



Revolution in educational affairs at the Finnish National Defence University?

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Abstract

In this paper the formative intervention conducted since 2000 at the Finnish National Defence University (FNDU) will be reflected on. In other words, this period covers the FNDU's application of the principles crystallised in the European Bologna Process. Consequently, in the triple-hermeneutic inquiry process, prevalent basic cultural assumptions, paradoxes and problems were identified, but even more interestingly, for the aims of the paper, a few key educational questions were put forward for the future. Every soldier is expected to be a leader and a manager of violence, as well as being a teacher and an educator. It follows that every teacher and manager at the FNDU has dealt with key educational questions. Such educational questions resemble sticking points for the actors involved in continuously reproducing and potentially revolutionising the social systems, for example of the FNDU, in the continuity of praxis.

Keywords: intervention, military education, revolution in military affairs

Introduction

While since at least 1990s the western Armed Forces have been debating the technologically-oriented revolution, namely on the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA), the Finnish Defence Forces (FDF) has aimed since the beginning of the 21st century to make progress towards a more human centric Revolution in Educational Affairs (REA). It will be claimed that if the REA is to take place, many, if not all, actors involved in military educational activities have to successfully deal with the fundamental, instead of some kind of secondary, questions presented in the paper. It will be emphasised that both the agentive actions of bridge building between the networked activities and the aligned global actions within the educational activities are needed in order to move the direction of the culturally evolving educational practices towards a new kind of visionary direction.

The FNDU educates and trains officers for both the FDF and for the Finnish Border Guard (FBG) based on a tradition several centuries long. The Finnish National Defence College was founded in January 1993 when the traditional Military Academy, the Combat School, and the War College were administratively joined together to form the FNDC. In 1998 the first two professors were appointed to the FNDC and in 2003 the first doctor of military sciences graduated from the FNDC. On January 1st, 2007, the FNDC was renamed in English as the Finnish National Defence University (FNDU) and since 2009 the FNDU has also educated civilians at all of its educational levels.

In the meantime, the so called Bologna Process has been going on in Europe (Benelux Bologna Secretariat, 2009; Mäkinen, 2005; 2010a). The Bologna Process is named after the joint Bologna Declaration, which was signed in the Italian city of Bologna in 1999 by ministers of education of 29 European countries. In the Declaration the main objectives were set for the process of establishing and promoting the European Higher Education Area (European Ministers of Education, 1999).

In 2001 the basic education and training for warrant officers was discontinued in Finland and a two-tier degree structure¹ was adopted for the officer education programme in the FDF (Government of Finland, 2008). In 2004, the new Decree on University Degrees was issued (Government of Finland, 2004), and it set the general aims for the Bachelor and Master level degrees, to be applied at the FNDC/FNDU as well. The new two-cycle degree system was adopted by Finnish civilian universities in 2005, and a year later, in 2006, it was adopted by the FNDC. In the process, the length of the lower academic degree was to

¹ The officer's lower academic degree was equivalent to 120 credit units (i.e. study weeks) and lasted about three years, and the officer's higher academic degree was equivalent to 160 credit units, lasting about four years. The students have to choose whether their area of expertise is the art of war (containing its own basic fields of operational art and tactics, strategy, and military history), military pedagogy, leadership, or military technology. Additionally, it has been decreed that each student has to choose the art of war either as his/her major or minor academic subject. After completing their BMSc studies, the students are allowed to change their major and minor subjects, and consequently, in some academic subjects, additional studies are needed before the beginning of the MMSc studies.

remain the same at the FNDC, but the length of the higher academic degree was shortened to two years for most students.²

When I thematically interviewed almost all the senior officers and professors of the FNDC in 2005 (Mäkinen, 2006a), the data revealed the cultural fact that the importance of the comparability principle had been increased, through the Bologna Process, at the FNDC. In this case, the comparability principle meant that the degrees at the FNDC should be comparable with, and on the same academic level as, their civilian counterparts. Through the Bologna Process it has been emphasised how strategically important it is that all education is based on research or artistic activity and professional practices (Government of Finland, 2004, section 7; cf. National Defence University of Finland, 2006³).

Paradoxically, the FNDU is both a university-scientific and a military organisation, the paradox is abbreviated as USMO (Mäkinen 2006a). These two different aspects of our social reality also have different kinds of premises, values and logics, which are not necessarily easily combined together in a balanced way. In other words, these kinds of paradoxical questions are also sticking points in the sense proposed by Ian Hacking (1999, 68), meaning that the sticking points emphasise philosophical barriers, real issues which clear or honourable thinkers – on both sides of the researcher-practitioner divide – may eternally disagree upon. The main point is not that they do disagree but that the focal point of their dispute is everlastingly paradoxical.

