The social ties that bind: the role of social relations and trust in EU intelligence cooperation

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Chapter 7

Chapter 7: Integrity in EU Intelligence Cooperation

Conflicting Cultures

7.1. Introduction

> *'Intelligence needs to talk to intelligence. Among themselves they will be able to understand their particular relationship. And value the traits of the craft [...]. Intelligence professionals behave by particular standards that differ from other professions, that others would not understand.'*[1]

The second condition for trust is for partners to perceive each other to have integrity, playing the game by clear rules. Mayer et al. argue that the relationship between integrity and trust 'involves the perception that the trustee adheres to a set of principles that the trustor finds acceptable'.[2] In doing so, they clearly distinguish principles as the leading entity at work. Principles show a partner's behavioral code of conduct and guide his activities. They show what partners think is appropriate or at least acceptable behavior. However, Mayer et al. do not elaborate much on the social structure and processes that empower these principles as a condition for trust, besides observing that they are related to the congruence of cultural values. The conceptual framework in chapter 3 filled this gap and identified that perceptions of integrity are built within institutions through the entity of principles and are part of a process of categorization.[3] Institutions are cultural frames of reference and understanding that provide formal and informal principles for guiding behavior. These principles form the basis for categorization and comparison between groups. In addition, this chapter uses concepts from the literature on professionalization and organizational culture to evaluate the role of principles and categorization in EU intelligence cooperation. It looks at the (professional) norms and standards present in the institutions and their influence on trust and cooperative behavior. The more compatible partners' institutional frames of reference and understanding are, the more trusting they will be and the more willing to cooperate on that basis.[4]

Institutions, categorization and principles are expected to play an important role in EU intelligence cooperation. They are seen to be part of the 'cultural fit', a common approach for research into alliance formation and effectiveness. It draws on the idea that cultural compatibility - not necessarily equality - is an essential element of alliance performance.

1 Interview 35

2 Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman, "An Integrative Model of Organizational Trust," 719.

3 Dunn, "Integrity Matters."

4 Ravasi, "Organizational Identity, Culture, and Image," 67; Schein and Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 159.

Lack of cultural fit is regularly mentioned as the cause of an alliance's failure.[5] However, what the principles for appropriate behavior are, and which of them carry the most weight, depends on the specific community, the circumstances at hand and the backgrounds of the organizations involved. For example, whereas transparency and openness to the public are highly valued in public administration, they might be less appropriate in certain aspects of political bargaining. Where different worlds meet, there will probably be tension, contestation or conformation. The EU is such a place. It brings together people from a variety of national and professional backgrounds. It is thought that cultural differences will hamper cooperation in this arrangement, although repeated interaction could be the cause of alignment of principles as well. In any case, the degree of cultural fit between intelligence institutions and EU organizations determines the limits of trust-based cooperation there.

This chapter examines perceptions of integrity in the EU intelligence system. Starting from the substantive theory provided by the conceptual framework, it scrutinizes how these perceptions shape cooperation in practice. The chapter offers an analysis of practitioners' views about the frames, overlap and compatibility in EU intelligence institutions. In doing so, it focusses on the intangible yet articulated part of culture; the espoused norms and standards that come from underlying assumptions about how the world works or ought to work.[6] Its central question is how perceptions of integrity influence trust and cooperative behavior in EU intelligence. Like the previous chapter, it answers this question at three levels. First, by addressing the overarching institutions at a macro- or system level. Section 7.2 looks at the the broader European intelligence institutions and how the EU relates to them. To what extent is there a common frame of reference and understanding for European intelligence? What norms and standards are considered the most important? What do they mean to the community, and how do they influence trust with regard to the EU organization? Second, section 7.3 zooms in on the meso- or organizational level, addressing the intelligence organizations in the EU. What is the basis for professional recognition there and how does this relate to the principles identified at the macro level? What does this mean for trust between and within EU intelligence organizations? Third, it considers the micro- or individual level. Section 7.4 focusses on individual intelligence officers in the EU intelligence organizations. What are the norms and standards they hold dearest? How do these relate to their organizational setting and what does it say about the type of community they are in? And how are these principles tested and transmitted among them? Section 7.5 concludes this chapter by evaluating how the aggregate perceptions of integrity, and the way these are formed and used, influence cooperative behavior in the European intelligence system. Conceptually, it shows that perceptions of integrity are well suited for scrutinizing the role of social relations and trust in cooperative behavior. It expands the framework introduced in chapter 3 by highlighting the role of subcultures in both organizations and occupations.

5 Douma, "Strategic Alliances," 153–54.

6 Schultz, *On Studying Organizational Culture*, 25–28.

In addition, it shows the importance of rites of passage into the group based on shared practices. Empirically, it shows the moderate effect of shared principles and categorization in the context of EU intelligence cooperation, being balanced between a powerful occupational culture of intelligence and strongly perceived and cultivated subcultures.

7.2. The Macro-Level: No Shared Understanding

7.2.1. National Differences

National cultures influence the cooperation practices between European intelligence services. They are considered important drivers for differences in the way intelligence is perceived and conducted.[7] International cooperation is by definition an assembly of nationalities, each bringing its own cultural background. Accordingly, they all have their own preferred way of working to some extent that influences cooperation.[8] This is no different in European intelligence cooperation. Intelligence practitioners note marked cultural differences between European countries that influence cooperation practices, and some countries and their services are judged more compatible than others.[9] Respondents refer to typical national ways of doing things and often name their partners by country name only, for example 'the Dutch', although they are aware that these are general categorizations only. These categorizations create in-groups where it is perceived easier to cooperate, and out-groups with which this is more difficult. Past research identified a wide variety of national characteristics that influence intelligence culture, for example a nation's attitude towards peace, war and violence, and the degree of centralization of state institutions.[10] From the interviews three of these national characteristics emerge as dominant in influencing national intelligence culture and compatibility in EU intelligence cooperation: country size, the political and legal regime, and proximity.

A first aspect of national culture influencing intelligence cooperation is country size.[11] It changes the nature of the services involved, in focus as well as well as in their relations with others. First, the size of a country influences the size of its intelligence capabilities. Only the larger countries can afford the full range of assets including technically advanced means for collection. For example, not all European countries possess sophisticated satellite capabilities and the same goes for advanced cyber tooling. Second, the size of the country is closely related to the level of geopolitical ambition. Larger countries seem to perceive themselves

7 Interview 4, 20, 22, 30, 36, 37, 42, 44

8 See for example: Gächter, Herrmann, and Thöni, "Culture and Cooperation."

9 Interview 1, 15, 18, 20, 22, 35

10 Graaff and Nyce, *Handbook of European Intelligence Cultures*, xxx.

11 Interview 19

more of geopolitical actors than the smaller ones and in constant competition with other large states. The inequality of their relations with smaller states causes some respondents to think that services of larger countries behave more competitive, more solitary, more selective in their dealings with others and less focused on broad analytical cooperation than those of smaller countries.[12] Some even depict them as self-centric, 'only in the receiving mode', haughty even.[13] Yet, this might be a somewhat one-sided view. The interviews show that some larger countries seem profoundly engaged in multilateral EU cooperation, exactly because they have the resources and perceive themselves as more of geopolitical actors. This point is further elaborated in chapter 8, when dealing with 'benevolence'.

A second aspect of national culture influencing intelligence cooperation is a country's political and legal regime. It directly influences the way the services operating in these regimes behave, including their cooperation with others. Although differences in the European theatre seem minimal, it appears that nuances in these regimes still matter. First, the political preferences of a country are sometimes seen to be 'imported into the intelligence communities', causing a form of politicization of intelligence practices. In these cases, the 'bigger [political] picture influences the little cooperation moments."[14] Especially, partners that 'are on a tight political leash' and those who are subject to political appointments are perceived different from those who are not.[15] Second, differing legal frameworks can be the cause of friction.[16] Intelligence is still an exclusively national affair. As a result, many variations exist that complicate exchange and cooperation. It requires services to interpret differences between their own standards and those of their partner. A national intelligence officer brings in an example:

> *'There are countries that value privacy in a different manner [than we do]. [...] This discrepancy makes cooperation for us harder to do. [...] To simply demand that your [own] framework will be used, will not help cooperation. [...] We will have to ask ourselves which demands we can make without damaging the relation and which ones are the most important."*[17]

A third aspect of national culture influencing intelligence cooperation is a country's proximity to others. Services operating in the same geographical space are seen to have more in common than those that stand further apart. As a consequence, cooperation between nearby-neighbors is perceived easier.[18] The first reason for this is very factual. Neighboring countries share their borders and as a consequence face much of the same threats. As a

12 Interview 1, 7, 30, 32, 36
13 Interview 10, 18
14 Interview 36, 9
15 Interview 12
16 Interview 3, 32, 35
17 Interview 19
18 Interview 26

result, they tend to meet more, are thus more likely to accustom to each other's habits and subsequently develop common best practices. A military intelligence officer remarks in this respect that:

> *'Next-door neighbors often have the same interests. And [when] you physically share a border [...] it practically obliges you to cooperate against transnational targets. [...] So, you build a history. Proximity matters in several respects.'*[19]

Interdependency requires interaction, eventually leading to trust that the other service will adhere to the expectations placed upon him. Military intelligence officers in this respect refer to the countries that worked closely together during the Cold War and established common norms and standards. Norms and standards to which they live up to this very day and still associate much with NATO.[20] Nevertheless, a common enterprise is not limited to the Cold War. Other more current examples in the EU are a nearby foreign aggressor or a disrupting refugee crisis at the borders. These outside pressures can also lead to partners growing towards each other and developing a common frame of reference. Besides bolstering perceptions of integrity, it also leads to increased benevolence between partners, a point further elaborated on in the next chapter. The second reason why geographical proximity influences cooperation practices, is that it often goes hand-in-hand with socio-cultural proximity. Besides sharing borders, nearby countries often share their history and cultural frame of understanding. People speak the same language, sometimes literally. This helps cooperation 'enormously'.[21] One respondent describes such a regional bond:

