Chapter 8
Psychological Safety During Military Integrations

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Abstract Increased military cooperation between member states of the European Union is a political given. The Netherlands and Germany form a spearhead in this process by integrating entire military units (i.e., brigades, battalions, companies) into higher-order units of the respective other nation (i.e., divisions, brigades, battalions). Researchers and decision makers emphasize that military integration is a long-term process for which the costs come before the benefits. In this chapter we will suggest that, in addition to the well-recognized financial, technical and procedural challenges resulting from military integrations, attention has to be paid to challenges revolving around soldiers' identities and cultural differences. Integrations are likely to disrupt soldiers' social environment and bear the risk of (intercultural) tensions at work—thereby impeding perceptions of psychological safety. By providing an understanding of the cultural and identity processes unfolding during a military integration this chapter aims to inform decision makers and encourage future research on how to overcome the initial psychological costs of military integrations.

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8.1 Introduction

> Military cooperation is no longer a choice, but a necessity! The German and Dutch armed forces are ready to take their cooperation to an unprecedented level of integration. It entails the harmonization of requirements, procedures, education and training. And yes, it will take time. But it is dogged that does it! As I said, it involves long-term commitment. At every level! It involves sincere determination to succeed. It involves commitment that reaches well beyond budgetary constraints and the push for efficiency. I am convinced that today's declaration will result in a deeper cooperation between our two countries … and that it will help to create and maintain the capabilities Europe needs.[1]

Since the minister's speech in 2013 the Dutch 11 Airmobile Brigade and 43 Mechanised Brigade have been put under the command of German divisions. This form of integration is unique in Europe and positions the Netherlands and Germany at the spearhead of bi-national military cooperation in Europe. Despite all due enthusiasm about the potential benefits of military integrations (e.g., retaining knowledge, maintaining and gaining capabilities), there is a general awareness that the costs come before the benefits and that therefore, as Hennis-Plasschaert notes, military integrations are a demanding long-term process.[2]

In this chapter we will explain why in addition to "the harmonization of requirements, procedures, education and training" a military integration also entails the harmonization of identities and culture.[3] To this end, we will describe

[1] Hennis-Plasschaert 2013.

[2] Bekkers et al. 2012.

[3] Hennis-Plasschaert 2013.

psychological processes revolving around identity and culture that are likely to unfold in soldiers involved in integrations. These processes are related to perceptions of psychological safety and can, if not taken care of, interfere with organizational processes, which ultimately may hamper military organizations' operational readiness. Moreover, we will outline how the psychological effects of integrations may influence involved military organizations at large. First, however, we will point out characteristics of military integrations that determine the context within which the processes of identification and culture develop.

8.2 Military Integrations - A Novel Type of Integration

The large majority of psychological research on organizational integrations is conducted in the context of different types of business integrations (i.e., mergers, joint ventures, alliances).[4] These different types represent how tightly organizations are coupled through integration: in a merger two companies fuse completely—two companies become one; in a joint venture two or more companies set up a new company together; and alliances represent a mere contractual commitment to close collaboration. However, none of these categories accurately represents the pattern of integration that has been applied to the recent integrations of Dutch and German army units - here, *complete* units are assigned to higher-order units of the other nation. For example, the integration of the Dutch 43 Mechanised Brigade and the German 1. Panzer division follows a novel pattern of integration sometimes compared with a 'Russian Matryoshka Doll': The 1. Panzer division (the biggest 'doll') gets command over the 43 Mechanised Brigade (the second biggest 'doll'). In turn, a German battalion is assigned to 43 Mechanised Brigade. Finally, a Dutch squadron is assigned to this German battalion. This unique integration pattern is pioneering and likely to become a blueprint for future bi-national military integrations in Europe. As we will illustrate below, this novel type of integration shares certain features with the types commonly researched in the organizational psychology literature. We will therefore translate insights from this literature to the military integrations (i.e., assigning complete units) discussed here.

8.2.1 Parent and Integrated Organization

In relation to considerations of national sovereignty (i.e., what if an integration partner takes another political stance?) the depth of bi-national military cooperation is often limited.[5] For example, the Dutch armed forces have only integrated

[4] De Man 2006.