The above-mentioned sets the background for expressing the key educational questions for the 21st century (see Mäkinen 2006a; Engeström 2001). Who are the subjects of military education and training? What should the subjects of military education and training be learning? How then do they learn and what are the key actions and processes of learning? Why do the subjects of learning learn or are they learning?

Who are the subjects of military education and training?

According to the Cartesian tradition, firstly we think and we are/act only after thinking (see Mäkinen 2006a). In contrast, when following widely shared anti-Cartesian interpretations, we more or less tend to be in the first place, existing as bodily creatures, having the potential to act and do – and often not just individually, but always also by taking part in collective activities (see Engeström 1987; Mäkinen 2006a).

² The students studying in a parallel manner to be pilots either for the Air Force or the Army are exceptions, as their studies last six years and begin immediately after they have completed their BMSc studies. Others will work for about three to four years before starting studies on an MMSc course.

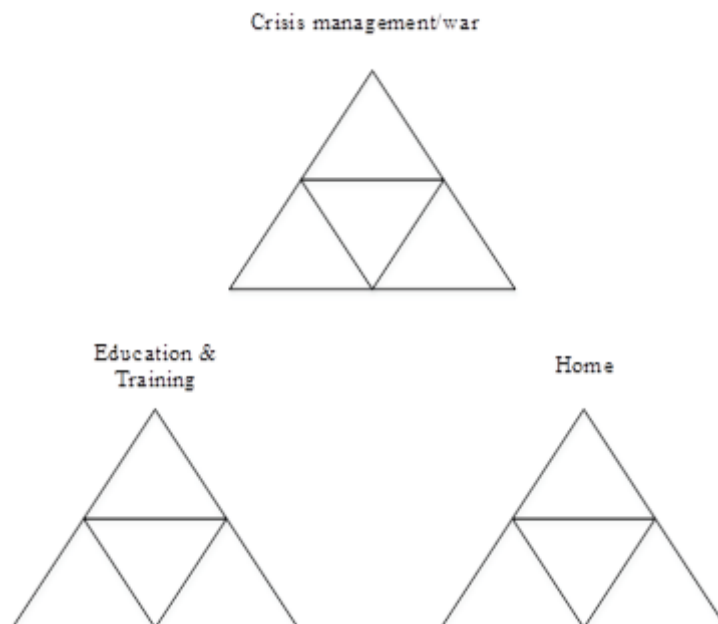
³ The latest strategy of the FNDU (2012) claims that all education is based on application of the principles of progressive inquiry learning (see e.g. Hakkarainen, Palonen, Paavola & Lehtinen (2004)). And progressive inquiry learning is based on on-going research, meaning that the new expression both emphasises the pivotalness of the progressive inquiry learning and the research based education and training.

In our globalising knowledge societies, many of us have read about the famous claim of Michael Polanyi (1966) as to how we can know more than we can tell. He has claimed, obviously in an anti-Cartesian spirit, that a human being's highest creative powers have bodily roots. We military pedagogists have continued the discussion by claiming that the human being's highest creative powers are rooted in action competence (see e.g. Mäkinen 2011).

Action competence has traditionally been a philosophically-oriented social construction used mainly in the military educational context (Toiskallio 2003; 2008; 2009; Toiskallio & Mäkinen 2009), especially in Northern Europe (Finnish Government 2008; Defence Command 2007; Jensen & Schnack 1997: 2006). Action competence is a holistic construct referring to an understanding of human competences in terms of an integrated whole of physical, psychical, social, and ethical spheres. In other words, action competence is a system that cannot be reduced to its component parts, meaning, for example, that we cannot understand someone's action competence if we only look at his/her different modes of reactive behaviour.

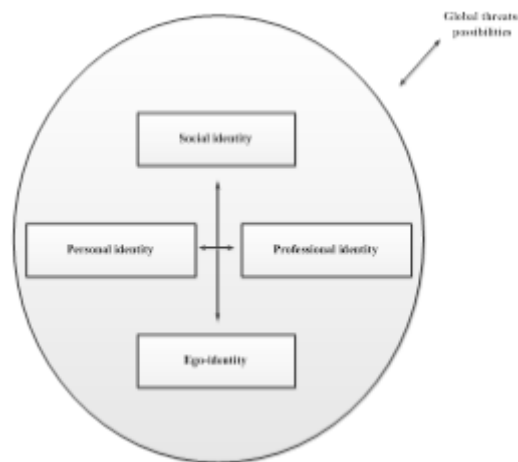
However, in the Armed Forces we also have to understand the networked activities (see Engeström 1987; Mäkinen 2006a; 2007) of potentially action-competent soldiers (see Mäkitalo 2001). Figure 1 illustrates the networked nature of the soldiers' activities.

