procedures play a defining role. In contrast, an epistemology grounded in contextualism seeks to understand skill in terms of habitual activity. This view seems to fit very well within the higher stages of several skill models. Here, skill is described as an ongoing habitual activity based on intuitive and experience-based practice, where the situation and the practitioner's perceptual and emotional participation plays a key defining role.

The universalist view of *what it is to be skilled*, holds that universalistic (theoretical) knowledge is articulated through formal propositions. Being skilled within this perspective is measured by the degree of how right or wrong one is in applying propositional knowledge in real-life situations. On the other hand, contextualism holds that (practical) knowledge is expressed through action, judgment, valuation, and assessment, and being skilled is seen as a consequence of how good or bad you are at solving practical tasks. The core difference between them is that a universalistic perspective focuses on following the existing norms and standard procedures of what is recognized as good conduct, while applying a contextualized view focuses on achieving the goals of our actions, which may or may not follow the given guidelines.

The distinction between scholastic and nonscholastic paradigms over *how skill is acquired* is pedagogically analogous to the distinction between universalism and contextualism. The first is connected to institutionalized mandatory education, which aims at giving large groups of the population basic knowledge and skills that may or may not be used in life. This type of knowledge and skills is of a stereotypical, general, and/or unobtrusive character. The second focuses on participation in the daily practice of a profession with the aim of solving real-life situations through well-adjusted solutions that demand individual and group skills that are innovative, flexible, and applicable.

Military education in the invasion defense era utilized a broad and general introduction to military skills for the masses, which was steered by a universalistic approach to skill acquisition. In the same way, a more situated and applied approach

**Table 2.** Understanding Military Skill—A Typological of Epistemic Foundations

	Universalistic epistemology (invasion defense-based concept)	Contextualistic epistemology (expeditionary force-based defense concept)
	Modernity (universalism, structure, and objectivity)	Postmodernity (constructivism, complexity, and contextuality)
Military paradigm	Volume concerning mobilization forces	Ability-motivated professional military communities of practice
View on the soldiering ethos	Individual submission for authority	Ability to take and display initiative, flexibility, and independency
View on human behavior	A following of rules and maxims	A response to context
View on knowledge as a basis for skill execution	Verbalized knowledge (theory-based)	Habitual knowledge (intuitive and experience-based)
View on the human nature and body	Dualistic (mind and/over body)	Holistic/integrated (living bodies in the world)
View on skill execution	Analytic information processing (based on cognitive and deliberate practice)	Ongoing habitual activity (based on intuitive and experience-based practice)
View on skill performance	Lower levels (rough, general, and unobvious)	Higher levels (nuanced, explicit, and situated)
View on pedagogical approach for skill acquisition	Scholastic learning (rational/analytical deliberation)	Nonscholastic learning (perceptual and emotional involvement)
View on learning context	Disconnected from real-life practice (i.e., in school and out of theater training, drills, and maneuvers)	Active practice participation in real-life situations (i.e., in theater operations)
View on learning	Behavioral change of permanent character	Behavioral change of continual and adaptive character

to military skill learning can be linked to a contextualistic view of skill acquisition. Accordingly, the concept of the large and static invasion defense force, which focused on the mass learning of basic military skills for the male population, was primarily based on a universalistic epistemology. Likewise, the concept of the smaller and flexible expeditionary defense forces, which emphasizes applicable skills for smaller and selected groups, is largely rooted in a contextualistic epistemology.

## Epilogue

This article has attempted through a typological construct to describe how different epistemological foundations influence understanding skillfulness. A typology is a



theoretical construct that does injustice to reality. One could argue that such theoretical constructs should not be used without a certain skepticism. Nevertheless, it seems clear under this typology that the extent to which military organizations continue to be hierarchical and bureaucratic indicates they are aligned with the modern perspective, unsuitable in the postmodern era. According to this typology, this could be a challenge for armed forces undergoing a transformation toward an expeditionary mindset. Thus, this typology heightens awareness of the consequences of the transformation, in general, and military skill acquisition, more specifically. This, in turn, raises new interesting and meaningful questions, such as, how can skillfulness and its acquisition be organized within the military (postmodern or not)? How do we develop a military learning culture based on situated knowledge and associated apprenticeship-like forms of learning? To what extent do military education with its curriculum and organization reflect the epistemological foundation put forward in this article? And thus, what should be the role and purpose of formal education in a postmodern military?

### Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

### Funding

The author received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

### Notes

1. NATO Press release, NAC-S (99)65, *The Alliance's Strategic Concept*, April 24, 1999, accessed June 17, 2009, <http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/1999/p99-065e.htm>. For a more extensive reading on the changes seen in the Western developed democracies, I suggest reading Charles C. Moskos, John Allen Williams, and David R. Segal, ed., *The Postmodern Military; Armed Forces after the Cold War* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2000). The book is an anthology describing the national changes seen in eleven Western democracies in comparison to a theoretical and typological framework (from *modern* through *late modern* to *postmodern* forms of military organization) outlined by Charles C. Moskos.
2. Christopher Flaherty, "The Relevance of the US Transformation Paradigm for Australian Defence Forces," *Defence & Security Analysis* 19, 3 (2003): 219–40. Flaherty argues that there has been a paradigmatic shift within military affairs from a threat-based "classical paradigm" to a capabilities-based (United States) "transformational paradigm." The former Norwegian Chief of Defense, General Sverre Diesen, "Mot et allianseintegret forsvar" [Towards an Alliance-Integrated Defense Force], in *Mot et avnasjonalisert forsvar?* [Towards a Denationalized Defense Force?], ed. Janne Haaland Matlary and Øyvind Østerud (Oslo: Abstrakt forlag, 2005), 163–84, argues that the transformation

is of such a magnitude that we are talking of a shift in paradigm. Diesen characterizes the transformation by calling it *a shift from a small militia-based defense to a partly professionalized defense force* (in Norwegian, author's translation). Sir Rupert Smith, (*The Utility of Force; The Art of War in the Modern World* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, a division of Random House, 2007), argues that there has undoubtedly been a paradigmatical shift when it comes to the understanding of war. He describes the shift as a change from industrial war to war among the people.

3. Fabrizio Battistelli, "Peacekeeping and the postmodern Soldier," *Armed Forces & Society* 23, 467–84; Charles C. Moskos and James Burk, "The Postmodern Military," in *The Military in New Times*, ed. James Burk (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994), 142; Moskos, et al., ed., *The Postmodern Military; Armed Forces after the Cold War*; Harry Bondy, "Postmodernism and the Source of Military Strength in the Anglo West," *Armed Forces & Society* 31 (2004): 31–61; Anders McD Sookermany, "The Embodied Soldier: Towards a New Epistemological Foundation for Soldiering skills in the (Post) Modernized Norwegian Armed Forces," *Armed Forces & Society* 37 (2010): 469–93. For an introduction on modernity and postmodernity see: David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity* (London: Blackwell, 2000).
4. NATO Press release, NAC-S (99)65, *The Alliance's Strategic Concept*, April 24, 1999, accessed June 17, 2009, <http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/1999/p99-065e.htm>; U.S. Department of Defense, *Strengthening Transatlantic Security – A U.S. Strategy for the 21st Century* (U.S. Department of Defense, 2000); David H. Petraeus and James F. Amos, *The United States Army and The United States Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual* (Kissimmee, FL: Signalman, 2006); Norwegian Defence Command and Staff College, *Norwegian Armed Forces Joint Operational Doctrine* (Oslo: The Defence Staff, 2007).
5. Moskos, et al., ed., *The Postmodern Military; Armed Forces after the Cold War*; Anders McD Sookermany, "The Embodied Soldier."
6. Patricia M. Shields, "21st Century Expeditionary Mindset and Core Values: A Review of the Literature," *Faculty Publications-Political Science*, 2009, Paper 53, accessed August 1, 2010, <http://ecommons.txstate.edu/polsfacp/53/>.
7. William S. Lind, *Maneuver Warfare Handbook* (CO: Westview Press and Fredrick A. Praeger, 1985), identifies what he calls basic techniques to be: marksmanship, map reading, and physical fitness. William C. David, "Developing a Supercharged Battalion," *Kunnskap om idrett* 3, 4 (1999): 101–26, defines the core performance areas as: mental toughening and physical fitness, marksmanship, and maneuver live fire exercises. Former Norwegian Chief of Defence, General Sigurd Frisvold, "Fysisk fostring på terskelen til et nytt årtusen" [Physical Fostering at the Dawn of a New Millennium], in *Konferanserapport konferansen for fysisk fostring 1999*, ed. Anders McD Sookermany (Oslo: Norges idrettshøgskole Forsvarets institutt, 2000), 44–7, adopts a similar division, talking about combat skills, marksmanship, and physical fostering.
8. Thomas Rathsack, *Jæger – I krig med eliten* [Ranger – At War with the Elite] (København: People's Press, 2009), 29. Even though Rathsack himself went through his

