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Retention Rates amongst Danish Army Officers:  
*“The Effects of Changes in Recruitment Strategy”*

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## **Abstract**

The 2013-2017 Danish Defense Agreement entailed a change in the recruitment segment for the Army's officer education. This means that the candidates (as of 2015) need to hold a higher accredited education of minimum level six. No studies have been conducted to provide an overview of how the turnover and retention rate compares to the prior recruitment segment.

This thesis aims to uncover whether the change in the Army's recruitment strategy has influenced the Army's ability to retain its junior-grade officers.

To investigate the differences, this thesis has followed a quantitative and qualitative framework. Quantitative data from 461 junior-grade officers representing the discontinued and current recruitment segments reveals a significant difference in retention rate. The junior-grade officers with an academic background displayed lower retention rates. Utilizing a qualitative approach drawing upon frameworks of Herzberg et al.'s (1959) two-factor theory and Rousseau's (1995) psychological contract, the recruitment segments' job attitudes, expectations, and preferences leading to satisfaction and dissatisfaction were examined. The findings show no significant dissimilarities in the recruitment segment's motivational or hygiene factors capable of explaining the difference in retention rate. However, the violation of psychological contracts was expressed as the primary cause of turnover amongst junior-grade officers.

In conclusion, the difference in the recruitment segments' retention rate cannot be explained by differences in job factors or psychological contracts. The difference in retention rate is sought explained by other variables such as differences in age, educational background, and work-life balance. These variables potentially affect the junior-grade officers' job satisfaction and explain the discrepancy in retention rates.

Further research is encouraged, as it is essential to mitigate the low retention rates amongst junior-grade officers and evaluate whether the current recruitment segment is suited for the Army. By expanding the study to additional personnel groups in the Army or branches within the Armed Forces comprehensive HR recommendations can be derived.

## Abbreviations and explanations

APD	Academy Profession Degree for NCOs
Cadet	An individual who is undergoing the officers' education at the RDMA
CCS	Contract civil servants, i.e. " <i>tjenestemandsansatte</i> "
DD	Diploma degree from the RDMA
FTC	Fixed-term contracts, i.e. " <i>overenskomstansatte</i> "
HOD	Hovedorganisationen af Officerer i Danmark, i.e. " <i>The Danish officers union</i> "
JGO	Junior-grade officer (officer ranks ranging from 2nd lieutenant to captain).
MoD	Ministry of Defense
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCO	Non-commissioned officers (NCO ranks from sergeant to chief master sergeant)
PA	The Armed Forces Personnel Agency
PBD	Professionals bachelor's degree from the RDMA
RDDC	Royal Danish Defense College
SGO	Senior-grade officer (officer ranks ranging major to general).

## **Preface**

This master's thesis is written as a part of the MSc. in Business Administration at Copenhagen Business School, Denmark. The thesis was conducted from December 2022 to May 2023 and is equivalent to 30 ECTS points.

The aim of this thesis is to uncover whether the change in the Army's recruitment strategy has influenced the Army's ability to retain its junior-grade officers. From an academic perspective, this thesis makes a small contribution to the field of human resources and organizational theory, as it draws upon motivational and contract theory in order to analyze job factors and expectations leading to job satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

Seeing as both authors attended the Royal Danish Military Academy from 2015-2018 and were commissioned first lieutenants in April 2018, understanding the subject of turnover and retention amongst our former, current, and future colleagues carries a strong personal interest. Especially, in the light of the recent development following the war in Ukraine and an upcoming Defense Agreement in 2023.

We would like to thank our supervisor Prof. Morten Thanning Vendelø, for all his time and constructive guidance. We would also like to thank the collaborative employees at the Royal Danish Military Academy and the Armed Forces Personnel Agency for supplying the quantitative data and Corporal Niklas Funder for allowing us to use his awesome pictures. Furthermore, we wish to extend our gratitude to all of the interviewees who were willing to share their insights and personal experience from their careers in the Armed Forces. Without your contribution, this thesis would not have been possible.

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# SECTION A: INTRODUCTION



## A1 Background

### A1.1 Introduction

Despite an ongoing war on the European continent between Ukraine and Russia, the Army is in its worst condition in decades due to repetitive reductions in defense spending. As of 2020, 1. Brigade also known as the “*Army’s fist*” lacked: 1,000 soldiers, a tank squadron, anti-air defense system, artillery units, ammunition, infantry-fighting vehicles, armored personnel carriers, logistical capabilities, etc. (Brøndum, 2021). To make matters worse in terms of international relations, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (2020) published a status report describing the flaws of 1. Brigade being “*numerous critical quantitative and qualitative limitations*” in a *supposedly* battle-ready brigade of 4,000 soldiers (NATO Watch, 2020).

On the 27th of March 2023, brigadier general Henrik Lyhne announced that the Army currently has 21% vacant positions equivalent to 1529 soldiers, whereas in 2021 that number was approximately 10% (Wester, 2022; Lomholt, 2023). Furthermore, the brigadier general stated, “*I have been in the Army for 40 years, and the personnel situation has never been this critical*”, which adds to the gravity of the current situation. A total of 807 soldiers left the Army in 2022, why the Chief of Staff of the Army major general Gunnar Arpe Nielsen proclaimed that retention of soldiers is the Army’s focal point (Rasmussen, 2023).

The 2013-2017 Defense Agreement entailed a new HR strategy followed by massive budget reductions across the Danish Armed Forces which caused approximately 10% of officers to leave the Army without a sufficient pipeline of officers to fill the gap (HOD, 2017). Since 2018 the unions representing all personnel groups in The Armed Forces including enlisted soldiers, NCOs and officers have been flagging the issue of a high turnover rate, combined with an increase in tasks and international operations, but the negative development has continued (Wester, 2021a, 2021b, 2023).

The war in Ukraine has been a catalyst for a renewed interest in the Armed Forces amongst the media, general public and politicians (Forsvarsudvalget, 2023). In 2023 the political level agreed to reach a 2% expenditure of the gross domestic product (GDP) on the defense budget as of 2030 (instead of 2033), why retainment and recruitment is critical to reaching this goal (The Danish Ministry of Defense, 2023). For this reason, countering turnover amongst Army officers has only become increasingly relevant as they are needed to assist in implementing military capabilities and rebuilding the Army which the forthcoming Defense Agreement calls for.

## **A1.2 The Royal Danish Army and its stakeholders**

The Royal Danish Army, which from now on will be referred to as the “Army”, is situated under the Army Command, a part of Defense Command Denmark. The Army consists of Denmark’s professional land forces and conscripts. The total strength of the Army is approximately 7500 professional soldiers, excluding conscripts that are undergoing basic training (The Royal Danish Army, 2020). Nine regiments are tasked with providing professional soldiers to the Army’s two Brigades and training more than 4000 conscripts annually.

1. Brigade is the Army’s largest contributor to the NATO alliance, where the brigade (in theory) is prepared to be deployed in the context of NATO within 180 days of warning from 2024. Approximately half of the Army is commanded by the 1st Brigade.

2. Brigade is responsible for the Army’s technical and tactical development in the realm of reconnaissance, tanks and light infantry. Furthermore, the 2nd brigade is tasked with preparing Army units for international operations and the officers’ training program.

As an active country in the realm of NATO and the United Nations (UN), the Army has since the year 2000 been engaged in conflicts and peacekeeping operations around the world counting: Kosovo, Iraq, Afghanistan, Korea, Mali, Estonia and Latvia amongst others.

As the scope of this thesis is structured around the Army change in recruitment base, it is necessary to introduce the most relevant stakeholders in the process: The Royal Danish Defense College (RDDC), The Royal Danish Military Academy (RDMA) and the Personnel Agency (PA).

The PA is responsible for marketing, recruiting, and selecting potential officer cadets for the Army officer education at the RDMA. To ensure that a sufficient number of officer candidates are recruited, the PA receives “production targets” from the Army Command. The production target is a forecast of the regiments’ needs for junior-grade officers (JGO) two-three years in the future.

The RDDC is responsible for all the branches’ officers’ education, whereas the RDMA educates the Army officers (see Appendix A for an organizational chart of the RDCC). The Army officers’ education goes back to 1713, when King Frederik IV of Denmark established the “Cadet Academy”. Since 1868 the RDMA has been situated at Frederiksberg Slot (The Royal Danish Defense College, 2020), despite numerous attempts to consolidate the Army, Navy and Air Force officer schools into one geographical location (Brøndum, 2015). The mission of the RDCC is the following: “ ...Our education and training rest on a solid foundation

of professional expertise with research within the three core fields of military studies: military operations, military strategy, and military leadership” (The Royal Defense College, 2020).

### **A1.3 The Army Officer Education**

The goal of the Army officer education is to enable young (20 to 30-year-old) men or women to lead a platoon size of about 30 soldiers and 4 NCOs in military operations. During the officers’ education at the RDMA, cadets become acquainted with modern leadership theory, strategy, adult pedagogy and military tactics (Forsvaret, n.d.). The education consists of vocational training and an interaction between theory and practice with modules taking place at different regiments across Denmark (The Royal Danish Army, 2020; Forsvarsakademiet, 2020). Each class attending the RDMA is named after a famous former officer and the naming convention is cyclical, e.g. class “Bennike” appeared in both 2014 and 2020.

#### **A1.3.1 The professional bachelor’s degree 2011-2016**

In the period 2011-2016, the Army Officers’ education was accredited as a professional bachelor’s degree (PBD) in an attempt to create transparency with the rest of the Danish educational system. A PBD shares similar recruiting criteria as many university colleges, where the majority of applicants are predominantly graduates from an upper secondary education or a vocationally oriented education. According to the framework in “Danish National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education”<sup>1</sup>, the PBD is positioned as a level 6 education - similar to a bachelor’s degree from a university (Uddannelses- og Forskningsministeriet, 2009; Retsinformation, 2015). The PBD educational structure was in place from 2011 to 2016 and the three classes attending the RDMA in this time period received this degree.

#### **A1.3.2 The diploma degree 2016-now**

In contrast to the former PBD, the new diploma degree (DD) in military studies is placed in the “further education system for adults”. This change required external applicants for the new officers’ education to hold (as a minimum) a university bachelor’s degree or a professional bachelor’s degree. Internal applicants, i.e. NCOs are required to have an accredited academy profession degree in e.g. leadership and two years of military service. This caused the new

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<sup>1</sup> See appendix B for an overview where the DD and PBD education is situated in the educational framework.

cadets to be older and have an academic background (as opposed to the PBD) before starting at the RDMA.

Seeing as the DD is still a level 6 education, the change did not entail a change in the complexity of the educational content, but a reduction in ECTS points (Royal Danish Defense College, 2015). For this reason the formal length of the DD education was reduced in comparison to the PBD. As of 2023, the Army has commissioned five classes on the DD education, namely class Palüdan-Müller, Storrud, Anker, Bennike and Pløger.

#### **A1.4 The Traditional Career of a Junior-Grade Officer**

Upon graduation from the RDMA the cadet is commissioned first lieutenant and is transferred to a regiment for his <sup>2</sup>first position. A first lieutenant is above the rank of second lieutenant and below the rank of captain, which are all JGOs. A Junior officer (company officer or company grade officer) refers to the lowest operational commissioned officer ranks in the Army, but still ranking above non-commissioned officers (NCOs) and below senior-grade officers (SGO).

The majority of newly commissioned first lieutenants are posted as platoon leaders for approximately five NCOs and 40 conscripts to obtain practical leadership experience before advancing. Army regiments with fewer conscripts or that are lacking officers sometimes appoint newly commissioned first lieutenants to more demanding positions such as platoon leader for professional soldiers with multiple years of experience, or second in command (2iC) for a company of 100+ soldiers.

The typical tasks of a first lieutenant include being responsible for the welfare, morale, discipline and training level of his platoon. In most Army units the first lieutenant is paired with an experienced NCO of the rank sergeant first class. In contrast to the officer, the sergeant first class has obtained his practical military experience serving years as a sergeant, perhaps a deployment, but with less formal education. The collaboration between the officer and sergeant first class is coined as the “command team”, with the sergeant first class functioning as a trusted advisor. After obtaining one-two years of experience most first lieutenants are deployed abroad either in a position as a platoon leader, 2iC<sup>3</sup> or staff officer depending on the type of international operation. Depending on the individual officer's tactical and leadership

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<sup>2</sup> All references to JGOs are referred to as “he”, despite having interviewed both male and female officers from both educational types. The denomination of “he” was chosen as the majority of officers in the Army are men, which this thesis interviewee distribution also reflects.

<sup>3</sup> I.e. “second-in-command”.

qualifications, and the needs of the Army (depending on turnover, vacant positions, etc.) many officers return to the RDMA after 3-5 years to receive staff officer training before advancing to the rank of captain.

After attaining the rank of captain a new array of job positions become available, most commonly being company commander, staff officer at battalion level or case manager. After three years, a captain can be nominated to start on a master of military studies degree in order to advance to the rank of major.

The exact career path for JGOs varies from regiment to regiment, but in general, the Army has the ability to shift officers around between job positions across Denmark and international deployment if needed.

### **A1.5 The 2013-2017 Defense Agreement**

In 2012 the Danish parties 'Venstre' (the Liberal Party), the Liberal Alliance, the Conservatives, the Social Democrats, the Danish People's Party and the Social-Liberal Party reached an agreement regarding the Danish Defense for the period 2013-2017. Defense Agreements are usually political agreements involving the majority of the political parties in the Danish parliament setting the direction for the Armed Forces for a five-year time period. The 2013-2017 Defense Agreement was characterized by a relatively large budget cut and a restructuring of the Defense Command giving more decision power to The Danish Ministry of Defense (MoD) (The Danish Ministry of Defense, 2012). Several "efficiency improvement" initiatives were implemented in the Armed Forces, which at the time being, was estimated to yield annual savings of approximately 2.4 billion DKK in 2017<sup>4</sup>.

Within this particular agreement, the following HR-related topics were agreed upon (The Danish Ministry of Defense, 2012):

1. Consolidating the Navy, Army and Air Force Officer Academy at the Royal Danish Defense College as of 2014. Previously they were under direct command at their respective branches.
2. Phasing out *contract civil servants* (CCS) as of 2015 and implementing *fixed-term contracts* (FTC) for newly commissioned officers.
3. Changing the recruitment segment for the officers' education to hold a bachelor's or an academy profession degree as of 2015. Subsequently, changing the officers'

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<sup>4</sup> See appendix C for a detailed overview of the efficiency improvement initiatives from the 2013-2017 Defense Agreement.

education structure to a diploma degree (DD) instead of a professional bachelor's degree (PBD).

### **A1.5.1 The change in the officers' education and recruitment segment**

The 2013-2017 Defense Agreement triggered the RDCC to undertake substantial changes, due to the budget cut of approximately 680 million DKK (The Royal Danish Defense College, 2018). In 2016 two of the main architects behind the Diploma degree, former commandant of the RDCC rear admiral Nils Wang, and dean Ole Kværnø were interviewed by OLF providing the reasoning behind the change in the officers' education. According to Wang, the officer's education was outdated. *"It was too expensive, had too many generalists, and had no ties to the civilian education system. It was necessary to change them"* (Rasmussen, 2016a). Kværnø, former dean of the RDCC emphasized the juridical challenges:

*"We were educating officers with a PBD in leadership. However, Moderniseringsstyrelsen argued that a PBD was a youth education and therefore not entitled to a salary while studying. If we were to continue with the current education we had to provide student grants (SU) instead of a salary. Providing a salary while studying is one of our most important competitive parameters, which is why we had to rethink the educational structure to solve this challenge. The new officers' education falls into the category of 'the adult and continuing education system' as a DD"* (Rasmussen, 2016a).

Rear Admiral Henrik Ryberg, commandant of the RDCC (2018-2023), with previous experience from the Personnel Agency, has confirmed the strategic choice of changing the recruitment segment and education model: *"...the aim was to reduce the overall length of the education and hereby enabling the Army to easier and faster upscale the production of Army Officers. With the proclaimed goal of recruiting two-thirds from the Army's own ranks, this seemed highly unlikely if the education was based on student grants. Not many of the internally recruited applicants would be able to afford to complete an officer's education solely on student grants"* (Ryberg, 2021).

Hence, it becomes apparent that the recruitment segments' economic considerations were taken into account and deemed a critical factor. Kværnø (Rasmussen, 2016a) and Ryberg's (2021) arguments remain on the decision to stay attractive for internal applicants (i.e. NCOs), who wish to pursue an officer's career and pay them a salary instead of receiving the public student grant.

The commandant of the RDMA (2010-2014), colonel Eigel Schønning, publicly criticized the aforementioned changes, which caused him to be fired and transferred to another position

(Brøndum, 2014). Schønings' criticism fell on the RDMA's 300th anniversary on the 26th of August 2013 where he is cited in his speech for saying "*generally speaking I have to conclude that the new education and contractual relations for officers are insufficient*" (Brøndum, 2013).

The shift in the recruitment segment and the restructuring of the officers' education was considered very controversial in the Army (Rasmussen, 2016b). According to the Ministry of Defense (2012), the changes would strengthen the officer's education. However, the common perception amongst military personnel is that the change in the recruitment strategy can be attributed to financial reasons and not a quality improvement (Jensen, 2021).

## **A2 Problem Discussion: HR Challenges Following the Change in the Recruitment Strategy**

Following the change in the officers' education in 2015, scholars at the RDCC and stakeholders in the Army have mainly been preoccupied with the practical and academic content of the "newly" structured education. With the focus being on whether cadets on the DD have obtained sufficient competencies within leadership, strategy and military tactics. The Danish Officers Union (HOD) is amongst the few who have attempted to shed light on the potential implication of the new recruitment strategy and the challenges that the Army faces in retaining its JGOs.

In preparation for the 2018-2023 Defense Agreement, HOD (2017, p.27) provided a questionnaire to the RDMA cadets, which revealed that only 46% of the cadets anticipated a life-long career as an Army officer. Drawing upon Miles & Snow's (1984) seminal work in "Designing strategic human resources systems" the Army has no other choice but to pursue the HR strategy of producing and training its own workforce. Army officers are not a "shelf item", e.g. it is not possible for the Army to hire officers without an internal education at the RDMA. Turnover amongst JGOs effectively reduces the future pipeline of SGO, but it can also be very costly for organizations, both in terms of direct expenses and the indirect costs associated with decreased morale and loss of knowledge and expertise. Jobs that are very complex and require higher levels of education and specialized training e.g. Army officers tend to have even higher turnover costs. Boushey & Glynn (2012) find that positions, which are well-compensated and likely have stringent educational credential requirements, have higher turnover costs than jobs with low educational requirements. Therefore, it is important for organizations, including the Army, to implement effective strategies to reduce turnover and retain their employees. While turnover in organizations is inevitable, unexpected turnover can easily create vacant positions in the ranks that take years to fill (Dall, Nielsen, Flinthøj &

Lindegard (2023). Ultimately, risking the Army's operational effectiveness and ability to reach the Armed Forces' 2030 targets.

As of 2023, the Army has 21% and 14% vacant positions respectively of the rank of captain and major, which is far higher than previously experienced. A research report by PwC (2016) suggests that a healthy vacancy rate is between 5-10%, as it allows companies to maintain a balance between operational efficiency and flexibility. An excessively high vacancy rate can also be a cause for concern, as it may indicate that the company is not able to attract and retain employees.

In 2022, 807 soldiers (almost equivalent to a battalion) left the Army, with officers accounting for 47 of these. Major general Nielsen emphasizes: *"the numbers show that retention must be prioritized in the upcoming Defense Agreement... it is especially an issue when experienced soldiers choose to leave the Army. There is no doubt that retention is a precondition for us to be able to move on"* (Rasmussen, 2023). Given the apparent focus on retention amongst the Army's top-generals, it is relevant to nuance the discussion of turnover amongst the JGOs. The Army has indisputably made the officers' education more efficient by streamlining the curriculum and removing content, thereby reducing the overall education time and financial costs. However, if applying a more holistic view and including the educational quality, and specifically the retention-level amongst JGO, which this thesis examines, the picture becomes unclear.

Whether the change in the recruitment strategy agreed upon in the 2013-2017 Defense Agreement has become a success or not is difficult to answer. Retention rates amongst all Danish officers have been studied in a more general scope (covering the Army, Navy and Air Force) by HOD in 2020, but as of today, no study exists that examines retention rates specifically amongst Army JGOs. While HOD's (2020) report recognizes that the Danish Armed Forces experience a critical retention problem amongst first lieutenants and captains in three branches, it deliberately omits to examine the consequences of the change in the recruitment strategy.

Herzberg's two-factor theory of motivation can be useful for examining retention rates in the army because it emphasizes the importance of both intrinsic and extrinsic motivators in job satisfaction and retention (Herzberg et al., 1959). By using Herzberg's theory to examine retention rates amongst JGOs, it can gain insights into, which factors are most important in keeping them satisfied and motivated to continue their service. This can help inform policies and practices aimed at improving retention rates and ensuring that the military is able to attract and retain the best possible talent.

### **A3 Problem Formulation**

As the officers' education takes approximately two years to complete, the effect of the change in the recruitment strategy in 2015 comes with a lag. For this reason, a comprehensive study of the impact of the retention rate has not been possible until recently, as it is difficult to infer conclusions until a significant number of officers have been commissioned with a diploma degree and pursued a career in the Army.

Following the change in the recruitment strategy, a new officer candidate profile has emerged, but no studies or research have been conducted to provide the Army with a detailed picture of how the turnover and retention rates compared to the officers without an academic background. In the Army, the narrative is that the change in the recruitment strategy has resulted in a higher turnover rate, but as of today, this claim is undocumented.

This thesis seeks to uncover the unanswered questions in relation to strategic HR perspectives in the shift of the recruitment strategy to meet the organizational demand of officers in the Danish Army.

#### **A3.1 Research Question**

After having identified the potential factors influencing the change in the recruitment base a further examination of retention rate amongst JGO is needed. Looking at the potential link between increased turnover and the strategic change in the recruitment base, the following research question has been derived.

**In which ways has the change in the recruitment strategy affected the Danish Army's ability to retain its junior-grade officers?**

To answer this main research question, the following sub-questions were derived.

1. From a quantitative perspective, how is the Army's ability to retain affected by the change in the recruitment strategy?
2. Drawing upon the two-factor theory, is there a difference in *hygiene* and *motivational factors* when comparing junior-grade officers from before and after the change in the recruitment strategy?
3. Drawing upon social contract theory, is there a difference in *perceived contracts* when comparing junior-grade officers from before and after the change in the recruitment strategy?

The sub-questions allow the authors to conduct a comparative analysis through empirically collected data. The conclusions of the sub-questions will act as the foundation for answering the main research question.

Looking onward into the 2024-2030 Defense Agreement, which is to be negotiated in 2023, this thesis seeks to provide recommendations for how the Danish Army could potentially alter its recruitment and HR strategy for JGOs to ensure a sufficient pipeline of Army officers.

### **A3.2 Delimitation**

The scope of this thesis is to focus on how the change in the Army's recruitment strategy has affected the retention rate amongst its JGOs. In order to investigate the discrepancies, selected PBD and DD classes were used as proxies to represent the recruitment strategy in both the qualitative and quantitative analysis.

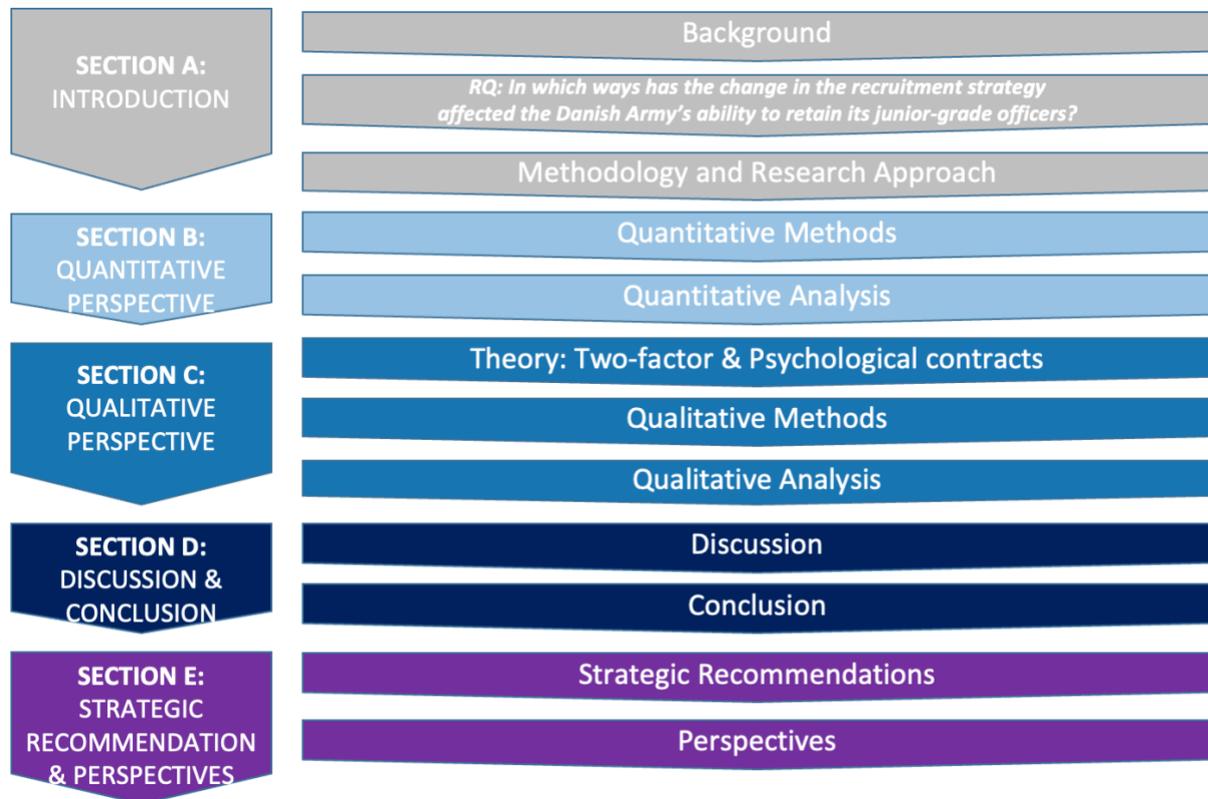
The 2013-2017 Defense Agreement entailed multiple changes, which have affected the JGOs simultaneously e.g. changes in educational length, structure, contractual relations and recruitment base. For this reason, the thesis focuses on the latter while acknowledging that the aforementioned factors also carry the possibility of influencing JGO career choices post-commission. It has been an active choice not to examine the educational context, and whether the 2013-2017 Defense Agreement enhanced the quality of the officers' education. Investigating an HR topic of this magnitude excludes the possibility of solely controlling for one factor, i.e. change in the recruitment base, why the causality in the results is encumbered with a degree of uncertainty. For this reason, the thesis does not seek to pass judgment or infer a conclusion regarding the 2013-2017 Defense Agreement

Several HR theories provide alternative explanations for employee turnover, such as equity (Adams, 1963), expectancy (Vroom, 1964), social exchange (Homans, 1958) and turnover intention theory (Mitchell & Lee, 2001). However, Herzberg's (1959) two-factor theory and Rousseau's (1989) psychological contracts theory have been selected for this thesis, as they provide an instrumental framework for predicting employee turnover. Additional theories, which could have provided additional insights are omitted.

