

WHY WE STUDY MILITARY INSTITUTIONS

An army is not only another organization, at least not the whole army all the time. It is a double –faced or double-sided body; one of them is used in peacetime and the routine circumstances i.e. ‘the cool one’. Hence it is like any other “traditional organization”. The other face or side is used in wartime or in the time of crises and in peace operations or plain war. In wartime an army exercises authority on behalf of the nation and adopts violence and may force people to do anything they do not like. Police forces and similar organizations are like that army organization. This authority of the army and the similar organizations which do not have special formal uniforms are something exceptional. Even in peacetime an army is not like any other institution or organization. Although obligatory recruitment has been cancelled in many countries, and although the army employees in these countries are regarded as other employees, (Moscow and Wood 1988). Work, training and living conditions are different. This applies to the armed forces which consist of soldiers; the draft citizens (obligatory recruitment). It is still the case with professional armies which include drafts.

There are three characteristics here (Lang. 1965), the first characteristic is the societal life. For the military forces their life and their private life too tend to overlap and change their career becomes part of their daily life. In many countries, military personnel and their families too live in military premises, camps, fenced and detached compounds for most of their life – isolated from the usual life led by others. This separation is dominated by political, legal and practical aspects of military organizations. The second characteristic is the military life with its hierarchic system like a pyramid. This is because military life is highly bureaucratic. It is a set of pyramids

which makes a clear compulsory power emanating from its top but accepted by all and looks in good order under its uniform. This is because the effectiveness of the military organization depends – to a great extent – on unity of thought and work. The third characteristic is the strict discipline i.e. submission to rules and acceptance of authority and commands and to public and open punishment in case of rebellion or insurgence.

It is true that these characteristics vary from one country to another. The armed forces in the USA differ from those in Turkey, Brazil, the UK or Holland. However, the armed forces in these countries vary from one country to another. These basic characteristics of the army tend to be unclear in modern countries. Modern military organizations appreciate more private life (i.e. professional life) for their individuals. They wish it be less compulsory and more empowered in its bureaucratic proximity (Adler and Borys 1996) and tend to encourage self-directed discipline instead of abstract instructions and commands (Soeters, 2000), yet the army remains in essence to be an army regardless of all the developments that might take place.

That is why we have dedicated this volume for studying the military organization as a type of its own (Yden, 2000) and this is very important for the army itself and maybe for other traditional organizations it might also be good for other traditional organizations. Historically speaking military organizations were models to be followed in terms of order and discipline. Military organizations were in the past the biggest and the most progressive organizations. This excellence continued up to the Industrial Revolution in the nineteenth century.

The Chinese general Sun Tzo, 2500 years ago wrote a small book on how to win battles by adopting convenient strategies and tactics. Later this small book becomes the best seller in the field of management. It gained popularity in the field of strategic management. The German sociologist and creator of the concept of “bureaucracy” Max Weber influenced the theories of strategic management and structure. His ideas were based on historical operations in the Roman Empire and its armed forces. The works of Frederic Taylor on scientific management have gained the support of the American Army generals and admirals since his works were published and became well known. (De Waard and Soeters 2007; Resteigne and Soeters 2009) It is believed that military institutions – or at least a big number of them – are organizations of high credibility. Safety and protection from disasters and accidents are common elements in the routine organization and cultural operations in such organizations. (Roberts et al. 1994; Weick and Sutchiff 2001). The study of the ideal qualities of these institutions may result in helpful recommendations for so many other organizations like financial organizations which encounter challenges of “credit crises”. The same thing would apply to our understanding of leadership developed by the army in hard times. (Kolditz and Brazil 2005).

However management and organization theories have developed to become an academic branch that concentrates a lot of civil life (Clegg et al 1996). Researchers give due regard to insurance companies, banks, car and textile manufacturers, schools, universities, oil extraction companies, advertising agents, IT service providers, communication companies, airlines, film studios, theatres, orchestra music bands and public administration organizations. But researchers rarely pay any attention to organizations which live in exceptional circumstances (Mintzberg 2001) not mentioning the military organization in this respect. It is a twofold aim: to apply the current civil management theory and

discipline on the military organization in order to have a better understanding of what is happens in such organized life (Isenberg 1985). On the other hand we hope that our book can contribute to the development of new concepts and ideas that might be of great use to the other traditional organizations. To begin with let us go back a little to see what really constitutes the real essence of military organizations. We will not feel ashamed of the less important aspects.

The Main Characteristics of Military Organizations

Politics and Society

Perhaps one of the most significant characteristics of a military organization is that it belongs to the field of politics. Military organizations in modern democracies are an executive device for politicians in terms of national and international security (Feaver 2003). A famous saying by Kloeafitz is “War and military operations are a continuation of politics but in a different way”. This implicitly means that an army can only be good within the scope or frame allowed by politicians. This refers to the resources provided to the army, and may be referring to the operations and tasks assigned to it by politicians: including authorization and the resources allowed for the army to enable it to execute its duty. In the end they are all operations chosen by politicians.

