# PERSONNEL PLANNING. A COMPARATIVE OUTLOOK

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*From a very wide perspective, planning has raised lots of issues over time. Management and business theory struggle to teach what planning is, and why it is so dramatically important, in a manner which seemingly quotes Antoine de Saint-Exupery -"A goal without a plan is just a wish", or sets up awareness through Benjamin Franklin's famous words -"By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail" [1]. However, some voices are circumspect or balance between the usefulness of plans and planning: "... plans are useless, but planning is indispensable" [2], while others, sporadically but decisively, criticize the entire organizational planning process, presenting it as a total failure [3]. Sometimes the 'cons' are right, meaning that real life might bring more surprise than ever expected. Even so, organizations benefit from planning by trying at least to 'see' one step forward, and to avoid total uncertainty or critical situations, if not to improve. The military ones are not exempt. Military planning has become the organic environment for such organizations since Napoleonic wars, or even longer ago. This present attempt does not intend to deeply analyze the antagonist advocacies over planning, but to bring under comparison, in a brief manner, the business-shaped theoretical approach of planning, against the real concerns of the Romanian military system in terms of manpower planning.*

**Key words:** *human resources, management, personnel, manpower, workforce, military, planning.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

There is only little differentiation in the ability of using concepts underlying lots of business-featured approaches to personnel planning need, importance and process. However, expanding such perspective on organizations with non-economic goals might not only be difficult, but also inappropriate. It could be the result of barely measurable outcomes and hence ofthe (un)usable concept of 'competitive advantage' within government organizations supposed to provide security, or more precisely, defense. The performance of the military organization is far more difficult to express in terms of productivity, profit, or whatever indicators may be used within an economic environment.

Military efficiency and effectiveness are related to mission accomplishment during either peace or war time, which is obviously a different kind of competitiveness than the one among players in the goods and services markets. But the main difference between military and non-military environments in terms of human resource management (HRM) seems to be the way the two environments acquire their needed human resources: whilst civilian enterprises have the possibility to "buy manpower", the military organization has the only option of "making manpower" (with some exceptions), since no military education and training are provided other than within the military.

There is no need to debate whether or not strategic planning, and subsequent personnel planning are useful or not, keeping in mind that even the military reason of existence has been very much linked with "fighting for resources" for millennia. Planning is also one side of this struggle, and it has brought better result within any kind of field, if not becoming itself a "fight in fight" for

expert methods and hi-tech instruments, whose results could have otherwise been easily missed or misunderstood. Instead, there is a feeling of the need to question whether the business-type manpower/ personnel planning process applies to non-business environments, especially to the military one, "in integrum".

This doubt does not necessarily generate a hypothesis which has to be demonstrated, meaning that if the results of any analysis revealed feasibility of business-shaped personnel planning processes within military organizations, then they would be available for adoption The opinion underlying this article states that these methods are not to be taken for granted, and consequently they have to be carefully inquired and comprehended. Thus, the aim of the study is based on an analytical comparison of personnel planning requirements, methodology, and results used in business and non-profit organizations..

Given this overall framework, the thesis of the current paper is basically meant to target the possibilities of improving military HRM processes (especially planning) through analyzing business HRM models, theory and practice.

Another objective is to identify the current legal and organizational context within which the Romanian military HR planning process may or may not benefit from the experience and expertise that other military systems and civilian business organizations have achieved.

With no unreasonable sense of criticism, the proposed comparative outlook is also aimed at identifying lessons to be learned, and trying to find theoretical solutions for taking further steps in experiencing them practically, if possible.

## 2. HR PLANNING.
## A THEORETICAL APPROACH

### 2.1. Terminological delineations
The human resources management (HRM) theory and practice use a variety of terms. They sometimes are based on the same content, but other times there are differences in meaning.

The concept of HRM is as large as the perception of *everything related to people* within any kind of organization, no matter what its main goal is. Being "more prospective than analytical" [4], the personnel management literature briefly describes HRM as "the management of work and people towards desired ends" [5]. The Romanian theory on the topic does the same, treating HRM as a whole *system of activities* (processes and procedures) rather than a *system of systems*. There are many works which could be taken as examples [6], not going into detail as the practice-based approach could do.

On the other hand, world-wide human resources literature has long ago started treating each of the HRM system "throughputs" as systems of their own, based on the specificity of each process and on the tendency to deeply research the newest methods and techniques, as a need for development. But even within this framework, the switch from theory to practice is loaded with overlaps in using terms such as personnel, manpower, and workforce.

The Romanian perspective sees every one of these as human resources, which may not be confusing, as long as human resources basically stand for people as an asset (the most valuable) of an organization. It must be mentioned that this approach is not an exclusive characteristic for Romanian HRM theory and practice, and at some points it is valid worldwide, since there is no interference with other (governmental) operating systems.

From some other perspectives, there are separated ways of understanding manpower, personnel, and resources. A RAND Corporation study [7] analyses the alignment of three systems – manpower, resources, and personnel systems – as a necessary condition for providing "the personnel inventory needed to meet readiness and operational requirements". This study is particularly important from the US military perspective on the PPBE (Planning, Programming, Budgeting, and Execution) System, which is more or less adopted by the Romanian Ministry of Defense (MoND). The PPBE system requires actually this kind

of segregation of HRM sub-systems, and according to the study, there is a different understanding of each of the above mentioned systems [8]:

- the *manpower* system "determines the needs of various organizations for military persons who have different characteristics", which may be taken as the pure personnel planning process (a "wish-list") with no financial constraints,

- the *resources* system "determines how many of those individuals will be paid for and pays for them", and

- the *personnel* system "enters, manages, develops, and exits personnel", which in general terms encompasses the main HRM processes, except for planning.

