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**Hari Krishnan**

Research Scholar, Sunrise  
University, Alwar, Rajasthan,  
India

**Dr. Diksha Vishavakarma**

Professor, Sunrise University,  
Alwar, Rajasthan, India

## Leadership ethics and Accountability

**Hari Krishnan and Dr. Diksha Vishavakarma**

### Abstract

Post-WWII Germany had to confront the legacy of authoritarianism and militarism, leading to a renewed focus on leadership character, integrity, and responsibility. This emphasis on ethical leadership and accountability can serve as a guiding framework for post-conflict or post-standoff societies seeking to cultivate a culture of respect for human rights, adherence to the rule of law, and transparency within their military establishments. By integrating lessons from Germany's experience, such societies can develop mechanisms for civilian oversight, professional military education, and training programs that prioritize ethical decision-making, respect for diversity, and adherence to international humanitarian law, thus fostering long-term stability and security.

**Keywords:** Leadership, military, ethical, decision, humanitarian, security

### Introduction

Military success or failure has often been tied to the quality of its leadership, according to historians. Despite political scientists devoting decades to investigating potential drivers of military success including technology, regime type, strategy, and military-industrial power, military leadership has been largely disregarded.

This essay provides the first comprehensive social science analysis of what makes for effective military leadership. It poses a trifecta of inquiries: Do armed forces get rid of mediocre leaders? What factors can make it difficult for a military to remove ineffective commanders from their posts? Does military efficiency increase when underperforming commanders are removed? The paper suggests that armies should replace underperforming commanders to boost overall performance. It also analyzes the possibility that badly performing commanders are not removed because of interpersonal networks among generals or coup-proofing incentives that favor political allegiance above competence. This work complements existing IR literature that focuses on political leaders by examining military commanders at the individual level.

We put our theories on military leadership to the test by analyzing the actions of the American and German armies throughout WWII. Both of the datasets we utilize are brand new. The first is a registry of 320 division-level American and German generals who served in North Africa, Italy, or Western Europe between 1941 and 1945 who commanded infantry, airborne, or armored forces. The second collection of data consists of monthly reports on the fighting prowess of American and German divisions across all three fronts. We examine whether the American and German governments were more inclined to replace underperforming divisional generals, and if the performance of the division improved after the general was removed. We also put to the test two theoretical arguments against the idea that ineffective generals are removed from their posts: the first holds that interpersonal networks prevent the removal of ineffective generals, while the second argues that in civilian dictatorships like Nazi Germany, generals are unlikely to be removed even after having performed poorly in combat because they are promoted for their political loyalty to the dictator. Our analysis of more granular microdata from a single fight follows the trend of other conflict researchers, particularly scholars of intrastate conflict, who have focused on a single war. Data quality and internal validity are enhanced when microdata is used.

The findings we've made are eye-opening. Replacing ineffective generals with more capable ones greatly increased military efficiency in both the German and the American forces. The fact that the German army under civilian dictator Adolf Hitler tended to replace lowperforming generals disproves the coup-proofing assumption that tyrants always prioritize political fealty over competence. The discovery that powerful social circles did not reduce the likelihood of replacement for American generals disproves the hypothesis that such networks would exaggerate the connection between leadership performance and dismissal.

**Corresponding Author:**

**Hari Krishnan**

Research Scholar, Sunrise  
University, Alwar, Rajasthan,  
India

## Literature review

Takala, Tuomo & Auvinen, Tommi. (2016) <sup>[1]</sup>. Abstract Here, we use a narrative-based and manipulative approach to constructing leadership impact. To demonstrate the enormous and possibly catastrophic power of storytelling, we utilize Adolf Hitler's career as a case study. With an eye toward deciphering such a leader's narrative, Hitler is used as a case study to demonstrate the importance of storytelling in establishing lasting leadership influence. Our empirical research combined conceptual and narrative methods. Polkinghorne's definition of narrative inquiry serves as the basis for our narrative analysis. However, the relationship between storytelling and destructive leadership has received less attention in recent studies of management. The example allowed us to provide a detailed account of the growth of destructive leadership. Leaders everywhere may find help and encouragement in their quests to lead more effectively and to oppose harmful leadership.

