

Jürgen Kuhlmann

THE MILITARY OFFICER'S JOB
SOME CONSIDERATIONS AND EMPIRI-
CAL FINDINGS

Paper prepared for the Interim Meeting of the
Working Group „On Military Profession“ in
the ERGOMAS RESEARCH GROUP ON
MILITARY AND SOCIETY (ERGOMAS)

Lucca/Italy,
October 12-13, 1989

(Revised January 1990)

C O N T E N T S

1. Introductory remarks
2. The concept of professionalism
3. About the military profession
4. Military leadership / headship in the military
5. Bureaucracy and administrative load
6. Professional image and professional reality

1. Introductory Remarks

David Segal recently stated that in his opinion Military Professionalism (I quote) „is an overused concept“. Segal is an experienced scholar who has worked on that topic intensively and has published several essays about it.¹

My first reaction was: David is right! There really is not much left to be said about the military profession, which wasn't discussed and was written about before. In fact the crucial problem on writing a paper about Military Professionalism would be to find something new.

The discussion, for example, whether the military is a job like any other one or whether it is or should be a „calling“, a profession sui generis, so to say, was finished in Germany some 15 years ago.²

Another example: The question whether career soldiers should be remunerated rather in terms of rewards corresponding to traditional values than by monetary inducements guided by marketplace standards was in Germany answered by reality. Soldiers' salaries are paid similar to equivalent levels in the public service. When civil servants receive a pay increase – which as a rule stands at the end of intensive negotiations between trade unions and government – then soldiers wages rise as well.

-
1. See for example: Heasuring the Institutional/Occupational Change Thesis, Armed Forces and Society 1986, pp. 351. Together with H. Wallace Sinaiko (Eds.), Life in the Rank and File, Enlisted Men and Vomen in the Armed Forces of the United States, Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom; Washington, Nem York etc. 1986.
 2. Ending generally that it should be viewed as any other job, with some peculiarities, however, and - in war time - carried out under special working conditions. See for example for a short description of the German concept of the "Citizen in Uniform" B. Fleckenstein, The Military Profession in the Federal Republic of Germany, paper presented at the Edvard Kardelj University, Ljubljana, Yugoslavia, September 5, 1988; published in German Armed Forces Institute for Social Research (SOWI), Working papers, p. 8: "The legislators accomodated the concept of the "citizen-inuniform" insofar as the civil liberties of the individual have been guaranteed to remain in effect even mithin the military service. The soldier can be restricted in exercising his civil rights only in a fex, specifically designated cases. Between the citizen and the soldier exist no qualitative differences. The soldier may be politically engaged; he may vote and put himself for election like any other citizen. He has the right to join professional organizations and unions and to vork for their goals. Disciplinary offences are punished according to the military disciplinary regulation; however, the decision of the military disciplinary authority is subject to complete review by civil judges. An independent military justice and the former military courts do not exist. Should a soldier become liable for prosecution (e.g. unauthorized absence, desertion, insubordination, mutiny, mishandling of subordinates) jurisdiction of the case belongs to the general criminal law. There does not even exist a classified discharge in any form, such as that of "honorable" or "dishonorable".

I somewhat changed my mind when I read Caforio's essay in Armed Forces and Society, published last fall, titled "The Military Profession – Theories of Change".³ I became aware of the possibility that the very intensive debate about the military's role in

democratic societies as we have had them many years ago for instance in the United States and in West-Germany, might have reached other countries with a certain time lag.

The papers of the RC 01/ISA 1988 Interim Conference in Munich which are at hand in FORUM international, volume 8, point into the same direction.⁴

Nick Jans, an Australian colleague, informed us lately about the Australian situation, where at present a market trend to occupational style employment conditions in the military can be observed and where some officers fear that this trend will negatively affect the military.

Last but not least exactly the same development could be observed in Leicester/UK during the conference under the title „The Armed Forces into the '90s. Personnel Problems and the Future of the Military Contract“.⁵ Difficulties and problems reach the British forces now, that obviously are typical companions of an All-Volunteer Military Force in democratic, well developed and leisure-oriented societies. By the end of 1989 there won't be enough young people who want to become a soldier in the British armed forces. Surprisingly enough the British Armed Forces are caught by a severe experience that was forecasted by scholars already at the beginning of the eighties.⁶

The following chapters present a set of questions referring to the profession of Military Officers. They offer some very personal answers which result from almost 18 years working experience with military related social research. One may call this essay a sample of working ideas, some considerations and *findings* on the daily professional life of soldiers – mainly in West Germany. Not more but not less than that.

