

MANAGEMENT OF THE PROCESS OF SOCIAL ADAPTATION OF SERVICEMEN RELEASED FROM MILITARY SERVICE

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Abstract

This article reviews the social adaptation of the military as a social process. There is an overview of adaptation concepts adopted in science and practice. There is an attempt to classify the types of adaptation based on the nature of the interaction, the type of adaptive environments, adaptive environment structural components and based on the psychological content. Social adaptation process is presented in the following major stages: preparatory stage, stage of psychological tension before discharge; stage of acute mental reactions to entry into „civilian life“; stage of acute mental reactions to exit out of „military life“ and stage of re-adaptation.

The our research is focused on a specific field of social work, such as social adaptation of the military at the end of their career and their preparation for proper realization in the public - private sector of economy (Ministry of Defence of the Republic Bulgaria, 2006) as a criterion for motivation and raising the activity of the human factor in the security and defence sector. Moreover, unlike previous researches, refracted through the prism of the military institution social policy, with this article we aim to offer to social and scientific knowledge a new look at social adaptation of the military leaving the system of the armed forces of the Bulgarian Army in compliance with the scientific rationalization of social work.

The type of the article: Theoretical article.

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1. Introduction

Social work is a relatively young, gaining distinction nowadays as a rapidly growing branch of knowledge and practical work, whose development has not been completed yet. Having emerged as a social phenomenon and a special area of human activity, it has been on a more frequent basis attracting the attention of those engaged in the field of research and becoming subject of special scientific studies. This means that the studies of leading specialists dedicated to social work are based on methodological approaches, aggregations of methods and technologies, generalized practical work experience applicable to most Social Sciences and Humanities (Dimitrova, 2011).

The concept of Social work is inherently polysemantic. Presently, there are several approaches to its understanding amongst which more significant are the following:

- the area of scientific knowledge about laws governing the utilization of internal and external resources of an individual, a family or a community being in difficult situations of inadequate social functioning;
- specific type professional activity, manifestation of which is evident in rendering governmental and non-governmental assistance to people in order to provide cultural, social and well circumstanced level of life, providing personal assistance to an individual, a family or group of persons;
- rendering assistance within in the context off an of immediate interaction with individuals and families to resolve problems in their mental life, interpersonal relations, social and

economic problems;

- helping an individual placed in a difficult life situation, encouraging him to become socially self-sufficient, socially developed and socially active member of society;
- type of activity of individuals and organizations providing assistance to various segments of population.

These definitions indicate that the social work is a particular type of activity of people aiming at providing help or assistance to various strata of society being in difficult life situation, also at creating conditions instrumental for the restoration or betterment of people's ability to social functioning.

The term „social work” in scientific and academic literature is most frequently defined as professional activity aimed at helping individuals, groups, communities to enhance or restore their capacity for social functioning and creating social conditions facilitating the implementation of this goal. Social work is also seen as a kind of social activity featuring specific levels of accomplishment conditioning its functions, forms and methods.

In the widespread R. Baker's Social Work dictionary in the list are included: individual social work, team social work, community organization, administrative social work, research, social policy, planning, immediate clinical practice, family and marital practices and other micro practices and also this, what is called the common practice of social work.

The amalgam of technology, research and practical procedures, mode of operation by means of which social work is carried out represents the methods of social work.

2. Method

Methodology of social work is based on a system of well- substantiated knowledge gained through research and evaluation of practical activities. The theory of social work accounts for the complexity of interactions between individuals and their encirclement and recognizes people's ability both to be influenced and to alter the effect of multiple factors acting on them.

Theoretical and methodological analysis of social work is based on the historical approach and identification of sources for the emergence of a phenomenon in the past.

Historians track down roots of compassionate attitude towards a fellowman still in the customs and habits of the Early Slavs. S. M. Solovyov notes that unlike the warlike Germans and Lithuanians, ridding of „needless, weak and infirm“ countrymen and killing captives, our distant ancestors used to exhibit mercifulness to old and little tribesmen, also to captives, who, after a certain period of time could return to their homeland or „to remain living with the Slavs as free people or friends”. Providing shelter and affection for strangers, they are conspicuous for their rare hospitality.

Against the background of that what was stated above, scientific understanding of social work in Bulgaria begins with the manifestation of social role of the phenomenon of charity in public life, as well as with the attempts various philosophical, psychological, psychotherapeutic, sociological and medical approaches to be applied for the purposes of scientific justification of social protection of people, helping the needy.

Nowadays, theoretical justification of social work is developing in three main directions. First, the place of social work as a branch of knowledge amongst disciplines such as Social Philosophy, Social History, Political Science, Sociology, Social Psychology, Cultural Studies is determined. Second, an own theoretical constant of social work as a specific object of study is sought; and third, its interaction with other human and society science is shown. Taking into account that the social work is based on human factor understood as an individual, team and team members' relationships based on the awareness, the social nature of prime priority of its activity conditions the necessity of knowing the general and specific factors. As to general factors, attention should be given to general culture, special functional culture, factors of motivation, while the specific factors are associated with the manner of management decisions making, managerial intercourse and management responsibility.

Sticking to the logics of the study, our research is focused on a specific area of social work, such is the social adaptation of servicemen at the end of their career and making them ready for positions in the public and private sector of economics (Ministry of Defence of the Republic Bulgaria, 2006) as a criterion for motivation and increasing the activity of the human factor in the field of security and Defence. Moreover, in contrast to previous studies, refracted through the prism of military department social policy, this study is aimed at offering the social and scientific knowledge a new perception of social adaptation of servicemen leaving the ranks of the Armed Forces and Bulgarian Army in accordance with the scientific understanding of the social work.

