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Introduction: The Need for Non-Western Perspectives in the Field of Military Pedagogy

Abstract: This chapter outlines the rationale behind the creation of this book dedicated to non-Western perspectives on professional military education, including: the relative dominance of European and North American perspectives in published collections on military pedagogy, the increasing emphasis on international student programmes at military colleges worldwide, and the ambiguous ongoing application of non-military cultural taxonomies in military settings. In addition, it provides an overview of the chapters featured within the book.

Keywords: PME, military education, military pedagogy, intercultural education, international students, education reform, cross-cultural perspectives

Introduction

There exists a self-evident paradox in the creation of a book that seeks to bring together 'non-Western' viewpoints, in the English language by a European publisher. Indeed, it could be argued that the very act of collating non-European and North American perspectives on military pedagogy is built upon a fetishized perception of cultural difference and an assumption that European and North American viewpoints are in some way marked by a broad cultural homogeneity. Although these critiques are valid, there exist equally valid practical and theoretical reasons for such a book.

The first, and most obvious, is that perspectives from non-Western practitioners are radically underrepresented in published collections of military pedagogical studies. Whether it stems from a lack of awareness, access or inclination, this has resulted in a predominantly European and North American bias in the field of military pedagogy. This scenario naturally inhibits the level of attention given to alternative pedagogical commentaries and critiques from a broad range of nations. The risk, as with any in-group formation, is that this trend eventually transmogrifies into a status quo, resulting in a lack of variety in the subject matters, epistemologies and methodologies covered within the field.

The second, practical reason is that there exists an ongoing expansion of international student programmes across defence and security colleges worldwide, as well as a growing emphasis on professional military educational (PME) collaboration, as evidenced by the increasing array of intercollegiate exchange programmes, practitioner conferences and working groups, and PME reform organisations such as the Partnership for Peace Consortium (PfP). These trends have both highlighted and increased the need for military educators to enhance their understanding of the pedagogical and cultural contexts of international peers and students. Increasing the breadth of available perspectives on military education also serves to assist practitioners in appraising and interrogating their own pedagogies.

This is not to say that the disparities between Western and non-Western pedagogies are always significant. Indeed, there are broad commonalities between the PME systems of a wide number of different countries. It is difficult to find a global military, for example, that does not implement some system of differentiation between the tactical, operational and strategic levels of education, or that does not modulate the traditional lecture format with some form of practicum or learner-centred activity, such as seminar discussions, personal study time, roleplaying, mentoring or written assignments. Similarly, discussions on wider issues such as the need for academic rigour, the correct balance of critical thinking and warfighting skills and the differences between 'education' and 'training' are common across the educational institutions of many (if not most) militaries. Such commonalities are, in part, the result of the historical expansion of European, Soviet and Maoist military educational models through colonialization, politico-military alliances and individual protagonists (such as Emil Körner and Emory Upton), as well as the knowledge sharing and benchmarking activities of contemporary epistemic communities of military educators (see, for example, Libel, 2017, pp.208–209).

Despite this, there exists a tendency across a number of militaries and military pedagogical studies to use essentialist cultural concepts or taxonomies in their discourses on foreign PME systems, on training requirements for transnational operations or on the motivations, behaviours and needs of international students, amongst other subjects. This scenario

presents self-evident issues. The continued use of cultural taxonomies (most notably those of Geert Hofstede, Fons Trompenaars and Charles Hampden-Turner) within the field of PME, for example, may at times belie the inherent limitations of transferring non-military studies to a military context, or serve to reinforce the essentialist anthropological concept that beliefs and/or behaviours are somehow innate (Holmes-Eber et al, 2009, p.5).

In reality, as noted by Selmezki (2007, p.4), "Individuals may have multiple, even conflicting cultural influences that they abide by, negotiate between, or ignore as circumstances dictate." In the military educational environment, these cultural influences can include ethnic, gender, religious, sexual, socio-economic, strategic, military and service cultures, among others. The existence of "important subsets of attitudes" within each of the military services (Hadley, 1986, pp.71–72), for example, may result in a student feeling more affiliation with a fellow submariner than with someone from their native country. Whether it takes the form of a student placing greater trust in a "leader who is from the same military service" (Lester and Vogelgesang, 2012, p.182) or adapting one's actions to assimilate within a male-dominated military college (Brown and Syme-Taylor, 2012, p.453), in the field of military education there exists a continual act of self-categorization and cultural prioritization across both students and staff.

