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From Doctrine to Deployment

Conceptualizing Culture and Religion within Dutch Defence

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Abstract

This research examines how concepts such as culture and religion are conceptualized within Dutch defense based on Cadge, et al. (2017) analytical framework. The levels investigated include the macro level, which encompasses the institutional environment analyzed through the Allied Joint Doctrine For Civil-Military Cooperation (AJP-3.19); the meso level, representing the public institution analyzed through the Dutch Defence Doctrine (NDD); and the micro level, focusing on individual actors through in-depth face-to-face interviews with soldiers who underwent Cultural Awareness Training (CAT) once or multiple times, military chaplains, and CAT trainers. The findings reveal that the conceptualization of culture and religion within the public organization primarily relies on individual interpretation, lacking a standardized and structured framework. Directives and guidelines provided at various levels, including macro, meso, and micro, remain abstract and flexible, allowing room for creative interpretation among CAT trainers and deployed soldiers. This flexibility can be beneficial, as it allows CAT trainers to tailor their approach based on personal interests, ultimately serving the objectives of the CAT program. However, it is worth noting that a significant amount of cultural and religious knowledge exists within the public institution, which has not been effectively utilized or integrated into structured training programs.

Keywords: Dutch Defence, military, cultural awareness, religious awareness, religion, culture, public institution, contextual environment, cross-cultural religious literacy

List of Acronyms

| | |
|----------|--|
| AJP-3.19 | Allied Joint Doctrine For Civil-Military Cooperation |
| CAT | Cultural Awareness Training |
| CAI | Cultuurhistorische Achtergronden & Informatie |
| CIMIC | Civil-Military |
| MO | Missie Orientatie |
| NATO | North Atlantic Treaty Organization |
| NDD | Nederlandse Defensie Doctrine |
| SVV | School Voor Vredesmissies |

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Introduction

Problem statement

“Conducting military operations in low-intensity conflicts without ethnographic and cultural intelligence is like building a home without using your thumbs: at best it is a wasteful, clumsy, and unnecessarily long process where frustration and failure are likely to arise is very big”.

(Kipp, Grau, Prinslow and Don Smith, 2006, 8)

Based on the above-mentioned statement by US soldiers, it can be contended that engaging in military deployments abroad entails residing among and establishing profound connections with the local populace. In such circumstances, prioritizing cultural and religious awareness becomes a fundamental objective for military personnel, particularly considering that these operations often occur within culturally unfamiliar territories (Nowakowska, et al., 2021). Given that Dutch Defence's civil-military (CIMIC) operations in international contexts primarily involve collaboration and engagement with indigenous forces and local populations, the significance of comprehending cultural and religious factors, commonly known as cultural and religious awareness, is consistently emphasized during the mission orientation (MO) of military personnel prior to their deployment (Connable, 2009).

Culture, religion, and cultural/religious awareness present challenges in terms of definition and comprehension within the military context, as they encompass diverse aspects. They are interconnected social phenomena that impact various spheres of human existence, including social, political, economic, and personal dimensions. Understanding and navigating these aspects are crucial in promoting intercultural understanding, fostering respectful interactions, and effectively engaging with diverse communities. Personnel of NATO militaries have the freedom to fill in how certain cultural awareness- exercises or training programs are shaped. As a result, these trainings are not standardized contents created by NATO (Žotkevičiūtė – Banevičienė, 2017). In the Dutch Army, Cultural Awareness Trainings (CAT) are designed based on specific theories and regulations that aim to address cultural and religious issues and differences in deployment areas. In the Netherlands, solely studies concerning the effectiveness of the cultural awareness training, cross-cultural competences of military personnel, or religious and cultural diversity within the military itself have been done (DeRidder, 2010; Wetzler & van Hemert, 2008; Ooink, 2008). What is left out in these studies is how religion and culture are understood and conceptualized by the organization in its cultural awareness training. There is a lack of research and evidence within academic literature regarding the conceptualization of culture and religion of CAT, which hampers the understanding of these concepts among Dutch soldiers during deployments.

Objective of thesis

The objective of this thesis is to analyze the conceptualization of culture and religion within Dutch Defence and explore how they are integrated into the Cultural Awareness Trainings (CAT). This research will examine multiple levels of the Dutch Defence, including the macro, meso, and micro levels, to provide a comprehensive understanding of the institutional framework. These levels will be further explained in the conceptual framework of this investigation. The main emphasis will be on investigating the definitions of cultural and religious aspects within the CAT, drawing insights from doctrines and directives at the macro and meso levels of Dutch Defence. It is crucial to emphasize that in the current research I analyze how the cultural and religious concepts are used within Dutch defence, rather than examining the cultural and religious practices of individuals within the institution.

Purpose of the study/Relevance/problem statement

It is crucial to engage in theoretical exploration of culture, religion, and cultural and religious awareness within the context of the Cultural Awareness Trainings (CAT) in Dutch Defence. This is because the implementation, interpretation, negotiation, or rejection of cultural and religious issues by institutional actors, such as soldiers, CAT trainers, and military chaplains, significantly impact deployment activities, particularly in the field of Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) (Cadge, Griera, Lucken, Michalowski, 2017). Examining the origins of the definitions of culture, religion, and issues related to cultural and religious awareness within Dutch Defence, as well as their promotion within the CAT, is essential for conceptualizing these concepts within the training program. Without standardized directives at the various levels of the institution, individual interpretations of these terms by deployed individuals, such as Dutch commanders and soldiers, who may lack the necessary skills or competencies to navigate different cultures, may prevail.

Internationally, there has been extensive research conducted on the topic of cultural and religious awareness within militaries (Žotkevičiūtė – Banevičienė, 2017; Račius, 2007; Badas, 2010). However, there is a paucity of studies focusing specifically on the conceptualization of culture and religion within militaries. It is conceivable that there may be divergent conceptualizations of culture and religion between public institutions and academia, yet there is a lack of empirical evidence to support this hypothesis in existing academic or scientific research. This study aims to address this research gap by investigating and examining the interpretation and conceptualization of culture and religion within the Dutch Defence, specifically within the CAT, shedding light on potential variations and contributing to a deeper understanding of these concepts within the institution.

Research Question

The main question of this research is: *“What are the conceptualizations of culture and religion within Dutch Defence?”*. The following sub questions will be answered in this investigation: *“How are*

cultural- and religious awareness trainings taken into account across the various levels within the Dutch army?”, “Where and on what basis does the Dutch army derive its knowledge for defining culture, religion, and cultural- and religious awareness?”, “How do the Cultural Awareness Trainings of the Dutch army contribute to the development of cross-cultural religious literacy among Dutch soldiers?” and “How is the contextual environment concerning cross-cultural religious literacy of Dutch soldiers constituted?”.

Structure of the thesis

This research has been divided into multiple parts. First, previously done research on the subjects of importance (cultural- and religious awareness within militaries, cross-cultural religious literacy, religion within public institutions) will be presented. Concepts, components and terms will be delineated, to understand the further conducted research. Hereafter, the conceptual framework of Cadge, Lucken, Griera and Michalowski (2017) of different levels of Dutch defence is presented. As argued in the conceptual framework, Dutch defence is considered as a context of enactment of a national ideology and serves as a venue in which soldiers are enabled to develop schemas concerning cultural and religious aspects (Bertossi and Bowen, 2013). These will be used within the analytical chapters for analyzing the data which is conducted. After this, a concise outline of the used qualitative methods will be implemented in order to illustrate how the research question will be investigated.

Afterwards, three analytical chapter are presented. The first will focus on the how culture, religion and cultural- and religious awareness are taken into account in the different levels of Dutch defence. Directives of the Allied Joint Doctrine For Civil-Military Cooperation (AJP-3.19) at the macro-level and the Doctrine of Dutch Defence (NDD) at the meso-level are analyzed for contributing to current investigation. At the micro-level, eight participants with different professions and experiences from within Dutch defence were interviewed, concerning their understanding of the concepts culture and religion.

The second analytical chapter focuses on cross-cultural religious literacy, collaborative and personal competencies within Dutch defence. Here I demonstrate Seiple and Hoovers’ (2021) definition of cross-cultural religious literacy in relation to directives of Dutch defence at the macro- and meso level, and how they come to the front in the micro-level of the current study.

The third analytical chapter will focus on the contextual environment of where cross-cultural religious literacy is found within the institution. The Cultural Awareness Training serves as the contextual environment for Dutch soldiers. Within all the different chapters, the main focus is to answer the main question, of how Dutch defence conceptualizes concepts as culture and religion, especially

through its CAT. Different schemas of participants concerning these aspects are presented.

Finally, a conclusion will be given, in which the research is summarized and directions for future research are presented.

Literature review

Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of previous research on culture, religion, as well as cultural- and religious awareness and -literacy within public institutions, particularly militaries. Notable scholars such as Prothero (2007), Seiple and Hoover (2021), Moore (2017), Cadge, Griera, Lucken, and Michalowski (2017), and Beckford (1999) will be discussed. The aim of this chapter is to identify relevant literature that sheds light on how the Dutch defence conceptualizes culture and religion in its CAT, and to present arguments for the importance of this investigation. I specifically focus on academic research in this review to emphasize the objective nature and scholarly contributions of the academic perspective, despite the extensive amount of military research conducted on these subjects.

Cultural Awareness Training in other militaries

Nowadays, within the militaries of NATO, the significance and importance of cultural- and religious awareness, literacy, and competence of soldiers are more acknowledged and stressed during peacekeeping or stability operations by multiple academic scholars (DeRidder, 2010; Euwema & Van Emmerik, 2007; Hernandez, 2007; Holmes-Eber & Salmoni, 2008; Petraeus, 2006; Rubinstein, 2005). However, as shown by Žotkevičiūtė – Banevičienė, the need for cultural awareness by military personnel is often solely assessed at the level of national states and not at the level of NATO (Žotkevičiūtė – Banevičienė, 2017). Thus, as a result, personnel of NATO militaries have the freedom to fill in how certain cultural awareness- exercises or training programs are shaped. As a result, these trainings are not standardized contents created by NATO. In the Netherlands, solely studies concerning the effectiveness of the CAT, cross-cultural competences of military personnel, or cultural- and religious diversity within the military itself have been done (DeRidder, 2010; Wetzler & van Hemert, 2008; Ooink, 2008).

DeRidder and Ooink highlight the effectiveness of the Mission Orientation (MO), a training week that each individual Dutch soldier undergoes before deployment, including the CAT. They recommend that the military should invest in CAT to ensure that soldiers possess a positive attitude towards the local population (DeRidder, 2010; Ooink, 2008). However, these studies overlook the organization's conceptualization of culture and religion within CAT. Additionally, the authors do not discuss the sources or methods shaping the content related to culture and religion. Furthermore, there is a lack of knowledge regarding the conceptual and methodological assumptions underlying scholars' approaches to studying religion within public institutions (Cadge et al., 2017). Therefore, this research contributes to academic debates on the conceptualization of culture and religion within public institutions.

Defining religion, culture, and religious and cultural awareness is crucial to understand their presence in the Dutch military. However, these concepts are complex and encompass various phenomena, including social factors, values, customs, behaviors, and individual perspectives (M. Bergman, 2013).. Due to their multifaceted nature, it is challenging to provide a single definition. Nonetheless, numerous authors have attempted to define these concepts, and their perspectives are significant for the present investigation. In the following part I will present the ways in which this is done and discuss their importance to the current investigation.

Religion in public institutions

Cadge, et. al. argue that much is known about the formal place in various countries of religion within public institutions (Cadge, et al., 2019; Gunn 2010; Hammond 1998; Hutchison 2003; Warner 1993; Warner, Vanantwerpen, and Calhoun 2010; Wuthnow 1988). Less is known about how scholars from these institutions approach the study of religion (Cadge, et.al., 2017). These scholars from within the institution consider religion broadly and inductively, like the approach which was adopted throughout this investigation, approaching what counts as religious from within the institution and who does the defining (Cadge, et.al. 2017). Previous investigations are done within other public institutions as e.g. public prisons, by Beckford (1999) and Beckford and Gilliat (1998). In their research on religion within public prisons, they claim that it is not possible to take for granted how, and through which mechanisms, public institutions identify and conceptualize religion. According to Seiple and Hoover (2021), including and considering religion as an analytic component into academic disciplines and professional sectors, facilitates a provision of an understanding of how religion can be a potential tremendous force in its institution, for good or for ill (Seiple, Hoover, 2021). Furthermore, Beckford (1999) argued that examining what counts as religion in each individual institutional context shows that defining religion in a particular way has concrete political consequences. Beckford also states that institutionally imposed definitions of religion depend on historical, contextual, and social factors. These definitions contain a contingent and shifting nature within institutional terrains (Bender 2010; DiMaggio and Powell 1991). This is something that was considered, accounted for and investigated within present research.

Religious literacy

Stephen Prothero, a scholar in the terrain of religious literacy stated that “religious illiteracy is more dangerous because religion is the most volatile constituent of culture, because religion has been, in addition to one of the greatest forces for good in world history, one of the greatest forces for evil” (Prothero, 2007, 17). For Prothero, religious literacy is “the ability to understand and use in one’s day-to-day life the basic building blocks of religious traditions, key terms, symbols, doctrines, practices,

sayings, characters, metaphors, and narratives” (Prothero, 2007, 15). Religious literacy can, by this analysis, be categorized into three sub-divisions which are: ritual literacy, confessional literacy and denominational literacy. Beneficial to fix the religious illiteracy of citizens of America, Prothero advocates for dedicated courses in public schools concerning world religions and Christianity. This can be related to current study, in which religious literacy of Dutch soldiers is crucial when being deployed. The CAT is contributing in their education building towards this, therefore Prothero’s arguments are contributing to current investigation.

Prothero’s arguments have been mostly constituted on the statements developed by Hirsch (1987) who was a promoter of the urgent need for cultural literacy within public institutions. Other scholars in the terrain of religious literacy, like Diane Moore, have combined aspects of cultural studies as a manner of overcoming religious illiteracy. Moore defines religious literacy as encompassing ‘the ability to discern and analyse the fundamental intersections of religion and social, political, cultural life through multiple lenses’ (Moore, 2010, 1). According to Moore (2007), a religiously literate individual is in need of the following characteristics: “an understanding of the beliefs, practices, history, crucial texts and contemporary manifestations of various world’s religious traditions shaped by social, historical and cultural contexts, and the capability to distinguish and research the religious levels of political, social and cultural expressions over time and place” (Moore, 2010, 1). Connecting to current investigation, these definitions can be applied into the field of Dutch defence. Facts concerning religion should not be isolated, but placed and understood in its contexts, so these contexts should be taught likewise (Moore, 2007). Consequently, these are taken into account within this investigation.

Dinham and Francis wrote a book concerning religious literacy in policy and practice, in which they mentioned that religious literacy “is a stretchy, fluid concept that is variously configured and applied in terms of the context in which it happens” (Dinham, Francis, 2015). Furthermore, they argued that religious literacy is fundamental to the knowledge concerning at least a few religious traditions, and an awareness to find out about others, with the aim to avoid stereotypes. Engaging, respecting and learning from others, and building good relations across differences are also of importance within this statement. Religious literacy is described by Dinham and Francis as “a framework which is best understood to be worked out in context. In this sense, it is better to talk of religious literacies in the plural than literacy in the singular.” (Dinham, Francis, 2015).

