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BOOK REVIEW

ON STAFFING AND MANAGEMENT IN MILITARY AND OTHER ORGANISATIONS

Maja Garb (ur.), Organizacija, vodenje in ljudje: Poti in stranpoti kadrovanja in odnosov v vojski in drugih organizacijah. Ljubljana: Fakulteta za družbene vede, Založba FDV, 2024. ISBN: 978-961-295-087-3.

Introduction The book series Security Studies, which has been published by the Faculty of Social Sciences since 1998, has a new book on (military) organisation, leadership, staffing and existence within it, edited by Dr Maja Garb and published in 2024. In her editorial, she also gives a theoretical concept of organisations as such and, more specifically, of military organisations, which are on the one hand specific, but on the other, most of their activities are carried out in the same or a very similar way to other organisations. Cohesion within a military organisation is even more important than elsewhere, as the accuracy of the execution of tasks in the field is crucial to the lives of all involved, making a military organisation even more vulnerable to all the elements that weaken it, from stakeholder stress to dissatisfaction with leaders.

1 DEFENCE MANAGEMENT

The book *Organisation, Management and People: Paths and Sides of Staffing and Relationships in the Military and Other Organisations* is the result of the study and research work of the students of the academic year 2020/21 in the undergraduate programme in Defence Studies at the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana, on the course Defence Management. It was edited by the lecturer of the course, and the 26 contributions were divided into three sections. In the first

part, the authors presented the theory of the papers under discussion (they referred to domestic and foreign professional literature, and some of them also consulted popular management manuals, most of them written on the basis of experience), mostly in the civilian field; then they came to military cases, followed by an empirical part, mostly three interviews in each paper. A few of these were conducted with people from the Slovenian Armed Forces (SAF), which certainly adds considerable value to the book and to the individual contributions. Further research would have required interviews with SAF members in all fields, and certainly in larger numbers, but the students probably did not have this opportunity due to the closed nature of military organisations (although some did manage to interview current and former SAF members). Let us add to this the fact that the students were mostly conducting the interviews during the pandemic, and thus faced the closure of public life and difficulties in conducting face-to-face interviews.

In their concluding thoughts, the authors, in addition to proposing further research, also provide their own thoughts and specific solutions to address the issues at stake in military organisations, particularly in the SAF. However, some of the authors also point to the rigidity of military organisations and their adherence to traditional values for decades, if not centuries in some organisations, which is why change is even slower to materialise here than in other organisations.

2 CONTENTS

The first eight papers in the first section, entitled »Processes in the Organisation«, deal with career paths, from recruitment selection to retirement procedures, and address the areas of reward, communication, leadership and people with disabilities in this specific work environment. The second section, entitled »Work, Motivation and Employee Satisfaction«, brings together nine papers dealing with organisational culture, rituals, satisfaction, leadership styles, the concept of accountability, and discipline, mentoring, and burnout, one of the biggest challenges in modern organisations. In the final section, there are nine contributions grouped under the title »Emotions, Interpersonal Relations and Bad Practices in the Organisation«. Here the authors address these topics, emotions and interpersonal relations, including with a focus on gender relations and attitudes towards problematic colleagues, and also with a special focus on the concrete challenges of today, such as toxicity in organisations, mobbing in the work environment, sexual harassment, free-riding in the workplace (including the attitudes of professional soldiers towards reservists), and also the life-work relationship.

Conclusions

Those students who not only included theory in their papers but also actively undertook concrete empirical research should be congratulated, but it should be stressed that the papers differ from one another and that some of them already reach high standards of scientific texts. The lack of material is highlighted, especially in the inaccessibility to researchers to examine the realities of defence management in the Slovenian Armed Forces. At a time when all organisations, including military ones, are facing staff

shortages and challenges in staff recruitment, as well as unresolved internal conflicts which continue to lead to staff departures despite the difficult realities described above, this book is a great asset for the Slovenian market. On the one hand, it offers insight into theory for all those who deal with HR and organisations in the context of their jobs in the SAF and the Ministry of Defence (MoD), while on the other it offers both defence scientists and, above all, other social scientists, especially researchers in the field of organisations, a starting point for further research, which is plainly more than necessary. The present work is also an example of good practice, where students' written products see the light of print and leave the walls of the faculty to find their way onto the desks of those in the SAF and MoD who have to deal with this field in practice.

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