

JOURNAL OF CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY
AND LEADERSHIP

LEADERSHIP IN CONTEMPORARY MANAGEMENT CONCEPTS

The 7th International Military Leadership Conference: Leader's Role in Developing Professional and Organisational Well-being

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.12775/JCRL.2018.008>

ANDRZEJ LIS^a, ENNO MÖTS^b, MIGUEL PEREIRA LOPES^c

^aThe Faculty of Economic Sciences and Management, Nicolaus Copernicus University in
Toruń, Poland

Doctrine and Training Centre of the Polish Armed Forces, Bydgoszcz, Poland
e-mail: andrzejlis@econ.umk.pl

^bEstonian National Defence College, Tartu, Estonia
e-mail: enno.mots@mil.ee

^cThe School of Social and Political Sciences, The University of Lisbon, Portugal
Portuguese Air Forces Academy, Sintra, Portugal
e-mail: mplopes@iscsp.ulisboa.pt

The 7th International Military Leadership Conference was held on 03–04 April 2018 in the Estonian National Defence College (ENDC), Tartu, Estonia. It is the intent and ambition of the organising team to propose up-to-date topics attracting the attention of both military leaders and researchers (e.g. the previous edition of the conference in 2016 was devoted to military leaders' development – cf. Lis, 2016). This year the focus of the conference was given to the military leaders' behaviours supporting development of positive organisational climate and overall organisational well-being. For the first time, the conference

was a joint event of the ENDC and Psychological Support Service of the Estonian Defence Forces (EDF). The event gathered keynote speakers from the Estonian Ministry of Defence (MOD) and the EDF as well as the representatives of the military and academia from Germany, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Ukraine and the United Kingdom. The conference programme comprised paper sessions and workshops conducted by guest speakers. The event was chaired and moderated by Col. (Ret.) Aarne Ermus, a lecturer of Organisation Management and a former (2007–2013) Commandant of ENDC.

The first plenary session included speeches delivered by military and civilian executives from the Estonian MOD and the EDF i.e. Col. Enno Mõts (the Commandant of ENDC), Maj. Gen. Indrek Sirel (the Deputy Commander of the EDF) and Mailis Neppo (the Director of the Personnel Department in the MOD).

Col. Enno Mõts discussed the issue of authentic expectations highlighting the need to shift from unrealistic (i.e. illusory or wrong) expectations to authentic expectations. He pointed out limitations (e.g. command authority, lack of the pool of talented people, organisational and financial constraints) observed by military commanders making efforts to put into practice positive leadership ideas. He stressed the importance of knowing each other's roles to establish adequate expectations. In this context, the purpose of leaders is to 'lead' (unite, direct, organise) and their role is to create favourable conditions for subordinates to achieve aims and feel good in the organisation. However, it should be remembered that well-being is not an objective but a means of achieving real aims of the armed forces i.e. be ready to fight. Discussing the role of leaders, Col. Mõts emphasised the issues of true initiative (i.e. doing roles above the one's position) and the importance of emotional intelligence (i.e. controlling their own emotions and motivating followers to achieve emotional commitment).

Maj. Gen. Indrek Sirel focused his speech on the development of military leaders. He is a proponent of the U.S. based approach defining leadership as an act of influencing people through aims and motivation. He stressed the leader's roles to motivate subordinates, improve organisations and create conditions enabling followers to excel. In his opinion, ability of leaders to create organisational well-being should be considered as one of the key competencies of contemporary military leaders. He shared with the audience three lessons from his military career pointing out what leaders can do to develop the well-being of

their organisations. As Maj. Gen. Sirel claims, firstly, leaders should pay attention to introducing newcomers into organisations (e.g. by providing mentors). Secondly, they should ensure effective information management in order to disseminate necessary information to all organisation members who need it. Thirdly, they should involve subordinates into organisational processes (e.g. through applying the brainstorming technique to enable people to share their personal experience about the organisation, its aims and achievements).

In her speech Mailis Neppo asked a rhetoric question whether the choices of a leader affect the organisation's culture. She presented her experience and lessons from more than 20 years of career in various positions in the Estonian governmental administration. She stressed the role of relationships in the workplace calling for win-win situations when work is done and organisation members feel good in the organisation. Then, she emphasised positive communication and requirements for leaders to make the work of their followers meaningful and communicate it effectively to them. She presented the main assumptions of the new HR strategy of the Estonian MOD for 2018–2021, including its main assumptions i.e. employer branding campaign, leader's role and development, salary, friendly leaving and outplacement as well as ethics and values. Mailis Neppo, concluded her speech with two 'golden' principles recommended for managers to apply that "when gaining ground in your career be nice to people, you may meet them when falling down the career ladder" and "not only we choose the job, the job chooses us".