^{3.} 1988, pp. 55

^{4.} See J. Kuhlmann (Ed.), Military Related Social Research – An International Review. Papers presented at the 1988 Interim Conference of the Research Committee 01: Armed Forces and Conflict Resolution. German Armed Forces Institute for Social Research, FORUM international, volume 8, Munich 1989. During the 1990 ISA World Congress the RC 01 will organize (amongst 9 other panels) one that will deal with „Military Profession“ chaired by Giuseppe Caforio (Italy) and Jerzy Wiatr (Poland).

^{5.} September 12 – 13, 1989, Leicester/UK, organized by Paul Watts and Christopher Dan-decker.

^{6.} Which obviously was seldom read in U.K., although published in English, see Gwyn Harries-Jenkins (Ed.), Armed Forces and the Welfare Societies: Challenges in the 1980's. Britain, the Netherlands, Germany, Sweden and the United States. London and Basing-stoke 1982.

2. The Concept of Professionalism

Let me first outline some definitions. Using the terms „professions“ or „professionalism“ I refer to that well known concept used by sociologists, namely those who deal with the „Sociology of Occupations“.

It is an ideal type model, a theoretical construct. Professions in the context of this model do not describe that „expert“ or „specialist“, who is well trained, who offers a certain configuration of skills and vocational qualifications, for short, that guy you rely upon – and you have to pay directly – in case you crashed your car and you want it repaired or in case, let's say, your wife ran away unexpectedly and you should want her to come back.

Professions in the meaning of the model distinguish themselves from this kind of occupational groups in many aspects. Professions claim to have a privileged status within society and demand an oligopoly of influence in their fields of knowledge. Professions value themselves extremely important, even vital for the existence and for the future development of society as such. Professionals behave – that's what the model says – according to and in coincidence with certain commonly accepted values, they show certain characteristic role commitments. Professionals perceive themselves as a whole – to use a lately reborn phrase – as having a .. „corporate identity“.

It is well known that not all scholars concerned do agree in detail upon every single component, that altogether shape the „model of professions“ (some of them even doubt that professions in the meaning of this model have ever existed). As we are „professionals on the matter of professionalism“ we need not to discuss this further. To my opinion Cathy Downes comes to the point, when she argues that, (I quote) „most researchers recognize and acknowledge, that there is a core set of ... (8) ... characteristics which may be regarded as imperative and constant“.⁷ I am here in accordance with Giuseppe Caforio who lately referred to Downes' enumeration as well.⁸

7. Cathy J. Downes, To Be or Not To a Profession: The Military Case, Defence Analysis, Vol. 1, No. 3, London 1985, p. 147.

8. Giuseppe Caforio, TO BE OR NOT TO BE A PROFESSION - A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF CATHY DOWNES' ARTICLE, working paper, Lucca 1989.

These enduring characteristics of a profession are according to Downes:

1. - Monopoly control over a body of defined theoretical knowledge and
- the practical abilities that accompany knowledge.
2. - Intensive, lengthy, formal and practical education and training of the aspirants to the profession;
- assessment of performances, learned competencies and skills through formal examinations executed by qualified practitioners;
- awards of a professionally- and societally-recognized qualification.
3. - Activities of the profession are located areas of vital concern to humankind.
4. - Altruistic based service by the profession to society.
5. - Considerable degree of autonomy over matters such as recruitment, training practices, expected behavior, and professional standards.
6. - Organization of the profession in a form of community;
- occupational consciousness often expressed by a professional association.
6. - Profession is seen as a full-time, permanent career-oriented form of occupation.
7. - Society sanctions the profession's activities as morally praise-worthy.
- Society accords to the professions a status of high esteem, respect, confidence, prestige and privilege.

3. About the Military Profession

Those who use an ideal type model like the „concept of profession“ have nearly almost to face the consequence of a reality only partially corresponding to the model. This is normal in social research and therefore no one should be surprised by Cathy Downes' statement, that „the extent to which the military profession conforms to the professional model is in many respects limited and qualified“.⁹ Nevertheless social research is still interested to know, to what degree the model can serve as an instrument to describe the military and explain attitudes and behaviour of the real existing military – at present as well as in the past and in the future.