[5] Bekkers et al. 2012; Van Outeren 2014.

two of their three army brigades with Germany and also cooperate with other nations (see e.g., UK/NL Landing Force of the Dutch navy). Additionally, substantial decisive power remains national. For instance, the allocation of resources to the Dutch army brigades under German command remains the task of the Dutch army command (CLAS) and the decision about deployment of soldiers of the brigades to missions requires approval of the Dutch government. Therefore, a distinction between the *integrated organization* (e.g., the 1. Panzer division and all its subunits) and the *parent organization* (e.g., the Dutch army) applies.[6] This distinction has, as will be outlined in Sect. 8.3, important consequences for soldiers' psychological group memberships.

8.2.2 Identity

From the literature on business integrations, such as mergers, joint ventures, alliances, it can be learned that when not managed well, such integrations may fail resulting in early termination, with reported failure rates ranging from 50 to 70 %.[7] Research over the past years has demonstrated that these failure rates can, to a large extend, be explained by dynamics of identification and culture as main factors for successful organizational integrations.[8] In particular, the harmonization of the unique identities, norms, and values that characterize each organization involved has been suggested as the main determinant of successful organizational integrations.[9]

Research on these processes in the military context is scarce. However, there are at least three noteworthy exceptions: First, Jetten and Hutchison conducted a study on the integration of military regiments in Scotland.[10] They showed that a perceived break with the historical past of regiments (that is a discontinuity of identities) was associated with a strong resistance against the integration. Second, Moelker and colleagues examined cultural differences in the bi-national military integration of the 1 (German/Netherlands) Corps.[11] In this context, they describe an incident surrounding the ISAF3 deployment in Kabul, Afghanistan, where "cultural frictions and differences in procedures and attitudes towards security" led to serious tensions between German and Dutch troops.[12] Third, Essens and Bekkers conducted research among (former) commanders of a Communication and Information Systems battalion in

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[6] Li et al. 2002.

[7] Li et al. 2002; De Man 2006.

[8] Hogg and Terry 2000; Ullrich and Van Dick 2007; Stahl and Voigt 2008; Teerikangas and Very 2006.

[9] For an overview, see Giessner et al. 2016.

[10] Jetten and Hutchinson 2011.

[11] Moelker et al. 2007.

[12] Moelker et al. 2007, p. 497.

which Germans and Dutch work side by side.[13] They highlight the difficulties and advantages of this form of military cooperation and identify as one of their core points that social costs (i.e., the extra effort required to effectively interact with soldiers of another nation) of military integration is often underestimated. These studies conducted in the military context give important indications about identity and cultural processes that unfold in soldiers during integrations. However, they did not capture how these identity and cultural processes develop over time, which one needs to understand to be able to identify how well they develop and when to intervene if needed. In the following we will therefore combine insights from different literatures to develop theoretical ideas that can inform decision makers, and encourage future research on how to manage and foster the processes of harmonization of the unique identities, norms, and values. While the bi-national military integrations we discuss, as they result from political decisions and not business, are unlikely to fail, suboptimal performance would not be acceptable.

8.3 A Social Identity Approach to Integrations

A useful theoretical framework to better understand the identification processes at play during an organizational integration is the *social identity approach*.[14] The social identity approach combines the related theories of social identity and self-categorization theory.[15] The fundamental idea of social identity theory is that individuals derive a positive sense of self from the membership in groups that are positively distinct from relevant other groups.[16] Self-categorization theory contributes to this idea by identifying when and why individuals are more likely to act in terms of their social identity rather than as self-focused individuals.[17] Specifically, cues in the environment that make us-them distinctions salient will trigger thoughts, emotions, and behaviours based on individuals' social identity. For example, attending a soccer game between Germany and the Netherlands is likely to trigger Dutchmen to categorize themselves as Dutch (rather than as, for example, John Smith, an employee of firm X, a teacher or an European).

Applied to organizational contexts, this means that employees derive an important part of their self-concept from their belongingness to their specific organization. Van Dick and colleagues suggest that this psychological association with an organization—referred to in the literature as *organizational identification*—is a multi-level phenomenon.[18] Belongingness to an organization can influence employees' self-concepts at the

[13] Essens and Bekkers 2014.

[14] Haslam 2004.

[15] Tajfel and Turner 1979; Turner et al. 1987.

[16] Tajfel and Turner 1979.

[17] Turner et al. 1987.

[18] Van Dick et al. 2004.

superordinate level (i.e., identification with the organization as a whole) and the group level (i.e., identification with subunits within the organization). This section will focus on the superordinate level, which represents an identification with the parent and/or integrated organization. In Sect. 8.4 we will elaborate on the possible importance of identifications at the group level and their relations to identification at the superordinate level.