For a better understanding it should be stated that the three systems are interconnected (they actually have to be aligned), so the outputs of manpower and resources systems will become inputs for the personnel system.

A NATO report [9] sets up equality between HR and manpower, probably as a result of a multinational perspective, defining HRM as a system which "includes all processes that enable, guide, execute and control the matching of personnel supply to the jobs required, i.e. '*spaces vs. faces*' ". Although valuable by revealing the limitations of NATO HRM methods, practices, and instruments, it may be assessed that the study has its own limits from a terminological perspective, focusing the entire HRM area on "matching faces to spaces", while in theory HRM also deals with issues such as encouraging employment opportunities, promoting rights for workers, and enhancing decent social protection.

Heading back to worldwide HRM theory, Canadian [10], US [11], and Australian [12] researchers use the term "workforce" when it comes to planning. This could somehow be confusing for a reader attached to another culture, since it has more than one meaning by definition, as shown in *APPENDIX A*. Since there is more than one meaning for every single concept, and at some points different terms have been understood

in the same way (see highlighted definitions), it seems that there is no reason to worry about terminology. Yet it should be stated that, depending on context, phrases such as "human resource" and "human resources" *must* be used accordingly.

Moreover, not quite any of the above-mentioned terms may be used whenever talking about planning. Having concluded that HRM deals with personnel needs and supply, the bottom-line condition of a correct understanding of what those terms are referring to is to define them, from an organizational perspective, as **manpower** (*spaces*), and **personnel** (*faces*). Once that point is reached, it is easily understandable why human resource planning is very well known under the concept of *4R: right person, in the right place, at the right time, with the right skills*.

Not really within the same context, but related to it is the fact that any national military system (including Romanian) which has adopted the PPBES needs to combine the so-called HRM planning system with the PPBE system, and to align them. Otherwise, planning remains just a process with no valuable results in terms of mission accomplishment.

## 2.2. An integrative outlook on HR planning: basic requirements

This section will focus on both theoretical and practical aspects of what planning actually means in terms of human resources. It is designed as a comparative outlook over business and government practice, with a highlighted military perspective. Because human resource planning deals by nature with the manpower needs of an organization, and also for simplicity reasons, this approach will use from now on phrases such as "HR planning" whenever both sides (spaces and faces) are referred to, "manpower planning", and "personnel planning", when it comes to only one of them, even if "manpower planning" may be obsolete, according to some approaches [15] which state that the term was used in the past, and it has been substituted by "workforce planning".

HR planning is mainly referred through its general purpose, which is to match human resources to organizational needs in shorter and longer terms requirements. Matching organizational resources and needs, according to the 4R principle, is seen as the result of planning, which is also described as a process of processes, encompassing not only estimates and plans, but also recruitment, selection, hiring, induction, training and development. Therefore, *planning* is just a piece of the puzzle, fitting into the wider scheme of an organization, as Reilly's theoretical model shows [16].
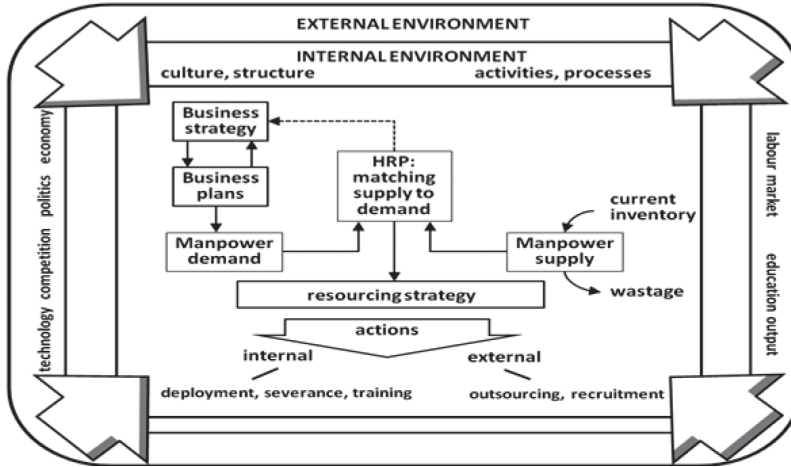


**Fig. no. 1**. Manpower planning model (Reilly, 1996)

HR planning followers and experts [17] have identified many reasons why it is so important to enable management to achieve such objectives as:
- reducing personnel costs, without impacting productivity;
- identifying and preparing future leaders for structural changes;
- guaranteeing a constant supply of qualified personnel in key roles;
- keeping a flexible workforce structure;
- having internal flexibility to match people expertise with job requirements;
- investing in the education of selected talented employees;
- recruiting people with the right mix of skills;
- increasing productivity.

Studies [18] have also shown the appropriate steps of HR planning. In this respect, the S-7 model is the most known , and consists of the following:

Step 1: Define the organization's strategic direction;

Step 2: Scan the internal and external environments;

Step 3: Model the current manpower;

Step 4: Assess future manpower needs and project future manpower supply;

Step 5: Identify gaps and develop gap-closing strategies;

Step 6: Implement gap-closing strategies;

Step 7: Evaluate the effectiveness of gap-closing strategies and revise strategies as needed.

The model is among the most recognized and used in practice, both within business and government environments. Under the circumstances of the above mentioned PPBES, a theoretical model of HR planning is proposed by Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, California, breaking down the Human Resource Development Process (HRDP) System into "four major quadrants: Requirements; Programming; Planning; Execution" [19].