3. Results

Features of Social Work with Servicemen at the End of their Career

A baseline of our research served the specificity of social work with servicemen discharged from military service. The need for transparency and equal treatment of users of social services, paying respect to dignity of military brings out the role of social work with them (Terziev, & Dimitrova (2013a, 2013b, 2014a, 2014b).

Hundreds of professionals moved from the army in the civil sector are able to make a substantial contribution to the reconstruction of Bulgarian society and to add value. Things are different in real life, where their experience and skills often give the impression that they are unnecessary. People who devoted their youth to the colors, as a rule are difficult to adapt to conditions of civilian life. Such a situation is not only immoral but also socially dangerous. People with special military-applied skills and knowledge actually form a new „risk group“, especially when they fall come to the attention of criminal world. Very indicative on this issue are the various reports and analyzes of the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy and the Ministry of Defence.

The data are indicative that a third of them have „finding a job“ offers in the security services to various private organizations, banks and/ or specialized licensed private security units.

The established practice shows that some of career service officers are experiencing serious difficulties finding a civil profession. Although highly qualified, many of them cannot find a job months in a row, lose the continuity of their working carrier or get deskilled. Working out the causes is based on an analysis of sociological and psychological studies materials enabling us to define the specifics of their self- and personal adaptation. Accordingly, the age groups of leaving the ranks of the AF and BA servicemen, social adaptation of who finds its manifestation in different ways.

Differentiation based on age criteria:

a) Servicemen up to 30 years old: In a rapidly changing security environment it is difficult to provide precise framing of causes leading to discharging from the army. Observations show that a young officer decided to leave service if he feels unable to fully realize his potential in military service, comparing his life journey and achievements with the way existence he has have and how successful their coevals in „civilian life“ are, or if he has chosen this profession by accident. This is the most mobile part of reserve officers. Discharged under honorable conditions or released members are not eligible for pension and for some time they have to face financial difficulties, especially those of them who have a family. They need such training, that would provide them quick and tangible revenue and growth in their professional career. This is the most successful part of the servicemen in the context of retraining/ acquiring additional qualification in civilian occupational specialty.

b) Servicemen aged 30-40: Many of them are forced to leave the ranks of AF and BA due to staff reduction and structural reforms. This does not always coincide with their personal plans. This category leaves resentful, prone to negatively evaluate their perspectives, quite often with aggressive attitude to others. The combination of pecuniary burdens and substandard living conditions leads to crisis states of mind and personality. Despite the difficulties, the members of this category are trying to maintain emotional and mental flexibility, actively seeking new forms of

behavior.

If the representatives of this group of military are provided appropriate positive solution to overcome the crisis, the probability for them to enter into a period of high productivity in a variety of areas of activity will increase. This is that part of discharged servicemen who need a thorough and adequate counseling, professional advice, social and legal support.

c) Servicemen older than 40: This is the group of military who have served their time and achieved maximum self-actualization within the army service. They have certain privileges and material welfare. They strain after activities enabling to keep the attributes of their past power and former social status, however, without striving for particularly complex types of business due to the fact that such an endeavor requires procedures of acquiring a new major, knowledge and skills. The process of serious training for them is unattractive, they tend to offices in the administrative and economic control departments of the state and public administration and to various activities /control and security/ in municipal administrations in the field of education and financial bodies. When choosing their further life path they find it easy to turn to various organizations.

In considering the main problems of socialization and adaptation of servicemen leaving the military service and their transition to civilian life environment resulting from their economic, age, psychological and social characteristics and their social status in modern conditions, the importance of social work targeting this category should be taken into account. This necessitates further development of already existing and newly developed forms of social work. Moreover, the servicemen social protection system has historically become a part of the national policy of a state. As such it should be further developed by actively interacting with all executive bodies and sectors of life in a country. In this context, attention should be given to appropriate best practices and their adaptation to our environment, accordingly.

Foreign and our Experience in the Field of Social Adaptation of the Military

In organizing the work on career development and social work with servicemen putting an end to their military career, regardless of reasons, as well as the work with their family members at national level, taking into account international experience is of significant importance. Undoubtedly, it is at least nonsense to believe that this experience can be transferred to our terms unalloyed, directly. In order to be used in the work of our social services, its bringing in conformity with Bulgarian specifics is a requirement.

Almost hundred years' experience in the development of social work not only determines the modernization of the classical social thought paradigm, but also provides scientific foundation for new trends in the social reconstruction of society (Ministry of Defence of the Republic Bulgaria, 2006; Dimitrova, 2013).

Theoretical growth of scientific knowledge in the field of social work in many countries of the world has been developing mainly in two directions. The first trend relates to promoting the importance of behavioral approach in the system of psychological explanation based on the theory of knowledge, on the domination of cognitive orientations. The second aspect is related to enhancing the interest in social work theoretical approaches.

In the long run, systematic concepts of social protection, social guarantees, and social services aimed at rendering assistance and support to people finding themselves in complicated life situations have been formed in the knowledge of social work. At that, orientation towards an overall approach to theory of social work, to the establishment of a legal foundation of social technologies is promoted.

- Comparative analysis of international practice in the system of conversion training and social adaptation of servicemen who undergo transition to civilian life has provoked us to look for an answer to the following questions:
- what military personnel classes leaving the ranks of AF and BA are covered by this system;
- how the financing of military staff's preparation for the transition to civilian is arranged and who is irresponsible for the core measures in this process;

- who is carrying out the process of social adaptation and what structures and organizations within and beyond the competences of the Department of Defence are involved;
- what is the technology of organization of the process of professional reorientation, conversion training and assistance in finding the servicemen discharged from military duty a job;
- what is the time span for carrying out the work on conversion and social adaptation of military before and after their discharge from military service;
- how the availability of practical skills and competences acquired in the course of regular duty by those discharged from military service is reported;
- what is the ratio of discharged servicemen intending to undergo retraining in one civilian occupational specialty or another and those intending to turn to one business or another in such civilian and educational field at a later stage?