To the extent that employees identify with their organization, they will have integrated the corresponding norms, values, and goals and will feel loyal towards their organization.[19] The reason why organizational identification is considered so important in integration research is that it is highly relevant for organizational behaviour at the individual, group, and organization level.[20] Organizational identification positively affects performance, job satisfaction, and positive work behaviours such as taking charge, creative performance, and showing commitment to an organization beyond what is contractually required.[21] At the same time, organizational identification decreases negative work behaviours such as turnover and cynicism.[22] Importantly, organizational identification also fosters employees' perception of meaning, belonging, and control at the workplace, thereby contributing to employees' experience of their organization as psychologically safe.[23]

Motivated by the importance of organizational identification for work-related outcomes, research has focused on the development of a common identity among all employees that belong to an integrated organization. In the case of the integrations of both the 11 Airmobile Brigade and the 43 Mechanised Brigade with German divisions, those integrated organizations emerge as a new category of identification, while soldiers' parent organizations (i.e., the respective nation's army) persist as a category of identification. In such a setting, soldiers may solely identify with either their parent *or* the integrated organization or they may identify with *both* of them.[24]

Research indicates that it is undesirable if individuals solely identify with their parent organization, as in consequence they will pursue the parent but not the integrated organization's goals.[25] Moreover, it becomes more likely that frictions arise between employees from different parent organizations.[26] Such frictions have been related to negative outcomes such as lower job satisfaction and lower levels of cooperation, as well as increased conflict and discrimination. That individuals only identify with the integrated organization is unlikely.[27] Several factors have been

[19] Hogg and Terry 2000; Gleibs et al. 2013; Giessner 2011; Giessner et al. 2011; Li et al. 2002.

[20] Kreiner and Ashforth 2004.

[21] Kreiner and Ashforth 2004; Vadera et al. 2013.

[22] Kreiner and Ashforth 2004.

[23] Kreiner and Ahsforth 2004; Edmondson and Roloff 2009.

[24] Li et al. 2002.

[25] Li et al. 2002.

[26] Giessner et al. 2011.

[27] Giessner et al. 2011.

identified as impeding the development of a shared identification with the integrated organization, for example, status differences, perceptions of threatened group status and doubts about the legitimacy of the integration.[28] In terms of organizational outcomes it therefore seems most desirable that individuals identify with their parent *and* the integrated organization because than they are willing to pursue the goals of the parent as well as those of the integrated organization.

In Sect. 8.5 we will discuss psychological processes that may be able to facilitate identification with both organizations. First, however, we will discuss yet another factor, which is likely to impede the development of a common identification with the integrated organization in the next section: Diverging cultural norms and values of employees from different parent organizations and (incorrect) expectations about cultural similarity.

8.4 Cultural Differences and Expectations

A fundamental insight of psychological research on intergroup relations is that individuals hold particularly positive attitudes towards members of a group they identify with—the so called *ingroup*. However, research also indicates that ingroup membership is linked to norms and values. Ingroup members violating these norms and values are perceived as more negative than individuals violating the very same norms and values, who are not part of the ingroup.[29] Thus, when individuals categorize another individual as belonging to their ingroup (independent of the other individual's self-categorization) they will react more harshly to violations of (seemingly) shared ingroup norms.

Research suggests that soldiers from different nations identify with each other based on a shared professional identification—they all are soldiers.[30] Consequently, they should expect to share certain norms and values with other soldiers independent of national and parent organization affiliations. However, extensive anecdotal evidence suggests that norms and values which soldiers from different nations attach to being a soldier can differ. Due to this difference, certain behaviours may be evaluated as normative by some soldiers and as a transgression of norms by others. Thus, soldiers, who consider military personnel from many nations to be part of a common ingroup (based on the shared occupation), are likely to perceive soldiers who behave differently as transgressing shared norms—which results in particularly negative attitudes towards these transgressors. This idea finds further support in research on the role of cultural differences during organizational integrations, the expectancy violation theory, and a model of acculturation.

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[28] Giessner et al. 2006.

[29] Abrams et al. 2003; Christensen et al. 2004.

[30] Farell 2001; Johansen et al. 2013.