Scholars defining religious literacy have clearly focused on various aspects. Moore (2007), Dinham and Francis (2015), Seiple and Hoover (2021), Prothero (2007), Cadge, Griera, Lucken and Michalowski (2017), Beckford (1999), Beckford and Gilliat (1998), DiMaggio and Powell (1991) and others defined religion with a contingent, shifting, and personal nature. One of the most important

factors of religious literacy, which should be taken into account, within a public organization considered by authors such as Moore (2007), Beckford (1999) and Cadge, et. al. (2017) is its contextual environment of where it is found. Others like Wrigley (1996) focused more on personal or group interests when explaining religion as a concept. These various aspects being used to define religious literacy and religion, respectively, are of importance, though it stays unclear what religious literacy and religion precisely encompasses when various authors mention different things. Besides, it has not been researched by such authors how the definitions of religious literacy and religion are shaped within the public institution of the Dutch defence, whereas this is of importance as mentioned earlier. In this research I adopt the definition of Moore of religious literacy, which encompasses intersections of cultural and religious aspects.

Cross-cultural religious literacy

Nowakowska et. al. consider culture as a central concept in anthropology of culture, which entails encompassing a range of phenomena that are transmitted through social learning in human societies (Nowakowska, et al., 2021). Connecting their definition to understandings concerning cultural literacy by other scholars, it contains various overlaps. Some scholars argue that cultural literacy includes the understanding- and knowledge of respect for other customs, traditions and languages (Sergeeva, Poliakova, Goltseva, Kolosova, Shafazhinskaya, Polozhentseva and Smirnova, 2019). These understandings can be obtained through the transmitting of social learning in human societies, as mentioned by the definition of culture of Nowakowska. Furthermore mentioned by Sergeeva et.al. is that cultural literacy demands the fluency to implement this understanding in the process of social interaction. Though, what remains un-noted here is the importance of cross-cultural religious literacy of soldiers in deployment areas in academic debates.

A long debate concerning the importance of education concerning comparative religion has been held by scholars of religious studies (Seiple and Hoover, 2021). Argued by Seiple and Hoover, is that the process of globalization has further intensified the urgency for cross-cultural religious literacy in all sectors of society and governance, domestically and transnationally. Within this process, globalization provokes several effects, wherein the constant impact on identity, is of importance within this context of current investigation. The ongoing flood of information and growth in mobility facilitated by globalization, challenges how we comprehend and understand ourselves, the other and the world (Seiple, Hoover, 2021).

Focusing on religious literacy, but in a cross-cultural setting, an explanation is provided by by Seiple and Hoover (2021) which is as follows: “Cross-cultural religious literacy demands that one be reflective about one’s philosophy/theology of the other, toward practical and positive engagement in

a multi-faith, globalizing world that will require multi-faith partners to serve the common good.” (Seiple and Hoover, 2021, 8). Drawing from this definition, three different competences are outlined: 1) a personal competency, 2) a comparative competency and 3) a collaborative competency. Each of them are evenly important within cross-cultural religious literacy, and feed and help form each other. The personal dimension here is that we start with understanding ourselves in the first place. The comparative dimension is to understand other persons as they perceive themselves, and the collaborative dimension is that we need to recognize the nature and requirements of leadership in crossing cultural and religious obstacles on account of practical collaboration which tends to yield civic society (Seiple and Hoover, 2021). This type of literacy is developed through a process of bilateral engagement with a religious actor rooted in an understanding of the self, the other’s self-understanding, and the objectives at hand in a specific cultural context. A cross-cultural religious literacy can therefore be described as “a broader set of skills and competencies oriented to a normative vision for vigorous pluralism, in contrast to a religious literacy, which is considered as a static or general knowledge of facts about religions of others” (Seiple and Hoover, 2021, 10). Since soldiers of Dutch defence during Civil-Military deployments will be exposed to localities or citizens from the deployment area with other cultures and religions, it is of importance to take into account to which level they possess these cross-cultural religious literacy skills and competences.

Religious- and cultural awareness

Relating to previous definitions of religion and culture, Žotkevičiūtė – Banevičienė argues, in the military context, that cultural awareness can be delineated, in a broad sense, as “the cognizance of cultural terrain for military operations and the connections between culture and war fighting.” (Žotkevičiūtė – Banevičienė, 2017). Nevertheless, even here the concept of cultural awareness relies on definitions used by national states, at the macro level which will be further delineated in the conceptual framework of this research. She argues that particular CAT can assist in helping military personnel to understand the motives of the counterpart, their behavioural models, observe historical symbols of the deployment area, and recognize areas or characteristics of people significant in terms of history, religion or ideology (Žotkevičiūtė – Banevičienė, 2017). Connecting to current investigation, it is important to investigate in what particular way and how these trainings concerning culture and religion are constructed by the CAT trainers of Dutch defence, to answer the current subject research question.

Within academic literature, a broad scale of terms are used to define cultural awareness, though without a strict hierarchical use. Most repeated terms are as follows: cultural knowledge, cultural literacy, cultural adaptability, cultural expertise, cultural intelligence, cultural sensitivity,

cultural understanding, cultural competences and cultural awareness (Žotkevičiūtė – Banevičienė, 2017). Definitions are widely proposed, though these definitions are not hierarchized as mentioned, and create a bigger confusion of using the terms. Some academic scholars advocate not to hierarchize these terms, for example, E. Račius stresses that the terms of cultural awareness, cultural understanding, cultural sensitivity, or cultural intelligence can be used as synonyms (Račius, 2007). Other military scholars as V. Badas, hierarchizes the terms cultural awareness, cultural understanding and cultural competences (Badas, 2010). Herewith, he argues that cultural awareness and cultural understanding are mainly to acquire knowledge concerning different cultures, whereas cultural competence is about the ability of military personnel to apply and synthesize information about another (alien) cultural environment when deployed. In this thesis I use the terms cultural- and religious awareness and cultural- and religious competence, since these are most applicable and used within Dutch defence and therefore relatable to the current investigation.

Conclusion

In returning to address the question guiding this research I ask what all this means for how the Dutch defence understands and conceptualizes religion and culture in its CAT. The fact that the definition of cultural and religious awareness of military personnel and the standardization of trainings concerning these subjects is non-existent within the NAVO militaries, empowers member states to differently interpret religious and cultural issues and how to obtain knowledge concerning these subjects (Žotkevičiūtė – Banevičienė, 2017). I wish to suggest that cross-cultural religious literacy of soldiers of Dutch defence should be taken into account when analysing the present subject. Cross-cultural religious literacy is therefore seen as a broader set of skills and competencies oriented to a normative vision for vigorous pluralism. The reason for this is that soldiers will be frequently exposed to different cultures and religions when being deployed to a mission area. This research analyses in what way these competencies and skills are present within soldiers of Dutch defence and in what way CAT are taught by trainers of CAT of Dutch defence. In the following part the analytical conceptual framework will be presented and the terms public institution, institutional environment and actors will be explained using the framework of Cadge, et al. (2017), concerning various dimensions of e.g. directives concerning religion and culture within Dutch defence.

Analytical conceptual framework

Introduction

This chapter will explain the conceptual framework of Cadge, Lucken, Grier and Michalowski (2017), approach, methods and concepts chosen to investigate the research question for contributing to exploring the intersection between culture, religion and cultural- and religious awareness and Dutch defence. Based on the comparative analytical framework of Cadge, et al. (2017), a conceptual framework is proposed to understand how the institution conceptualizes religion and culture in its Cultural Awareness Training (CAT). This is done by analyzing various levels from within the institution, on macro, meso and micro level. A brief introduction to the different levels is as follows: the institutional environment of Dutch Defence is examined as the macro level. This level represents the broader context of Dutch defence, where an analysis is conducted to explore the definitions and emphasis on cultural and religious issues in its directives. The meso level focuses on the public institution of Dutch Defence itself, specifically examining how it addresses religion and culture through its CAT and its directives. Lastly, the micro level delves into the perspectives of individual actors within Dutch Defence, including soldiers, trainers of CAT, and military chaplains. An analysis of their views sheds light on how they implement, interpret, negotiate, or reject issues related to religion and culture as derived from the macro and meso levels. This chapter explains how these different levels are identified within the current investigation.

This thesis aims to examine the internal context of Dutch Defence, combining various levels and providing perspectives from different roles within the institution. The key concepts explored in this study include cross-cultural religious literacy and cultural- and religious awareness. The focus is on understanding how these concepts are integrated and conceptualized within Dutch Defence. Through the analytical conceptual framework conceptualizations of these concepts are drawn and the relationship amongst these variables is discussed.

Analytical framework

Moving toward a theoretical understanding and analyzing how culture and religion are conceptualized and integrated by Dutch Defence, must begin with a basic understanding of the public institution, its institutional environment and the actors within the organization. The framework proposed by Cadge et al. (Cadge, et al., 2017) is used to analyze, investigate and study the current subject. First, the institutional environment will be delineated, next the public institution itself and then the actors of Dutch defence will be presented using the conceptual analytical framework. Although Cadge, et. al. (2017) divide their framework into five sub-categories, I will look at these three, as they present certain categories which can be tested and come forth explicitly in this study.

Three main questions are outlined and of importance within this framework: the descriptive, the analytic and the methodological (Cadge, et. al., 2017). The intention of the authors of creating this comparative framework was that it is sufficiently inclusive to be applied across different public institutions, though also specific enough to point to differences and commonalities across cases. In this research the framework is used to combine various levels and perspectives within the institution itself, instead of comparing it with institutions outside of its organization. Examining how the public institution Dutch defence conceives and handles cultural and religious concerns brings to the front on how the culture and religion are being conceptualized in the public space of a contemporary society (Cadge, et. al. 2017). Thus, the analytical comparison framework provided by Cadge, et. al. gives clear directions in which to research the current subject from different levels.

Arranged from the macro to the micro, the five following points are proposed in the framework of Cadge et.al. (see figure 1). Firstly, the institutional environment, secondly the public institution itself, thirdly, the physical space within the institution, fourthly, the actors and lastly, religious practices and their regulation (Cadge, et. Al., 2017). In answering the research question connected to the outlined levels, a qualitatively oriented approach is privileged since with this approach, perspectives on daily life from within the institution can be offered. Investigating whether and how these different levels are presented concerning cultural and religious issues in Dutch defence, and also if differences might exist amongst various actors within the organization and how these are constituted, can contribute to answering the research question.

This research focuses on the first, second and the fourth levels of the framework, since these have not yet been investigated on the academic or systematic level within the present subject, and lay in line of what came to the front explicitly in this investigation. In the following part these three levels,

macro, meso and micro, will be further delineated and explained in the context of the Dutch defence.



Figure 1. Analytical comparison framework in range of macro to micro, with examples of questions concerning the dimensions (Cadge, Lucken, Griera and Michalowski, 2017)

The institutional environment - macro level

The institutional environment of Dutch defence, with regard to the framework of Cadge et al, is considered as the macro level of the field of research (see figure 2). This dimension is about the general legal and political framework of the recognition of culture and religion. So, this is an environment composed of regulations, customs and taken-for-granted norms common in organizations, which impinge upon and outline organizational outcomes and behavior (Swaminathan, Wade, 2016). The directives from the Allied Joint Doctrine For Civil-Military Cooperation (AJP-3.19) are considered in this investigation as the institutional environment.

As stated by Swaminathan and Wade (1988), the institutional environment used to be a power from outside the organization, which could outline and limit organizational activities, regulations and policies. However, nowadays scholars have examined that public organizations can act to shape the institutional environment in which they are situated (Swaminathan, Wade, 2016). Swaminathan and Wade (2016) define the institutional environment as follows: “this consists of normative and regulatory pressures exerted on organizations by the state or society and the professions. These pressures can be coercive and direct and enforced through mechanisms such as courts and regulations.” Furthermore, they mention that “it can also affect organizations indirectly by creating expectations and norms that organizations must conform to in order to acquire legitimacy and resources” (Swaminathan, Wade, 2016). Argued by DiMaggio (1988) is that the actors, considered in

this research as the micro level, have a great influence on the institutional environment since their relative power carries a vigorous effect on its ultimate structure. He recognized that actors with competent resources are able to operate as institutional entrepreneurs and try to constitute the environment in accordance with their personal interests.

A question concerning the current subject, which arises from the framework of Cadge, is as follows: *“How do directives as the AJP-3.19 govern how cultural- and religious knowledge are implemented in the CAT within Dutch defence?”* (Cadge, et al., 2019). In the analytical chapters, various analysis can be found from the AJP-3.19 which are structured through different themes which come to the front in the different dimensions of the framework.

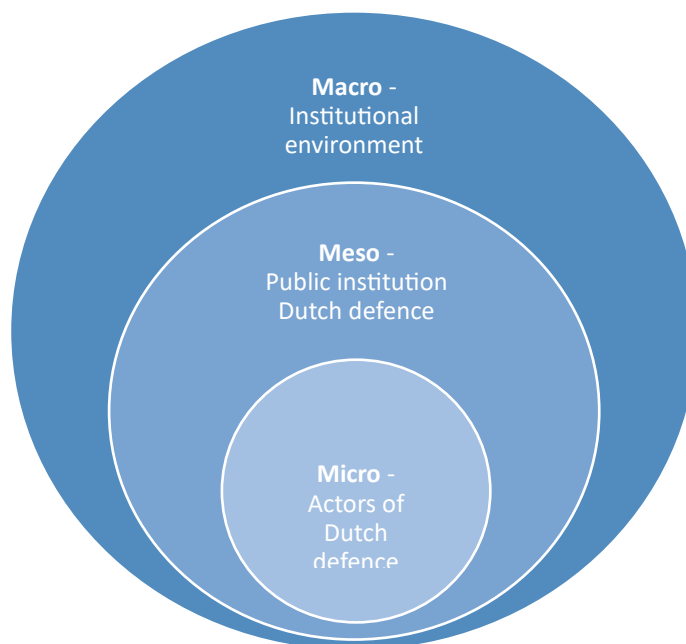


Figure 2: Analytical comparison framework, based on the framework of Cadge et al, specified to the macro, meso and micro dimensions of Dutch defence.

The public institution (meso level)

Within the framework of Cadge, et. al., the public institution Dutch defence is conceived as “An institution that needs to follow state regulations, is publicly accountable and is supported with state funds.” (Cadge, et. al., 2017). Furthermore, mentioned by Bertossi and Bowen (2013) is that public institutions are contexts of enactment of national ideologies and can serve as a venue in which actors develop practical schemas about religion and culture. These contexts are not created in homogenous surroundings, and practical schemas are not only a balanced symbiosis amongst institutional and national repertoires. Moreover, events reshape, sometimes re-weight, the practical schemas these actors utilize. This has to be taken into account when researching the current subject,

therefore its context is important. As Beckford (1999) argues, the examination of what counts as religion in institutional context shows that defining religion in a certain way has concrete political consequences. As mentioned before, institutionally inflicted definitions of religion and culture are reliant on contextual, social, and historical factors. Thus, we must consider such definitions' contingent and shifting essence inside institutional areas (Bender, 2010; DiMaggio, Powel, 1991).

In this research, an analysis is presented on the meso level of how religion and culture are understood through the CAT. Material which is used in these classes and provided to the soldiers are analyzed, besides the theories and policies concerning religious and cultural issues. A question concerning the current subject, which arises from the framework of Cadge, is as follows: *"In what way does Dutch defence understand religion and culture through its NDD?"* (Cadge, et al., 2019) In the analytical chapters, analysis can be found from the NDD, which are structured through different themes which come to the front in the different dimensions of the framework.