In pursuing an answers to these key questions, we turn to the best practices in the field of conversion training and adaptation of the military personnel discharged from service and the members of their families. And it is quite understandably for us, as a member state of NATO, to focus on the practices and experience of the USA and many EU member states of this structures in this area.

In the U.S., in the late 80s of XX century, the Pentagon, the ministries of the Armed Forces, many military organizations (Associations of the US Army, Air Force, Navy, Officers, Seniority, Sergeants, Reserve Officers) assisting those who left military service created a special office aimed at providing employment services.

Employees of this department have developed and implemented a special program for „linking“ military and civilian fields, where the individual willing to find a job can obtain information about business sectors he/she would be appropriate for and where specialists in the particular field are needed. Close cooperation between the Department management and companies, corporations, government and private labor offices is essential for achieving this is of exceptional significance. Very useful in boosting and simplifying the job finding process are the published handbooks containing variety of information: starting from tips for servicemen moving from active duty to reserves to requirements for completing the necessary questionnaires, data to be entered by using the modern computer technology. Today, these handbooks are available in almost all libraries of the U.S. military units.

Care for soldiers upon termination of military service in the U.S. by legislation is a duty of the state authorities. Moreover, the enlisted men and N.C.O. who do not receive pensions are eligible for unemployment benefit paid from a fund financed only from the budget of the Ministry of Defence. Military reservists have priority in employment for positions at government offices, more particularly, certain categories of veterans are given priority in employment at government organizations. What is the question about is that in accordance with the legislation of the U.S. (Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, Veterans' Education and Employment Assistance Act of 1976 and „Civil Service Reform Act of 1978) hiring priority in employment at governmental organizations enjoy the participants in combats and having received government awards or disability during service. Moreover, for those enrolled in the army after September 7, 1980 there is a requirement for them to have served in the regular armed forces for at least two years (this condition does not apply to people with disabilities).

No less noteworthy is the attempt to solve the social problems of servicemen in the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland. All British military are serving under contracts. According to The Queen's regulations and orders for the army commanders are responsible for ensuring access to information and advice on all aspects of adaptation to civilian life for all soldiers in all ranks and in every period of their career.

Specific features of the British practice in solving the problems of adaptation of soldiers passed in stock are the following:

- all measures are carried out at the expense of the state and not at the expense of employers or military;
- the Ministry of Defence provides servicemen advising on these issues two or two and a half years prior to the termination of military service and one year after;
- servicemen are eligible to retraining after five years of service, at that two or two and a half years retraining for the regular is mandatory, while for the officers-voluntary;
- servicemen are entitled to receive a grant of 534 pounds sterling (the amount has not been changed for a number of years) for retraining courses outside the system of the Ministry of Defence (as against our practice established where the amount allocated for retraining of discharged servicemen is cut at regular intervals- currently 350 BGN for a discharged serviceman);
- 25,000 servicemen are being released every year; partial support is provided to all military and full- to 50% of the discharged;
- in addition, the Ministry of Defence reimburses the servicemen travel and accommodation expenses during the conversion retraining;
- duration of conversion training depends on years of service: four weeks - upon completed five years of service, five weeks - upon eight years, six weeks - upon twelve years; seven weeks - sixteen years of service.

Support of the military in the UK takes place on three levels. This includes: general consulting at the unit conducted by the officers responsible for the employment of released officers, the level of support provided by the respective commanding using respective-consultants (in Navy- 8 people; in the Air respective- 11, LF -22 people); the structure, in which along with the Ministry of Defence participates a private company (the structure includes the Ministry of Defence, Veterans Jobseeking Office, Coutts Consulting Group and the Bureau of Vocational rehabilitation).

A distinctive feature of French policy in the field of social adaptation of the military is the established complex „assembly - training - retraining“ taken as a whole and offering possibility for the servicemen not only to successfully carry out their service in the army, but to succeed when they return to civil society within the frameworks of their second career.

Since 22 February 1996, immediately valid and effective as at the date and time of its announcement by the President of the French Republic, the decision to move the army into a professional, the policy for retraining of the military staff is an integral part of the personnel management policy. This makes it necessary to provide for such a career that allows for a serviceman to serve within that specialty at a particular point in time and that can be used at a later stage - in the civil service. This also justifies the necessity of validation of military diplomas in accordance with scale of state diplomas issued in the education system by the administrative committee with the Ministry of Labor. Coordination of the procedure for recognition of military diplomas military is carried out by the Department of occupational mobility.

Yet another feature of the French policy in this area is the significant differentiation in social work care provided to particular military personnel classes (Navy, Air Forces, Land Forces). Thus, a structure designated as Mobility in the Navy was established in the Navy, encompassing five retraining departments. Coordination of each of these departments is carried out by an officer-consultant in charge for the region. Their staff is looking for employment opportunities in direct contact with companies (more than 4,000 different companies use the services of Mobility in the Navy structure).

Existing legislative basis for conversion training includes:

- A common normative instrument for military personnel (a Law of 13 July 1972) with amendments introduced with the Law on measures to help military within the frames of transition to a professional army of 19 December 1996. According to this act, career regulars and servicemen on contract are entitled to twelve months of leave for training, allowing them to pass training tailored to their career project. Moreover, during the first six months of retraining they receive 100% of their salary and over the next six months - a

salary, but without payment of premium and bonuses. They also have the right to work (internship) at an enterprise and to get remuneration there, though it can reduce the military salary.

- Three decree adopted in May 1997, regulating the conditions for granting leave for retraining (the leave is granted by personnel departments).
- A common regulation of 22 April 1998 of the General Secretariat of the Executive Office to the MD and the General staffs of different military defines the principles underlying the new policy for retraining of personnel.