- ranger training in the early 90s, his demands for the skillful soldier are those that were identified and idealized during the Cold War era (in Danish, author's translation).
9. Ellen Menaker, Jo MacDonald, Arnold Hendrick, and Debra O'Connor, *Traning a Joint and Expeditionary Mindset*. ARI Contractor Report 2007-04 (United States Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences, 2006), iii, accessed August 7, 2010, <http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?Location=U2&doc=GetTRDoc.pdf&AD=ADA460138>.
  10. Kitzen, M., Bon, A., & Bosch, D. (2008). Educating counter-insurgency: The Dutch experience. Paper presented at the pedagogy for the long war: Teaching irregular warfare, Quantico, VA. In Paul C. van Fenema, "Expeditionary Military Networks and Asymmetric Warfare," in *Advances in Military Sociology: Essays in Honor of Charles C. Moskos, Part A. Contributions to Conflict Management, Peace Economics and Development*, Vol. 12A, ed. Giuseppe Caforio (Bingley: Emerald Group, 2009), 277.
  11. Sir Rupert Smith, *The Utility of Force: The Art of War in the Modern World*, 20.
  12. Kantian universalism and Aristotelian contextualism has its out spring in ethical thinking, as they seek to view the moral sides of human action. My concern, however, is to use its perspective as an epistemological foundation for my argument.
  13. During the height of the invasion defense-based concept era in the 1970s and 1980s, the Norwegian mobilization force consisted of approximately 230,000 soldiers, while the corresponding number today is approximately 83,000 and still dropping. Equally, the peacetime organization numbered approximately 35,000 officers and privates (more than 20,000 were conscripts) in the 1970s and 1980s, while today NoAF has approximately 23,000 service personnel, of which conscripts comprise less than 10,000, accessed September 14, 2010, <http://www.mil.no/fakta/>. When reading these figures, one needs to bear in mind that Norway is a small nation of approximately 4.5 million inhabitants.
  14. Ståle Ulriksen, *Den norske forsvarstradisjonen – militærmakt eller folkeforsvar?* [The Norwegian Defense Tradition – Military Power or Popular Defense?] (Oslo: Pax Forlag A/S, 2002), 255 (in Norwegian, author's translation).
  15. St. meld. Nr. 38 (1998–99), *Tilpasning av Forsvaret til deltagelse i internasjonale operasjoner* [Report to the Storting No. 38 (1998–99), *Adaption of NoAF for Participation in International Military Operations*], 8–15.
  16. Shields, *21st Century Expeditionary Mindset and Core Values: A Review of the Literature*.
  17. Leonard Wong, *Developing Adaptive Leaders: The Crucible Experience of Operation Iraqi Freedom* (Carlisle, PA: The Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College, 2004), 15.
  18. NOU 2000:20 (2000). *Et nytt Forsvar*. Innstilling fra Forsvarspolitisk utvalg, oppnevnt av regjeringen 16. juli 1999. Avgitt til Forsvarsdepartementet 29 juni 2000 [A new NoAF. Report from a Defense Political Panel Appointed by the Government on July 16, 1999. Submitted to the Royal Ministry of Defense on June 29, 2000] (Oslo: Statens forvaltningstjeneste, Informasjonsforvaltning, 2000). See also: Inspector General of the Army, Roar Jens Haugen, *Forsvarets Forum årsbilag for 2003* [Forsvarets Forum, Annual

