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Framing Leadership Challenges in the Digital Age: The Role of Senior Leaders

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The Digital Age innovations greatly change how people gain information, communicate, work, make decisions, solve problems and even how they spend their spare time. It certainly effects trust relations at workplace between leaders and followers posing great challenges for leaders, especially for senior ones who do not belong to the so-called iGeneration, those who were not born into the age of social media, automatization, artificial intelligence, and the jungle of millions of apps. As a result, we can observe a widening generational gap between junior and senior leaders. Nevertheless, how can senior leaders drive the change in the Digital Age without having the necessary digital maturity? What are the implications and challenges for leadership? Transformational Leadership is proven to be the most effective leadership approach but without mutual trust, leaders will have no other choice than employ transactional leadership approaches which is less effective. Thus, the question how to maintain trustful relationship at workplace between trustee and trustor in the world of digitalization is rather important. It is even more significant in military where people need to trust each other with their lives. This paper aims to frame this problem and raise awareness of this phenomena to initiate further research and discussions on the challenges of senior leaders in the Digital Age.

KEYWORDS: digital age, transformational leadership, trust, senior leadership

A vezetői kihívások megfogalmazása a digitális korban: A felsővezetők szerepe

A digitális korszak innovációi gyökeresen megváltoztatják azt, hogy az emberek hogyan jutnak információhoz, hogyan kommunikálnak egymással, milyen munkamódszereket alkalmaznak, hogyan készítenek elő és hoznak döntéseket, hogyan oldanak meg problémákat, sőt még azt is, hogy mily módon töltik szabadidejüket. Ez jelentős hatással van a munkahelyi bizalmi kapcsolatokra a vezetők és a vezetettek között, ami nagy kihívások elé állítja a vezetőket, különösen azokat a korosabb vezetőket, akik nem tartoznak az úgynevezett iGenerációhoz,

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akik nem születtek bele a közösségi média, az automatizálás, a mesterséges intelligencia és az alkalmazások milliósok dzsungelébe. Ennek eredményeként egyre nagyobb generációs szakadékot figyelhetünk meg a fiatal (junior) és a korosabb (senior) vezetők között. De hogyan tudnak a felsővezetők a digitális korszakban a változás motorjai lenni anélkül, hogy rendelkezniük kell a szükséges digitális műveltséggel? Milyen következményekkel és kihívásokkal kell számolnia a vezetőknek? A transzformacionális vezetés bizonyítottan a leghatékonyabb vezetési megközelítés, de kölcsönös bizalom nélkül ez a vezetési megközelítés nem működik így a vezetőknek nem marad más választásuk, mint a tranzakciós vezetési megközelítések alkalmazása, ami kevésbé hatékony. Így az a kérdés, hogy a digitális korszakban hogyan lehet fenntartani a kölcsönös bizalmat a szervezetekben vezető és vezetett között, a legfontosabb kérdések egyike. Fokozottan jelentkezik ez a kérdés a haderőkben, ahol a katonáknak adott esetben az életüket kell egymásra bízniuk. Ennek a tanulmánynak az a célja, hogy megvilágítsa ezt a problémát, és ráirányítsa a felsővezetők figyelmét erre az aktuális kihívásra, célja továbbá az is, hogy további kutatásokat és vitákat indítson a transzformacionális vezetés kihívásairól a digitális korszakban.

KULCSSZAVAK: digitális korszak, transzformacionális vezetés, bizalom, felsővezetés

Introduction¹

The fourth industrial revolution and the growing dominance of computer technology play an increasingly greater role in our life. The world is experiencing the growth of advanced automation, robotics, and the development of artificial intelligence and machine learning. Hundreds, if not thousands, of new applications and social media tools are popping up every day changing the way people communicate, learn, collaborate, and, more importantly, the way of thinking and solving problems. Ideally, these all should provide the opportunity for everyone to work not harder than smarter to improve results. It is of crucial importance that leaders embrace this technological opportunity and understand the pace of change because it can lead to an improved thinking and adjusted practice and with that to an effective leadership in the Digital Age². However, it is certainly easier said than done, because as we all experience it, this new computing technology, the innovative ideas and the limitless access to information at all levels influence trust relations both at micro (interpersonal) and at macro (organizational) level in any national or multinational organizations including Ministries of Defense, Armed Forces Commands or NATO and EU Headquarters.