The actors (micro level)

Shifting to the actors of the organization, I look at the practical schemas that actors developed in Dutch defence concerning the different frameworks about religion and culture. In this research, practical schemas found in institutional settings within the organization are embedded in professional representations, organizational issues and institutional norms and values, and they assist in the understanding of how Dutch defence conceptualizes culture and religion through its CAT (Bertossi, Bowen, 2013). The relationship between the organization and religious- and cultural literacy arose in a great part from debates about how and to what extent and knowledge concerning religion and culture, cultural and religious awareness training should be taught by public organizations. These debates cannot be understood without analyzing Dutch defence as a public institution, as mentioned before (Bertossi, Bowen, 2013).

The analytical importance of the practical schemas here is that it is not that actors of Dutch defence have different employments or refuse to recognize the importance of religious or cultural literacy but the differences lay in the weight given to different schemas. Every actor participating in this investigation agreed on the importance to a certain basic knowledge concerning foreign cultures and religions to prevent biased prejudices or conflicts with localities concerning cultural and religious differences. Differences lay in how much weight to give each of these issues, and in whether other schemas were brought into play (Bertossi, Bowen, 2013). In this investigation, the relationship of practical schemas to the conceptualization of religion and culture of Dutch defence is at the micro level sensitive to the social location of actors within Dutch defence. Schemas used by military chaplains are taken from schemas of their e.g. educational backgrounds concerning religious or cultural literacy, in contrast to (yet) undeployed soldiers who do not take their schemas from these. These actors within

Dutch defence, are frequently called by the requirements of their institutional participation in finding manners of accomplishing their tasks, e.g. when being deployed in cultural and religious alien areas. The soldier or commander deployed in the mission abroad, is likely to be considered a “xenos” by the host state as Fotini Bellou puts it (Bellou, 2014). Herewith, xenos is defined as a foreign person or a stranger, or all peoples in contrast to the ones with whom we feel affiliated with, relatives or friends. In this research the soldier is considered a xenos. As a result, they welcome a basic understanding or knowledge through clear guidelines concerning the current subject, though mentioned is that this kind of knowledge is highly context related. This can be achieved and further explored, when understanding how Dutch defence conceptualizes religion and culture, through its cultural awareness training and how actors, like the trainers, soldiers who attend the trainings, and military chaplains receive and translate these. A question concerning the current subject, which arises from the framework of Cadge, is as follows: “*How do actors within Dutch defence create religious- or cultural literacy?*” (Cadge, et al., 2019).

Analysis of participants and their perceptions concerning the current study can be found in the analytical chapters, which are likewise the macro and the meso dimensions, structured through different themes which come to the front.

Conclusion

Central to this investigation are the three points delineated by Cades’ et.al. framework: the macro level the institutional environment, the meso level the public institution and the micro level which are the actors. The claim of this research is that we best comprehend and grasp why and how the public institution Dutch defence conceptualizes religion and culture through its CAT. In the coming chapters analysis are provided concerning current subject applied on the various levels of Cadge, et al. Thus, in order to achieve the current subjects’ aim of the investigation an analysis is made on how and in what way culture and religion are conceptualized, mentioned, defined and interpreted on the levels of the macro, meso and micro. This is done by analyzing the institutional environment directive AJP-3.19, public institution directive NDD and conducted interviews from participants within the institution for understanding how culture and religion are understood by Dutch defence. Practical schemas of actors found in institutional settings are embedded in professional representations, institutional norms and values and organizational issues concerning culture and religion. Though, these schemas are given different weight to each participants, which should be taken into account. In the following part the methods are described of how this investigation is done.

Methodology

Introduction

The following section focuses on explaining and accounting for the chosen methodology for this research. A qualitative method was used to address the research question which, in this study, requires explanation and understanding of how the Dutch defence conceptualizes religion and culture in its Cultural Awareness Trainings (Snape, Spencer 2013). Three different dimensions (macro, meso and micro) of the framework of Cadge et al, are used to analyze the knowledge concerning the current subject.

Furthermore, this method is chosen since it suits to explore the complex issue of defining culture and religion within the Dutch army, which is important for my research question. In-depth understanding of participants at the micro level, in broad terms, of Dutch Army perception of issues as cultural or religious awareness require these sorts of information. In contrast to this method, quantitative research would not be suitable as this way looks more objectively at measurable events and static categories (May, 2002). In-depth (face-to-face) interviews with open-ended questions with different sampling groups have been chosen as a primary technique for data collection at the micro level. This is done in combination with analysis of directives of the NATO at the macro level, an analysis of the Dutch Defence Doctrine (NDD) at the meso level, and analysis of the data of the conducted interviews at the micro level to answer my research questions. The aim of this research was to get an insight and understanding of how culture and religion are conceptualized by Dutch Army and how these are integrated during CIMIC operations of Dutch soldiers.

Qualitative research: in-depth interviews

For this research eight interviews of about sixty to eighty minutes each were conducted. These interviews were held in Dutch as this was the mother tongue of the participants. The non-probability sampling method was used since there was no option to interview every individual of the Dutch army. Participants were chosen by their varying levels of experience with deployment and their functions within defence. The four groups were divided as follows: 1) two soldiers who have not been deployed but have followed the CAT in the mission orientation, 2) two soldiers who have been deployed several times and have followed the CAT in the mission orientation, 3) two CAT trainers, and 4) two military chaplains from different denominations within the Dutch army.

An in-depth interview involves a number of stages (Robson, 2002; Rubin and Rubin, 1995; Spradley, 1979). In a broad sense, the interview/researcher's task is to comfort the participant from the everyday, social level to a deeper level at which they can together target on the specific topics. The

stages are as follows: 1) arrival, 2) introducing the research, 3) beginning the interview, 4) during the interview, 5) ending the interview, 6) after the interview (Legard, Keegan, Ward, 2003).

The choice of venue for in-depth interviews often led to the participant. Since the interviews were in their professional capacity, they were mostly held in their workplaces which were the following: 1) Harskamp at the School For Peace Operations (SVV), 2) Havelte at the Johannes Postkazerne, 3) Apeldoorn at the Willem III Kazerne, 4) Den Helder at the Complex Nieuwe Haven and conducted by phone. These places were chosen due to the importance of having face-to-face interviews. The interview was recorded through an audio-record from the start of the interview till the debriefing of the interview. The audio-record device of the interview was made in between the participant and me, the interviewer. Choice of audio-recording was made because it is a more neutral and less invasive way of recording the interview, since note-taking can give participants unintended cues (Legard, Keegan, Ward, 2003).

For the sake of the analysis, pseudonyms of the participants were created for anonymity. Various interviewees were reached and collected by former colleagues of my internship which I did at the ministry of Defence at section CAI, from August 2022 to February 2023. Trainers of the CAT were direct colleagues during this period, therefore it gave me the opportunity to make direct appointments for the conducted interviews. Furthermore, contact was held via E-mail and phone calls, prior to the meetings.

Methods and procedure

I investigated how the Dutch defence as an institution understands and conceptualizes culture and religion. To do so, I examined the directives the Allied Joint Doctrine For Civil-Military Cooperation (AJP-3.19) from the macro level, the Dutch Defence Doctrine (AJP-3.19) from the meso level and how soldiers interpret, integrate or reject the knowledge and skills they acquire in the CAT during CIMIC operations by way of face-to-face, self-conducted, semi-structured interviews at the micro level. Important to note is that Holstein and Gubrium (1997) underline that the researcher is not solely a 'pipeline' through which knowledge is transmitted. They see knowledge as constructed in the interview, through collaboration between interviewee and researcher, which was also applicable within this investigation. The constructivist research model is used in which knowledge is not given but created and negotiated. The researcher is taking part as a traveler who journeys with the story of the interviewee in which the stories are developed as the traveler interprets them (Kvale, 1996). With this journey, different contexts of interpretation are identified in the research.

Before conducting the interviews, practical questions concerning personal information were asked (see appendix 1). Upon asking these, a short explanation was given about what the purpose of the research was and what participants could expect while taking part. Each individual participant was

asked for their permission to record the interview on a computer device and conduct research with the outcomes. Furthermore, I asked if I could use their name and function in the research. If there were any topics or questions which participants would rather not discuss they were able to identify this at any point during or after the interview, including having the opportunity to adjust the recorded transcript. In addition, it was mentioned that it was always possible to withdraw from the investigation at any point. Furthermore, they were told that the interview could be seen as an informal talk to make the interviewee as comfortable as possible. The interviewee and I were also situated at an angle to give the participant the opportunity and the freedom to look away when answering questions which might have been too personal or complex.

Interviews started after consent was given. The interviews consisted of ten to fifteen 'main' questions, which were adjusted to the functions of the participants, and what information was needed for the investigation (see appendix 2.1-2.4 for the interview questions). These questions involved a combination of content mapping and content mining questions. Here, content mapping questions are used to raise issues, and content mining questions are asked to explore them in detail (Legard, Keegan, Ward, 2003). Some examples of questions are as follows: 1) (to CAT trainers): *"Concerning the knowledge you gained within your employment and operating within Dutch defence: How do you gather information concerning religion and culture of the deployment area, which you pass along to soldiers in the Cultural Awareness Trainings?"*, *"Are these definitions leading in all different Cultural Awareness Trainings taught by different trainers?"* and *"Have you ever had contact on a professional basis concerning the definition of religion with a military chaplain within Dutch defence?"* 2) (to soldiers with deployment experience): *"What was your view of different religions or cultures before and after being deployed?"*, *"What experiences have you had concerning religious or cultural differences, and did they cause issues within you or your team?"* and *"How would you describe your competences when it comes to religious or cultural awareness?"* 3) (to military chaplains): *"In what way are a soldier and a chaplain compatible?"*, *"Do you think there is any importance of religious and cultural knowledge to soldiers (before deployment) and in what way?"* and *"In what way are colleagues from different departments within Dutch defence welcoming or treating you?"*.

The questions were not intended to influence the answer of the participant themselves, therefore leading questions were avoided and clear short questions were formulated for most effectiveness. Double questions were avoided when possible. Furthermore, too abstract or theorized questions were avoided and a sensitive tone to the language and terminology used by the participants was kept and 'mirrored' as far as achievable. After the interview was conducted, the participants were given a debriefing in which they could declare last statements and could indicate whether they wanted to receive the complete research or rather a 'summary' and recommendations of the investigation.

Limitations and Strengths of qualitative research

The disadvantages to qualitative research are that open-ended research makes participants have more control over the content of the data collected, therefore it is more difficult to verify results. Being limited to a number of eight interviews it depends on the chosen participants on how the interviews are taken. As Legard, Keegan, and Ward (2003) mention: *“However active or passive the role of the interviewer, an in-depth interview is based around the ability of the interviewer to establish a good rapport with the participant”*. Furthermore, the success of the conducted interview relies mostly on the professional and personal nature of the interviewer. Thereby, objectivity is impossible to achieve since the interview data is interpretative data.

In contrast to these limitations, more in depth understanding of individuals’ views and the groups’ discrepancies within the conducted interviews give occasion to provide further united attention to each individuals’ ideas. Thereby, the interviews were not restricted to particular questions and could be redirected at any time. Furthermore, some argue that the obtained data which is based on human experience is considered as more powerful and sometimes more compelling than quantitative data (Anderson, 2010).

Methods of analysis

Unlike quantitative analysis, there are no explicit rules or procedures for analyzing qualitative data (Legard, Keegan, Ward, 2003). The primary focus of the discourse analysis of the conducted interviews was mainly concerned with capturing and interpreting common sense with substantive understanding in the data (Spencer, Ritchie, O’Connor, 2003). After conducting the interviews, data reduction was a central task as a result of the voluminous, unwieldy and discursive qualitative data. Therefore, the interviews were lightly edited for clarity since transcribing full-verbatim did not contribute to the research. This meant that it also involved paring down explanations to their essence of intention (Miles, 1979).

An examination of the required qualitative data was also done for patterns, practical schemas, and repeated ideas about cultural/religious awareness, religion, and culture within Dutch defence of the participants. From this a data coding system was developed for categorizing the data. The data was assigned to codes wherefor an identification and comparison was made of recurring themes, concepts, categories, and ideas of the conducted transcripts (Spencer, Ritchie, O’Connor, 2003). There is a look at specific segments of the data, each individually of which was in demand of a distinct conceptualization of categories (Mason, 2002). Since the interviews were kept in Dutch, translations are sourced by the author.

Lastly, an analysis will be provided of material present at the macro and meso level of Dutch defence. The analyses of material and directives are provided around the AJP-3.19 and the NDD. Within

these analyses, it is looked at in what way culture and religion are constituted, considered, mentioned, and used in the directives. Throughout all analytical chapters, specific quotations regarding cultural and religious aspects extracted from the AJP-3.19 and NDD have been selected based on their relevance to the current investigation of conceptualizing culture and religion within Dutch defence. Key elements include the prominence of these aspects, their contextual framework, definitions provided, and the approaches taken by these documents in addressing them. Overlaying themes were found in different dimensions (macro, meso and micro) and connected to one another in the analytical chapters.

Place of researcher in analytical account

Qualitative research requires a complicated interaction amongst the researcher and the research subject, in which the researcher's link with participants and the research process impacts the statements which are provided in e.g. the interviews (Pelias, 2011). Within this study, positionality refers to the place the researcher adopted, therefore it is of importance to discuss the positionality of the researcher in this study (Savin-Baden, Major, 2013). As the researcher, I will introduce myself shortly. I am a 27 year old white, Dutch, secular middle class female who is greatly interested in various religious beliefs and I align myself with the left side of the political spectrum. I was raised with great religious freedom, my family is historically Protestant but not currently practicing. Furthermore, I consider myself to be open to different religious and cultural views. Currently I work with refugees in the refugee center Ter Apel so I am directly, on a weekly basis, in touch with a lot of different cultures and religions. The internship I did was within the Dutch Army teaching soldiers CAT before their deployment as part of the mission orientation. Besides the trainings knowledge I obtained, I was aware of the approach and interactions of certain groups and individuals within the Dutch Army. By continually reflecting on how my personal views and understanding could be influenced by my social background, I tried to avoid being prejudiced in the answers given by the participants. Therefore, I might not have been objective in all statements and it is of importance to keep this in mind when evaluating the research.

Analytical chapter 1 – Cultural- and Religious Awareness

Introduction

In this chapter, a focus is placed on the presence, knowledge and guidelines of the concepts of cultural- and religious awareness, within different levels (macro, meso and micro) of Dutch defence. I am interested in how these are taken into account in the army, and will not put focus on actors' own cultural and religious practices. Besides the main research question, the leading sub question I address here is stated as follows: *"How are cultural- and religious awareness trainings taken into account across the various levels within the Dutch army?"*.

This is done with the aim to explore how concepts such as culture and religion are considered and implemented by the public institution in different dimensions within Dutch defence. Directives of the NATO doctrine (AJP-3.19) at the macro-level and the Doctrine of Dutch Defence (NDD) at the meso-level are analyzed for contributing to current investigation. At the micro-level, eight participants with different professions and experiences from within the institution were interviewed, concerning their understanding of the concepts culture and religion. When analyzing the AJP-3.19, the NDD, and the participants of the conducted interviews, the contextual and social factors are taken into account. This was done since culture and religion are contingent and shifting in nature within institutional fields (Bender 2010; DiMaggio and Powell 1991). As I argued in the theoretical framework, Dutch defence is considered as a context of enactment of a national ideology and serves as a venue in which soldiers are enabled to develop schemas concerning cultural and religious aspects (Bertossi and Bowen, 2013). These contexts are not homogenous in the various parts of the institution, so events reshape the schemas the actors employ. These will be further delineated in the micro level of the analyses, in which the participants show similar schemas concerning different themes, though put different weight to them.