The study proposes a comparative outlook on HRDP System specific to US Marine Corps, and the US Navy system equivalent – Manpower, Personnel and Training System, based on the same processes, as shown below:
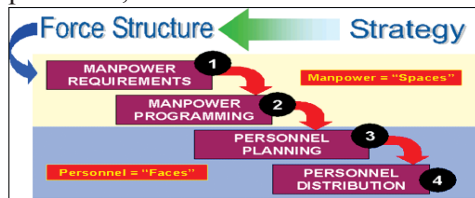


**Fig. no. 2.** Manpower, Personnel and Training System

There are different ways to establish the right manpower requirements, depending on how the workloads are standardized, based on working time or productivity. **Estimating workload** is considered to be "the heart of demand forecasts" [20].

Workload projections can be based on quantitative models, qualitative models, or on both of them. The key outputs of workload projection are the estimate of the type and volume of tasks to be performed, how many people and with what qualifications will be needed to perform the tasks.

Workload calculations are easier to be done whenever the equipment allows it, meaning that there is a fixed number of people with established qualifications operating the equipment. However, no one can work endlessly to operate a part of that equipment. This is why planners need to calculate the entire "amount" of work and to split it into appropriate time shifts, which in most cases means 8 work-hours per day. Accordingly, the necessary manpower to operate the equipment 24/7 is at least 3 qualified persons, not taking into consideration the "reserve", which means at least one extra-person ready for unpredictable substitution.

Standardization tends to be an important role-player within the manpower planning process, not only for workload assessment, but also to help planners to directly refer to certain skills encompassed by a qualification. Such standards are internationally available under International Labor Organization (ISCO – International Standard Classification of Occupations). According to Romanian law, an occupational catalogue [21] is used by HRM within both business and government environments. Every inventoried occupation is supported by an occupational standard, describing educational levels, and skill requirements. Unfortunately, the Romanian military does not use such an instrument related to military manpower. Although the catalogue does exist, listing all military occupational specialties, the educational and skill requirements are not inventoried under a unique document, and they are spread out in many manuals or other guidance documents, which affects manpower planning.

Even if planners do their job properly, there are not many cases in practice when it happens according to plan, because manpower is expensive. It is more expensive when technology requires highly qualified people to operate the equipment, but not only that: there is a balance between quantity and quality, through the fact that a small number of highly qualified people are as costly as a greater number of medium or less qualified performers.

Along with workload determination, manpower planning is also based on another key requirement, which is **estimating future manpower needs**: the critical point is to find the correct answer to the question "how many and what kind of people will we need?".

Answering that question needs a large amount of different variables to be taken into account, and manpower planners often have to rely on information that could only be obtained from top and middle managers. Some of the most important variables have been identified by business model studies, but they can apply for a government (military included) environment:

- the state of the economy;
- demographics;
- attrition or turnover;
- new skill requirements due to production and/or technological changes;
- obsolescence of current skills and its effects;

- equipment availability and costs;
- social changes effects on labor market;
- labor costs.

Organizations have different options to estimate future manpower demands. Mathematical models are the most accurate, but other techniques are still frequently used, such as regression methods, trend analysis, individual estimates, and Delphi method [22].

Whatever tools are used, cross-function analysis requires the management of a large quantity of information, which could not be possible without the valuable help (but often too expensive) of IT systems.

There are numerous available methods and instruments which help organizations to conduct HR planning, as it involves an analysis of the present manpower competencies, the identification of the competencies needed in the future, a comparison of the present workforce to future needs to identify competency gaps and surpluses.

Many organizations have developed their own techniques, and complex software-packages based on even more complicated statistics that are available on the market. However, they might be so expensive that most organizations could not afford them, and they may not be 100% reliable if not tailored taking into account the specific requirements and environment of the organization that uses them.

## 3. DEFENSE & HR PLANNING

### 3.1. US Navy manpower planning

Following the main goal of providing a brief comparative outlook on HR planning, this section will delay the business-shaped model for further comments, and will try to summarize some of the most important features of US Navy Manpower, Personnel and Training (MPT) System mentioned above, based on the information provided by the quoted study.

It should be mentioned that, as a similarity between business and military, both environments must have HR plans, derived from strategy (goals –

objectives – processes– activities) and guided by the integration principle. The difference comes from the target that each environment focuses on, so that business-tailored planning follows the competitive advantage, while military plans are capability-based, according to the PPBES requirements.

The US Navy MPT System reflects the overall process of translating strategic objectives into people demands, and according to sources [23], it has the following designations:

- to help build platforms to accomplish missions assigned to the Department of the Navy as a part of the National Military Strategy (NMS) in support of the greater National Security Strategy;
- to provide guidance for planners to justify the Military Personnel Navy (MPN) appropriation to Congress;
- to fund the correct number of sailors with the right qualifications and experience to specific assignments in preparation for war and support of peacetime personnel readiness levels.

As shown in **Figure 2**, the system is based on four quadrants, and each quadrant reflects a process, being treated through sub-processes, specific players, documents, and information systems. For simplicity reasons, the present thesis only refers to sub-processes, with only short comments on other features which may lead to better understanding.

The first process – *manpower requirements* – is designed to determine the human resource needs, and for that reason it is known as the quantitative and qualitative determination and validation of workload. It basically measures workload through industrial standards, which convert workload into hours of productive work by skill and pay grade. The resulting hours of workload are converted into the number of requirements for a specific platform class. These requirements are ultimately used for accessions, training, promotion plans, and personnel appropriation justifications to Congress. Each platform type is assessed approximately every two years or when deemed necessary, one of the purposes being to ensure future Navy war fighters have the right jobs identified

by studying human-machine interfaces.

Sub-processes are *determination* and *validation*: new systems and platforms are determined using a zero-based methodology, while validation is generally used to measure workload on previously existing systems and platforms. Hourly workload is captured based on readiness levels in a (financially) unconstrained manpower environment.