Research on bi- and multinational integrations suggests that (expectations about) strong cultural differences can, somewhat paradoxically, contribute to a more successful integration of organizations. When low cultural closeness is assumed leaders and employees involved in an integration are more understanding of and attentive to culture differences.[31] Thus, expecting that an integration partner is similar (e.g., because both integrating organizations are military) can impede the integration process. This idea corresponds with the *expectancy violation theory*, which proposes that individuals make assumptions about what is typical or appropriate behaviour in a given situation.[32] When the other deviates from these expectations, the result is cognitive arousal and (mostly) negative evaluations of the behaviour in question (some violations reflect pro-norm deviance and are evaluated positively).[33] This suggests a greater potential for expectation violation and the resulting frustration for integrations of presumably similar organizations. The same dynamics also reflect in Hofstede and Hofstede's model of acculturation.[34] This model describes that after a first phase of curiosity and euphoria about an integration, which is usually characterized by very positive feelings towards each other, individuals may start to realize that cultural differences are bigger than previously expected, resulting in the so called culture shock and negative feelings towards the integration partner. Notably, experiencing another group as not predictable and their values as different from and incompatible with the norms of one's ingroup negatively affects feelings of trust towards the other.[35]

8.5 Psychological Safety, Disrupted Processes and Operational Readiness

In this section, we will outline in more detail how dynamics of organizational identification and culture in the context of military integrations can decrease individuals' sense of psychological safety—and how low psychological safety, in turn, can disrupt organizational processes which are relevant to accomplish operational readiness. Psychological safety describes people's perceptions of the consequences of taking interpersonal risks in a particular context such as a workplace.[36] Thus, work environments can be considered psychological safe when employees hold the shared belief that their team or subunit is safe for interpersonal risk-taking—they have "a sense of confidence that the team will not embarrass,

[31] Stahl and Voigt 2008.

[32] Burgoon 1993.

[33] Abrams et al. 2002.

[34] Hofstede and Hofstede 2005.

[35] Bijlsma-Frankema et al. 2015.

[36] Edmondson and Lei 2014.

reject or punish someone for speaking up".[37] In such a psychological safe work setting, employees can focus on the achievement of collective goals and the prevention of problems rather than on self-protection.[38]

Drawing on the above sections, we suggest that in the context of military integrations, soldiers' perceived psychological safety is likely to be impeded through at least two psychological effects. First, as indicated before, frictions can develop between soldiers from different nations if some soldiers identify only with their parent organization and not with the integrated organization.[39] Soldiers who do not identify with the integrated organization are more likely to focus primarily on goals of their national ingroup and to exclude and discriminate against soldiers from the other nation. Soldiers who become the target of such actions will have to defend themselves and perceive lower psychological safety at work. This relates to the notion of disengagement as related to psychological safety by Kahn.[40] Rather than commonly engaging in the solution of potential problems, employees disengage from interaction and focus on psychological self-protection.

Second, psychological safety is likely to be impeded due to expectancy violations. Above it was suggested that soldiers often expect other soldiers—independent of their nationality or parent organization—to be similar, because they share the same profession, and that this expectation is likely to be violated by someone from another nation. Such expectancy violations may have negative effects for the psychological safety of persons whose expectations were violated and persons who (unintentionally) violated the other persons' expectations. The violators may feel less free to speak up, as they (despite good intentions) received disapproval for previous behaviour (which unintentionally transgressed the other group's norms). Thus, lowered psychological safety is linked to uncertainty about the behavioural norms that apply in the work context. In turn, the persons whose expectations were violated may perceive lower psychological safety at work because they feel that the soldiers from the other nation are less trustworthy. After all, trust is commonly defined as being "based on positive expectations of the intentions of behaviour of another"[41] and a lack of trust is related to a reduced willingness to take risks.[42]

Research indicates that psychologically safety and, as a strongly related phenomenon, trust are related to smooth organizational processes when high and distortions of this processes when low. For example, high psychological safety has been related to better team learning and performance, high levels of job involvement and extortion of effort, as well as smoother collaboration.[43] In contrast, when

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[37] Edmondson 1999, p. 354.

[38] Edmondson and Roloff 2009.

[39] Li et al. 2002.

[40] Kahn 1990.

[41] Rosseau et al. 1998, p. 395.

[42] Schoorman et al. 2007.

[43] Edmondson 1999; Baer and Frese 2003.

individuals feel psychological unsafe at their workplace they have been found to withdraw personally, cognitively and emotionally from their work.[44] Similarly, trust has been related to positive outcomes such as increased information sharing, group effectiveness and cooperation, whereas in settings of low trust individuals were found to invest considerable energy in monitoring others and interpret ambiguous information negatively.[45] Thus, psychological processes revolving around identity and culture that occur in the context of military integrations can potentially impede the psychological safety of soldiers, which in turn can disrupt important organizational processes (e.g., communication and collaboration). It therefore seems possible that the operational readiness of integrated military organizations is impeded when harmonization of identities and culture is not realized—and, as we will suggest in the next section, the effects of harmonizing identity and culture (or failing to do so) may even spread beyond the integrated organization.