Throughout all analytical chapters, specific quotations regarding cultural and religious aspects extracted from the AJP-3.19 and NDD have been selected based on their relevance to the current investigation of conceptualizing culture and religion within Dutch defence. Key elements include the prominence of these aspects, their contextual framework, definitions provided, and the approaches taken by these documents in addressing them. The greatest focus is put in this analysis on the micro-level, which are the perceptions and views of the soldiers, trainers of CAT and military chaplains, to see how these actors implemented, interpreted, negotiated or rejected the issues concerning religion and culture from the macro- and meso level. Overall, these contribute to understanding how Dutch defence conceptualizes culture and religion through the CAT.

Cultural- and Religious Awareness at the Macro Level

The institutional environment in this research is about the general legal and political framework of the recognition of religion and culture, which is composed of regulations, customs and taken-for-granted norms common in organizations, which impinge upon and outline organizational outcomes and behavior (Swaminathan, Wade, 2016). In the context of Dutch defence, the institutional environments' regulations concerning religious and cultural aspects, derive from the AJP-3.19 for Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) of NATO-members. It is worth noting that AJP-3.19 is part of the broader NATO Allied Joint Doctrine Series (AJD). The AJD serves as a framework for NATO's military doctrine, providing guidance and principles for joint military operations across various domains and capabilities. Therefore, it is important to research this, since it provides general guidance to conduct CIMIC in joint operations (AJP-3.19, 2018). A question which is leading within this level is: "How do directives as the AJP-3.19, govern how cultural- and religious knowledge are implemented in the CAT within Dutch defence?".

The AJP-3.19 is intended mainly as a guideline for NATO commanders and staff. However the doctrine is instructive to, and provides a framework for operations conducted by a coalition of NATO members, partners of NATO and non-NATO nations (AJP-3.19, 2018). NATO defines its doctrine as: "The fundamental principles by which the military forces guide their actions in support of objectives. It is authoritative but requires judgement in application" (NATO AAP-47, 2018, 1). It is important to note that specific regulations and guidelines related to religion and culture may vary among NATO member countries, as they have their own policies and practices. Each member country, as well as the Netherlands, is responsible for implementing and adhering to NATO's overall principles while considering its own cultural and legal framework.

In the AJP-3.19, religion is mentioned seven times and culture is mentioned thirty times throughout the entirety of the ninety-six-page document. NATO recognizes the importance of understanding and engaging with religious and cultural aspects during CIMIC activities, as they play a significant role in shaping local communities and dynamics. Religion and culture are understood as essential elements that influence the social, political, and economic dimensions of a population. However, AJP-3.19 does not have a specific conceptualization of religious or cultural issues to specific areas for CIMIC operations. NATO aims to develop cultural and religious awareness among its personnel to ensure effective engagement and cooperation with local populations (AJP-3.19, 2018). This can be seen by the following statement concerning cultural awareness in the doctrine:

"The following considerations need to be taken into account when interacting with non-military actors: a. Cultural awareness. Understanding and being sensitive to local customs, beliefs,

convictions and heritage is crucial to mission success. A violation of local laws, traditions or customs may inadvertently create a highly unfavorable situation and seriously undermine the mission. [...]" (AJP-3.19, 2018, 28)

Drawing on Žotkevičiūtė – Banevičienė's (2017) perspective, the significance of cultural (and religious) awareness within the military context is characterized by a comprehensive understanding of the cultural landscape for military operations and the interplay between culture, religion and warfare. However, it is important to acknowledge that the concepts of cultural- and religious awareness are contingent upon national definitions, which can vary considerably across countries due to global cultural and religious diversities. Furthermore, these definitions can be subject to interpretation and may be influenced by various factors, including secularism and multiculturalism (Žotkevičiūtė – Banevičienė, 2017). In the specific context of AJP-3.19, it is important to highlight that this doctrine is not a fixed document, but rather a product of collective development among member states. This is crucial for the conceptualization of culture and religion within the public organizations of national states, as it allows for flexibility and creative adaptation to the interpretations of these institutions. It provides an opportunity for national states to shape and define their understanding of culture and religion in alignment with their unique contexts and perspectives. The interpretation of how these concepts by the meso- and micro level will be further explored in this chapter. The AJP-3.19 mentions the following concerning gender differences within cultures.

"During NATO operations, it is important to obtain a clear understanding of the local culture, society and environment which are fundamentally influenced by the culture-specific notions of gender. It is also essential to take measures to promote gender equality relevant to the operation. [...] The forces must understand the cultural context within which they are operating and not simply apply their own norms, laws and behavior. [...] Lessons learned indicate that a mixed gender force enhances the sharing of information and is instrumental in garnering trust and credibility." (AJP-3.19, 2018, 34)

It is noteworthy that the NATO guideline AJP-3.19, contains directives aimed at promoting "gender equality relevant to the operation." However, prior to this statement, it is important to consider the local context of deployment and refrain from imposing one's own cultural perspective. The document generally emphasizes the significance of cultural and religious aspects concerning gender in military deployment areas. However, it raises questions about how these tools for understanding the culture and religion of specific areas are actually utilized. The mention of "enhancing information sharing within deployment areas" suggests that they may be used as tactical tools, potentially disregarding the human rights of the deployment areas when interacting with specific localities. In the following

paragraph, the institutional environment's guidelines, derived from the concerning cultural and religious awareness within the army will be delineated.

Cultural- and Religious Awareness at the Meso Level

Within the framework of Cadge, et. al., the public institution Dutch defence is conceived as "An institution that needs to follow state regulations, is publicly accountable and is supported with state funds." (Cadge, et. al., 2017). Prior to examining the directives within the public institution concerning cultural and religious aspects, it is important to acknowledge the document CDS-A700. As the document CDS A-700 is not publicly accessible, insights are drawn from a personal contact to shed light on the significance of the CAT training according to this document. It is a comprehensive seventeen-page document issued by the military authorities, outlining the instructions and prerequisites for Dutch military personnel to fulfill prior to a mission. Within the same context where moral competence is addressed under the section of 'power and ethics' (consisting of five sentences), three sentences are dedicated to 'intercultural communication', which fall within the domain of the School for Peace Missions (SVV), typically facilitated by the Cultural Historical Backgrounds and Information (CAI). The CAI section serves as the knowledge institute within the Dutch military, specialized in social-cultural expertise of (potential) mission areas and providing advisory support on the protection of cultural heritage during emergencies and conflicts, both domestically and in expeditionary operations (CDS-700, 2023). In essence, the requirements for intercultural communication of Dutch soldiers within the CDS-A700 document encompass the possession of cultural and religious- knowledge, awareness, and skills necessary to effectively communicate in an intercultural setting. Moreover, specific attention is given to understanding and navigating cultural and religious differences with (potential) coalition partners. CAT trainers have to incorporate these guidelines concerning cultural and religious aspects into their CAT, therefore it is important to note in what context these concepts are placed within the CDS-A700 document.

The NDD is guided by the AJP-3.19, and provides the specific national context, highlighting national (cultural) accents and areas in which the Netherlands deviates from NATO. The NDD holds a leading role in shaping the conduct of military deployments, considering the increasing interdependence between different military units and collaboration with other ministries and public organizations (NDD, 2018). This doctrine is regarded as the meso-level of current study. The institutional environment (macro level) used to be a power from outside the public organization, which could outline and limit organizational activities, regulations and policies (Swaminathan and Wade, 1988). However, nowadays scholars have examined that public organizations can act to shape the

institutional environment in which they are situated (Swaminathan, Wade, 2016). This is applicable to the Dutch army, within the context of AJP-3.19.

Within the NDD, religion is mentioned four times and culture is mentioned eight times throughout the entire document of ninety-six pages. Various chapters in the NDD address different themes, and according to the writers of the doctrine, each chapter takes into account the military-historical context. This aligns with Beckford's (1999) argument, which emphasizes the significance of historical, contextual, and social factors in defining religious and cultural issues. The interpretation of the reader of the document should also be considered. The NDD itself acknowledges the need to approach the doctrine in a particular way, as stated in the following statement:

"[...] Whoever reads this document has to remember that it never can replace the individual initiative. This doctrine can serve as a guideline for commanders and subordinates of how to think but not what to think. [...]" (NDD, 2019, 3)

When using the NDD as a directive document as e.g. a Dutch commander, it is essential to have a comprehensive understanding of specific definitions of culture and religion and their practical application. In this process, self-reflection and self-understanding are crucial for the reader to situate their interpretation within the appropriate context (Seiple and Hoover, 2021). The NDD does not further provide specific guidance on the individual level of self-reflection or self-understanding. At the micro level of current investigation, further exploration is done in Chapter 2 for understanding how individual Dutch soldiers navigate these processes. The first statement in which religious aspects are present in the statements of the NDD, is as follows:

"[...] Examples of actors are states, (international) organizations, interest groups, religious institutions, multinationals, influential persons (heads of state and government, warlords, leaders of criminal or terrorist organizations, [...]" (NDD, 2019, 20)

Subsequently, it is acknowledged that actors within the operational environment possess personal interests and are influenced by their own perspectives on how to best serve those interests. However, it is explicitly stated that not all actors articulate their strategic objectives and the means by which their interests are pursued. This encompasses elements such as "cultural and historical aspects, religion, ethnicity, and politically driven events" (NDD, 2019, 20). Nonetheless, it should be noted that the definition of religion is contingent and subject to change within institutional contexts (Bender, 2010; DiMaggio & Powell, 1991). Consequently, it is the responsibility of the individual to interpret these concepts at an individual level for higher tactical decision-making. However, the document does not provide specific guidance on how these cultural and religious aspects are shaped in specific deployment contexts of Dutch soldiers, or how they should be interpreted and addressed by e.g. Dutch

commanders or CAT trainers. This religious- or cross-cultural religious literacy of actors will be further explained and delineated in the micro-level analysis in the following part.

Cultural- and Religious Awareness at the Micro Level

Schemas, within the context of Dutch defence, refer to the cognitive frameworks produced by the participants about cultural- and religious awareness, culture and religion through their (personal or deployment) experiences or professions within Dutch defence. Specifically, in the scope of this study, schemas can be defined as the specific beliefs, values, and understanding held by the participants regarding the cultural and religious aspects conveyed by the institution through its CAT, as well as the implications these have for their roles and interactions during deployments abroad or within their professional capacities (Bertossi and Bowen, 2013). Hence, to understand to what level these are present within the participants, in which the CAT as contextual environment is assisting, inquiries were made regarding their perspectives on religion, culture, and the religious and cultural awareness at hand.

The analytical importance of the schemas is not that participants advocating these phenomena (cultural- and religious awareness) derived from different professions or ranges within Dutch defence, or refused to recognize the importance of the phenomena. The differences lay in the weight given to different schemas. It was noticeable that among the interviewed participants, encompassing different roles and positions, everyone agreed to a recognition of the importance of religious and cultural education for different deployments within Dutch defence context. However, differences lay in how much weight is given to each of these phenomena, and in if other schemas were brought into play. The multiple schemas of the participants came into conflict around specific cases, which can be observed in the following investigations. It is important to investigate the understanding of current subject from multiple perspectives, to understand how the institution conceptualizes concepts as religion and culture and integrates this in the CAT.

Exploring Perspectives on Cultural and Religious Awareness

Before the CAT is taught to soldiers who are about to be deployed, trainers of the CAT investigate the level of interest in particular subjects of the soldiers who attend the mission orientation (MO). Sarah, one of the CAT trainers, stated the following:

Sarah: "During the first class of the week [of the MO], when you ask them: 'What would you like to hear this week?'. It is almost always: 'culture, local norms, values, customs...'. [...] Therefore, I believe there is indeed a lot of interest and openness, although I must say that priorities often lie elsewhere."

When being asked about whether this importance of the CAT was equally significant to every singular deployment abroad, different answers were given by participants. For example Floris, a young Dutch soldier without deployment experience and not religiously raised, who is about to be deployed to Lithuania, followed the CAT before his deployment. When being asked about his perception of the significance of the CAT, he answered the following:

Floris: "I do find these trainings [CAT] important. I have taken a lot of notes [during the CAT], so I can review them [when being deployed]. [...] However, this is a European country so there are many norms and values that align with the Dutch ones."

When Floris was being asked about how he would describe or recognize particular religious issues in the context of his deployment to Lithuania, he was not capable of expressing how he would define this.

Floris: "It has faded from my memory [what religion encompasses]. It [Lithuanian cultural or religious beliefs] does align with my beliefs, so I am not really bothered by how to handle it [dealing with Lithuanian citizens], as long as I continue to behave as I do now."

From Floris' response, a schema can be found that he perceived the significance of cultural and religious differences to be relatively lesser when deployed within Europe compared to deployments outside of Europe. He implied that the variations encountered within Europe are not as substantial, thereby suggesting a potential difference in the level of importance attributed to cultural and religious awareness depending on the deployment context. From his understanding of cultural and religious education provided by the CAT, Floris has limited familiarity with understanding the role of religion in the society of Lithuania. He is assuming he will adapt easily to the people in the deployment area, with his personal cultural background. Floris' statement can be related to the adherence of the Dutch armed forces to the so-called Dutch Approach, which refers to a cultural sensitivity that every Dutch citizen is presumed to possess (Ooink, 2010). Stated by Ooink, is that this Dutch approach was not always naturally present as Dutch defence presumed. Ooink (2010) argues that "By expanding and improving cultural training within Defence, military personnel will be better prepared for the norms, values, and customs in the mission area. [...] In this way, Dutch military personnel can genuinely claim to possess the Dutch approach." (Ooink, 2010, 145). Therefore, it is of importance to understand how these CAT are conceptualized, and how the concepts of culture and religion are explained within its deployment context.

Similarly by the statements made by Oliver, a young Dutch soldier without deployment experience and without religious upbringing, a schema is found in which he highlights the recognition of the importance of religious- and cross-cultural awareness in relation to different deployment areas. This observation further exemplifies the recognition of the value of understanding various religious and

cultural environments, within the context of Dutch military operations. Similarly as Floris, Oliver is agreeing to a greater importance of CAT for deployments further away from the Netherlands (e.g. Afghanistan), than deployments near the Netherlands (e.g. Lithuania).

Oliver: “[...] It depends on the area [of deployment], what is required, the rules, the differences, the do's and the don'ts. In my opinion, it is much more needed in Afghanistan than in Lithuania [CAT]. You delve much deeper into these aspects, as religion plays a more significant role. [...] In such cases [of deployment as Afghanistan], you should explore these matters [of cultural and religious differences] more extensively [...]”

When Oliver was being asked about his characterization of religious individuals in deployed areas and his approach to dealing with religious differences on a broader scale, Oliver’s response reflects his perspective on religious beliefs and practices. He expresses acceptance of individual religious beliefs, however, he is frustrated when religious beliefs are used to impose upon or manipulate others.

Oliver: “...It [religious adherence] is totally fine with me if you believe in something. It does make me angry when some people push [their religious belief] to persuade others. [...] Some Muslims do not shake women’s hands, I don’t think that is normal. Disrespect.”

