

**ZRÍNYI MIKLÓS NATIONAL DEFENCE UNIVERSITY**

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Summary of the PhD Dissertation

***“Management in the Armed Forces”***

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## **0 ABSTRACT**

Strategy, planning and the best possible use of scarce resources are classical priorities on the military sector. Additionally, the principles of modern business management are gaining more and more importance and can certainly be applied to defence administration as well as to operational and troop management - taking into account their unique specifications. In this context, future oriented thinking, adaptability, flexibility, improvability, and the best possible coordination and performance are standing in the foreground. The instruments of performance and effect oriented governance can - if applied correctly and professionally - contribute substantially and in the best way to find solutions for the manifold problems of military management.

## **1 THE DEFINITION OF SCIENTIFIC PROBLEM**

Today not only businesses are facing global competition, but also countries in their quality as economic locations. This, as a consequence, includes the institutions of public administration as agencies of a nation state.

At the beginning of the last century, the bureaucratic model had a predominantly positive connotation attached to it. However, it developed under premises which strongly differ from today's circumstances. The current and foreseeable situation increasingly requires administrative organisations to be flexible and cost effective. Institutions of public administration have been showing an increasing awareness of the fact that present procedures of administrative actions are no longer up to date and require redeployment.

Generally speaking, public administration is suffering from budgetary shortness, image problems, deficits in management, a not always ideal effectiveness and efficiency, sometimes also from problems in motivation of the staff members and a relatively quick change of duties and requirements while at the same time facing considerable new challenges. All strengths – the rule of law and reliability in the first place – are facing remarkable weaknesses; high cost, deficits in quality and usually weak innovations in dynamics should also be mentioned here. Numerous specific factors provided, this applies also to the military sector. More than ever the ideal planning and use of scarce financial and other means seems to be in the foreground (“getting out most of the budget”).

Administrations are increasingly facing these problems with the realisation of – and dealing with – changing settings of tasks. They find themselves confronted with new challenges which require new approaches. Contemporary forms of coordination within administrations and abstract bodies of rules and regulations for an efficient management of public institutions are needed. It is important to establish a suitable framework on a political, economic and social level in order to reasonably fulfil public tasks, preferably in the sense of a requirement and circumstance oriented public value performance. The latter should on the one hand still be relevant to interest groups, but nevertheless more economy oriented. Existing unused or misrouted productivity reserves should be mobilised, self organisation on the public side established and information networks within and between the organisations built up and developed.

These processes affect the military administrations in very special ways. The drastic and rapid changes of global security political conditions do have a massive impact on interpretation, structure and assignment of modern armed forces. This requires corresponding adjustments in all military related administrations and other institutions.

Not only should this approach demonstrate the necessity of restructuring and reorientation of military administration, but also the possibilities of such a transformation from a principally purely administrative to an enhanced business economically managed administration by means of basic principles of public management.

Public management is to be understood as the summary of modern approaches of organisational and tax intelligence of an institution appointed to guide and design complex systems in a performance and effect oriented way. The crucial criteria are effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. The main objective of administration management is to guarantee military task fulfilment and viability of the military organisation in the long term by constant optimisation against the background of political specifications and the military mandate. Skills like flexibility and the ability to further common- and self-development are to be cultivated.

In the past, relatively little importance was ascribed to these economic considerations regarding the interpretation of the military and its administrative organisations. This has to change, however, if an effective and efficient armed forces structure and process is to be implemented and maintained.

## **2 RESEARCH AIMS**

In transforming an army to an effectively managed organisation, the research target is

- to analyse the logical particularities of “military administration”
- and to identify, on the basis of that analysis, the starting point for appropriate measures in order to make the work within the military administration more efficient and effective.

In the long term the military can change from an “administrative establishment” to an “enterprise”. The systematic activity to administer and see to the accomplishment of the issues instructed by law within the framework of an administrative management, also in the sense of a contemporary business management, is to be administered and provided. Hereby, reasonable management, in terms of economic oriented thinking and acting, stands in the foreground. In this context, defence economics and business administration are particularly significant. It is important to find out about effectiveness (“Are we doing the right thing?”), efficiency (“Are we doing the right thing the right way?”) and cost effectiveness (“profitability”). In the course of the goal setting process – against the background of public interest – the role of the corporate stakeholder has to be taken into consideration.

## **3 METHODS OF RESEARCH**

Against the underlying background public management focuses on a comprehensive method of problem resolution by applying findings of business administration and management (compare “service institution military”) based on its principles and demands.