⁹. Downes, p. 162.

In this respect, however, one is well advised to be careful or even suspicious. At one hand the military traditionally stands in one line with other so called professions for example priests, medical doctors, judges, professors and the like. On the other hand, however, empirical research has widely failed to verify the facets of the „professional model“ in case of the military.¹⁰

Anyway David Segal is right when pointing out that the institutional/occupational model by Charles Moskos includes the premise, that militaries sometimes have followed the whole set of institutional orientations at all. If that ever happened to be reality, he continues, it must have been in those good old golden days.¹¹

Manifold attempts were made to measure institutional values within the military in order to prove that a change is taking place in direction towards a more occupational system. But according to Segal the findings do not provide sufficient evidence that could support the hypothesis of such a change.

To the contrary the results feed the suspicion that in all times institutional and occupational values have more or less coexisted. Soldiers obviously were more concerned with economic issues than the institutional approach admits. And why shouldn't they? I quote Segal: „Being aware of pay, benefits and the economic well-being of one's family need not mean that one is a bad soldier“.¹² Segal calls this attitude „pragmatic professionalism“ explaining that occupational orientations may be pursued „without rejecting traditional values and norms“.¹³

This conclusion is in accordance with our daily experience – not only in the military but also valid for non-military occupations, for those money-making jobs as well as for the other esoteric, so called professions.

I refer here to Herzberg's „Two Factors Theory of the Motivation to Work“.¹⁴ Herzberg's considerations have brought about generations of scholars to search for the real needs of the working people. His conclusions have been severely criticized, but they have shown clearly, that „pragmatic professionalism“ seems to be the rule with any occupation – at least during the last 20 years.

10. And maybe did or will fail too in case of the other Professions mentioned. Adding my personal experience after 24 years service in the German armed forces (although this is not an scientific argument): I can't remember a fellow officer, a superior or subordinate, who fully or even mainly would have fulfilled the model's requirements. And further, should one have done so, he surely would have been viewed to be „not from this star“.

11. Segal (1968), p. 364.

12. *ibid.*, p. 363.

13. *ibid.*, p. 356.

The core statement of Herzberg's model is that there do exist so called „maintenance factors“ which are:

- working conditions
- kind of supervision
- salary
- personal life
- status, and
- job security

and so called „satisfiers“ or „content factors“ like

- recognition
- the work itself
- responsibility
- advancement, and
- growth (of one's personality).

According to Herzberg maintenance factors are viewed by employees as fundamental, basic needs which the employing organization is expected to meet without any discussion. They are prerequisites to bring the „satisfiers“, the „content factors“ into action. Shortly: in general there is only a small chance for a positive job commitment, when the economic basis is meager. A common daily experience, as one must admit even without arguing in scientific terms. And I repeat: why should this not apply to soldiers?

Provided these arguments are correct (and I think they are), what remains then from the ideal type construct „military profession“? Not much, I am afraid.

The model obviously does not describe reality. It is not an „how it is“ but rather an „how it should be“. I think the concept of military profession serves a society well that wants to get along with the knowledge that soldiers are allowed and sometimes even enhanced to do what generally is forbidden in society itself: lawfully managing deadly violence and killing man, if necessary. On the other hand soldiers themselves seem to welcome the concept for the same reasons: how better should they justify their „handicraft“ than by referring to the community's sake?

^{14.} F. Herzberg, *Work and the Nature of Man*, New York 1968. F. Herzberg, *One More Time: How Do You Motivate Employees?*, *Harvard Business Review*, Jan/Febr 1968.

Being a former career officer myself I apologize to friends and colleagues who may feel insulted when I say that the „military professional“ model is an ideology, a myth. It seems to be especially useful in times when rational arguments are not at hand or fail to succeed. I remember all these reasonings well, like „You have an 24 hour commitment“, „You serve your country“ or „You should have a separate code of morals and manners from that of the civilian population“. What could one have said against it without undergoing the risk to be called and treated a bad soldier and thereby spoiling one's own career?