The second plenary session comprised the lecture by Ulrike Beckmann-Zimmermann, the psychological advisor and the gender advisor to the Multinational Joint Headquarters Ulm. She focused her speech on the aspects of leadership and well-being in multinational surroundings. Firstly, she outlined the origins, background as well as current structure and tasks of the German military psychological service. In the second part of her speech, she discussed a long list of principles of good leadership behaviours combining both transactional and transformational concepts of leadership. Among them, there was a passage from the German Central Service Regulation ZDV10/1 stating that "if you want to lead you have to like people", which triggered animated discussion among the conference participants. Thirdly, the need for a good climate, a healthy (social, physical, psychological) environment was emphasised. As observed by the speaker, such an environment is well described by a German word *Gesundheit*, which

meaning combines health, fitness and wellbeing. Well-being is an issue of paramount importance due to the fact it makes a foundation for effective accomplishment of organisational tasks and the success of operational missions. Finally, discussing the issues of leadership and well-being in the multinational military environment, Ulrike Beckmann-Zimmermann stressed the particular importance of mutual respect due to cultural diversity. An interesting observation was also made also about linguistic skills which often determine who becomes an informal leader in such a context.

In the parallel session on the “Aspects of leadership psychology – Lithuanian approach”, Lt. Jorma Helenurm introduced the panel and explained the reason for a separate session that specifically addressed leadership in the Baltic countries within the strategy of cooperation between these countries. The session included the speeches by Maj. Linas Dungveckis, Capt. Rosita Kanapeckaite and Capt. Giedre Ambrulaitiene, all three representing the Leadership Development Centre of the Military Academy of Lithuania.

Maj. Linas Dungveckis started his talk on “Myths about leadership or just different definitions of leader?” by explaining that he would also address some solutions to the obstacles to practicing good leadership. Referring to the book *Bad Leadership* (Kellerman, 2004), he discussed types of such leaders ranging from unethical to ineffective leadership. Contrary, being a good leader requires being at the same time ethical and effective. Then, Maj. Dungveckis presented the Bass’ 4Is model of transformational leadership, and finished with a set of recommendations on how to improve leadership in the military context, namely through a feedback loop and leader’s self-knowledge.

Afterwards, Capt. Rosita Kanapeckaite presented her speech on the importance of psychological resilience for military personnel and shared her experience as a psychologist at the Leadership Training Centre of the Military Academy of Lithuania. She talked about the importance of resilience for people in general to overcome stressful situations. Then, she specifically approached the problem from a military point of view. For instance, after about seven years, militaries normally reduce their social relationships to other militaries. When they move out of military service, then, they are less adapted to other challenges. Then, Capt. Kanapeckaite defined resilience, identified individual, family, and unit-level factors, and proposed some strategies on how to improve resilience.

Finally, Capt. Giedre Ambrulaitiene discussed psychological factors in military decision making processes. She reported the findings from the study of 129 military individuals that collected data on self-efficacy, perceived risk and personality (NEO-FFI). She specifically presented a new scale for the Lithuanian military on perceived risk composed of three clusters of questions, loss of military personnel, loss of civilians, and loss of resources. She found relationships between personality dimensions and perceived risk. Specifically, extraverted officers made better decisions and made less mistakes.

The second parallel session focused on organisational climate and overall well-being combined the views from researchers and practitioners. The speeches were given by Col. Dr Andrzej Lis (Poland), Lt.Col. Toomas Tõniste (Estonia), Wg Cdr Mark Attrill (the United Kingdom).

Col. Dr Andrzej Lis, representing the Doctrine and Training Centre of the Polish Armed Forces and Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń, Poland, disseminated the findings of his study on the manifestations of positive leadership strategies in the doctrinal assumptions of the U.S. Army leadership concept (Lis, 2015). He analysed the texts of four U.S. Army documents i.e. ADP 6–22 (2012), ADRP 6–22 (2012), AR 600–100 (2007) and FM 6–22 (2015) against the model of leadership strategies and techniques proposed by Cameron (2012). His analysis “contributes to the theory through testing the U.S. Army as a critical case study to validate the deduced statement that if a military organisation implements positive leadership strategies, they may be applied to all kinds of organisations. This is due to the fact that military organisations are not traditionally associated with the ideas and approaches represented by the concept of positive leadership. The findings confirm that the assumptions of the positive leadership concept have been institutionalised in the U.S. Army doctrines” (Lis, 2015, p. 70).