There is a Council on personal retraining operating to the Ministry of Defence, researching and dealing with the whole range of problems, drawing conclusions and recommendations on projects of the Ministry of Defence.

The panel of the Council, chaired by the Minister of Defence, consists of twelve representatives of staffs and controls, seven members appointed by the CSFM, the president of the Association of Social Adaptation of Officers (ARCO), representatives of various associations of ex-servicemen, a representative of the Ministry of labor and representative of the Ministry of National Education .

Responsibility for the retraining of personnel is assigned to the Department of occupational mobility (MMP -Mission pour la Mobilité Professionnelle) founded in 1982, that develops and defines together with the various armed forces a policy for retraining of personnel under the leadership of the management of military and civilian personnel (DFP).

The first interview for reorientation is in the competences of the Department of Defence. Depending on situation, it provides the applicant an opportunity to refer to the officer-consultant at a training center (CIR) or ARCO.

In Germany the organization of retraining process, professional orientation of military personnel on duty and after leaving is the competences of the administrative and economic management of the Bundeswehr (its units within the Federal provinces). Under the command of Administrative and Economic Office VI in Bavaria there are 21 000 people, 17 units (district military administration). A distinctive feature of the German experience is that professional orientation and retraining at the end of the service is part of a general policy for training of the military carried throughout the service. Funding for these activities is charged to the budget of the Defence Department.

During the late 1960s a resolution was adopted according to which every officer of the Bundeswehr is required to have higher education. To this end, the officer either goes into the army after having completed university education, or obtained it during the service. In a related move two military universities have been established (in Hamburg and Munich). Eligible for these universities were military servicing on re-engagement who have served not less than four years and wishing to become officers - professionals.

Courses at these universities are conducted on a more intensive basis than at ordinary civil universities. The total period of training is significantly reduced (3-4 years) by organizing training trimesters (i.e. a calendar year training lasts three semesters, hence the name „trimesters”). Students receive a salary, wear civilian clothes. Once a week they have only military training. Specialties in which the training is conducted is determined according to the needs of the Armed Forces.

During the service, through the mediation of the Career Development Office to the Bundeswehr, training in civil disciplines and professions and further qualification of contract servicemen in the military- vocational training is conducted.

Upskilling takes place in a special school to the Bundeswehr at the end of military service. There general training and special courses in majors leading to awarding of professions as economist, tutor, engineering technician or electrician are taught.

Upon completing the service, assisted by the Career Development Office to the Bundeswehr, the officers receive special education and financial aid at a particular office with allowance for length of service, compensating jobseeking and relocation expenses incurred.

It is noteworthy that in the Bundeswehr considerable resources are spent on advertising

military service. In support of this was the large-scale campaign was conducted in 1996, on organization of which almost half of the budget allocated to attract recruits (about 11 million) was spent.

The analysis shows that military service under contract in Germany is a temporary job. Civil future of servicemen is protected by the Social security of former Bundeswehr officers act providing insurance for years of service (monetary compensation for the interim period and cash assistance for the transitional period) and professional qualification.

The practices of developed countries in Europe (the UK, France, Germany, etc.) confirm that servicemen discharged from military service prepare for civilian life prior to their releasing from the Armed Forces and the organization of this process is a responsibility of the ministries of Defence, and of course, subject to financial support from the state.

Adoption of foreign experience in social protection of servicemen requires taking into account the complex of domestic and foreign policy factors influencing the processes taking place in a particular state. The existing models for social protection of servicemen worldwide can be divided into institutional, partially institutional and extrainstitutional.

The institutional model is typical for the countries with developed legal systems, industrial or post industrial economy, democratic state system. There are clearly defined conditions of operation of the armed forces, a comprehensive civil control is carried out there, a functioning contract-based service system and an established legal framework for protection of the honor and dignity of the military. A well-developed system for material and social security of servicemen and members of their families allows the state to provide them with living standards higher than the national average. Institutional model defines the high prestige of military service in the public mind and its attractiveness for a significant part of the younger generation.

In countries where a social security institution is just beginning to form and the system of guarantees, compensations and benefits for servicemen sometimes has a casual and fragmentary character a partially institutional model is formed. There, the peculiarity of the legal status of the armed forces and the military represents an opportunity to involve them in extrinsic functions implementation. In some cases, such decisions of the military and political leadership of a country could be taken in concurrence with the legislative authorities. Living standard of the military in partially institutional system is comparable to the average standard of living of the population. The prestige of the military service is substantially lower than in terms of the institutional model; military service in the public perception is ambiguous. There are certain difficulties with the provisioning of the armed forces. The choice of the military profession is often driven by the more favorable socio-economic conditions of life outside the army.

Extraintitutional model is formed in countries where the military are an independent political force, being in power (or having unlimited influence on it). There, the military actually participate in political decisions and, if necessary, use firearms. They act under the wartime laws and conduct military dictatorship. Army members get considerably higher socio-economic benefits than civilians. The military cause fear and tension.

Social protection of servicemen in Bulgaria for the present is of partially institutional nature, and sometimes, in a number of signs is reduced to extraintitutional model. The way ahead in its further development depends on the specific policies applied. More preferable is the way of strengthening the legal basis for the social protection of servicemen and provisioning plenty of the socio-economic and socio-cultural mechanisms, which means a move towards institutional model.

The analysis of the legal regulation concerning social protection of servicemen applied by the member countries Euro-Atlantic structures allows to highlight a number of specificities. Attention, in our view, should be given to the following:

- First, they regulate the status of the military both as a citizen, and as a special subject of public relations;
- Second, the underlying principle of legal regulation of the servicemen social protection system is the principle of compensation for specific burdens and hardships of the military service;

- Third, the special status of the military, the complex of their rights and privileges is constitutionally entrenched.
- Fourth, the effectiveness of military legislation is conditioned by its systematization.