To come to an end with discussing the professional model in the military I want to stress that after all it is not so important whether the military's job is or should be a profession in the model's sense. More adequate questions to be asked are for instance those, who will increase our understanding of organizational peculiarities of the military (if there are any) and of inner dynamics of the military system.¹⁵

- What, for example, are the real orientations and values of to-day's soldiers?
- What really guides their daily commitment?
- Are decision-making processes in the military indispensably different to those in civilian organizations?
- To what extent can one organize (military and nonmilitary) effective defence without using typical military brick-stones like: Order and obedience, living in barracks, giving up one's individuality and the like?
- Is it really necessary to cut short civil rights of those whose task is defined to defend just these rights in a vivid democracy ?¹⁶

4. Military leadership / headship in the military

There is hardly any other human attribute that so often is cited to be an original military virtue as it is the case with leadership. But although social research on leadership issues has a long tradition (that actually came to a stop some years ago) there is at present no definition at hand convincing enough that all scholars could agree upon. That ambiguity is normal in social sciences and it helps the militaries to describe leadership „to come from one's heart: either you have it or you don't have it“ – as one career officer stated lately.

15. See for example for the German armed forces J. Kuhlmann, On an 'Ideology' of Military Leadership, in: J. Kuhlmann (ed.), *Military and Society: The European Experience*. German Armed Forces Institute for Social Research (SOWI), FORUM international, volume 4, München/Toulouse 1984, pp. 281., recently reprinted in F. Battistelli (ed.), *Marte e Mercurio, Sociologia dell'organizzazione militare*, Milano 1990, pp. 513 under the title „La professionalita' dei commandanti militari in Germania“.

16. See for example the questions raised by E. Lippert and G. Wachtler in their essay "Military Strategy and Social Order", in: J. Kuhlmann (ed.), *Military and Society: The European Experience*. op. cit., pp. 23.

The term „military leadership“, however, stands actually for a number of tasks.

First, it means directional power, the organizational responsibility and the ordering power for the subordinate soldiers. The military leader is the in-line superior.

Second, it indicates the military leader's job to train the soldiers. Equally in the handling of the weapon and its implements as well as in preparing the soldiers for the task which they should accept with „fighting spirit“.

Therefore, one expects expertise and competence of a military leader which should at least be equal to those to be trained, if not better.

In all these functions the military leader acts as a warden of the public employer, as an official authority. In doing this he holds the executive control. Using the instruments of order and obedience he carries out what I prefer to call „headship“.

But this is not all. The more important task of a military leader is commonly seen in his ability to attract the formal subordinates even emotionally. According to German military regulations the military leader should be an „example“, have „good humane relationship with his subordinates“ and should „assure that his soldiers can convey their requests – even the private ones“.

I would like to hold the term “leadership” for this part of a superior's job in the military. Leadership in this social-psychological understanding can best be described as the willingness of the crew members to internalize the values and norms of the commanding officer in absence of any other pressures.

Leadership therefore is a matter of perception of the formal subordinates. Mostly those superiors are accepted to be a leader besides their headship functions who either really meet the needs of the people or at least make them believe that their needs are met.

To distinguish in this way between headship and leadership is very important.

First, as already pointed out, is an officer officially expected to be head and leader simultaneously.

Second, he doesn't automatically become a leader when he is appointed to a certain position. He may for instance remain a „head“ only for the whole time of that special commitment without having even a chance to become accepted by the subordinates to be a leader as well.

Third, leadership is a result of intensive and mutual processes of social interaction. Therefore it doesn't only depend on the officer alone whether he will accomplish both roles – head and leader. To a very great extent it depends on the perceptions of the subordinates. One may say that the subordinates by their behaviour decide whether an officer has become a leader or not. (In this sense the subordinates „elect“ an officer to be a leader).

There is, after all, no doubt that military superiors are able to impose their will with the legal means at their disposal, primarily with orders. But in the light of empirical evidence it is less sure that they will be acknowledged as leaders by their subordinates.

I several times measured leadership relations between commanding officers and privates using a set of different instruments. The research was conducted in combat troops of the German Army and of the Navy.

In Army combat units I observed the commanding officers for about 100 working days. I registered every occasion where the officer either personally talked to his men or was as close to the soldier that a face-to-face contact could be assumed. In the Navy I used questionnaires to evaluate the perceptions and opinions of commanding officers themselves, of NCO's and of lower ranks.¹⁷

The outcome of all these investigations during the last years have constantly been nearly the same: There is every indication that a close relationship between commanding officers, on one hand, and their subordinates, on the other hand, are unlikely to occur. Since there is very little personal contact between the commanding officer and the crew, one could also raise the question about the Commanding Officer's credibility as an „educating authority“.