Iso-Markku, Tuomas & Müller-Brandeck-Bocquet, Gisela. (2019) <sup>[2]</sup>. Germany has been viewed as the EU's most prominent member state in the wake of the Eurozone crisis. Even in security and defense, where Germany's capabilities and willingness to give leadership have historically been relatively constrained, the country is now expected to provide more. Germany's involvement in this area of policy is changing at the moment. Since 2014, Germany has shown its willingness to take on a more active role in foreign and security affairs. In light of these considerations, this article evaluates Germany's role as a leader in the Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) of the European Union. Since shared leadership within the EU is emphasized throughout the piece, the focus is on Germany's potential to play the role of a "co-leader" with France. The 'Europeanization' of this shared leadership has allowed the CSDP to make great progress. The congruence of French and German strategic viewpoints is key to determining how long this leadership will last.

Kuronen, Tuomas & Huhtinen, Aki-Mauri. (2015) <sup>[3]</sup>. We analyze the struggle for power between individual commanders and larger institutions in modern Western militaries. We zero down on two (out of five) of NATO's merit measures, the Measure of Performance (MOP) and the Measure of Effectiveness (MOE), to see how this conflict is played out at the tactical level. We argue that in today's ever-evolving battle scene, rigid leadership structures are no longer sufficient; instead, commanders must adopt a more flexible, realistic, and sometimes even defiant stance toward the military establishment.

Zolotarev, V. & Trunov, F. (2017) <sup>[4]</sup>. In this paper, the writers answer V.A. Nekhamkin's demand to address the historical "what if?" of Leningrad's capitulation during the Great Patriotic War. The authors use the logic of alternate histories to first consider what the Nazi military and political leadership would have done in a scenario analogous to the siege of Leningrad, and then what the military fallout of that failure may have been. Military experts and humanitarians agree that the Soviet command's decisions to use deadly force to protect Leningrad were justified, and that no other option was available.

Daria Sito-Sucic and Alistair Bell (2021) <sup>[5]</sup> Bosnian Serb leader Milorad Dodik made the announcement on 14 October 2021, saying that the Serb Republic's leadership would soon take steps to withdraw from Bosnia's military forces, top court body, and tax administration. In fact, Republika Srpska had been proposing referendums

between 2008 and 2011, but the EU had been blocking them. Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina was established in 1992, but a Peace Implementation Council (and European Union Force troops) are still needed today, 26 years later. Rebuilding the Bosnian military after the war had plainly been subpar.

## Research methodology

Compared to an empirical examination of several wars, focusing on a single war's leadership and fighting dynamics has evident advantages. There are enough observations for a statistically significant sample size, but the sample is still small enough that contextual factors and finer-grained, higher-quality data may be collected. The concept of victory in warfare may vary greatly throughout conflicts, from eliminating the enemy to seizing land to gaining control of the populace, making context extremely important when evaluating military performance. Combat success in these World War II battles is often measured in terms of territory captured, as the Allied troops fought to expand their control over the landscape as they advanced toward their ultimate goal of liberating Berlin. To counteract the Allies' progress, German soldiers were also vying for control of land.

The general loses command of the division when the "failure" happens. When a division's commander is transferred to a less prominent combat command, removed from leadership, or given command of a military school, it is considered a demotion, this is considered a command downgrade. We do not consider the following two occurrences to be demotions in command. To begin, a general's promotion to a corps or army's general staff is not a demotion. When an officer rises through the ranks, he or she may be groomed for a more senior position by being transferred to the staff of a bigger unit. When a permanent division commander is appointed, we do not record the general's prior rank as a demotion since it is expected that he would return to a lower-ranking position as part of the appointment. We use competing risks models to analyze the likelihood of both downgrade and uplift independently. Since these models allow for modeling many ways in which command tenures terminate, they are significant; in particular, they provide a technique to circumvent our inability to see the end of a command tenure owing to our being stationed on the Eastern Front or due to the end of the war. (by "right-censoring").

## Innere fuehrung – a superior concept of leadership

In the societal and military shifts of the twenty-first century, the Bundeswehr's guiding leadership philosophy, innere Führung, confronts a problem of practical execution. Key facets of the German military, politics, and society seem to benefit from improved civil-military ties, especially after the end of conscription in 2011. Despite pervasive skepticism from civilians and those in the military who wish to embrace a simple worship of the warrior, the paradigm of the citizen in uniform must be further developed, maintained, and transferred to ensure that core ideals of citizenship and soldiering are preserved and transmitted.