Figure 1. Soldiers' spheres of life



Hence, it follows that the identity of the soldier should be an integrated construction. For these kinds of demands I have developed a neo-Eriksonian identity process model (Mäkinen in print; Mäkinen 2015) as illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Neo-Eriksonian multidimensional process model



For the soldiers the model claims that s/he is always a 'human-citizen-soldier'. The citizenship of the soldier is pivotal to him/her due to the fact that the interpretation allows, and actually requires, that they take an active stance in the debate on the civil rights and duties of soldiers, not least due to his/her role as a teacher, and an educator, and consequently one of the strategic communicators of the Armed Forces.

The humanness of the soldier means, for example, that h/she is a glocal actor linked to emerging 'global' threats such as climate change and ecocatastrophe (see Mäkinen 2010b; Vetlesen 2005). For soldiers of the 21st century this fact means that self-interests and the outcomes of the activities should ultimately be balanced on a global level (Mäkinen 2010b; Donaldson & Dunfee 1994; 1999). Wenger (1998, 151) explains how identity is a way of being in the world, and who we are lies in the way we live from day to day – not just in what we think or say about ourselves. Wenger emphasises – and in my view does so justifiably – that identity, in practice, always represents an interplay between the local and the global. Hence it follows that the soldier is a glocal actor⁴.

Additionally, according to Wenger (1998, 263) education, in its deepest sense and at whatever age it takes place, concerns the further emergence of identities – exploring new ways of being that lie beyond our current state. Thus, education is not merely formative: it is transformative. It follows that education – military education included – is a transformative process, where both the structures and identities will be potentially transformed in a glocal context and within the epistemic infrastructure (Mäkinen 2006a; 2006b; 2007) in question.

In addition to this, in an organisation as hierarchical and centrally led as the FDF is usually believed to be, it will take some time to convince the officers that a reasonable alternative to make sense of the military organisations of the 21st century exists – the network-centric perspective (Lawson 2014; Cares 2005). The transition towards the network-

⁴ See the security strategy for the society of Finland (2010, 13) for an illustrative framework of glocal educational considerations.

centric perspective is on its way to becoming a dominant cultural premise in civilian spheres of life to, although a strong belief in technological determinism tends to reduce the role of human agents to the same level as that of the other actants (i.e. the stance of actor-network theory (ANT); Latour 1991; Miettinen, 1999).

Instead of assuming soldiers act as information processors enmeshed in a cybernetic web (see Coker 2007, 17) without any sense of human agency, the human dimension of the network centric perspective need to be figured out (see e.g. Warne, Ali, Bopping, Hart & Pascoe 2004), for the peace-time purposes of the FDF as well⁵.

As explained in Mäkinen (2006b), in the field of organisational learning and knowledge management studies, the 'western' approach (see Nisbett 2003) is also the dominant approach for making sense of organisational epistemic infrastructures. Despite of the present dominance of the 'western' approach, an alternative angle exists, namely the 'eastern' angle (e.g. Sahtouris 2000; Allee 2003), or the network-centric perspective.

Furthermore, in the case of the FNDU the commander-centricity was, and still is due to the USMO paradox, the dominant norm, but the majority of the teachers were not aware of the fact that the managers of the FNDU claimed that the teachers play a decisive role in the success or failure of the FNDU. The role assumed for the students will be discussed later in this paper but prior that I will take a closer look at the core content of the military education and training.

What should the subjects of military education and training be learning?

In a way the personnel of the FNDU and the FDF are in a continuous process of becoming involved in the process of mastering their lives and their personal leadership in times when every soldier is a leader (Brownlee & Schoemaker 2004; Nissinen 2001); if not of others then at least of themselves, for example by the means of Deep Leadership. In 21st century Armed Forces every soldier is a leader (i.e. 'a strategic corporal') and this means that s/he is able to 'see the forest instead of mere trees⁶, but what is soldier's line of business?