8.6 Personnel Rotation and Transmission of Attitudes

Most military organizations apply an institutionalized three to five year rhythm in which higher-ranking soldiers rotate positions.[46] Therefore, independent of promotions or other career events, these soldiers change their position and often their unit within the armed forces on a regular base. This implies that new staff continuously enters the integrated organization (*incoming*) and that other staff continuously leaves the integrated organization and enters (back into) the respective parent organization (*outgoing*). This phenomenon adds substantial significance to two features of military integrations.

First, the rotation requires ways to uphold and transmit the newly developed identification with the integrated organization and the norms and values attached to it. In integrated units a challenge arises from the continuous flow of incoming military staff and constant effort has to be undertaken to socialize incoming soldiers to accept the integrated organization's identities and norms. In addition, the newcomers are in turn likely to constantly reshape the integrated organization's common identity.[47] One possibility to address this unique challenge for military integrations could be to couple identity, norms, and values with the respective functions and professional roles that are present in a team—because these functions and roles remain part of the team, thus are stable, and may therefore be suited for the transmission of core values and identity of the integrated organization.[48]

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[44] Kahn 1990.

[45] Adams and Webb 2002.

[46] Jans and Frazer-Jans 2004.

[47] Nielsen and Miller 1997.

[48] Bettencourt and Sheldon 2001.

Second, the rotation requires that attention be paid to 'contagion' effects, because soldiers are likely to share positive as well as negative experiences with other soldiers. However, psychological research indicates that negative information and attitudes spread faster and are more pervasive than positive experiences.[49] For instance, Bijlsma-Frankema et al. speculate that within-group convergence, the tendency of a group in conflict to "increasingly share negative perceptions of the other group", contributes to an increase in negative attributions and consequently distrust between groups.[50] Thus, soldiers who experienced the integration as negatively and rotate from an integrated organization into other units of their nation's military, are likely to spread and foster these negative attitudes in their new units. This can cause situations in which soldiers, without ever having had contact with another nation's military staff, develop negative attitudes towards members of this staff based on 'second-hand' information and what one might call 'contagion'. This will reduce the willingness among these members to join the integrated organization. On a more positive note, a similar (yet supposedly weaker) effect may contribute to the spreading of positive 'second hand' attitudes throughout the military organization. In sum, this underscores that management of identity and expectations is particularly important during military integrations—only soldiers who positively identify with the integrated organization and feel psychologically safe in this environment will spread positive intergroup attitudes, pro-actively collaborate with others, and be able to perform at their best.

8.7 How Can Identification and Cultural Processes Develop Positively?

The previous sections of this chapter discussed the importance of harmonizing identities and culture during the military integration process in order to foster psychological safety and, consequently, organizational effectiveness, and we described related psychological processes. In the following paragraphs, we will discuss the processes that support the development of identification with the integrated organization while simultaneously keeping the identification with the parent organization. Finally, we will outline how considerations about reciprocal expectations can lead to a reduction of tensions resulting from violated expectations and cultural differences in the context of military integrations.

[49] Skowronski and Carlston 1987, 1989.

[50] Bijlsma-Frankema et al. 2015, p. 4.

8.7.1 Common Identification and Perceived Identity Continuity

As has been outlined above, high identification with both the parent and the integrated organization is likely to result in positive organizational outcomes such as high psychological safety and job performance. However, identification with the integrated organization seldom reaches high-levels for all individuals involved in an integration, because factors such as pre-integration status differences and diverging expectations about the integration impede its development.[51] A possible solution to overcome the negative effects of these factors is the enhancement of individuals' perception of the continuity of their parent organization's identity. In the following we will elaborate on these psychological processes, which may facilitate soldiers' perception of being represented in both the parent and the integrated organization.

Research on *identity continuity* indicates how identification with both organizations could be realized.[52] The basic idea of identity continuity is that individuals have to feel and experience that elements of their self-concept linked to the parent organization are also represented in the integrated organization. For example, perceiving that one's conscientious manner of working, which was highly appreciated in the parent organization, is also valued in the integrated organization makes it more likely that soldiers identify with the integrated organization.