A short but important comment is worth adding: there is a point where military and civilian manpower planning could meet on the ground of occupational standards, as long as the same type of equipment is used by both environments. It is a fortunate case with the shipping industry and naval military forces, and it may apply also for other services such as air (pilots, air controllers) or land forces (drivers, engineers, etc.).However, this kind of matching is barely usual. In any case, the workload estimate process within the military could rely on civilian manpower experience and practice, at least from a methodological perspective.

As presented by the study [24], once the workload is assessed and requirements have been determined, the results are maintained in manpower requirement documents, which are the inputs for the next process.

The MPT System also plays the role of integrating manpower planning into the PPBE System through its **manpower programming** process, which has as a general objective to fit 'unconstrained' war fighter requirements into a fiscally constrained environment. Manpower programming identifies necessary current appropriations and projects future requirements across the Future Year Defense Plan (FYDP).

It is based on the following sub-processes:

- *authorization*: a manpower requirement supported by approved funding and corresponding end strength; once a requirement is authorized, it is referred to as a *billet*, which is the basis for programming officer and enlisted end strength;

- *end strength*: "the number of officer and enlisted requirements which can be authorized (funded) based on approved budgets" [25], or "the number

of uniformed personnel set by congress allowed on the last day of each fiscal year" [26];

- *PPBES*: is the cyclical process of *planning*, *programming*, *budgeting* and *execution* of the budget which connects mission to capabilities, forces and resources, and is designed to provide the best mix of forces, equipment and support within fiscal constrained environment.

Although further iterations of the US military PPBES go beyond the goal of this approach, one comment needs to be added. This authorization – end-strength – PPBES well-ordered mixture of processes allows military players to advocate, negotiate and even to influence the political will in order to attract the appropriate funding for mission accomplishment. The Navy uses the whole process to determine what capabilities they require, how much of the capability they can afford to fund and what adjustments must be made to attain those capabilities, based on strategic demands and deep risk analyses which weigh goals and limitations (capabilities and funding), and costs (personnel, operational time, missions).

The third process – **personnel planning** – makes the transition from the 'spaces' to the 'faces' side of planning. It is time for using 'workforce' after 'manpower' requirements have been determined and authorized. The process consists of ensuring that the human resource requirements of the future are being properly sourced, grown, retained, and released. Personnel planners are responsible for developing strength, accession, school, and advancement and promotion plans.

Sub-processes are *strength planning* and *community management*.

*Strength planning* consists of predicting, planning and managing the Navy's total gains and losses for a given fiscal year with the goal of reaching the congressionally mandated end strength with the given budget.

Strength planners use the following formula to manage end strength:

## BS – L + G = ES

[*Beginning Strength (1 OCT) – Losses + Gains = End Strength (30 SEP)*]

Forecasting losses is done by looking at attrition, retention and retirement, while predicting gains is done in order to obtain end strength at the end of the fiscal year. Gains include accessions into the Navy (boot camp and officer training), lateral transfers from other services, and the Naval Reserve. Both losses and gains are predicted on a monthly base by pay grade, which means that the personnel planning is actually a continuous work, watching the balance between *personnel* and *resources* systems as defined earlier.

Through *community management* future community inventory from accession to retirement is predicted based on current inventory, in order to shape the workforce.

According to the study, officers and enlisted community managers usually develop compensation policies, accessions, advancement and promotion plans, and school training plans, as shown in *Table 1* below.

**Table 1**: Community manager's role

| TASK | DESCRIPTION |
|---|---|
| Compensation policy | Incentives, SRBs (Selective Reenlistment Bonus Model) |
| Accession planning | Recruiting quotas (Skipper: model of predicting recruiting goals and future inventory requirements) |
| Advancement planning | Promotions by community & pay-grade |
| A and C school plans (early evaluated, and monthly tracked by pay grade and rating, gender, school capacity and length, instructor to student ratio, and attrition rates, minimize the difference between authorizations and projected inventory) | Quota planning |

*"Personnel distribution is the cycle-closing process, which actually deals with the 4R concept, having personnel managers directing the movement of individuals to fill command vacancies. The process begins by identifying sailors who are nine months from their Projected Rotation Date (PRD). This projection separates non-distributable inventory from distributable inventory (transients, in training, patients and prisoners or nondistributable inventory). Personnel meeting the assignment criteria are* known *as the distributable inventory. Sub-processes are allocation, placement and assignment."*

*Allocation* consists of distributing sailors and officers among the US Navy maritime commands, through a prioritized list of projected available billets and distributable inventory of sailors. The result of the allocation process is the input to placement and assignment sub-process.

*Placement* is an intensive process in which command advocates search for the right sailor, with the right skills, for the right command and at the right time. This is also known as looking out for the command's requirements (interests).

*Assignment* considers the sailor's preference, and puts a 'face' in a 'space'. The act of assigning sailors to billets is done by assignment officers (detailers).

As a short conclusion of this section, the US Navy MPT System is complex, and it may look inefficient with lots of players, documents, information systems, and tasks. It works as an extremely wide and complicated "military manpower management enterprise" [28], with the general goal of providing security by deterring and winning wars. Its pillar principles are the following:

- cross-control, both civilian (by budget) and between agencies (HR planning actors);
- advocacy (justifying manpower requirements);
- negotiation (influencing political will through risk analysis);
- coordination: manpower-equipment.

### 3.2. Lessons to be learned and challenges

This section is about lessons to be learned (not yet learned, since measures are not in place), and challenges to be faced in order to improve the national defense planning system through a proper manpower planning process.

The brief overview of a theoretical approach based on business experience, and the crossing through one of the

most world experienced and powerful military manpower planning systems revealed a series of good practices to be thought of, not to borrow them as they are, but maybe to understand the rate of their practicality within the Romanian military.