## A4 Thesis Structure

This section provides a brief overview of the thesis structure with an introduction to each five sections. To ensure logical cohesion the thesis has been divided into five sections with individual themes.

**Figure 1: Reading guide**



*Authors' own creation*

**Section A** revolves around providing the reader with relevant background information for understanding the changes made to the officers' education and the PA's recruitment strategy. Subsequently, the overall research question is presented along with three sub-questions. Finally, in order to set the academic preconditions for the remaining sections of the thesis a chapter on methodology guides the reader through the applied research approach.

**Section B** takes a quantitative approach to answer subquestion one. Through a positivistic research paradigm section B covers quantitative methods followed by a quantitative analysis. This section will depict the differences in the Army's ability to retain its JGOs across the DD and PBD recruitment groups.

**Section C** covers the qualitative perspective. Firstly, a theoretical foundation within the field of motivational theory and psychological contracts is presented. Following an interpretive

research paradigm, the part on qualitative methods describes the scientific research methods applied in the collection of primary data. Drawing upon semi-structured interviews with JGOs the qualitative analysis seeks to provide answers for subquestion one and two. Finally, the differences in *hygiene*, *motivational factors* and the JGOs' *perceived contract* are presented.

**Section D**'s main purpose is to discuss the results that emerged in sections B and C, while including external sources and interviews with key stakeholders in the Armed Forces. Potential explanations and theories for turnover and retention amongst the scope of JGOs in the Army are presented. Furthermore, reflections on the applied research methodology are scrutinized in order to provide suggestions for future research. Finally, a conclusion to the overall research question is offered.

**Section E** offers the Army concrete HR recommendations to operationalize the academic findings. Lastly, the thesis attempts to provide perspectives on, how the HR situation is across other personnel groups in the Army, branches in the Armed Forces and whether retention issues can be attributed to external factors.

## **A5 Research Approach**

The following section of this thesis will delineate the chosen methodological approach. Firstly, the research paradigm has to be clarified. The research paradigm sets the framework which guides the research process, in terms of design, data retrieval and analysis (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016). As such, it is important that a thorough and fitting research philosophy is adopted. According to Rehman & Alharthi (2016), a deepened understanding of the research paradigm enables the researcher to ensure that the research goals and values are in line with the scope of the project, while ensuring a clear path for examining the topic. Furthermore, it grants the ability to internally reflect on, how well the research approach is going and which actions might be needed, in order to stay on the path. According to Collis & Hussey (2013), the two most common research paradigms within business and management disciplines are positivism and interpretivism.

Positivism views social reality as singular and objective. It is associated with the methods of collecting and analyzing quantitative data, although it is not exclusive. Thus, research should be conducted through scientific quantitative methods that seek to develop theories based on empirical research, which can be scientifically verified. The goal lies in discovering the law that governs human behavior (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016).

Interpretivism, on the contrary, was developed as a response to the criticism of positivism, which rests upon the assumption that social reality is not objective, but instead subjective

since it is shaped by our individual perceptions. This means that the individual subjective experience of reality is what makes up reality, according to interpretivism. Therefore, research is conducted through the usage of non-scientific qualitative methods in order to gain a deeper understanding of people's behavior and perceptions (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016).

As delineated in the thesis structure, this thesis has sub-questions, which require more than just a single research paradigm and methodology. As section B in this thesis seeks to answer, the question of whether there is a difference in turnover between PBDs and DDs it required a positivistic view, as the answer could be quantified through scientific quantitative measures. Positivism as a paradigm relies on knowledge as reasonable and revealed from a neutral and measurable observation of activity, action or reaction. In order to measure the difference in retention and turnover rates, the quantifiable action under observation would be that of staying in the Army, or conversely, leaving the Army. Both are actions that can be observed and quantified. The measurements could potentially provide a certain answer of whether there was a difference or not. Based on this path, positivism as a research paradigm set the path for section B of this thesis.

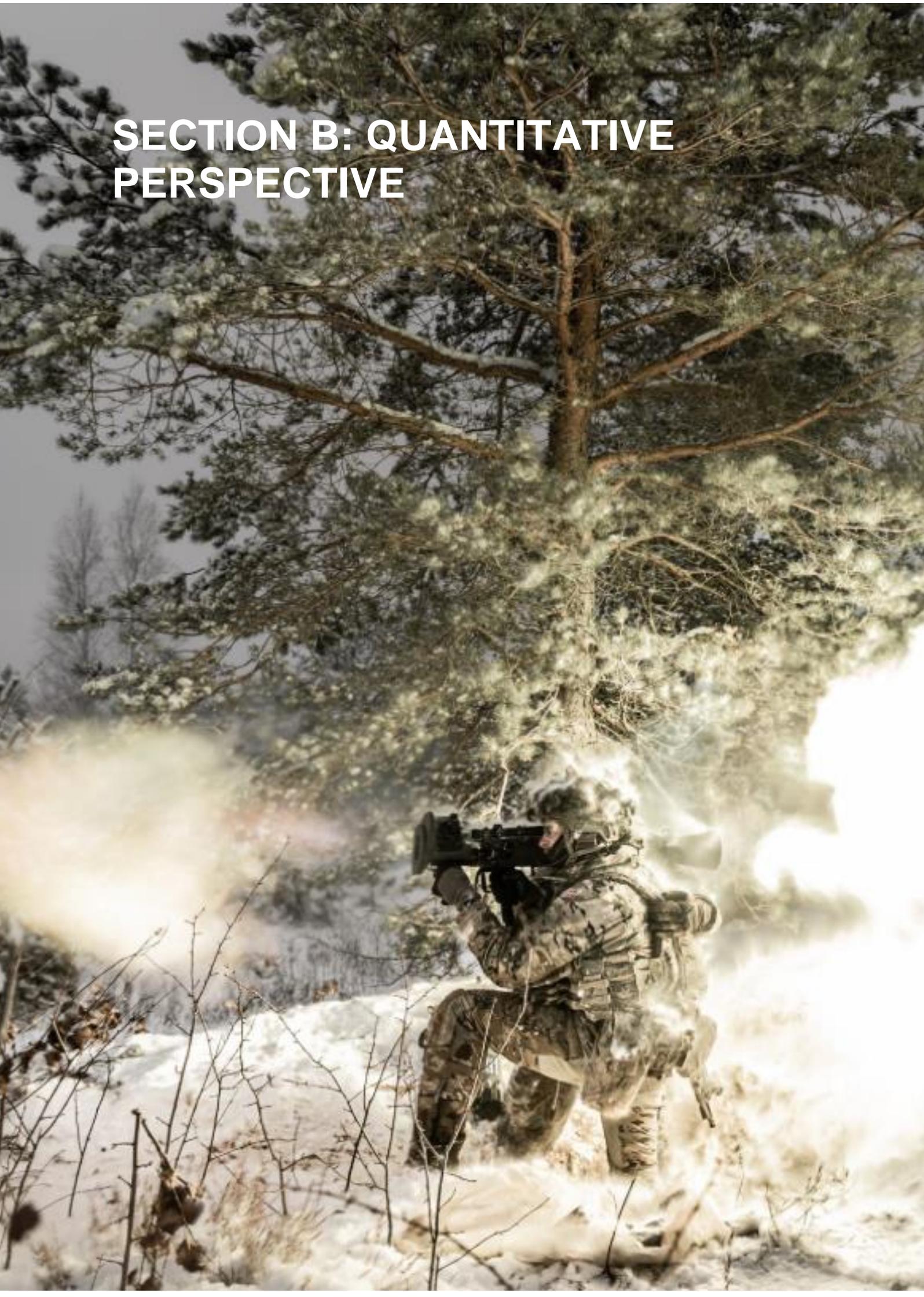
Based on the quantified answer of section B, this thesis will then shift its focus from measuring quantifiable actions to an in-depth cause analysis. The shift requires an understanding of, why the individual reacts in the way they do, e.g. stay or leave an organization. In order to examine this, the thesis requires a different paradigm. Interpretivism provides the grounds, as it assumes that reality is based on subjective, multiple or social constructions (Collis & Hussey, 2013). In order to understand an individual's reality, we have to understand their experiences of that reality, which are found to be the case, when trying to understand the underlying cause of quitting or committing to a job. The assumption on which interpretivism is based, is that reality is an individual experience, and the subjective perception of individuals leads them to act or react in a particular way. To conclude, the research method will adopt an interpretation of qualitative research data to better come to terms with the meaning of the social phenomena and to understand human behavior (Collis & Hussey, 2013). Therefore, interpretivism has established the path for the research approach in section C of this thesis.

Overall, this thesis entails the research paradigms of positivism and interpretivism in respectively section B and C. The sections use corresponding data, quantitative and qualitative, in accordance with the particular section's research paradigm. Furthermore, the qualitative methods' validity is examined in the four aspects of dependability, credibility, confirmability and transferability according to Lincoln & Guba (1985).

To answer which effect the change in the recruitment base has had on the Army's ability to retain JGOs, the authors needed to gather a wide range of primary data. The primary data was collected in two different ways. Firstly, time series data on employment status was collected from The Armed Forces Personnel Agency (PA), which served as data for the quantitative analysis. Secondly, primary data was gathered through semi-structured interviews, which were used for a qualitative analysis, which enabled a further discovery of insights that would have been unavailable with only quantitative data (Riencker & Jørgensen, 2017).

Both data sources and analysis of the primary data are strengthened through the use of secondary data (Collis & Hussey, 2013). The secondary data was obtained from publicly available publications from the Ministry of Defense and The Armed Forces, database searches on CBS Library to obtain academic literature, and books on HR-related issues on turnover, motivation and psychological contracts. Furthermore, internal consultancy reports were acquired by the PA to widen the perspectives and strengthen the conclusions. To answer the research questions, a sufficient amount of data has been collected to obtain explanatory power. The data will be classified as either primary or secondary.

# SECTION B: QUANTITATIVE PERSPECTIVE



## **B1 Quantitative Methods**

The application of quantitative methods in this thesis is utilized in an attempt to provide the reader with an overview of the retention rate amongst Army officers and subsequently answer subquestion 1: *“From a quantitative perspective, how is the Army’s ability to retain affected by the change in the recruitment strategy?”*.

The scope of this thesis revolves around how the Army’s ability to retain its officers is affected by the change in the recruitment strategy. In order to conduct the statistical analysis and compare the retention rates, it was necessary to clean the raw data.

### **B1.1 Data Collection**

The quantitative analysis is based on data, supplied by PA in collaboration with the RDMA. The PA provided times series data containing employment data on all officers commissioned from the RDMA between the time period 2014-2021. This period contained data from seven classes. Three classes from 2014-2016 belong to the PBD structure and four classes from 2018-2021 belong to the DD structure. The absolute number of officers commissioned from the RDMA fluctuate yearly and no data exists for 2017 as the change in the officer’s education and recruitment requirements caused a year to be canceled.

The classes commissioned in 2022 and 2023 have been omitted from this thesis, as they do not match the selection criteria as the classes had to have at least two years of experience post-commission. In total, the PA provided a dataset of 461 unique officers (n-value), with 2456 observations.

The data from RDMA had been cleansed for sensitive information, showing only the officers’ unique employee ID (a six-digit number), year of graduation from RDMA and employment status. The original data did not distinguish between active duty officers, reservists and officers on unpaid leave of absence. Therefore, additional data was provided from the PA in order to distinguish between these employment statuses and control for this factor. Only officers affiliated with the Army e.g. active duty and reserve officers, are reported in the quantitative analysis. This approach was chosen as officers utilizing the opportunity of taking an unpaid leave of absence rarely return to the Army, but use it as a safety net to avoid unemployment.

### **B1.2 Data Processing**

Data processing is the method of collecting raw data and translating it into usable information. As the exact month of commission from the RDMA has changed over time (2014-2021) from July, March, December and January the authors have applied rounding rules to reach a baseline year of commission. E.g. the reported commission year of 2018 entails that the class

was commissioned in either one of the following months: July '17, August '17, September '17, October '17, November '17, December '17, January '18, February '18, March '18, April '18, May '18 and June '18.

Similarly, the PA reported employment data on a monthly basis from 2014-2021. For simplicity, the results following the year of the commission are reported in the January numbers.

The collected data were processed through a descriptive statistical analysis. A data subset of each commission year was analyzed, in order to calculate the mean, median and variances in retention rates and turnover.

In order to compare the retention rates amongst the two different recruitment segments, the data was grouped into two categories; PBD '14-'16 and DD '18-'21. Each commission year in the subgroup as mentioned above, was weighted according to their respective n-values in order to compute new mean values. The employee turnover rate was calculated as the percentage of employees that leave the Army organization during a given time frame - in this case, reported annually. The employee retention rate is reported as the percentage of active duty and reserve officers that remain affiliated with the Army post-commission.

### **B1.3 Statistical Analysis**

Inferential statistics have been conducted to test if a significant change in retention rates between the two different subgroups PBD (2014-2016) and DD (2018-2021) exists. Welch's t-test, i.e. unequal variances t-test, was used for comparative analysis, as it shows potential statistical difference between two variables. Standard significance levels of  $p \leq 0.05$ ,  $p \leq 0.01$  and  $p \leq 0.001$  were applied. The statistical analyses were performed using MS Excel (version 16.71).

To conduct Welch's t-test, a binary categorical variable was created for each unique officer, allowing two-sample t-tests across different years and recruitment groups under the assumption of unequal population variances and normality. Applying the binary employment data implies the coding of "1=active or reserve officer" and "0=civilian or unpaid leave of absence". Therefore, the mean equals the proportion of officers in category 1. In this case, the null hypothesis implies that in any given year the proportion of officers still affiliated with the Army is the same between the PBD and DD. Statistical analysis on turnover data was not conducted as the turnover function is inverse to retention rates.

It was also of interest to the authors to examine whether a significant difference in employment tenure (in comparison to retention rates) existed across the recruitment segment. The binary categorical data was converted into a discrete variable (tenure in years) for all officers. When

applying the concept of a discrete tenure variable all observations are given the value 0 in year X. This tenure variable was cumulative implying that in year X+5 the variable equaled 5 if the officer was still employed, but equaled 3 if the officer left two years prior in X+3.

## B2 Quantitative Analysis

### B2.1 Data Overview

Table 1 provides an overview of active duty and reserve officers across the different commission years from 2014 to 2021. The class name “Bennike” appears twice (2011-2014 and 2019-2020) in the table as the naming convention at the RDMA is cyclical. As elaborated in section 1.2 Data Processing, rounding rules are applied to all classes in order to ensure a systematic distribution in the commission year, due to varying commission months.

Class name	RDMA year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Bennike (BEN)	2011-2014	75	65	67	61	59	57	53	51	51	48
Jessen (JES)	2013-2015		67	64	63	57	52	50	53	50	46
Pløger (PLØ)	2014-2016			46	45	44	41	39	38	34	30
Paludan-Müller (PAM)	2016-2018					33	32	31	30	21	16
Storrud (STO)	2017-2018						56	53	51	44	38
Anker (ANK)	2018-2019							100	100	96	92
Bennike (BEN)	2019-2020								84	82	72

The three classes that were commissioned in 2014, 2015 and 2016 (BEN 2011-2014, JES 2013-2015, and PLØ 2014-2016) constitute a total of n=188 officers with a professional bachelor’s degree (PBD) from the RDMA. The following four classes of PAM 2016-2018, STO 2017-2018, ANK 2018-2019 and BEN 2019-2020 (n=273) were the first officers from the RDMA with the diploma degree.

### B2.2 Retention- and Turnover Rates

Table 2 shows the retention rate in percentage per commission year, where the year of commissions equals 100%. In order to compare the retention values over time, table 3 was constructed to index the year of commission.

Class name	RDMA year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Bennike (BEN)	2011-2014	100,0%	86,7%	89,3%	81,3%	78,7%	76,0%	70,7%	68,0%	68,0%	64,0%
Jessen (JES)	2013-2015		100,0%	95,5%	94,0%	85,1%	77,6%	74,6%	79,1%	74,6%	68,7%
Pløger (PLØ)	2014-2016			100,0%	97,8%	95,7%	89,1%	84,8%	82,6%	73,9%	65,2%
Paludan-Müller (PAM)	2016-2018					100,0%	97,0%	93,9%	90,9%	63,6%	48,5%
Storrud (STO)	2017-2018						100,0%	94,6%	91,1%	78,6%	67,9%
Anker (ANK)	2018-2019							100,0%	100,0%	96,0%	92,0%
Bennike (BEN)	2019-2020								100,0%	97,6%	85,7%

Class name	RDMA year	X	X+1	X+2	X+3	X+4	X+5	X+6	X+7	X+8	X+9
Bennike (BEN)	2011-2014	100,0%	86,7%	89,3%	81,3%	78,7%	76,0%	70,7%	68,0%	68,0%	64,0%
Jessen (JES)	2013-2015	100,0%	95,5%	94,0%	85,1%	77,6%	74,6%	79,1%	74,6%	68,7%	
Pløger (PLØ)	2014-2016	100,0%	97,8%	95,7%	89,1%	84,8%	82,6%	73,9%	65,2%		
Paludan-Müller (PAM)	2016-2018	100,0%	97,0%	93,9%	90,9%	63,6%	48,5%				
Storrud (STO)	2017-2018	100,0%	94,6%	91,1%	78,6%	67,9%					
Anker (ANK)	2018-2019	100,0%	100,0%	96,0%	92,0%						
Bennike (BEN)	2019-2020	100,0%	97,6%	85,7%							

In table 3 column X serves as the index year. From X to X+2 the dataset contains employment data on all classes from the RDMA, but from X+3 the dataset diminishes over time given 2023 is the time constraint. The ranges in retention percentages across the classes in X+1 vary from min 87% to max 100%, and in X+2 min 86% to max 96%.

Table 4 gives an overview of the yearly turnover rate, which is the inverse function of the retention rate.

Class name	RDMA year	X	X+1	X+2	X+3	X+4	X+5	X+6	X+7	X+8	X+9
Bennike (BEN)	2011-2014		-13,3%	3,1%	-9,0%	-3,3%	-3,4%	-7,0%	-3,8%	0,0%	-5,9%
Jessen (JES)	2013-2015		-4,5%	-1,6%	-9,5%	-8,8%	-3,8%	6,0%	-5,7%	-8,0%	
Pløger (PLØ)	2014-2016		-2,2%	-2,2%	-6,8%	-4,9%	-2,6%	-10,5%	-11,8%		
Paludan-Müller (PAM)	2016-2018		-3,0%	-3,1%	-3,2%	-30,0%	-23,8%				
Storrud (STO)	2017-2018		-5,4%	-3,8%	-13,7%	-13,6%					
Anker (ANK)	2018-2019		0,0%	-4,0%	-4,2%						
Bennike (BEN)	2019-2020		-2,4%	-12,2%							

Two apparent outliers have been identified in Table 4, namely BEN 2011-2014 in X+2 and JES 2013-2015 in X+6. In both cases, the turnover rate is positive, respectively 3,1% and 6,0% implying that a small number of officers from BEN 2011-2014 and JES 2013-2015, who had left the Army have actively sought reemployment. The exact number of officers seeking re-employment (or returning from an unpaid leave of absence) cannot be accounted for due to anonymity reasons. The supplied data does not provide information on the specific officer, only the aggregated numbers per commission year.

Both class PAM (2016-2018) and STO (2017-2018) from the DD experience the highest turnover rate in the reported data with turnover rates higher than 13,5% in two subsequent periods. In X+4 and X+5 class PAM (2016-2018) experienced a turnover of respectively 30,0% and 23,8%. Class STO (2017-2018) turnover constituted 13,7% in X+3 and 13,6% in X+4.

Table 5 shows a trend of the Army experiencing a higher turnover in 2021 and 2022 compared to prior years. Of the 38 yearly turnover rates reported in Table 5, eight are double digits where 2021 and 2022 account for 87,5% of these. Class PAM (2016-2018) and STO (2017-2018) account for the highest turnover rates in percentage in 2021 and 2022.

Class name	RDMA year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Bennike (BEN)	2011-2014	-13,3%	3,1%	-9,0%	-3,3%	-3,4%	-7,0%	-3,8%	0,0%	-5,9%
Jessen (JES)	2013-2015		-4,5%	-1,6%	-9,5%	-8,8%	-3,8%	6,0%	-5,7%	-8,0%
Pløger (PLØ)	2014-2016			-2,2%	-2,2%	-6,8%	-4,9%	-2,6%	-10,5%	-11,8%
Paludan-Müller (PAM)	2016-2018					-3,0%	-3,1%	-3,2%	-30,0%	-23,8%
Storrud (STO)	2017-2018						-5,4%	-3,8%	-13,7%	-13,6%
Anker (ANK)	2018-2019							0,0%	-4,0%	-4,2%
Bennike (BEN)	2019-2020								-2,4%	-12,2%

Table 6 groups the PBD and DD officers' classes in order to draw a comparison. The difference in retention rate (in terms of percentage points) between PBD and DD becomes apparent from X+4. However, one must take into account that only two classes (PAM (2016-2018) & STO (2017-2018)) from DD constitute the data foundation for X+4, and in X+5 it is only class PAM. The n-value for DD officers decreases over time as fewer classes have the required tenure.

Type of RDMA degree	X	X+1	X+2	X+3	X+4	X+5	X+6	X+7	X+8	X+9
Professional bachelor's degree '14-'16	100,0%	92,6%	92,6%	84,6%	79,8%	77,1%	74,5%	69,7%	68,3%	64,0%
Diploma degree '18-'20	100,0%	97,8%	91,6%	87,8%	66,3%	48,5%				
<i>Difference in percentage points</i>	0,0%	5,2pp	-1,0pp	-3,3pp	-13,5pp	-28,6pp				
<i>Difference in percentage</i>	0,0%	5,7%	-1,1%	3,9%	-16,9%	-37,1%				

From X to X+3, the difference in percentage and in pp is marginal. Figure 2 depicts the results from table 6 showing that the retention rate from the PBD almost follows a linear curve with the largest fluctuation happening at X+1, whereas DD is almost unchanged in X+1. In time periods X+2 and X+3, the retention rates are almost equivalent.