In reading and analysing this book of 'non-Western' perspectives on military pedagogy, therefore, it is important not to interpret themes as being inherently representative of national mindsets or to construe similarities between chapters as proof of a set of unified cross-cultural concerns. Instead, the chapters within this book are necessarily performative responses to a specific request for non-Western perspectives, by a set of individuals seeking to represent PME activities that are both culturally specific and capable of wider application, through a medium that requires both academic rigour and experiential acumen. This focus on the intentions, biases and concerns of individual authors not only helps to circumvent the use of essentialist frameworks but allows us to better understand how independent perspectives and individual agency may be shaping and informing national pedagogical priorities as well as specific teaching and learning activities.

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Overview of Featured Chapters

As we shall now consider, this miscellany of perspectives has resulted in a number of common themes, including: the historical interplay between civil-military relations and military pedagogy, the impact and challenges of incorporating civilian methods and academics within military education, the effect of culture on the adoption and implementation of (predominantly European) military pedagogies, the importance of increased interoperability and inter-cultural skills, the evolution of the military organisational model and the implementation of new curricula and pedagogies. Although most of the chapters within this book contain at least two to three of these focus areas, to varying degrees, an effort has been made to separate chapters into thematic sections. At the very least, this format provides an additional interpretational linkage through which to read and compare the chapters. At their core, however, the chapters within this book are bound by a common purpose, to assess how and to what extent military education should adapt to shifting contexts.

Two chapters that exemplify this common purpose are those of Major General (Ret.) Dr. Noel Khokhar and Major General (Ret.) Muhammad Inuwa Idris, who both present unique, first-hand accounts of large-scale contemporary PME reform initiatives. In his chapter on the radical educational reforms implemented by the Pakistan Armed Forces since 2005, for example, **Major General (Ret.) Dr. Noel Khokhar** highlights the pace and extent to which contemporary PME strategies are shaped by politically fluid and asymmetrical conflict scenarios, requiring innovative, agile and operationally adaptable soldiers, with emotional intelligence, technological literacy and cross-cultural skills. Specifically, the chapter demonstrates how military education at the strategic, operational and tactical levels in Pakistan was profoundly influenced by the events of 9/11, the resulting invasion of Afghanistan and formation of the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan terrorist organization in 2005. Among other things, this analysis reveals the importance of combining active in-theatre training with specialized technical training, increasing jointness across services and creating a culture that recognizes and incentivizes the achievements of high performing students.

As show in **Major General (Ret.) Muhammad Inuwa Idris'** chapter, however, the course of military pedagogical reform is not always a smooth

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one. Assessing the reforms that were implemented at the National Defence Academy (Kaduna) from 2013–2015, the chapter provides a powerful critique on the detrimental impact of over-politicization and careerism of military officers, absence of joint doctrine, broad replication of external curricula, and negligent staff recruitment and retention policies, on the Nigerian military educational system. In order to overcome such deficiencies, it advocates the creation of collaborative links and strategic partnerships between colleges (both nationally and internationally). Perhaps most importantly, the chapter highlights the need to balance long-term projects with immediate gains, as well as safeguarding long-term reforms by generating internal support across a college's faculty, thus mitigating the structural deficiencies of an educational system in which the longevity of reforms is at the whim of future commandants with their own personal educational visions and career priorities.

Another significant factor affecting the progress (or lack thereof) of military pedagogical reform, is that of civil-military relations and the potential for heavy-handed state intermediation on PME. As seen in three chapters by Colonel Ulysses Prada, Jorge Serrano Torres and Colonel (Ret.) Juan Carlos Liendo O'Connor and Diego Pérez Enríquez, Milton Reyes Herrera and Carla Álvarez Velasco, respectively, there exists significant value in historical analyses of the impact of national political priorities and military education, as well as the impact of military education on national politics.

Using Charles Moskos' formative concept of the Institutional, Occupational and Plural models for the armed forces, **Colonel Ulysses Prada** outlines how the frameworks and objectives of military education are dependent upon and necessarily tailored towards the military's wider organizational structure. Specifically, he examines how civil-military mistrust within Uruguay, from the 1920s until the early 21st century, has resulted in a lack of sufficient direction for the armed forces, which in turn has inhibited their ability to prepare and evolve an educational system relevant for Uruguay's specific national security contexts. For the Uruguayan military to generate relevant educational programmes for its officers and soldiers, he concludes, it must be provided with a long-term vision for national security that is not influenced by party politics.