Lt.Col Toomas Tõniste, Kuperjanovi Infantry Battalion Commander of the EDF, analysed the leader’s role in developing the working environment. He shared with the audience his practical observations from the field, focusing on building cohesive teams and units. He pointed the leader’s role to talk the right language and foster it in the organisation. Secondly, he talked about effective commanders using wicked leadership techniques and the impact of such practices on the organisational climate. Finally, he stressed the strategic importance of HRM function responsible for selecting right people with right values who speak the

same language as the organisation does and teaching the values to organisation members, newcomers in particular.

Wg Cdr Mark Attrill, the Deputy Commander of the NATO Force Integration Unit (NFIU) in Estonia, discussed leader's role in managing organisational change and the well-being of individuals from the multinational perspective. He presented four case studies from the UK Ministry of Defence and NATO environment. Firstly, he shared his observations and lessons related to maintaining the well-being of personnel in the Royal Air Forces in the 1990s, during the period of force reduction and going for outsourcing of some logistic functions previously performed by the military staff. These findings were confirmed by the second case study describing challenges related to contracting out functions of the UK MOD Travel Agency conducted in search of perceived economies of scale. The third story was about the One Team Project at the NATO Joint Warfighting Centre (JWC), Stavanger, Norway. The aim of the project is to integrate newcomers into the organisation facing very challenging tasks but cultivating culture aimed at satisfying organisational well-being in the highly challenging internal environment (combining people from 15 nationalities, different Services i.e. Army, Air Forces, Navy, with varying levels of English). The last study presented the case of the NFIU in Estonia established from the scratch in 2015 in a very ambitious timeline (6 months). The organisation makes attempts to follow the one team approach in the multinational context through developing professional and social integration as well as giving its members the sense of achievement.

The third plenary session, including papers presented by Lt.Col. Antek Kasemaa (Estonia) and Dr. Miguel Pereira Lopes (Portugal), was focused on relationships between military leadership and well-being. Lt.Col. Antek Kasemaa from the ENDC and Tallinn University presented results of the research conducted in the Estonian Defence Forces related to military morale studied as a construct of well-being. As he observed, morale considered to be a critical predictor of performance reduces also psychological problems. Therefore, it seems to be crucial both for the orientation to achieving objectives and the orientation to people. In his research model, among the antecedents of morale Lt.Col. Kasemaa mentioned leadership (clear objectives, installing efficacy/trust, recognizing superior performance and positive outcomes), the unit/group (collective efficacy) and individual traits (self-efficacy, military identity, hardiness, dispositional optimism,

trust). He also pointed out some context specific antecedents (e.g. clear purpose, achievable objectives, incremental success, positive public opinion). Morale including the aspects of optimism, confidence and purpose is intended to have positive consequences for performance and psychological aspects. Lt.Col. Kasemaa's research, employing quantitative approach based on data collected by the questionnaire survey, aimed at testing reliability and validity of the military morale instruments, studying the changes of morale over time and the patterns of relationships between morale and other constructs.

Dr Miguel Pereira Lopes, an Associate Professor at the University of Lisbon and a lecturer of the Military Academy of Portuguese Air Forces, discussed the issues of leading through positive psychological capital and well-being. He first presented two studies that suggest that the personality of leaders do not seem to be a critical issue for leadership emergence or effectiveness. In the first study (Lopes, 2012), it was tested whether being optimistic improved the probabilities of being named by fellows as a network leader. Contrary to that expectation, being optimistic or pessimistic did not make a difference on how a person was chosen as more central in that workplace network. However, those who induced more positive emotions of optimism on others were significantly more chosen by them, i.e., those with higher levels of 'alter-optimism' actually ended up as emerging leaders of innovation and knowledge sharing workplace networks. The second study (Rego, Bluhm, Story, Owens, Chi, Cunha and Lopes, in press) also demonstrated that the way how leaders self-assess themselves in regard to their Positive Psychological Capital (PsyCap), i.e. their self-reported PsyCap, predicts neither team energy as measured by followers, nor leadership effectiveness as measured by the leaders' supervisor. However, 'conveyed leader PsyCap', i.e. leader's level of PsyCap as perceived and measured through subordinates does positively predict team energy levels and performance. Given this, Dr Miguel Pereira Lopes passed then to a more practical side of his presentation where he defined and explained the four major Positive Psychological Capabilities of Hope, (Self-)Efficacy, Resilience, and Optimism (the so-called HERO model), and suggested and exemplified practical exercises that leaders could do in order to improve their conveyed PsyCap and followers' own levels of PsyCap. Some of these examples included the practice of stepping goals, scenario planning, positive and negative belief attribution, and role modelling. He ended his presentation with the example of Rogger

Bannister, a medical doctor-Olympic athlete of mid-20th century who served as a role model for self-improvement.

On the second day of the conference, the speakers conducted practical workshops oriented to developing thorough understanding of the issues related to leader's role in developing professional and organisational well-being. The workshops were attended by conference participants, ENDC teaching staff and students.