- Supplement for 2003], 7, that the actual purpose of compulsory military service is to secure competent people for international operations, rather than to build departments in Norway's own mobilization force.
19. Kant makes a distinction between objects that can be experienced and transcendental principals for something to be experienced as an object (Filosofleksikon, 1996, 556).
  20. Accessed April 21, 2009, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/99359/categorical-imperative>.
  21. For an extended discussion on the view of the body in connection to the ongoing military transformation, see Anders McD Sookermany, "The Embodied Soldier."
  22. Hubert L. Dreyfus and Stuart E. Dreyfus, *Mind Over Machine: The Power of Human Intuition and Expertise in the Era of the Computer* (UK: Basil Blackwell, 1986); Steen Wackerhausen, "Det skolestiske paradigme og mesterlære" [The Scholastic Paradigm and Apprenticeship], in *Mesterlære: Læring som social praksis* [Apprenticeship: Learning as a Social Practice], ed. Klaus Nielsen and Steinar Kvale (København: Hans Reitzels Forlag, 1999), 219–33.
  23. P. M. Fitts, "Perceptual-Motor Skill Learning," in *Categories of Human Learning*, ed. A. W. Melton (New York, NY and London: Academic Press, 1964), 244–86; P. M. Fitts and M. I. Posner, *Human Performance* (Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole, 1967); R. A. Schmidt, *Motor Control and Learning – A Behavioral Emphasis* (IL: Human Kinetics Publishers, 1988); R. A. Schmidt, *Motor Learning & Performance – From Principles to Practice* (IL: Human Kinetics Books, 1991).
  24. Hubert L. Dreyfus and Stuart E. Dreyfus, *Mind Over Machine*. In the early 80s, the Dreyfus brothers conducted studies about the acquisition of practical skills. Their studies included the teaching of pilots, tank drivers, military officers, chess players, car drivers, and adults who were learning a second language. Independent of the different practices, they identified five specific features within the learning process, which they called the "five stages of skill-acquisition." The model describes the different characteristics and horizons of understanding the five stages: novice, advanced beginner, competent, proficient, and expert.
  25. Lars Løvlie, "Of Rules, Skills and Examples in Moral Education," 77.
  26. Ibid.
  27. Simon Priest and Michael A. Gass, *Effective Leadership in Adventure Programming* (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, University of New Hampshire, 1997), 16.
  28. Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1998), 28–9 (II03a31).
  29. Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, 29 (II03b11).
  30. Lars Løvlie, "Of Rules, Skills and Examples in Moral Education," 77.
  31. The German word *Fingerspitzengefühl* is exceptionally well suited for describing this as a sort of feelable and nuanced skill that is situated in your hands—as compared to a more general skill steered by an analytical brain.
  32. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time* (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1962), describes the relationship as a subject–subject, rather than subject–object relationship, in which the individual's surroundings are considered an object.

33. Eivind Tjønneland, "Martin Heidegger," in *Vestens tenkere. Bind III: fra Freud til Baudrillard* [The Thinkers of the West. Volume III: From Freud to Baudrillard], ed. Trond Berg Eriksen (Oslo: H. Aschehoug (W Nygaard), 4 oplag, 1998), 190–209 (in Norwegian, author's translation).
34. Hubert L. Dreyfus and Stuart E. Dreyfus, *Mind Over Machine*, 30.
35. Jonathan Crowther, ed., *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*, 5th ed., 3rd impression (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 1109.
36. *Webster's New World College Dictionary*, 2009. Your Dictionary, April 23, 2009, <[www.yourdictionary.com/skill](http://www.yourdictionary.com/skill)>Etymology: ME, discernment, reason < ON *skil*, distinction, akin to *skilja*, to cut apart, separate < IE base \*(s)kel-, to cut (> shield, shell): basic sense "ability to separate," hence "discernment," accessed April 23, 2009, <http://www.yourdictionary.com/skill>. In the Norwegian language, the term *skille* means something that divides or creates a distinction.
37. It was Gilbert Ryle who introduced the *terms/expressions* "knowing-that" and "knowing-how" in his book *The Concept of Mind* (New York, NY: Barnes & Noble, 1949). Others have later described similar distinctions, see for instance, Ludvig Wittgenstein, Imponderable vs. ponderable and documentary evidence (*Philosophical Investigations* [Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1958]); Burrhus Fredric Skinner, contingency-shaped vs. rule governed behaviour (*Contingencies of Reinforcement* [Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1969]); L. Stinessen, unverbaliizele vs verbalizable knowledge ("On the Distinction between Verbalizable and Unverbalizable Knowledge," in *Basic Issues in Psychology*, ed. I. A. Bjørgen [Søreigrend: Sigma, 1989], 273–83); A. G. Greenwald, unconscious vs. conscious cognition ("New Look 3: Unconscious Cognition Reclaimed," *American Psychologist* 47 (1992): 766–79).
38. Hubert L. Dreyfus and Stuart E. Dreyfus, *Mind Over Machine*, 22.
39. Hubert L. Dreyfus and Stuart E. Dreyfus, *Mind Over Machine*, 24.
40. John Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct: An Introduction to Social Psychology* (New York, NY: Modern Library, 1922), 177–78.
41. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1962).
42. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception* (London and New York, NY: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962).
43. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 167. For an extended discussion on the view of the body in connection to the ongoing military transformation, see: Anders McD Sookermany, "The Embodied Soldier."
44. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 166. Øyvind Førland Standal, "Relations of Meaning. A Phenomenologically Oriented Case Study of Learning Bodies in a Rehabilitation Context" (PhD dissertation, Norwegian School of Sport Sciences, 2009), gives an example through an experiment illustrating the point: "Can you tell which finger you use to press the letter F on the key board of your computer? Most people, who are somewhat proficient at typing, wouldn't. But if they sit down by their keyboard, the finger will find the letter immediately without the intervention of thought."