Privates and NCO's say that they have very little opportunity to speak personally with the commander. Actually the Army study revealed that the commanding officer reached every soldier only once every four to five weeks for personal conversation. In general this talk lasted on the average only four minutes, and it mostly included official but rarely private ones.

Privates and NCO's feel that the officers are not able to help them with work problems or with private concerns. Hence officers are not sought out for assistance when difficulties arise. Aboard of submarines, for instance, only one out of ten sergeants would address the boat commander in case of private problems. But nine of ten commanders view themselves to be the sergeant's preferred problemsolver.

This difference in mutual perceptions appears to be typical for the relations between commanding officers and the crew members both in the Army and the Navy: whereas commanding officers think that they are successful in leading the subordinates, most of the crew has a quite different perception.

^{17.} J. Kuhlmann, Einheitsführer-Studie (Unit Commander Study. An Empirical Analysis of the Activities of Infantry Commanders), German Armed Forces Institute for Social Research (SOWI), Report No 16, Munich 1979. J.Kuhlmann, Zeithaushalte und Tätigkeitenprofile von Bootskommandanten der Bundesmarine – Eine empirische Studie (Work Schedule and Job Profile of German Navy Boat Commanders – An Empirical Study), SOWI Report No. 42, Munich 1986. The latter reviewed in Rivista Marittima, Rome 1989, pp. 23 by A. Brauzzi „Una ricerca di sociologia militare“.

Privates and NCO's place greater trust in their own members than in the officers. They exhibit strong cohesion in their own ranks.

It appears that the soldiers learn about the commanding officer's orders and guidance especially from intermediate supervisors in the military hierarchy. The chain of communication (that is commander – officers – NCO's – privates) seems well enough defined that (indirect and impersonal) leadership of the crew can be accomplished by intermediate supervisors.

The majority of the soldiers – one may conclude – see in their commanding officer mainly the training manager and disciplinating superior. They most probably do not accept him to be their leader.

This situation holds even true aboard submarines. We know about the tight quarters and the proverbial bonding aboard submarines. Nevertheless, the findings in submarines are similar to those in larger infantry units.

The following hypothesis therefore seems reasonable: if leadership even aboard submarines is weak despite favorable conditions then increasing social distance between commanding officers and the lower ranks can be expected, the larger military units are.

5. Bureaucracy and Administrative Load

There is no doubt – mass armed forces are bureaucratic organizations. This holds true for Germany and I guess for other countries as well. And frankly, could we think of any other organizational model that promises to keep such an accumulation of manpower, of technical and financial means and of weapons effectively under control?

To achieve that goal some fines have to be paid, however. The ideal type model "legal power", formulated by Max Weber, recommends a number of principles, that normally will make an organization work in the desired way but which at the same time may be viewed to be troublesome to the individual. In fact, at the first glance it is not very convincing why every event must be kept in records and files, why it has to follow prescribed legal procedures and why it always has to fall in a special guy's purview.

It seems therefore understandable enough when soldiers complain, that interventions and impositions of administrative authorities often appear to serve more frequently their own interests rather than those of the military. In the German armed forces, for example, it is the task of the administration to „serve the duties of personal matters and to satisfy the needs of the armed forces“. Consequently, the power of disposal over the financial resources, which is necessary to fulfill these tasks, is given to the administration and taken away from the soldiers. Thus interventions and control possibilities by the administration are almost constantly present to the soldier.

But to be fair, one should admit too that soldiers themselves tend to be often even more bureaucratic. orders, regulations and instructions are often detailed to such a degree that the individual soldier only has to react in the requested manner without even being expected to use his own brains. This organizational framework obviously reduces complexity and uncertainty but it also is in contradiction to the official „mission tactics“ doctrine, which provides the objectives and leaves it up to the subordinate which decisions should be taken to achieve the goals (a kind of management by objectives, so to say).

Last but not least one should realize that restrictions of the bureaucratic model do not apply to military organizations alone. In this respect the military stands in line with organizations of similar size – not only in the public sector but equally in private business establishments.