> *'It would be very easy for me to cooperate with someone from [a neighboring country]. We speak a similar language, have a common history, and a [common] way of doing things.'*[22]

He adds that in these regional partnerships 'they use the same language' even 'when not using the same words'.[23]

In the context of intelligence practice, from this study it appears that the idea of a common European culture is of limited eloquence. Most doubt that EU intelligence holds norms and standards that are exclusively European.[24] Even more so, respondents claim that differences in national cultures cause a divide in perceived integrity between EU members. Some note an East-West divide between the countries 'that were in from the start', and those who

19 Interview 32
20 Interview 9, 12, 18, 19, 27, 28
21 Interview 21, 32, 35
22 Interview 15
23 Ibidem
24 Interview 3, 9, 36

joined later.[25] This seems to confirm the detrimental influence of differing cultures on trust between former adversaries in the EU as noted by Björn Fägersten.[26] Others notice a divide between northern and southern Member States.[27] From these regional divides it seems that recognition exists by the virtue of having marked 'outsiders' as well. It is comparative. This aligns with chapter 3 where it was noted that perceptions of integrity are part of a process of categorization in which in-groups are separated from out-groups. Until recently, such an out-group seemed to be absent in the European context. One practitioner fears that some European partners would give unpleasantly surprising answers on the question 'what they are willing to do to obtain information or gain effect, what are [their] red lines, and what would never be acceptable [for them].'[28] Nevertheless, national differences can often be circumvented and 'in most cases [intelligence officers] are able to work something out, to find some sort of compromise.'[29] To a certain extent, it appears that intelligence practice is decoupled from national and regional differences and similarities. It holds a reality of its own, a cultural reflection of the disconnect between the political 'high politics' and specialist 'low politics' in intelligence cooperation underlined by Aldrich.[30] An intelligence officer illustrates this disconnect:

> *'Close political ties between [EU] members do not necessarily produce close intelligence ties. [Even more so] My home country is not necessarily the closest of partners with one other European country in international relations, they have very different cultures and various political differences. Yet, on the professional level there is a connection.'*[31]

However important differences in national culture are for EU intelligence cooperation, the respondents do not see them as a major problem. In European intelligence cooperation - sometimes diverging - national cultures are not the dominant force. In practice, occupational convergence is at least as powerful.

7.2.2. Occupational Similarities

Contrary to other domains in Security Studies like the military and the police, publications on intelligence culture have been mostly limited to the effect of national and organizational cultures. Yet, occupations can transcend these and 'tend to be cultures in and of

25 Interview 18, 8, 31, 36, 38
26 Fägersten, *For EU Eyes Only?*, 3.
27 Interview 12, 28
28 Interview 8, 35
29 Interview 19, 10, 11, 28
30 Aldrich, "US-European Intelligence Co-Operation on Counter-Terrorism."
31 Interview 12

themselves'.[32] Some scholars have already hinted on a common occupational culture for the intelligence profession.[33] This research confirms this view. Its principles influence activities among its members, like the way they cooperate. Insiders as well as outsiders refer to intelligence personnel as having their own cultural institutions. These frames of reference and understanding are seen to exist independent of their nationality. Some even claim that for their occupational similarity, intelligence practitioners:

> *'Sooner reach out to a foreign partner than to [their] own foreign affairs department. It's about craftmanship. They understand and value [each other]. They are concerned with the same things. Things that are irrelevant details to others.'*[34]

Intelligence comprises of a general set of principles that translate into common norms and standards. On the basis of these principles, intelligence practitioners recognize each other as occupational peers sharing the same institutional beliefs. They can be seen with intelligence practitioners across the board, reflect the ideas of its members about the occupation as a whole and sets it apart from other occupations. Three overarching principles stand out that depict the intelligence occupation as a whole and that influence the dynamics of intelligence cooperation in general; its secrecy, its goal orientation, and its autonomy.

The first, and probably the most well-known, principle of the intelligence occupation is undoubtedly its closed character. As one national officer describes:

> *'Intelligence services [are] very closed, never to show their full intentions or knowledge. The general reflex is to keep the shutters closed. And not only to other intelligence organizations, to other governmental and political institutions as well. It is a general trait, never to show the back of your tongue.'*[35]

Secrecy is a very strong force in intelligence.[36] When addressing the role of trust in intelligence, many intelligence officers simply equal integrity with not disclosing secret information. It leads to a discrete way of working. Each service has its own considerations in cooperation and asking around about them is not well accepted. Not being an open book

32 Trice, *Occupational Subcultures in the Workplace*; Paoline and Gau, "Police Occupational Culture"; Soeters, "Organizational Cultures in the Military"; Maras, "Overcoming the Intelligence-Sharing Paradox"; Whelan, "Security Networks and Occupational Culture"; Dumitru, "Building an Intelligence Culture From Within"; Bean, "Organizational Culture and US Intelligence Affairs."

33 See for example: Yelamos, Goodman, and Stout, "Intelligence and Culture: An Introduction"; Braat, "Self-Reinforcing Secrecy"; Willmetts, "The Cultural Turn in Intelligence Studies"; Oling et al., "Towards a Cultural Perspective on the Absorption of Emerging Technologies in Military Organizations."

34 Interview 30, 32, 34

35 Interview 13

36 Interview 3, 26

is very much valued.[37] It leads to professional norms and standards like the 'third-party rule' and 'need-to-know'. Some even claim that without secrecy the intelligence occupation as a whole is at jeopardy. They perceive an unbreakable link between secrecy and the added value of intelligence. In their opinion, without it the occupation would lose meaning. This puts secrecy beyond the functional realm of security norms and standards. Some respondents were very hesitant to name specific cooperation arrangements, even after being made aware that these formats were well known publicly.[38]

The intelligence community is often depicted as distrustful of outsiders. Although there appears to be a trend of opening up, intelligence services operate in the shadows.[39] One national practitioner depicts the intelligence world as:

> *'A vague, shady world that exists in parallel to the real world. It has its own rules and customs that you have to adhere to. And that helps create and sustain very interesting international relations among partners. Outsiders do not have a clue about these dynamics.'*[40]

Apparently, secrecy defines and shields the in-group. From this perspective, it is well conceivable that based on occupational culture a trusted community evolves from a European transgovernmental network in intelligence.[41] A community that exerts authority over the behavior of its members. Interestingly, many of the respondents note that seemingly contradicting norms like openness and honesty are of equal importance as secrecy and exist alongside it. Yet, for this they make a sharp distinction between the inside and the outside of the community. This will be further elaborated on in subsection 7.3.2 and in the next chapter.

The second principle of the intelligence occupation is that it is very goal oriented, and less focused on processes. Intelligence practitioners emphasize the value they place on task accomplishment.[42] A national practitioner frames this in terms of being passionate about the work. He observes that people in the intelligence profession are:

> *'All about their task and getting it done. [...] They have a goal to accomplish, and not just any goal, but one that matters. This support of national security is crucial to them.'*[43]

37 Interview 14, 20
38 Interview 14, 23
39 Interview 8, 21, 38
40 Interview 20
41 Cross, "A European Transgovernmental Intelligence Network and the Role of IntCen," 389, 395–96.
42 Interview 9, 31, National Intelligence officer, statement at conference, May 2022
43 Interview 21

Another adds that for him an attractive partner is 'dedicated to the mission we have to perform'.[44] In the end, intelligence services focus on a competitive advantage for their customers. And they are willing to go to lengths to achieve this advantage. One respondent admits that services 'often like and need to play at the borderline what can [be done] or is allowed to be done'. It leads to a pragmatic way of working.[45] Focusing on the task at hand allows them to discuss sensitive matters without getting caught in endless procedural or normative debates. A respondent bluntly states that '[intelligence officers] are not diplomats, that is actually one of their advantages'.[46] Intelligence services are able to disagree on some matters while cooperating on others without problems, or - in the words of another practitioner - they have a 'no-nonsense mentality'.[47] It enables them to cooperate despite the inherent vulnerability that comes in situations of conflicting interests or opinions. Intelligence services first look for partners that can help them out, and only then search for a way to responsibly work together. Moreover, this not always needs to be the most obvious or politically preferred partner.[48]

The third principle of the intelligence occupation, and one closely linked to the previous two, is its fondness for autonomy.[49] It is coupled with informality. In the words of one practitioner, the 'field is characterized by our decentralized way of working and for being headstrong'.[50] In international intelligence cooperation, autonomy and informality in cooperation ensure that:

> *'National agenda's do not take center stage; are not brought forward too often or too directly. Political pressure is not done."*[51]

This resembles what Davis Cross calls 'avoiding partisanship'.[52] It allows intelligence services room to maneuver and enlarge their chance of success. An intelligence officers shrugs that 'you will not have guidelines and directives for everything [and sometimes need to adapt quickly]."[53] Unlike in many other areas of international cooperation by governments, intelligence services are seen to 'generally shirk from formalized and standardized arrangements'.[54] Installing formal dependencies and control-measures are seen as the

44 Interview 23
45 Interview 17, 26
46 Interview 1
47 Interview 1, 42
48 Interview 9, 12, 19, 35
49 Interview 4, 8, 17, 3, 44
50 Interview 19
51 Interview 17
52 Davis Cross, "The Merits of Informality: The European Transgovernmental Intelligence Network," 245.
53 Interview 36, 23
54 Interview 12

endpoint of a trust-building process, not the beginning of it.[55] As one intelligence practitioner sighs; 'we will not be moving around MOU's to make this [cooperation] happen."[56] There are some representatives who reconnect more regularly to their capitals to check on a proper response, but they are seen as an exception to the rule:

> *'In our line of work, you have to keep things informal to keep going. You normally operate in a grey zone, where effects are not always clear and the boundaries of official documents give little guidance. I have seldom seen anyone phoning back to his capital for instructions. There is little to gain there."*[57]

7.2.3. EU Incompatibility

The organizational culture of the EU and the occupational culture of intelligence seem at odds.[58] Contrary to intelligence services, where the organization is for the most part built upon the intelligence occupation, the EU has its own distinct organizational culture. It is a showcase for a situation where the organizational culture has little appeal to professionals who have a relatively high commitment to their occupation.[59] As the organization has little to do with the way they are socialized, their tradecraft and their working relations, they will keep it at bay as much as possible. Concurring with their skeptical stance towards the EU's ability depicted in the previous chapter, intelligence practitioners think little of the EU organization in terms of integrity. Most respondents do not recognize the way the organization works and see it conflict with their own professional norms and standards. They perceive to be working from an entirely different book of rules than EU civil servants do, or are at least reading from a different page:

> *'The 28-year-old [EU] civil servant, from some foreign relations type of agency, knows intelligence only from the movies. And that picture tends to conflict with the ideals they bring in."*[60]

Most of the intelligence officers interviewed, in and outside the EU, assert that EU staff lacks a clear understanding of what intelligence is, how it works, and how it can be used. The EU officers among them often feel misunderstood and misplaced.[61] Some respondents even

55 Interview 7, 11, 15, 16, 18, 23, 31

56 Interview 32

57 Interview 30

58 Interview 1, 4, 11, 12, 23, 25, 28, 38, 42, 43, 44

59 Anteby, Chan, and DiBenigno, "Three Lenses on Occupations and Professions in Organizations: Becoming, Doing, and Relating," 184–85, 189–90, 200–201, 212–13, 222.