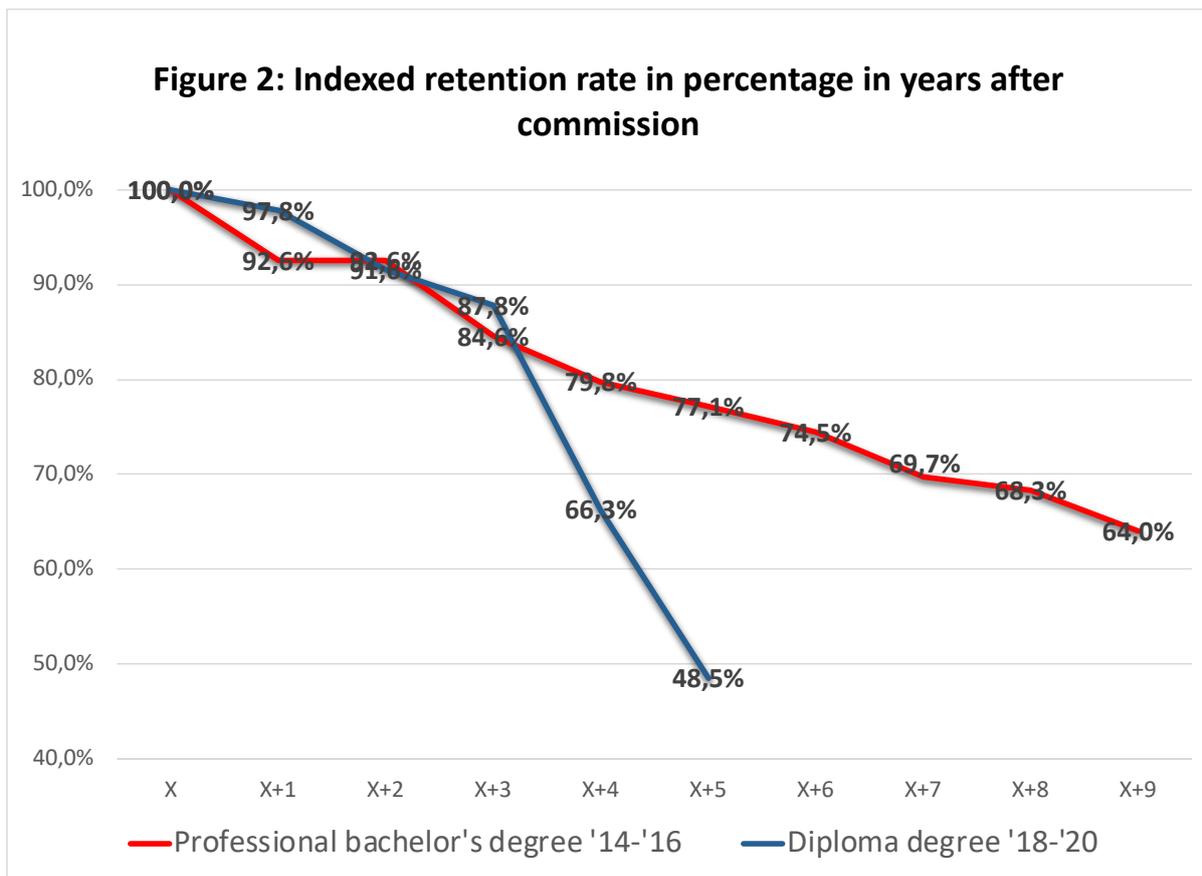
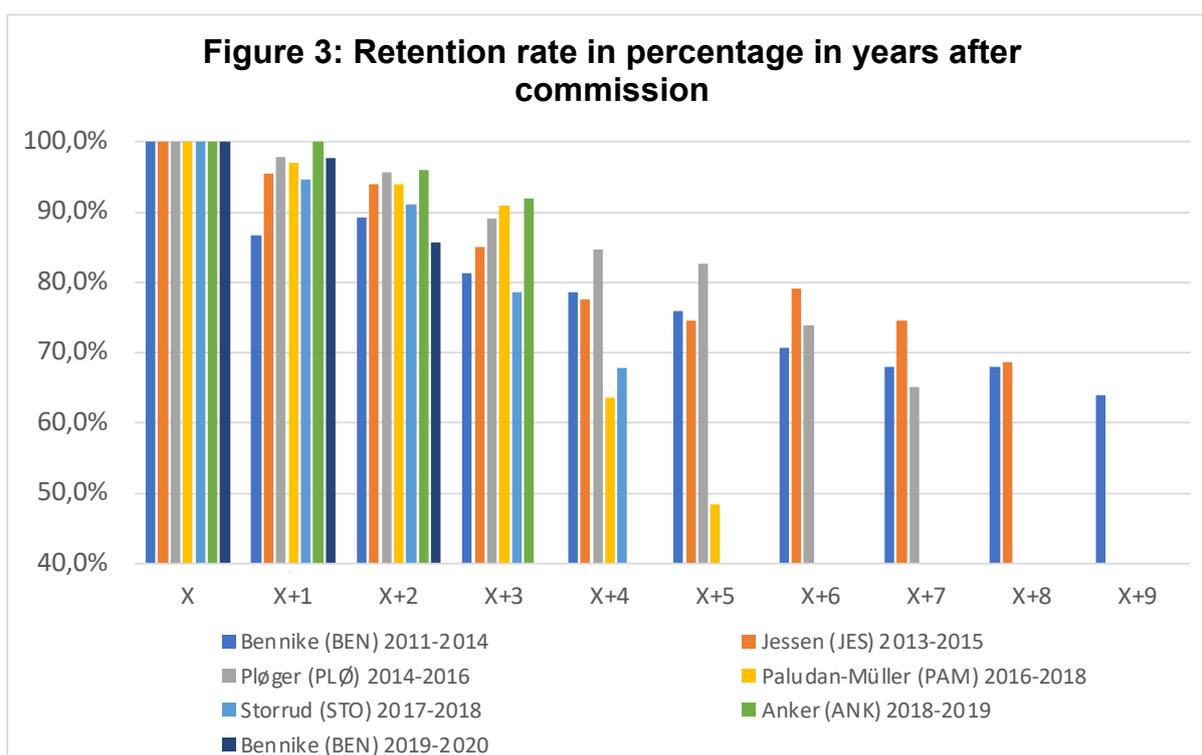


Figure 3 depicts retention rates among the different officer classes over time, with the “oldest” classes farthest to the left. The retention rate varies a lot across the different classes, which adds to the argument of needing to test for significance.



## B2.3 Statistical Reporting

Table 6 and figure 2 does not offer enough information to calculate a t Stat, why the binary categorical and discrete tenure variable was created as described in section 1.3 Statistical Analysis. Both datasets were used to test the hypothesis that the two populations have equal means in every single time period. In dataset 1, the unit of measure represents aggregated tenure and in dataset 2, the unit is the proportion of officers employed in the Army.

### B2.3.1 Tenure data

The difference in tenure employment data can be seen in table 7.

Tenure employment data		X+1	X+2	X+3	X+4	X+5
<b>Professional bachelor's degree '14-'16</b>	Mean	0,926	1,856	2,686	3,479	4,245
	SE	0,019	0,037	0,059	0,084	0,111
	Median	1	2	3	4	5
	Observations	188	188	188	188	188
	Variance	0,069	0,252	0,655	1,320	2,303
<b>Diploma degree '18-'20</b>	Mean	0,978	1,894	2,799	3,371	3,939
	SE	0,009	0,023	0,044	0,115	0,226
	Median	1	2	3	4	5
	Observations	273	273	189	89	33
	Variance	0,022	0,139	0,364	1,168	1,684
<b>t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Unequal Variances</b>	df	267	324	346	183	49
	t Stat	-2,481	-0,869	-1,534	0,760	1,214
	P(T<=t) one-tail	0,007**	0,193	0,063	0,224	0,115
	t Critical one-tail	1,651	1,650	1,649	1,653	1,677
	P(T<=t) two-tail	0,014*	0,385	0,126	0,448	0,231
	t Critical two-tail	1,969	1,967	1,967	1,973	2,010

Conducting Welch's t-test on tenure data shows that it is only in year X+1 that it is possible to reject the null hypothesis, i.e. the mean tenure between the PD and DD is indifferent. The 188 officers on the PDD (M = 0,926, SE = 0,019) compared to the 273 officers in the DD group (M = 0,978, SE = 0,009) demonstrated significantly different tenure values,  $t(267) = -2,481$ ,  $p = ,01372$ . From year X+2 to X+5, the mean tenure levels do not differ significantly as all of the p-values are above 0,05. These results can be explained by looking at X+1. The data solely consists of binary values (0 and 1) why the variability in results is higher, ceteris paribus. From X+2 to X+5, the variation in relation to the mean is lower providing a t Stat closer to zero. In overall terms, the difference in the officers' tenure, in terms of mean, does not differ significantly.

### B2.3.2 Binary employment data

For X+1, the results yield the same for the binary data as for tenure data, which is consistent with the variables having the same values (0 or 1). The null hypothesis tested in this section

is e.g. “In X+5 after commission an equal proportion of officers from the two populations (PD vs. DD) are still active or reserve officers in the Army”.

Table 8 reports the results from Welch’s t-test from X+1 to X+5.

Binary employment data		X+1	X+2	X+3	X+4	X+5
<b>Professional bachelor's degree '14-'16</b>	Mean	0,926	0,920	0,840	0,793	0,766
	SE	0,019	0,020	0,027	0,030	0,031
	Median	1	1	1	1	1
	Observations	188	188	188	188	188
	Variance	0,069	0,074	0,135	0,165	0,180
<b>Diploma degree '18-'20</b>	Mean	0,978	0,916	0,878	0,663	0,485
	SE	0,009	0,017	0,024	0,050	0,088
	Median	1	1	1	1	0
	Observations	273	273	189	89	33
	Variance	0,022	0,077	0,107	0,226	0,258
<b>t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Unequal Variances</b>	df	267	408	370	151	40
	t Stat	-2,481	0,172	-1,056	2,217	3,003
	P(T<=t) one-tail	0,007*	0,432	0,146	0,014*	0,001**
	t Critical one-tail	1,651	1,649	1,649	1,655	1,684
	P(T<=t) two-tail	0,014*	0,864	0,291	0,028*	0,001**
	t Critical two-tail	1,969	1,966	1,966	1,976	2,021

The main difference when reviewing the binary retention data in comparison to the tenure data is that more results are significant (even at  $p < .01$ , at X+5). In X+4 the 188 officers on the PBD ( $M = 0,793$ ,  $SE = 0,030$ ) compared to the 89 officers in the DD group ( $M = 0,663$ ,  $SE = 0,050$ ) showed a significantly different proportion of officers still affiliated with the army tenure value,  $t(151) = 2,217$ ,  $p = .035^*$ , why the null hypothesis is rejected. In X+5 the difference in mean value (proportion) becomes increasingly significant at 76,6% (PBD) vs. 48,5% (DD) why the null hypothesis is rejected at a  $p = .01$  significance level. Hence, figure 2’s graphical depiction of the retention level amongst DD drastically dropping after X+3 is very significant in comparison to the PBD and cannot be attributed to a normal variation.

### **B3 Quantitative Conclusions**

Section B’s main purpose was to answer subquestion one: *From a quantitative perspective, how is the Army’s ability to retain affected by the change in the recruitment strategy?*

The data from 461 observations showed that there was a significant difference between the retention levels in X+1, X+4 and X+5 between the PBD and DD recruitment segments. In the first year after commission (X+1) more officers on the DD stayed in the Army (97,8%) compared to the PBD (92,6%). Conversely, at X+4 and X+5, the retention rate for officers with a DD *drastically* declines in comparison with PBD, which upholds a relatively stable yearly turnover rate. At X+5 only 48,5% of DD are in the Army against 76,6% of PBD. Although X+5 only includes the class of PAM 2016-2018 ( $n=33$ ) for DD, the results are very significant.

Figure 2's visual presentation of the retention rate shows a drastic decline in the retention rate amongst the DD officers of 20 percentage points in X+4 and X+5.

Considering this two-year time frame, the retention rate for the DD's officer from X+4 to X+5 is reduced by 48,8% in a matter of 2 years. Conversely, the PBD officers' retention rate appears much more stable (and higher) when measured in the annual change.

In the scope of the aggregated (DD and PBS) retention data, the Army never experienced a positive turnover rate, i.e. a positive inflow of officers. It emerges that once a JGO has left the Army, or has been granted an unpaid absence of leave, it is unlikely that he seeks re-employment in the Army. The minority of officers, who pursue re-employment, is far from enough to balance the outflow of officers in 94,7% of the observed years. This adds to the importance of the Army pursuing an HR strategy ensuring a focus on retention, as the interplay (in terms of turnover) between military and civilian careers does not favor the Army.

Overall, the quantitative data in this thesis suggests that there is a significant difference in the Army's ability to retain its JGOs following the change in the recruitment strategy. With a difference of 28,6 percentage points in X+5, the discrepancy is substantial. A discussion of the results can be found in section D.

# SECTION C: QUALITATIVE PERSPECTIVE



## **C1 Theory**

Job satisfaction is one of the major factors which can increase work motivation (Wright & Davis, 2003). If employees are more satisfied at work, they would be more motivated and display a higher work performance, all other things being equal (Emmert & Taher, 1992; Steel & Warner, 1990). Need-based theories on motivation describe how individual efforts that meet employee needs can increase employee job satisfaction, and ultimately their motivation. (Alderfer, 1969; Herzberg, 1968; Maslow, 1954).

Wright & Davis (2003) explained that employees' satisfaction is linked to specific rewards and working conditions. Therefore, if employees perceive discrepancies, compared to what they feel that they commit to their employer, job satisfaction and motivation suffer. If an employee continuously experiences discrepancies, they are more likely to perceive these as violations of the psychological contract that they entered into (Rousseau, 1995). Another potential consequence is employees may choose to work less to regress a balance between their contributions to an organization (e.g. effort, time, and loyalty) and their organization's provided inducements (e.g. pay, job security, benefits, and career development) (Rousseau, 1989; Argyris, 1960). This theory section seeks to provide the background of some of the most studied and acknowledged theories in behavioral science, namely Herzberg's theory on motivation and the concept of psychological and implied contracts in organizations.

### **C1.1 Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory**

#### **C1.1.1 Background**

Some of the original pioneers of studying job satisfaction and its effect on motivation are Herzberg, Mausner & Snyderman (1959). Herzberg et al. (1959) proposed the two-factor theory following an extensive study of motivation and demotivation amongst accountants and engineers in the metal production industry in the USA. Engineers and accountants were chosen in order to limit their study to a few professions "*as their jobs are rich in technique*" (Herzberg et al., 1959, p. 32). However, seeing that these groups are vastly different in terms of their training, the actual work they do, and, presumably, the people that are attracted to that type of work Herzberg et al. (1959, p. 32) acknowledges that their study "*...might have yielded results of questionable generality*".

By interviewing 203 respondents across nine companies and decoding their answers Herzberg et al. (1959) mapped 16 job factors leading to positive and negative emotions towards the respondents' job which are reviewed in the following section.

### **C1.1.2 Definition of job factors**

Herzberg et al. (1959, p. 44) define a job factor as *“an objective element in the situation in which the respondent finds a source for his good or bad feelings about the job”*. In this section, the authors provide the reader with the original framework of the factors. Since Herzberg et al. (1959) published their work, many academics have adapted similar definitions, when referring to motivators and demotivators, but the original study uses the terms “satisfiers” and “dissatisfiers”.

The purpose of this section is to describe the job factors, so they can be referred to in a latter context. The factors are not listed according to their importance, but are given a prefix of “M” or “H” depending on, whether they are recognized as being a motivational or hygiene factor.

**M1: Possibility of growth.** Herzberg et al. (1959) recognize “possibility” as a paradox as the first criteria is an objective element. However, respondents in the original study referred to numerous situations involving objections to evidence where the possibilities for respondent growth were increased or decreased. E.g. if an individual is told that a lack of a formal degree makes it impossible for him to advance.

**M2: Advancement.** This category was solely used, when an actual change in title or position happened. A change in company or department without any changes in status but increased opportunities was considered a change in responsibility.

**M3: Responsibility.** Factors relating to responsibility and authority fall into this category, when the respondent derives satisfaction from being given responsibility for his own work, or being given new areas of responsibility. It also includes sequences where there was a loss of satisfaction or negative attitude stemming from a lack of responsibility.

**M4: Recognition.** The criteria for this category is some act of recognition, where the source could be anyone. An important aspect of the effectiveness of recognition for producing high job attitudes is some achievement as a basis for the recognition.

**M5: Work itself.** The actual job and its inherent tasks, whether it is routine, varied, stultifying, creative, complex, or easy constitute “work itself” and can be a source of both good and bad feelings.

**M6: Achievement.** The achievement also includes the opposite, failure. Positive achievements entail specifically mentioned success such as successful completion of a job, vindication, and harvesting the fruits of one’s hard labor.

**H1: Working conditions.** Factors relating to the physical conditions of the work itself, the amount of work or available facilities are categorized as working conditions. Adequacy or inadequacy of proper lighting, tools, space and environmental characteristics and resources falls into this category.

**H2: Interpersonal relations.** Even though interpersonal relations have the ability to influence all of the other factors, this specific category restricts interpersonal relations to characteristics that are explicit to this interaction. Furthermore, the category is divided into three sub-categories (superior, subordinate and peers) to enable the ability to control for the different characteristics of interpersonal relationships.

**H3: Company policy and administration.** This category covers two kinds of overall company policy and administration characteristics. One involved the adequacy or inadequacy of company organization and management resulting in unclear lines of control, and communication hindering a satisfactory completion of job tasks. The second covers the harmfulness or beneficial effects of the company's policies, primarily revolving around personnel and administrative policies.

**H4: Supervision-technical.** Albeit a resemblance to interpersonal relations-supervisor, this category captures the supervisor's competence or incompetence, fairness or unfairness. These attributes differ from the aforementioned category by focusing on the leadership behavior of a proficient or inferior supervisor.

**H5: Salary.** This category includes all events in which compensation (i.e. base salary, bonus etc.) plays a role.

**H6: Factors in personal life.** Herzberg et al. (1959, p. 48) only included sequences into this category if "aspects of the job affected personal life in such a way that the effect was a factor in the respondents' feeling about his job". Applying this definition the more modern term "work-life balance" is applicable to this category as long as work-life balance imposes a direct effect on job satisfaction. For example, if the Army required an officer to undertake a six-month deployment abroad, causing his family to become unhappy.

**H7: Status.** Status is not to be confused with advancement, as the status category only implies when the respondent explicitly conveys status as being a factor in his feeling about the job.

**H8: Job security.** This category captures the objective signs of the presence or absence of job security of the respondent. Thus considerations such as tenure and company stability as objective parameters of the respondent's job security.

### **C1.1.3 Examining job factors**

#### **C1.1.3.1 Positive job attitudes**

Herzberg et al. (1959) examined the respondents that declared having a high job satisfaction and ranked the frequency of the appearance of the aforementioned job factors. The most frequently appearing factor was “achievement”, which in 41% of the cases accompanied a favorable job attitude. Second highest frequency was recognition, which appeared in approximately one-third of the respondent’s high job attitude stories. There is a case to be made for linking the aspect of recognition to achievement. *“The effectiveness of recognition for producing high job attitudes is some achievement as a basis for the recognition”* Herzberg et al. (1959, p. 60).

In a subsequent re-publication by Herzberg (2003) their original study has been expanded to 12 subgroups<sup>5</sup> covering different job types including that of a military officer. The study increased the number of events that lead to extreme satisfaction from 228 to 1753. However, the results from the original study in 1959 are surprisingly robust as the top five drivers of extreme satisfaction are unchanged in order of occurrence. It follows that only a small number of job factors are responsible for positive feelings about one’s job. Furthermore, the factors responsible for this outcome are interlinked to performing the job itself, or to the intrinsic content rather than the context or conditions in which the job is performed. Figure 4 displays to what extent the 16 job factors are the source of extreme satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

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<sup>5</sup> The employees, studied in 12 different subgroups, included lower level supervisors, professional women, agricultural administrators, men about to retire from management positions, hospital maintenance personnel, manufacturing supervisors, nurses, food handlers, military officers, engineers, scientists, housekeepers, teachers, technicians, female assemblers, accountants, Finnish foremen and Hungarian engineers (Herzberg, 2003).

**Figure 4: Factors affecting job attitudes**

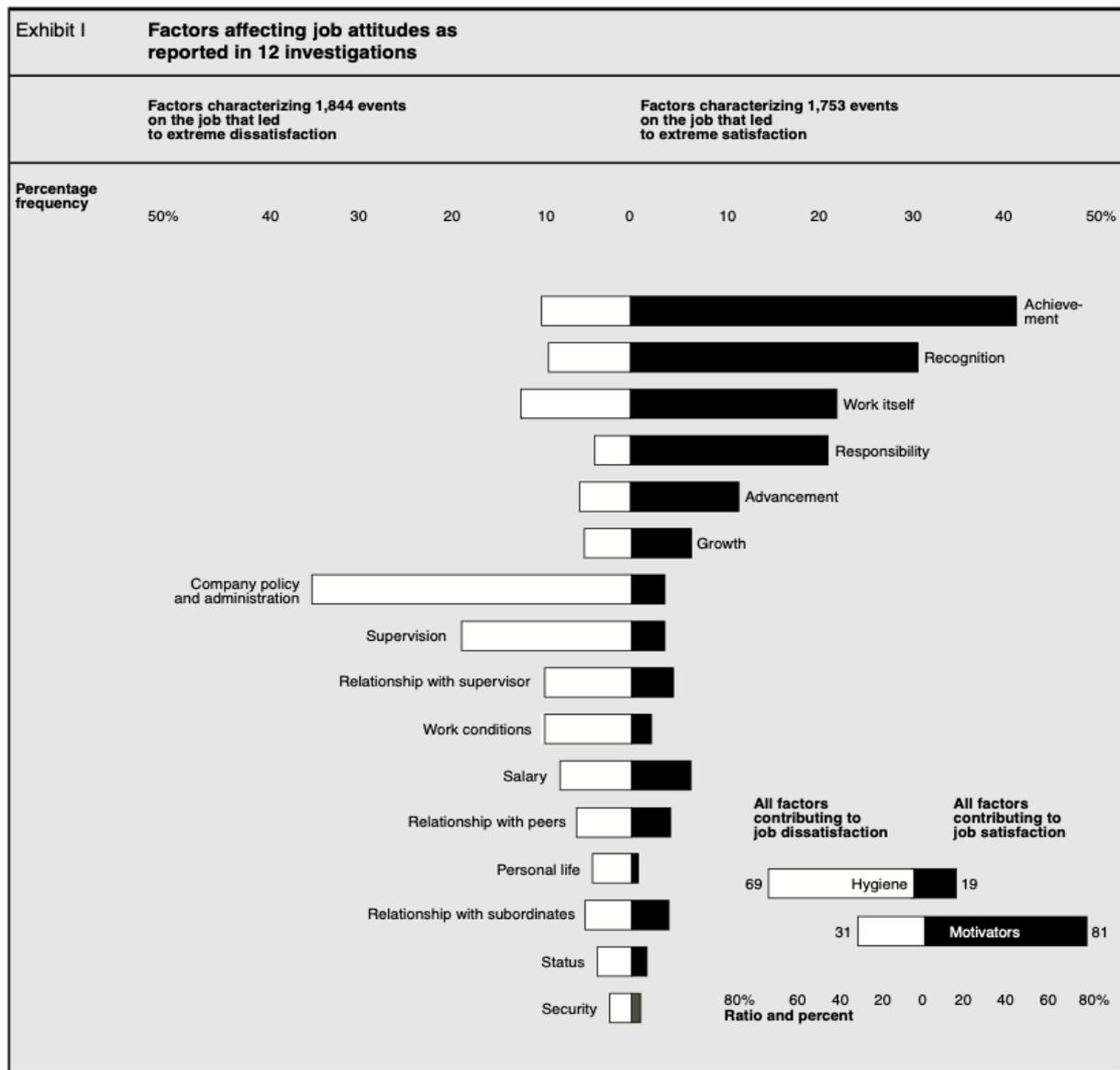


Exhibit from Herzberg, F. (2003, p. 90).

### 1.1.3.2 Negative Job Attitudes

When reviewing the factors associated with a negative job attitude, Herzberg et al. (1959) hypothesized a clear distinction between “satisfiers” and dissatisfiers” in their data. Their hypothesis predicted that the positive job factors identified in the previous section would appear infrequently among respondents with a negative job attitude. This prediction proved to be true as shown by the results in the above-mentioned figure.

Company policy and administration is second to none the job factor that leads to the highest degree of dissatisfaction. More than a third of the 1844 respondents report this category as contributing to negative job emotions. This negativity revolves around two aspects of company

policy and administration according to Herzberg et al. (1959, p. 71). *“First company ineffectiveness produced by inefficiency, waste, duplication of effort, or a struggle for power”* and *“personnel and other policies that are viewed as unfair or that in some ways have detrimental effects”*. The latter effect is described in newer literature as “organizational justice” which Cropanzano, Bowen & Gilliland (2007, p. 35) define as *“personal evaluation about the ethical and moral standing of managerial conduct”*. Cropanzano et al. (2007) are preoccupied with the aspects of distributive, procedural and interactional justice as a driver for ensuring committed and motivated employees with high job performance. Unfair salary policies are linked to company policy and administration, as a third of the respondent reported salary as a dissatisfier also viewed policies as negative.

Supervision is second in order of frequency in the factors leading to a low job attitude. Recalling the definitions of job factors, the distinction in supervision vis-a-vis interpersonal relationship with the supervisor is the emphasis on the supervisor's ability, or competence, in carrying out his function. As expected, reports of stories describing an incompetent supervisor showed a high correlation with the degree of interpersonal relation with the supervisor which is placed as the third most demotivating factor.

Work conditions was mainly represented in the survey in connection to negative job attitudes. Paramount in complaints related to this factor was inadequacy of working facilities, and the workload.

## **C1.1.4 Two-factor theory**

### **C1.1.4.1 Motivators**

Motivators in Herzberg's two-factor theory are considered intrinsic to the job. Motivators add to job satisfaction and take into account an employee's requirement for growth, self-realization and fulfillment. The role of motivators is not to decrease the amount of job dissatisfaction, but to provide employees with the needed elements for feeling satisfied and motivated in their jobs. Herzberg et al. (1959) coined the process of focusing on motivators as "job enrichment". Examples of motivators in the workplace are (Herzberg, 2003):

- M1: Possibility of growth
- M2: Advancement
- M3: Responsibility
- M4: Recognition
- M5: Work itself
- M6: Achievement

#### **C1.1.4.2 Hygiene Factors**

The hygiene factors definition includes parts of the workplace experience that are considered extrinsic. Hygiene factors do not contribute significantly to added job satisfaction, but if neglected they are the root cause of job dissatisfaction. They are also sometimes described as job dissatisfiers. Examples of hygiene factors that are extrinsic to the job include (Herzberg, 2003):

- H1: Work conditions
- H2: Workplace relationships
- H3: Company and administrative policy
- H4: Supervision
- H5: Salary
- H6: Factors in personal life
- H7: Status
- H8: Job security

#### **C1.1.4.3 Motivation & Hygiene**

The results from Herzberg's newer studies in 1968 and 2003 indicate that motivators were the primary cause of satisfaction and hygiene factors the primary cause of dissatisfaction on the job. Traditionally, employee satisfaction and dissatisfaction were thought to be two ends of the same spectrum, where increasing job satisfaction also decreased job dissatisfaction. However, the motivation-hygiene theory proposes that satisfaction and dissatisfaction are not opposites and that factors which affect one spectrum may not necessarily affect the other. *“The opposite of job satisfaction is not job dissatisfaction but, rather, no job satisfaction; and similarly, the opposite of job dissatisfaction is not job satisfaction, but no job dissatisfaction”* (Herzberg, 2003, p. 91). As a result, an employee may experience satisfaction in some aspects of their job, but dissatisfaction in others. According to this theory, the presence of motivating factors alone does not necessarily decrease dissatisfaction. For instance, an employee may experience a high degree of motivation towards his work tasks, but may still be dissatisfied with external factors such as salary and working conditions.

In summary, Herzberg's two-factor theory emphasizes the importance of both hygiene factors and motivators in creating a positive work environment. While hygiene factors are necessary to prevent job dissatisfaction, motivator factors are necessary for job satisfaction and motivation. The two factors are interlinked, with motivators only leading to job satisfaction, if hygiene factors are already in place. Hence, fulfilling hygiene factors first is necessary before

motivators aid in enhancing job satisfaction, why special attention needs to be given to these factors.

### **C1.1.5 Relation to turnover**

Herzberg et al.'s (1959) study sought to link the effect of job factors (defined in section 1.1.2) to what they defined as "*major-effect categories*". These categories included performance effects, turnover, mental health, interpersonal relationships in the workplace and attitudinal effects. The effect on turnover rate falls strictly within the scope of this thesis. For this reason, Herzberg et al. (1959) findings related to turnover of are elaborated in this section.