The meaning of trust in leadership approach is described in an easily digestible way by Brené Brown (2018) in her book titled *Dare to Lead*, where she stated that “no trust no connection”.³ And we all know that the leadership approach with no connection to followers can only be *Laissez Faire*, which is proven to be the least effective or even ineffective approach. Brown’s statement could even be translated to “no connection no leadership”. Thus, on the one hand, it is important to analyze the

1 This Article is based on the author’s Doctoral Dissertation titled Challenges of Transformational Leadership in the Digital Age: The Role of Moral Trust in Maintaining Transformational Approaches. (Helmut Schmidt University, Hamburg, 2023.) It is however tailored to focus on the perspective of senior leaders.

2 Sheninger 2019, 11–13.

3 Brown 2018, 222.

possible erosion of trust through digitalization of teamwork and decision-making processes and its effects on Transformational Leadership⁴ in national or multinational headquarters. On the other hand, it is also of key essence to examine and better understand the role of senior leaders who were not born in the Digital Age and do not belong to the so called iGeneration,⁵ but they are expected to define company objectives and make strategic decisions, and with that to drive the digital transformation.

Digitalization as a Game-changer

Before moving on to define the relevant main features of digitalization it is constructive to create some clarity concerning terminology such as *digitization*, *digitalization*, and *digital transformation*. Indeed, it does reign some confusion regarding the right use of these hype terms even in the related literature. These terms have distinct meanings and for the sake of this article, it is important to enable the reader to make the distinction. Considering *digitization*, we can invite the help of the IT Dictionary of Gartner. This defines digitization quite clearly as “*the process of changing from analog to digital form*”, with other words “*digitization takes an analog data and changes it to a digital form without any different-in-kind changes to the process itself*”.⁶ Simple examples of digitization are the converting of handwritten or typewritten documents to digital text meaning bits and bytes or digitizing a VHS tape, which can be used by computing systems. However, it is key to understand that it is the information that will be digitized not the process because digital process deeds digital information.

As to *digitalization*, the Gartner IT Glossary exerts that “*it is the use of digital technologies to change a business model and provide new revenue and value-producing opportunities; it is the process of moving to a digital business*”. From the definition it becomes evident that here, unlike digitization, the process will be digitized.

A further perspective of digitalization is asserted by researchers of the University of North Carolina School of Media and Journalism. They refer to digitalization as “*the way in which many domains of social life are restructured around digital communication and media infrastructures*”. Via this process both work and private life become digitalized.⁷ Digitalization also means the adoption of innovative digital technologies across human and societal activities. Here, examples could be the digitalization of marketing or the government. All in all, digitalization is understood as the way moving forward to digital transformation by leveraging digitized data and process. Digitization and digitalization are two important terms unfortunately often used interchangeably in a wide range of literature.

4 The indoctrinated leadership approach of NATO is mission command or in German *Auftragstaktik* which perfectly overlaps with transformational leadership. This leadership mindset is based on trust, critical thinking, empowerment, willingness to delegate and readiness to take the initiative.

5 It refers to the generation born between 1995–2012. The generation who did not have a choice to live without iPhones or iPads. It often called as the internet generation, too.