To introduce such a weighty subject, it would be helpful to first specify what Innere Fuehrung is not. To serve or defend any system, ruler, or ideology with unquestioning allegiance despite one's best understanding is contrary to the spirit of Innere Fuehrung, which the soldier in a democracy, the citizen in uniform, must uphold. After seeing the political abuse by and of soldiers under National Socialism, the

founding fathers of the Bundeswehr proposed Innere Fuehrung as a way to reconcile pluralism and liberal democracy with soldierly honor and service. Innere Fuehrung was also considered as a way to reformulate military professionalism in a democracy, something that had never been accomplished before in Germany. Despite its shaky beginnings in the 1950s and 1960s, this idea—sometimes called a leadership philosophy—emerged as a notable success story. Innere Fuehrung has inspired generations of German troops to serve their country with honor and pride. Innere Fuehrung provided members with a shared feeling of purpose and belonging throughout the

darkest days of the cold war. Additionally, it provided the Bundeswehr soldier with the tools he needed to combat anti-democratic thought. The relevant central field manual ZDv 10/1 identifies Innere Fuehrung as an element of what is called a "guiding philosophy," a term used by those who disagree with the term. Innere Fuehrung might be defined as the idea that empowers and integrates the German citizen soldier by making him or her a unified and convinced defender of the principles and standards enshrined in the German Basic Law. However, as shown in Figure 4.4, there are a few crucial elements that should not be overlooked.

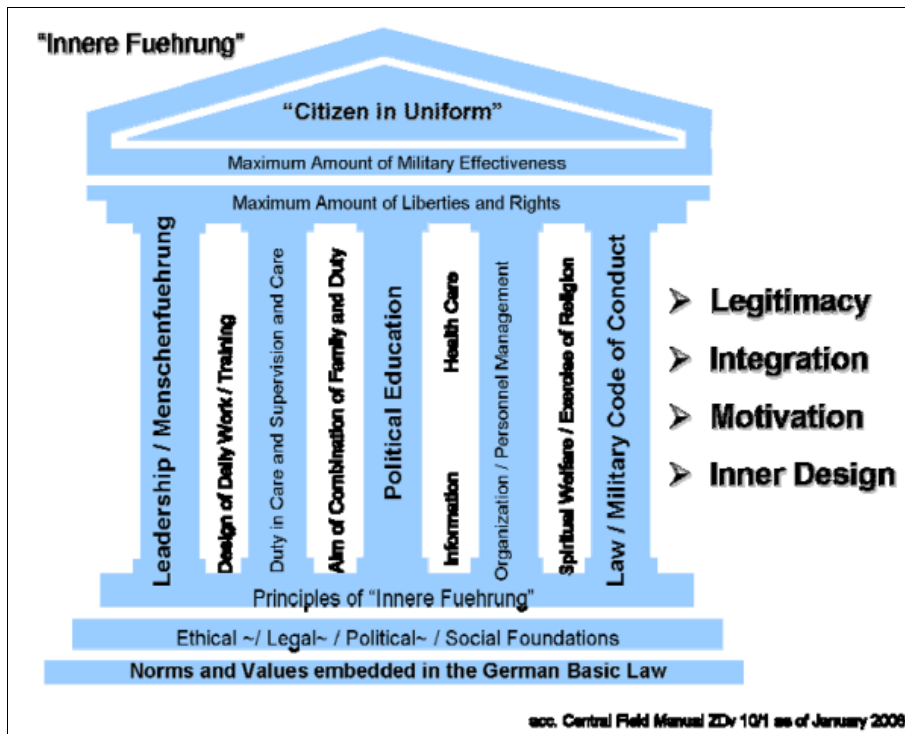


Fig 1: Innere Fuehrung-Basis, Principles and Domains

In the early 1950s, the fear of a military caste being restored as an anti-democratic force and a false rebirth of military dignity at the price of pluralism were both very serious concerns. To combat these inclinations, Innere Fuehrung's founders had to rescue the value of soldierhood from the perversions of National Socialism and the years 1890–1933. The Germans also had to reassure their former enemies and potential allies that Grossdeutschland no longer existed. It is difficult to generalize about where exactly Innere Fuehrung came from historically, since its many parts were developed independently at different times beginning in the 19th century. At the same time, the anti-democratic worship of tradition in the military and society has its roots in the same time period, the mid-nineteenth century. The discussion about the effectiveness of soldierly tradition was inextricably intertwined with the debate over the implementation of Innere Fuehrung. Innere Fuehrung may be traced back to its inception in the specific time frame of 1950–1955. This time frame is defined by the keywords "Weimar," "Korea," "Himmerod," and "Amt Blank." The sheer number of potential avenues for researching the background of Innere Fuehrung suggested by this list alone is impressive. However, all they would do is provide a history of how this idea came to be. The complicated quest for self-understanding, inner drive, and the required distancing from the previous century cannot be captured by