A distinctive feature of the legal regulation concerning social protection of foreign armies servicemen is the establishment and effective functioning of special structures to the state administrative bodies within the immediate jurisdiction of which is the settlement of the said issues.

European practice gives evidence that parliamentary scrutiny is the basis for a broad and developed system of civil control over the armed forces and the entire military. In Bulgaria, there are still many gaps in the implementation of parliamentary scrutiny, although there have been certain changes in this direction. However, a number of questions concerning armed forces activities that have significant social importance remain outside the regulating effect of the National Assembly. Speaking of this very day in our country, it is far from complete implementation of the possibilities inherent in the foundations of parliamentarism.

The existence of a network of public organizations at different levels is typical of the established in the Western countries social protection systems; there is a steady tendency to boost their role. Thus, the French experts consider it necessary to establish within the military organization special institutional frameworks for open discussion and early detection of problems at regiment (ship) level.

Notwithstanding undoubted success of the military social protection system development of foreign countries, they also have a number of unresolved issues. This is primarily the problem of housing. For example, many U.S. military garrisons have no living conditions for the families provided and they are categorized as units where family reunification is not allowed. Family separation creates many financial, psychological and social difficulties. Servicemen arriving at the place of service with a family are paid travel expenses for 60 days. In practice, it often turns out that this money is not enough. Quite often the soldier is unable to find accommodation for his family.

In Germany, with all that there are sufficient lodgment opportunities, they often do not meet the modern requirements, or inappropriate in terms of location. All this creates difficulties for the families of soldiers when it comes to children going to school, finding jobs for women and the loss of previous social environment with all associated negatives in general.

In all armies of states, subject of this study, without exception, the social protection of servicemen families is a topic of the day. In the U.S., the total income of an officer's family is often lower than the family income of civil servants in the federal administrative bodies. Soldiers and their families are sometimes concerned about that to what extent they will do until the next monetary allowance. Family's dissatisfaction with the lifestyle of servicemen is pointed out as a major barrier in the way of continuing the military service contract.

Social and psychological adaptation of soldiers passed in stock remains a problem of the day. They are changing the profession in advanced age, when others have made a career in civilian profession. As a result, on the background of tense situation, special difficulties are faced on the labor market, being exacerbated by the fact that in many countries, in Germany in particular, there is no protection against unemployment for ex-servicemen under contract.

Experts in the field of innovative military education in Bulgaria believe that indiscriminated borrowing of foreign practice is extremely dangerous. Meanwhile, others believe that the specifics of Bulgarian lifestyle, ideological heritage, mentality of the population should not be exaggerated, since during the transition period they have not been so much significant factors of social development, as could be expected. Much greater impact has the state of economy, which crucially affects social processes, limitates the choice of orientations and scales of social and political events, rising sometimes insurmountable barriers in the way to implementation of social policy.

Thus utilization of foreign practice and experience should be seen as a guideline to form a system and mechanisms for social protection of servicemen. With all steadiness of the historical and national circumstances, they also undergo certain changes. Representative in this respect is our legal system, in the development of which the role of the state determinative. Such a role for the state gives the Bulgarian legal system that unique character that sets it apart from the legal systems of

other European countries. This means that when taking certain legal concepts, models, and rules of the law, we must recognize the specific nature of our legal system that can radically transform foreign ideas and models. In this vein, we consider it necessary to trace our country-specific practice for social adaptation servicemen, discharged from military service.

Procedure for Social Adaptation of Servicemen in Bulgaria

Solving the complex task of creating a system of social protection of servicemen, as a rule, affects all aspects of the life of society. Fundamentally new questions appear to economic, social, intellectual and other spheres. Solving a similar problem in Bulgaria is complicated by the significant reduction of the army, its reforming by applying professional principle of completion. Taking into account the international experience, it can be assumed that similar changes at home can cause new set of difficult and complex problems. In this case, attracting foreign partners and adopting joint training programs of soldiers moving into stock would be useful. Measures and actions in this area should be directed towards the implementation of programs and projects for motivation, training and retraining, job placement, starting own business and conversion of military property. Feasibility of the study of the labor market determines the need for professional orientation. This requires involvement of the military in training courses, providing learning opportunities at higher educational institutions awarding majors sought by employers, making them ready to start their own business, helping them with job placement. Accordingly, provided funding for training courses should be in proportion military budget - serviceman (70:30). Such an approach shall promote the aspiration for development of those servicemen who are subject to retirement or otherwise leaving the ranks of the Army and prepare them for self-actualization in civilian life. Training courses should be tailored to the requirements of the labor market (Terziev & Dimitrova, 2013c).

In accordance with the above, the main types of social services can be classified as follows:

- professional orientation;
- assistance in professional retraining;
- jobseeking assistance;
- legal assistance;
- social and psychological support;
- assistance in setting up, small business enterprises;
- information and consulting services;
- work with the families of servicemen who died while performing their military duty.

Professional orientation and the choice of civil profession is the first step in preparing for the transition to stock. Assistance with professional retraining includes career choice and direction to professional retraining at educational units or professional training centers.

As to the jobseeking, it consists in rendering assistance on the part of specialists-professionals when choosing a future profession, and seeking suitable placement.

Legal assistance consists in information-consulting sessions with young officers on the mortgage system of housing of soldiers, providing legal advising to soldiers who have been wounded and more.

Social and psychological support includes psychological diagnosis and psychological help using modern methods and also psychological support to servicemen found themselves in a difficult life situation.

Assistance in the establishment of small business enterprises among servicemen discharged from military service is provided during information meetings on development of entrepreneurial activity among retired military personnel and their family members and others.

