

# **Abstract: Values and the military - values in the military**

## **The subject matter of values in the context of the individual, society and armed forces**

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If values and attitudes towards values really form the foundation of the philosophy of a person, if they are important for his or her thinking and action and, as a power of creating sense, have an effect on his or her social and political environment, the matter of the genesis of values, of their origin, of their possible change, is not only the most fascinating one within the fabric of axiology, but also the one which has to be dealt with with priority. Particularly when looking at man as „zoon politikon“ with regard to his embedding in human communities and social as well as professional networks and associations, the matter of values seems to be of more importance than is generally assumed. This is even more the case if in the complex of values the decisive element for the unity of a human collective, of a social system, no matter of which kind or scale, is identified, and if the value, the awareness of values, the attitude towards values, are considered the most important category of mediation between acting man and his social and professional environment. Soldiers and officers have always been confronted with the challenge of the permanent necessity of assessing and considering values. Especially in the relationship between the military and the civilian society, however, there still are discrepancies in interpretations and systems of values. This potential gulf between a pluralistic society and a hierarchically structured armed force cannot and must not be dissolved, as long as the political and social will prevails to leave the military organisation its vested functionality and organisation culture to the necessary extent for an effective accomplishment of tasks. On the one hand one has to live with this discord of values, but on the other hand it is still possible and desirable to bridge it with rational methods, for instance by giving the military organisation and its members cognitively the appreciation they are denied by the emotionally and irrationally tinged interpretation of values. In the course of media and public relations, the efforts of military-civilian discourse ought to concentrate on this mental bridging. Nevertheless, for social integration a minimum of organizational unity is as much a prerequisite as a real consensus concerning the main values of a human sphere of association and its latent and effective functionality. Although the pluralism of values, which seems to penetrate the military as well, interferes with maintaining a clear inner-military hierarchy of values, it is still necessary to establish a distinct soldierly and military identity, which naturally depends on particularly prevailing environmental conditions, and which must be considered the main parameter for a constructive discourse with society and the integration of the military into the social cosmos of values.