60 Interview 16

61 Interview 7, 14, 23, 26, 27, 29, 31, 36, 37, 39

perceive themselves a 'stranger in their [EU] midst'; and the 'odd one out in this setting'.[62] One respondent illustrates the feeling of unease felt by many when stating that:

> *'It is a different way of problem solving. Whereas the EU solves its problems by institutionalizing, bureaucratization and inclusivity, intelligence solves its problems by informality, pragmatism and exclusivity.'*[63]

As reflected upon by a national intelligence officer explaining his distrust for the EU, this is about the EU 'not [being] capable to act in an appropriate manner' with regard to intelligence.[64] The EU organizational culture is seen to defy the exclusivity, informality and pragmatism that intelligence officers regard their occupational recipe for success.

First, the organizational culture of the EU is perceived to challenge the closedness and secrecy so valued in intelligence. Intelligence officers, both in national capitals and in the EU organization itself, think of the EU as being more about transparency and inclusion than about security and restraint.[65] One EU intelligence officer recalls being named 'intelligence' in an open setting and being asked to do classified briefings in non-secure meeting rooms. Occurrences that might look insignificant from the outside, but make these intelligence professionals feel uncomfortable.[66] Another EU intelligence officer is even more outspoken, qualifying the EU organization, outside the doors of SIAC as a 'highly unclassified environment'. He challenges to:

> *'Find a briefing room without the customary accredited [non-EU] diplomats. You never know who is in the audience, let alone what security clearance they hold. In here, you have SIAC. [...] That is clear. But out there, you never know. They could have the appropriate security clearance, but even then. Need to know is a term unknown to them.'*[67]

In practice, even more than the lack of security measures, it is this perceived lack of security awareness in the EU that is seen to hamper intelligence cooperation the most. There is little trust among intelligence practitioners that an 'overambitious' EU decisionmaker would not:

> *'Use [an] exact phrase [from an intelligence report] in a public speech, [putting] yourself in jeopardy. So, in the heads of people, despite this not happening often, a sense of reluctance to share remains.'*[68]

62 Interview 29, 40, 23
63 Interview 1
64 Interview 27, 7
65 Interview 31, 30, 42, 43
66 Interview 38
67 Interview 40
68 Interview 37

Second, the organizational culture of the EU is perceived to challenge the goal-orientation and pragmatism so valued in intelligence. Intelligence officers, both in national capitals and in the organization itself, view the EU as being more about processes than results.[69] An EU intelligence officer sighs that 'you could have the people that have some expertise or sympathy with the topic. [...] Or you could have the trainee who happened to be available that day.'[70] Another respondent couples this to the occupational principle of being goal-oriented:

> *'The EU [...] connects poorly with the way intelligence likes to operate, which is very pragmatic and target-oriented. Once we have a goal in sight, we just start pounding towards it. And that is not the way it works in the EU.'*[71]

EU intelligence officers note a perceived lack of boldness. They think the EU process is 'just not hands on enough' and 'talking for the sake of talking'.[72] A national intelligence officer illustrates this by stating that 'jumping through layers of bureaucratic procedures' is killing for national support to the EU.'[73] An EU intelligence officer complements this picture from the inside:

> *'Every word needs to be perfect; it is part of the political hair-splitting. Every word is being weighed on a scale and words are sought that are agreed by all or do not offend, but do not tell much either. That is not us.'*[74]

When comparing to this image, they see themselves as 'relatively direct' and 'outspoken' in their messaging.[75] Although many, if not most, are coming from very bureaucratic organizations themselves, this perceived mismatch in norms hampers cooperation nevertheless. Even military intelligence officers, perceived by their civilian colleagues as the most receptive to following procedures, 'are sometimes a bit disoriented with this bureaucratic [EU] system of problem solving. [...]'.[76] Intelligence officers both in- and outside the EU mistrust the organization's effectiveness in intelligence. They doubt that their contributions will reach EU decisionmakers or will make a difference.[77]

Third, the organizational culture of the EU is perceived to challenge the autonomy and informality so valued in intelligence. In the perception of intelligence officers, both in

69 Interview 27, 30, 31, 32, 41
70 Interview 40
71 Interview 32
72 Interview 18, 29, 31, 37
73 Interview 18, 25, 30
74 Interview 38
75 Interview 14, 22
76 Interview 23
77 Interview 17, 25, 34, 36, 37, 38, 41, 42

national capitals and in the organization itself, the EU's tendency to regulate and control diminishes the room for maneuver needed for successful intelligence cooperation.[78] The bureaucratic resistance by intelligence services against further institutionalizing EU intelligence organizations, or adding new ones, is put by some respondents in this light. In their eyes, it almost 'touches on identities'.[79] For them, stressing autonomy has nothing to do with:

> *'Objecting for objecting's sake. [...] When national services get the feeling that they are being surpassed on all sides by EU institutions or pressured into an arrangement that has too much control, this will jeopardize cooperation. It is disastrous. But they [policy makers] do not understand.'*[80]

Strong perceptions on the EU's lack of integrity in the face of intelligence practice put SIAC in a difficult position. It is caught in the middle. Of course, some reservations can be made against the voiced cultural incompatibility between the EU organization and the intelligence occupation. Part of the particularly strong wording and tone may be a deliberate or undeliberate attempt to bolster a self-image by contrast. Nevertheless, contrary to the negative perception of the EU's ability in the previous chapter, many of the respondents quoted in this section are in a position to know the practices in the EU and there is a remarkable concurrence among them. Even more importantly, like with ability, perceptions in themselves matter in this context. Repeated use of words like 'they' and 'them' versus 'we' and 'us' are clear indications of categorization and (negative) comparison. They clearly display distrust and suspicion about the integrity of the EU bureaucracy.

In practice, it is hard for SIAC to be a cultural in-between in cooperation. Some respondents even describe it as a 'catch-22'.[81] To disseminate intelligence effectively to the EU, they need to be part of the bureaucracy. Yet at the same time, fully conforming to EU culture would jeopardize their professional recognition in the intelligence community. Coming from that intelligence community, most respondents criticize SIAC for standing culturally too close to the EU and not 'being genuine intelligence'.[82] One EU intelligence officer even remarks that by moving intelligence away from the Council to EEAS it has come to the end of its potential, becoming 'a container full of professional diplomats'[83] Some are more positive though. Resonating the role of individuals noted in the previous chapter, they value the SNEs from the national services as a clear and needed 'baseline for professionalism'.[84] As seen in other fields when examining the intersection between occupational culture and organization,

78 Interview 2, 3, 41, 43
79 Interview 1, 13
80 Interview 31
81 Interview 16, 2, 3, 7, 10, 34
82 Interview 1, 4, 18, 33, 39, 40, 44
83 Interview 38
84 Interview 3, 26, 29, 31

remaining at a too abstract level might preclude a deeper analysis of what is actually going on in practice.[85]

7.3. The Meso-Level: Various Codes of Conduct

7.3.1. Stressing Professionalism

The intelligence profession holds itself to be a special category. Whereas occupations refer to trades with similar tasks and skill requirements, professions in addition convince their surroundings that they hold a special position by actively demarcating their expert status and derive authority from that.[86] The unusual demands of intelligence work cultivate a sense of being special among members of the intelligence community.[87] These demands offer a pronounced basis for categorization and comparison, setting intelligence officers apart from others. Intelligence services specifically refer to the uniqueness of their craft and their personnel. For example, the Dutch MIVD emphasizes the huge responsibility that comes with serving national security and contend that speaking truth to power requires 'courage'.[88] This sense of exclusivity is mimicked in other countries. For example, the Czech Úřad pro Zahraniční Styky a Informace (UZSI) considers an intelligence service an 'elite organization of a special type', while the French Direction Générale de la Sécurité Extérieure (DGSE) stresses that they are 'a unique service' as they 'act in the utmost secrecy to defend the vital interests of [their] nation.'[89] Intelligence practitioners believe that they are in the possession of a kind of specialized knowledge that is essential for the execution of their specialized task. Other occupations might:

> *'Have a lot of expertise and are able to put it together in a very fashionable, shiny manner. But they do not have that key element coming from special sources that can confirm or deny what is really going on. To really make a difference, you need this piece of information that puts things into perspective and delivers just the right nuance.'*[90]

Bigo labels this cross-border community of practice a 'transnational guild'. Their shared world view, vested in practical outings like lifestyle, (body) language and symbols and shored

85 Guzman, Stam, and Stanton, "The Occupational Culture of IS/IT Personnel within Organizations," 46; O'Neill and Singh, "Introduction," 9.