- *Personnel planning is just a piece of the larger HR planning process*

This assumption is based on the fact that there is no historical evidence of a comprehensive HR planning system in place within Romanian armed forces. It is only known from sayings that there used to be a personnel planning method, based on a yearly process, with a so-called "*annual plan for providing with human resources*" as a result.

It is not known whether this instrument was covering both the manpower (spaces) and the personnel (faces) sides of the coin, but since there is no registered document at hand, this has to be a matter of further research.

Other than that, there is no evidence that the greater process of defense planning uses the right techniques of assessing manpower requirements, as long as there is a lack of military occupational standards. On one hand, according to Romanian legislation [29] on defense planning, the HR planning is deeply integrated into a top-to-down defense planning process, based on PPBE System, and a series of subsequent documents which provide directions: National Defense Strategy (NDS), Government Program (GP), Defense White Book (DWB), Military Strategy (MS), and Defense Planning Guidance (DPG).

On the other hand, according to personal experience, specific regulation for manpower planning is missing, so that the process is mainly based on shaping force structure in accordance with capability requirements, under a previously given number of budgeted 'spaces'. Therefore, the manpower requirements are determined through matching manpower to equipment, and by a 'traditional' military organizational framework, under the policy of maximum affordable quantity. There is also a negotiation process, within which the major programmers' representatives

justify their needs, and adjust their "portions" of approved requirements. This phase takes place under the authority of Integrated Defense Planning Directorate (IDPD) – a sub-structure of the MoND Defense Policy and Planning Department (DPPD). The result are the Major Programs (MP), and Force Employment Operational Plans (FEOP).

The conclusion is that manpower requirements ought to be based on scientific workloads calculation. A timorous step has been done in this respect, but from a psychological perspective. According to regulations [30], the Socio-behavioral Investigation Center (SbIC), a sub-structure of the Human Resources Management Directorate (HRMD), performs personnel psychological evaluations using professional characteristic charts. It is not something that measures workloads, but it may be helpful for further on-site studies, and job analyses, with the goal of correctly setting up 'how many and what kind of people we need' (skills, pay-grade, quantity).

But before evaluating, the reference system has to be operational, which means that occupational standards need to be previously developed. It would not be the main SbIC objective, but the HRMD's one, and other specialized bodies'. SbIC could only help performing this laborious task. Such standards inventory would back-up military specialties inventory, and therefore would help workloads analysts, and manpower planners to accurately estimate manpower requirements.

Should these instruments be operating, organizational adjustments related to jobs (spaces) and their requirements will be needed, and this also could be done at once or on a long term basis, depending on the urgency of this particular change, which is mostly determined by every organization's level of involvement in building a capability.

- *Implementing succession plans*

Studies see succession planning as an HR activity which "acknowledges that staff will not be with an organization indefinitely and it provides a plan and process for addressing the changes that

need to be improved and updated. And also the infrastructure needs additional accomplishments.

Whether a Human Resources Information Systems (HRIS ) will be available or not, analyses are key factors of HR planning. If supported by statistics, mathematical methods and HRIS, these will result in good HR plans, which would be able to sustain military (manpower requirements) justifications faced with political will (this may be another lesson to be learned by Romanian military leadership from the US perspective). It will also save money, through appropriate gap closing strategies. If not, there will be not much to do other than planning by personal experience.

## 4. HR PLANNING: FROM PROMISE TO PRACTICE

### 4.1. The need for an integrated perspective

As depicted in previous chapters, HRM has developed as a system of systems. Whichever perspective (business, government, or military) is applied, the HRM system creates multiple links between the organization which it supports and the wider social system, which makes it even more complex.

Understanding the very detailed HRM mechanisms of "dealing with people and organizations" requires not only deepened research, but also an accurate bird's-eye view of processes, sub-processes, connections and correlations.

At the very first level of HRM process of processes stands the HR planning, as planning is the first function of general management by theory. The HR cycle goes on with cross-connected processes as recruiting, selecting, developing (education, training, assigning, and career development), performance management (assessment, appraisal, and rewards), compensation, and it formally ends with retirement or/and outplacement. This entire cycle comes under organizational external and internal influencing factors, and "manages" people while supporting tasks. At the same time it is supported by and interacts with structures, technology,

Staff), education and training capabilities, and attrition rate based on resignation records, and legal framework (retirement regulation). The results of this process were (and they still last) the *initial education and training plans*, along with *recruitment plans*, which are yearly delivered. This issue has been raised both officially and unofficially [35], and from 2014 a new HR Planning Office has been established. Its main current task is to develop a new HR planning methodology, which hopefully will provide an integrated perspective over both manpower and personnel planning.

Returning to specialists, it is a notorious fact that Romanian military has few real HRM specialists. Some of them are academics, and their education is mainly based on civilian, business-shaped approach. Their knowledge is extremely valuable, and it could be arguably useful to improve military HRM practice. They only have little experience with the military environment.

On the other hand, military personnel working in this field area are experienced as military, but only few have studied HRM theory. Their skills are exclusively based on experience. This is also to be taken into consideration by HR planning policies, in terms of education and training, but also in practice, in terms of information changing, common studies, and other means to increase level of skills.

- *External and internal factors analysis (demographics, economy, attraction, retention, attrition)*

Determining manpower requirements should be an issue of concern Not only for the Romanian military HRM system (also HRMD should be more involved). Deeper analyses have to be performed, in order to investigate both internal and external environment, which would by accuracy help HR planning improvement.

This also requires investment in time, talent, and resources. Resources might be the most targeted sinceaccurate information necessitate high performance information systems.

Unfortunately, former attempts of acquiring valuable IT solutions for HRM have failed, due to both lack of knowledge and money. Nowadays some "home-made" products are in place, but they still

will occur when they leave" [31]. It enables an organization to fill leadership vacancies within a reasonable time frame, focusing *on developing a pool of people to consider for promotion*, and it should not be confused with emergency-related replacement planning, or with talent management, which deals with "attracting, developing, deploying, and retaining the best people" [32].