6 Gartner IT glossary

7 Bloomberg 2018, 3.

To achieve higher clarity, it is constructive to deal with the term of *digital transformation*, too. As the word suggests, digital transformation is not something that companies can introduce as projects. Digital transformation usually includes several digitalization projects, but it is more than the sum of digitalization projects. It requires companies to better handle change and making it the most crucial competency of any enterprise including armed forces. In sum, as Bloomberg asserts, *“we digitize information, we digitalize processes and roles that make up the operations of a business, and we digitally transform the business and its strategy.”*⁸ It is important to emphasize that without digitization of paper and processes, there is no digitalization and with that no digital transformation. However, digital transformation, as we use it today, is much broader than digitalization. It requires the employment of more bridges in a comprehensive digital transformation strategy. *Meaning that, digital transformation is a company-wide phenomenon. Summing it up, one can say that digital transformation needs digitalization on the way to digital capabilities and it requires digitization of information.*

After providing overall understanding of these key terminologies, we can move on to assess the effects of digitalization on transformational leadership approach. As a departure point, it is necessary to define transformational leadership (hereafter: TL) and its embodiment in military environment. The first researcher describing the so called “transforming leadership” was James MacGregor Burns in 1978. He asserted that transforming leadership *“occurs when one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality”*.⁹ It is not like in transactional leadership (hereafter: TAL) where a give-and-take transaction happens between a leader and a follower. It reshapes perceptions and values, as well as the expectations of followers. TL is certainly based on leaders’ ability and traits, and it encourages change through lead by example. A transformational leader articulates a clear vision and objectives, which challenge followers. As Burns (1978) found, transforming leaders strive for changes in organizations while transactional leaders tend to live in the given organizational culture.¹⁰

The American theorist Bernard M. Bass (1985) further refined the theory of Burns (1978). He found that under transformational leaders’ subordinates feel loyalty, respect, and trust. It results in well-motivated followers who are willing to work beyond expectations. It occurs because transformational leaders communicate a clear vision and inspiring objectives and through that they provide followers a new identity in the organization. According to Bass the 4Is such as *idealized influence* (earlier also referred to it as charisma) *inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation* and *individual consideration* characterize TL. Bass and Riggio (2006) describe in their book of Transformational Leadership (second Edition) neutralizers and enhancers of TL and its possible substitutes, too. Concerning the latter, they define, amongst others transformational teams and organizational culture with transformational

8 Bloomberg 2018, 5.

9 Burns 1978, 20.

10 Roberts 1985, 1.

characteristics as possible substitute for TL. Extensive training and education of followers is also a substitute for TL because these employees or even staff officers in military need less direct supervision. In military teams the mutual support of members and the common history of success results that the appointed formal leader might find sufficient member self-esteem without any actions taken by the leader.¹¹ The authors also developed and clearly defined the four components of TL as described at the beginning of this chapter. The first element, they defined *Idealized Influence*. It is when leaders behave in a way that enables them look like a role model for their followers. In US military and certainly also in NATO it is as they call it “lead by example”. In the German Armed Forces’ leadership model, it is called “*Führung von vorne*” meaning quite the same. Two aspects are relevant regarding this component of TL, on the one hand, it is leaders’ behavior and on the other hand followers’ attribute to their leaders. The second component of TL is *inspirational motivation*. By employing behavior which inspires, team spirit will be strengthened which has an utmost high relevance in military environment along with trust. As to *intellectual stimulation* which is the third characteristics of TL it is important to note that “*Transformational Leaders stimulate their followers’ effort to be innovative and creative by questioning assumptions, reframing problems, and approaching old situations in new ways*”.¹² A crucial aspect of this component that followers’ mistakes will be tolerated and not criticized publicly. Subordinates should be effectively encouraged to bring up innovative ideas and solve problems creatively. *Individual consideration* is the fourth component of TL. It is practiced by paying special attention to all followers as individuals. Moreover, leaders need to act as mentor and coach for associates creating a supportive environment and new learning opportunities. It is of high importance that leaders are fully aware of followers’ individual differences in skills and abilities. Meaning that one associate needs more guidance and the other one needs higher autonomy to achieve results. The operationalization of individual consideration is achieved in a two-way communication by employing the management by walking around. It is of grave importance that leaders carefully listen to their followers aiming to understand their problems or even the new ideas they wish to put forward.¹³ This component has a special meaning in the military considering the research results of Sosik et al (2018). They conducted research in the US Air Force to find out new opportunities for military leaders to be effective. *They proved that among the 4Is individual consideration provides mostly to building mutual trust.*