While Oliver recognizes the importance of religious freedom and personal beliefs, he expresses disagreement with particular practices that he considers disrespectful, such as the refusal of men to shake hands with women in some Muslim cultures. Although, he emphasizes the importance of knowledge of differences between cultural and religious norms in various countries and the need for cultural understanding and adaptation when being deployed in diverse contexts, it contradicts with the following response they gave on the question how he would act when he experiences this particular practice.

Oliver: “When I see something happening like this [a man not shaking a woman’s hand] at work, I would say something if I know the person. I would say something like ‘Hey, are you out of your mind or so, we are in the Netherlands.’ [...]”

Oliver responded by indicating that his reaction or actions would depend on the context, professional or not, of the situation. His perspective emphasizes the complexity of navigating cultural differences and the significance of effective communication and mutual understanding among soldiers from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds. Therefore, it is of importance to receive cultural and religious education concerning the background of particular cultural or religious practices in the district of deployment, for gaining a deeper understanding. As stated by the AJP-3.19: *“It is also essential to take measures to promote gender equality relevant to the operation”* (AJP-3.19, 2018, 34). However,

prior to this statement, it is important to consider the local context of deployment and refrain from imposing one's own cultural perspective. The CAT is the main source of education in this cultural and religious awareness among soldiers in Dutch defence, therefore current investigation is of great importance to gain an understanding of how this is done.

Kai, a Dutch soldier with deployment experience within Dutch defence, having served in Bosnia (twice), Iraq, Afghanistan, and Mali, was also asked about his perception of the importance of religious and cultural awareness of CAT during various missions. Despite not having personal religious beliefs, he acknowledged the significance of religious and cultural literacy and awareness within the various military contexts during his deployments. Another schema, concerning the importance of CAT is shown. Drawing upon his practical experience, Kai described his perspective on current subject by stating the following:

Kai: “[...] But at the time [in 1996 to Bosnia], you simply go there [on deployment] and assume everything will be fine. However, I believe it would be beneficial to highlight these [cultural and religious] aspects more in the CAT. However, it is often challenging due to the busy training schedules and separate objectives of militaries.”

Schemas of actors in Conflict

Contrastingly to the schemas of Floris and Oliver, Thomas, the chief of all military chaplains, highlights the equal importance of cultural and religious awareness both within and outside of Europe. A schema can be found in which he emphasizes the significance of understanding cultural and religious differences, when being deployed to various countries, inside and outside of Europe, in the following statement:

Thomas: “When being deployed to countries such as Belgium, France or Germany, it is imperative to know what the cultural differences are, however the religious differences are not yet that obvious. When you go further, let’s say Afghanistan, Mali, Iraq, but also Syria or Lithuania, you should also be aware of the mores, habits, and also the religious expressions in these diverse deployment settings. [...]”

Hereafter, Thomas argues that there is too little sufficient knowledge within the trainers’ section concerning religious matters. Consequently, it becomes difficult to cultivate cultural and religious awareness among the soldiers who attend the training in a manner that enables them to navigate their deployments with a heightened sense of consciousness. Thomas states the following viewpoint regarding religious issues within the CAT:

Thomas: “[...] When it comes to religious related customs, rituals and texts, I believe there is much to be gained for a MO [specifically CAT] to conduct a study on these aspects and provide them to military personnel, to ensure awareness and understanding. Additionally, it is fascinating to observe the variations in religious consciousness, not only between countries but even within regions within a single country. [...]”

Thomas introduced another schema to what extent the CAT was contributing to areas nearby the Netherlands. Here is the basic challenge that trainers, in Thomas' opinion, have little or no sufficient knowledge concerning religious topics of the country or district of deployment. Kai agreed to this, by mentioning his personal deployment experience to Bosnia, and stating these cultural and religious aspects of deployment areas should be highlighted more specifically within the CAT.

Kai emphasized the intertwined nature of culture and religion: “See, religion is what people believe and that also largely determines one’s culture.”. Jake, a Dutch soldier who has been deployed five times (once in Bosnia and four times in Afghanistan), and not being (raised) religious, stated the following about his perspective on culture and the CAT:

Jake: “[...] I believe that culture is not something created by individuals. Similarly, when you have been deployed in an area for a longer period of time, the people you interact with or see on the streets become aware of our habits. With particular individuals, you do not have to start from scratch. [...] I do have the ability to assimilate what is being said in the CAT. [...] This [way of thinking] may be influenced by my [deployment] experience. [...]”

Mahmoud, one of the three Imams within Dutch defence, was raised in the Netherlands and pursued studies in Islamology and theology in England. During and after his academic journey, he has consistently served as an Imam and spiritual counselor in various civil society contexts. For the past two years, he has been serving as an Dutch defence Imam. When being asked how he would define culture and religion, he answered the following:

Mahmoud: “Culture is connected to place and background [of people]. Religion is very broad, it is also in line with the whole world, so to speak. Derived from religion, the faith and the philosophy of life is explained. Cultures sometimes indicate their own interpretation on it [religion]. [...]”

The answers given by Kai and Jake are corresponding to the definition of culture by Guiso, Sapienza and Zingales (2006) which is: “those customary beliefs and values that ethnic, religious and social groups transmit fairly unchanged from generation to generation” (Guiso, Sapienza, Zingales, 2006, 23). This definition is mostly used in empirical investigations, in which values and beliefs are combined in

the same definition and can be related to Kai's definition: "religion is what people believe and that also largely determines one's culture". Theoretical studies mostly adopt a definition of culture in which values and beliefs are often separated, which corresponds with the definition Mahmoud provided. Various scholars have developed theories in which culture encompasses "beliefs about the consequences of one's actions, but where beliefs can be manipulated by earlier generations or by experimentation." (Alesina and Giuliano, 2013, 4). Guiso, Sapienza, and Zingales (2008) demonstrate in their investigation of how individual beliefs are initially obtained through cultural transmission and then gradually transformed, from one generation to the next. Even though Jake is mentioning that culture is not created by individuals, he also mentions that individuals adapt to certain events within deployments. Therefore, the empirical and theoretical definitions of culture of Guiso, et al. are found in Jake's statement.

Conclusion

The current chapter focuses on the on the presence, knowledge and guidelines of the concepts of cultural- and religious awareness, within different levels (macro, meso and micro) of Dutch defence. The main question in this chapter was: *"How are cultural- and religious awareness trainings taken into account across the various levels within the Dutch army?"*. First there was shown that while the AJP-3.19 and the NDD directives both acknowledge and address cultural and religious aspects, there is a lack of specific directives pertaining to particular deployment areas or a comprehensive understanding of the precise scope of religion and culture. Consequently, the documents (e.g., commanders, soldiers, CAT trainers) lack clear navigational guidance on these matters. Likewise, it was evident that all participants, encompassing diverse roles and positions, employed similar schemas concerning the importance of religious and cultural awareness training for various deployments within the Dutch defence context. However, differences emerged in the emphasis placed on each of these aspects. Younger soldiers displayed less interest in cultural and religious differences, particularly in countries close to the Netherlands (e.g., Lithuania), while demonstrating greater interest in countries further away with more pronounced cultural and religious disparities (e.g., Afghanistan). Soldiers who had been deployed multiple times, emphasized the importance of knowledge concerning culture and religion of all deployment areas equally. Interestingly, also a military chaplain deviated from this pattern of the young soldiers, emphasizing the significance of understanding cultural and religious differences regardless of the deployment location, whether within or outside of Europe. These variations in perspectives arise due to the absence of strict conceptualizations or specific directives addressing cultural and religious awareness for distinct deployment areas. Consequently, individual approaches and interpretations by institutional actors regarding these concepts are prevalent. These schemas concerning cultural and religious awareness, are based on perceptions gathered during experience

within deployments or professions. However, they focus on different elements of culture and religion, in which some are more intertwined with one another than others. Essential to current investigation, is whether these understandings are derived from the CAT, from directives from the meso or macro-level or are individually shaped by participants. This contributes to the main question of current study. In the following analytical chapters these questions will be further explored.

Analytical chapter 2 - Cross-cultural religious literacy

Introduction

In the previous chapter a focus was laid in to what extent directives of different levels are focused on cultural- and religious awareness and how actors are implementing these within the context of Dutch defence. In this chapter, the leading sub question is stated as follows: *“How do the Cultural Awareness Trainings of the Dutch army contribute to the development of cross-cultural religious literacy among Dutch soldiers?”*. As argued by Nowakowska, Kantoch, Reis and Kazanecka (2021), someone’s cultural awareness is “their understanding of the differences between themselves and people from other countries or other backgrounds, especially differences in attitudes and values” (Nowakowska, et al., 2021, 331). Winkelman (2015) argues that awareness of cultural and religious differences and their influence on behavior is the start of intercultural effectiveness. He mentions that cultural self-awareness includes understanding of one’s own cultural influences upon values, beliefs, and judgments, as well as the influences derived from the professional’s work culture (Winkelman, 2005). Current chapter will focus on the presence, knowledge and guidelines concerning cross-cultural religious literacy within the different levels of Dutch defence.

Cross-Cultural Religious Literacy

As discussed in Chapter 1, that having a comprehensive understanding of specific definitions of culture and religion and their practical application is crucial for Dutch commanders when utilizing the NDD as a directive document. In this regard, self-reflection and self-understanding play a vital role in enabling readers to situate their interpretation within the appropriate context (Seiple and Hoover, 2021). At the meso-level, the NDD discusses the perception of Dutch soldiers during deployments, stating the following:

“Perception is the subjective observation of an objective reality. Perception is shaped by the worldview and mindset through which an actor perceives, interprets, and anticipates reality in a specific way. Perception, as a core element of the cognitive dimension, serves as a filter through which an actor sees the world. This filter is based on cultural, societal, and religious aspects” (NDD, 2019, 68).

This can be related to Seiple and Hoovers’ (2021) definition of cross-cultural religious literacy: “Cross-cultural religious literacy demands that one be reflective about one’s philosophy/theology of the other, toward practical and positive engagement in a multi-faith, globalizing world that will require multi-faith partners to serve the common good.” (Seiple and Hoover, 2021, 8). Within the definition of cross-cultural religious literacy of Seiple and Hoover, several competences were identified. The perception of

the self, can be identified as the “personal competency” as described by Seiple and Hoover (2021), which entails understanding one’s own moral, epistemological, and spiritual framework, which encompasses an understanding of one’s own oral traditions and guidance on engaging with others. It also involves recognizing the processes and motivations behind the development of one’s own character (Seiple and Hoover, 2021). As Lenn Goodman (2014) argues, self-knowledge is crucial to authentic engagement and dialogue. The subsequent directives from both the AJP-3.19 and the NDD highlight the significance of mutual understanding, which aligns with the concept of comparative competency as elucidated by Seiple and Hoover (2021):

“The contemporary operating environment involves a myriad of ethnic, religious, ideological and technological issues, which require sustainable solutions in societies disrupted by conflicts, disasters or humanitarian catastrophes. [...] A successful resolution of these challenges will depend on cooperation and coordination based on a common sense of purpose and resolve, mutual understanding, collaboration and appropriate resourcing.” (AJP-3.19, 2018, 24)

“Mutual respect and understanding: The respect for a Dutch military unit is a direct result of its professional conduct. The way in which the Dutch unit treats local actors and acknowledges their authority, despite potential exceptional positions related to its tasks, is crucial for accomplishing its mission” (NDD, 2019, 88).

Both the AJP-3.19 and the NDD directives exhibit distinct provisions regarding the guidelines for the conduct of cross-cultural religiously literate soldiers in the context of deployments abroad. However, the precise interpretations of these directives are entrusted to individual actors at the micro-level, allowing them to incorporate these guidelines into their personal practices within the Dutch defence and its operational settings.

Exploring Schemas Related to Comparative and Personal Competencies

The term “comparative competency” refers to understanding the moral, epistemological, and spiritual framework of one’s neighbor as they do, and what that framework says about engaging the other. This level of religious literacy encompasses the range of topics that would usually be taught in a religious studies course in comparative religion (Seiple and Hoover, 2021). Within the context of Dutch defence, the CAT enables soldiers to extend their cross-cultural religious literacy. When being asked about the approach to fostering religious and cultural awareness among Dutch soldiers during their MO during the CAT, Sarah, one of the CAT trainers, responded that it proves challenging to cultivate a potent religious and cultural awareness among the soldiers. A reason, she mentions, for this is that there is a restricted time frame of the CAT prior to the deployment. She emphasized that these sessions do, however, address the significance of religious and cultural awareness and the soldiers’ personal

competencies associated with specific deployment areas. She states the following concerning in what way the personal competencies are elaborated on during the CAT:

Sarah: "How to deal with things that are against your own principles, ethical differences... That you inform people [soldiers who follow the CAT] about these. Perhaps, it can be made practical in the first instance, by opening that door. Emphasizing the importance [of the soldiers' own norms and values] in their mission and translating examples into practice. [...]"

During the CAT, a PowerPoint presentation is utilized to support the discussion on the cultural and religious dimensions and differences of the deployed region. The training addresses the following concerning the personal- and comparative competencies of soldiers: "Being cognizant of one's own cultural background and its impact on behavior and actions, acknowledging the potential for encountering cultural differences during deployment, and recognizing how one's own culture can shape the deployment experience and perspectives." (PowerPoint CAT, September 22, 2022). Typically, this discussion lasts no longer than five minutes due to time constraints during the CAT. Subsequently, Sarah provided illustrative examples to emphasize the significance of this point in her opinion.

Sarah: "For personal development as a military professional, you sometimes come across challenging situations in which you have to make decisions. Topics such as ethics, culture, your own perspectives and principles should be explored."

This form of literacy is cultivated through an interactive exchange with a religious entity, incorporating an awareness of one's own beliefs, the other person's self-perception, and the objectives relevant to a particular cultural milieu. Hence, a cross-cultural religious literacy can be defined as a wider range of abilities and proficiencies aimed at promoting robust pluralism, as opposed to a religious literacy that is perceived as a fixed or basic understanding of factual information about different religions (Seiple and Hoover, 2021). Sarah's reference pertains to the soldier's capacity to adapt, aligning with the viewpoint put forth by Seiple and Hoover. Connecting to Sarah's statement, Kai, the soldier who has previous deployment experience, expresses the following:

Kai: "[...] If you do not have acceptance, it will not work. We, as Western people, tend to take the lead in explaining things. [...] I believe that with our Western background, we cannot expect everything and the entire world to conform to Western standards. [...]"

When being asked how Kai considers his own cultural and religious competencies, when being in contact with other cultures and religions of localities in deployed areas, he argued the following:

Kai: "[...] That I do respect their [alien cultures or religious people] norms and values. [...] That you [as soldiers] are aware of these [norms and values]. [...] For example, when you went on

a patrol [during deployment], it was not done to say that you did not adhere to a religion. Then it is strange when you have to lie, to say ‘Yes, I did believe, but I do not do anything about it.’

Jake also emphasized the importance and awareness of his own cultural background during multiple deployments. He exemplifies this with an incident in Afghanistan where he had a meeting with an Afghan military commandant. During this encounter, he was tested by the Afghan commander about how he, as a Dutch soldier, dealt with specific cultural differences.