Even if not as widely used as it should be, business theory and practice recognize its importance. Similar concerns could have been identified within the US Navy *placement* phase of the *personnel distribution* process.

The Romanian military HRM system has adopted a more "equal opportunity" orientated policy, translated into staffing-related regulation [33]. According to it, everyone has the right to apply for a vacancy, which is an overall valuable way. Selection boards are to decide (fitting) who is the right person among those who meets the job requirements.

Yet there is a need for pooling future leaders. It does not mean avoiding regulation. A selection process should still be in place, but before this is to be taken, having many choices at hand could not only ensure the best staffing solutions, but also improve leadership among the entire organization.

From the perspective of the architecture of organization processes, some balancing structural constraints may apply, meaning that key positions filling must be based on additional requirements. As an example, the actual regulations (Ministerial Order no. M.30/2012) sets-up that only company commanders may become battalion commanders. It is not very clearly established which are the key position subjected to succession planning, and this may lead to fuzziness, but at least types of required positions for further career development are alternatively proposed by policies and provisions. This may be a better approach, instead of strictly enumerating key positions, because the system should avoid exaggerated path narrowing measures.

Bearing with the truth that this is easier said than done, building succession plans requires "investment in time, talent, and resources" [34]. Beside the fact that senior leaders need to recognize the role of succession planning, and to be willingly involved to pass the leadership baton at a certain time, some other instruments could be used.

The most important factor seems to be education (even within second field area), but some others may play a role whenever possible, such as mentoring, and creating opportunity for junior leaders to switch positions. This is a mobility requirement ("rotations"), and sometimes it could raise issues of social concern, but they need to be mitigated by appropriate motivational means.

Of course, this should be done by regulations; otherwise only by a fortunate chance pieces of succession plans could be locally in place – wherever very skilled senior leaders think for the future and are able to find out "leadership talents".

- *Involving more specialists*

As the first lesson explanation showed, it seems that not enough specialists are involved within the manpower planning process.

This is not only to say that some other specialists, as operational commanders, academics, IT specialists, maybe psychologists and even defense industry actors could be successfully taking part into manpower planning. Taking a look back at the US Navy process, which is known as centralized, there is a large amount of actors "running the business". Some of them are partially involved, and some others are totally on the ground, but every one of them has specific tasks to accomplish, and the ability to negotiate and to bring their own arguments.

This lesson also allows a critical view on HRMD involvement. According to available knowledge, it has kept over times a low profile, playing the minimal role of "watching the personnel ceiling" within that process, which is to be assumed as not very helpful.

It was an understandable situation of not having the appropriate "tools" for years (between 2009 and 2014 there was not a single manpower planning specialist working with HRMD), due to personnel reduction based on budgetary constraints. During that time period, HRMD was only planning personnel, matching services requirement proposals (through General

financial and informational resources.

Everything mentioned above is working together for a strategic mission accomplishment, and has as results organizational culture and products, which one way or another influence the external organizational environment through implications and consequences, and the internal one, through feed-back. In this respect, a fully comprehensive *Organizational System's Framework Model* has been designed by Prof. Nancy Roberts (Naval Postgraduate School), and reproduced to illustrate the "PPBE System from a manpower perspective" [36].

As for the HRM cycle as part of of an integrative outlook on the organizational systemunderstanding the way manpower and personnel planning smoothly slide into the PPBE System is not quite easy; therefore, an integrated perspective is as valuable as it is needed.

There are also two practical reasons for the present thesis purpose.

Firstly, there is a call for eliminating disuse of manpower planning, and misuse of personnel planning (the latter frequently covering both manpower and personnel), and for treating the two in an appropriate theoretical and practical manner.

Secondly, an integrative approach to HR processes has not been on the HRMD agenda since the beginning of 2000; most projects have been implemented on a sequential basis; so that, starting with last year (2014), a series of projects related to HR sub-processes have begun to be outlined. Concerning that, it is worth outlining that the difference between manpower and personnel planning will most probably position HRMD towards its better inclusion into the PPBES' manpower planning, through workload analysis assistance.

## 4.2. A prospective approach to armed forces planning in developing countries (a blueprint for action)

Some of NATO member states have adopted the PPBE System as a defense planning framework, under the credible argument of budgeting systems alignment. It is of evidence that PPBES has been designed for the large and complex US military system, therefore it is complicated as a process. In this respect, it may not be appropriate for smaller organizations. This is actually why it has raised criticism so far.

Romania has also adopted PPBES, on the same ground of integration and interoperability. But still proper adjustments have to be done. One of the reasons may be the unaligned national fiscal and budgeting laws.

From the present perspective, an issue of concern is how to integrate manpower planning into PPBES. As it has been already mentioned, there is a process in place, but there is no evidence of performing the most appropriate manpower planning method, since there is no cross-control between all involved actors. Manpower planning normally follows the capability requirements, being a part of capability-based defense planning process. Codes of capabilities have been developed, and periodically issued at NATO level. They have inventoried *force structures* and *personnel structures*, among other capability composing elements. Romanian military planners strictly refer to these so-called "Blue Books" when they define capability targets, and build-up Major Programs.

There is no doubt that those Blue Books have been issued based on analysis, taking into consideration national particularities regarding doctrine, organization, personnel, training, logistics, materials, leadership, facilities, interoperability, etc. But the reviewing cycle for the Blue Book might be too long at some point, and some adjustments might be necessary between previous and next edition.