As to further assess leadership in the military, the so called *Innere Führung*, which is the Leadership and Civic Education Model of the German Armed Forces, describes that on the one hand, sub-leaders or followers are provided the freedom to contribute with their individual skills to mission success. On the other hand, the delegation of decision-making authority and the freedom of action to lower levels provide sub-leaders grip the initiative which enables them to react appropriately to the constantly changing tactical situation on the ground. The leadership part of this

11 Bass & Riggio 2006, 219–220.

12 Bass & Riggio 2006, 7.

13 Bass & Riggio 2006, 7.

concept known as *Auftragstaktik* also stresses out that mutual trust of leaders and followers is an essential pre-requisite of this leadership approach. After thorough analysis of this concept, it becomes clear that the four components of TL are perfectly included in the German Leadership philosophy. Therefore, the German Armed Forces Leadership Concept is an example of transformational leadership though not called so.¹⁴ It carries real value considering the proven fact that “*Organizations whose leaders are transactional are less effective than those whose leaders are transformational*”.¹⁵ The figure below depicts the place of TL (4Is) on the scale of effectivity of leadership.

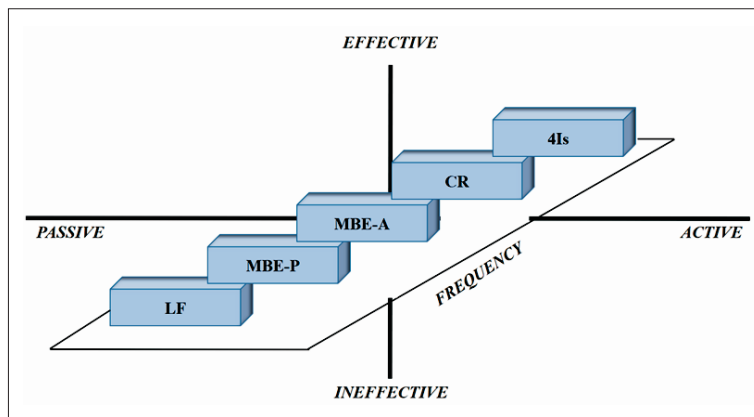


Figure 1.
Model of the Full Range of Leadership: Optimal Profile¹⁶

The graph provides a clear overview of the optimal profile of the full range of leadership described by Bass & Riggio (2006). It comprises the different leadership styles from non-leadership (*Laissez-Faire*) up to the TL with its 4Is on the effectivity and activity coordinates. The dimensions of TAL have also been shown on the graph including passive or active management (MBE-P, MBE-A) by exception and contingent reward (CR). As far as the idea of passive management by exception is concerned, leaders do not act until meaningful problems occur. These leaders act according to the good old motto „*If it ain't broke don't fix it*”¹⁷. Active management by exception on the other hand, means that principals monitor and anticipate possible problems and are ready to introduce the necessary measures to fix them.

Moving on to analyze the relevant features of digitalization, it seems productive to have a closer look at the issue of *whether digitalization matters for national and multinational organizations*. Digital technology is certainly the defining feature for the upcoming decades. Considering military, one can identify that to win the conflicts of