According to Herzberg et al. (1959, p. 52), turnover can be viewed as "a continuum of possible categories ... at one end, we have situations in which the respondent actually quit his job. On the other, we have situations in which positive feelings were so great that the respondent turned down attractive offers elsewhere".

Between these two extremes, employees can experience periods of negative and positive job attitudes which entail activities such as attending job interviews, searching for job openings or merely considering quitting. Herzberg et al. (1959) found that the employees who reported a low job satisfaction resulted in 13% quitting their job, 8% took steps and 17% considered quitting. Thus, almost half of these employees with a low job satisfaction experienced some degree of physical or psychological withdrawal from their job.

Academic research has provided mixed results regarding the relationship between hygiene factors and turnover. Meta-studies have found that dissatisfaction with hygiene factors is positively related to turnover, while other studies have found no relationship or even a negative relationship.

For example, a study by Griffeth, Hom & Gaertner (2000) found that dissatisfaction with job security, pay and supervision was related to increased turnover intentions. Similarly, a study by Tett & Meyer (1993) found that dissatisfaction with salary and working conditions was related to actual turnover.

However, other studies have found that satisfaction with hygiene factors does not necessarily prevent turnover. For example, a study by Mobley, Horner & Hollingsworth (1978) found that employees, who were satisfied with their pay, working conditions and job security still left their jobs if they were dissatisfied with other aspects of their work, such as lack of opportunity for advancement. Overall, while Herzberg's theory suggests that dissatisfaction with hygiene factors can lead to turnover, the relationship is not always unambiguous.

### **C1.1.6 Theoretical shortcomings and critique**

Although Herzberg's theory of motivation has been widely tested and applied in various motivational studies (Zhang, Yao & Cheong, 2011; Balmer & Baum, 1993), this theory has not been without criticism due to the two-factor theory's clear distinction between motivators and hygiene factors, regardless of differences in employees' personalities or job categories (Judge, Heller & Mount, 2002; Furnham, Ford & Ferrari, 1999; Locke, 1976).

For example, Furnham et al. (1999) argued that employees' motivators would be different, depending on their personalities, and found that extroverts put more emphasis on motivators such as achievement and recognition at work than other types of personality when they choose a job. Judge et al. (2002) supported Furnham et al.'s findings and concluded that employees' motivation at work may vary, depending on their personality trait (i.e., the Big Five personality traits) in their meta-analysis study. When reviewing the specific job factor of salary Herzberg et al. (1959) define it as a hygiene factor, despite it being reported almost equally as a factor leading to both dissatisfaction and satisfaction (see figure 4). Daft (2003) argues that salary can be a hygiene factor or a motivator depending on the meaning itself. E.g. if the salary does not have any meaning other than increasing the employee's purchasing power, it should be just considered a hygiene factor. On the contrary, salary could be a motivator if it represents a symbol of achievement at work (Daft, 2003).

Herzberg (1968) proclaimed that if hygiene factors are met, job satisfaction will follow an increase in satisfied motivational factors. However, unlike Herzberg's assertion, Simons & Enz (1995) pointed out that in certain industries, hygiene factors, e.g. salary and job security, are more important to employee satisfaction than motivators, such as work itself and recognition. In addition, according to Chitiris (1988), when an organization did not provide employees an opportunity to satisfy most of their needs, hygiene factors became a more powerful source of motivation than motivators, and they led to improved performance and productivity.

Methodological inconsistencies and the fact that different researchers have used different motivation variables have affected the contraposition of Herzberg's two-Factor theory (Chitiris, 1988). Therefore, we cannot conclude that Herzberg's proposal regarding motivation is readily applicable to all kinds of organizations including the Danish Army. In other words, Herzberg's two-factor theory must be reexamined to understand, which motivation factors are more significant in different organizations. However, Herzberg et al.'s (1959) identification of job factors as a source of dissatisfaction and satisfaction provides a useful framework for understanding job elements.

## **C1.2 Psychological Contracts in Organizations**

### **C1.2.1 Theoretical framework**

The theory of social contracts in organizations has been discussed from various perspectives since the 1960s, by which it was used to understand employees (Argyris, 1962; Levinson, 1962). In 1995, Rousseau focused not only on the contracts in organizational settings but “...particularly those contracts that exist between workers and the organization” (Rousseau, 1995, p. 15). This focus led to the creation of a theoretical framework that seeks to predict the effects of the expectations that arise between individuals and organizations.

Rousseau (1995) acknowledged that the expectations, which shape a psychological contract are both internal and external. However, the factors influencing the individual to enter a contract, still has to be interpreted by the individual, thereby making it subjective: “*The psychological contract is individual beliefs, shaped by the organization, regarding terms of an exchange agreement between individuals and their organization*” (Rousseau, 1998, p. 9). However, the individual is not necessarily conscious of the factors influencing them and the effects they have. Therefore, Rousseau divided the contracts into four different versions that will be delineated in the following.

### **C1.2.2 Types of contracts and implications**

#### **C1.2.2.1 Psychological contract**

Is a contract between an individual and an organization based on the beliefs that have been built, in relation to the expectations of an exchange agreement. These types of contracts are often influenced by the organization, but are difficult to control, as they start prior to a potential legal contract between the two parties. “*In both employment and customer service, many of the promises expressed involve future courses of action (e.g., career paths and promotion, product service and maintenance). In promising, it is not what the maker intends but what the receiver believes*” (Rousseau, 1995, p.2). The promises and the receiver's beliefs in regards to these are rarely included in a contract. Most commonly, the psychological contract between an individual and an organization is “...built around obtaining positive outcomes” (Rousseau, 1995, p. 6). This means that the individuals and organizations that enter a contract, are doing so, based on the expectations of positive outcomes.

#### **C1.2.2.2 Normative, implied, and social contracts**

Besides the psychological contracts, Rousseau (1995, p. 9) lists: “*normative, contracts as the shared psychological contract that emerges when members of a social group hold common beliefs*”. From that definition, it can be derived that almost all larger organizations will have

some sort of normative contract. These will function as external factors that influence the psychological contracts that individuals have with other individuals as well as organizations: *“Once people hold common beliefs about what they owe their employer and what they are owed in turn, these normative contracts become part of the social norms of the workplace”* (Rousseau, 1995, p. 48).

Implied contracts are that of third parties: *“...external judgment made by courts, the public and other outsiders about the relationship in which a contract is created”* (Rousseau, 1995, p. 52). These play a role in the individual psychological contract, as it affects the implied expectation, which as an external factor will influence the psychological contract.

Social contracts relate to the shared beliefs that are to be found in societies. In most Western societies, one of the usual norms is *“...that of reciprocity”* (Rousseau, 1995, p. 13). Overall social norms influence the psychological contract an individual enters as it will be a part of both the legally written contract and the implied expectations that are created.

### **C1.2.2.3 Implications and limitations**

When an individual, (e.g. a potential employee), decides to enter into a contract with an organization, (e.g. a potential employer), the negotiations in relation to their contract are often somewhat limited: *“Cognitive limits, limited information, and different frames of reference make it likely that people will hold different views regarding the existence and meaning of contracts”* (Rousseau, 1995, p. 19). This implies that both the hiring company's relation to a contract of employment and the individual that is about to become an employee have varied expectations of the implied return, which can influence the relationship. This is once again due to the limitations of a written contractual agreement: *“Due to bounded rationality, it is virtually impossible to spell out all details at the time a contract is created. People fill in the blanks along the way, and they sometimes do so inconsistently”* (Rousseau, 1995, p. 7). These expectations, caused by limitations, are difficult to fulfill, and could end up as discrepancies.

### **C1.2.3 Contract violation**

Violation of contracts is about as common as the concept of contracts itself. Furthermore, Rousseau (1995, p. 89) found that: *“Contract violation occurs at least as commonly as contract completion. In a recent study, 54% of new hires reported some contract breach in the first 2 years of employment (Robinson & Rousseau, 1994). It is likely that a good deal of this breach arises from different interpretations of the deal and changes among contract makers”*. Therefore, it is imperative to gain an understanding of what constitutes a violation of a

psychological contract and how severe the violation has to be in order to break (or terminate) a contract.

### **C1.2.3.1 Violation of a contract**

The violation of psychological contracts varies in severity, ranging from misconceptions with few or no consequences to a breach of trust. The difficulty is that as opposed to written contracts, psychological contracts rarely have clear boundaries nor consequences attached to various degrees of violation. As the psychological contract is a product of an individual understanding, so is the perceived violation. According to Rousseau (1995, p. 118), violations begin as a discrepancy: “*contract violation begins with the perception of a discrepancy between a relied-upon outcome (e.g., a choice assignment, extra support) and the actual outcome that occurs*”. Rousseau (1995) suggests three factors that increase the likelihood of a discrepancy to be perceived as a violation:

**Monitoring:** When one party indirectly seeks information from others, by tracking their behavior. An example would be to keep close attention to coworkers’ arrival times. Arriving late could for some be considered a contract violation, but for others a mere discrepancy that would go unnoticed.

**The perceived size of loss:** The perceived size of the loss is linked to the perception of a discrepancy as a major factor. Individuals tend to assess the size of loss by the amount of harm done.

**Relationship strength:** The relationship between the parties within a contract is a factor that will influence the perception of a discrepancy. If there is no history of discrepancies or adversarial behavior, it is less likely that a discrepancy will be perceived as a violation.

In short, monitoring will increase the perceived number of discrepancies in the contract, simply because attention is paid to measurable factors. The *perceived size of loss* will influence the individual perception so that discrepancies with larger negative outcomes are more likely to be perceived as violations. The relationship strength and history will affect the perception of, whether contract discrepancy is a violation or not. These three are important, because within them, lies the potential to mitigate perceived discrepancies, thereby potentially avoiding perceived violations.

### **C1.2.3.2 Mitigating the effects of violations**

In order to mitigate discrepancies and potential termination of contracts, parties within the contract, use remediation, voluntariness and explanation. Remediation is defined by

Rousseau (1995, p. 121) as: "*Remedies substitute one outcome for another and thus can be thought of as forms of "buyout"*". Through substitution, one side of a contract can ensure the existence of the contract through remediation, as the perceived value is still upheld. Furthermore, voluntariness is a factor that influences perception as to how grave a potential discrepancy is. The parties' ability to fulfill the contract is what matters: "*A breach of contract occurs when one party reneges on the agreement despite their ability to fulfill it*" (Rousseau, 1995, p. 123). Perception of the opposite party's ability to fulfill the contract will be a determining factor in relation to a potential violation. Lastly, an explanation is emphasized as it helps shape the understanding of a potentially violated contract holder. Employees, who do not receive their anticipated salary raise, special assignment, etc. look for explanations to help them understand and adjust to their losses: "*Much of how people make sense of losses stems from what perpetrators communicate to victims.*" (Rousseau, 1995, p. 127). All organizations should make use of remediation, and voluntariness to provide explanations, when discrepancies occur. However, many organizations might not be aware, when and if, an employee experiences discrepancies in their psychological contracts, which makes it difficult for organizations to mitigate the issue.

#### **C1.2.4 Relation to turnover**

With the psychological contract representing an individual's belief in mutual obligations and expectations between themselves and their employer, it is natural to assume a link between the psychological contract and turnover. When these obligations and expectations are not met, employees may experience a psychological contract breach, which can lead to negative outcomes such as decreased job satisfaction, reduced organizational commitment and increased turnover intentions.

According to research by Suazo & Stone-Romero (2011), a link between psychological contracts and turnover exists. They found that psychological contract breach was a significant predictor of turnover intentions in a study of healthcare professionals. Furthermore, a study by Robinson and Morrison (2000) found that employees, who perceived a breach in their psychological contract were more likely to leave their organization within the following year.

In other words, if employees believe that their employer has not fulfilled their obligations as promised in the psychological contract, they may feel a sense of betrayal and become more likely to leave the organization. According to Rousseau (1998), HR strategies and management strategies affect the employee-organization relationship, thereby affecting the perceived psychological contract and the potential evaluation of discrepancies: "*HR practices send strong messages to individuals regarding what the organization expects of them and*

*what they can expect in return*" (1995, p. 181). This management of expectations helps ensure that discrepancies are not experienced, which in turn should make the individual less inclined to leave the organization.

### **C1.2.5 Theoretical shortcomings and critique**

The theory of psychological contracts has since its origin been criticized for its diffuse definition. In 1998 Guest criticized Rousseau (1995) as opposed to former theorists (Schein, 1978; Kotter, 1973; Herriot & Pemberton, 1995) for having too strict of a definition: "*We are therefore left with something of a conceptual muddle about whether to accept this restricted definition and an operational problem of how to distinguish promissory from implied contracts*" (Guest, 1998, p. 651). Furthermore, Guest criticizes the general validity of the concept, due to an unclear definition, and continues to argue that the empirical evidence is insufficient: "*This problem is reflected in the research which has largely ignored the organizational perspective on the psychological contract, rendering it very one-sided and again raising the issue, developed below, of concept redundancy*" (1998, p. 658).

In response to Guest's (1998) critique, Rousseau (1998, p. 667) responded that: "Despite Guest's criticism, for which he provides little if any empirical support, we find substantial evidence that contemporary psychological contract research is both specific and rigorous". The reasoning behind Rousseau is: "Contemporary researchers apply two boundaries to the concept of the psychological contract. First, by definition, a psychological contract exists at the individual level, in the form of a person's beliefs regarding the terms of his or her exchange relationship with another" (Rousseau, 1998, p. 668). The discussion of the difference between expectations and psychological contracts is thereby set by the boundaries a researcher applies when investigating the phenomena. Potentially, expectations differ from a psychological contract because they generate different consequences for the individual contract holder.

### **C1.3 Linking theories**

Herzberg's two-factor theory of motivation and the concept of the psychological contract are related in that they both address the factors that influence employee motivation and job satisfaction.

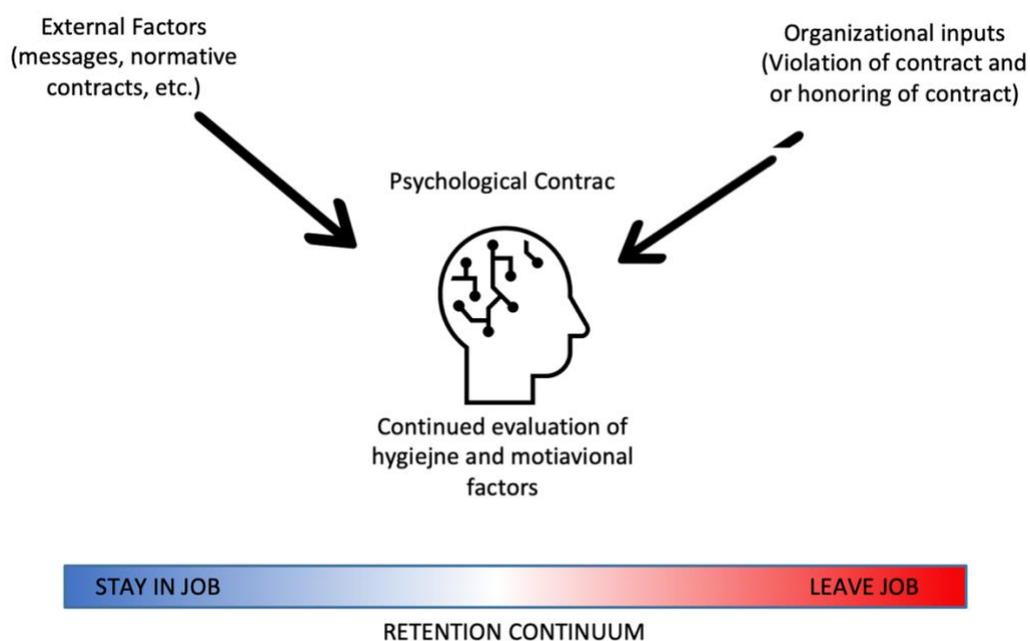
There is a link between Herzberg's theory and the psychological contract in that both address the importance of meeting employees' expectations to promote job satisfaction and motivation. Employers can use Herzberg's theory to identify the factors that influence their employees' job

satisfaction and can use the concept of the psychological contract to understand and meet their employees' expectations.

Having depicted both Rousseau (1995) and Herzberg et al. (1959), it is important to understand, how the two theories interlink. As Rousseau (1995) suggests that there are psychological contracts, which represent an implicit understanding or agreement between an employer and an employee about what they can expect from each other. While Herzberg et al. (1959) suggest that there are two types of factors, which influence employee motivation and satisfaction.

As the psychological contract is a product of beliefs, in relation to what an employee owes their employer and what the employer can expect from them, it will affect the employee's perception of both motivational and hygiene job factors. This link combines the theories, in order to give a deeper understanding of how job factors are affected, from the perspective of the employee. If the employer fails to meet the end of the psychological contract, the employee may perceive it as a neglected hygiene factor, which can lead to dissatisfaction. On the other hand, if the employer exceeds the expectations set in the psychological contract, the employee may perceive it as a motivational factor, which can lead to job satisfaction. Therefore, it is important for employers to understand and deliver on both the explicit, in the best case also implicit, promises made in the psychological contract to ensure that their employees are motivated and satisfied at work, as it should in theory keep the turnover rate down. This interdependence between the theories sets the ground for the following model:

**Figure 5: Retention continuum model**



*Authors' own depiction*

Figure 5 depicts, how an employee continuously interprets and evaluates events, in relation to his expectations. In the employee's work-life, external factors will affect how the psychological contract is perceived, thereby affecting the employee's attitude towards his job factors. If the experiences are perceived to aligned within the boundaries of the psychological contract, the employee is likely to have a positive attitudes towards the job factors, thereby increasing their job motivation and satisfaction. The more satisfied and motivated the employee feels, the less likely they are to leave their job. Since the employee will be moving along a continuum of perceived satisfaction and motivation, it is not the aim of this thesis to quantify where on the continuum the JGOs are, but rather to identify factors and inputs constituting positive or negative inputs.

## **C2 Qualitative Methods**

### **C2.1 Sampling Approach**

A sampling approach allows the researcher to minimize the amount of primary data collected due to a narrow focus on a smaller sample. The narrow focus enables the subpopulation to be viewed as a representation of the total population, thereby enabling a smaller sample size (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2007).

Two types of sampling approaches exist probability, and non-probability sampling. Probability sampling is, when samples are chosen randomly and have an equal chance of being chosen. Non-probability sampling is, when samples are chosen based on the researcher's subjective judgment, i.e. not by chance (Saunders et al., 2007).

This thesis has chosen a smaller data sample, which in return allows for a more detailed data gathering, namely officers, who are still employed or formerly employed by the Danish Army. According to Saunders et al. (2007), this is encouraged, when dealing with more complex cases. A non-probability sampling approach was adopted as it ensured that the participants fitted the criteria. Emphasis was therefore on choosing interviewees, who have experience relevant to the research question. This enabled the researcher to select interviewees based on suitable criteria that comprised a sample to better answer the research problem (Saunders et al., 2007). Furthermore, when conducting interpretive research, unbiased samples are considered less relevant and should instead favor depth over width (Collis & Hussey, 2013).

Establishing contact with potential interviewees was done either via LinkedIn, sending emails to current employees, or reaching out via the authors' network. A brief description of the project was given with an invitation to participate, preferably in a face-to-face meeting, alternatively via video conferencing (VTC).

### **C2.1.1 Junior-grade officers**

Formerly employed and active duty officers were selected based on three criteria. Firstly, they had to have been graduating between 2014-2016 or 2018-2021 to represent either the former or the new recruitment segment. Secondly, they had to be either still working in the Army or had left their active duty. The difference between the two was needed, to clarify any difference in the subjective experience of the Army between continued employees and former employees. Thirdly, the scope was narrowed to individuals, who had no prior military experience, besides having been conscripts. This criterion was chosen to ensure a comparable baseline by mitigating differences in experiences and expectations towards the officers' education and the subsequent job in the Army. Any deviations from these criteria were considered unacceptable. All respondents were contacted through the researcher's network to ensure criteria fulfillment.

### **C2.1.2 Key stakeholders**

To obtain a deeper understanding of the decision to change the recruitment base and officers' education, as well as the Armed Forces HR strategy in general, it was deemed necessary to interview key stakeholders. Potential interviewees were identified by mapping out the structure of the Armed Forces at the time of the change. Individuals in positions of knowledge and influence, who were involved in the process of change, were identified and contacted. Amongst identified personnel following military officers agreed to an interview:

- Former head of the Royal Danish Defense College (2010-2018), Rear Admiral Nils Wang (retired), currently managing director at Naval Team Denmark.
- Case Manager and Head of Recruitment and Careers at the Personnel Agency, Navy Commander Jesper Lyng.
- Project Manager and education consultant at the Ministry of Defense and Danish Defense College, Major Alexander Tetzlaff.

## **C2.2 Semi-structured interviews**

As a basis for the root cause analysis, interviews were chosen as a methodical gathering of primary data. In the gathering of qualitative data, and especially the use of interviews, there are three available structures. These are defined as structured, semi-structured and unstructured interviews (Collis & Hussey, 2013). Structured interviews plan all questions in advance and ask them in the same order, but are less suitable in an interpretive paradigm. The unstructured interview does not prepare any questions in advance and instead develops questions during the interview (Collis & Hussey, 2013). Semi-structured interviews consist of pre-established questionnaires to ensure validity and structure, like that of the structured

interview. Some alterations, such as follow-up questions are encouraged/allowed, to gain a deeper understanding than that of structured interviews (Saunders et al., 2007; Collis & Hussey, 2013). Moreover, Smith, Flowers & Larkin (2009) state that semi-structured interviews are especially suitable for uncovering lived experiences. Subsequently, a semi-structured interview format was chosen, as it allows for an overall richer primary data gathering.

In general, face-to-face interviews were adopted, as it allows “richer communication”, which means that the sender and receiver have a greater potential of success in communicating their desired intention (Lengel & Daft, 1988). The majority of the interviews were conducted at the RDMA. This particular setting was chosen as it represents a time in the life of every Army officer, thereby putting the interviewee in the right state of mind. However, due to geographical distance (one interviewee was currently situated in England) and practical reasons, a minority of the interviews was conducted in a VTC setting.

Both authors were present during the interviews. This ensured that the interview guide was followed and that observer could ask follow-up questions, in case the primary interviewer missed an opportunity. The risk of overwhelming the interviewee by being two as opposed to one, was mitigated by managing expectations and roles before the interview.

All of the interviews were conducted in Danish, as it is the native language of all the interviewees. This enabled the interviewers and interviewees to communicate easily and freely, ensuring a relaxed atmosphere during the process.

Subsequently, the interviews were transcribed, to prepare them for analysis. All quotes applied in the thesis are translated into English at the discretion of the authors, but with the approval of the interviewees.

### **C2.2.1 Interview technique**

According to Nathan, Newman & Lancaster (2019), it is important to build rapport to create an interpersonal space that will make the participants feel at ease and comfortable in the situation. Rapport is crucial, when conducting interviews, in which personal experiences are shared, as it helps develop trust and makes the participant feel safe, while sharing their opinions and emotions (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). A way to build rapport is by guiding the interviewee easily into the setting by first introducing the interviewers and explaining the purpose of the interview. Secondly, the interviewer needs to ensure the interviewee that the interview is confidential, to remove social responsibility, leading the interviewee to be able to share unpopular opinions and experiences. The formulated questions were clear, precise, and unambiguous while avoiding unnecessary use of adverbs. In case clarification was needed,

the interviewers were careful not to provide any suggestions or leading questions in a specific direction.

Tanggaard & Brinkmann (2010) state that in the science of performing qualitative interviews, it is essential that there is a positive relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee. This was taken into account in the process of establishing the questions that were used in the interviews to ensure an open and trustworthy setting. Furthermore, control questions were weaved into the question design, for example, asking the interviewee to elaborate on their responses to obtain a more concise answer and concrete examples. Acknowledging the interviewee's opinions and experiences creates a conversation with more flow and fewer awkward breaks.

According to Guest, Namey & Mitchell (2013), it is of great importance to reassure the interviewee through active listening during interviews. This was ensured by the authors, through indirect nudges, such as smiles nodding and simple affirmation. Open body language with the front against the interviewee and hands placed relaxed on the legs contributed to the appearance of an actively engaged listener.

At the end of the interview, the authors had built up enough rapport, to ask open-ended questions that could have been too sensitive for the interviewee to answer earlier on. Moreover, these questions had less laddering, as they required the interviewee to reflect back on some of the previously asked questions. An example from the interview guide, designed for former Army officers is: "*what could have made you stay in the Army?*". These questions also provided a natural ending to the interview and the interviewees were encouraged to ask any questions regarding the project.

### **C2.2.3 Question design: Junior-grade officers**

To gain a deepened understanding of the underlying causes of turnover and retention both current and former JGOs were interviewed. The two types of interviews carried the same structure regardless of the employment status of the JGO. The qualitative interviews in this thesis are designed as semi-structured interviews to provide us with primary data to supplement existing secondary data. To ensure a logical cohesion in the question design and that the interviews could be completed in less than an hour, a pilot interview with a JGO currently working at the RDMA was conducted. The pilot interview is not included as primary data in this thesis, as alternations to the interview guide were made subsequently. Various adjustments were made to ensure that the interviews with officers covered the topics needed to research the underlying causes of turnover and retention, while ensuring an interpretive

phenomenological analysis structure. The question design for the semi-structured interviews was divided into four different themes.

- 1) Motivators leading to retention.
- 2) Demotivators, i.e. hygiene factors leading to turnover.
- 3) Expectations before and after becoming an Army officer.
- 4) Values, beliefs and narratives.

The main body of questions was structured with four overall themes, which all had between three and six questions. Each theme had an introduction to ensure that the interviewer clarified the focus of the theme, thereby further strengthening rapport, while ensuring validity. The questions used were open-ended, and written within the interpretive phenomenological analysis format. Having completed the introduction and started building rapport, the interview was designed for the interviewee to share the story of, when they started in the Army and lay out their initial career path. These first questions ensured a more close-ended and easier to provide succinct answers to, which help build rapport, and puts the interviewee's mind on to the start of their career as an officer. From here on, the interview moved on to the main body of questions.