86 Muzio, Aulakh, and Kirkpatrick, *Professional Occupations and Organizations*, 3; Anteby, Chan, and DiBenigno, "Three Lenses on Occupations and Professions in Organizations: Becoming, Doing, and Relating," 187–88.

87 Interview 34

88 Militaire Inlichtingen- en Veiligheidsdienst, "Strategische Agenda MIVD; Kernwaarden", 17.

89 Úřad pro Zahraniční Styky a Informace, "Ethical Code of UZSI Officers," point 2; Direction Générale de la Sécurité Extérieure, "Who Are We."

90 Interview 30

by similar background and socialization, is what distinguishes them from others and binds them together.[91]

In the European intelligence community, feelings of shared professionalism grant a collectivity to EU intelligence practitioners that the EU organization cannot.[92] Intelligence professionals are convinced that they 'have a job to do, and that they are the only ones who know how it has to be done'.[93] Almost without exception, respondents demarcate their craft on the basis of specific norms and standards of professional quality and use it to define an in-group. When considering the factors important for successful multilateral cooperation, they name a partners' professionalism as one of the most important. The profession serves as an institutional agent for guidance in assessing integrity.[94] One respondent underlines this point:

> *'We share our basic knowledge, our processes and our procedures. Not as a formal regulation, but it serves as a common frame that guides us. We all had more or less the same training. That frame is supported by informal rules. Conventions on how to behave.'*[95]

The general principles of the intelligence occupation provide the basis for similar, although - as will become clear in the next sections - not identical professional norms and standards that serve as a behavioral code and provide markers for trustworthiness. They are 'just something [...] indoctrinated from the beginning'.[96] One respondent illustrates:

> *'People working in intelligence only need half a word to properly understand each other. They are tuned in at the same frequency. They have a professional code of conduct that is specific to their tradecraft. Share a sense of integrity.'*[97]

Professional recognition among intelligence officers bolsters cooperation in EU intelligence. It is about feeling safe among the like-minded and 'about partners being able to box you into [the] appropriate category'.[98] As one intelligence officer explains:

> *'Discovering the professional in-group is important. [...] This is the purpose of articulating professional standards that the group respects. [...] To show that we have the same understanding in the community*

91 Bigo, 'Sociology of Transnational Guilds', 399–400, 405, 410; Bigo, 'Shared Secrecy in a Digital Age and a Transnational World'.

92 Labasque, "The Merits of Informality in Bilateral and Multilateral Cooperation," 493., Interview 1, 7, 21, 23

93 Interview 21, 7

94 Muzio, Aulakh, and Kirkpatrick, *Professional Occupations and Organizations*, 8–9, 16.

95 Interview 40

96 Interview 31, 7, 9

97 Interview 32

98 Interview 30, 2, 3, 4, 10, 20

> *and that the methods we use are very similar. Once you find that out, you experience that you are closer to the others than you had thought, and you have more willingness to listen to them and cooperate."*[99]

As could be expected of any occupation that values informality and pragmatism as much as intelligence does, the norms and standards for discovering this in-group are largely unwritten, not too complex and are maintained without formal sanctions. This informality is not to say that anything goes; 'informal does not mean do as you please'.[100] Partners must be seen to adhere to the 'unwritten rules of the game' to be acceptable.[101] As noted above when discussing secrecy, these informal principles seem to fluidly intermingle with identity-traits. At this higher level of abstraction, the unique raison d'être or 'métier' underlying occupational culture defines intelligence practitioners.[102] Respondents use a variety of colorful metaphors to illustrate the professional bonds between intelligence practitioners. They describe their community as 'birds of a feather', 'soccer players among each other', 'a flock of sheep' or even as a 'family'.[103] One of them compares the intelligence profession with similar dynamics in the Special Operation Forces (SOF). He notes that 'especially between badged SOF operators from different countries there is an instant brotherhood for sharing the same background, facing the same difficulties and qualifications."[104] Another EU intelligence officer recognizes the warm professional feelings for fellow-practitioners from other countries, as 'you know how they work. It means you will entrust them with more than you would do with others."[105] This can even lead to what one experienced EU intelligence officer calls the 'peer syndrome'. The - for intelligence 'remarkable even counterintuitive' situation - that:

> *'On some subject or for some domain, you trust more and feel more comfortable with some of your foreign partners, especially when you have the same type of expertise, than with some of your own [fellow countrymen]."*[106]

Professional recognition is not only a source of inclusion, although intelligence officers themselves mainly note its positive effect on cooperation. Wherever there is an in-group, there is an out-group as well and this can lead to exclusion. This research underlines that

99 Interview 11

100 Interview 31, Labasque, "The Merits of Informality in Bilateral and Multilateral Cooperation," 493, 496.

101 Interview 1, 38

102 Clot, "The Resilience of Occupational Culture in Contemporary Workplaces," 136–38; Anteby, Chan, and DiBenigno, "Three Lenses on Occupations and Professions in Organizations: Becoming, Doing, and Relating," 185, 192, 200–201, 205–6; Trice, *Occupational Subcultures in the Workplace*, 28–29.

103 Interview 17, 30, 28, 24

104 Interview 16

105 Interview 34

106 Interview 36

discovering and preserving the intelligence in-group goes with contestation and conflict.[107] Norms and standards not only assure proper behavioral conduct among members of the intelligence community; they also safeguard its exclusiveness versus other (work)groups. One respondent admittingly observes that intelligence professionals are 'keen to keep their standards up, [because they are] aware of their surroundings."[108] It is a dynamic that is actually at the very heart of professionalism. For example, it can be seen in medicine and law where professionals like surgeons and lawyers shield their craft from laymen, albeit there in a more formal and codified manner. The lack of formality might explain the vehemence with which the borders of the intelligence trade are defended. Categorization and comparison safeguard the viability of the professional community. The norms and standards are:

> *'Something the community relies and insists upon, [something] that is not under discussion. [...] Stepping beyond them will have severe consequences."*[109]

When services fail to live up to them, they to some extent place themselves outside of the community of practice. They risk losing the privileged position of being an acceptable partner. Equally, people that are not recognized as 'peers' in the first place are excluded from cooperation, even when they are in the same organization.[110] One respondent in this respect even refers to 'a wall around those doing secret collection and processing' and those who do not, directly resonating the term used by Simmel when depicting the way secret societies shield themselves from the outside.[111]

7.3.2. Organizational Subcultures in SIAC

In general, SIAC has a higher cultural compatibility with intelligence than the wider EU. Despite the balancing act described above, it is seen by many to abide to a baseline of professional intelligence principles. Although within the EU there is no formal program of socialization or education to install these common norms and standards, it is thought that the people coming into the EU intelligence organizations bring them from their home organizations.[112] As one participant states on the people working in SIAC:

> *'[Here] We all know the standards of the game and we speak the same language within intelligence."*[113]

107 Stout and Warner, "Intelligence Is as Intelligence Does," 521.

108 Interview 26

109 Interview 11

110 Interview 3, 34

111 Interview 27, Georg Simmel, "The Sociology of Secrecy and of Secret Societies," 486–87.

112 Interview 16, 23, 42

113 Interview 29

In addition, within SIAC there is a strong feeling of being a distinct in-group within the intelligence community. A feeling that is bolstered by perceived pressure from the outside world. Respondents from the EU witness that in SIAC they have developed their own manner of doing things. They have the advantage of analysts 'sitting together structurally or at least more frequently [...] and develop a common code of behavior."[114] In this, they have the additional advantage that the EU intelligence organizations are rather homogeneous in terms of organizational subcultures.

When examining the role of organizational subculture in the realm of governance, management, and organizational learning, much emphasis is placed upon the formal roles members of organizations hold.[115] The divides between functional roles can be the cause of friction between employees. This does not seem the case within SIAC. Its workforce mainly consists of people having very fairly similar tasks in very similar circumstances. An 'operator culture' prevails that is mainly focused on production.[116] Respondents note that SIAC is in effect a 'very flat organization, with a great emphasis on output in terms of actionable intelligence'.[117] A military intelligence officer in the EU mockingly remarks that:

> *'Everyone [here] is called an 'action officer'. [...] In any job they see fit. A kind of slave laborer so to say [laughing].'*[118]

Only few indications exist that role-based distinctions cause tension, for example with a respondent working on intelligence policy who challenges the prevailing intelligence culture:

> *'When we encounter something that is not working properly, it is not enough to go around it and continue. [...] Pragmatism is great, especially nice for you. [...] But in one year, another person will encounter the same problem as nothing has changed structurally. I hate that.'*[119]

Yet, there are not that many people working in support roles. Only EUMS INT has a policy and support branch, and this is substantially smaller than the production branch. In addition, most of these positions are filled by intelligence personnel as well. They are very much sympathetic to the peculiarities of the craft. The same goes for SIAC leadership. Their roles are perceived to be necessarily more politically or bureaucratically motivated than those of their subordinates. Yet, formal leadership positions in SIAC are also generally filled by people

114 Interview 19, 26

115 Schein and Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*; Schein, "Three Cultures of Management: The Key to Organizational Learning."