Information, consulting and methodological support include: disseminating information about the social protection services provided to servicemen, to those discharged from military service and their families /Labor Office, Social Assistance Directorates, etc./; creation of information-analytical data base on social adaptation issues; working out, publishing and distribution of guiding and reference literature; organizing information interaction with the media, with departments and

organizations dealing with social protection of servicemen moving into reserve and their family members; working out, publishing and distribution of methodological instruments in relation to organization and carrying out military social work.

An important point is that the process of social adaptation initiates at the very military formation, before a serviceman is discharged from military service. To this effect, group and individual motivational talks are held, with the participation of experts from the National Employment Agency, and its territorial divisions, when possible. Motivation lectures within groups are organized by commanders and coordinators within the formation, being helped and assisted by consultants in adaptation from the District and Regional Military Departments to the Central Office of Military Districts /CMD/. This means that before being released, a serviceman acquires an initial notion of the process of social adaptation and the possibilities for self-actualization in civil society.

It is noteworthy that the legislative basis (Article 162, item 2, Art. 164 and Art. 169 of the Act on Defence and Armed Forces of the Republic of Bulgaria) is indicative that upon release from military service, including due to unfitness while performing or in connection with the performance of his duties, the military are entitled to a single training course with a duration of up to six months. For the duration of the training they are provided with additional paid leave.

The choice or refusal of the military to enjoy their rights to participate in the activities of social adaptation is certified at the time of serving of the notice or service termination order, and to this end they personally complete a Registration card No. 1 in the established form, that is attached and stored in the personnel file.

Adaptation coordinators in formations are those, who conduct individual talk with the individual released from military service and perform its registration in special log. They provide the registered serviceman a copy of his Registration card No.1 and inform him of the time and place of his first visit to respective Military District/ Regional/ Central Military Department or Division/. Registered soldiers are issued to a recommendation /personal profile/ by the human resources /personnel/ office, signed by the commander (chief) of the formation.

Cooperation in conducting the process of adaptation of soldiers moving to civilian life is rendered by the Central Office of Military Districts and subordinate Military Departments, Regional and District Military Offices.

Servicemen discharged from military service willing to participate the social adaptation activities in their first visit to the structure of CDM submit the package of documents required (a copy of Registration form No 1 or an expert decision issued by the Central Military Medical Commission to those discharged due to unfitness, a recommendation /profile by the commanding officer (chief) of the military unit).

Adaptation consultants to the structures of CMD are responsible for the proper and timely delivery of information on the military documents for registration and filing up of documents requirements, employment and training projects, programs and measures carried out by the national, regional and local structures of Employment Agency and other employers and training organizations or job vacancies, relevant requirements, application procedures and information of employers.

During the first visit, a serviceman, assisted by the Military Office/ Regional, District or Central Military Department adaptation consultant should complete Registration Card No. 2m as per the established form, thus being registered in a special log. Every visit of the officer to the CMD structure is recorded in the logbook.

Each registered serviceman is being elaborated to an individual plan defining procedures for social adaptation activities and a schedule for subsequent visits to the CMD structure. The individual plan is drawn up by the adaptation consultant together with the freed army member who follows the implementation of the plan and the recommendations of the consultant.

Professional orientation of the military discharged from military service requires information on occupations and activities, employability requirements, training organizations and institutions, forms of study, documents issued upon completing the study, employment opportunities in the labor market. The choice of solution for civil profession/ specialty and referral to a related appropriate

training is assisted by adaptation consultants to CMD structures. They are the ones who carry out individual or group (a group of at least three soldiers) motivational talks aimed at adapting the participants to the market environment in civil society. Within the scope of consultancy are included problems such: identification of knowledge, skills and experience gained during military service; formulation of social adaptation objectives and development of an individual plan; working out strategies for effective job searching and applying; getting acquainted with trends in the labor market, the sources of information on job vacancies; analysis of jobs adds and choice of jobs for application; application documents preparation: CV, recommendation/ profile letters and forms; interview with the employer; job offer assessment etc.

There is a possibility for a single return trip on account of formation at the place of residence to the place where motivational talk is held in the case that motivational training takes place at the CMD structures outside the place in which the serviceman lives. In these cases, subsistence and accommodation expenses are paid by the serviceman.

Further consulting to soldiers and/ or their family members, self- seeking psychological assistance related to effects of change resulting from the transition from military to civilian profession and lifestyle is provided by medical teams consisting of appropriate professionals. The military, released from military service is granted the right to choose a qualification course and training institution. They furnish the commander (chief) and the consultant of respective military unit a document issued by the training institution evidencing his inclusion in a training course not later than three days prior to the course. This is the ground for him additional paid leave for the duration of the course to be granted. To this end, the certifying document from the training organization shall contain the following information: personal data of the serviceman discharged from military service; place of employment; the name of the course; training period; number of classes for the training period; the price (tuition fee); a licence/ certificate - training qualification document.

Regular attendance is required by course-enrolled servicemen and successful passing the exams at the end of the training. In case a serviceman quits the course, on his own initiative including, he should immediately inform the commander (chief) of formation and the head at the CDM. Having completed the course, the military is obliged in a 5 days-term to present to the CMD all the documents issued by the training organization certifying completion of the course: an original invoice and a cash receipt, a copy of the license/ certificated issued by the training institution .

Financial provision for participation in courses is ensured by the Ministry of Defence. On the basis of supporting documents evidencing successful completion of the training course soldiers are paid 70% of the training cost, but not more than the maximum amount of funds amounting to BGN 350.00.

Consultants to CMD assist the registered military discharged from service in seeking job, providing information and directing them to the regional employment services, labor offices and other employers' organizations to be successful in the labor market. More particularly, they provide them information about: suitable jobs, including at another location in the country or in other countries; involvement in projects, programs and measures for employment and training carried out by other institutions and organizations; directing injured during or while performing their duties to programs and projects that support their social integration; including and increasing their employability and employment; preparation and participation in employment and information exchanges; meetings with employers and other forms of employment opportunities, organized in collaboration with the structures of the Employment Agency and other institutions and organizations.