Jake: “An Afghan tradition, Chai boys¹, is only for a small part of the [Afghan] population. They are young handsome boys, used as a kind of trophy for the police commissioner. [...] If during a conversation, not during the first, a Chai boy was offered, you had to explain that our [Dutch] culture is different. You have to suppress your anger and indignation. [...]”

When Jake further elaborated on this particular event during his deployment, he explained the reasons behind his actions in that situation. He mentioned that the Afghan soldiers were aware of his Dutch cultural background.

Jake: “We are there [in Afghanistan] with a certain objective. [...] We should not have the Western arrogance that we are going to bring democracy and adapt the culture [of Afghan people]. At that moment it was a matter of accepting and achieving your goal. [...] I see this as their problem, and I am not going to make it mine. [...] I did explain that in our [Dutch] culture, we do not know this [Chai boys] and therefore do not accept it. [...]”

Several schemas came into play when discussing the role of self-awareness, collaborative competency and personal competency. Each resonates with its own values, morals and beliefs concerning how to deal with people with other cultural or religious rituals, habits, norms and values. In both answers, of Kai and Jake, schemas are found in which specific competencies of self-understanding and collaborative understanding are mentioned. This can be related to Seiple and Hoovers (2021) definition of cross-cultural religious literacy. Notably, the statements made by Kai and Jake demonstrate the presence of comparative competency and personal competency. Kai was aware of the cultural and religious norms and/or values of the other during his deployment, in which he acted in a particular way in order to cooperate with them. As a result, he could ask himself what the

¹ According to Jake’s statement, “Chai boys” refer to boys aged between eight and fourteen who used to serve tea for chiefs or commanders and to entertain their company through dancing. However, in contemporary times, their primary role has changed to that of “toy boys”. In Afghan slang, they are referred to as “Bacha bāzi” (Prey, Spears, 2021).

thresholds were in the moral framework of the other that allows them to belong to this particular religious group. Therefore, Kai was especially mindful of their religious adherence. In the statements made by Kai, he is aware of his own norms and values when being offered a “Chai boy” by the Afghan commander. His personal competency by understanding his own (moral) framework, contributed in this specific dialogue with the other in this situation.

Thomas, the chief of all military chaplains, stated that religious and cultural awareness of soldiers starts with acknowledging their own values, mores, actions and perspectives. This corresponds with Seiple and Hoover (2021) their understanding of a cross-cultural religious literate individual, especially the comparative competencies are seen in the following response:

Thomas: “I think it starts with an awareness of yourself, if you meet someone else [with other religious or cultural background] and you immediately have a judgement or a condemnation, then the relationship is immediately broken. [...]”

Furthermore, he mentioned the importance of a (Dutch) soldiers’ individual perspective when deployed in an unfamiliar area where cultural and religious matters come into play, therefore the personal competency, as described by Seiple and Hoover (2021), is of importance to take into account.

Thomas: “We are considering such issues² with a Dutch viewpoint and I asked the question: ‘Do you want to impose our culture, our values? That is almost colonization, isn’t it?’. I mentioned that we should not go back to the time with missionaries, we should not have done that. And if we do this now, we will actually impose on others, not Roman Catholicism, but our culture. Are we going to say in a hundred years: ‘We should not have done that.’? [...]”

The current investigation revealed that several participants, with different professions and backgrounds, emphasized the significance of their personal perspectives and cultural/religious backgrounds when interacting with individuals from different cultural or religious backgrounds. It is noteworthy that all participants' responses exhibited similar schemas, indicating that personal- and collaborative competency play a crucial role in CIMIC-operations. Thomas specifically advocated for self-awareness at an individual level during deployments, providing vivid examples to support his argument. Similarly, Kai, Jake, and Sarah shared the same schemas on the current topic. These perspectives align with the guidelines outlined in AJP-3.19 and NDD. According to DiMaggio (1988), actors have significant influence over the institutional environment, as their relative power greatly

² The term “issues” refers to a narrative shared by Thomas concerning cultural differences between Dutch soldiers and Afghan soldiers in a deployed region. In the context of trainings conducted by the Dutch military for Peshmerga combatants, a Dutch soldier caused an accident with a Peshmerga combatant. Initially, the Dutch military’s response was to repatriate the Dutch soldier to the Netherlands. However, the Peshmerga combatant viewed the Dutch soldier as a friend and did not blame him for this accident.

impacts its overall structure. The individual commitment of these actors towards developing personal- and collaborative competencies becomes crucial, as there is no specific structural education with defined guidelines available within Dutch defence. Furthermore, these aspects receive limited attention in the education provided by the CAT. As a result, soldiers who are deployed in far-away regions are left to their own (personal) experience concerning developing their competencies without particular direction from the institution concerning how to approach these.

Conclusion

This chapter focused on the presence, knowledge and guidelines concerning cross-cultural religious literacy within the different levels of Dutch defence. The main question here was: *“How do the Cultural Awareness Trainings of the Dutch army contribute to the development of cross-cultural religious literacy among Dutch soldiers?”* This was related to Seiple and Hoovers’ (2021) definition of cross-cultural religious literacy: “Cross-cultural religious literacy demands that one be reflective about one’s philosophy/theology of the other, toward practical and positive engagement in a multi-faith, globalizing world that will require multi-faith partners to serve the common good.” (Seiple and Hoover, 2021, 8). The investigation identifies several competencies within the sphere of cross-cultural religious literacy, with particular emphasis on personal competency and collaborative competency. The AJP-3.19 and NDD directives provide clear guidelines for cross-cultural religiously literate soldiers during deployments abroad. However, the interpretation of these directives is left to individual actors at the micro-level, allowing for their personal integration into Dutch defence deployments.

Findings from the investigation highlight the significance of participants' personal perspectives and cultural/religious backgrounds when interacting with individuals from diverse cultural or religious backgrounds. However, these aspects receive limited attention in CAT education, possibly due to minimal directives from the macro- and meso-levels that lack specificity for distinct deployment areas. Consequently, CAT trainers rely on their own interpretation and creativity in educating these elements within the CAT program. This lack of specific guidance also affects deployed soldiers in distant regions, who rely on personal experiences to develop their competencies without clear institutional direction on how to approach these challenges.

When considering the importance of contextual factors in which participants are situated, it becomes crucial to examine how the environmental context of actors within the Dutch defence system shapes their understanding of religious and cultural matters. Therefore, the contextual environment (CAT) is of importance which will be delineated further in the following chapter. As a result, we gain a more comprehensive understanding of how the concepts of culture and religion are conceptualized within Dutch defence.

Analytical chapter 3 - Contextual environment

Introduction

The contextual environment of where religious literacy is found, as mentioned by Moore (2007), Beckford (1999) and Cadge, et. al. (2017) is one of the most important factors which should be taken into account within a public organization as Dutch defence. Therefore, this chapter is dedicated to the contextual environment of actors of the institution. The contextual environment can shape an individual's perspectives, experiences, and interpretations of religion. It holds an important role in determining how religious and cross-cultural religious literacy are acquired and understood.

In this chapter, the leading sub question is stated as follows: *"How is the contextual environment concerning cross-cultural religious literacy of Dutch soldiers constituted?"* and *"Where and on what basis does the Dutch army derive its knowledge for defining culture, religion, and cultural- and religious awareness?"*. In this particular scenario, the CAT serves as the contextual environment for Dutch soldiers. Within this training, soldiers are provided with a context in which they can actively engage themselves with religious diversity, cultural norms, and values of their deployment destination. This enables them to cultivate a deeper understanding of the religious dimensions that are pertinent to their roles and interactions while deployed in foreign missions. The CAT serves as a platform that provides a structured framework for exploring and enhancing religious- and cross-cultural religious literacy.

Environment of deployments

Within the AJP-3.19, the civil environment is described as: *"the political, economic, social ethnographic, cultural, infrastructure and information elements of the people with whom a military force or a government agency operates"* (AJP-3.19, 2018, 30). According to NATO, the role of the military force in achieving the assigned objective must be carefully considered since achieving military objectives will not necessarily lead to a desired political outcome. Military operations in this civil environment affect the people and must, therefore, be factored into military planning. Taking into account these statements concerning the civil context of the deployment of soldiers, CAT is more or less used as a tactical tool as stated by NATO, rather than taken into account the human right or social aspects. The directives from the NDD underline this statement:

"The function of "Intelligence" involves using [local cultural and religious] information as a tool to modify the opinions, perspectives, and perceptions of [local] actors, thereby changing their behavior. This includes strategic communication, information operations, psychological warfare, and public relations." (NDD, 2019, p. 91).

Sarah, a CAT trainer at CAI, comes from a strict Catholic family but currently does not align herself with any religious faith. However, she draws inspiration from various religious principles and ideas. As institutional definitions of religion and culture are influenced by contextual factors, it is of importance to take into account Sarah's upbringing and religious background (Bender, 2010; DiMaggio & Powell, 1999). This context is significant for interpreting her responses and understanding her perspective on the role of religion in CAT training within the Dutch defence context.

Sarah: "When you take a look at the CAT for any mission area, I think religion is one of the most important themes. Because, because ... because religion produces a lot of norms and values, norms of behavior. But also, for example, choice of words, how you say things, how you treat each other. [...]"

Sarah emphasizes the significance of considering the theme of religion within the context of the CAT explicitly, which leads to a cross-cultural religious literacy within the students (Dutch soldiers) of the training. Emphasized by Moore (2007), is that religious literacy is not solely about knowing facts about different religions, but also about understanding how religion has an influence on individuals and societies. Furthermore, Moore argues that religious literacy should be taught in a way that promotes critical thinking, cultural understanding, and respectful engagement with diverse religious perspectives (Moore, 2007). Analyzing how these elements come to the front within the CAT, contributes to the aim of current investigation. Žotkevičiūtė – Banevičienė (2017) argues that CAT can assist in helping military personnel to understand the motives and behavioral models of their counterparts, observe historical symbols of the deployment area, and recognize areas or characteristics of people significant in terms of history, religion, or ideology. Hence, it is essential for CAT trainers to possess a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the religious foundations, values, norms, and practices of the local population in the deployment area. This understanding will enable them to foster cross-cultural religious literacy within the context of CAT. The current investigation aims to examine to what extent the CAT trainers possess the necessary comprehensive knowledge mentioned above and how they acquire this information.

Perspectives and Sources on Culture and Religion

In the context of how Dutch defence conceptualizes concepts such as religion and culture, to develop cross-cultural literacy amongst soldiers, it was imperative to investigate the information sources utilized by CAT trainers and military chaplains in imparting knowledge to soldiers. Several trainers and military chaplains were asked regarding the origins of their knowledge on the current subject. Thomas, the chief of all military chaplains, offered the following response:

Thomas: *“This is often very personal. We are all autonomous professionals. Also when it comes to the manner of designing the trainings [of military chaplains during MO], what is mentioned and what is not. [...]”*

Other participants, hailing from diverse religious- and cultural backgrounds and professional fields were also inquired about their understanding and importance of religion and culture in the CAT and their respective interpretations of these concepts within Dutch defence. Mahmoud, one of the three Imams within Dutch defence, provided the following response when being asked how he is collecting his knowledge concerning religious- and cultural knowledge within Dutch defence:

Mahmoud: *“[...] Well, I have brought along my baggage and experience from the past years [in civil society as Imam], serving a diverse range of individuals not only from Islamic backgrounds but also from other backgrounds. [...]”*

Both participants provide answers that address their individual engagement with acquiring knowledge on the current subject. Schemas are found by trainers of the CAT and military chaplains which rely on their personal experiences or knowledge within and outside of Dutch defence. This leaves room for creativity when filling in their roles as CAT trainers or military chaplains, and providing information and knowledge to a certain extent concerning cultural or religious issues. Tala, a CAT trainer with academic Islamic studies background and a great interest for different religions, shares her approach to working within the framework of CAI and highlights the opportunity for her individual input in designing the CAT. In her initial statement, she discusses the theories and methodologies employed by CAT:

Tala: *“Within the CAT, we have established specific methodologies and frameworks for structuring our presentations, which we [CAT trainers] strive to adhere to as much as possible. We rely on certain theoretical models, particularly those rooted in cultural anthropology, although theology plays a lesser role in this context. [...]”*

Subsequently, Tala provides the following insights concerning the personal approach and application of individual trainers of the CAT towards these theories and methodologies:

Tala: *“[...] We [trainers of CAT] notice that there are different dynamics within our department [of CAI]. Of course, different people have different expectations. [...] It has an impact on the lessons and their design. [...] We do have a format [for the CAT], but we still execute it in our own way, it won't present a consistent narrative in our trainings. [...]”*

Furthermore, she emphasizes the importance of experiencing the deployment's area culture and religions herself, since, to her opinion, this prevents generalizing and unconsciously stereotyping of the people of the deployment area of the CAT:

Tala: “[...] In my opinion, undertaking a working trip to the area for regional orientation purposes, in order to acquire practical knowledge that aligns with the objectives of the CAT would contribute to the information we provide to the soldiers.[...] I have not been there [deployment area of the CAT] myself, and no one of the CAT trainers, so I can only share limited information. [...] Everything we [trainers of CAT] say is limited, subjective, and based on our own perceptions. [...]”

Similarly, the NDD acknowledges the importance of establishing a holistic relationship with local communities in deployment areas, recognizing that cultural and religious factors can be better comprehended through direct engagement and physical presence in the operational environment.

“The physical presence of military personnel remains necessary as it enables direct contact with the local population. This personal contact is essential for gaining a comprehensive understanding of their needs, expectations, intentions, and the local conditions. Through physical presence, support and acceptance from the local population can be fostered.[...] ” (NDD, 2019, p. 69).

This is underscored by Jake, the soldier with deployment experience, who mentions the different examples concerning cultural and religious differences within the CAT, which do not always align with the reality of the country of deployment.

Jake: *“The CAT provides examples of interactions between Afghan and Dutch military personnel to illustrate cultural differences [during deployment], but such incidents are not common in everyday deployment situations. This is because the Afghans are aware of our [Dutch and Afghan] cultural differences.[...] It should be noted that not every example mentioned should be considered as the norm.”*

Kai fulfills the role of an instructor at the SVV for General Awareness (GA) trainings. These trainings are integrated into the mission orientation (MO) program, alongside the Cultural Awareness Training (CAT). In terms of the alignment of conceptualization or guidelines of the CAT and GA trainings, he provides the following insights:

Kai: *“[...] If you are lucky and have an instructor who has been deployed multiple times, these [cultural and religious] aspects are also touched upon. In my opinion, it should be integrated more generally into the trainings. There is a lack of direction [of Dutch defence policies]. [...] Now we are working bottom-up. [...] There is little to no knowledge [concerning cultural or religious knowledge] at the higher levels, and that is detrimental.”*

Interviewer: *“How can this situation be altered or transformed?”*

Kai: "There simply needs to be a clear vision [from Dutch defence policies], and people with expertise should be placed in positions of authority again."

When being inquired about whether there is a certain communication between the trainers of CAT and military chaplains regarding the conceptualization and training of religious aspects, Tala and Sarah answered the following:

Tala: "I have solely shaken hands with Mahmoud [military Imam], I would really like to meet [professionally] with him. Also, because of my background, Islamic- and Arabic language studies, a significant focus was placed on that [religion] during my own education. [...]"

Sarah: "No, actually I have never spoken with a military chaplain [concerning the conceptualization of religion within our CAT]."

The same question regarding the contact between CAT trainers and military chaplains concerning the conceptualization of religion within CAT, was posed to both Mahmoud, the military Imam and Thomas, the chief military chaplain.