116 Schein, "Three Cultures of Management: The Key to Organizational Learning," 13.

117 Interview 25, 2, 19, 21, 29, 44

118 Interview 14

119 Interview 23

with an intelligence background, softening role-based differences. Moreover, the informal leadership by senior analysts plays an important role as well.[120]
Within SIAC most intelligence officers in the EU are not just operators, they are analysts. Besides their topic of interest, there seems little distinction between them. This greatly helps professional recognition and acceptance. As one practitioner explains:

> *'You have to take into account that we have only one type here. What we do is fusion, so we [mostly] have general analysts that perform that task. Recognition would have been more difficult when other specialisms would have been present."*[121]

This means that besides the general norms and standards of intelligence work, there is a shared analytical culture present. Respondents underline the importance of standards like knowledgeability, reliability, objectivity, analytical curiosity and even imagination.[122] Due to the analytical nature of their jobs, EU intelligence officers also name a standard for cooperation success that seems to be at odds with intelligence culture in general. Many mention the need for interaction and exchange. Even more so, some state that open discussion and critical thinking are at the very heart of SIAC culture.[123] One EU intelligence officer indicates that he considers:

> *'The discussions in our hallway a success to certain extent. It is not a classified exchange. [...] Sometimes people there are people who have better information, but that does not mean they have better understanding as well. We need to analytically break up information. That is the process we are in, our daily business."*[124]

Openness is not an indiscriminate trait between all analysts in SIAC. In practice, many respondents make a clear distinction between analysts and *intelligence* analysts working in SIAC. Whereas the latter come from intelligence services, the first do not. They perform the same tasks, have the same job titles and possess analytical integrity, but they are not fully accepted by people from the intelligence community. Limited trust exists between them. Although it is acknowledged that these non-intelligence analysts obey rules of their own, they are thought to behave in a way that conflicts with 'several iron rules for intelligence' like 'need-to-know' and the non-disclosure of sources.[125] An EU intelligence officer explains his concern:

120 Interview 25, 43, 44
121 Interview 24
122 Interview 15, 16, 21, 23, 25, 29, 31, 34, 40
123 Interview 16, 28, 29, 36
124 Interview 25
125 Interview 24, 3, 23, 40, 41, 44

> *'Real intelligence is about analysis. [But] not just any analysis. [Those that] are not aware of the intelligence cycle; [...] do not know how to process intelligence, [...] do not operate in a covert way [...] are not intelligence. [...] Their tradecraft is different."*[126]

Again, the term professionalism surfaces:

> *'From an intelligence point of view, they are not doing it professionally. [...] They go by different standards. [...] They have a whole different mindset."*[127]

The distrust caused by the cultural difference between the organizational culture of the EU and occupational culture of intelligence is catapulted into SIAC, hampering cooperation. The most obvious divide in this respect is between the civil servants coming from other EU institutions and SNEs from intelligence services, both working in INTCEN. Respondents make a sharp distinction between these 'career diplomats' and themselves.[128]As one states:

> *'Part of the INTCEN staff, fortunately a slightly decreasing part lately, are EU civil servants. [...] They do have a clearance, but they are not intelligence. National services do not want this. It is something that comes out of EEAS and I find this a bad idea. Again, a matter of culture."*[129]

On the inside, there is little appreciation for non-intelligence personnel in SIAC and their presence is a cause for tension.[130] It closely resembles conflict between subcultures in the police organization, where 'civilians' are distinguished from more specialized and prestigious 'sworn officers'.[131] One respondent strikingly sums up this process of categorization and comparison and its effect on perceived integrity:

> *'You do not need the diplomats there. They do not understand intelligence. So, speaking about trust; there is no trust in SIAC. We intelligence people often speak in confidence. We know the rules of the game. [...] Not only what is officially allowed, but [what is] possible and feasible."*[132]

On the outside, the presence of non-intelligence personnel in SIAC is perceived by intelligence practitioners to jeopardize cooperation with national services. They acknowledge that EU civil servants have an advantage in providing the cultural bridge needed between SIAC and other EU institutions, but in their view the fact that these 'very bright and very ambitious

126 Interview 14
127 Interview 25
128 Interview 25, 29, 43
129 Interview 38
130 Interview 25, 32, 38, 40
131 Manning, "A Dialectic of Organisational and Occupational Culture," 50, 57.
132 Interview 41

young people from foreign relations offices or other institutions [...] have no clue on the peculiarities [of intelligence] weakens the recognition [...] by national services."[133]

In EUMS INT a more hidden, yet similar dynamic exists. Its action officers are alle seconded from their nations, but the degree of intelligence experience varies. Some even have little to no previous experience in the intelligence craft. Many respondents readily admit that '[sometimes] you get people who are not the best suited for the job, but who are the next in line [for a variety of reasons]."[134] Few do not have an intelligence background at all:

> *'There is person X, who is seconded by his nation, but who might not have any intelligence background at all. He might be just a regular army officer on a temporary posting. He will be there for only a couple of years. [...] They have little link to the intelligence community."*[135]

The divide between intelligence and non-intelligence personnel in EUMS INT does not seem as wide as the one in INTCEN, because of the common military background.[136] Nevertheless, like in INTCEN non-intelligence personnel is seen to go by different standards. One military intelligence officer finds his non-intelligence colleagues particularly unknowledgeable, putting job titles in open mailings and not seeing the harm of using EU intelligence in a non-EU environment. In his opinion 'it is a bit of a joke to them."[137] The effect of these perceptions is serious enough though. It limits cooperation as it causes extra caution and restraint with intelligence officers. As the same respondent continues on the relation:

> *'Troublesome. [...] Sorry. You know intelligence is not an academic analysis, nor is it a doctrine endeavor. But there are rules. [These are] difficult to apprehend for those here without intelligence experience, even the good ones. It really is troublesome."*[138]

7.3.3. Occupational Subcultures of Intelligence

Professional recognition between like-minded intelligence analysts facilitates cooperation in SIAC. In these cases, the occupational culture of intelligence and the subculture of the analyst reinforce each other. It confirms the existence of a culture of intelligence analysis that is part of the wider occupational culture of intelligence and that binds these specific professionals together.[139] Contrary to their interaction with non-intelligence colleagues,

133 Interview 3, 14, 25, 32, 44
134 Interview 40, 9, 36, 38, 43, 44
135 Interview 27
136 Interview 17
137 Interview 41
138 Ibidem
139 Arcos and Palacios, "EU INTCEN: A Transnational European Culture of Intelligence Analysis?," 75–76.

respondents indicate that, intelligence peers find each other instinctively.[140] As one intelligence officer states on SIAC:

> *'In order to work together effectively it is paramount to be on the same page regarding workable practices. This is actually easier than it seems. Despite its diversity, when you look at the EU partners with some detachment, you will see that all have more or less similar values and norms. The differences are a matter of taste and emphasis.'*[141]

Yet, indeed differences remain and it is not obvious that they are a matter of taste only. Even within the strong occupational culture of intelligence subdivides exist that can hamper trust. Despite their similarity in organizational subculture and occupational culture, all being operators and virtually all being analysts, intelligence officers in SIAC still experience various 'subfamilies' within the intelligence craft that they recognize 'instantly' as being different.[142] These subcommunities of practice matter for cooperation as they bring different norms and standards, or emphasize different aspects. One respondent reflects on them when saying that:

> *'I do not know if you can genuinely speak of something like a European intelligence community. Perhaps there are several.'*[143]

Within SIAC a variety of intelligence subfamilies come together, causing some tension. The arrangement is presumed to deliver intelligence on a wide range of intelligence topics. The expertise needed is equally broad. The intelligence analysts present in the EU, as national secondments or temporary agents, import their occupational subcultures in the intelligence organizations there. To some extent it mimics the diversity of the intelligence network as a whole, presented in the previous chapter. Many practitioners remain selective about the type of intelligence they cooperate with. As one of them remarks on his workplace; 'I would have thought that trust was far higher than it is, [but] we are all [still] so different.'[144] Although adhering to the same common occupational principles, the resulting norms and standards are considered 'only basic rules and their impact differs on the setting in which they are applied. So, they are not always as clear-cut as one would think'.[145] A respondent coming from a specialized subtrade of intelligence grumbles when considering his place in the EU intelligence community:

140 Interview 16, 22, 24, 28, 30, 36, 38, 40, 44

141 Interview 19

142 Interview 14, 1, 3, 8, 17, 24, 36, 42, 44

143 Interview 29

144 Interview 31, 36, 37, 42

145 Interview 3, 40, 42

'For the intelligence community this [trust] works like an onion. [And here] I consider myself somewhere at the brownish outer layer. We do not fit in nicely."[146]

Like him, many respondents note remaining divides in the community that represent differences in approach. Nevertheless, respondents vary on which divide they perceive the most influential on their cooperation practices.

The first divide noted in SIAC is between military and civilian subcultures of intelligence.[147] Two perceptions stand out that both relate to the comparative degree to which these two groups adhere to existing intelligence norms and standards. Military intelligence officers are perceived more formal and less flexible than their civilian peers. As one INTCEN officer explains:

'EUMSINT and INTCEN sometimes work in very different worlds. It is much about the difference between the military and civilians. [...] They [military] are very obedient to procedures [and] tend just to execute those directives. And when they are in doubt, they will reach back to their superiors first. Soldiers tend to think in terms of hierarchy and categories, procedures and rules. But here in the INTCEN, it does not work that way. In here it is a very flat structure and a place for open debate. Very pragmatic as well. It is well accepted to have a discussion."[148]

Some military officers concur on the formality, although framing it as a positive attribute. For them it is about goal-orientation. One states on EUMS INT that 'in here it all about plans and roadmaps. For everything there is a time and a date. Civilians do not like that."[149] Yet, they do not agree on the lack of flexibility. Actually, military intelligence officers perceive of themselves as pragmatic team players, while they see their civilian counterparts as more closed and less open to cooperation. In any case, the divide between military and civilian intelligence is perhaps the most tangible one between the organizational entities EUMS INT and INTCEN. Yet, it is not perceived as the most important divide hampering cooperation in SIAC.

The second divide noted in SIAC is between domestic and external subcultures of intelligence.[150] Respondents experience this divide as more fundamental than the civilian-military one. Many military respondents identify the INTCEN with a subculture attributed to domestic security services. Again this is framed in valuations of secrecy, pragmatism and informality. In sum, INTCEN would be less open to cooperation than EUMS INT:

146 Interview 14
147 Interview 3, 6, 29, 36, 38, 42, 43, 44
148 Interview 38
149 Interview 39, 40
150 Interview 1, 19, 40, 42, 43, 44

'Their [INTCEN] way of thinking is very much focused on security, being defensive and constantly aiming at mitigating threats. They are even more closed up than normally is the case in intelligence.'[151]

Yet, regardless of how much truth there is in these value claims - and again it is the perception that matters -, the concern appears not to be really about INTCEN. Apart from the fact that many SNEs in INTCEN do not come from (purely) domestic security services, the argumentation shows an external rather than an internal dynamic. It is about the domestic services that are seen to have a strong influence in INTCEN and cooperate with the brakes on.[152] Indeed, some of their intelligence officers in INTCEN appear to see themselves more as representatives of CTG than EU intelligence officers. It is not so much that they are excluded from a category, it is more that they choose to stay out of it.