The questions regarding motivators and demotivators were derived with inspiration from a study by Yongbeom Hur (2018) named "*Testing Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory of Motivation in the Public Sector: Is it Applicable to Public Managers?*". Hur's (2018) questions for public managers were heavily inspired by Herzberg et al.'s (1959) original study uncovering factors leading to positive and negative attitudes toward one's work. The study by Hur (2018) was used, as it specifically targets public managers, who have been shown to have different job factors, compared to employees of the private sector (Sharma & Jain, 2013; Andersen, Jensen & Kjeldsen, 2020; Kim, Li, Holzer & Zhang, 2019). Instead of drawing upon all of Herzberg et al.'s (1959) 16 job factors, a few were omitted or combined (i.e. interpersonal relationships with superior, subordinates and peers) due to other studies that have shown their limited impact on job satisfaction (Campion & Thayer 1985; Chiang & Jang, 2008; Hahn et al., 2016; Hur, 2018).

For each question, it was possible for the interviewee to answer freely in a positive or negative manner, to uncover the factor-attitude-effects on job motivation. Furthermore, the interviewee was given the freedom to select any events, he wanted to report and was encouraged to give examples of, when they felt positive or negative about their job. Based on the follow-up questions in regards to the interviewees' chosen example or topic, the interviewers uncovered the underlying causes of positive or negative associations.

Through these interviews, the interviewees shared their expectations, values and beliefs - all of which had played a part in their decision to stay or leave the Army. When interviewing currently employed officers, a lot of emphasis was put on creating a "safe space" encouraging the interviewee to contribute with his personal perspectives and experiences. As a result of this, insights were shared, that to some extent contained very personal information and potential career implications. The questions were informative enough to answer, without affecting the interviewees' judgment. An example was: "what are your values?". These types of questions were combined with a laddering technique, in order to get more detailed answers and a deeper understanding of the interviewees' individual views without questioning the participant about the structure (Corbridge, Rugg, Major, Shadbolt & Burton, 1994).

In the interview process, the interviewer raised previously specified questions to pursue lines of inquiry suggested during the course of the interview. Following the interviews, it was necessary to code the interviewee's answers as the responses across the different themes were in some instances more related to prior or later themes, or some of the questions had already been elaborated on. The interviews were all used for the qualitative analysis in section 3.

Once the interviews had been conducted significant statements were extracted and coded according to the theoretical framework. In order to ensure that all relevant statements were extracted and that they were set in the right context, both authors analyzed the interviews multiple times. This process of analyzing also ensured that more ideas, experiences and perceptions were explored. The summarization of all significant statements created a large base of high-quality extracts that in combination with chosen theories served as the basis of the analysis. At this stage, certain themes of expectations and lived experiences between the interviewees were starting to show. These themes were then categorized in relation to job factors and explained psychological contracts. In this stage of the coding process, a certain level of interpretation was inevitable as statements had some level of ambiguity to them. However, by going back and looking at the context of the statements, this ambiguity was mitigated and strict topics were formed. The process of clustering statements into common themes was used to get an in-depth understanding of the interviewees' perceptions and experiences.

### **C2.2.2 Question design: key stakeholders**

Interviews with the aforementioned key stakeholders were conducted in order to obtain background information on the following themes:

- The Defense College's motive to change the recruitment segment.

- Did the Personnel Agency change its recruitment strategy to cater to the new recruitment segment?
- Following the change in recruitment strategy - did the Army, Defense College, or Personnel Agency change anything in its HR strategy to counter turnover?

Before conducting the interviews, an interview guide was designed, based on each of the specific stakeholders. This was done in order to best utilize the specified in-depth knowledge that each individual held, due to their particular job area of responsibility.

Semi-structured interviews were chosen to ensure that particular topics were covered, while still allowing the interviewee to elaborate on unforeseen topics or details not covered by the interview guide.

These interviews were not analyzed, but processed through transcription of quotes of interest in relation to the research question. This approach was chosen as the interviews primarily served to obtain background information, subsequently as verification of secondary data utilized in this thesis. For this reason, these interviews are mainly used in the introduction and discussion section to clarify the motives from the employer's (i.e. the Defense College and Personnel Agency) point of view.

## **C2.3 Qualitative Validity**

Validity measures the chosen method's ability to measure the intended goal (Riencker & Jørgensen, 2017). The term validity covers a wide variety of measures, depending on the structure and scope of the research project. Lincoln & Guba (1985) proposed four general criteria in their approach to trustworthiness i.e. validity in qualitative studies. These are credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. This section considers each of these factors in the qualitative interviews to ensure trustworthiness in the primary data.

### **C2.3.1 Dependability**

Dependability is a measure of how the settings and context within a study have affected the results (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 21). Conducting multiple qualitative semi-structured interviews challenges the possibility of collecting primary data uniformly. To counter this issue, the setting of each interview should be as similar as possible. For this reason, the majority of interviews with JGOs were conducted at the RDMA. The higher-ranking officers, either retired or still working, within the Armed Forces were offered the possibility of being interviewed at their work location to ensure their participation.

Furthermore, a pilot interview was conducted, to ensure the setting and structure of the interview guide. This allowed the authors to improve the question design, the setting, and the scope to improve dependability. The authors found that there was consistency and continuity throughout the gathering of empirical data. This continuity provided an acceptable level of dependability for the data collection. Lastly, the use of positivism as a research paradigm puts the focus on subjective experience, which can be almost impossible to control through settings, and therefore merely becomes part of the subjective experience that is investigated.

### **C2.3.2 Credibility**

The credibility of a research project is linked to the trustworthiness or believability of the project (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). In this case, the credibility is based on the authors' ability to gather truthful empirical data and primary interviews, upon which their analysis is based. To some degree, it relies on the credibility of the authors themselves, as well as their research methods.

In terms of the researcher's credibility, it was emphasized that the interviewees' participation in the research project is within an academic context as a master thesis project at Copenhagen Business School, and not part of a study driven by any entity within the Armed Forces. By emphasizing this context, the authors moved the interviewees' focus away from the fact that one of the authors are still employed by the Army, as this was not relevant to the interview. Furthermore, neither of the authors have any personal conflict of interest, e.g. in attaining results that proved a hypothesis, making them incompetent or biased.

For this thesis, the authors have ensured credibility, through their research design, which takes an explorative approach with non-probability sampling combined with triangulation. Denzin (1978) built on the notion of triangulation of multiple sources of data and developed a framework for triangulation of qualitative research to increase credibility, from which this thesis applies three of them.

Firstly, methodological triangulation was used. The project was based on both primary and secondary data, to verify the truthfulness of the results. The secondary data was retrieved primarily from the Armed Forces and was used to verify the truthfulness of the primary data. The verification of the truthfulness of the answers was used to heighten the credibility.

Secondly, investigator triangulation was used to ensure the credibility of the project. The collected data findings were analyzed by both authors, which countered bias and opinions while also helping to illuminate blind spots.

Thirdly, theory triangulation was used to verify answers and give the project more credibility. The use of two different, but complementary theories, heightened the credibility through a

broader perspective that allows for a better understanding of the context. However, the use of an opposition theory could have furthered the credibility.

This paper did not use source triangulation due to the participant criteria and the anonymity. The authors found that with the use of source triangulation, the project scope would have widened. However, this could have negatively impacted the project, by neglecting the depth of the analysis.

In order to heighten the credibility of this thesis, member-checking was used. The method refers to: *“taking findings back to the field and determining whether the participants recognize them as true or accurate”* (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002, p. 242). The use of member checking is both ethical and credible, in relation to qualitative research, with the use of anonymity and the context of the project leading the authors to conclude that it would strengthen the credibility. Member-checking was done, once interviews had been transcribed and coded. Once the statements had been coded into topics, the statements were sent to the interviewee via email, upon which they would verify their answers.

### **C2.3.3 Confirmability**

Confirmability is a measure of the degree to which other researchers can confirm or substantiate the results of a study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). This thesis focused on motivational and hygiene factors, which with an explorative and phenomenological perspective became a matter of perception (Herzberg et al., 1959). As perception is a construct within the individual, while being influenced by the context and the setting, confirmability suffers. This implication could have been countered by conducting structured interviews instead of semi-structured interviews in a more “clinical environment”. However, it was cast aside as semi-structured interviews allow for the possibility of covering topics that the researcher had not identified beforehand. One of the strategies applied for enhancing confirmability in this thesis is that one of the authors took the role as contrarian concerning the results, to examine the potential for bias or distortion in the analysis procedure following transcription.

### **C2.3.4 Transferability**

Transferability is the extent, to which the results of qualitative research can be generalized and transferred to another context (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). In regards to this thesis, transferability could be linked to how well the findings related Army JGOs could be transferred to other branches of the Armed Forces, such as the Air Force or Navy officers. As with

confirmability, the inductive phenomenological perspective challenges the perception, thereby making the results difficult to generalize.

However, the results carry the potential to be generalized, as the theoretical ground supports the extended notion of complex structures being simplified. As the scope of this thesis is limited to an analysis of the factors contributing to job satisfaction and dissatisfaction among Army Officers, the results could be transferred to other branches under certain assumptions. In such cases, an additional study would be advised and the researcher who wishes to “transfer” the results to a different context is then responsible for making the judgment of how sensible the transfer is. Additionally, a thorough job of describing the research context and implied assumptions is required.

## **C2.4 Ethical Considerations**

In recent years, ethical considerations requires more attention as technology keeps developing (Bell & Bryman, 2007). Furthermore, factors such as: interviewee rights, transparency and bias avoidance are important to consider when conducting research (Anderson, Fontinha & Robson, 2020).

When conducting research that involves the participation of individuals, it is important that the respondents are volunteers, for the research to be truthful. Furthermore, the respondents should have the opportunity to withdraw from the project at any time (Bell & Bryman, 2007). Within this project, the respondents were allowed to participate and choose to do so, out of their own free will. In most cases, the opportunity to participate was presented via digital media communication, such as email or phone calls. To ensure that the respondents felt safe at all times the authors reassured the candidates that they were free to withdraw at any time. Furthermore, all participants were presented with the opportunity to stay anonymous, to heighten the validity and safety of participants.

According to Bell & Brymann (2007), transparency and honesty are core values that should be emphasized, for a research project to successfully counter negative influences. For this project, the scope, purpose and relations have been shared and discussed with all stakeholders throughout the process. This was done to counter any conflicts of interest.

When conducting research projects, bias and misleading information should be mitigated and removed (Bell & Bryman, 2007). For this particular project, the authors have countered bias, through the use of investigator triangulation. This counters bias, simply by having multiple authors analyze the data, thereby countering various bias forms (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Lastly, the authors have created a data management plan (DMP) following the guidelines of

CBS (2017). The DMP<sup>6</sup> ensures responsibility and action planning, which counters ethical implications, such as data handling and GDPR. To further ensure that all data is handled responsibly, the authors have assigned responsibility areas, concerning updating the DMP and ensuring that all GDPR guidelines are followed in accordance with EU regulations.

## **C2.5 Anonymity and Confidentiality**

Anonymity and confidentiality should always be an option available to all respondents when conducting research (Collis & Hussey, 2013). Anonymity refers to the respondent's identity being excluded from the project, by making their identity known, only to the researcher, who will assure the respondent's identity will not be shared. Moreover, confidentiality ensures that the information provided by the participant is only linked to the individual by the researcher, and no one else. Furthermore, the information will have to be displayed in such a way that it can not be traced back to the participant. Failure to comply with these requirements can cause embarrassment or even harm to individuals, if the information can be attributable to a particular individual (Saunders et al., 2009). Therefore, the individuals who participated, as JGOs, have been anonymized to protect their identity. For the stakeholders, an exception was made, as their identity is what made their knowledge and statements credible. However, through member checking, the stakeholders had an opportunity to ensure that their statements were cited correctly.

Due to the nature of the topic discussed in this paper, it was deemed necessary that all participants were offered confidentiality. In return, this increased the chances of receiving more honest answers and greater freedom of expression (Collins and Hussey, 2013). In order to overcome the obstacles of anonymity and confidentiality, each respondent received an alias, i.e. respondent 1,2,3..., but with a distinction between their educational background i.e. "PBD" or "DD". It is also worth mentioning that the numbers provided to the participants did not reflect a natural order or ranking.

## **C3 Qualitative Analysis**

This section covers the qualitative analysis of the motivational, and hygiene factors as well as psychological contracts for the PBD and DD JGOs respectively. The PBD and DD analysis has been divided into respectively section C3.1 and C3.2.

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<sup>6</sup> See appendix D DMP.

## C3.1 PBD Officers

### C3.1.1 Motivational factors

#### C3.1.1.1 Possibility of growth

When investigating this job factor, a recurring topic of career opportunities and expectations kept occurring, hence it became an interesting motivational factor to reflect upon. The interviewees repeatedly returned to and discussed the topic as being related to Herzberg et al.'s (1959) motivational factors of "growth" and "advancement". The link between "growth" and "advancement" was one depicted by Herzberg et al. 1959 as well, as they exemplified the possibility of growth with the need of a particular degree, in order to advance. The PBDs expressed the link as: *"If you have a desire to advance in the Army you must follow a very specific path. You need to have held specific job positions and attend specific courses such as the staff officers course and a master in military studies"* (PBD-1, M1, min. 03:47). The topic revolving around career and the possibility of growth, encapsulates the most present motivational factors of the PBD interviewees who participated. In order to gain a deeper understanding of what motivates the PBD officers, and to clarify whether the Army had been successful in motivating them, their statements are derived and analyzed.

In order for employees to feel satisfied, they have to feel motivated, which can be achieved through the employee's perception of growth (Herzberg et al., 1959). When the interviewees are asked about growth, their answer revolves around the formal education system in the Army which is a prerequisite for advancing to a higher rank. Growth is described by PBD-2 as: *"...the continuing education there is within the system [Army] has some sort of natural progression..."* (PBD-3, M1, min. 03:21). The need for an employee to feel "the possibility of growth" was ranked as the lowest-scoring job factor contributing to motivation by Herzberg et al. (1959), however, it was a very important topic in the interviews with the PBD officers. PBD-2 mentioned that: *"I found it challenging to take time out of my work calendar to attend any courses"* (PBD-2, M1, min. 05:43) thereby expressing a lack of "possibility to grow". This lack could be attributed to the individual officer not prioritizing self-development, or the employer i.e. the Army, not ensuring that this particular JGO had the needed time. Regardless of the underlying reason, the effect on the JGO is a lower level of job satisfaction as motivation suffers. This is further mentioned in relation to the Army's internal education, for which the employer does not prioritize employee growth: *"In my experience, it has been a challenge [to find the needed time]."* (PBD-1, M1, min. 04:13). This lacking *time* within the hours of the job (to develop and grow), is expressed by the PBDs as a factor hindering their "possibility of growth".

Despite various internal education and courses offered by the Army and the Defense College none of the interviewees refer to these educational offerings in a positive way. On the contrary, the interviewees express a lack of time, and thereby opportunity to complete an education that could lead to growth.

According to Herzberg et al. (1959), the lack of growth opportunities will lower the employee's overall job satisfaction, thereby making them less motivated. This lack of motivation could potentially affect their everyday efforts.

### **C3.1.1.2 Advancement**

The topics that were covered, when examining “advancement” occurred in relation to the PBD interviewees’ perception of advancement possibilities in accordance with Herzberg et al.’s (1959) definition. Since the Army has a highly transparent hierarchical structure it is easy for everyone in the organization to track advancement in terms of being promoted to a higher rank. When reflecting on their accomplished advancements and potential future advancements, the PBDs kept returning to the expectations that the Army had for them to follow a specific career path, which seemed to conflict with the PBD’s expectations.

In order for the PBDs to be satisfied, and thereby motivated, they should perceive their opportunities for advancement as realistic and attainable. However, this does not seem to be the case for the interviewed PBDs. PBD-3 expressed: “*Studying for a master in military studies and the ‘Command and General Staff Officers’ [requirements for advancing], while working is not feasible. It is really just a battle not to get a divorce*” (PBD-3, M2, min. 04:12). The link between the formal requirements for advancing and the risk of being divorced points towards a negative perception of the possibilities of “advancement”. The problem that the interviewees express is related to a lack of a variation in alternative career paths in order to advance “*You need to have held some very specific positions and have studied the right education which has not necessarily been in my personal interest*” (PBD-1, M2, min. 03:54). The need to follow a specific career and educational path is problematized by PBD-1 as his job function was atypical in comparison to most JGOs. For this reason, he found the standardized educational path of the Army as being a “waste of time”, due to the lack of relevance. The discrepancy between the PBD officers’ career wishes and the Army’s outlined career path forces some officers to follow an undesirable career path. The perception extends to PBD-2: “*As of now I am not motivated to put in the required time to study for a master in military studies and the ‘Command and General Staff Officers’ while working*” (PBD-2, M2, min. 35:23). The perception is negative to an extent that the above statement was mentioned as a direct response, when asked what might cause a JGO to leave the Army. Throughout the interviews with PBD

officers, the closest to a positive response that was given was PBD-2: *“As of today, I believe that the Army has offered me a lot of interesting possibilities”* (PBD-2, M2, min. 03:37). A difference in “advancement” was expressed *priori* and *post-attaining* the rank of captain, which can be attributed a variety of options. The PBDs expressed that the opportunity for advancement up to and including the rank of captain was attainable and manageable, despite disagreeing with the path. However, the opportunities for advancement from the rank of captain to major (and higher) were expressed as difficult and demotivating, due to the perceived strict requirements in past held military positions and formal education.

In sum, the PBDs expressed negative attitudes towards the job factor of “advancement” in the Army. This lack of advancement opportunities was attributed to the topic of a standardized career path which was negatively expressed by PBDs. The negative attitude was associated with the Army’s narrow definition of advancement, which did not take the individual PBD’s desires and competencies into consideration. According to Herzberg et al. (1959), a perceived lack of advancement opportunities can result in a lack of motivation, leading to less effort in day-to-day activities.

### **C3.1.1.3 Responsibility**

The factor of “responsibility” in relation to job satisfaction and motivation is linked by Herzberg et al. (1959) to one’s ability to influence the work. For a JGO, this would be their autonomy to choose, how to conduct tasks, rather than what tasks to conduct, in order to become self-directed (Gagné & Deci, 2005). As most JGOs typically hold positions as, e.g. platoon or company commanders, there is an innate personnel responsibility, which is why the topic of responsibility came naturally, when interviewing the PBD officers. From day one in their first job as a newly commissioned first lieutenant, responsibility was placed on the interviewees according to PBD-1: *“Yes, most definitely. Actually, I believe that throughout my time as a first lieutenant, I have had a lot of responsibility”* (PBD-1, M3, min. 10.07). The interviewee argues that he, in certain situations feels a high degree of responsibility stemming from the fact that he commanded a large number of subordinate soldiers and was held accountable: *“On a day-to-day basis, you are responsible for a lot of decision that directly affects your soldiers”* (PBD-1, M3, min. 11.45). Despite being mainly positive, the interviewees as a whole are not unambiguously positive, when expressing their perceptions and personal experiences. PBD-3 expresses: *“In some areas, the Army is very reluctant to delegate decision-making competencies in comparison to the level of responsibility, they entrust you with”* (PBD-3, M3, min. 05:17). This negative attitude towards the Army’s level of delegation of decision-making competencies to JGO is directly linked to certain areas of responsibility: *“in particular, when it comes to administrative tasks, I am scrutinized and forced to save every penny - even though*

*I am just a poor company commander*" (PBD-3, M3, min. 05:23). PBD-3, who refers to his position as a company commander, expressed a negative perception of responsibility, but according to Herzberg et al. (1959), his example is better linked with the hygiene factor of "company policies and administration". This is an example of the interviewees needing to express their frustrations related to a factor outside the scope of the current question. If the topic of, which they are being asked, is not explicitly linked to their main frustration, the interviewees attempt to link the question to another of their frustrations. This could be because the interviewees perceive the interview as an opportunity to air their frustrations.

Overall, the perception of job responsibility varies for the PBDs. According to Herzberg et al. (1959), diminished responsibility is linked to a loss in job satisfaction, which the interviewees express as a frustrating element in their daily work in these cases. Based on the statements and covered topics by the PBDs, it is found that they are overall satisfied with the level of responsibility, they have experienced as JGOs. In theory, this should keep them motivated in their jobs, thereby supporting their retention rate in the Army.

#### **C3.1.1.4 Recognition**

As a motivational job factor "recognition" is related to external recognition, which can be provided by subordinates, supervisors and other peers. In the Army, recognition is often related to the successful completion of a task or job: "*At the end of an international deployment, I feel that I receive recognition*" (PBD-3, M4, min. 08:17). Notice how it is "*at the end*" that is phrased, rather than "during", i.e. in the work process. This particular point is further emphasized by the interviewee: "*I believe that all of us in the Army are not particularly good at acknowledging progress. We are very results-oriented:*" (PBD-3, M4, min. 08:38). Recognition solely in relation to task completion or performance-based results is not by its very nature negative or bad. However, it leads to a focus on the result, rather than the process itself. This could in turn lead the JGOs not to feel a sense of achievement if their effort is not recognized. Hence leading to a negative association with the organization and lowered motivation.

Furthermore, an overly exerted appraisal and recognition culture in organizations might lead individuals to disregard the recognition they receive, as it becomes a regularly predictable occurring happening. This apparent risk does however not seem to be an issue in the Army as an interviewee elaborates: "*It is not like you are constantly getting a pat on the back*" (PBD-2, M4, min. 10:51). When PBD-2 elaborates on how recognition could be shown, he responds: "*...by showing a general interest in how I conduct my tasks. Through this, I would feel recognized by my superior as he is showing an interest in my tasks ... which is not the case*"

(PBD-2, M4, min. 11:42). A parallel is drawn by PBD-1 as well, between his supervisor and the degree of recognition, he receives: *"...it varies a lot depending on who is your boss"* (PBD-1, M4, min. 09:13). Thus, creating a link between "M1 Recognition" and "H4 Supervisor conditions". Consequently, the potential link could be a sign of interdependence between the two factors. In that case, if one factor is low, the other would be low as well, or conversely if one is high, the other would be high.

Overall, the recognition perceived by the PBDs during the course of the interviews does not appear to have a particularly negative or positive impact on their job satisfaction and retention. Recognition, or perhaps a lack of recognition, seems to be more of an accepted and expected part of the feedback culture in the Army.

### **C3.1.1.5 Work itself**

Trying to investigate the perceived satisfaction in relation to the factor "work itself" is particularly difficult, as it relates to the specific job function that each JGO had during his career. Since "work itself" varies over time and differs across the Army regiments, the interviewees' perception primarily covers their memorable tasks.

Leading soldiers is one of the job tasks which the PBDs find meaningful. PBD-2 expresses: *"I feel that it is a very important job to develop future leaders ... it is a large responsibility because if I succeed, it will be of great importance [to the Army]"* (PBD-2, M5, min. 12:12). The feelings towards "work itself" is consistent throughout the interviews with PBD's, both currently and formerly employed. In general, the PBD officers derive job satisfaction, when preoccupied with job tasks relevant to what they deem as their and the Army's core tasks. A current company commander is very straightforward, when responding to, whether he finds his work meaningful: *"I enjoy doing what I do"* (PBD-3, M5, min. 10:00). However, he adds: *"I feel like things are starting to make less sense to me. There is a lot of stuff that I as a company commander am forced to spend my time on that has nothing to do with my core task"* (PBD-3, M5, min. 10:10).

Interviewee PBD-1 is likewise divided in this regard as he finds his primary job meaningful, but his job satisfaction is challenged, when faced with meaningless tasks: *"I would agree that my job is normally meaningful, but there are also times, where I think to myself that, this does not make any damn sense"* (PBD-1, M5, min. 15:18).

More specifically, COVID-19 related tasks were mentioned as not being meaningful tasks to PBD-3: *"It has received a lot of attention in the Army that our company, amongst others, has helped operating a COVID-19 call center."* (PBD-3, M5, min. 10:20). His statement is related

to the lack of a connection between soldiering skills and the tasks of assisting the Danish society with COVID-19 call and vaccination centers.

The overall assessment of the factor work itself, amongst the interviewees is that it constitutes a positively contributing factor for motivation, when officers are undertaking work assignments associated with the Army's core task. The expressed cause of motivation is training soldiers for international operations. On the contrary, negative attitudes and dissatisfaction are expressed in relation to the performance of random ad-hoc job tasks. The dissatisfaction is explicitly expressed in relation to tasks that lie outside the general scope or understanding of what it constitutes being a soldier and an Army officer, e.g. vaccinating civilians and border patrol. This link will be explored further in the psychological contract section, as it revealed strong emotions with the interviewees.

### **C3.1.2 Hygiene factors**

#### **C3.1.2.1 Work conditions**

Herzberg et al. (1959) defined "work conditions" as the factors being either adequate or inadequate, in relation to the general tools and equipment that are needed to conduct the job satisfactorily. For JGOs in the Army, working conditions require not just "a set of tools", but an unusually large amount of equipment (e.g. ammunition, vehicles, spare parts, fuel, weapons, etc.) to train, maintain competencies and deploy soldiers abroad. Unfortunately, many of these working conditions are not perceived to be satisfactorily met: *"Resources are very sparse. Sometimes you think to yourself: can it really be true that we have these limitations in our training? Ultimately it could entail consequences for the lives of our soldiers"* (PBD-3, H1, min. 12:03). This is a rather critical statement from PBD-3, but his perception is backed by PBD-1, who says: *"It is good to train soldiers to solve tasks while lacking equipment ... but once they have learned to overcome problems with insufficient resources, we should not pressure them further on that parameter"* (PBD-1, H1, min. 17:32). The negative attitude towards the factor of working conditions, is linked to the lack of resources, but mainly equipment, according to PBD-3: *"It is a logistical problem, we lack everything from uniforms to all classes of logistics [ammo, fuel, vehicles]. Everything is lacking"* (PBD-3, H1, min. 13:43). Furthermore, PBD-1 adds a lack of time and colleagues to the constraints: *"There are more tasks to be solved, than there is time, and there are fewer resources than there are tasks..."*, to which he continues: *"It has been extremely difficult getting what is needed"* (PBD-1, H1, min. 17:02).