Mahmoud: "No, we [military chaplains] have not had any contact at all. [...] However, I always believe that when you engage in conversations and interactions [with trainers of CAT], it can only enrich and we always learn from each other."

Thomas: "No, well, we do undergo the MO [before deployment]. The MO covers various important topics that are essential for military personnel [during deployment]. However, what I sometimes emphasize is the importance of leveraging our expertise, as we have representatives from seven different [religious] denominations within our team [of military chaplains]. [...] Sometimes they [CAT trainers] are not even aware of our existence. [...]"

Based on the responses provided, it is evident that various schemas emerge regarding the willingness of collaboration between different departments of military chaplains and CAT trainers in discussing the definitions of culture and religion and leveraging each other's expertise. However, it is noteworthy that there is a lack of a formalized framework for such cooperation.

Learnt Lessons

Sarah addressed the significance of the CAT by drawing attention to past events where the lack of cultural- and religious awareness had damaging consequences. She proceeded by providing illustrative examples of situations in which such awareness was overlooked. When being asked about the overall importance of the CAT, Sarah answered the following:

Sarah: *“I think, because the past³ has shown that lack of minimal knowledge of the religious and cultural aspects of the deployment area has proven to have negative consequences, particularly for soldiers involved in CIMIC activities or gathering intelligence. Understanding and following local rules, behavior, and showing respect is essential for accessing information and building rapport with the local community. Failure to do so can result in a lack of cooperation and limited access to valuable information.”*

Examples such as the crucial errors committed by the PRT team in Afghanistan arise due to a lack of understanding of the local context, as elucidated by Sarah: *“Knowledge of tribal associations, ethnic communities and demographic groups is crucial. Otherwise, situations can get even more complex and intricate.”* Jake, the soldier with deployment experience, also provided relevant examples on the subject at hand. When asked about his recollections concerning cultural and religious differences encountered with the local populace in the areas of deployment, he answered with an example of an incident from his mission in Mazar-e Sjarif (Afghanistan) that underscored how cultural differences of (in this case) the American soldiers and Afghan local people caused conflict.

Jake: “We [Dutch soldiers] prioritize cultural sensitivity and adapt our patrols according to local holidays. However, I witnessed an issue in which the American armed forces were not aware of a particular Islamic holiday in which young men hurt themselves to forgive the sins. They unintentionally disrupted a ritual, causing tension and misunderstanding. As Dutch soldiers are better prepared for such situations. [...]”

Interviewer: *“Did you acquire the information regarding the local holidays during the MO prior to your deployment?”*

Jake: “No, I knew this ritual existed, though not specifically of the usage in Afghanistan. [...] We review a lot of general holidays and celebrations [during the MO].”

Thomas, the chief military chaplain, further emphasized the importance of acquiring knowledge concerning specific local cultural and religious holidays and rituals. Having been deployed twice as a military chaplain, Thomas served in Kunduz and Mazar-e Sjarif (Afghanistan). During one of his deployments, the soldiers were prohibited from conducting patrols due to a religious holiday in Afghanistan. This restriction resulted in misunderstanding among the soldiers regarding the rationale behind their limitation within the compound.

³ Referring to Afghanistan Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT), who were sent into the deployment area to expand civil-military activities. One of their activities concerned the drilling of wells, though these caused more conflicts due to geographical choices of the PRT of placing the wells. One village had access to water and civilians started asking for money from people of other villages.

Thomas: *“Then a young lady from the MIVD⁴ said: ‘Perhaps you can explain better than I, what this [the religious holiday] means.’ Of course, I had some [knowledge of particular holiday] during my studies [theology]. I can place it more easily from the Quran, so I make the translation to military life.”*

Interviewer: *“To what degree was there understanding for these types of religious holidays?”*

Thomas: *“They [Dutch soldiers] understood it better, that it is a holy day for them [local people]. After this, we also spoke about the holy days for us [Dutch people]. That varies for everyone, also in the Netherlands there are different holy days, for example Pentecost last weekend. A lot of [Dutch] people do not even know what it is about. [...]”*

Promoting collaboration among various departments within the Dutch defence as military chaplains and CAT trainers, rather than relying solely on individuals, regarding the knowledge pertaining to events as mentioned by Sarah, Thomas, and Jake, can help prevent misunderstandings surrounding cultural and religious differences within specific deployment areas. Moreover, it fosters the comprehension of Dutch soldiers when specific cultural or religious knowledge is readily accessible, rather than relying on accidental encounters with the appropriate instructor or military chaplain. These examples demonstrate that the conceptualization of how certain cultural and religious aspects are approached within the institution are shaped by individual actors.

Conclusion

This chapter was dedicated to the contextual environment of actors of the institution. The contextual environment, in this context the CAT, shapes the soldiers’ perspectives, experiences, and interpretations of religion. The main question were here: *“How is the contextual environment concerning cross-cultural religious literacy of Dutch soldiers constituted?”* and *“Where and on what basis does the Dutch army derive its knowledge for defining culture, religion, and cultural- and religious awareness?”* All the statements made by the participants concerning how cross-cultural religious literacy is developed by soldiers within Dutch defence, are holding similar schemas concerning their awareness of their personal input and investment within their professions. Though, they differ in the weight given to these.

Mahmoud, was giving neutral statements in current subject and was pleased to bring the knowledge he had gained in the years before his employment within Dutch defence. Others, like Kai,

⁴ MIVD: The Military Intelligence and Security Service (Militaire Inlichtingen- en Veiligheidsdienst) is a Dutch secret service that conducts research into the security of the armed forces under the responsibility of the Ministry of Defense and collects military intelligence from and about abroad.

are concerned about the direction in which Dutch defence as an organization is heading concerning the same guidelines and knowledge of distinct trainings (CAT and GA) which relies on, to him, people without expertise. Tala underlines the importance of individual working trips, to expand their knowledge of the deployment areas, since the information of the CAT relies on their own understanding of certain cultural or religious aspects. Therefore, she argues, that the organization should make an investment in CAT trainers, as they are the central point of cultural and religious advice of deployment areas.

Drawing from these answers concerning the manner of producing the knowledge for the CAT around religion and culture, is that it largely depends on individuals who take their own experience from past years with in present employment. Therefore, we see that there is room for creativity to fill in how the CAT trainings are designed by the CAT trainers. This leads to an individual conceptualization of concepts as religion and culture, which are also passed to the soldiers who attend the CAT. Taking a closer look at past events concerning cultural and religious differences which occurred in military deployments, can contribute to where conceptualization of current subjects are needed within Dutch defence. The final conclusion gives more directions to where future investigations are needed.

Conclusion

This study focused on the conceptualization of culture and religion across different levels within Dutch defence. The main researched question was: *What are the conceptualizations of culture and religion within Dutch Defence?*. Four sub questions were addressed in this investigation within the three analytical chapters, which are as follows: *“How are cultural- and religious awareness trainings taken into account across the various levels within the Dutch army?”*, *“Where and on what basis does the Dutch army derive its knowledge for defining culture, religion, and cultural- and religious awareness?”*, *“How do the Cultural Awareness Trainings of the Dutch army contribute to the development of cross-cultural religious literacy among Dutch soldiers?”* and *“How is the contextual environment concerning cross-cultural religious literacy of Dutch soldiers constituted?”*.

Three different levels were indicated from the analytical conceptual framework of Cadge, et al. (2017), the macro, meso and micro. From the micro level, interviews were conducted with soldiers who participated in the CAT once, soldiers who underwent the CAT multiple times, military chaplains, and CAT trainers. Analysis were made of directives of the macro level: the Allied Joint Doctrine For Civil-Military Cooperation (AJP-3.19) and the meso level: the Doctrine of Dutch Defence (NDD).

It was important to answer these questions, as cultural- and religious awareness trainings within militaries becomes a fundamental objective for soldiers, particularly considering that their Civil-Military operations often occur within culturally and religiously unfamiliar areas. Moreover, research up until now has not yet focused specifically on the conceptualization of culture and religion within different levels of militaries, in specific the Dutch military.

First, an introduction to the subject was given, after which previous research on the current investigation was presented. Building toward a theoretical understanding and analyzing how culture and religion are conceptualized and integrated by Dutch Defence, must begin with a basic understanding of the public institution, its institutional environment and the actors within the organization. Therefore, the analytical conceptual framework was presented, which consisted of the various levels drawn from Cadge, et al. (2017) comparative analytical framework. The various levels were as follows, the macro: the institutional environment (AJP-3.19), the meso: the public institution (NDD) and the micro: the actors. Different themes were detected throughout the different levels, which were the presence, knowledge and guidelines concerning 1) cultural- and religious awareness, 2) cross-cultural religious literacy and 3) the contextual environment. These were explained in detail as a means to compare the data of this research with. Continuing, the methodology was presented. Afterwards, three analytical chapters were presented, where each focused on the sub questions and different themes.

The first analytical chapter placed a focus on the presence, knowledge and guidelines of the

concepts of cultural- and religious awareness, within different levels (macro, meso and micro) of Dutch defence. While in both directives, the AJP-3.19 and the NDD, cultural and religious aspects were indicated and presented, there were no specific directives presented concerning specific areas of deployments or what religion and culture precisely encompasses for navigation of the readers of the documents (e.g. commanders, soldiers, CAT trainers). Similarly, it was noticeable that among the interviewed participants, encompassing different roles and positions, everyone agreed to a recognition of the importance of religious and cultural awareness education for different deployments within Dutch defence context. However, differences lay in how much weight is given to each of these phenomena, since younger soldiers were less interested in the cultural and religious differences, and therefore the CAT, in countries which were nearby the Netherlands to them (e.g. Lithuania) than countries further away with greater cultural and religious differences (e.g. Afghanistan). This schema was not held by one of the military chaplains, since a schema was found in which he emphasizes the significance of understanding cultural and religious differences, when being deployed to various countries, inside and outside of Europe. These different schemas arise, since there are no strict conceptualizations or directives of specific deployment areas concerning cultural and religious awareness. This leads to an individual approach and interpretation by the actors of the institution of these different concepts.

The second chapter focused on the presence, knowledge and guidelines concerning cross-cultural religious literacy within the different levels of Dutch defence. This was related to Seiple and Hoovers' (2021) definition of cross-cultural religious literacy: "Cross-cultural religious literacy demands that one be reflective about one's philosophy/theology of the other, toward practical and positive engagement in a multi-faith, globalizing world that will require multi-faith partners to serve the common good." (Seiple and Hoover, 2021, 8). Within the realm of cross-cultural religious literacy, various competencies were identified within the participants. This study emphasizes the significance of personal competency and collaborative competency. Both the AJP-3.19 and the NDD directives exhibit distinct guidelines for the conduct of cross-cultural religiously literate soldiers in the context of deployments abroad. However, the precise interpretations of these directives are entrusted to individual actors at the micro-level, allowing them to incorporate these guidelines into their personal practices within the Dutch defence and its operational settings. The current investigation revealed that several participants, with different professions and backgrounds, emphasized the significance of their personal perspectives and cultural/religious backgrounds when interacting with individuals from different cultural or religious backgrounds. These aspects receive limited attention in the education provided by the CAT. This can be caused by the minimal directives from the macro- and meso level, as they are not specified to distinct deployment areas. As a result, CAT trainers are left to their own interpretation and creativity concerning how to educate these elements within the CAT. Consequently,

soldiers who are deployed in far-away regions are left to their own (personal) experience concerning developing their competencies without particular direction from the institution concerning how to approach these.

The third chapter was dedicated to the contextual environment of actors of the institution. The contextual environment, in this context the CAT, shapes the soldiers' perspectives, experiences, and interpretations of religion. It is mentioned that it holds an important role in determining how religious and cross-cultural religious literacy are acquired and understood. All the statements made by the participants concerning how cross-cultural religious literacy is developed by soldiers within Dutch defence, are holding similar schemas concerning their awareness of their personal input and investment within their professions. Though, participants weight on the schemas concerning their agreement with this were different, as a result, the schemas came in conflict. This is in line with the argument of Bertossi and Bowen (2013), that differences lay in how much weight to give each of these issues, and in whether other schemas were brought into play. Some were pleased to bring their academic knowledge to their profession within the military, and given the freedom and creativity to fill in their profession in their personal manner, wherein others were concerned about the directions concerning cultural and religious knowledge directives from the macro- and meso level in which Dutch defence as an organization is heading to. Others were aware that the information they provided concerning the cultural and religious aspect within deployments, relied on their personal religious and cross-cultural religious literacy. Therefore, suggestions were given to expand their knowledge of deployment areas with e.g. working trips.

During the investigation, it was remarkable to observe the level of interest expressed by all participants regarding the current subject matter at the micro level. This observation is supported by one participant's statement: *"Therefore, I believe there is indeed a lot of interest and openness [regarding cultural and religious knowledge], although I must say that priorities often lie elsewhere."* This statement, along with the participants' perspectives and schemas on the importance of cultural and religious awareness, highlights that individuals within the organization are generally committed to enhancing their personal cross-cultural religious literacy. However, a significant issue arises from the lack of investment at the macro- and meso levels of the Dutch defence. Argued by DiMaggio (1988) is that the actors, considered in this research as the micro level, have a great influence on the institutional environment since their relative power carries a vigorous effect on its ultimate structure. This is evidenced by minimal time allocated for educating the CAT by CAT trainers to soldiers, limited guidance on cultural and religious issues in directives, and varying objectives in CAT. Questions arise during the current investigation about the utilization of cultural and religious awareness in deployment areas: whether it is driven by the human rights of local populations and taking them into consideration, or if

it serves as a tactical tool to prevent potential conflicts based on past experiences or to gather information more easily.

Returning to address the main research question of this investigation, it becomes evident that the conceptualization of culture and religion within the public organization is predominantly left to individual interpretation. Consequently, there is no uniform structural conceptualization in place. At various levels, the macro, meso, and micro, directives and guidelines are provided, however, they remain abstract and flexible, allowing ample room for creativity among CAT trainers and subsequently deployed soldiers. This flexibility can be advantageous, as it permits CAT trainers to dedicate their time and investment to their personal interests, ultimately serving the objectives of the CAT program. However, it is notable that a significant amount of knowledge regarding culture and religion exists within the public institution, yet it has not been utilized or incorporated into structured training programs. For future research, it is recommended to delve deeper into the potential for enhanced cooperation among these different dimensions and professions, aiming to establish a more structured and effective approach that contributes to an improved cross-cultural religious literacy among the soldiers responsible for CIMIC operations.

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Appendix 1

Introduction (provided to every participant):

Goedemiddag, bedankt voor uw tijd. Ik zal me kort voorstellen: mijn naam is Lotte, ik studeer de master Religion, Conflict and Globalization aan de Rijksuniversiteit Groningen. Ik heb afgelopen half jaar stage gelopen bij Cultuurhistorisch Achtergrond en Informatie (CAI) in Apeldoorn, misschien kent u het, hier gaven we militairen les rondom cultuurbewustzijn voordat zij op uitzending gingen.