Why then specially discuss bureaucracy in the military context as it appears to be concomitant to any large organization?

There is some evidence that the stereotype and doggedly displeasure about too much administration in the military addresses a central concern of the soldier's selfimage. Soldiers tend to perceive themselves to be the men of action and of decision-making. Contrary to that administrative norms and values set limits which as a rule tend to interfere with the freedom of quick decision-making and coming to instant reactions.

The above mentioned empirical studies in combat units of the German Army and Navy offered a unique chance to measure the real amount of administrative load in the commanding officer's daily work. All activities of the officers were recorded in terms of „task contents“ and of „length of time required for an activity“. ¹⁸ The resulting time budgets include 220 working days of commanding officers – all data collected by means of nonparticipating field observation.

The term „administrative load“, however, needs to be defined before measuring. It has very little to do with the amount of time a commanding officer spends in his office or at a desk doing „paper-work“.

The primary obligation of commanders of combat units, for example, is to train the soldiers for military action. Indeed they concentrate on this job and on assuring the combat readiness of the unit.

Roughly 70% of their time is dedicated to that purpose. But in garrisons and in similar situations, which cover the greatest deal of the year, commanding officers spend more than half of the time used for training purposes not in the place of training or in the field, but in the office, at the desk, in meetings. Here the officer decides and coordinates, he sorts out training plans and the like – simply because he would barely be able to overcome without the aid of the administrative personnel of the unit.

¹⁸. For the methodological tools of these investigations see J. Kuhlmann, On an 'Ideology' of Military Leadership, op. cit., pp. 293.

All this is paperwork – but to my opinion it is not necessarily „bureaucratic load“. It is a toll to be paid to the fact that armed forces now-a-days are materialintensive as well as personal- and technical-intensive undertakings. Even the officer whose main duty is combat has to sit behind a desk. He wouldn't be able to accomplish his tasks without performing these unmilitary cores – as a traditional oriented officer might have said in „those good old times“.

„Burdensome paperwork“, that „nasty administration load“ should on the other side only refer to activities of the commanders that are not really necessary to manage the combat unit. What is meant by that has to be decided upon in any single case, for any single activity of the officer concerned. To discriminate important administrative work from unessential paperwork, one therefore must have a lot of own experience in the officer's working field. As a matter of fact no general criteria can be given here how to measure superfluous administrative work. That depends to a great deal on the special situation and context of those forces to be investigated.

The empirical results for the German case present a convincing documentation that the actual bureaucratic burden is not as heavy as one might have guessed after all the complaints.

Commanding officers of infantry units as well as boat commanders were occupied with administrative duties for an average of 20% of their time on workday in their garisons (in peacetime, of course). During maneuvers the average of company commanders scored only 13%, that of naval commanders only 5%.

These results surely do not conclude that the soldiers are excessively burdened with administrative work. Commanding officers in the German combat troops are definitely not administrators.

These findings result from observations – that is to say from an empirical method that gives little way to the observed person to influence the result of the measurement. In the Navy-study we additionally asked the commanders by a questionnaire to evaluate their actual administration load. The aim was to contrast quasi objective data (gained by field-observation) with the individual perceptions of the officers concerned.

The outcome was really surprising and striking. Only about 10% of the boat commanders reported scores which coincided with the results gained by observations. Submarine commanders by 30% hit the actual average score. The rest of the officers reported proportions of administrative work, that reached as much as 70% of the total time spent for the daily duties.

6. Professional Image and Professional Reality

The Commanding Officer of combat units in the German Armed Forces most probably is not a leader. And he is not an administrator either. This at least rules out the possibility that administrative responsibilities keep the officer from leading and training military personnel.

When evaluating themselves, most officers concerned have an entirely different point of view. They not only believe that they are burdened by a greater administrative responsibility than what was observed, but they also believe that they are the primary problemsolver and confidant for their crews.

The officer's assessments of their job are not consistent with our data nor with the crew's picture. In the day-to-day routine, military personnel – officers as well as NCO's and lower ranks – apparently interpret their own role on the job differently from their closest work associates.

How should one explain these considerable contradictions between self-perception and reality? At this point, I think, almost necessarily the traditional image of the soldier comes into sight.