For instance, let us look at the relatively small numbers of military chosen by the US government for the Iraq operation. Only after years of pressure, was it clear for the US government officials that the operation would only be a success only by increasing the number of military. The margin for the army maneuvering would be tighter even in the UN operations lead by the “international” world

community. In the nineties of the twentieth century, peace missions of the UN were dramatically reduced to a minimum due to administrative and organizational circumstances. Names like Somalia, Rwanda, and Srebrenica become well known in this connection (Brahimi 2000). The peace mission undertaken by the UN was open to criticism due to the vague decision making process, insufficient contribution of partners and the political oversensitivity that lacked practicality (Lipson 2007; Gowan 2008). As a matter of fact there were aspects of improvement over the years in both the national and international political frameworks. However this would not refute the fact that military effectiveness is greatly affected by the convenient political decision and execution, in addition to the world community support. For sure the management of military and peaceful operations addresses the problem of political complexities (Clement and Smith 2009).

Continuity and Lack of Clear Objectives

An army and other organizations have a feature in common in terms of general management: each of them is established to continue forever. In this continuity an army is different from other organizations which have to assert and prove their existence in the market ever day where their offers may be demanded. Of course the army offer also is demanded, but this offer is called the mass or communal demand; hence it is politically defined and priceless. It is priceless in form but not in reality, because military activities need costs that is usually paid by politicians representing the public taxpayers. In an army the relationship between supply and demand is indirect at its best. Due to lack of a direct market and pricing mechanism the military are busier with operations than with costs. They are rather busy with the casualties of their staff. Military leaders give less regard to natural organizational efficiency (Mol and Beeres 2005). They intentionally ignore this area (Seibel 1996).

Furthermore, military organizations and their leaders usually have problem when they come to defining the results of their achievements. This is because the objective of their existence in peacetime is only to prepare for time of work i.e. wartime. Even during work time the range of time for which objectives were specified is unclear (Call 2008). It is true that you can count the number of the surrendering troops or those taken as war prisoners or those unarmed or count the number of assets like buildings. All this does not give a lot of information about the real effects which politicians had in mind when assigning the operation to the military. Analogy of influence and operations is the only way to overcome the challenge, but results will continue to be argumentative as it is the case with control systems in the public sector (De Bruijn 2006). This problem is attributed to the vague objectives decided before the beginning of the mission. Quite often this failure is attributed to politicians and not the army. However an army overcomes lack of clarity when it realizes that it has succeeded.

Variety of Missions, Services, Nationalities, Companies

This matter has become more pressing due to the development that took place over the past years. Since the cold war the army has been participating in support of peace missions instead of explicit war. Although objectives of war may be clear and plain, they are much less in nowadays' operations because there are things which are more important than breaking out of violence or neutralization of a hostile party: it is stability all over the country and reconstruction of its infrastructure to mend its economic, legal, social and political fabric, as well as restructuring its educational system and healthcare system. At present there is a need to address all these missions at the same time (Gates 2009). Despite the similar historical instances

(Fukuyama 2006), these multiple missions are things that do not make an army feel at ease and it may not be able to carry them out. These multiple missions and the increasing demand for them, urge the army to be more flexible and form teams with others (Dandeker 1994) which may allow for introduction of new squadrons and army units for instance. This may also allow for the introduction of military experts like anthropologists in military units (McFate 2005). There is a need for an army to work with the armed forces of other countries. This is a high degree of internationalization of the military missions and operations today (Soeters and Manigart 2008). This development also creates its own special challenges of softening cooperation among armies whose troops used to be strangers with each other in their best conditions, and enemies in their worst conditions. This challenge is embodied at a larger extent in civil-military partnership where political, humanitarian development agents cooperate together (Rietjens and Bollen 2008).

Bureaucracy

Early in this chapter we referred to the fact that the military organization is a main example of bureaucracy: an organization that is originally coercive and machinery without any doubt. There is a strict division of work and authority (i.e. commands and rules) and things flow in a single direction from top to bottom. Over decades this type of military organization made caricatures accuse armies - and the military - of being an organizational fool. Furthermore, caricatures on the other hand sympathized with the poor humans within the military organization who try to avoid hazards and risks. Let us look at the famous novels like "Good Soldier Sefk" (Hasek 2000) to be able to imagine this kind of enlightened sarcasm. In a more academic way, such criticism was not lighter when analyzing the World War 1 operations. Fled (1959) refers to the gap between a great responsibility and the real type of work. As for strict division of

work communication among units was missing in most cases. Vertical communication tended to be unbalanced, and chief commanders were responsible for this and were to blame. During the World War 1 it was noticed that there no British officers were seen in the battlefield in Belgium during the battle. This is a very strange matter. However, in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan the western armed forces were too centralized to be effective against irregular enemies (Sinno 2008). The US Defense Secretary Robert Gates made a kind of analysis of the procurement of his organization. It is another evidence of bureaucratic deficiency and flaw (Gates 2009). He admitted that the procurement procedure of the Ministry of Defense hindered the fast development of technology against the haphazard explosion devises and the production of chemicals to overcome detonators, expansion of intelligence, monitoring and reconnaissance systems in Iraq. Again this is another negative aspect of bureaucracy and bureaucratic mentality.

Over the years criticizing and mocking at the military bureaucracy and government red tape has become a source of nice entertainment and amusement of academics, politicians and novelists. In spite of this, we should not forget that bureaucracy has developed due to unwanted organizational phenomena like favoritism, corruption, organizational misconducts like bossing others, partiality and domination for the strongest (physically). The strict organizational laws) complementing societal ones) are badly needed to abolish unacceptable conducts like the whimsical use of weapons. It is obvious that this is a big issue for the army, hence bureaucracy was created to stay in the army (Soeters 2000) like anywhere else (Wilson 1989; du Gay 2000) and this makes the military organization a better one and morally more acceptable.