The negative attitude towards the working conditions was expressed by all PBDs. However, one interviewee nuanced the issue by explaining that the lack of working conditions was partly job dependent: *"It is up and down... Right now, I am not missing anything, in my current job. I*

*get what I need... However, in the operational units, it is significantly more difficult to get what you and your soldiers need*" (PBD-2, H1, min. 13:09). The statement is pointing out the experienced differences the PBDs express. It links their experiences of lacking resources to particular job functions. However, PBD-2 still points at ammunition for being in short supply, when asked, what a major critical need is: *"...we lack ammunition"* (PBD-2, H1, min. 13:18), which indicates that the lack of resources is generally experienced.

The consensus is that the working conditions in the Army are inadequate, leading to dissatisfaction, and potentially a lowered motivation. The expressed causes of dissatisfaction vary between a lack of equipment, time and colleagues.

### **C3.1.2.2 Co-worker relations**

The interpersonal relations, which in this thesis have been limited to "co-worker relations", is an investigation of whether these affect the individual JGO positively or negatively in their job attitude. Co-worker relations are influenced in a vast number of ways, and the PBDs express multiples reasons for their associations. PBD-3 expressed an exceptionally positive attitude towards co-worker relations: *"They are strong. It is one of the things that means a lot to me"* (PBD-3, H2, min. 15:10), which is further strengthened by PBD-2: *"I have always had good co-worker relations. I have felt a strong esprit de corps, because of what we have been through"* (PBD-2, H2, min. 15:06). Even PBD-1, who is no longer employed in the Army, expressed strong positive associations in relation to his perception of co-worker relations: *"They are extremely strong, because of the hard and demanding experiences that we have lived through and shared"* (PBD-1, H2, min. 18:52). The positive perception of co-worker relations is described by all the interviewed PBDs as a feeling of pride and loyalty because of hardship endured. The Army is well known for creating mentally and physically demanding situations i.e. team building activities to strengthen interpersonal bonds.

It is expressed by the PBDs that they find "co-worker relations" to be positive. These associations are linked to their positive experiences during training and exercises despite challenging circumstances.

### **C3.1.2.3 Company rules and policies**

"Company policies and rules" cover two parts: adequacy or inadequacy of management and the potential benefits or harmfulness of administrative policies (Herzberg et al., 1959). In relation to the Army and the PBDs, the main topics revolved around the inadequacy of management. Depictions by PBD-2 relate to bureaucracy: *"I have been stopped by top management, because of some minor bureaucratic issues. Situations like this entail that*

*employees stop being innovative and creative*" (PBD-2, H3, min. 16:27). A more concrete example by PBD-2 is: *"Traveling abroad for multinational exercises. They are a pain to plan, but the soldiers like them a lot"* (PBD-2, H3, min. 17:01). The given example is an unfortunate situation, in which PBD-2 expresses a desire from the soldiers to train abroad, but "red-tape" constraints makes him unwilling to plan such activities. The inadequacy is further linked to the policies and rules that hinder the job efficiency of an officer with personnel responsibility, such as outdated time-management systems: *"In some areas, it would be relatively simple to implement procedures and policies from the private sector, e.g. approving employee time records. I still have to sign every single employee's time record every month on a fucking piece of paper"* (PBD-3, H3, min. 14:14). Whereas annoying systems, rules and procedures are primarily brought to the attention of currently employed officers, formerly employed focus more on their dissatisfaction towards human resources management in general. PBD-1 stated: *"I think that the HR policies are hopeless because it makes things harder than necessary"* (PBD-1, H3, min. 20:05), which unfortunately is partly related to the former frustrations, seen with advancement and growth. PBD-1 explained further: *"Despite that, the Army needs someone, who is capable of analytical thinking and with a knowledge of international politics, they will not consider hiring someone, who is not [at least] of the rank of major"* (PBD-1, H3, min. 21:06). PBD-1 expresses negative associations towards the bureaucracy that categorizes job functions to a certain rank, instead of evaluating the required competencies needed for the job. He further explains: *"The Army is making it difficult for itself to retain talented people, since it insists on officers' need to be alike, even though the jobs are different. It just does not make any sense"* (PBD-1, H3, min. 20:18). Most noticeable is the notion that bureaucracy affects the Army's ability to retain personnel negatively.

Overall, the interviewees expressed a unanimous negative attitude towards the job factor "company rules and policies", which in line with Herzberg et. al (1959) is the primary hygiene factor contributing to dissatisfaction in the workplace. As causes of the negative associations, the PBDs expressed rules and regulations in relation to administrative tasks, planning tasks (such as exercises) and rigid job descriptions.

#### **C3.1.2.4 Supervisor conditions**

Herzberg et al. (1959) defined "supervisor conditions" as the employee's perception of their supervisor as being either competent or incompetent. The expressions of the PBDs were that of mixed emotions, which has been stated earlier in the context of giving recognition: *"I have had some good supervisors and some that have been very absent, so it really depends on your supervisor"* (PBD-1, H4 min. 14:21). The variation that PBDs express as JGOs is significant enough for them to emphasize the potential negative effect: *"It was really downhill..."*

he [the company commander] nearly lost half of his employees. In the end, I was also burned out and close to quitting my job.” (PBD-2, H4, min. 18:37). PBD-2 states that the bad supervisor is the cause of potentially quitting, expressing a strong link between supervisor conditions and retention in the case of PBD-2. However, the potential dissatisfaction of incompetent supervisors also implies the fact that competent supervisors have beneficial effects: “I really had a good relation with the guy [supervisor] that I started with. There was a really positive vibe and work satisfaction” (PBD-2, H4, min. 18:30). The expressed perception of competent supervisors being positive contributors to job satisfaction is a focal point, when retaining personnel. The view is consistent throughout the analysis of the PBDs’ interviews: “I have had some really good supervisors and leaders” (PBD-3, H4, min. 16:21.) and “I have experienced really great leadership in the Army” (PBD-1, H4, min. 23:00). When expressing the cause of these good experiences PBD-1 elaborated: “In situations when you are given a complex task and you afterward sit down, discuss the problem, and are coached through possible solutions. Very process-oriented elements in how we make decisions and give feedback” (PBD-1, H4, min. 22:32). The link between clear processes in task assigning, and continued guidance through task solving are attributes of positive association towards his supervisor. The Opposite is the lack of guidance, which is negatively attributed: “...guidance can be very unclear as people do not necessarily have the competencies. Then you do not receive the feedback that you need” (PBD-1, H4, min. 22:53). Negative perceptions of supervisor competencies are identified by both current and former PBD officers, as stemming from the organizational framework, rather than the specific supervisor being negligent or lacking competencies. E.g. an example expressing this issue is “...the organizational setting entailed that my superiors have been under a cross-pressure, which has not been optimal” (PBD-1, H4, min. 23:11). This perception is shared and expressed as having a negative influence, “The higher you advance in the Army...there is a career and there is the right thing to do. Sometimes these two things conflict and I think that is the worst part of our system in the Army” (PBD-3, H4, min. 16:39).

The sum of the PBDs’ attitudes is that of varied negative and positive associations. Positive associations are created, when the supervisor is perceived as competent and ensures guidance and feedback. Negative associations are formed when the supervisor is incompetent and unable to provide feedback and guidance.

The expressed perception can be summed as many senior-level officers are competent, generally speaking, with the ability to influence employees both positively and negatively. However, at some point, they are “caught in the system”, which hinders their abilities to exercise competent and sufficient management skills. This is interpreted as a generally

negative attitude towards organizational administrative policies instead of supervisor conditions.

### **C3.1.2.5 Salary and benefits**

Salary and benefits are for the purpose of this thesis, an extension of Herzberg et al.'s (1959) job factor of salary. This change in definition is made, as the original job factor only captures compensation measures, why benefits encapsulate other contractual benefits of employment such as e.g. parental leave, flex time, and hybrid work related to relevant for competitive terms of employment in 2023.

The PBDs' expressed their opinions on the topic of compensation consistently, with the opinion being that compensation is relatively low compared to their responsibility: "*The salary is not aligned with the job responsibility*" (PBD-3, H5, min. 17:47). The general consensus was that the salary is significantly lower than that of similar leadership positions in the private sector, "*you should be cautioned about comparing the salary to what a manager with similar responsibility brings home in the private sector*" (PBD-3, H5, min. 17:26). Subsequently, this led the PBDs to focus on the positive elements of their contractual relations, such as: "*I believe our maternity and parental leave is quite good*" (PBD-2, H5, min. 20:00). The potential negative effects of feeling underpaid are not negative enough to impact motivation on a daily basis: "*On an everyday basis, I don't give my salary a lot of thought as my bills are paid, and I have a lot of other benefits in my job*" (PBD-3, H5, min. 18:06). The feeling of being compensated directly in relation to overtime work appears to have a positive effect: "*If I work extra hours I can take time off on another day, or I receive overtime pay - I think that is pretty good.*" (PBD-1, H5, min. 24:34).

When investigating contractual differences, PBD-3 was one of the last JGOs to receive a CCS express positive associations towards it: "*I am happy to be one of the last officers, who got on the CCS contract, due to the pension program. When I compare to the FTC contract, I find myself to be happy with the benefits*" (PBD-3, H5, min. 17:09). The positive association is built upon the difference in the contractual form affect on the pension plan. Interestingly, PBD-2, who was not presented with the CCS, expressed positive associations: "*Even though there is a difference between the CCS and FTC contract types, I guess that I am pragmatic. Somebody has to be the first without the CCS, which in this case was me, but in an X number of years nobody with a CSS is left*" (PBD-2, H5, min. 20:33). PBD-2 explains a difference in compensation but does not express or convey negative associations towards this difference.

According to Herzberg et al. (1959), hygiene factors either contribute to satisfaction or cause dissatisfaction if they are not met. The PBDs appear to have experienced a status quo in

relation to contractual relationships with positive and negative factors potentially canceling each other out, which enables them to continue working without feeling motivated or demotivated by this job factor. The causes of positive associations are spare time, maternity/paternity leave, and the fairness of compensation through hourly-based pay. Negative associations are expressed in relation to the salary as a reflection of responsibility and the pay gap between the Army and civil corporations.

### **C3.1.3 Psychological contract**

#### **C3.1.3.1 Contract creation**

Once the PBDs were commissioned from the RDMA, they started in their first position as JGOs. However, their psychological contracts had already been entered prior to starting their new job. These contracts were formed and shaped by various parties: *“My perception of what an Army officer job entailed was formed by my time as a conscript. I thought it was pretty cool to be the one in charge of the parades and such.”* (PBD-1, P1, min. 29:49). Former experience or encounters with the military was a common topic when interviewing the PBDs, which could be attributed to the start of a *normative contract*, which *“I loved every moment of being at an Army base* (PBD-2, P1, min. 22:32). PBD-2 further explain: *“The officers were the ones, who seemed to have everything under control. Even themselves”* (PBD-2, P1, min. 22:32). These normative contracts shape the form and expected reciprocity within the psychological contracts of the PBDs an example is: *“Did not expect to be able to leave “office” at 15:30. I was committed to work, no matter how much time it would take...”* (PBD-1, P1, min. 31:29). The implied expectation which PBD-1 expresses, it that he is to work more than the legally contractual 37 hours. This expectation could be a sign of his psychological contract with the Army. Furthermore, it could be interpreted to be telling a story that the job of a JGO is to put in the required work hours, rather than prioritize one's personal life.

PBD-3 expressed his understanding of the expectations to him: *“You must be able to adhere to the demands that you require of others. You have to take charge and make decisions even though it is tough. And you must be able to work under deficient working conditions”* (PBD-3, P1, min. 22:17). Interestingly, PBD-3 knowingly undertakes a job with inadequate resources. According to Herzberg et al. (1959), a negative association with “work condition” should cause dissatisfaction that could have a detrimental effect. However, in the case of PBD-3, it is expressed that his psychological contract includes these conditions, thereby mitigating the effect.

The neutral perception of contractual relations, such as salary, could further be explained, as it was part of both the legal and the psychological contract into which the PBDs entered.

Therefore, the salary and contractual relations are not perceived as discrepancies, nor violations, since they have been clearly communicated by the organization. The psychological contracts are however perceived by the PBDs to contain an agreement of exchange, that the Army would ensure a possibility of growth and development: *"I believe that it was the Army's job to prepare me with the necessary competencies, but also mentally in order to embrace the responsibility of leading soldiers"* (PBD-3, P1, min. 22:50). The Army's ability to keep its side of the psychological contract might play a larger role in the explanation of turnover rates, than what the theoretical ground is.

### **C3.1.3.2 Discrepancies and violations**

The PBDs expressed varied experiences, when graduating from the RDMA and starting as junior officers, for most parts, in either conscription or professional Army units. Therefore, their expressions were almost contradictory. When asked if his expectations were met, PBD-1 said: *"No, not really"* (PBD-1, P2, min. 33:03). He continued to elaborate on why: *"... it was disappointing in the way that I assumed that I would be surrounded by like-minded individuals"* (PBD-1, P2, min. 33:34). The contradiction between PBD-1 and PBD-2 is quite clear: *"I loved every moment of being an officer. My expectations and references were all met"* (PBD-2, P2, min. 27:42), which is the statement of a currently Army employed PBD. Whether the individual perceives discrepancies as violations, or hardly even notices them, should be influenced based on the strength of the relationship. Since the strength of the relationship is based on the experience of former discrepancies and violations, a newly commissioned officer, should not have a large history of these with the Army, coming out of the RDMA. However, there is a time aspect, so that experience must accumulate for the individual to categorize potential discrepancies. It was mentioned in the following: *"When you are done with the RDMA then you are forced to let go of the existence without responsibilities ...from day one you are responsible for someone else and feel very alone. You are outside of your comfort zone and either you grow or die slowly."* (PBD-3, P2, min. 25:48). The duality of either experiencing growth or "death" (i.e. an immense feeling of dissatisfaction) is linked by the interviewee to the acceptance of the job requirements, expectation and organizational settings.

An explanation for this duality, can potentially be explained by the formerly mentioned normative contracts. The PBDs are presented with a choice of entering the normative contracts, along with their psychological contracts or disregarding them. In the case where individuals "accept" the terms within the organization, they experience growth and development and the ones, who "refuse" the terms, end up "dying" and leaving the Army.

Former PBD-1's description of his first job as a JGO follows: *"It was very disappointing. A lot of it had to do with that I expected to be part of a unit, where everyone was on the same page. I expected that I would join a community of like-minded people, who all agreed that we were first of all soldiers"* (PBD-1, P2, min. 35:05). The expression "like-minded" and the interviewee's lack of cohesion with his colleagues could be a sign of lacking a normative contract. The discrepancies that the individual would have felt between oneself and the unit could have made for situations in which the individual would have perceived discrepancies as violations.

Looking into the discrepancies that PBDs express in relation to their psychological contract, the two job factors of "possibility of growth" and advancement once again surface. When confronted with the question *"what could make you leave the Army?"*, the responses were unique, yet related to their imposed career plan: *"The master in military studies and the 'Command and General Staff Officers' course while working full time is an issue. Right now, I am not motivated to give up so much of my free time for studying"* (PBD-2, P2, min. 35:30).

The concern related to spare time having to be spent, in order to grow and advance, constitutes a reason for PBD-2. This explanation is further strengthened by: *"If I feel that I reach a stop where I can not see myself growing, it means that I would have to leave, because of a status quo or standstill, that would kill me"* (PBD-3, P2, min. 32:51). Interestingly, this explanation is not just one covered by currently employed PBDs, but is expressed by former PBDs as well: *"It felt very natural for me to leave the Army ... even though it was opportune at that point"* (PBD-1, P2, min. 44:12). The statement by PBD-1 expresses a lack of continued opportunities for development and interesting tasks, which is related to the statement of coming to a *stop* by PBD-3.

In sum, the PBDs express causes for quitting or associations of quitting with a lack of advancement opportunities, due to fixed requirements, or a lack of purpose in their daily tasks.

## **C3.2 DD Officers**

### **C3.2.1 Motivational factors**

#### **C3.2.1.1 Possibility of growth**

The DDs expressed lacking possibilities for growth: *"I think that the Army does a poor job of continuously developing its JGOs"* (DD-2, M1, 04:29). The negative associations were caused by a lack of personal development, which could have happened through a plan and/or mentoring. DD-3 elaborates on the lack of a development plan: *"It was not like that from the day that we were commissioned first lieutenants a development plan was put forward."* (DD-

3, M1, min. 04:52). As expressed by DD-2, the lack of a formal process, which would help the DDs to continue their growth and learning, was not in place. Interestingly, DD-2, who felt there was a poor continued development, actually experienced having a planned process for his development: *“In my latest position, a career plan was presented to me. At no point was I involved in the making of it, it was just produced and shown to me. It was quite odd, as they did not even know me”* (DD-2, M1, min. 05:02). Unfortunately, DD-2’s associations towards his career plan are negative due to lack of involvement.

Not all associations are negative, as DD-3 had one positive experience: *“At one point we were picked up and sent back to the RDMA to get supplementary education, but there was nothing structured”* (DD-3, M1, min. 05:17). The expression of being “picked up”, implies that DD-3 felt forgotten or neglected before receiving a supplementary course from the RDMA. However, the positive association of being presented with extra courses is overshadowed by the negative associations towards the lack of a formal growth and personal development plan. When investigating DD-1’s perception of the possibilities for growth, he expressed: *“The Army offers selected internal courses and education for its officers.”* (DD-1, M1, min. 05:30). DD-1 associated the possibility of growth with internal courses in the Army, which are requirements for formal advancement. It also implies that DD-1 finds that personal growth has to be in line with how the Army wants him to develop, rather than his own desires. Furthermore, this could explain, why DD-2 experienced that the Army made a development plan without consulting him.

Overall, the DDs expressed negative attitudes towards the Army’s ability to provide them with possibilities for personal growth. These negative associations are linked to a lack of a personal development plan that would ensure personal progression. Furthermore, if a plan was made, the interviewees felt a lack of involvement in the process, which they interpreted negatively.

### **C3.2.1.2 Advancement**

As portrayed earlier and in accordance with Herzberg et al. (1959), “advancement” is linked to changes in title or position. This is, however, strongly connected to the definition of “possibility of growth” due to the Army’s requirement for formal degrees from the internal courses. This link, as seen with the PBDs, is apparent in the Army. The Army’s hierarchical structure induces a very visible but also to some extent rigid path concerning advancement.

When interviewing the DDs on these motivational factors, the same topic of a rigid career path kept reappearing: *“From my point of view, the Army only offers one career path, which is quite restrictive”* (DD-1, M2, min. 04:04), expressing negative associations towards potential advancement. There were continued negative associations of how the rigid structure impacted

his perception of possibilities: *“It is a strict career path. Compared to the Navy and Air Force, it seems a lot more difficult to advance in rank in the Army”* (DD-1, M2, min. 05:05). This negative attitude seems to be linked to the lack of varied opportunities and career paths, i.e. implying that the Army is making it harder than necessary, compared to the Air Force and Navy. This subjective perception by DD-1 is further expressed: *“There is a portion of luck involved, as you have to complete the right courses timely”* (DD-1, M2, min. 04:31) with the new insights that “luck” also is a factor with regard to personal growth and advancement. The above statements stem from a currently employed DD, but this seems to be the case for all the interviewed DD officers. A former employed officer, DD-3, expressed his dissatisfaction in terms of an unsatisfactory timely process to advance to captain: *“The career path [to become a captain] takes a long time. Longer than what I am ready to wait for”* (DD-3, M1, min. 04:28). The general perception amongst the DDs is that the path to advancement is long and specific, but transparent: *“A very loose plan for my career was made. It did not contain the rank of captain, but I could see the steps that I would need to take to get there”* (DD-2, M1, min. 03:13). The Army’s requirement of adhering to specific internal courses is negatively perceived by the DDs.

Overall, the DDs expressed negative attitudes towards the Army’s opportunities for advancement. The negative associations were linked to a rigid career path, which is perceived to cause a lack of variety while lacking the consideration of which type of career and advancement the individual wished to pursue.

### **C3.2.1.3 Responsibility**

The DDs expressed varied experiences and attitudes towards the job factor of “responsibility”. Since the job itself is considered a management position, the link between satisfaction, or lack thereof, was linked as to whether the DDs felt that they were able to assert influence or not: *“When you are done at the RDMA, you are given the responsibility for 30 soldiers. If you have to lead them in war, it can have serious consequences”* (DD-1, M3, min. 06:18). DD-1 derives satisfaction from having the responsibility of being in charge of his subordinate soldiers. However, this experience is not completely shared: *“Most of the time, decisions were made at the very top. If I tried to question or fight a decision it did not really matter, even if my superior agreed with me”* (DD-2, M3, min. 05:59). The experience that decisions were made on a higher level and simply trickled down, rather than that of being responsible, is more likely to be a demonstration of a subjective understanding of the question and experience, rather than that of objectified measures of responsibility. The understanding is luckily less important in this case, whereas the individual DD’s attitude towards the factor in accordance with their understanding is what matters. Therefore, it can be said that the attitudes varied, but the

majority, were positive and satisfied, with the level of responsibility, they had: *"I felt as though I was given a lot of responsibility. It is very different than many other places, as I was given 100% responsibility for the soldiers' training..."* (DD-3, M3, min. 06:04).

Amongst the DDs, there existed a varied perception of job responsibility making it difficult to conclude, whether this would have had a motivating effect or not on the DDs, whilst they were working as JGOs. The causes expressed for positive association were that of responsibility for subordinates. The expressed causes of negative associations were linked to the lack of effect, when making decisions, also called decision power.

#### **C3.2.1.4 Recognition**

By Herzberg et al.'s (1959) definition, "recognition" could come from anyone, and not just one's daily supervisor. However, the perception by the DDs (and PBDs) is that the amount of recognition received is often dependent on their supervisor. According to DD-2, recognition from subordinates is of less importance: *"Recognition was given [from subordinates], but it is not really about what my subordinates think. This is less relevant but of course, they are entitled to their opinion"* (DD-2, M4, min. 09:48), expressing that their opinions weigh less than one's peers or superiors. *"...but peers and superiors, if they notice you, that would be positive"* (DD-2, M4, min. 09:55).

Two-thirds of the interviewed DDs are positive in relation to them receiving recognition in their daily jobs as JGOs: *"Personally, I feel that I receive recognition in my job."* (DD-1, M4, min. 08:38). This perceived feeling of recognition is expressed as satisfactory, which in turn should keep the DDs motivated according to Herzberg et al. (1959). However, there is a varied understanding of what recognition entails and should entail: *"I recall that my basic feeling was that I lacked recognition and it arose from a lack of focus on the development of employees in the Army and a lack of trust in me as a leader. If I was given more freedom of action, I would have perceived this as a sign of recognition."* (DD-2, M4, 08:27). This quotation captures a deeper understanding and expression of recognition than the more generic term of appraisal, i.e. being told to have done a good job by one's boss. The link between "recognition" and "possibility of growth" made by the interviewee is beyond what is captured in the original theory. Nonetheless, it shows that DD-2 is not only dissatisfied with the recognition, he receives, but requested more opportunities to prove himself. Furthermore, he objected to recognition only being given based on results. He would rather that the work effort was recognized: *"ideally he [the supervisor] should recognize all the contributions and efforts that are done continuously. My main appeal would be that of noticing work effort and not only tangible results"* (DD-2, M6, min. 10:12). Recognition as being primarily result-based, could

potentially be an outcome of the FOKUS<sup>7</sup> HR system, placing “task completion” as the most important factor. The variety of experience of recognition is shown in DD-3’s statement: *“I think that I, as an individual, received recognition, whether it was in the form of distinction awards, a bonus or merely the fact that my contributions were noticed”* (DD-3, M4, min. 10:04). This is an example of how DD-3 experienced recognition positively through the use of distinction rewards, spot bonuses and praise from one’s supervisor. However, DD-3 expresses an understanding of the Army as a whole of neglecting recognition: *“It is not something that I have generally experienced the Army as being good at [giving recognition]”* (DD-3, M4, min. 10:26). Whether the Army sufficiently recognizes its employees in order to motivate them cannot be concluded.

Overall, the majority of DDs that were interviewed expressed positive associations towards recognition, due to their closest supervisor appraising them. Opposite, causes for negative associations were expressed when supervisors focused merely on results upon completion, rather than the invested effort and work process.

### **C3.2.1.5 Work itself**

Investigating the underlying causes of a positive or negative attitude towards the “work itself” is in accordance with Herzberg et al. (1959) an investigation of the individual perception of the job and its tasks as being routine, varied, stultifying, creative, complex or easy. These experiences are then linked to a positive or negative attitude towards the job, to identify whether the job itself is found to be motivating or not.

The DDs generally expressed positive associations with the work itself, especially in relation to the training and development of soldiers: *“It has been meaningful to train conscripts, educate young soldiers and work with experienced soldiers because ultimately I can find myself in war with them [by my side]”* (DD-1, M5, min. 10:04). The positive associations related to training for war which in peacetime is one of the JGOs’ primary areas of responsibility. The link between “work itself” and the Army’s function in society and serving Denmark’s interests was a recurring topic: *“I found it to be meaningful, knowing that I could make a difference for my country, in time of war and training people for that scenario, that gave purpose”* (DD-2, M5, min. 11:21), continued by DD-3: *“Being deployed. Doing something for your country. It is more than just a job, it is an identity”* (DD-3, M5, min. 08:54).

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<sup>7</sup> Forsvarets kompetenceudviklings- og bedømmelsessystem (FOKUS) is a HR tool developed in 2008 to combine performance management and employee development.

However, not all societal-supporting tasks were found motivational: *“...but before I quit the Army, I lost my motivation for several reasons. One of them was a lack of connection between the military training we did and the tasks we were given e.g. COVID-19”* (DD-2, M5, min. 11:35). COVID-19 related tasks were viewed negatively in relation to the work itself by DD-2. The DDs find a lack of purpose with civilian supportive tasks that fall outside the scope of what the DDs expect the Army to solve. It is further explained by DD-1: *“I have avoided many of these civil-support tasks such as guarding a Jewish synagogue, COVID-19 testing and vaccinating people. However, I have seen, how it impacts my colleagues, who are commanded to do these tasks. It takes a lot of resources and they are not given anything in return”* (DD-1, M5, min. 09:29). Once again, societal tasks, which are nationally solved, are expressed with negative associations towards the job as opposed to international tasks, which carry positive associations.