14 Csombók 2020, 18.

15 Bass 1990, 22.

16 Bass 2006, 9.

17 Bass 1985, 20.

the future NATO and its member states armed forces need to “reconcile conventional diplomatic and military power with data as a strategic capability”¹⁸. It means that military, such as other civilian companies, needs to harness digital transformation. The quoted researchers identified seven disruptive technologies which are relevant to the organizational and operational effectiveness of NATO but certainly are relevant for member states’ armed forces, too. These technologies are: “artificial intelligence, autonomy, quantum technology, space technology, hypersonic technology, biotechnology and human enhancement, and novel materials and manufacturing”¹⁹. They also identified that without the intermediary step of digitalization the strategic advantage cannot be realized. Meaning that if the listed disruptive technologies are the locks for NATO’s strategic superiority than digitalization is the key for it. Digitalization can clearly improve NATO’s ability to effectively gain and process information in support of a timely situation awareness even beyond its traditional, functional and regional expertise. And, with that, it can significantly improve NATO’s and its member states’ decision making. Thus, one could conclude that *decision making is the number one beneficiary of digitalization*. NATO can increase its strategic advantage by harnessing disruptive digitalization, increasing creative thinking, and employing new technologies over legacy capabilities. Reynolds & Lightfoot identified five game changers namely: Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning (hereafter: AI/ML), data factory, footprint and reach, staff & culture, a new (ish) way of war. The game changer staffs & culture is highly relevant because it is crystal clear that NATO needs digital talents in its ranks, the digital transformation cannot be achieved without the relevant digital competencies. To gain and maintain these competencies there is a need to change in talent acquisition and in policies, such as design thinking, research and innovation and flatter hierarchy.²⁰

In sum, as Sheninger (2014) asserted, digitalization is a difficult phenomenon to explain because the properties of it are cross-cultural, interdisciplinary, and virtual as well.²¹ Furthermore, it is not a miracle cure, but it is surely key to enable national and multinational organizations to meet the challenges of the coming decades. *Thus, the digital maturity of senior leaders seems highly essential to drive the digital change.*

As further assessment of the importance of senior leaders’ digital awareness, the next chapter deals with the effects of digitalization on trust relations mainly at micro (interpersonal) level.

The Effects of Digitalization on Trust Relations and Transformational Leadership

Transformational Leadership seems to be the best possible fit to achieve success in complex multinational organizations. It is also gravely relevant for this topic that TL is based on a mutually trustful relationship meaning that without trust between

18 Reynolds & Lightfoot 2020, 2.

19 Reynolds & Lightfoot 2020, 2.

20 Reynolds & Lightfoot 2020, 2–4.

21 Sheninger 2014, 8.

a leader and a follower TL is not enabled and leadership will be more transactional which is proven to be far less effective.²² Another crucial aspect of trust, important for this paper, is, defined by Luhmann (1968) asserting that the complexity of modern society requires more trust because “*trust is an effective form of complexity reduction*”.²³ It makes trust certainly a delicate commodity of the Digital Age.

If it comes to recent literature on trust, it is a must to mention Rachel Botsman (2018) one of the world’s well-known experts on trust. In her book, titled *Who Can You Trust* she asserted that *we are at the beginning of the third trust revolution in humankind’s history*. She emphasizes that the history of trust includes three chapters up to now. The first was local trust, this was the time when we lived within local boundaries of small communities. The second chapter was institutional, a sort of intermediate, trust in the Industrial Age when trust ran through different contracts and courts as she puts it “*freeing commerce from local exchange*”. And the third chapter is distributed trust in the Digital Age. This latter will be explained as “*Trust that flows laterally between individuals enabled by networks, platforms and systems*”.²⁴ She also puts a remarkably simple and concise explanation for trust describing it as “*a confident relationship with the unknown*”²⁵. She argues that distributed trust shaped and reshaped by people needs can provide a successful path forward for governments, media & business, as well.²⁶

Thus, if trust is a must-have, then it is certainly constructive to find the specific behaviors that facilitate or inspire trust at micro (interpersonal) and at macro (organizational) level. Concerning micro level, I found a well-applicable vehicle designed by Brené Brown (2018). She identified with a team of researchers seven behaviors that are needed to inspire and build trust, they named it the BRAVING inventory. This is an acronym containing the first letters of the behaviors they identified namely: *Boundaries, Reliability, Accountability, Vault, Integrity, Non-judgement, and Generosity*. Amongst these behaviors there are a couple they seem obvious but also some they need little clarification. The first one (*Boundaries*) means know your boundaries and respect them and if you are not sure about it then ask. The second one (*Reliability*) is be aware of your competencies and limitations and do not over-promise. Do always what you say you will do. The third one (*Accountability*) is about owning your own mistakes, dare to apologize and make amends. The fourth one (*Vault*) means do not share experience or information that are not yours to share. Respect the confidentiality of information about persons. The fifth behavior is (*Integrity*) it is about “*choosing courage over comfort*” and choosing to live your values not only to professing them. The sixth element (*Non-judgement*) is about talking to each other about how you feel or what you need without judgement, and we can ask each other’s help without being judged. The last component (*Generosity*) means you need to be ready for generous interpretation of intentions, actions and words of others.²⁷