Een paar praktische punten voorafgaand dit gesprek:

- Omdat ik dit gesprek moet uitwerken en de uitkomsten ga verwerken in mijn onderzoek wil ik u graag om **toestemming** vragen om dit op te nemen. Gaat u hier akkoord mee?
- Zijn er **onderwerpen of vragen** waar u het liever niet over wilt hebben?
- Als u naderhand niet wilt dat bepaalde vragen of antwoorden in het gesprek verwerkt worden, kunt u dit altijd aangeven. Als u tussendoor vragen of opmerkingen heeft, stel ze gerust! U mag me altijd onderbreken voor vragen, onduidelijkheden of opmerkingen.
- Mag ik uw volledige naam en functie gebruiken in het verwerken van het onderzoek of blijft u liever **anoniem**?
- Dit interview kunt u als een informeel **gesprek** zien en niet als een interview. Ik zal tussendoor een paar keer **checken** of mijn opname nog goed loopt. Daarnaast verwacht ik dat het gesprek ongeveer een uur duurt. Heeft u voorafgaand nog vragen?

Interview guides (Dutch):

Vragenlijst Trainer CAI:

1. Uw huidige functie is trainer en onderzoeker bij CAI, wat houdt deze functie in en hoelang bent u hier werkzaam? (binnen de Nederlandse krijgsmacht) vervolgvragen: waar houdt u zich voornamelijk mee bezig en met wie werkt u veel samen? Hoe ziet uw week eruit, waar bent u vooral te vinden? Welke rol spelen andere eenheden of 1CMICO bij uw functie? Weet u hoeveel soortgelijke functies er zijn binnen de Nederlandse krijgsmacht? Weten collega's binnen defensie wat uw functie inhoudt?

2. Bent u religieus opgevoed? Kunt u iets vertellen uit wat voor familie u komt? En is uw hele familie religieus gezind? Heeft u een studie voor deze functie gevolgd? Zo ja, welke en wat was uw beweegreden om deze studie te volgen? Waarom bent u hierin geïnteresseerd? En hoe bent u bij de rol als trainer van CAI gekomen, de combinatie van defensie (een gewelddadige organisatie) en cultuur?

3. Zoals ik eerder al noemde doe ik onderzoek rondom de kennis van religie en cultuur binnen de Nederlandse krijgsmacht. Ik vroeg me af hoe u religie zou beschrijven/definiëren. En hoe zou u cultuur beschrijven/definiëren?

CAT training inhoudelijk-

4. Wat is het belang de CAT training volgens u? Hoe zou u de les omschrijven voor mensen die hier niets vanaf weten? Op welke manier krijgen militairen les omtrent cultuur, religie en diversiteit in hun opleiding? (initiële fase)

5. Betreft de kennis die u op heeft gedaan binnen uw functie en het opereren binnen Defensie: Hoe komt u aan de informatie die u doorgeeft in de lessen/gesprekken aan collega's waar u mee samenwerkt? Is er een algemene database of een algemeen kenniscentrum waar alle trainers van CAI hun informatie vergaren? Komt u veel samen met andere collega's waarmee u samenwerkt en waar gaan deze ontmoetingen vooral over? Bent u het ook wel eens oneens geweest over bepaalde

onderwerpen? Kunt u een voorbeeld noemen?

6. Cultuurbewustzijn (CAT) lessen worden gegeven aan militairen die op uitzending gaan. Hoe komen jullie aan je informatie die jullie doorspelen? En loopt deze definitie of literatuur gelijk aan alle lessen die aan andere missies lopen? Trainers van CAI gebruiken voornamelijk de definitie van Hofstede van cultuur, waarom is deze gekozen? Kun je hier iets meer over vertellen? En ben je het hiermee eens? Waarom wel, niet?

7. Binnen defensie opereren Geestelijke verzorgers, die ieder een specifieke kennis hebben over een bepaalde religie of stroming. Gebruiken jullie de kennis die zij hebben bij jullie lessen van CAI?

8. Voorheen waren de lessen die gegeven worden een hele dag. Deze zijn verkort naar 2 uur per training. Hoe filteren jullie de belangrijkste informatie door naar de militairen? Denkt u dat een militair voldoende kennis en informatie heeft door deze les voordat zij op uitzending gaan? Waarom wel of niet?

9. Een quote uit de militaire spectator gaat als volgt: 'De huidige cultuurtraining bij de Nederlandse krijgsmacht is onvoldoende in staat om militairen voor te bereiden op 'vreemde culturen'. Ben je het hiermee eens? Waarom wel of niet? Idealiter; hoe zou je dit vormgeven als je alle ruimte had?

10. 'De Nederlandse krijgsmacht houdt vast aan de zogeheten Dutch Approach. Deze term refereert aan een culturele sensitiviteit waarover iedere Nederlander zou beschikken. Hierdoor heeft Defensie sinds de Koude Oorlog weinig geïnvesteerd in cultuurtrainingen.' Heb je hier eerder van gehoord? En heeft dit enige betekenis voor jouw als trainer? Merk je dat in de lessen die je geeft, dat dit in algemene zin waar is? Dutch approach?

11. Tijdens een uitzending komen veel militairen in aanraking met voor hun onbekende religies en culturen, die gebruiken die ze wellicht niet gewend zijn. Deze verschillen kunnen klein zijn maar ook groot. Worden hun ervaringen met deze aanrakingen bespreekbaar gemaakt in de groep tijdens de uitzending? Weet u op welke manier hier aandacht aan wordt gegeven? Is er een verschil van gesprekken/bespreekbaar maken met betrekking tot de rangen van de militair?

12. Bent u op uitzending aanwezig geweest als trainer van CAI? Zo ja, op welke uitzending bent u geweest en wanneer was dit? Kunt u iets over uw rol vertellen van de uitzending? Op welke manier had u contact met collega's? Wat waren uw dagelijkse bezigheden? Is er een gebeurtenis die u het meest is bijgebleven of kunt u een voorbeeld geven?

Na uitzending evaluatie-

13. Op welke manier wordt er geëvalueerd na een uitzending met betrekking tot hoe militairen deze religieuze of culturele verschillen hebben ervaren en wat hun bevindingen waren tijdens de uitzending? Zijn er samenkomstdagen waarbij u als trainer van CAI wordt betrokken? Wat is uw rol hierbij? En wordt dit ook meegenomen in de trainingen die jullie geven (CAT)?

14. Bent u het eens met hoe uw rol binnen Defensie wordt vervuld? Zo nee, hoe zou u dit idealiter willen integreren of veranderen? Zo ja, waarom?

15. Korte introductie: Binnen Defensie wordt er op een bepaalde manier gekeken naar cultuur en religie. Ik heb dit ervaren doordat er bijvoorbeeld een vermindering van uren aan cultuurbewustzijn training wordt gegeven bij de missie-oriëntatie. Hoe ervaart u dat u als trainer van CAI wordt ontvangen en/of behandeld binnen de Nederlandse krijgsmacht?

16. De bevindingen van dit onderzoek ga ik, als er genoeg vraag naar is, samenvatten en uitbrengen in

een kleiner bestand. Zou u het interessant vinden om dit in handen te krijgen? Zijn er vragen rondom dit thema wat u belangrijk vindt en wat ontbreekt aan dit onderzoek, volgens u na dit gesprek? Wat hebben we niet besproken wat wel van belang is?

Korte samenvatting proberen te maken, bedanken voor de tijd en vraag naar adres eventueel voor bedankje toe te sturen. Wilt u de transcripten eerst lezen voordat ik deze verwerk? Als u vragen heeft mag u altijd bellen of mailen.

Vragenlijst Militair met uitzendervaring:

initiële fase –

1. Wat is uw huidige functie, wat houdt deze functie in en hoelang bent u hier werkzaam? (binnen de Nederlandse krijgsmacht) vervolgvragen: waar houdt u zich voornamelijk mee bezig en met wie werkt u veel samen? Hoe ziet uw week eruit, waar bent u vooral te vinden?
2. Op welke en hoeveel uitzendingen bent u geweest en wanneer? Kunt u kort vertellen wat uw ervaringen waren en wat u het meest is bijgebleven? Hoelang bent u weggeweest bij deze uitzendingen?
3. Zoals ik eerder al noemde doe ik onderzoek rondom de kennis van religie en cultuur binnen de Nederlandse krijgsmacht. Hoe zou u religie/cultuur definiëren, als u uw ervaring meeneemt van de uitzendingen waarop u geweest bent?
4. Op welk moment in uw opleiding binnen defensie tot... heeft u voor het eerst training gekregen over cultuur bewustzijn of diversiteit en religieën? Wat vindt u van de aandacht die hieraan besteed wordt? Zou dit meer of minder moeten volgens u? Hoe ziet u de noodzaak ten opzichte van dit bewustzijn?

pre-deployment fase-

5. Voordat u op uitzending ging had u een missie oriëntatie. Hier waren de Cultuurbewustzijn lessen (CAT) een onderdeel van. Hoe zou u deze lessen omschrijven? En waarvoor waren deze wel of niet van belang volgens u? Heeft u hier elementen of kennis uit gehaald die u kon toepassen op uw uitzending? Kunt u voorbeelden noemen?
6. Bent u er van op de hoogte dat tijdens deze lessen u wordt geacht de basiskennis van het culturele erfgoed en de geschiedenis van het missiegebied; – basiskennis van lokale gebruiken, mentaliteit en do's & don'ts; – basiskennis en benodigde vaardigheid om te kunnen communiceren met alle betrokken partijen te leren? Heeft u hier de juiste vaardigheden geleerd, in de lessen? Heeft u genoeg praktijkervaring gekregen in de voorbereiding naar de uitzending?

deployment fase-

8. Tijdens uw uitzending, kwam u toen in contact met andere culturen of religieën? Met betrekking tot de lokale bevolking of leiders, of coalitie partners? Wat was uw beeld van de lokale bevolking of coalitie partners voordat uw op uitzending ging? Kunt u hier iets over vertellen? En was dit beeld na de uitzending veranderd? Heeft de CAT les hier invloed op gehad?
9. Waren er incidenten of gebeurtenissen die u bij zijn gebleven waarbij de culturele of religieuze verschillen groot waren wat een probleem veroorzaakte in uw missie? Hoe ging u hiermee om?
10. Heeft u tijdens de uitzending ook de mogelijkheid gekregen om gecoacht te worden met

betrekking tot hoe om te gaan met bepaalde zaken met betrekking tot culturele en religieuze verschillen? Was er een trainer aanwezig? Zo ja, hoe ging dit? Zo nee, was dit volgens u van belang geweest?

post-deployment fase-

11. Hoe was het evaluatieproces met betrekking tot een cultuurshock, culturele of religieuze verschillen etc.? Hoe was het adaptatiegesprek na de uitzending? Heeft u gesprekken gehad met geestelijk verzorgers of trainers? Op welke manier heeft u dit wel of niet geholpen? Was er een vragenlijst met betrekking tot interculturele ervaringen gegeven?

12. Hoe zou u uw eigen culturele en religieuze competenties omschrijven? Waarom?

13. Hoe zou u idealiter uw voorbereiding, in eerder stadium eventueel van uw carrière, zien ten opzichte van cultureel en religieus bewustzijn? Wat zijn elementen waar u meer van had willen weten tijdens uw uitzending naar...? Waarom was dit van belang? Kreeg u de mogelijkheid dit aan te geven bij iemand hogerop?

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Vragenlijst Geestelijk Verzorger:

Vragenlijst

1. Uw huidige functie is krijgsmacht imam, wat houdt deze functie in en hoelang bent u hier werkzaam? (binnen de Nederlandse krijgsmacht) vervolgvragen: waar houdt u zich voornamelijk mee bezig en met wie werkt u veel samen? Hoe ziet uw week eruit, waar bent u vooral te vinden? Welke rol speelt het contactorgaan Moslims en Overheid voor uw functie? Weet u hoeveel soortgelijke functies er zijn binnen de Nederlandse krijgsmacht? Weten collega's binnen defensie wat uw functie inhoudt?

2. Bent u religieus opgevoed? Kunt u iets vertellen uit wat voor familie u komt? En is uw hele familie religieus gezind? Heeft u een studie voor deze functie gevolgd? Zo ja, welke en wat was uw beweegreden om deze studie te volgen? Waarom bent u hierin geïnteresseerd? En hoe bent u bij de rol als krijgsmacht imam gekomen, de combinatie van defensie (een gewelddadige organisatie) en religie?

3. Zoals ik eerder al noemde doe ik onderzoek rondom de kennis van religie en cultuur binnen de Nederlandse krijgsmacht. Ik vroeg me af hoe u religie zou beschrijven/definiëren? (eventueel) En hoe zou u cultuur beschrijven/definiëren?

4. Betreft de kennis die u op heeft gedaan binnen uw functie en het opereren binnen Defensie: Hoe komt u aan de informatie die u doorgeeft in de lessen/gesprekken aan collega's waar u mee samenwerkt? Is er een algemene database of een algemeen kenniscentrum waar alle GV'ers hun informatie vergaren? Komt u veel samen met andere collega's waarmee u samenwerkt en waar gaan deze ontmoetingen vooral over? Bent u het ook wel eens oneens geweest over bepaalde onderwerpen? Kunt u een voorbeeld noemen?

5. Bent u op uitzending aanwezig geweest als geestelijk verzorger? Zo ja, op welke uitzending

bent u geweest en wanneer was dit? Kunt u iets over uw rol vertellen van de uitzending? Op welke manier had u contact met collega's? Wat waren uw dagelijkse bezigheden? Is er een gebeurtenis die u het meest is bijgebleven of kunt u een voorbeeld geven?

6. Waren er momenten dat alle collega's/militairen tezamen kwamen tijdens deze uitzending(en) om met u een gesprek te voeren? Of was dit voornamelijk op individuele basis? Over welke onderwerpen gingen deze gesprekken voornamelijk? Waren er terugkomende onderwerpen? Kunt u een voorbeeld geven van waar zo'n gesprek over ging en hoe het contact was tussen u en de collega's die op uitzending waren? Zag u dat er behoefte was aan gesprekken die betrekking hadden op religieuze of zingevende doeleinden? Waren er moeilijkheden of problemen tijdens deze uitzending met betrekking tot religieuze verschillen met andere partijen of de landen waarin geopereerd werd?

! 7. Bent u op de hoogte van de Cultuur Bewustzijn (CAT) lessen die worden gegeven ter voorbereiding van een missie aan militairen? Heeft u weleens contact gehad met trainers van CAI betreft de definitie van religie in de lessen die worden gegeven? Hoeveel kennis denkt u dat trainers hebben betreft religie? Denkt u dat deze training voornamelijk seculier wordt gehouden, of dat deze dan te veel uit religieus perspectief wordt gegeven? Zou dit volgens u voordeel kunnen hebben om de kennis over te dragen?

8. Bent u zelf ook onderdeel van de missie-oriëntatie? Zo ja, hoe heet deze les? Op welke manier ziet u dat de lessen die u geeft worden ontvangen door militairen? Op welke manier heeft deze les invloed op militairen? Wat is het doel van deze lessen? Heeft het een bijdrage aan de complete uitzending? Denkt u dat deze lessen voldoende zijn voor een militair in hun complete loopbaan? Op welke manier zou dit anders kunnen (verbetering)? Tijdens de opleiding meer aandacht aan besteden?

9. Tijdens een uitzending komen veel militairen in aanraking met voor hun onbekende religies en culturen, die gebruiken die ze wellicht niet gewend zijn. Deze verschillen kunnen klein zijn maar ook groot. Worden hun ervaringen met deze aanrakingen bespreekbaar gemaakt in de groep tijdens de uitzending? Weet u op welke manier hier aandacht aan wordt gegeven? Is er een verschil van gesprekken/bespreekbaar maken met betrekking tot de rangen van de militair?

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