In the framework of the research, this systematic, holistic approach shall be applied. It allows taking into consideration as well the cause-effect relationship and the strengths and weaknesses within the “military business” and as a consequence to propose successful ways of structuring.

It has to be outlined, that the concept and realisation of public management must not be a pure belt-tightening policy. In fact, state and administration should be prepared for future tasks appropriately and on time. Various specific instruments could be applied for this purpose.

#### **4 THE EXECUTED RESEARCHES IN DIFFERENT CHAPTERS**

The following fundamental scientific tasks and questions are to be posed:

- **Question 1:** How can a performance and impact oriented governance/regulation be established on the military sector? (Related research covered by Chapter I)
- **Question 2:** What does such a governance/regulation generally look like? (Related research covered by Chapter I)
- **Question 3:** Which particularities have to be taken into consideration at the realisation of such a concept on the military sector? (Related research covered by Chapter II)
- **Question 4:** Which measures have to be taken into consideration at the realisation of such a concept on the military sector? (Related research covered by Chapter II)

#### **5 CONCLUSIONS**

I have found, that especially the following problems have to be addressed:

- Critical development of public households
- change of tasks
- pressing political problems
- public image problems
- pressure of legitimacy and changed performance expectations
- serious managerial deficits; lacking efficiency and effectiveness in administrative acting
- loopholes in modernisation of administration
- changed expectations towards staff
- unbalanced human resources management
- problems concerning motivation of staff, and inability to keep pace with swift task changes

The principles of an economic interpretation would be:

- Optimization of the strategic decision making processes on the political level and enforced delegation of duty fulfilment to the administration
- Long term transformation of a military administration to military as an enterprise
- Promotion of the individual responsibilities of duties, resources, cost and results
- Reduction of bureaucracy, simplification and transparency of processes, optimization of the internal information system, clear assignment of responsibility
- Optimization of dedication and use of the provided means

- Finding of concepts for the integration of individual areas of responsibility
- Development of organizational structures for more motivation and personal responsibility

In this context, considerations about profitability do increasingly play a role, whereas its measurement especially in the military sector will remain largely unsettled for the time being. Initially, the following problems are to be solved: Up to now, input oriented rather than solution oriented governance has been in the foreground. This way, it is clearly regulated how much money can be spent on which issues (input), but it is regulated which services are to be performed with it (output). Target settings are hardly ever clear, which means that it stays often unclear which “products” and services are to be set up at what cost and for which target group. The usual separation of professional management and resource management is also problematic. This tends to lead to the point where nobody feels responsible for results (see “organized irresponsibility”). The outcome is a relatively dependent system, guided by extreme target parameters but not a “learning”, self guiding one. Such a system is incapable of responding to changes with the necessary flexibility and to guide its performance towards better effectiveness and efficiency.

It has to be outlined, that the concept and realization of public management must not be a pure belt-tightening policy. In fact, state and administration should be prepared for future tasks appropriately and on time. Various specific instruments could be applied for this purpose.

Within the framework of strategy the right position of points should be carried out, whereas a respective mission statement should see to basic orientation and confidence (see “value structure”) and ensure appropriate target building and learning processes (see vision, organizational philosophy, corporate identity). In this context, military governance is primarily aimed at finding independent ways of transformation without conflicting with other institutions of society and organizations of public administration. Especially against the background of the diverse military tasks new forms of “military leadership” bear great chances, not least also in the broadening of inbound concepts of civil-military cooperation.

In general, the current realization of public management is to be evaluated rather differently. Quite good progresses could be made in regards to the “hard” factors (e.g. budgeting, cost accounting, controlling). Compared to them, the development of the so called “soft” factors (e.g. management, organizational culture, flexibility) is by far not as advanced. Of course it has to be underlined, that the realization of changes in fields which are directly connected with people and their behavior is by far more difficult than the purely technical implementation of business economic tools in other fields.

## 6 NEW SCIENTIFIC RESULTS

For the military, the application of a holistic concept of business management suggests itself in the sense of transition from a bureaucratic administration to an efficient “business”, professional management playing a main part in this transition.

**Result 1** (referring to Question 1): It is absolutely necessary to implement the principles of an economic interpretation in the context of military administration as such: Optimisation of the strategic decision making processes on the political level and enforced delegation of duty fulfilment to the administration; long term transformation of a military administration to military as an enterprise; promotion of the individual responsibilities of duties, resources, cost and

results; reduction of bureaucracy, simplification and transparency of processes, optimization of the internal information system, clear assignment of responsibility; optimisation of dedication and use of the provided means; finding of concepts for the integration of individual areas of responsibility, and development of organisational structures for more motivation and personal responsibility.