The third divide noted, more in general than in SIAC, is between operational and strategic subcultures of intelligence. Respondents indicate that these types of intelligence 'come with different beliefs [...], different redlines and generally the idea with the participants that they are of a different category'.[153] Operational intelligence is seen as direct support for 'keeping the troops in the field safe' or supporting counterterrorism operations.[154] Strategic intelligence stands closer to political decision-making and is therefore considered by respondents more 'political' and focused on national agendas. Especially military intelligence officers voice their dislike about strategic intelligence officers who are only seen to serve their own interest and are perceived less of cooperators. The following colorful description by one of them mainly serves to illustrate that professional recognition can also backfire when it concerns not-acceptable behavior:

'When I step into a large international conference room, I can smell the different subcommunities. [...] I immediately identify these [foreign intelligence people], including the ones from my own country. They are constantly collecting, apparent from the way they jump into conversations and the way they introduce themselves. [...] Differences are visible in haircut, outfit, behavior, and language. [They] come to conferences with large high-level delegations in fancy suits and ties.'[155]

Another thinks them to 'dress over the top. Too slick. [...] I used to recognize them by their shiny tie clips and cufflinks.'[156] This negative image of strategic intelligence officers is quite different from how these operational intelligence officers like to see themselves; pragmatic and informal. They perceive themselves as being more of a specialist, having cooperation

151 Interview 18, 30
152 Interview 20, 30, 31, 19
153 Interview 19, 1, 12, 18, 30, 34, 36
154 Interview 42
155 Interview 12
156 Interview 18

'in their DNA' and used to getting the job done 'outside the comfortable home office'.[157] It is probably a cultivated image, but one that probably causes low perceptions of integrity between the two groups.[158]

The subcultural divides mentioned above hamper cooperation in SIAC. Respondents state that 'EUMS INT is a small community in itself, as is INTCEN', both being ignorant or nonreceptive of the peculiarities and the specific habits of the other.[159] For the respondents, it seems that many of the subcultural differences mentioned align with the organizational divide between these two organizations. This organizational divide thus becomes a simple instrument for demarcating the cultural in-group and out-group. Moreover, perceptions about the other subcultural group also create their own reality for cooperative behavior between the organizations. As one of the EU intelligence officers with both a military and civilian background remarks:

> *'[It] is very hard to overcome for others, even for me. To be introducing other colleagues from here. And the other way around is not that attractive either, I must admit. Not even for me. Interaction, and crossing divides, is much easier on this floor than it is with the people from the other. There, interaction is harder."*[160]

The subcultural divides reported on are based on strong perceptions of a multitude of respondents from various backgrounds. There is little doubt that they exist and influence the degree of trust and cooperation, especially when they coincide with organizational divides between INTCEN and EUMS INT. Nevertheless, they seem as cultivated as they are cultural. Several indications exist to support this. First, in many instances respondents on both sides of a perceived subcultural divide use the same arguments on each other. For example, a lack of pragmatism is mentioned by respondents in both EUMS INT and INTCEN when addressing the other. Apparently, both equally value this principle, but choose not to see it in the other or admit it.[161] Second, the consistency in the arguments sometimes seems lacking. For example, INTCEN is associated with civilian intelligence officers. In reality, EU civilian and military intelligence are more intermingled than often assumed. As they are throughout the European intelligence community for that matter. When confronted with the fact that a mere 20 percent of 'civilian' INTCEN officers come from a military background or from a 'dual-hatted' intelligence service, a respondent quickly adds that these people are still 'far more INTCEN than military'.[162] This seems like projection. Apparently, the cultural

157 Interview 40
158 Interview 10, 11, 18
159 Interview 29, 36, 39, 43
160 Interview 38
161 Interview 19, 36
162 Interview 36, 42

subfamilies in in the intelligence family are not as black-and-white as respondents make it appear. As is typically the case when accentuating frames of reference and understanding, this serves a purpose. The perceptions of integrity emphasize the distinctiveness of (in) groups creating a simplified reality for cooperation.[163] It supports the narrative about 'who we are' in comparison to others, a point further elaborated on in chapter 8. Nevertheless, on the personal level degrees of compatibility are likely to exist and the edges of perceived differences can be softened.[164]

7.4. The Micro-Level: Possibilities for Entering the In-group

7.4.1. Hard on the Outside, Soft on the Inside

Respondents sketch the intelligence profession to be 'hard on the outside and soft on the inside'.[165] Due to the closed nature of their work, intelligence officers are not expected to be the talkative type. As explicated above, closedness is one of the core principles in intelligence culture, accompanied by norms of secrecy and restraint. This seems to make a difficult combination with developing personal relations. Yet, respondents describe much more openness when talking about the inside of their community. One of them sketches what happens among intelligence peers after an international policy meeting with a variety of attendees:

> *'Later, behind the scenes they check out how the others feel about issues. And there, opinions are shared and proper discussions take place."*[166]

Especially in operational situations of coproduction, intelligence officers are perceived to be 'as transparent as possible, as [they] have to share' to achieve success.[167] Here, outreach is more accepted and expected. With the counterparts they know well, intelligence officers are seen to be 'frank' and discussion is seen to be vital in achieving results. For them, trust is being as closed as an oyster to the outside world, but opening up to recognized intelligence counterparts.

Interaction and openness in the EU intelligence organizations is very much linked to proven expertise. All respondents agree that intelligence is 'the work of specialists' and this idea is

163 Kenny, Whittle, and Willmot, "Organizational Identity: The Significance of Power and Politics," 142.

164 Interview 42

165 Interview 15, 11, 21, 30

166 Interview 16

167 Interview 30

reflected in cooperation practices.[168] Whereas it is deemed appropriate for a specialist to open up on his topic, a generalist is expected to display more restraint. Moreover, among these specialists it is accepted that they 'grow towards each other through their deep technical exchange [...] Contacts will become increasingly simple'.[169] A respondent once witnessed:

> *'How two collection guys, usually the most closed up part of our organizations, participated in a bilateral meeting. Within no time they were chatting as if they had never done otherwise. 'I once had a case like this, and then I did this' etcetera. To my surprise it worked! They had a clear professional recognition. [...] It is apples and apples instead of apples and pears."*[170]

The type of expertise required for this interaction is specific. A respondent remarks that among themselves even the most technocratic intelligence specialists can cooperate well based on professional recognition. Their 'conversations take place on a different, more subject-matter level. They find each other in their [technical] expertise'. Even more so, for 'an outsider it is hard to capture the dynamics between them as it takes years to master the expertise and understanding prevalent in a certain field of action."[171]

In SIAC, this is mainly about analytical expertise. Yet, little about it is formally codified. The informality so clearly present in the profession, is visible among analysts in INTCEN and EUMS INT as well. Even in the latter organization, for its military character typified by respondents as the most hierarchical and procedural of the two, 'procedures and taskings do not exist in writing, there are no battle orders and so on. Things happen in speech'.[172] For example, during the interviews it became apparent that there is a SIAC handbook for the proper conduct of EU intelligence, but many respondents are unfamiliar with it or did not find it relevant enough to mention. A joint analytical training existed, but not anymore.[173] One intelligence practitioner explicates this when saying:

> *'We lack [written standards] now. Not that we miss them that much from an operational point of view. I think that in the EU setting, it would not be very effective in enhancing our workflow because of the informal way we work."*[174]

There are some respondents who advocate codifying analytical practices in EU intelligence, despite this being contrary to intelligence nature. Yet, rather than anchoring professionality on the inside, it seems that for them this would serve setting the boundaries to the outside

168 Interview 9, 11, 18, 21, 30, 32, 36, 42, 43, 44
169 Interview 20
170 Interview 35
171 Interview 20, 18
172 Interview 14
173 Interview 25, 28, 44
174 Interview 16

and impose recognition from other EU organizations and employees. They do so from a lack of trust that norms of appropriate behavior among intelligence analysts are sufficiently known and recognized on the outside.[175] One explicates this point by stating that the urge to codify standards is 'more about the EU [...]. The point is that outsiders to the intelligence community are not abiding to the same values."[176]

Within the EU intelligence organizations, individual experience is often used as a gauge for expertise.[177] On the basis of it, integrity is assessed and the limits of cooperative behavior are determined. Respondents indicate that for them practical experience is a cornerstone of appropriate behavior in SIAC. Only time on the job will allow an intelligence officer to know the unwritten book of rules. An EU intelligence officer sees that 'every conversation I have in this multilateral setting starts off with probing on who I am, and what I have done in this particular line of work."[178] And only genuine experience will do, as another EU intelligence officer explicates:

> *'It is not enough - as some colleague here - to have been in a service for a year only. That is only legitimizing your posting on paper. In practice it does not really make a difference.' And you can see that in the everyday work. They think they understand. But they do not."*[179]

In addition, respondents expect the 'old hands' to guide the younger and unexperienced ones on intelligence cooperation practices.[180] Some even refer to a 'master-apprentice' relation, where learning originates from socialization and imitation in the workplace.[181] This is typical for practice-based professions.[182] One military officer from EUMS INT underlines the importance of experience when comparing his organization to INTCEN. Surprisingly, he asserts that INTCEN is perhaps the 'real' intelligence in the SIAC setting, because: 'there are the people with 20 years of experience in intelligence, or even on a specific topic."[183] Another fiercely counters this unfavorable comparison, but agrees that:

> *'In the end, you have to be a firefighter to be able to knowledgably talk about fire. By extension it could be allowed for an arsonist or a chemist to join the conversation, but they do not enjoy the same level of*

175 Interview 2, 11, 33
176 Interview 25
177 Interview 9, 30, 36, 38, 40, 43
178 Interview 30
179 Interview 41
180 Interview 20, 44
181 Interview 18
182 Muzio, Aulakh, and Kirkpatrick, *Professional Occupations and Organizations*, 57.
183 Interview 24

trust. This is very instinctive. We might not know each other, but the fact that I know that this or that guy has worked his whole live in intelligence makes a big difference to me."[184]

Cooperation within the branches and working groups of SIAC is largely built upon an individual dynamic among specialists, based on expertise and experience. Professional recognition among analysts working in SIAC creates the personal leverage not only for exchange, but 'to talk about the process off-record [and] even to express doubts' in the assurance that the counterpart understands how to interpret and value these outpourings.[185] One EU intelligence officer claims that on the basis of professional relations 'between the analysts [...] there is a working level trust'.[186] Respondents acknowledge that in this mechanism they differ little from any other profession, but they do differ in the way recognition is obtained. Secrecy and informality play their part there. The credibility of intelligence professionals is mostly a black box; their current performance barely visible and without a clear previous track record. As a consequence, intelligence officers in SIAC have a hard time capitalizing on their expertise and experience. Respondents name two methods for assessing integrity that help them establish reasonable expectations about their counterparts nevertheless: the organization of origin and personal contact. Whereas the latter involves direct recognition by testing the waters face-to-face, the first provides a head start by indirect recognition. It is largely based on stereotypes.