such a linear narrative. Figure 2 displays the four objectives and one core component identified by Innere Fuehrung.

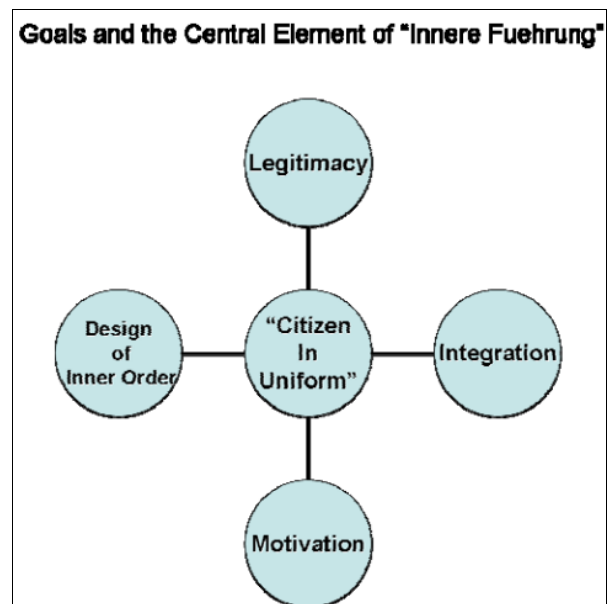


Fig 2: Four Goals and the Central Element of Innere Fuehrung

### **The Bundeswehr's innere führung and the cold war divide**

The military as a whole adheres to a common set of ideals. Innere Führung is a rare quality. In the 1950s, a new model for the German soldier and a new relationship between superior and subordinate were established as part of the leadership philosophy for Germany's federal armed forces, or Bundeswehr. The new army, which rose from the ashes of the Wehrmacht of the Nazi period, was meant to be radically different. The Bundeswehr's mission was to promote peace at a period of utter conflict. It was to maintain a firm stance on democratic ideas and protect the rights of individuals even when totalitarian nations amassed powerful armies. And despite the rise of cutting-edge military technology, Bundeswehr members were instructed to maintain their civic-mindedness as "Citizens in Uniform" rather than turning into "professional warriors" or "technocrats" of their own class. Each of these concepts, mandated by Innere Führung, represented a significant break with the past for the German military. The positive effects of Innere Führung may be seen today in many branches of the armed forces. All ranks of soldiers and commanders get instruction on the idea. Innere Führung is still being studied by a group of academics outside the military to see how it may be applied to the current Bundeswehr. A section of the Bundeswehr Command and Staff College in Hamburg is named after Wolf Graf von Baudissin, who is generally regarded as the founder of Innere Führung. German Defense Minister Ursula von der Leyen remarked in 2016 at the 60th anniversary of the Innere Führung Center in Koblenz, "If there was no Innere Führung, someone would have to invent it."

Today's ranks are messier, making Innere Führung a less ideal concept. From discouraging brutal and demeaning training to allowing female and LGBT personnel in combat units, recent controversies highlight how similar present difficulties are to those of the past. The instance of First Lieutenant Franco A., 28, who disguised as a refugee in order to plot a terrorist attack<sup>4</sup>, has prompted questions about whether the military is still representative of society or if it has been "overrun with right-wing extremists." Distracting from the larger identity concerns confronting the German military today, for which Innere Führung was designed, are stories like these. At enormous expense, the Bundeswehr has reduced its military from around 600,000 men (half of whom were conscripted) during the Cold War to about 178,000 troops (male and female) who are available for deployment at any time. Instead of sitting around and waiting for the Cold War to heat up, they are now routinely deploying to other areas, where they are exposed to danger and, in some instances, death. Meanwhile, their clientele is becoming more disinterested in their work. Most Germans can afford to ignore the conduct of their military since they are no longer threatened by war and are exempt from conscription. The public and private distrust of the military has persisted after the end of the conflict. President Hörst Köhler of Germany said in 2005 that the general public in his country still shows "friendly disinterest" in the military.