**Result 2** (referring to Question 2): A management of the military as an enterprise after the parameters of public management guarantees the achievement of the following targets and results in a more effective way: Strengthening of the strategic leadership on the political level and comprehensive, target oriented delegation of task fulfilment to the level of administration. This way, the tendency to under control in the strategic field can be reduced as well as the tendency to over control in the operational field; transition from an administration to a target group and performance oriented (service-) organisation; promotion of responsibility for tasks, resources and results; reduction of bureaucracy, simplification of decision making processes and procedures, improvement of transparency and therefore positive stimulus of motivation; increase of effectiveness by more targeted use of resources and clear priorities; increase of efficiency through clear responsibilities and finally the long term change of the organisational culture in view of more willingness to perform, more responsibility and more motivation.

**Result 3** (referring to Question 3): Considering this “framework” it is important to leave old patterns of thinking behind, since the realisation of the mentioned aspects would not be possible or respectively desirable under such conditions. Existing, negative attitudes and concerns about a change in organisational culture would have to be confronted by convincing to achieve the following: Enhanced target and result oriented guidance *instead* of mainly input guided regulation; strategic guidance “from a distance” *instead* of governance by constant (political) interventions into daily business; extensive self guidance of decentralised entities with an effective guiding framework *instead* of “bureaucratic centralism”; graded, to a large extent delegated result-responsibility (“unity of professional responsibility and resource responsibility”) with clear and transparent structures of responsibility *instead* of “organised irresponsibility”; reintegration of formerly shared tasks and performance processes targeting an optimization of the entire process; clearer orientation on the target groups and on clear quality criteria; focus on the “core competences” by enhanced usage of external suppliers; enhanced efforts for transparency of costs and performances, among other by a complete cost accounting and compilation and evaluation of performances; intensive human resource management, which is primarily based on motivation and personnel development; within the framework of a strategy the right positions of points should be taken, it should see to an according mission statement of basic orientation and confidence of behaviour (“value structure”) and to secure appropriate target setting and learn processes (vision, organisational philosophy, corporate identity, “military leadership”); the configuration and maintenance of the organisational culture is an important element of public management; task and process review can also be instruments of a sustainable increase of efficiency and optimisation of the use of resources and the task fulfilment of the armed forces; in this context, the so called contract management is also an important factor; controlling is finally summarising the described instruments, as a new kind of understanding is exceeding the conventional logics of planning, guidance and surveillance.

**Result 4** (referring to Question 4): The following measures for a successful and sustainable application of the above mentioned implications would have to be fulfilled: To achieve a certain basic understanding of an enterprise named military for a leadership, which is strongly oriented according to the point of view of business management; the application of this basic understanding in the realisation of business economic thinking and action taking in all fields

and on all levels; the acquiring of a certain basic knowledge relevant to management and about business economy of all executive managers; the use of business economic instruments, methods and procedures has to be enhanced and intensified; the preconditions for constant development and optimisation of the applied instruments, methods and procedures have to be established; an enhanced assignment of pertinent trained personnel in corresponding functions of the different fields and levels; optimisation of human resource management; more efficient use of the existent knowledge and improved knowledge transfer; development of a controlling concept as well as a controlling system and a complete introduction of controlling; the continuing of already started, pertinent reformation projects, also consulting external experts; the introduction of quality management in order to secure a high level of performance; the cultivation of the instrument of task review in the sense of the permanent analysis which tasks should ideally be administered by whom and in which way.

In general, i.e. in the Austrian Armed Forces, which were the main object of the authors research and findings, the current realisation of public management is to be evaluated rather differently. Quite good progresses could be made in regards to the “hard” factors (e.g. budgeting, cost accounting, controlling). Compared to them, the development of the so called “soft” factors (e.g. management, organisational culture, flexibility) is by far not as advanced. Of course it has to be underlined, that the realisation of changes in fields which are directly connected with people and their behaviour is by far more difficult than the purely technical implementation of business economic tools in other fields.