7.4.2. Stereotyping

The principles, norms and standards of organizational and occupational (sub)cultures permeate down to the individual level, but the dynamics change down the line. Categorization and comparison become less abstract when applied to the individual. Especially on the inside of the EU intelligence organizations, in the branches and working groups, professional recognition gets a face. Nevertheless, affiliation to an already recognized and acceptable organization or person can provide a head start when coming in fresh. Moreover, it offers stability to cooperation, for example in the face of high turn-over of personnel.[187] Their 'earlier behavior reflects on the 'new guy'; [it] is taken into account.'[188] It is thought to tell something about the integrity of the new-comer, bolstering trust and kickstarting cooperation. First, new partners can be put on advantage by being introduced directly by a trusted person. An introduction 'transfers a bit of trustworthiness' from the known to the

184 Interview 40
185 Interview 10, 11
186 Interview 34, 23
187 Interview 2, 6, 9, 16, 18, 22, 23, 28, 36, 37
188 Interview 9

unknown partner.[189] Second, they can be helped indirectly by showing acquaintance to a trusted person. As one respondent remarks:

> *'Even the faintest acquaintance to a trusted person rubs off. It can help you start new cooperative relationships. For example, when it became apparent that I had worked together intensively with a certain person in the same home office as this [EU] colleague, that immediately broke the ice."*[190]

Third, coming from a valued organization acts as a 'door-opener' even when individuals were complete strangers when entering. An EU intelligence officer recalls getting a request from an unknown peer:

> *'Although I had no personal experience with him whatsoever, there was no question about if I should answer. He belonged to that trusted organization and was introduced. For me, that meant that I agreed to a meeting and even provided 'those answers that do not go into paper'. [...] His background was a quality brand by which I could assess him upfront."*[191]

This quality is mainly based on the intelligence principles, norms and standards mentioned above. Again, the subcultural divides come into play. For being boxed in a favorable category, not any organization will do equally.

Indirect trust is primarily granted to intelligence officers coming from dedicated intelligence organizations, preferably intelligence services.[192] The latter are depicted as 'real' intelligence by their peers, although of course mainly by others coming from a national service as well. Some include operational and tactical intelligence officers coming from J2 intelligence staffs, and the professionalized intelligence branches of the army, air force or navy. Yet, most do not agree. They perceive these 'binocular' intelligence officers as a different breed than intelligence officers coming from a service.[193] As one illustrates with an example:

> *'You have to be one of the guys. And that comes very tight. It has to be a service-to-service affair. Just having some related posting will not do. Not even when some appropriate background is there. I recently made the mistake of wanting to take along a military colleague to a meeting. The first question was whether he was working for the service. When that momentarily appeared not to be the case, I was kindly but firmly told that his presence there would not be appreciated."*[194]

189 Interview 14
190 Interview 15
191 Interview 10
192 Interview 23, 34, 38,
193 Interview 41, 36
194 Interview 30

Another, recalling a previous experience, depicts the mechanism as 'almost cartoonish' in its simplicity:

> *'It was not the organization or function that made the difference. The real question was what service I was from. And in the end, it would not have even mattered which service exactly. It mattered that I was from a service.'*[195]

In SIAC, knowing what organization an intelligence officer comes from is 'important and the fault line between the in-group and the out-group is very sharply interpreted'.[196] However, on an individual level the decision to grant initial trust appears to be based on equally shallow grounds.

Assessing integrity is 'all about scanning for common ground.'[197] Respondents agree that on a personal level this begins with the smaller things in life, like sports and hobbies. They often express bewilderment themselves on how important this trivial form of categorization actually is. In this phase of the relation already, and often based on very basic indicators, a label is placed on a counterpart to help reasonable expectations. Yet, although this first step is not about the substance of intelligence, chit-chat even, it is also 'a serious business. It is the beginning of professional probing [and] making a favorable professional impression.'[198] For example, military intelligence officers indicate that shared deployments overseas can greatly help recognition and acceptability. Slightly getting to know a partner's personality adds to his national and organizational background. In a structural setting like the EU this personal information is rapidly available, but at first the judgment is mostly based on stereotypes. Integrity is judged on whatever information is available.[199] Stereotypes make cooperative behavior in this phase vulnerable as sound judgments of character are cut short. Drawing on occupational subcultures of intelligence from the previous section, one intelligence officer criticizes these generalizations:

> *'Analysts are weary of humint; 'be careful of them', and someone is quickly recognized as being 'a somewhat nerdy siginter' [...]. These categories can be [a] source of rejection.'*[200]

Respondents prove aware of the vulnerability stereotypes bring to the relation. Predating his time in the EU, one EU intelligence officer recalls having a bad start with an intelligence counterpart when deployed overseas. Being categorized according to some shallow

195 Interview 40
196 Interview 34
197 Interview 16, 17, 9, 12, 26, 28
198 Interview 18
199 Interview 37, 44
200 Interview 17

stereotype of his country of origin, he was confronted with unreasonable - perhaps even intrusive - prejudices about his expected lack of appropriate professional behavior.[201] He notes that, for obvious reasons, it took months to find proper professional recognition and to establish a productive cooperation between them based on mutual respect and equality. Interestingly, in the end it evolved into a very successful professional relation based on personal friendship, a topic to be addressed in the next chapter. Taking into consideration the potentially negative influence of stereotypes on perceptions of integrity; one EU intelligence officer asserts that:

> *'In here, [...] I actively try to forget what country or agency people represent and what program they might be striving for. Otherwise, I would get intimidated and avoid them based on expectations from the track record of their organization, [...] these experiences frustrating the system.'*[202]

It is questionable how feasible a strategy it is to block your knowledge and interpretation of someone's background. Even more so, while acknowledging the risks, many intelligence officers state that stereotyping helps them set off cooperative relations.[203] From this small but essential fundament for reasonable expectations, it can be attempted to open up further.

7.4.3. Behavioral Testing

Entering the trusted intelligence in-group in the EU ultimately requires more than just coming from an intelligence service and possessing some basic recognizability. These are only a start. For some respondents, knowing the originating service of a colleague is sufficient ground for cooperation. To them, all SNEs working in SIAC possess a basic credibility, because they are sent by their national services. In doing so, they approach intelligence 'as a black-and-white thing. [...] Either you are intelligence or you are not.'[204] Yet, this is doubtful.[205] Unlike the surgeons and lawyers mentioned earlier and unlike in many national settings, in European intelligence it is hard to link the largely informal norms and standards of the intelligence profession to membership of one type of organization or to a 'state-sanctioned monopoly'.[206] First, among services there are many shades of grey. As seen in previous chapters, the one intelligence service is not the other and these services are hardly perceived as all the same in quality. Second, membership of these services is not as clear to the outside as it seems. One military intelligence officer, while pointing at a specific badge

201 Interview 15
202 Interview 16
203 Interview 15, 19, 22, 26
204 Interview 16, 23, 34
205 Interview 22, 23, 32, 36, 44
206 Muzio, Aulakh, and Kirkpatrick, *Professional Occupations and Organizations*, 6–7, 43.

on his uniform, attests that membership of the intelligence community is readily visible.[207] Yet, the look and feel of tangible distinctions of membership generally vary by country and organization. In addition, in intelligence they are often totally absent. For obvious reasons of security, few intelligence officers carry around visible signs for professional recognition. Most important though, respondents indicate that for successful cooperation 'perhaps two thirds or more is about personal qualities.'[208] After the initial stereotyping, they feel that it is vital to check first-hand whether the person at hand actually can fulfill the basic expectations presumed from stereotypes and organizations; to judge whether he has what it takes to do the job. In the opinion of one of them:

> *'The big question is who is to determine whether a partner can be trusted. You? The answer is yes. [Objective safeguards] are a poor instrument for trust. It is subjective, an interpretation of a situation in which not all is clear. [...] All categories in the Memorandum of Understanding can be 'on green', and still no cooperation may occur. Just because [partners] are perceived to be a joke'.*[209]

In EU intelligence, actual behavior provides a valuable avenue for professional recognition.