Taking as their starting point the significant percentage of Peruvian presidents who have been army officers and graduates of the Chorrillos Military School (Escuela Militar de Chorrillos), **Jorge Serrano Torres** and **Colonel (Ret.) Juan Carlos Liendo O'Connor** provide a historical analysis of civil-military relations through the perspective of military pedagogy and the civilian academe in Peru. Their chapter reveals how significant fluctuations in PME reforms from the 19th century to the present day have been influenced by the different approaches, needs and concerns of successive governments regarding the role of the armed forces and the importance of educating military officers at the strategic level. Above all, their analysis highlights the lack of cohesion that can occur between military and civilian academic communities, and the strategic importance of creating suitable academic spaces for the joint training of civilian and military professionals in security, development and defence.

Providing an interesting contrast to the Peruvian case study, **Diego Pérez Enríquez, Milton Reyes Herrera**, and **Carla Álvarez Velasco** chart the development of military education in post-transitional Ecuador (1972–2016) and the varied impact of state intermediation on PME reform during periods of shifting legal, economic and political renewal. Focusing largely on the country's oldest security training institution, the Institute of Higher National Studies (Instituto de Altos Estudios Nacionales), they demonstrate that the evolution of Ecuador's military education system is representative of a historical process of rapprochement between the armed forces and the strategic political level of the state. The authors argue that this has resulted in a level of integration of civilians within military education, designed to aid dialogue and enhance decision-making across the civil-military divide. As noted by the authors, however, the profound legal, institutional and political reforms seen over the last decade in Ecuador, make it difficult to analyse or fully predict the end result of this process of educational reform.

The concern surrounding civil-military relations, of course, extends beyond the various interactions and potential schisms between political and military elites. The increasing integration of civilian academics and pedagogies within military educational establishments has catalysed a great deal of debate and contrasting opinions, for military and civilian educators alike. In the chapters of Lieutenant Colonel Dr. Marcelo J. Alem Troncoso, Ho Shu Huang and Andrea Falla Rubiano, we find a range of

varying perspectives on a number of key contexts that can influence the relative success or failure of civilianization in PME.

Lieutenant Colonel Dr. Marcelo J. Alem Troncoso, for example, argues that the civilian pedagogical reforms implemented in late 20th and early 21st century Argentina resulted in a vision for national education that did not fully account for the needs of occupational training. His chapter reveals how an increasing governmental focus on research competencies within higher education alongside an indiscriminate emulation of other nations' PME systems, may have resulted in an uneasy balance between the teaching of theory and practicum, a reduced emphasis on professional competences, and the undermining of cultural traditions which remain vital to the Argentine military identity and the basic functioning of a military force in a conflict scenario. For Lieutenant Colonel Troncoso, however, a potential solution to this is to be found in the field of 'labour pedagogy', which adapts the basic principles and norms of pedagogical knowledge and applies them to the context of employment.

In his chapter on the professional development and education of the Singapore Armed Forces, **Ho Shu Huang** addresses four key challenges faced by 'outsider' educational contractors in scenarios in which the academic education of military officers has been outsourced to a civilian university. Specifically, different perspectives on the notion of 'time', teacher-student rapport, student motivation and student ability. Focussing on the Singapore Armed Forces' Tri-Service Warfighter Course, the chapter places particular emphasis on the challenges faced by lecturers who are only present in the military environment during their teaching hours. It contends that successful PME requires a process of compromise between the military client and academic contractor, and that academics should view their experiences as learning opportunities that can benefit their own work and generate self-reflexivity when assessing the value of civilian pedagogies.

In her analysis of the educational practices of the Military School of Aviation 'Marco Fidel Suárez' (Escuela Militar de Aviación 'Marco Fidel Suárez'), **Andrea Falla Rubiano** highlights two key difficulties facing contemporary military education in Colombia's post-FARC era. Firstly, the challenges encountered when educating officers for whom digital multi-tasking is an ingrained behaviour. Secondly, the challenges of integrating concepts such as peace-making, education for peace and sustainable

development across military curricula, in line with the post-FARC educational policies of the Colombian Government. Through her analysis of a number of specific teaching methods, she reveals how socio-humanistic pedagogies can be applied within a military context, to enhance PME objectives and to inspire new ways of thinking in future officers.

In addition to the ongoing incorporation of civilian pedagogies and practices, contemporary militaries face an increasing strategic impetus to internationalise their officers and, as a result, the education of those officers. In their respective chapters, Dr. Jowaiti Juhary and Lieutenant Colonel Mahammad Moumin, provide unique case studies that address the challenges faced by military educators (both civilian and military) in seeking to balancing internationalisation with national pedagogies, cultural priorities and wider strategic contexts.