22 Bass & Riggio 2006, 7.

23 Luhmann 1968, 6.

24 Botsman 2018, 264.

25 Botsman 2018, 264.

26 Botsman 2018, 259.

27 Brown 2018, 225–226.

Charles Feltman is another great contemporary researcher of trust (2021), he described trust in his book titled *The Thin Book of Trust* as follows “*Trust is choosing to risk making something you value vulnerable to another person’s actions*”²⁸. Things we make vulnerable is ranging from promotion to things we hold dear or beliefs or our good name. In his view, whatever we choose to display and make vulnerable to others’ actions, we do it because we want to achieve something together which we cannot accomplish alone. And we only withdraw trust when it is betrayed. Choosing to trust is always a result of either a hasty or even a thorough risk assessment. Considering trust between a leader and a follower, Feltman (2021) points out that building trust is certainly a two-way street meaning that “*you may be trustworthy but if you do not extend trust to others, none is built*”.²⁹ This statement is based on his research findings showing that the problem starts usually with a leader’s lack of trust in members of their team. In this context, it is of key importance that “*building trust is a competency, a set of skills that can be learned and improved*”.³⁰ Therefore, it is an opportunity and of high importance in leadership training to better enable leaders to trust building and with that to strengthen of their transformational leadership approach. Because, as identified in earlier chapters, without trust there is no transformational approach. As Nancy Settle-Murphy, a virtual workplace expert, points out in her cover page quote in Feltman’s book, building and maintaining trust is very challenging especially in the Digital Age where leaders and team members work and meet increasingly in virtual space. Feltman (2021) created not only theories, but he provides great tools for leaders how to be trustworthy and ways to maintain and improve trust at interpersonal level. According to his research findings, trustworthiness will be defined by four key distinctions namely *care, sincerity, reliability, and competence* (See Figure 2.).

To find out what prevents leaders from trusting others we need to assess these attributes. This also works in identifying how trustors are judging trustees’ trustworthiness. To properly understand and address trust, one should analyze distrust, too. It is basically the opposite of trust meaning “*distrust is a choice not to make yourself vulnerable to another person’s actions*”³¹. Distrust is basically a disaster at workplace, it gets in the way of a leader and a follower to work effectively together. Its meaning in terms of leadership perspective is real, simple, no trust no connection and no connection no leadership.

The topic in military environment shows certainly clear signs of research needs. The Multinational Capability Development Campaign (hereafter: MCDC) is a US led platform, including 15 nations and dealing with the enhancement of collaboration amongst nations’ armed forces in order to provide multinational concepts for capability development aiming to close capability gaps in multinational military operations. This initiative put out the research on *Future Leadership* (2020). This paper points out how important it is for military leaders to understand the