45. Harald Grimen "Profesjon og kunnskap" [Profession and Knowledge], in *Profesjonsstudier* [Studies of Professions], ed. Anders Molander og Lars Inge Terum (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 2008), 71–86.
46. Hubert L. Dreyfus and Stuart E. Dreyfus, *Mind Over Machine*, 30–1.
47. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*.
48. Klaus Nielsen and Steinar Kvale, ed., *Mesterlære: Læring som sosial praksis* [Apprenticeship: Learning as a Social Practice].
49. Ibid.
50. Gunnar Breivik, *Sug I magen og livskvalitet* [The Gnawing Feeling and Quality of Life] (Oslo: Tiden Norsk Forlag A/S, 2001).
51. Ståle Ulriksen, *Den norske forsvarstradisjonen* [The Norwegian Defense Tradition], 255.
52. Hubert L. Dreyfus and Stuart E. Dreyfus, *Mind Over Machine*, 21.
53. See Sir Rupert Smith, *The Utility of Force: The Art of War in the Modern World*.
54. Alfred de Montesquiou, "Marines Try a Woman's Touch to Reach Afghan Hearts," GMANEWS.TV, accessed March 9, 2010, <http://www.gmanews.tv/story/169856/marines-try-a-womans-touch-to-reach-afghan-hearts>.
55. Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger, *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1991).
56. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Émile. Or Treatise on Education*, trans. William H. Payne (New York, NY: Prometheus Books, 1896).
57. Hubert L. Dreyfus and Stuart E. Dreyfus, "Beyond Expertise: Some Preliminary Thoughts on Mastery," in *Veglederen et festskrift til Nils Faarlund* [Veglederen a festschrift to Nils Faarlund], ed. Anders McD Sookermany and Jørgen W. Eriksen (Oslo: GAN Aschehoug, 2007), 217–26.
58. David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity*.
59. Norwegian Defence Command and Staff College, *Norwegian Armed Forces Joint Operational Doctrine* (Oslo: The Defence Staff, 2007), para. 0614.
60. On the basis of numerous conversations with those who have served in different operations over the last decade, this is the author's clear understanding.
61. Jens-Christian Smeby "Profesjon og utdanning" [Profession and Education], *Profesjonsstudier* [Studies of Professions], ed. Anders Molander og Lars Inge Terum (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 2008), 87–102.

## Bio

**Anders McD Sookermany** is head of the Department of Military Skill-Acquisitions at the Norwegian Defence University College, Norwegian School of Sport Sciences, Defence Institute. His War College education is supplemented with a master degree in sports-philosophy. He is currently working on a PhD thesis about skill acquisition in postmodern/modern military contexts. He is the author and editor of several books.