### **C3.2.2 Hygiene Factors**

#### **C3.2.2.1 Work conditions**

As mentioned earlier, soldiers' job requires a large amount of military equipment, which habitually challenges working conditions in the Army. All of the DDs expressed how a lack of resources made work processes difficult. The topic of lacking resources is generally expressed negatively by the DDs: *“I have been in positions, where there has been a clear lack of resources both in terms of being understaffed but also financial”* (DD-1, H1, min. 10:56). The negative association that DD-1 is expressing in relation to the working conditions is generally revolving around the economic pressure and lack of resources for basic training. Considering that the DDs expressed a positive attitude towards “work itself” (M5), when it revolved around the training of soldiers, it appears intuitive that the lack of basic resources to conduct this task is perceived negatively.

Relevant to the topic of turnover and retention, DD-3 expressed a lack of JGO colleagues and described the consequences: *“As a platoon commander, I experienced an organization, with a high large turnover causing people including myself to be ordered into new positions very frequently. This affected me negatively, as I never had sufficient time to build any relations with anyone”* (DD-3, H1, min. 13:13). The lack of fellow officers, i.e. human resources, had a direct negative effect on DD-3's perceptions of working conditions, but also on co-worker relations.

DD-2 describes the physical work conditions in the Army as being poor and insufficiently maintained, however, it does not affect his job satisfaction: *“...old, worn-down facilities with bad lighting. Stuff like that... I just think that you are so deeply embedded in a culture that it*

*just does not bother you anymore. Or at least it did not bother me.*” (DD-2, H1, min 13:48). The acceptance of poor working conditions could be interpreted as a sign of acceptance, stemming from the Army Culture. Especially considering that the other DDs did not take the hardships into consideration, when expressing their attitude.

The lack of resources was the major topic, while investigating the working conditions of the Army: *“In my time in the Army [2015-2023], I have only experienced deteriorating work conditions. I honestly feel that the Army basically lacks resources everywhere, even in places where a small investment can make a very large difference”* (DD-1, H1, min. 13:09). When expressing an experience of lacking resources and having only the experience of lacking resources, DD-1 is pointing towards a lack of improvement throughout his eight years of service. This continued lack causes frustration, especially because it is something that has been widely discussed in public throughout the years, as established in section A.

Overall, the DDs have negative associations with the Army’s working conditions. The expressions are linked primarily to a lack of resources in the form of employees, tight budgets and military equipment such as ammunition.

### **C3.2.2.2 Co-worker relations**

While attempting to discover the root cause of the DDs attitudes towards co-worker relations, the theme of learning, living and completing tasks together are brought forward: *“The co-worker relations are really strong. You create a unique and very strong bond, while at the NCO school and RDMA. Upon commission and working with professional soldiers, these strong relations continue, because you are always dependent on each other to accomplish your mission”* (DD-1, H2, min. 11:50). The positive attitude, in this case for DD-1, is linked to both the educational context and the tasks being carried out in collaboration with one’s colleagues. Completing tasks, while under pressure is attributed positively: *“The social relations that are built are very strong due to the external pressure that you experience together”* (DD-2, H2, min. 16:11). Both DD-1 and DD-2 attribute their associations towards their co-worker relationships to camaraderie created through hardship. Despite living on an Army base, DD-3 expressed a lack of co-worker relations due to his frequent job changes: *“I was forced to change job so often that I did not manage to form any strong co-worker relationships. I also lived at the barracks, so I spent an extremely large amount of time at work, but because there was this constant moving around, I did not experience forming close relationships”* (DD-3, H2, min. 16:14). This constant job change is therefore a direct outcome of the lacking working conditions, in terms of human resources in the Army.

Generally, the DDs perceived positive associations towards co-worker relationships are mainly attributed to the collaboration and hardship endured, while training to become an officer. However, a lack of relations was also expressed, caused by frequent job changes.

### **C3.2.2.3 Company policies and rules**

When investigating the experiences and associations towards the Army's policies and rules, the DDs expressed an overall negative attitude: *"I recall a PowerPoint presentation from my first job in the Army that stated. 'You only have one career, but you can always get a new family', I did not find this funny at all, because it was apparent to me that essentially everyone present at the presentation was sacrificing their personal life just to do their work"* (DD-3, H3, min. 17:17). The negative associations expressed by DD-3 can be attributed to his current work-life balance living at the barracks, but traveling home every weekend. Furthermore, it can be derived from the statement that DD-3 perceives himself and his colleagues to be of an age where family and "work-life" balance are of high importance. At the core of the interviewees' negative associations lies the underlying (but unrealistic) expectation of an extremely high level of commitment from the Army.

Furthermore, when working in the Army, DD-2 experienced the policies and rules in relation to employee time management and overcomplicated his management tasks: *"Everything revolved around counting and registering hours worked. Time management was a major issue as it controlled everything and had first priority"* (DD-2, H3, min. 17:47). The constraints DD-2 expressed, are related to his experience of the work itself, which was negatively influenced due to strict policies and rules. Not only did DD-2 have negative associations in relation to constraints in his administrative tasks, but he elaborated on company implications in general: *"I use to say that ... moving a trash bin half a meter, was a huge problem in the Army as it would not be the normal way of doing things around here"* (DD-2, H3, min. 18:35). The negative association that DD-2 expressed is linked to his perception of "red-tape" preventing a change in the Army. The organizational consequences of this issue is that employees stop providing suggestions for improvement and changing ineffective procedures: *"At a point, it becomes clear that there are disadvantages, such as doing something new, innovation"* (DD-2, H3, min. 19:06). DD-3 gave an example of an experience, in which the HR procedures were dissatisfying: *"I was a cell in a spreadsheet, not an individual. At one point I was told that I would be changing positions, which was done by sending an email stating that the spreadsheet had been updated"* (DD-3, H3, min. 17:59).

Overall, the DDs express negative associations related to the policies and rules within the Army. Their associations are caused by the Army's unrealistic career commitment from the JGOs, flaws in HR procedures and overcomplication of tasks that would limit innovation.

#### **C3.2.2.4 Supervisor conditions**

During the examination of the DD's associations towards their supervisors, DD-2 described his former company commander: *"In my experience, the company commanders are really competent and motivating. My perception is that they genuinely desire to be good leaders"* (DD-2, H4, min. 19:27), which is completely in line with Herzberg et al.'s (1959) definition of a competent supervisor. This view on supervisors was shared by DD-3 who stated: *"At company-level, there is a willingness to listen to what I have to say and a desire to help me in my future career"* (DD-3, H4, min. 20:08). Both statements are positive in their associations towards their closest supervisors, viewing them as competent, compassionate and professional. These positive contributions are expressed by former officers, indicating that their supervisors have had a strong positive impact. However, there are more associations than just those of positive impressions: *"At the battalion level, it has been my general perception that they are not very good at communicating their intentions and decisions. It has been frustrating, as they might have had their good reasons, I just do not know of them"* (DD-2, H4, min. 20:24). The frustration that DD-2 expressed and linked to a lack of information were in relation to the battalion level. This feeling of distance was further expressed by DD-1: *"I do not really feel that I am in a position to make a statement on the general leadership in the Army or the Armed Forces. There is a long way from a young first lieutenant to a one or two-star general"* (DD-1, H4, min. 14:10). The inherent distance in the Army's hierarchical structure appears to be accepted by DD-1, however, it has a negative effect: *"JGOs like myself feel distanced from decision-making which affects us a lot. The fact that you are not really able to change anything despite having a lot of good ideas is frustrating. There is no opportunity to present your good ideas"* (DD-1, H4, min. 14:43). The frustrations that DD-1 experiences from not being able to effect the organization in any way could be linked to a lack of "responsibility" or "policies and rules", which shows how difficult it is to narrow in on a single jobfactor, when interviewing. The negative effect of feeling distant from management might negatively affect the motivation of DD-1, and thereby add to the variety of lacking positive job factors.

Strikingly, the experience of a less competent management, when moving further up the hierarchy than company commanders, was shared by DD-3: *"My impression was that the upper management had its own agenda and acted very short-sighted instead of thinking in a broader context. I wished the management took my competencies into account and evaluated me"* (DD-3, H4, min. 20:25). DD-3 confirms the associations that DD-1 and 2 expressed and

explains that a specific lack of competency management is, in part, what has caused these associations.

Generally, the DDs express positive associations towards their closest supervisors, at the company level, caused by competent and compassionate leaders. However, once they describe levels of management above the company, negative associations are expressed, due to a lack of competency management and transparent communication.

### **C3.2.2.5 Salary and benefits**

The former JGO, DD-2 perceived his salary as being low: *“I think that it is obvious that the salary is too low compared to your level of responsibility. But I have to admit that the salary does not affect me positively or negatively”* (DD-2, H5, min. 21:15). However, he also expressed that it did not affect him. Interestingly, DD-3 use the almost exact same wording to describe his take on the salary: *“the salary was low in comparison to your level of responsibility but I had come to accept that”* (DD-3, H5, min. 23:08). The fact that both DD-2 and 3 express neither positive nor negative associations towards their salary is interesting, considering they perceive it as being inadequate compared to their responsibility. According to the study by Herzberg et al. (1959), salary was not one of the main attributing factors in relation to a lack of satisfaction with one's job. This could provide a potential explanation for why the perceived low salary did not cause decidedly negative associations for DD-2 and 3.

As described earlier, this job factor covers the whole range of job-related compensation and benefits. One of the interviewees, DD-1, points to the fact that the Army has multiple contract types among officers. This was negatively associated for the following reason: *“One of the big drawbacks is that we do not have the same rights and privileges as contract civil servants officers”* (DD-1, H5, min. 15:17). The difference, which is negatively associated, is linked to the former point of competence management. If two employees with the same competencies perform the same job with equal results but receive different compensation, due to different contractual relations it is a cause of frustration and negative association.

However, DD-1 also states that there are some positive perspectives of his contractual relations: *“There are also some positive elements. I can leave the Army tomorrow or in a month and retain my pension. In that way, I am not rooted or pressured to stay in the Army in the same way as officers on the civil-service contract are”* (DD-1, H5, min. 16:15). The positive link towards leaving is interesting, considering the difference in turnover presented in the quantitative analysis section B2.2. Given DD-1's contract form as a union officer, he perceives it as being easier for him to leave the Army, compared to the officers on a civil servant contract. This perceived ability to leave could potentially be a variable that effects the retentionrates.

Overall, the DD's associations towards the factor of salary and benefits were uniform. Amongst the interviewees, the salary was perceived as being low, but without it causing negative associations towards the job factor.

### **C3.2.3 Psychological contract**

#### **C3.2.3.1 Contract creation**

As with the PBDs, the DDs' psychological contracts were originally established with the PA, and has since been affected through their education at the RDMA. DD-3 provides an example of his understanding of what the contract constituted, in terms of his offerings: "*My expectation was to start off as a platoon commander and train the unit I would be assigned*" (DD-3, P1, min. 27:56). The contract, according to DD-3, was that he had to "deliver training", which implied responsibility for the soldiers and their development while developing the unit. Furthermore, he points towards a training aspect, which is the most usual task for units that are not currently deployed.

When DD-3 reflects on what he expected in return for his work, in accordance with the psychological contract, it was mainly leadership experience: "*I expected to gain hands-on leadership experience, which I did not have. Dealing with tricky situations such as conflict management, and employees with stress, ... basically gaining practical experience with all the leadership theory we were taught while at the academy.*" (DD-3, P1, min. 29:41). The expectations to receive leadership experience, are in line with the statements with regards to the job factor of "responsibility" and "possibility of growth" as a JGO. Furthermore, it can potentially explain the neutral feelings towards "salary and benefits" in the sense that the derived leadership experience is perceived as a non-monetary compensation or benefits.

These expectations, i.e. that the Army offered a job with a degree of responsibility in the psychological contract, are shared by DD-2: "*I expected an enormous responsibility placed upon me, which was mine to carry. Furthermore, I expected it to be a physically demanding job*" (DD-2, P1, min. 26:39). Responsibility comes across as the main elements in the DDs' psychological contracts. This responsibility entails being in charge of 30 soldiers in a platoon, with regard to all aspects of training, well-being, staffing, discipline and military exercises.

Besides the perceived agreement in which, leadership experience would be supplied by the Army, DD-1 expressed an expectation or desire to stay in the same job position for a while, in order to gain that experience: "*I expected that I would be able to be in the same job position long enough to gain a lot of experience*" (DD-1, P1, min. 21:14). This example from DD-1

shows how his preferences would not appear in a written contract, but rather be a product of how he understands the job and the surrounding factor.

### **C3.2.3.2 Discrepancies and violations**

In accordance with the expressed psychological contract, DD-3 was expected to take care of his unit, and ensure that the soldiers were trained and held to a high standard. In return, DD-3 expected leadership experience and development but unfortunately, discrepancies occurred: *"I expected to spend more time as a leader since we spent the majority of our time at the academy discussing and preparing for leadership dilemmas. Unfortunately, the reality was that I spent little time exercising leadership, as I found myself buried in administrative tasks"* (DD-3, P2, min. 27:09). The unexpected amount of time spent on administrative work, rather than leadership, i.e. guiding and developing one's subordinates, was perceived as a discrepancy by DD-3. This discrepancy caused DD-3 to have negative associations with the job as a platoon leader. Interestingly, DD-3 actually assigned the creation of this part of the contract to the RDMA, as an emphasis was put on leadership. This did not correlate with what DD-3 experienced while working. This experience is described as a discrepancy, rather than a violation, which could potentially be attributed to the strength of the relationship between DD-3 and the Army at the time. Unfortunately, the experience might have caused DD-3 to start monitoring for further discrepancies.

The same understanding of the agreed-upon psychological contract was shared by DD-1. When asked about his first job after being commissioned, he stated: *"It was chaos. Courses as "administration" seemed irrelevant while at the academy, but subsequently, I realized it might have been the most important course if it had been prioritized."* (DD-1, P2, min. 24:50). Since DD-3 expresses the same experience of discrepancy in relation to administrative work, it shows that the psychological contract might have been normative, and created while the DDs were attending the RDMA. The identified discrepancy carries the potential of harming the relationship between the Army and the JGOs, which could lead to other discrepancies being perceived as violations. Furthermore, DD-1 expressed that his expectations with regard to acquiring proficient leadership experience and developing interpersonal bonds were not met either: *"Quickly it was very obvious to me that the Army lacked officers why it became the norm to rotate positions to make ends meet. You might be told that this is your position for the next 3 years, but after one year you are told you have to leave for Afghanistan because you are the only damn officer left"* (DD-1, P2, min. 21:27). The lack of human resources was expressed by the DDs in relation to the "working conditions" of the Army. Further, DD-2 and 3 expressed discrepancies in relation to those explained by DD-1 in relation to his psychological contract.

The psychological contract was affected by the DDs' time in the Army, whether they were in education or within units. DD-1 expressed that he did not expect to conduct unforeseen tasks, due to a lack of resources, which then became a discrepancy. However, it was not perceived as a violation, potentially because DD-1 entered his psychological contract knowingly: *“Even though it is against your own personal preference, the Army schools you to say yes sir ... and then you make the best out of your new situation”* (DD-1, P2, min. 21:48). It is plausible, that DD-1 entered the Army without knowing what the psychological contract was going to entail, but after having learned it, still decided to enter the contract.

The experience of tasks being more important than the individual performing them is something that DD-2 also expressed: *“I was shipped to Varde without being asked. Nobody involved me in the decision or gave it a thought if it suited me at all. Focus was merely on filling a job position at the NCO-school”* (DD-2, P3, min. 30:29). The implied expectation of being involved in the process of change, e.g. a change in job geography, was experienced as a discrepancy, and subsequently a violation by DD-2. When questioned about what caused him to leave the Army he responded: *“The uncertainty of being tossed around without being involved was the final drop. The fact that I was transferred to Holstebro, to Varde, and back to Holstebro without being asked, while pretending ‘this is normal’ was too much”* (DD-2, P2, min. 35:32). The lack of involvement is pointed out by DD-2 as a direct cause of him leaving the Army, pointing to the experience being perceived as a violation. In the case of DD-3, the topic is somewhat the same even though he was affiliated with another regiment: *“I hit the wall at the Royal Guards. My career path was presented and I knew what was expected of me, but I was not interested. I could not see how my competencies would be applied, and I was not satisfied [with the career plan]. Furthermore, I experienced a system that seemed incapable of learning and anchoring important knowledge as it lacked capable and competent people”* (DD-3, P2, min. 22:27). The expressed experience of DD-3 revolved around a lack of involvement in his career planning and competency management. DD-3 even provides an explanation for this lack of involvement, as being due to a failed HR strategy, carried out by incompetent individuals in HR-related job functions. DD-3 felt violated by the regiment and thereby the Army because his psychological contract included involvement, which was not met.

Furthermore, when DD-1 reflects upon the number of DDs leaving the Army, the following is described: *“When your recruiting segment already has an education they can fall back on, I believe they have fewer incentives to stay in a job they are not satisfied with”* (DD-1, P2, min. 35:42). The reasoning in relation to violations of a psychological contract, is that the DDs are quicker to leave the Army once they experience violations. Since the DDs have an education

prior to joining the RDMA, they know that they are desired and capable of changing jobs and industries.

As an explanation of the violations that are experienced by the DDs is the lack of involvement: *“I think that if you are in possession of some competencies that are useful for the Army, but are restrained from applying them this makes you dissatisfied and under stimulated”* (DD-3, P2, min. 44:31). Overall, the DDs express the lack of involvement as a violation of their psychological contract, which makes it a plausible cause for the turnover that the Army experiences amongst the DD officers.

## **C4 Qualitative Conclusions**

### **C4.1 Motivational and hygiene factors**

The aim of the analysis section was to attempt to provide an answer to sub-question two: *Drawing upon the two-factor theory, is there a difference in hygiene and motivational factors, when comparing junior-grade officers from before and after the change in recruitment strategy?*

Having analyzed the PBDs' and DDs' perceptions of the underlying causes of both positive and negative associations towards Herzberg et al.'s (1959) job factors, both differences and similarities have been identified. Both PBDs and DDs interlinked the factors of “possibility of growth” and “advancement” together, which was attributed to the structure of internal courses and their link to advancement opportunities in the Army's hierarchical structure based on ranks. Furthermore, both the PBDs and the DDs had negative associations towards these two job factors, explaining that a narrow and rigid career path had a lack of variety and did not take into account, what the individual JGO preferred, nor involved them in the process. Considering that all interviewees, both former and currently employed officers from PBD and DD, expressed these concerns, points towards the importance of these two particular job factors.

The analysis showed that the factors of “recognition”, “responsibility” and “work itself” had varied associations. The interviewees expressed both negative and positive associations towards all three factors. The job factor “supervisor” was found to be decisive in defining the interviewees' attitude to the job factor “recognition”, while their perception of decision power defined the factor of “responsibility”. The factor “work itself” was the most similar of the three, in which core tasks such as international deployment, training soldiers and leading professional soldiers resulted in positive associations. Ad-hoc tasks such as assisting with

COVID-19 vaccinations, guarding the Danish border and Jewish institutions were found as the negative driver of negative associations.

Overall, there were not found any specific differences in the motivational factors, nor their underlying causes between the PBD and DD recruitment segment.

When analyzing the hygiene factors, the same overall pattern of similarities and differences appeared. The factors of “working conditions” and “company policies and rules” were negatively associated by all interviewees. Similar underlying causes were expressed by both the PBDs and the DDs, who all pointed towards a lack of resources (financial, staffing and material), and regulative constraints (combined with many administrative tasks), which caused frustration and dissatisfaction.

The factors of “co-worker relationships”, “supervisor conditions” as well as “salary and benefits” were neutrally or positively expressed. Both PBDs and DDs expressed a high degree of satisfaction towards their “co-worker relations”, while attributing it to the collective shared experiences and hardships endured in their training. Their associations towards “supervisor conditions” varied, depending on their specific superior officers, but were generally positive. Lastly, their attitude towards salary was neutral, as it was unanimously expressed as being low, but ostensibly not low enough to cause dissatisfaction.

Altogether, there were found no significant differences in the hygiene factors, nor their underlying causes between the PBD and DD recruitment segment.

#### **C4.2 Psychological contract agreements**

The aim of the analysis section was to attempt to provide an answer to sub-question three: *Drawing upon social contract theory, is there a difference in perceived contracts, when comparing junior-grade officers from before and after the change in recruitment strategy?*

When identifying differences in the psychological contracts of the PBDs and DDs, some degree of variance was found. The main difference was found in the understanding of the terms upon which the PBDs had made their contract. They expressed that they would be compensated with a personal development process in return for their time and effort. The focus was put on their personal development, which was found to be violated in two out of the three cases. The DDs expressed the terms of the psychological contract as being an exchange of their time and effort, including their competencies acquired from previously completed educations, in exchange for leadership experience. The difference in the understanding of what constituted their psychological contracts could be attributed to a variety of factors such as age, educational background and experience.

Both recruitment segments anticipated the Army to involve them and expected to have influence on their own development and career plan. Even with the difference in contractual inputs and outputs for the PBDs and DDs, both expressed their jobs as JGOs as containing discrepancies and violations of their psychological contracts. The analysis revealed that both PBDs and DDs found that the lack of involvement and influence was a violation of their psychological contract with the Army. This violation was expressed as being the greatest cause of turnover in this thesis.

In sum, the PBDs and DDs had differences in the terms on which they had based their psychological contract. However, these differences still lead to a similar experience of violation due to a lack of involvement and influence on one's own career and development.

**C4.3 Table 9: Psychological contract, motivational and hygiene factors emphasized in the qualitative interviews.**

Base	Factors	PBD	DD
<b>Motivational</b>	M1 Possibility of Growth	Specific job requirements hinder potential growth.	A lack of involvement in career planning hinders growth.
	M2 Advancement	Only one career path is presented, which is very rigid.	Only one career path and it takes too long.
	M3 Responsibility	Lots of responsibility but sometimes a lack of decision power.	There is responsibility, but a lack of influence.
	M4 Recognition	It varies, depending on the supervisor.	Recognition is given but centered on results instead of effort.
	M5 Work itself	Work is meaningful when the tasks are training and deployment. Civil support does not make sense.	The core tasks are important, but civil support does not make any sense.
<b>Hygiene</b>	H1 Work conditions	Everything is lacking e.g. buildings, equipment and ammo.	Working conditions are bad. Both equipment and personnel are lacking.
	H2 Co-worker relations	Relations are the most important reason for working in the Army.	Relations are strong because of external pressure during tasks.
	H3: Company policies and rules	HR policies and rules, make tasks harder than necessary.	A rigid control of working hours and economy currently defines everything in a negative way.
	H4: Supervisor conditions	There are great supervisors, but as they advance in rank, they appear less competent.	Company commanders are competent. Battalion level and above are not.
	H5: Salary and benefits	Salary is low, but it is not a concern.	Salary is low, but it is not a concern.
<b>Psychological Contracts</b>	Contract creation	Give your time and effort in return for becoming a leader.	Use your competencies in return for leadership experience.
	Discrepancies and violations	The expectation of prioritizing work above everything else.	No involvement or use of prior competencies.

Table 9 provides an overview of the most predominant themes that appeared in the interview process. Table is color-coded: Positive Neutral Negative

# SECTION D: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION



## **D1 Discussion**

Section D1.1 presents reflections on this thesis' research methodology to discuss the limitations and provide suggestions for future research.

Although the qualitative analysis in section C is unable to explain the large difference in retention rate found in section B, this section discusses the results by including secondary sources and interviews with key stakeholders in the Armed Forces. Potential explanations and theories for the turnover and retention of JGOs in the Army are presented with caution. Section D1.2 discusses the implications of the change in the recruitment strategy while section D1.3 is preoccupied with how the Army's current HR policies affect retention amongst JGOs.

### **D1.1 Critical Reflections**

#### **D1.1.1 Quantitative approach**

The quantitative analysis in section B concluded that there is a significant difference in the retention rate between the DD and PBD. While the results reveal that the Army faces challenges in retaining JGOs, especially the DD officers, the quantitative analysis does not attempt to provide explanations or causal relations. This section seeks to uncover potential methodological issues, discussion of specific quantitative findings, and suggestions for future quantitative research.

##### **D1.1.1.1 Methodological implications**

The data provided by the PA contained observations from 461 JGOs with an acceptable distribution between PBD and DD. However, as the change in the recruitment segment took effect with the first class (PAM) starting at the RDMA in 2016 the observation count for the DD linearly decreased from X+1 to X+5. Despite the results being tested as being robust and significant the number of observations was relatively low for DD in X+4 and X+5.

The number of JGOs leaving the Army differed from the officially reported numbers by the PA to the Danish parliament's Defense Committee<sup>8</sup> (Forsvarsudvalget, 2023). This deviation was caused by a difference in the methodological questions of "how" and "who" to include in the dataset. In opposition to the quantitative methods applied in this thesis, the PA reported JGO on an "unpaid leave of absence" as currently employed, consequently displaying a higher retention rate. Both methods are applicable with their inherent pros and cons. The

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<sup>8</sup> See "question 16" asked by a member of parliament (MP) to the Danish Parliament's Defense Committee (Forsvarsudvalget, 2023).

disadvantage of the PA approach of including “unpaid leave of absence” is the issue of postponing the event of turnover happening in the near future (X+1 year). From an HR perspective, the PA's approach appears more correct as employees in absence are still employed. However, this thesis' vocal point is examining retention, and excluding JGOs on an unpaid leave of absence, the retention rates reflect the actual number of JGOs serving in the Army's units.

When reporting the number of JGOs leaving or re-entering the Army it was only possible in this thesis to cover the net personnel flow. E.g. class JES (2013-2015) experienced an aggregated positive inflow of officers from 50 to 53 (2020 to 2021), which is equivalent to a positive turnover rate of 6%. Due to GDPR restrictions in the provided data from the PA, it was not possible to deduct if that positive inflow was due to 3 JGOs reentering or 10 officers quitting and 13 reentering. For this reason, the thesis only covers the aggregate retention and turnover numbers, which entails the risk of a significantly higher flow in both directions. However, this risk appears quite low, as a civilian career experience does not provide credit upon reentering.