28 Feltman 2021, 9.

29 Feltman 2021, 10.

30 Feltman 2021, 9.

31 Feltman 2021, 11.

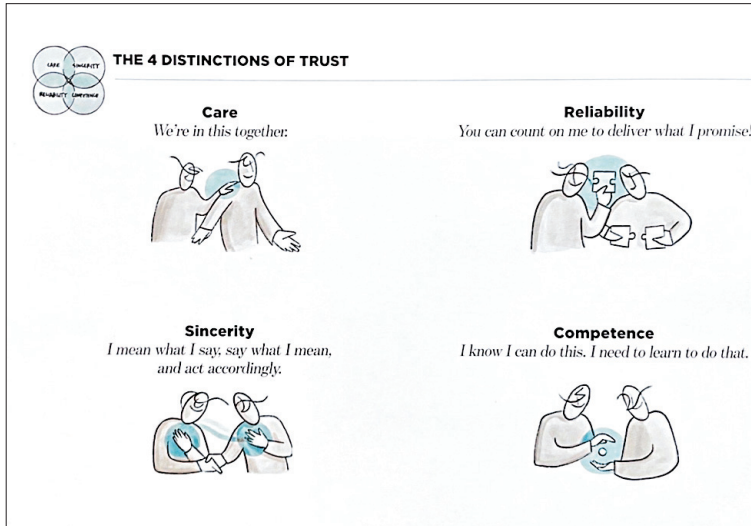


Figure 2.
Feltman's Four Distinctions of Trust³²

challenges of the 21st century one of which is digitalization. As these developments shape the way we think and act, and it is crucial to keep thinking effective. However, *humans are hampered by cultural inertia, and self-deceptive inconsistencies and contradictions. And all these put at risk our ability to rethink or at least challenge leadership practices of the past and present.* Thus, it is fundamental how military organizations can prepare their leaders to meet the challenges of the highly complex operating environment. The digital battlefield is the new operating environment. This research points out the urgent need for all military leaders to examine and re-think all facets of leadership aiming to gain a better understanding of the leadership implications of the so called VUCA³³ environment and the growing use of artificial intelligence technologies in decision preparation and decision-making processes (MCDC 2020, 5). Transformational military leaders in NATO and its member states are challenged when deployed by not only the many different leadership cultures but also by digitalization of processes such as decision preparation, decision-making and teamwork. These challenges are compounded by the rather short deployment periods of leaders and followers, resulting in a constantly changing human make-up within standing but especially in deployed headquarters. These all have the potential to change relation structures even in strictly structured military environments and they seem to compromise trust and, with that, TL approaches.

As the U.S. Army Field Manual 6-22 on Army Leadership (2006) suggests, *"command is about sacred trust"* (US Army FM 6-22, 2-3). It is a powerful expression

³² Feltman 2021, 11.

³³ The future operating environment is described by NATO as, "VUCA", meaning Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous.

about trust in military and shows the significance of it. This manual also suggests that the Army as a military institution is built up of teams and of team of teams. To be effective, especially in warfighting scenarios, but basically in any situations, team cohesion is fundamental. Trust in military organizations gain a much stronger significance because of the life-or-death situations.

Conclusion

As this article points out TL is the most effective leadership approach to lead in national and multinational companies in the Digital Age. Thus, it is essential to keep leadership approach transformational. However, the “sacred trust”, which is the ultimate enabler of TL, is challenged not only in civilian companies but also in military organizations by digitalization of teamwork and decision-making processes. Without trust there is no connection, and no connection means no effective leadership. Trust has the potential to reduce complexity which makes trust a very important commodity in the Digital Age. As Feltman (2021) found “*building trust is a competency, a set of skills that can be learned and improved*”.³⁴ The same has been proven by Bass (1990) concerning transformational leadership when he found that it can be learned³⁵. Thus, it is of key importance to further research and operationalize findings on how digitalization changes trust relations at micro (interpersonal) and macro (organizational) levels. *Senior leaders are facing quite a paradoxical situation because on the one hand, they are not digital natives and sometimes they are not even interested in understanding how digitalization effects the leadership approach but on the other hand, they are expected to drive the change in the Digital Age.*

In sum, since leadership is an essential part of a military capability defined in NATO along the DOTMLPF-I³⁶ it is quint essential to raise digital awareness and improve digital maturity of leaders, especially senior ones by finding ways to integrate digitalization and its effects into leadership trainings. This would enable senior leaders to successfully drive the change in the Digital Age and keep the leadership approach transformational. Moreover, it could contribute to stopping and even shrinking the widening gap between junior and senior leaders.

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34 Feltman 2021, 9.

35 Bass 1990, 27.

36 NATO Joint Analysis Handbook (2016): The eight components of DOTMLPF-I are: Doctrine, Organisation, Training, Materiel, Leadership, Personnel, Facilities, and Interoperability. DOTMLPF-I is a way of describing the essential elements of capability development.

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