On the other hand, blindly following prescriptions in doing this business might be to everyone disadvantage, which does not mean disobeying orders, but having the opportunity to justify manpower requirements. This "food for thoughts" approach may also encounter critics, but from the military system point of view it does not seem that unfair when it comes to justify capability requirements to "higher" (political). There is no doubt and no argument regarding constitutional

principles (civilian control over military); otherwise history may undesirably repeat itself. But PPBES should set up the opportunity to undertake requirements statements, and risk analysis reports, and it should enable senior leadership to assess alternative ways to achieve the established objectives. This is thoroughly valid, not only for manpower requirements.

In terms of the relation between the manpower planning topic and the PPBES, the missing bridges seem to be *occupational standards* and *workload estimates*, alongside with other supporting processes, structures, and subsystems (workload analysis center/ specialists, HRIS).

However, the process exists, and it is ongoing. The present section tries to figure out where, and how missing elements could be placed within this process, which is illustrated bellow.
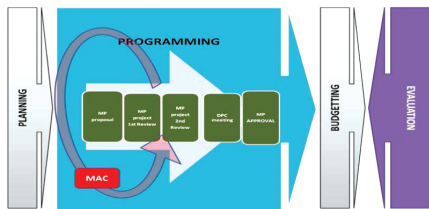


**Fig. no. 3.** Manpower analysis

As the first two PPBES phases are developed top-to-down, only HR general directions are given through the planning process. Manpower planning is addressed by the programming phase; after that, personnel planning goes together and/or parallel (but still linked) to budgeting and evaluating phases.

Despite the fact that planning needs to be periodically reviewed, and flexible, in order to achieve better results of manpower planning, the programming phase needs to embrace another loop-process which passes raw manpower requirements identified by services through the deepened analysis of a (desired) Manpower Analysis Center (MAC), fully equipped to perform this task (either with accurate military occupational standards, and IT analysis and workload estimating tools). The result will need to be reviewed by major programs directors, General Staff (as

strategic command) if deemed, IDPD, HRMD, and other entities. Should the results be re-negotiated, it will have to be done before the Defense Planning Council meeting. It could be assessed that the right time of the "double-check" analysis to be done is between the first Defense Planning Guidance (DPG) proposal review, and the second DPG project review, when MP's representatives have already started to balance their proposed manpower requirements against capabilities and resources.

After that, and until the next programming session (next year), occupational standards have to be reviewed (by MAC) following a planned schedule so that every occupational standard is reviewed on a 4-5 year basis.

The outline shown in **Figure 3** is an imaginary scenario, so that it may not be taken by granted, but it still could provide ideas of a "blueprint for action".

### 4.3. Steps to be taken in implementing the change to a manpower planning system

As stated from the very beginning, this theoretical attempt does not pretend to find out the best solutions for implementing a "state of the art" manpower planning system. However, a few ideas of how to take action in this respect could be highlighted in the present section.

Implementing a new model of action needs a change. Setting-up the new manpower requirements analysis process depicted within the previous section is a matter of senior leaders' decision. Then there would be a free way to practice – no sooner said than done, because the bureaucratic military system sometimes accepts it this way.

Unfortunately, real life requires some more attention to be paid. Even if such step could be taken in a short run, there would be a lot more to be done. It needs a small scale reengineering process a, which means to start from understanding the "as is" status against the "to be" end-state (setting-up vision and objectives), passing through phases such as identifying the process to be

redesigned, implementing and evaluating new processes, and not ending but continuing with ongoing improvement.

If such process were to be implemented within the Romanian military defense planning system, it would have to follow the DOTMLP model [37] (doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership, and people):

- *doctrine* requires appropriate provisions to be developed and implemented – a ministerial order would be necessary for broad opposability;
- *organization* refers to projecting the Manpower Analysis Center (MAC): mission, objectives, organizational chart, and manpower; personnel, relationship and communication ways (within and outside/vertical and horizontal), inputs-outputs, responsibilities, methods, techniques, SOPs, etc.
- *training* needs to be structured on short term (adapting new people to new requirements), and long term (preparing the "tomorrow shift");
- *materiel* – all necessary means to accomplish the mission, especially infrastructure and tools (IT equipment – appropriate hardware & software);
- *leadership* is one of the most important component of a new system – it has to understand and to lead the change, to evaluate processes, and to implement corrections;
- *people* – the most important – need to be able to understand collective and individual roles, and to perform accordingly; people may not be available on the spot, therefore the whole HR cycle-process (planning comes first) may be helpful.

Because the process itself needs "investment in time, talent, and resources", its implementation would not be easy if resistance is neglected. Based on this assumption, there is a suggested need to deal with the "people side of change" [38], which basically could be undertaken through Kotter's change phase's model [39]:

1. Establish a sense of urgency (need for accuracy of manpower planning);
2. Create a coalition of change champions (people who understand the need for change and are willing to promote it);
3. Develop a clear vision (realistic, credible, and attractive);
4. Share the vision (communicate);
5. Empower people to clear obstacles (allowing to break roadblocks);
6. Secure short term wins (achieving short term results);
7. Consolidate and keep moving (avoid declaring victory too soon);
8. Anchor the change (inserting it into the organizational culture).

From a more practical perspective, such a project could be fashioned within the Romanian military manpower planning system starting with the reassessment of the military occupational specialities inventory. This process would be extremely time-consuming, because according to the law, the inventory applies to all Romanian military organizations, and subsequently it has to be approved by all their leaders.

Next would be the occupational standards development, which would fill the military occupations within the above mentioned ROC (Romanian Classification of Occupations).

After that, the MAC could be projected, and time would still be needed to operate it. The results of its work (workloads estimate during manpower planning phases, occupational standards periodic review, manpower/personnel data analysis) need to be evaluated, and corrective measures will have to be taken.

Overall, this project management would require the MoND decisions, and the HRMD and GS (General Staff)/J1 involvement (both as decision-makers, and owners of process), because the MAC would need to be placed at such level so that it would be able to support and assist the whole defence planning process from the manpower perspective.