Those willing to start their own business are assisted by the adaptation consultant, who advices them and refers them to training courses providing entrepreneurial, managerial and business skills; furnishes them with promotional and information materials to start their own business; inform about regional, national and European programs aimed at supporting entrepreneurs, crediting sources and other relevant information about starting their own business.

Preparation for starting own business is directed at promoting activity and adaptability of the military discharged from active service, with the clear idea, desire and attitude to provide career development through self-employment and to start their own business. The relevant governing documents in relation to social adaptation activities implementation have been provided for at the CMD (the Act on Defence and Armed Forces of the Republic of Bulgaria; Ordinance No. H-29/12.11.2010, the SG, item 95/03.12.2010 on conditions and terms of adaptation of servicemen of the Ministry of Defence, the structures directly subordinate to the Minister of Defence and the Bulgarian army upon discharging from military service and the amendments thereto in the Ordinance promulgated in the SG, 41/01.06.2012; Cooperation Agreement between the Ministry of Defence and Employment Agency to the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy of 07.06.2011; Joint Regulations of the Ministry of Defence and Employment Agency 2011; Instructions of the Director of Human Resources Agency- MD on social adaptation activities within CDM, Military Offices and Regional military departments; CDM concept for improving the model for social adaptation of servicemen released by the Ministry of Defence, the structures directly subordinate to the Minister of Defence and the Bulgarian Army; Instructions No.03/05.07.2012 of the Head of CDM concerning organization of activities aimed at adaptation of servicemen to the Ministry of Defence, structures directly subordinate to the Minister of Defence and the Bulgarian Army upon releasing from military service (Ministry of Defence of the Republic Bulgaria, 2006).

It is noteworthy that our country has gained experience and methodological basis for the social and adaptation of the military honorably discharged from active service. Based on best practices- own and these of the member states of the Euro-Atlantic structures we considered appropriate to state the right direction to increasing the efficiency of social adaptation of servicemen released from military service.

4. Discussion

Main Directions for Optimization of Social Work with the Military, released from Military Service

Much of the servicemen released from military service have a good education and sufficient social status. After moving in reserve, they are left alone with their problems and often become absolutely defenseless in the modern world of exchange relations.

It is necessary for former military to be involved in the entrepreneurship in order to create additional employment opportunities. Besides social and economic problems, the military that have moved into reserves and their family members also face difficulties in finding job, housing problems, family wealth impairment, little accessibility to health and recreational activities. All this is due to the fact that there is no an effective social policy to support such families. According to the representatives of all the departments main cause, giving rise to this problem, is economic.

Studies allow to conclude that the establishment of a system for social adaptation of the military released from military service presently refers to the modern stage the most important directions in the social policy.

Nowadays, the need for further development of social work and various social technologies, giving significance to contemporary experience in the sphere of social services, becomes even more relevant.

An elaborated approach aimed at establishing a network of social service agencies, at creating a truly effective and necessary social protection system should be applied. Professionalism and morality should be regarded as personal qualities that every single social services specialist must be in possession of. Coordination between various administrative departments for social protection of the population, education, health, employment, etc. should be also enhanced- to meet the needs of the population in general.

The main obstacles to increasing the effectiveness of social work with servicemen passing to the reserve are:

- unregulated legislation on the functions of social protection in the armed forces and the mechanisms for their implementation;
- inadequacy and fragmentarily of the legal basis relating to issues of social and economic security of military personnel ;
- inadequate modern working conditions and retirement indemnity for servicemen;
- the absence of action programs for social adaptation of servicemen subject passing in stock;
- delayed arrangement of housing problems;
- imperfection of medical care system applicable to servicemen released from military service and to their family members;
- weak legal basis of the social security system;
- limited financial resources available at the disposal of government authorities at national and regional level, the deficit of funds in local government;
- lack of coordination between the ministries and agencies in the field of social services;
- shortage of staff who have professional training in social work;
- low social status and inadequate wages of workers engaged in social services.

It is obvious that here, in Bulgaria, it is necessary to develop licensed activity services /delegated social service/ in the area of social adaptation of the military released from military service, to ensure monitoring of the social service compliance with the state standards. It is important for normative and legal basis for the organization and functioning of the social welfare services to be developed, personnel support to social offices providing services to a particular category of citizens.

In recent years a number of measures have been adopted to improve the legal basis for social protection of servicemen released from military service and members of their families, given the changed social and economic conditions. Sociological studies conducted in Bulgaria and results analysis of annual monitoring of socio-economic and legal status of the military taken all round mark positive dynamics of the process of social adaptation of soldiers discharged from military service in recent years.

This process has a systematic and complex character and is performed by many social institutions and specialized agencies concerned with the organization of the social adaptation of the military released from military service and the members of their families. Arguably, the process of adaptation began acquiring institutional traits. However, inconsistencies in the implementation of programs for adaptation lead to serious regional disparity.

Against the background of the declining level of confidence in the bodies of legislative and executive power on the part of population the rating of the armed forces in other state and public institutions remains relatively high, though the military themselves do not value the military service prestige in modern Bulgarian society. And this is directly related to dissatisfaction with the level of concern of the state for their families, underestimation of the place and role they play in the protection of the state, etc. This controversial circumstance shows hidden reserves to improve social policy and social work in social adaptation of soldiers released from military service and members of their families.

Social protection of servicemen released from military service and their families is a wide range of legislative, organizational, professional, financial, psychological and other aspects relating to both everyday life and the inner realm of a man.