The first workshop delivered by Dr. Inga Karton and Capt. Rivo Zirk focussed on effective communication. In the workshop, the communication-based intervention tool was introduced. This tool is based on prosocial behaviour, harm-reduction intervention, motivational interviewing, positive psychology, and modern leadership approaches, in particular the transformational leadership style. The workshop gave practical overview of the effective communication six-step intervention manual which aim is to provide squad and platoon commanders with an alternative tool for solving and preventing problems. The guidelines in this manual were developed for commanders to be used in cases of disciplinary offenses or problematic behaviour by conscripts.

The second workshop conducted by Maj. Kalle Kõlli and Capt. Kristjan Kostabi was devoted to leader's role in shaping and developing team spirit and overall performance. Firstly, workshops participants learned how to use creative methods in order to develop team spirit. They had the chance to watch the short video produced by the members of the ENDC administration staff a couple of years ago, during the Christmas period. As experienced by the personnel engaged in the event, producing the movie united them and contributed to the increase of their positive mood and overall well-being. Following the example, the workshop participants did plan, design and produce their own film aimed at conveying the message that positive leadership oriented at the followers' well-being improves organisational performance.

The aim of the third workshop, delivered by Col. Dr Andrzej Lis, was to study the applicability of positive leadership strategies in the military context. The workshop consisted of three exercises. First of all, there were discovered techniques implemented under the umbrella of four positive leadership strategies, i.e., developing a positive climate, strengthening positive relationships, practicing positive communication and creating positive meaning. Secondly, the aforementioned positive leadership strategies and techniques were matched with U.S. Army leadership competencies. Thirdly, the manifestations of positive

leadership strategies were identified in examples from the field (mini case studies) included in the U.S. field manual FM-6.22 (2015). Finally, the workshop participants had the chance to put positive leadership strategies into practice. They trained their abilities to convey negative messages in a positive manner. They also applied the technique of story writing to share observations and best practices about the manifestations of leaders' behaviours aimed at developing positive climate, relationships, communication and meaning they experienced in their professional careers.

Last but not least, there was held the 3B military psychology workshop intended only for military psychologists. This workshop consisted of three parts. The first one, conducted by Rodion Hryhoryan (Ukraine) was oriented to the methods of self-regulation, stress resistance and recovery. The participants practiced various techniques and observed their effects on physiological parameters. In the second part, Maart Juursoo (Estonia) discussed various forms of psychological support provided to conscript soldiers. Thirdly, Dovile Japertiene and Miroslav Filistovic analysed relationships between well-being, job-related attitudes and turnover behaviour in the Lithuanian Land Forces.

Summing up, paper sessions and workshops enabled the participants to share knowledge, research findings and practical experience related to the leader's role in developing professional and organisational well-being. Either as a mean to improve organisational performance or as an end on itself, well-being, including mental well-being, is a critical issue in organisations in general and perhaps even more in military organisations, given the security-level issues that are at stake in these organisations. We hope this conference on leadership that is now an institutional mark of the Estonian National Defence College, keeps running on a regular basis for the years to come.

References

- ADP 6–22 (2012), *Army Leadership*, Headquarters Department of the Army, Washington.
- ADRP 6–22 (2012), *Army Leadership*, Headquarters Department of the Army, Washington.
- AR 600–100 (2007), *Army Leadership*, Headquarters Department of the Army, Washington.
- Cameron, K.S. (2012), *Positive Leadership: Strategies for Extraordinary Performance*, Berrett-Koehler Publishers, San Francisco.

- FM 6–22 (2015), *Leader Development*, Headquarters Department of the Army, Washington.
- Kellerman, B. (2004), *Bad Leadership: What It Is, How It Happens, Why It Matters*, Harvard Business School Press, Boston.
- Lis, A. (2015), “The Manifestations of Positive Leadership Strategies in the Doctrinal Assumptions of the U.S. Army Leadership Concept”, *Journal of Corporate Responsibility and Leadership*, Vol. 2, Issue 1, pp. 51–76.
- Lis, A. (2016), “The 6th International Military Leadership Conference: Military Leaders Development – The Multiple Approaches”, *Journal of Corporate Responsibility and Leadership*, Vol. 3, Issue 3, pp. 107–110.
- Lopes, M.P. (2012), “Good Vibrations: The social Networks of Optimists and Alter-optimists”, *Social Networking*, Vol. 1, pp. 1–12.
- Rego, A., Bluhm, D., Story, J.S.P., Owens, B.P., Chi, Y.K., Cunha, M.P., Lopes, M.P. (in press), “Conveyed Leader PsyCap Predicting Leader Effectiveness through Positive Energizing”, *Journal of Management*.