Personal contacts in SIAC offer signals for professionalism that cannot be derived from national and organizational stereotypes. Many respondents agree that normal work-related interaction and social events in SIAC provide fertile grounds for answering 'whether my counterpart, the person on the other side, is a professional as well'.[210] It is not only a meeting ground, but a testing ground as well. One respondent in this respect refers to the expertise and experience mentioned earlier:

> *'But how do you know whether someone is intelligence. This quality becomes apparent in the course of multiple conversations. The way someone behaves in them, is actually a resume in disguise. [...] The way they interact, the questions they ask.'*[211]

The way counterparts behave in SIAC is a rare first-hand marker for testing integrity; an indication of acceptable norms and standards both as analysts and as intelligence practitioners.[212] Ongoing conversations offer an abundance of direct signaling opportunities to participants. As one of them remarks:

207 Interview 14
208 Interview 36, 18, 23, 29
209 Interview 32
210 Interview 3, 6, 9, 10, 12, 16, 18, 21, 23, 28, 29, 30
211 Interview 40
212 Interview 14, 18, 28, 38

> *'The moment it starts to feel odd or uncomfortable, you know there is something to it. Something is wrong. At that moment the interaction apparently moves beyond what is normal, beyond common expectations.'*[213]

Personal interaction allows EU intelligence officers to test the intelligence norms and standards of their SIAC peers first hand.[214] These relate directly to the occupational culture of intelligence depicted above. One respondent explains on appropriate behavior that 'by openly showing that you know how the game is played, you build trust that you will do the same when it comes to the part a counterpart cannot see.'[215] This is in the first place about being discrete and showing restraint.[216] As one respondent explains:

> *'When I know a counterpart to be too talkative about what others did, having no restraint, then I would begin to question him, have professional doubt. Who else is he talking to and how able is he to keep my additional explanation to himself.'*[217]

Yet, it needs to strike a fine balance with showing to be experienced enough to dare opening-up sufficiently for cooperation. In practice, practitioners hover between openness and restraint. Testing this balance is seen as a 'ritual' dance' that generally follows the same pattern of conversation across the intelligence community, one in which 'you open up, but never completely, and never right away'.[218] As one intelligence officer states:

> *'You will develop trust with someone who is not a bigmouth, is experienced and knowledgeable and as transparent to you as possible. If you possess these qualities, then you will be able to build bridges.'*[219]

Personal interaction allows EU intelligence officers to test the analytical norms and standards of their SIAC peers first hand as well.[220] These relate directly to the occupational subculture of intelligence analysts depicted above. Respondents state that in EU intelligence it is important that an intelligence officer shows that he masters the analytical craft. In this they find it important that their peer is knowledgeable on a certain topic, but even more important that he is not a fraud, only pretending to know. In their eyes an analyst can never just 'talk bullocks'. If 'you do not know something, do not guess but admit that you don't

213 Interview 37
214 Interview 16
215 Interview 18, 22
216 Interview 16, 18, 32, 38
217 Interview 25
218 Interview 18, 10, 15, 40
219 Interview 30
220 Interview 6, 12, 16, 40, 42

know and need to check'.[221] EU intelligence officers regard it easy to test these analytical skills in the setting of SIAC. An experienced intelligence officer there even thinks he:

> *'Will recognize [people lacking those skills] with the first intelligence report they write, or even with the first words that come out of their mouth after entering the building for the first time.'*[222]

Interestingly given their apparent contempt of non-intelligence personnel, respondents acknowledge that in SIAC it is not about analytical skills alone, but also about skills required to cooperate effectively in a multilateral setting. They point at much needed knowledge of the EU bureaucracy, networking and language skills. Especially with regard to the latter many respondents agree that without them analysts 'will be professionally handicapped' in an international arrangement. They will appear uninformed or unknowledgeable, risk misunderstandings, will not be able to get the message across, and partners will be more reluctant to reach out.[223] Even more so, it will hamper any relation building to begin with.

7.5. Conclusion

This chapter set out to answer the question how perceptions of integrity influence social relations and trust in EU intelligence cooperation. It started from the entity, process and structure identified in chapter 3. The conceptual framework introduced principles, categorization and institutions as constituent parts of perceived integrity. From a conceptual point of view, these parts proved insightful windows into the views of practitioners working in the EU intelligence system. Indeed, they very much base trust in their counterparts on principles for appropriate behavior and categorize them accordingly. Moreover, as expected, these principles are specific for the field at hand. Nevertheless, two conceptual remarks are in order concerning institutions and categorization. First, the institutions present are governed not by one, but by two logics. Next to the logic of appropriateness, which is largely shared by all, there is also a logic of practice at work. Intelligence officers behave in a way, and value behavior, that simply gets their specific job done. The emphasis placed by respondents on expertise and experience, as well as on informality and autonomy leads to think about intelligence in terms of the communities of practice mentioned in chapter 2. Moreover, it obliges to take into account different types and levels of culture to gain a more nuanced understanding. Second, the process of categorization does not fully explain how perceptions of integrity are being built in this professional community. It needs to be complemented by the concept of socialization and acculturation. There is an interplay between institutions and the individuals that act within these frames. Not only are individuals judged by their

221 Interview 20, 9, 15, 18

222 Interview 40

223 Interview 18, 16, 20, 35, 43

adherence to the prevailing frame of reference and understanding, in the long run their interaction can change this frame as well. Interaction between intelligence officers in a specific setting can create a successful practice that in turn leads to new rules of the game.

From an empirical point of view, this chapter concludes that in the case of the EU intelligence system perceptions of integrity have a moderate effect on cooperative behavior. It analyzed these perceptions on three levels of relations; the macro (international), the meso (organizational) and the micro (personal) and it found an ambiguous picture. As it appears, the divides between clusters noted in the previous chapter are not only structural. They have a cultural effect as well, although to some extent cultural differences seem to be nurtured to fit or amplify the organizational divides. An overarching culture of intelligence is clearly visible, including shared principles. Subsequently, integrity is experienced among intelligence peers based on overlapping norm and standards. Nevertheless, the overarching occupational culture of the intelligence trade does not tell the whole story of EU intelligence cooperation. Its cultural fit is not all-encompassing or all-inclusive. At the intersections of the EU organization and this occupational culture, as well as between underlying subcultures of intelligence, notable differences still hamper cooperation. Trust is reserved for a select in-crowd, excluding others. The aggregate results are visualized in Appendix F.

On the macro-level, an overarching culture is hampered by national differences. It was found that differences in national cultures still exist, based on the respective size, political and legal regimes, and proximity of countries. Yet, the occupational culture of intelligence crosses national and organizational borders and provides the trade with clearly identifiable principles that can serve as a basis for categorization. This strongly perceived culture is seen to play an important role in European intelligence cooperation, but conflicts with the organizational culture of the EU and raises doubt among intelligence practitioners on the integrity of that organization. They perceive to hold conflicting views over the value and necessity of secrecy, pragmatism and informality The different frames of reference and understanding lead to diverging preferences in practices and problem-solving. SIAC is caught in the middle. Yet, overarching cultures do not tell the whole story.

On a meso-level, a shared professionalism facilitates recognition and supports cooperative behavior. Intelligence practitioners working in the EU are bound by a shared sense of being special. They see themselves doing a job that only they can do, but one that in the context of the EU is contested by outsiders. This seems to exacerbate tension between subcultures within SIAC. There are several. Although being relatively homogeneous in terms of job description and activities, a clear line seems to exist between personnel with an intelligence background and that without such a background. All are equal, but not equally so. In addition, there are several perceived cultural differences between various subgroups in intelligence, in many cases perceived to match the organizational divide between INTCEN

and EUMS INT. Nevertheless, at this point perceptions become more contradictive and confusing. Many of the cultural issues raised by respondents do not correspond fully with the organizational lines in the sand and some arguments are even contradictive. It seems that organizational roles and positions dictate or emphasize perceptions of occupational subdivides. Nevertheless, these perceptions are widespread and put colleagues' integrity in doubt. Categorization appears mainly a means for maintaining a small circle of trust. Yet, one that hampers broader cooperation.

On a micro-level, it is again personal relations that can make a difference. The community appears hard on the outside, but soft on the inside. Once in, considerable openness exists, is expected even. It is based on recognition of expertise and experience. The teams, working groups and branches of SIAC in EU intelligence provide a setting for witnessing and testing them first-hand. On the basis of expertise and experience shown, individual practitioners can transcend from the secluded out-group to an included in-group and reap the benefits of the fair amount of openness and exchange there. In the first instance, preliminary entrance into the in-group is facilitated by some sort of stereotyping on the basis of country and home organization or is based on experience with a predecessor. Here, a clear connection exists with the reputational dynamics around perceptions of ability depicted in the previous chapter. Yet, few norms and standards qualifying experience and expertise are codified. In second instance, further admittance to the group is only possible when passing the subjective test of behavioral integrity. In this respect, the SIAC setting provides an excellent opportunity, one largely absent from bilateral cooperation. It offers both the time and interaction needed to test the grounds. Showing a fine professional balance between openness and restraint is key in what is described as a ritual dance of passage.

When evaluating how perceptions of integrity influence social relations in EU intelligence cooperation, a metaphor is again helpful. When looking at the internal dynamics of professional recognition in the EU intelligence organizations, this resembles a soccer team. Soccer (intelligence) is their passion. They live and breathe soccer. And although all players come from different backgrounds, they recognize each other in this passion. Among them, there is no doubt about what the game stands for, when you can consider yourself the winner, and how it is played (secrecy, pragmatism and informality). And they themselves are convinced they know best (being special). Not all of this behavior is instantly understood on the outside, but for them it works and it binds them together as soccer players. Yet, now the team becomes part of a general sports club (EU), of which soccer is only one part and a recent addition too. Moreover, for the first period they have been much of a side-show. Contrary to the dynamics in the team, the club is perceived very formal, bureaucratic, and inclusive. They are actively encouraging players of other sports in the club to join the soccer team to bolster their numbers (EU civil servants). No matter how skillful these additions are, they are perceived to not fully grasp the technicalities of the game and have little feel for

the code of conduct in the team. This creates tension. However, the team already had some conflicts beforehand. The experienced players look alike to some extent, but their mindset, their skills, and their behavior is partly linked to their position on the pitch. For example, the center-forward is very goal-oriented and highly technical, but perceived of as not much of a team player (civil/security/operation), whereas the goalkeeper is thought to be the opposite; very risk-avoidant, a master in buying time, and the architect of the team strategy (military/intelligence/strategic). As a result, although from the outside they look like a team, and overall they agree on many things, on the inside many faultlines exist. These can cloud recognition and hamper cooperation in the game.