In her chapter on the creation of internationalised military leaders of moral character in Malaysia, for example, **Dr. Jowaiti Juhary** contends that a natural diversity exists between the PME systems of different countries. Using the National Defence University of Malaysia as a case study, the chapter reveals an inherent duality between Malaysia's internal socio-cultural emphasis on creating intellectual leaders with spiritual, sporting, combat and socio-diplomatic integrity and the growing strategic and operational need to enhance the internationalisation of Malaysian officers. As outlined by the chapter, in order to balance these concepts, the university adopts a pedagogical philosophy centred around three concepts: *Fikrah* (Nature), *Amal* (Practices) and *Akhlak* (Attitudes). Although the approaches used to implement these concepts possess significant similarities to European pedagogical traditions, their application as part of the university's wider goals reveals subtle contrasts between European and Malaysian models of military pedagogy.

As outlined by **Lieutenant Colonel Mahammad Moumin**, military forces in Africa must contend with a broad range of threats, ranging from transnational terrorist groups, to human and drug trafficking networks. Francophone African militaries, however, face a particularly difficult challenge in developing and implementing the educational policies necessary to secure their territories against such threats. Central to this challenge is the impact of budgetary deficits that significantly limit infrastructure, equipment, personnel and educational exchanges for military colleges. In some

instances, this has led to a partial reliance on foreign technical support, specifically in the form of Regional Vocational Schools (Ecoles a Vocation Régionale). As argued by Lieutenant Colonel Moumin, therefore, military educators in francophone African countries must chart a difficult course between national autonomy and trans-national collaboration, combining ambition with pragmatism.

Following on from these chapters, the final three chapters of the book address the ever-increasing need for interoperability and inter-cultural awareness in modern military education, with particular emphasis on the role of such skills in coalition and peacekeeping operations. In **Ambassador Brigadier General (Ret.) Marcel Chirwa's** chapter, for example, we find a unique insight on the role that PME associations can play in standardizing, harmonizing and coordinating training across multiple countries and institutions. Through an in-depth analysis of the six core objectives of the African Peace Support Trainers' Association, the chapter highlights the type of challenges that such associations must address, the methods by which they can contribute, the bureaucratic procedures required to achieve these goals and the financial inhibitors that may affect their capacity to achieve significant reforms. In addition to its core focus, Ambassador Chirwa's chapter inadvertently demonstrates the vital importance of patience, perseverance and attention to detail in the PME reform process.

In her chapter on the work of Argentina's National Military College (Colegio Militar de la Nación), **Professor Silvia Christina Bernava y Rosas** highlights the need to train military personnel to appreciate alternative socio-political and cultural perspectives, as a means of enhancing interoperability. Specifically, she outlines a number of teaching and learning frameworks that incorporate intellectual, ethical and competency-based training, including operational and policy roleplaying scenarios with students from across the military and civilian sectors. The chapter contends that these frameworks fulfil a vital requirement for modern militaries in an era of hybrid warfare and complex politico-military relationships, by giving officers the skillsets required to adapt to new security threats in the national and international, single-service and coalition environments.

In seeking to better inform military education for international peace-keeping deployments, **Colonel Dr. Eri Hidayat**, **Dr. Urip Purwono** and **Dr. Harry Susianto's** chapter considers how cultural differences can

influence the decision-making of soldiers in-theatre. Specifically, their analysis of 241 Indonesian and 83 French peacekeepers deployed within the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) mission, reveals how culture-related personality types can affect cross-cultural competencies. Their findings and advocacy of psychological training methods that combine cognitive and behavioural techniques, bear direct relevance for the development of curricular and pre-deployment training materials for peacekeeping operations, as well as contributing to the wider academic discourse on cross-cultural competencies in peacekeeping operations.

Conclusion

It is reasonable to assume that professional military education, like so many expert spheres, must continue to adapt its focus and methodologies to account for an increasingly heterogeneous array of cultural contexts. This may take the form of rapidly evolving operational contexts, fluctuating student and staff demographics, schisms between political and military elites, and internationalisation or civilianization of military curricula and teaching methods. As seen within this book, however, the challenges inherent to this process of adaptation are not restricted to the European or North American environments, but extend across different nations, militaries and individuals. In increasing access to cross-cultural perspectives within the field of military pedagogy, it is possible to better understand the ways in which the challenges facing military educators across the globe tend to vary or coalesce. How educators choose to interpret or address these challenges, however, is inherently influenced by a range of personal cultural contexts that may be prioritized or deprioritized by such individuals depending on the specific scenario in which they find themselves. As this book reveals, it is this individual agency that, perhaps above all, directs the evolution and priorities of military pedagogy, from large-scale PME reform to individual classroom sessions.

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