According to the so-called Huntingtonian thesis (1957, 11) the central skill of officers is the management of violence. On the other hand, Huntington emphasised that a peculiar

⁵ Metaphorically speaking the mindset of the soldiers of the FDF should be shifting from the 'chain' towards the 'network' (see Personnel strategy of the FDF, 2015). According to the Competence development strategy of the FDF (2004, 4) 'it is essential that a chain from strategic planning to personnel competence is formed and secured as a functional whole.'

⁶ S/he should be able to make sense of the networked activities when the unit of analysis is an activity system (Engeström 1987; Mäkinen 2006).

skill⁷ of the officer is the management of violence, not the act of violence itself (Huntington 1957, 13). However, since the end of the Cold War the jurisdictional claims of the military in general have expanded. This expansion means that the officers have to be aware of both the themes of management of defence and management of peace⁸ (see Burk 2005; see also Toiskallio 2007, 9; Anttila 2012).

It should be noted that at least since 1995 an aligned argumentation through the years has been noted in Finnish officers' value assessment reports (Ojala 1995; Limnell 2004; Heinänen 2008) in the following manner:

*The Defence Forces fulfils the duties given by society as based fundamentally on the security needs of individual citizens and the communities formed by them.*⁹

As I have already mentioned in figure 1, an illustrated networked nature of the soldiers' activities exists. Previously, in the times of the Bologna Process, the BMSc students (i.e. the cadets) had to choose the art of war as their major or minor academic subject. But how able were they of acting as leaders, managers and instructor-educators both for the conscripts, their peers and to the non-commissioned officers in their networks? How able were they of taking part to crisis management missions or peace-building? Where they able to keep themselves as an integrated whole while moving between different kinds of activities during their careers and lives? In autumn 2015 the BMSc studies at the FNDU have a 'neo-Bolognian structure'¹⁰ and in my opinion these illustrated frameworks and key educational questions, as well as the ensuing answers for these, are even more timely both for the teachers and the students at the FNDU.

For the present and future needs of the branches of the FDF the students have to learn a specific know-how type of knowledge (Ryle 1949). Additionally, they have to learn how to instruct the conscripts and the reservists in several kind of skills and competencies based on their own positive example as a leader, instructor and educator. Additionally, they have to be trained to make sense of and even develop societal security activities and

⁷ Huntington also (1957, 11) emphasised other duties of the officers such as the organising, equipping, and training of the military forces, the planning of their activities, and the direction of their operation in and out of combat.

⁸ The Burkian thesis is also a fruitful one for societal purposes, being intended to divide societal labour between several security and safety oriented professions also active in Finland.

⁹ Hawkins (2001) has named unity, endurance, obedience, hierarchy, and readiness for violence as the main warrior premises. For the military educators it is essential to trigger identity explorations amongst their students that potentially transform their identities from monodimensionality (I am a warrior) towards multidimensionality (i.e. a warrior understands that s/he is also something else).

¹⁰ There will be four study programmes available for the BMSc students at the FNDU. One for each of the services and a programme for future fighter pilots. How firmly based on research these new kinds of 'service oriented' study programmes are is a pivotal question for the future.

the activities of international comprehensive crisis management and peace-building, with the other professions and actors involved.

For the educators it will be a challenge not to lump higher-order concepts, such as (practical) wisdom into knowledge (Davenport & Prusak 1998, 2; Allee 1997, 16) or mix data or information with knowledge or knowing. When we entered the era of Knowledge Societies we could have recognised the claim that instead, the ultimate aim of our knowledge creation is the 'generative dance' (Cook & Brown 1999; Mäkinen 2006a) of bridging four distinct and coequal forms of knowledge¹¹.

Elsewhere I have claimed (Mäkinen 2006a) what I believe the metaphorical 'generative dance' means for our soldiers in practical terms:

- intuiting, anticipating, perceiving; putting doubt into productive use
- appropriating and cross-appropriating globally conceptual tools too
- socialisation of novices into practices by the experts of the community, and not necessarily only by 'old-timers' or 'experienced nonexperts'
- articulating, writing, drawing (i.e. externalising) and openly communicating about what they have experienced while taking part in the various activities
- memorising and sense-making
- systematising, integrating, routinising (i.e. institutionalising) but often also destabilising what it means to be a teacher at the FNDU
- learning, understanding and developing action competence.

How do they learn and what are the key actions and processes of learning?