### **Militarism is dead**

It is generally accepted that the legacy of the Nazi government and the militarization of German society under it is a Germany that was defeated, divided, and fighting to secure basic requirements by the spring of 1945. Future

West German chancellor Konrad Adenauer addressed an audience at the University of Cologne in March 1946, "the institution in which state power was most meaningfully and impressively expressed is the army." As a result, "militarism came to dominate people's minds and hearts."<sup>10</sup> After Germany's capitulation, the Wehrmacht was disbanded and military colleges and training grounds were abandoned. Responsibility for the war's worst atrocities was laid at the feet of the high command, the SS leadership, and the commanders of individual operations during the Nuremberg trials. Regular military personnel were not only largely exempt from guilt, but were widely seen in a favorable light by Germans. In his address in Cologne, Adenauer agreed with the veterans' view that they had served honorably regardless of the government, distinguishing "militarists" from the soldier who had "fulfilled his duty in respectable ways and done nothing more."

### **Conclusion**

There is great value in the German military's post-World War II leadership rebuilding model for reorganizing armed formations after battle or standoff. By dissecting this approach and its guiding principles, it becomes clear that the lessons learned from Germany's experience may be used as a useful template for countries attempting to rebuild and reform their armed forces in the aftermath of battle or standoff. This summary elaborates on the study's most important findings and stresses how those findings might be applied to the military of today.

- 1. Emphasis on Professionalism and Expertise:** Post WW-II Germany's military leadership methodology placed a strong emphasis on professionalism and expertise among its officers. This approach recognizes the importance of skilled and knowledgeable leadership in rebuilding military forces. Developing a well-trained and capable officer corps becomes paramount in post-conflict situations, ensuring that the military can effectively address the challenges of reconstruction while adapting to evolving security landscapes.
- 2. Civil-Military Relations and Democratic Oversight:** Germany's post-war approach to military leadership also underscores the importance of fostering healthy civil-military relations and establishing democratic oversight. By involving civilian authorities in decision-making processes, countries can ensure that military reconstruction aligns with broader national goals and values. This principal safeguards against potential military overreach and helps maintain a balance between military power and civilian authority.
- 3. Adaptability and Innovation:** The German military leadership methodology post WW-II emphasized adaptability and innovation, allowing the military to transform itself to meet contemporary challenges. This principle is invaluable in post-conflict scenarios where military forces often need to transition from wartime to peacetime roles rapidly. Incorporating innovative technologies and strategies ensures that the military remains relevant and effective in the face of evolving threats.
- 4. Reconciliation and International Collaboration:** Germany's post-war experience highlights the significance of reconciliation and international collaboration for long-term stability. In post-conflict or post-standoff scenarios, fostering diplomatic relationships and participating in international alliances

can enhance a nation's security while contributing to global stability. Learning from Germany's efforts to rebuild trust and engage in cooperative endeavors can prove beneficial in similar circumstances.

5. **Ethical Leadership and Professional Development:** Ethical leadership and ongoing professional development were core tenets of Germany's military leadership methodology. These principles resonate strongly in post-conflict scenarios, as they ensure that military personnel are well-versed in ethical conduct and are continuously improving their skills. This fosters a culture of accountability and integrity within the military, critical for maintaining public trust during reconstruction efforts.
6. **Balancing Tradition with Modernization:** The German approach demonstrates the significance of striking a balance between military traditions and modernization. While retaining institutional knowledge and values, countries must also adapt their military forces to current technological advancements and strategic realities. This dual approach enables a smoother transition from conflict to stability while preserving the core strengths of the military.

In conclusion, the military leadership methodology developed in post WW-II Germany possesses remarkable relevance for reconstructing military forces in post-conflict and post-standoff scenarios. Its focus on professionalism, civil-military relations, adaptability, reconciliation, ethical leadership, and tradition-modernization balance provides a comprehensive framework for nations aiming to rebuild their military capabilities while upholding democratic values and international cooperation. By drawing from the lessons of history, countries can better navigate the complexities of post-conflict reconstruction and standoffs, ultimately contributing to enduring peace and security on a global scale.

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