We propose that identity continuity derives largely from individuals' identification with multiple groups. Such identification goes beyond the distinction between the two organizations. For example, military organizations offer and actively signify (e.g., through badges) multiple group-level categories of identification (e.g., profession, rank, section, armed service branch). If identification with these groups is complemented with the awareness that the groups are nested in both organizations, a sense of identity continuity emerges.[53] For example, a Dutch army corporal with a background in mechanics who works for the logistic section has many potential categorizations that are more than the simple distinction of being a soldier of one nation or the other. A soldier embracing many of these possible categories simultaneously is more likely to recognize elements of identification significant to him- or herself in the integrated organization than a soldier focusing exclusively on one dimension. Haslam et al. describe such as "a situation in which employees define themselves in terms of a relatively complex superordinate identity (as members of the focal organizational unit), but are simultaneously aware of the subgroup memberships from which that identity has been forged".[54] This situation is likely to produce a range of positive organizational outcomes.

However, research indicates that adapting to an altered social environment at work will require additional (mental) resources.[55] This suggests that when persons

[51] Giessner et al. 2006; Gleibs et al. 2013.

[52] Lupina-Wegener et al. 2014; Van Leeuwen et al. 2003; Van Knippenberg and Van Leeuwen 2001.

[53] Amiot et al. 2015.

[54] Haslam et al. 2003, p. 95.

[55] Roccas and Brewer 2002.

experience negative emotions or are mentally exhausted, they are more likely to rely on less complex representations (e.g., focus on the group distinction most salient in a given situation). Therefore, during military integrations working time needs to be reserved and planned for soldiers to do 'identity work'.

8.7.2 Cultural Differences and Expectation Management

Emphasizing a shared professional identification of being a soldier may raise soldiers' expectations that their comrades from other nations embrace very similar values and norms. We argue that such expectations may result in negative affect between the groups, if proven wrong. Johansen et al., for example, propose that military identities revolve around aspects such as *idealism* (i.e., serving one's country), *professionalism* (i.e., instrumental focus on the ability to win combats), and *warriorism* (i.e., desire or attraction to be involved in combat).[56] Even though most soldiers will to some degree identify with these aspects of being a soldier, the concrete norms and values attached to these aspects may diverge substantially. This effect may be reinforced by a perception of a common military identity as 'holistic'—meaning that it is expected to provide shared behavioural norms for many, if not all, situations in a soldiers' life.[57]

However, a common military identity may provide a useful layer of identification during military integration, using the following strategy: If an explicit exchange about what it basically means to be a soldier—which norms and behaviour it prescribes—is encouraged, and such strategy is matched by comprehending potentially diverging norms and behaviours linked with other identities in the military context, then a development of incorrect expectations may be prevented and a more objective representation of cultural similarities and differences can be accomplished. Still, an initial culture shock may never be fully prevented and the development of mutual understanding requires time, as the research by Hofstede and Hofstede has convincingly shown.[58]

8.8 Conclusion

In this chapter some of the challenges revolving around soldiers' identities and cultural differences in the context of military integrations are being discussed. We argue, that, if these challenges are not being addressed, soldiers' psychological safety may be impeded which can result in disrupted organizational processes

[56] Johansen et al. 2013.

[57] Turner-Zwinkels et al. 2015.

[58] Hofstede and Hofstede 2005.

and ultimately interferences with the operational readiness of the integrated military organization. Identification of soldiers with both the parent and the integrated organization is identified as a desirable state facilitated by perceptions of identity continuity derived from identification with multiple groups that are nested in both organizations. Expectations about cultural similarity and shared norms based on a common professional identification (i.e., being a solider) may be violated because of the stronger cultural differences, which may result in negative attitudes. We suggest that by explicitly addressing similarities of norms and values attached to a military identity and at the same time building understanding and appreciating the diverging norms and behaviours linked with the other identities negative experiences and attitudes may be prevented. This may also guard against a possible 'contagion' of the parent organization at large when soldiers rotate back to their parent organization. In sum, drawing on a broad scope of research literature, this chapter points out important psychological processes that should be considered in order to uphold soldiers' psychological safety during military integrations. Since there is limited research available on how precisely these processes unfold in the context of the bi-national military integrations discussed in this chapter, more extensive empirical research is needed. This will help to develop clearer guidance on how to address identity and cultural factors in the building of operationally ready, bi-nationally integrated units.

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