Regarding the HRMD, there is an actual opportunity to improve the ongoing HR planning process, by breaking it down into two sub-processes: manpower planning, and personnel planning, both of them supported by the same new HR Planning Office.

In this respect, the new mentioned methodology needs to be a two-fold shaped one.

On a long term framework, implementing such change needs to start by adequately planning it. Having in mind the reality of HR specialist's shortage and the need for change management implementation through the above mentioned phases, the present opinion indicates that the right first step consists of educating and training a pool of HR specialists, in order to ensure the proper mission accomplishment within a reasonable timeline. Then the training should be a continuous process.

It must be highlighted that this long-term perspective also requires "investment in time, talent, and resources", and a great will of HRMD involvement: first, it has to be understood that the HR planning means both manpower and personnel planning; second, policies and appropriate requirements for the educational bodies are to be outlined, with the purpose of creating the right "initial development framework" for military HR specialists, and the path(s) for their development (career included).

It also needs to be stated that the HRMD involvement is a necessity, not a simple whish, even for the simple reason of shifting from the personnel management to HRM, which implies a multifunctional approach, a lot more than a view "based on rules and procedures and seen as a separate function from general management", in accordance with the the 27 points of Storey's HRM model [40]. It would be interesting to identify the HRMD roles among those depicted by Storey, using interactive methods like Delphi. It could bring some new ideas related to HRMD strategic functions in the limelight , far beyond the actual mission framing set up by law.But this would be another issue of interest for further research. Anyways, no matter what conclusion should be drawn, it could be effective if only translated into regulatory provisions.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

Although the present theoretical attempt has been initially thought-out to describe the Romanian military personnel planning process through its objectives, means and (not yet very well defined) methods, which are being developed at the HRMD level, it turned into a "comparative outlook" over the understanding of the manpower planning, seen from different perspectives: worldwide business, US military, and Romanian military organizations. Therefore, an alternative personnel planning procedure, which uses analytical and statistic tools and formulas, alongside with historical data exploration is to be the object of further inquiry.

This is the result of deepening the documentation phase focusing on what actually manpower planning stands for, which has revealed the first and most important conclusion that could be drawn: HR planning has to look at both the "spaces" and "faces" sides of the process, meaning that it is more than estimating gaps and searching for the appropriate ways to fill them. This approach indicates that there is still room for better practice development of the process within the Romanian military organization, and it requires a deepened involvement of specialized entities in order to improve the manpower/personnel planning process, so that it smoothly integrates into the PPBE System.

Another important conclusion, which has already been highlighted, is that the above mentioned improvement needs *investment in talent, time and resources*. Without an appropriate vision of doctrine, organization, training, materiel (IT systems strictly required), leadership, people, and facilities, the accuracy of HR planning remains just a wish.

Achieving the main goal of improving the HRM processes within the manpower/personnel planning is not to be attempted without any effort. It requires changes to be made. This is why it furthermore needs a strategy, which has to be part of and aligned with the organizational strategy. That is, any organizational strategy should include mission, vision, goals and objectives related to the HRM field, and a very important point is that all those need to be communicated, and very well understood. The information flow must go all the way through decision and

execution levels. It would pretty much help implementing change, and dealing with its "people side".

This necessity has been identified mainly through the reading of the study quoted in the first section of the third chapter ("*US Navy manpower planning*"), but it has also been revealed by some business researches reflecting the same idea. Based on this observation, it must be concluded that despite differences between business and military environments, both of them find common grounds related to HR issues. In other words, business-shaped HRM models show practicality within military organizations.

This is why it could be stated that improving national defense planning system through an appropriate HR planning process development may rely on both business and other government (military included) systems' expertise, and experience. Therefore, analytical and deepened research could be recommended as "musts".

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## APPENDIX A
## TERMINOLOGICAL DELINEATIONS

| DEFINED TERMS | DEFINITION/SOURCE | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| | Merriam-Webster Dictionary [13] | Business Dictionary [14] |
| WORKFORCE | 1. the group of people who work for a particular organization or business<br><br>2. the number of people in a country or area who are available for work | 1. total number of a country's population employed in the armed forces and civilian jobs, plus those unemployed people who are actually seeking paying work<br><br>2. total number of employee (usually excluding the management) on an employer's payroll |
| MANPOWER | 1. power available from or supplied by the physical effort of human beings<br><br>2. the total supply of persons available and fitted for service | 1. (general) total supply of personnel available or engaged for a specific job or task<br><br>2. (economics) total labor force of a nation, including both men and women. If there are more people than available jobs, it is called manpower surplus; if available people are fewer than jobs, it is called manpower deficit |
| PERSONNEL | 1. the people who work for a particular company or organization<br><br>2. a department within a company or organization that deals with the people who work for it | 1. employees of an organization<br><br>2. human resources division of an organization |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **HUMAN RESOURCE** | | The resource that resides in the knowledge, skills, and motivation of people. Human resource is the least mobile of the four factors of production, and (under right conditions) it improves with age and experience, which no other resource can do. It is therefore regarded as the scarcest and most crucial productive resource that creates the largest and longest lasting advantage for an organization | |
| **HUMAN RESOURCES\*** | * Merriam–Webster Dictionary does not provide a definition of "human resource"; it only treats "human resources", but the second definition shown better matches the concept or "human resource". Business Dictionary clearly defines both concepts. | 1. a department within an organization that deals with the people who work for that organization<br><br>2. a group of people who are able to do work | The division of a company that is focused on activities relating to employees. These activities normally include recruiting and hiring of new employees, orientation and training of current e m p l o y e e s , employee benefits, and retention. *Formerly called personnel* |