The main tasks of the system for social protection of population in providing social support to the military, the honorably released part of their staff and their families can be specified as follow:

- identifying the most topical issues of adaptation and social protection of servicemen released from military service;
- support in providing medical, social, psychological, socio-economic, legal and other assistance;

- Interaction with the state and public organizations in search of servicemen released from military service due to illness or disability /people with fewer opportunities/;
- support to the families of servicemen in need of social assistance;
- analysis of conditions and prospects for social security and services to participants in warfare, to the military released from military service and members of their families;
- raising the living standards of the military and their families providing each of them the maximum possible under particular conditions social protection in accordance with the legislation of Bulgaria.

Based on the analysis performed we consider it appropriate to offer some recommendations to improve the system for social protection of servicemen released from military service.

Above all, it is necessary to establish the legal foundations of social protection of servicemen, also the social adaptation of the military released from military service and the members of their families. These are socio-economic, political and personal rights and freedoms, which cannot be modified, canceled or restricted by other normative and legal acts of lower level force. In other words, no legal regulation can contravene constitutional rights and freedoms of citizens.

In carrying out the reform of the military, length of service also has to be taken into account when providing for the pension insurance.

A detailed and realistic military service contract is optative in order to provide for equal responsibility of servicemen to the state and, vice versa, of the state to servicemen. It is necessary to strengthen control over the legality of orders issued by commanders and superiors regarding the allocation/ distribution of material and household goods among employees, imposing disciplinary actions, as well as regarding compliance of their practical work with the principle of social justice in the formations they are being entrusted to. Most full effect here can be achieved by establishing Institute of delegated representation of the bodies of state power within the formations in the form of special agents (on the model of the army in Germany) who would come into the system from bodies engaged in social and legal activity.

It is desirable to improve the system for continuous qualification advancement of the military, including at civilian universities, making them ready for the conditions of „civilian” life, providing opportunities for members of their families to receive superior quality education, which in turn shall ensure their competitiveness in the labor market.

It is necessary to set up sufficiently effective social-state structures to implement the support of the servicemen after their release from military service and transition into the stock.

We need to continue work on implementation of existing programs for social adaptation and social work with citizens released from military service and their families and to ensure privileges prescribed under the law. It is practicable to actively use the possibilities of social activity which involves such mechanisms as professional retraining of military personnel in the basics of entrepreneurship and small business, psychological consulting, legal services and other activities.

In this regard we consider beneficiary using new employment opportunities related to computers and new technologies. These types of activities, having high rehabilitation potential, contribute to self-assertion and can provide them with conditions for self- insurance. Complex development of the social protection of servicemen released from the ranks of the armed forces system in our view calls for:

- further development and legislative endorsement of new basic social standards and norms for the quality of life for servicemen and those passing in stock;
- defining mechanisms for their up-dating, development of medium and long-term social protection programs, providing social services and social benefits system reformation;
- completing the legislative package with regulations governing the social protection issues that have not been reflected in national legislation so far;
- adoption of urgent measures aimed at improving the retirement insurance;

- development of a long-term program for economic security, adapted to modern economic relations, at that maintaining a focus on the participants in hostilities, war invalids, on family members of servicemen who have lost people providing for them;
- supporting purchasing power of each family of military personnel within the conditions of continuing rise in prices and the going up cost of living through systematic readjustment/indexation and compensation payments;
- defining the mechanisms for recovery of the lost link between the amount of pension and monetary support of servicemen;
- providing a radical solution to the housing problem in the Armed Forces.

Very recent creation of an effective, dynamic system of social adaptation of soldiers has succeeded to operatively and flexibly reorganize their structural divisions in order best to implement social policy of the state in life through a network of local state social service local government, public organizations.

In accordance with this requirement, a specialist of the given sphere need to:

- have good professional training, knowledge in various areas of psychology, pedagogy, sociology, laws, economics and organization of production, computing, mathematical statistics and many other general professional and special disciplines;
- have sufficient general and professional culture, to be deeply versed that presumes good knowledge in the humanities;
- be informed about contemporary political, social and economic processes in society and widely aware of the standard of living and problems of different social groups;
- foresee the consequences of his actions and firmly pursue his position in life;
- be in possession of certain social adaptability in relation to diversity of population needing advices of the social activity specialist;
- skillfully communicate and predispose the „difficult” growing ups, orphans, deserted women, people with limited opportunities, elderly, people in vindication etc.;
- to possess professional skills and experience, to be able to provoke sympathy and trust, to keep professional confidentiality, to show sense of delicacy in all matters concerning intimate aspects of human life, to have emotional stability, to be ready for mental loads, to avoid neurotic deviations in their own judgments and actions despite possible failures (not pertinent reactions, refusals, etc.);
- be able to conscientiously perform own duty, remaining calm, benevolent and attentive to the ward;
- be able to take appropriate decision in extreme situations, to formulate his thoughts, literate and understandable to set them forth.

In summary of above fragments of the social adaptation of the military released from military service and passing in stock we believe that it should be regarded as part of a comprehensive system for social work and protection of intellectual capital in our country that is in possession of value adding knowledge and skills. As soldiers are part of this capital, of the quality of social work carried out for adaptation to civilian life, possibilities for their smooth adaptation to civilian life and effective use of their skills and competencies carrying value and competitive advantage are determined. We make no claim to comprehensiveness of problems considered in our study but we purport to contribute to scientific knowledge in the field of social adaptation of servicemen leaving the ranks of the Armed Forces and the Bulgarian Army providing our view on this such a topical issue in the conditions of strengthening budget deficit and dynamic changes in security environment. And the effectiveness of the implementation of a cost- based system of social adaptation and protection is directly related to compliance with the principles of legality, integrity, impartiality, accountability, professionalism, competence, positivity, accessibility, humanity, transparency, equal treatment of social services users and the dignity of the military and civilian personnel along with all other members of our society.

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