The „traditional“ heroic soldier with it's concerns of social cohesion, intimacy, and charisma finds professional fulfillment in himself, his weapon and in the field. They are, in accordance with these ideas, the real and most important soldier's duties: the core of their professional ideas are still the military tasks of combat action.¹⁹

It appears quite reasonable that the bureaucratic, rational and impersonal reality is experienced by the affected officers on the background of their own subjective scales: and these are – as a lot of empirical evidence shows – still more of that traditional type. One therefore may suppose that complaints about too much bureaucracy signal the difficulties of each of the affected, to identify themselves with the complex planning and decision making process of today's military.

These internal organizational processes show in accordance with the bureaucratic procedural rules – sphere of responsibility, recordkeeping, official channels, justice, etc. – throughout and desired civil service character. And it seems understandable enough that traditional military values and norms are viewed to somehow getting lost. Where one can only determine his own position on a limited basis in the work and communication net, uneasiness and work dissatisfaction understandably increase.

^{19.} Even though more than two thirds of soldiers would not be directly participating in fighting in case of war, but would have to take combat support4-ng tasks, which are often enough mainly of administrative character.

Whoever criticizes the superiority of administrative needs – that is my conclusion – obviously let it be known that he himself feels pushed by civilian controls, which appears to him unjustifiably subordinate – not military like. Complaints about too much administration, in this view, is therefore not really commenting on specific bureaucratic procedures but expressing some vague annoyance about military duties that are believed not part of an officer's profession.

Explaining the perceptual gap concerning the leadership functions of officers traces the same pattern. Leading and developing subordinates is a very central component of the more traditional officer's understanding of his job. And officers responding from this position are helped by military regulations and the official phraseology which point in just this direction. So why shouldn't officers interpret their daily activities in terms of leadership when military regulations state that officers are performing „leadership“ when dealing with their daily tasks ?

Having a high opinion of oneself as a „leader of his men“ only shows the other side of the medal. Both the positive side (leadership that I do) and the negative aspect (bureaucratization that I am forced to do) are overemphasized – frequently unconsciously – to put something in a more favorable light or find greater fault with something.

I am afraid, both phraseologies – the overburdening story as well as the leadership matter – have one in common: they are normative, prescriptive rather than descriptive. Whereas the bureaucracy argument discloses, how it should not be, the leadership is a wishful thinking as well. It tends to sum up central desirable virtues and qualities of military officers to the effect that a pleasing catchword is a hand. In other words: leadership describes rather how officers want to be seen (by themselves and their surroundings) than it actually describes reality.

All these considerations and conclusions are not that leftish and revolutionary critical as they may appear at first glance. Sune Carlson, a Swedish scholar, already in 1951 pointed out, that executive managers in civilian enterprises consider typical elements of their daily work – as for example administrative work – as a real unpleasant burden. Although these elements turned up frequently and at regular intervals, managers nevertheless viewed them to be only temporary. Carlson evaluates this attitude a „pathological behavior“. To his opinion the managers measured their daily activities by an extreme high level of aspiration thereby unavoidably scoring negative results and disappointments.²⁰ Perceptions and realities – one may recognize relaxed – do not only fall apart in the officer's profession but do the same in civilian jobs.

^{20.} Sune Carlson, *Executive Behavior. A Study of the Work Load and the Working Methods of Managing Directors*, Stockholm 1951, p. 114.

The „perception gap“, that is „between what the military hierarchy and leaders themselves perceive they ought to do, and what leaders actually do“²¹ is not restricted to the German Armed Forces but obviously applies to services of other nations too. I quote Charles Cotton, who commenting on my empirical findings, made evident for the Canadian Armed Forces, that the traditional self-image of officers, „a subjective phenomenon in its essence, has, however, objective consequences in dissatisfaction, alienation, and selective disobedience. One finds the curious and paradoxical phenomenon within the military, which I ... (that is Charles Cotton) ... term the 'beleaguered warrior syndrome'. This is the situation in which those members who are most dedicated to traditional norms and the combat subsystem become alienated from the system they nominally control. Increasingly they see themselves as 'surrounded' by civilians-in-uniform and bureaucratic controls at every turn“.²²

^{21.} Charles Cotton, *Alternative Approaches to Continuity and Transformation in Military Organization*; in: J. Kuhlmann (Ed.), *Military and Society: The European Experience*, op. cit., p. 436.

^{22.} Charles Cotton, p. 438.