As I have emphasised the studying soldier is also a glocal actor, meaning that while studying s/he deal with the ill-defined problems appearing them in a more defined form with the knowledge gained while socially navigating (Munro, Höök & Benyon 1999) and following cognitive trails (Cussins 1992; Bransford et al. 2000, 138) while learning. It naturally follows that both the activities of learning and research are glocal activities in nature, at least in the 21st century.

Previous generations have not solved our problems and we cannot solve our students' problems on their behalf. Human civilisation has come to what it is mostly through its capability to socialise (i.e. teach and educate) the younger generations, in a systematic manner, that which is already known. When the complexity of our social reality keeps increasing, we have to concentrate on problem-solving capabilities and ways to create new and creative solutions to our problems, in our military organisations too. Hence, in the future we need progressively inquiring students and officers (Dewey 1916: 1997; Hakkarainen, Lonka & Lipponen 2004; Mäkinen 2006a). While studying and

¹¹ The forms are individual-tacit (i.e. skills), individual-explicit (i.e. concepts, rules), group-tacit (i.e. genres) and group-explicit (i.e. stories, metaphors).

progressively inquiring the students also act as bridge builders between the activities, instead of being mere boundary crossers in a Wengerian sense (Mäkinen 2007). Additionally, they can both individually and collectively learn how to integrate their identities to form a multidimensional and coherent whole (Mäkinen in print; Mäkinen 2015).

Why do the subjects of learning learn or are they learning?

It has been famously emphasised that historically accumulated contradictions are intrinsic to human activity and also to schooling (Engeström 1987; Cuban 1999), but what kind of a role do they play for the educational institution? According to the researchers of cultural-historical activity theory, the contradictions are seen as forces driving development, learning and change (Kerosuo 2006, 86; Teräs 2007, 40; Engeström 2008, 106). In other words, it is emphasised how activity systems produce events and actions (Engeström 2008, 26), or how in the midst of emerging disturbances the activity system responded (ibid, 43).

Interestingly, many sociologists associate contradiction with the unintended consequences of action¹². According to Giddens (1984, 311), contradictory consequences ensue when every individual in an aggregate of individuals acts in a way which, while producing the intended effect if done in isolation, creates a perverse effect if done by everyone (Giddens 1984, 311). For example, in this paper I have emphasised the pivotalness of progressive inquiries. At the FNDU too there is a strategic emphasis on progressive inquiries, but if then most of the teachers, regardless the dominant knowledge type of the course in question, arrange only progressive inquiries with the students, then the fact is that a lot of perverse effects will result.

According to Cuban (1999), university colleges have been places where contradictions have produced an enduring stability in beliefs, structures, and cultures. On the other hand, Engeström (1987) has argued that new qualitative stages and forms of activity emerge as solutions to the contradictions of the preceding stage. However, how then do we explain the immanent stability of the FNDU, or educational institutions in general, which are all facing several contradictions on a daily basis? Why have new qualitative stages and forms of activity not emerged at the FNDU as solutions to the contradictions? Could this state of affairs be explained by the lack of deliberate efforts of teachers or researchers? In my opinion, the answer to the last question is after all at least partly an affirmative one.

However, are we really doomed to be, instead of masters, some kind of marionettes of our lives? In my opinion, the Vygotskian man seems to be more a master than a marionette (Mäkinen 2006a). Often the criticism levelled against the CHAT states that although it is masterful in the social domain, it does not do well at the level of the individual

¹² The unintended refers to a phenomenon that is partly but not fully anticipated in advance.

agents/subjects (Minnis & John-Steiner 2001, 309; Hakkarainen, Palonen, Paavola & Lehtinen 2004, 151–153), persons or selves.

How then can contradictions within and between the two activity systems explain the state of stagnation (Engeström 2008, 47)? In order to make sense of real life stagnations we have to shift our attention towards the emerging interpretations of contradictions. Metaphorically speaking, contradictions can be said to be like 'logs jams in the river', having an enormous amount of potential energy to be released but currently in a state of needing to be 'touched' by 'something' or 'someone'. In this case the agentic action will be carried out, for example, by 'a man with a pike pole'. For contradictions to become effective as a source of development, specific agentic actions are also needed (Engeström 2006, 29). Furthermore, the possibility of these kinds of actions increases if the actor defines her/himself as a creative initiator and not only for the Armed Forces but our societies in general.

Discussion

Through the formative intervention process, many of the actors at the FNDU were introduced to key educational questions. In the future we will see how they will answer these questions in a glocalised manner and in practice (see Mäkinen 2008; FNDU 2013; FDF 2015).

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