## **7 PRACTICAL AVAILABILITY OF THE NEW SCIENTIFIC RESULTS**

Against the mentioned background public management focuses on holistic method of problem resolution by applying findings of business administration and management (compare “service institution military”) based on the following principles and demands:

- Enhanced target and result oriented guidance instead of mainly input guided regulation
- Strategic guidance “from a distance” instead of governance by constant (political) interventions into daily business
- Extensive self guidance of decentralized entities with an effective guiding framework instead of “bureaucratic centralism”
- Graded, to a large extent delegated result-responsibility (“unity of professional responsibility and resource responsibility”) with clear and transparent structures of responsibility instead of “organized irresponsibility”
- Reintegration of formerly shared tasks and performance processes targeting an optimization of the entire process (business re-engineering)
- Clearer orientation on the target groups and on clear quality criteria
- Focus on the “core competences” by enhanced usage of external suppliers (“warranty management”)
- Enhanced efforts for transparency of costs and performances, among other by a complete cost accounting and compilation and evaluation of performances
- Intensive human resource management, which is primarily based on motivation and personnel development
- Within the framework of a strategy the right positions of points should be taken. It should see to an according mission statement of basic orientation and confidence of behavior

(compare “value structure”) and to secure appropriate target setting and learn processes (compare vision, organizational philosophy, corporate identity, “military leadership”).

- The configuration and maintenance of the organizational culture is an important element of public management. It can be applied as an essential instrument of leadership. In the military, it is traditionally and extensively used as such. Nevertheless, at the same time there is a considerable necessity for restructuring notable when considering a more modern organizational culture.
- Task and process review can also be instruments of a sustainable increase of efficiency and optimization of the use of resources and the task fulfilment of the armed forces.
- In this context, the so called contract management is also an important factor. By target and performance agreements administrative action is to be guided in a result oriented way through negotiable parameters of operational targets.
- Controlling is finally summarizing the described instruments, taking some kind of cross divisional function. This new kind of understanding is exceeding the conventional logics of planning, guidance and surveillance.

## **8 RECOMMENDATIONS**

For the military, the application of a holistic concept of business management suggests itself in the sense of transition from a bureaucratic administration to an efficient “business”, professional management playing a main part in this transition. Such a holistic concept is also to be seen in the context of public management. The following preconditions for a successful and sustainable application of such a holistic concept of business management would have to be fulfilled:

- A certain basic understanding of an enterprise named military for a leadership, which is strongly oriented according to the point of view of business management
- The application of this basic understanding in the realization of business economic thinking and action taking in all fields and on all levels
- The acquiring of a certain basic knowledge relevant to management and about business economy of all executive managers
- The use of business economic instruments, methods and procedures has to be enhanced and intensified
- The preconditions for constant development and optimization of the applied instruments, methods and procedures have to be established
- An enhanced assignment of pertinent trained personnel in corresponding functions of the different fields and levels
- Optimization of human resource management
- More efficient use of the existent knowledge and improved knowledge transfer
- Development of a controlling concept as well as a controlling system and a complete introduction of controlling
- The continuing of already started, pertinent reformation projects, also consulting external experts

- The introduction of quality management in order to secure a high level of performance
- The cultivation of the instrument of task review in the sense of the permanent analysis which tasks should ideally be administered by whom and in which way

In this context it is important to leave old patterns of thinking behind, since the realization of the mentioned aspects would not be possible or respectively desirable under such conditions. Existing, negative attitudes and concerns about a change in organizational culture would have to be confronted by convincing.

Public management guarantees that the tasks are being agreed upon between politics and administration in form of targets, performance, budget and operation. This way, a transparent communication is possible. In addition to that it sees to a better effectiveness and efficiency in task fulfilment, which is supposed to lead to a better use of resources and orientation towards target groups and demands.

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#### 10 ASPIRANT'S SCIENTIFIC- PROFESSIONAL CV

25th May 1961	born in Mödling/Lower Austria (nationality Austria)
1967-1971	Elementary School Perchtoldsdorf
1971-1975	High School Mödling
1975-1980	Technical College Mödling
1980/81	Military Service, Telecom Division, Vienna/Großmittel
1981-1986	Studies of Business Administration, Vienna University of Economics and Business Administration (MBA 1985, PhD 1986)
1981-1985	Technical College Mödling, Assistent Practical Education Laboratories (Eng. 1984)
1985-1987	Hewlett-Packard Ges.m.b.H (Vienna), Financial Analyst
1987-1989	Österreichische Länderbank AG (Vienna), Industrial Holdings Department, Controller
1989-1992	WANG Austria Ges.m.b.H (Vienna), Finance & Administration Manager/ Eastern European Operations
1992/93	Comenius University Bratislava (Slovakia), Faculty of Management and Masaryk University Brno (Czech Republik), Faculty of Economics and Administration, Visiting Professor
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Budapest, February 2010