Lastly, this thesis entails the implication of comparing retention and turnover rates across different time periods as the baseline  $X$  differs across each class commissioned at the RDMA. With baseline numbers in different years, a comparative analysis entails the risk of being influenced by internal and external factors. Internal factors are changes in the Army such as international missions, HR policies and Defense Agreements, while external factors are the general Danish economy, public wage policies, and COVID-19. For this reason, when comparing retention rates amongst the PBD and DD recruitment segment, it is impossible to control for (or hold everything else constant), due to a changing external and internal environment.

#### **D1.1.1.2 Discussion of findings**

In X+1 significantly more JGOs from the PBD than the DD recruitment segment have left the Army. However, 30-50% of the PBD are “internally” recruited, meaning that they have already been in the Army for a prolonged time period (Lyngge, min. 06:20). This can potentially explain the higher turnover amongst PBD in their first-year post-commission, as they have already experienced what it entails working first-hand in the military units.

Generally, the PBD and DD experience a rather comparable and high retention rate until X+3. This can be interpreted as cadets, from both recruitment segments, do not pursue a leadership education at the RDMA with the sole purpose of pursuing a civilian career immediately after commission. Across both recruitment segments, approximately 85% of the JGOs are still

employed in the Army after serving three years, which is positive compared to retention rates in a broader context.

The largest difference in retention rates between PBD and DD becomes apparent in X+4 and X+5 with the specific numbers reported in section B. One potential explanation is that this time period coincides with the first lieutenant returning to the RDMA to complete the *“Staff Officers Course”* in order to advance to the rank of captain. The qualitative analysis showed that in particular, the DD had an issue with this timing: *“The career path [to become a captain] takes a long time. Longer than what I am ready to wait for”* (DD-3, M1, min. 04:28). Furthermore, it takes a couple of years to become acquainted with the career perspectives of staying as an Army officer. The first couple of years can be considered a “honeymoon phase”, why the retention rates are relatively stable amongst both the PBD and DD. Upon discovering, the rigid career path which is elaborated on in section C, more DD than PBD chose to leave the Army. This can potentially be attributed to the finding that more DDs expect, based on their psychological contract, that their previously obtained competencies would be applied in the Army. Upon discovering that a certain rank and a rigid career path are required for certain positions they are more inclined to leave the Army than the PBDs.

#### **D1.1.1.3 Suggestions for further research**

To further improve the quantitative analysis and uncover potential causal explanations additional analysis must be undertaken. The PA’s employment records contain information on all JGOs’ age, marital status, sex, grade levels, number of deployments, geography, etc. By incorporating additional variables in a quantitative analysis, it is possible to explore any potential links to retention rates by performing a multivariable regression analysis. Multiple studies have pursued this quantitative approach in order to uncover factors influencing job satisfaction, turnover and work-life balance Oskarsson, Lundell & Österberg, 2022; Zhang et al., 2011; Munap & Hudi, 2020). Oskarsson et al. (2022) specifically engaged in a collaboration with the officers union in Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Finland to collect questionnaires from their members in order to conduct an analysis on Herzberg’s job factors’ (amongst others) impact on work-life balance and job satisfaction.

Furthermore, by expanding this thesis and collecting primary data from JGO officers in Denmark it could have been possible to replicate Munap & Hudi’s (2020) study of Malaysian officers in a Danish context. Munap & Hudi (2020) found that the six independent variables (job factors) personal life, rate of pay, working condition, achievement, career advancement and recognition had no relationship with turnover intention, hereby rejecting their hypothesis.

In relation to this thesis, it would have been of interest to see if the JGOs who have left the Army, would rate Herzberg's motivational and hygiene factors differently than those JGOs, whom the Army has managed to retain. Furthermore, there are still unanswered questions that additional quantitative data could have helped answer, such as quantifying the key drivers that lead to turnover and retention. In order to qualify, whether the change in the recruitment segment has affected the Army's ability to retain JGOs, it also appears relevant to investigate the retention rate for cadets studying at the RDMA.

## **D1.1.2 Qualitative approach**

### **D1.1.2.1 Methodological implications**

The data for the qualitative analysis was obtained using semi-structured interviews. This method of collecting empirical evidence is known for being difficult to keep consistent (Kvale, 1996; Patton, 2002; Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). Retrospectively, this was also the case for this thesis. The clearest case was that of the investigation of the interviewees' perception of the job factor "supervisor conditions". Herzberg et al. (1959) originally delimited the factor to that of one's closest supervisor. However, when conducting semi-structured interviews, the definition and delimitations of topics are difficult. It requires the interviewer to phrase questions in specific wording that ensures a mutual understanding of the definition and topic in question. In the case of the factor "supervisor conditions", that was not the case. Maintaining the interviewees' focus on specific topics and job factors was difficult. When analyzing the job factor of "supervisor conditions", it was found to be positively associated with their company commanders, but negatively associated at higher levels of command in the Army. Suppose the factor had to fully reflect the original factor, as intended by Herzberg et al. (1959), the interviewees should have focused on the current supervisors, or last supervisor prior to leaving the Army. If this had been the case, this thesis could potentially have uncovered different underlying causes of positive or negative associations towards "supervisor conditions". Furthermore, the source of the factor "recognition" is originally attributed to anyone (Herzberg et al., 1959). It was, however, difficult to explain and express this to the interviewees, causing them to mainly focus on their supervisor and the supervisor's ability to give recognition.

Both in the case of "supervisor conditions" and "recognition", the question design was not specific enough, causing these miscommunications. Due to the interviews being semi-structured, the interviewers were able to counter these tendencies, by asking follow-up questions. Unfortunately, the decoding process of the qualitative interviews revealed that the interviewees' perception of certain job factors varied as it allowed for interpretation.

The language difference between the spoken language during interviews and this thesis proves language creates inexpediency. Translating quotes and statements entails the risk of confirmation bias. E.g. the translator might adjust statements while translating, in order for the statement to better fit the desired context. This was mitigated through the use of multiple translators, as well as member-checking post-translation.

#### **D1.1.2.2 Discussion of findings**

The findings in section C of this thesis have some implications due to the use of only selected parts of the theory. The use of Rousseau's theory has been prioritized in relation to the contract that is made between the individual and the organization as the fit was best found to explain the underlying causes of dissatisfaction and potential turnover of JGOs. When concluding, the omitted parts of the theory could potentially have provided a further explanation in relation to the topic. For one, Rousseau's (1995) theory on agent-to-principal hiring could potentially have explained some of the discrepancies and violations that the JGOs experience. The lack of career opportunities and growth possibilities that are negatively associated with all JGOs could potentially be explained by Rousseau's (1995), agent-to-principal theory. The majority of JGOs do not apply for their first positions, but rather have it appointed, which calls for a contract renegotiation between them and their supervisors. Since the scope of this paper did not include all parts of the theoretical grounds from Rousseau, potential explanations might have been overlooked as well.

The lack of significant differences in the underlying causes of negative and positive associations, found in section C, could be caused by a broad variety of variables. The PBDs and DDs both expressed negative associations towards "work itself" while relating it to tasks that were not considered core tasks. As an example, both PBDs and DDs articulated COVID-19 and other police-related as demotivating. Considering the difference in retention rate between the two segments, the timing of the political initiative "*safe streets*" (Politi, 2017) could be a plausible cause. The initiative was taken in 2017, and while there were no JGOs commissioned that year, the first DD classes were commissioned the following year. Thereby, many of the DDs experienced the start of their career undertaking job tasks such as supporting the police. However, the PBDs should have, due to their earlier commission year, had a chance to work without being tasked with supporting the police. The simple timing of commissioning could provide an explanation for the difference in retention rates looking at the job "work itself".

The difference in the PBDs' and DDs' understanding of their psychological contracts and the balance of giving and receiving had a peculiar wording difference. The PBDs expected that

they would become leaders as compensation for their time and effort in the Army. The DDs expected to obtain leadership experience as compensation, which is a minor wording difference that might have a greater effect than expected.

Right about, when the change from PBD to DD was implemented, Ingemann (2015) wrote a paper on the difference in the wording linked to recruitment. She concluded that *“leadership in connection with the recruitment process for the new officer training programs has changed from being addressed as something functional ... to being addressed as a human element”* (Ingemann, 2015, p. 75). The difference in recruitment strategy is, according to Ingemann (2015), changed to fit the perception of the future DDs. The marketing wording was: *“using terms such as freedom and love, as well as the phrase “become a leader in reality”.*” (Ingemann, 2015, p. 26). Compared to the former strategy of recruitment in the Army, there was a change in the phrasing of what to expect, which is shown in the former strategy: *“There are several aspects of the military that appear very positive. The camaraderie, team spirit and personal development that are unique to a military education should be highlighted”* (Forsvaret, 2006, p. 3). The difference in marketing and communication strategy, between the time of the PBDs and the DDs, could potentially explain the subtle difference in their psychological contracts.

### **D1.1.2.3 Suggestions for further research**

The findings of section C showed no significant difference in job factors or psychological contracts between PBDs and DDs. In relation to this investigation, a number of underlying causes of negative or positive associations were discovered. Most of these were aligned between the DDs and PBDs as well. However, they present an interesting opportunity for further research and suggestions for potentially mitigating effects.

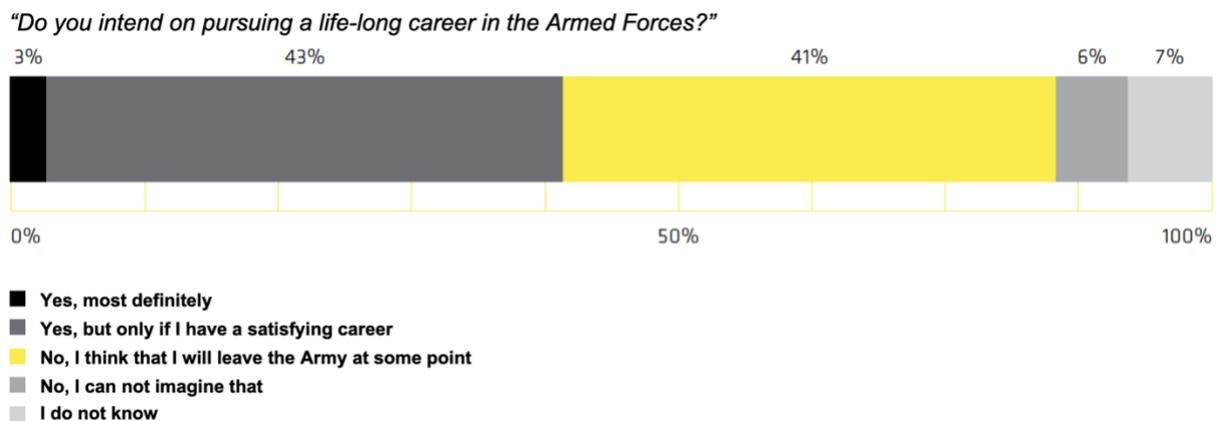
Subjects for further research that were discussed, but not analyzed in depth, would be potential differences in age between the PBDs and the DDs, as age could potentially affect their perception of work-life balance as well as working conditions and the job itself.

Furthermore, an in-depth analysis of changes in HR strategy and the effect on individuals could be interesting, as the overall strategy changed along with the education. In order to target the challenges found in this thesis, the perceived lack of involvement, expressed by both PBDs and DDs would be interesting. A focus on career planning and opportunities should further be investigated.

## D1.2 Recruitment Strategy

Following the 2013-2017 Defense Agreement, the recruitment strategy changed drastically, entailing a new “type” of applicants pursuing an officer's career. As described in the introduction in section A, it was not a prerequisite that the applicants had any prior military experience as a professional soldier or a military conscript, but instead to hold a level 6 education (The Danish Ministry of Defense, 2012). These aforementioned changes implied a spill-over effect to other recruitment factors relevant to retention, which will be examined in this section. Figure 5 shows that the DD recruitment segment had varied expectations for the longevity of their career in the Armed Forces.

**Figure 5: Questionnaire for RDMA cadets in 2017**



Source: HOD (2017, p. 27). Figure translated to English at the authors' discretion.

There appears to be a coincidence between the cadets' future expectations of their employment, and the quantitative findings in this thesis. In the period X+5 after commission, less than half of the DDs were still employed in the Army, which is approximately aligned with their expectations, while attending the RDMA. The same JGO cadets, who answered the HOD questionnaire in 2017, are the same ones (PAM and STO) represented in figure 2 from the quantitative analysis.

Seeing as section C had limitations in explaining the difference in retention rates, the following sections will investigate possible explanations. In the DD recruitment segment, qualified candidates are, on average, older, more life-experienced and higher-educated. Upon first look, this appears to solely be positive parameters strengthening the Army's future officers. However, these personal factors and attributes also come with a flip side.

### D1.2.1 Age difference

As most applicants holding a bachelor's degree or a professional bachelor's degree are *ceteris paribus* older than applicants to the PBD, the change has contributed to a higher average age

amongst the officer cadets attending the RDMA. According to the Ministry of Higher Education and Science, the age of graduates with a bachelor's or master's degree is respectively 24,9 and 28,2 years in 2017 (Ejsing, 2019). In 2017, the average age of cadets was just above 26 years, which is significantly higher than PBD cadets with a high-school diploma (Retsinformation, 2017). Rear Admiral Wang points to potential implications of this change as being: *"If you are relatively young ... and enter an organization as the Armed Forces you are more inclined to endure more adversity than a bachelor graduate, who has already started a family. Furthermore, if you are older, you have already formed opinions, which can be a disadvantage for the Armed Forces as they are less likely to accept as much hardship"* (Wang, 2023, min. 31:05). The link between age and family is also drawn by DD-3: *"I believe that age matters [in terms of retention]. Because at some point you need to decide, whether you are willing to compromise on your family relations"* (DD-3, min. 43:40). A higher age itself is not a determining factor, but it entails that the recruitment segments have different preferences and priorities. *"When recruiting candidates directly from high school, they are so young that they have barely finished developing their personality. This meant that it was possible to mold them as desired by the employer"* (Wang, 2023, min. 12:25). This variability in maturity and preferences links directly to work-life balance which is examined in the following section.

### **D1.2.2 Work-life balance**

In general, JGOs face unique challenges in balancing their military commitments and home-related responsibilities and sometimes have to act in demanding and stressful situations with little or no advance notice. The older the JGO is upon commission from the RDMA, the more likely he is to have settled down with a family and have additional responsibilities. As elaborated by the interviewees in section C, the Army can at times require a high amount of flexibility with regard to geographical mobility and job positions. As the JGO often has little to no say in this matter, it carries the potential of influencing their perception of work-life balance negatively. DD-3 stated *"essentially everyone ... was sacrificing their personal life, just to do their work"* (DD-3, min. 17:17), and *"if you can not get your work-life balance in order and sort things out at home, I believe that you pretty fast will come to the decision of leaving"* (DD-3, min. 46:05). Finding an appropriate balance between work and non-work is particularly challenging during military exercises and job-related deployments (either domestic or abroad) that require long periods away from home. Subsequently, the more family obligations the JGO has, the less likely or willing he will be to adhere to the Army's rigid career plan. Furthermore, military personnel's perceptions of work-life balance are likely to influence their job satisfaction and future career intentions in terms of staying in or leaving the Army (Sachau et al. 2012). A study conducted by the Netherlands Defense Academy concluded that soldiers reported lower satisfaction with their personal relationships and an increased turnover following a period of

family separation (Andres, Moelker & Soeters, 2012). A Danish study by HOD (2020, p. 5) found that *“... more young officers move to the capital region, despite their military units being situated in Jutland. The reasons for this preference is that the officers’ partners are based in the capital region and their job opportunities are better in this area”*. Hence, the Army experiences a geographical workforce movement away from the bases in Jutland, due to the JGOs prioritizing their families.

### **D1.2.3 Difference in the educational background**

In comparison to the PBD recruitment segment, the DD officer’s educational background entails recruiting candidates who *“... have learned to learn and know how to systematically acquire new knowledge”* (Wang, 2023, min. 35:05). This paved the way to effectively reduce the length of the officers’ education and reduce costs, which the 2013-2018 Defense Agreement required.

As the majority of the educated DD officers hold a university degree, DD-1 hypothesizes that it is easier for them to leave the Army and pursue a civilian career. This hypothesis has not been investigated in this thesis but DD-1) explains: *“One of the things that is obvious to me is that officers on the DD are older and have a university degree. They know the other side [the civilian job life]. When you have a segment, who knows that they have an education that they can “fall back” on, they are less likely to stay in a job, where they are not fulfilled”* (DD-1, min. 41:26). Hence, DD-1 links a higher turnover rate amongst DD officers to the fact that they have more civilian career opportunities, but also attributes JGOs with the DD education of being more conscious of their job possibilities. A PBD officer concurs with DD-1: *“They are not afraid of quitting the Army as they know how to communicate their competencies in a way that civilians understand ... officers like me [on the PBD] first have to realize that there is another world besides the Army, and then think about education ... if you already have a civilian background the transition is just so much easier to make both mentally and in terms of already having relevant competencies”* (PBD-1, min. 54:21).

Many DDs have during their university studies had student jobs, why they are acquainted with the civilian job market (Uddannelses- og Forskningsministeriet, 2016). Furthermore, they have attained a network from their prior studies, who are ambassadors for a “civilian career” which PBD-2 deems valuable: *“They [JGOs with a DD] quit because they are aware of their opportunities. It is not frightening to them, and they may even have established a “civilian safety net”. They know civilians who can support them and help them find the needed motivation”* (PBD-2, min. 38:00). Implicitly PBD-1 and PBD-2 suggest that from their perspective, transitioning into a civilian career is fraught with insecurity and entails a larger

“leap” than that of the DDs. The combination of academic background and a diploma degree in military leadership with practical leadership experience constitute an attractive candidate for many civilian management positions, which can explain why the DD retention rate is lower than PBDs.

### **D1.3 HR Strategy**

The applicants that followed a change in recruitment strategy also entailed a change in the JGOs that started working in the Army in 2018 and onwards. The change in recruitment strategy entailed that the DD had undertaken an updated and shortened version of the officer's education at the RDMA. These newly educated JGOs started at regiments in the Army that, according to Wang, had difficulties in adapting their HR strategy: *“The problem was not to transform and change the educational structure. This was a technicality for the RDCC. The real challenge is whether the organization is ready to welcome the new officers with different expectations to their line of services, and who have different expectations of what a good career entails”* (Wang, min. 22:50). The challenge of changing, how the Army as an organization should handle this new type of JGOs, was according to Wang, difficult for the Army: *“The Army seemed to be the most conservative of the three branches in the Armed Forces, as they had a fixed and clear perception of what a good career path was for the first 10 years of an officer's career”* (Wang, min. 23:01). For this reason, a change in the recruitment strategy and educational structure should entail a change in HR strategy ensuring an alignment between the recruitment base and their subsequent career in the Army. The following sections will discuss selected discrepancies between the DDs' career expectations in terms of involvement, career planning, purpose and the Army's ability to adhere to them.

#### **D1.3.1 Involvement and career planning**

The Army and the HOD have conducted numerous reports on job satisfaction and retention over the past fifteen years. Some of the impact points were that of involvement and career planning, which will be discussed in relation to the findings in this thesis. HOD (2020) concluded that: *“There is a reason for concern as the responses from the officers, who experience little to no involvement in decisions attribute this as having a large impact on their job satisfaction”* (HOD, 2020, p. 25). A lack of involvement and applied competencies, is a root cause for negative associations and dissatisfaction, in accordance with the statements by the PBDs and DDs in this thesis. In 2020, a former JGO expressed: *“I lost my work motivation due to bad managers in the Army. Now I am at a company, where they value practical competencies and skills, rather than exam diplomas”* (HOD, 2020, p. 28). The lack of evaluating competencies in the Army, when assigning job positions and tasks, is a frustration

that was expressed by DD-2 as well: *"I noticed that we were indignant about not being allowed to contribute with our skills"* (DD-2, min. 41:37).

Based on these statements, a potential cause for the low retention rate is a lack of competency management, when assigning new roles and tasks. Lack of involvement is of similar importance: *"the responses from the officers who do not, or to a small extent, experience being involved in decisions are a cause for concern, as the same officers assess that this has a very significant influence on their job satisfaction"* (HOD, 2020, p. 25). HOD's (2020) findings are very consistent with the concerns expressed by both the DDs and PBDs in this thesis.

In terms of Herzberg et al.'s (1959) factors of "supervisor competencies" and "possibility of growth", HOD (2020) identifies a challenge amongst the DDs' managers in the Army: *"They [DDs] demand not to be met by managers who in their career counseling function, are only capable of looking at how they themselves have been treated and have allowed themselves to be treated throughout their own careers. Instead, they demand managers, who can advise based on the younger officer's individual abilities and circumstances"* (HOD, 2020, p. 4-5). The interviewed DDs in section C also emphasize the need for career counseling and viewing them as a person instead of a "human resource". This coincidence of results strengthens the thesis' credibility, while emphasizing the JGOs' requirements for involvement and competency management.

In 2009, Capacent Epinion investigated how the Danish Armed Forces managed its HR strategy, with the aim of providing improvement opportunities in order to retain all personnel groups. Career planning was one of the identified elements that impacted the employee turnover rate negatively: *"... the lack of contact with the HR partner has an impact on the turnover rate because the long-term career perspective for the employees is replaced by acute gaps in the organization that need to be filled"* (Capacent Epinion, 2009, p. 4). Furthermore, they concluded that *"The acute personnel needs are so significant that long-term plans, desires, and a nuanced view of how the employees' competencies and desires fit with the needs of the military must give way to side for the short-term need to fill a job position"* (Capacent Epinion, 2009, p. 13). Based on this, the recommendation was to: *"significantly increase the staffing of the HR partner function"* (Capacent Epinion, 2009, p. 4) in an attempt to increase involvement and include military personnel in their own career planning. Seeing as the personnel situation (in terms of vacant positions) has only worsened since 2009, this has challenged the Army even more to fill vacant positions. Consequently, this further decreases employee involvement and competency management. This is however not scientifically substantiated, but merely a potential explanation for why the topic of career planning reappears.

Career planning was also a topic in HOD's (2020) report on JGO retention. "Rigid 5-6 year career plans for JGO, are recommended to be reduced to a maximum of 2-3 years. From that point on the JGOs should be allowed to apply for positions (as is the case with more senior officers). The result [turnover] of the current HR strategy speaks for itself: retention through serfdom has had the opposite effect" (HOD, 2020, p. 4). Furthermore, HOD (2020) concluded that the current career plans are negligent: "The Armed Forces is a hierarchical system, and career as a concept is, therefore, most often associated with vertical advancement in the ranks. Historically, this has required flexibility for the officers, to be measured and weighed in several – and preferably in several geographically dispersed job positions" (HOD, 2020, p. 4). The lack of a career path, which consists of more opportunities besides vertical advancement, is necessary to appeal to a broader recruitment segment.

Overall, the two reports from HOD (2020) and the Capacent Epinion (2009) delineate challenges in the Army's current HR strategy in relation to employee involvement, career planning and the consequences in terms of retention. The findings of the reports are consistent with those presented in section C as being a lack of involvement, HR management, and career planning, which was negatively associated with both the PBDs and the DDs.

### **D1.3.2 Purpose and core tasks**

The findings in section C suggest that a lack of purpose in the assigned tasks has a negative effect on the JGOs' motivation. The PBDs and DDs both expressed negative associations with tasks that are not within their understanding of the core competencies of the Army. This finding was also done by HOD (2020), which concluded: "... *they [officers] are driven by their will and ability to solve any tasks at hand when they can see the purpose and when there are no barriers to their task completion. Because when this happens, the officers become exhausted and choose other paths*" (HOD, 2020, p. 5). Their conclusion is in line with most motivational theories (Ariely, 2016; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Amabile, 1993). Fowler (2014) links purpose to motivation and satisfaction. Even though the findings of this thesis do not underline a significant difference between the PBDs and DDs in relation to job factors or psychological contracts, there are coincidences in regard to how they value purpose in "work itself". Both the PBDs and DDs expressed satisfaction and motivation in relation to tasks such as deployment in international operations and training of soldiers. Reports show that there was a problem with lack of purpose, which has been articulated as: "*The leadership level in the Danish Defense does not keep the core tasks in mind. For example, soldiers are now assigned tasks that are otherwise police tasks (e.g. GEFION, VIDAR, border patrol, etc.). This removes the opportunity for soldiers to practice and perform actual military tasks, and the specialization competencies are weakened*" (HOD, 2020, p. 10). The trouble with assigning tasks that are,

by the JGOs definition, not perceived as the Army's core, is that it leads to dissatisfaction and turnover (Stefani, Aaen, Breddam & Marchant, 2021). Barber (1986) found that job dissatisfaction was associated with higher turnover rates. With high job satisfaction, the employee tended to show stronger organizational commitment and higher intention to remain with the company. The reverse occurred with low job satisfaction (McFillen, Riegel & Enz, 1986). This might be an explanation for the officers' shortage, which is experienced today, coupled with the negative effect in the wake of COVID-19 related tasks. Once again, it is found that the challenge has existed for years: "...some administrative procedures and workflows in DeMars take disproportionately much time away from core tasks" (Epinion Capacent, 2009, p. 3). The challenges of focusing on the core task can be traced far back, but with varying underlying causes. Whether it be police support, COVID-19 related or an overcomplication of basic administrative tasks, selected JGOs have been expressing a lack of purpose in some of their job elements for fourteen years. In all cases, this carries the potential to have negative effects on motivation, job satisfaction, and turnover.

## D2 Conclusion

This thesis sought to answer the main research question: *“In which ways has the change in the recruitment strategy affected the Danish Army’s ability to retain its junior-grade officers?”*. In order to answer this research question, a quantitative and a qualitative research approach were implemented.

Data from 461 JGOs revealed that there is a significant difference in the retention levels in years X+1, X+4 and X+5 after commission between the PBD and DD recruitment segments. At X+4 and X+5 the retention rate for the officers with a DD declines in comparison to those with a PBD which upholds a relatively stable yearly turnover rate. Considering this two-year time frame, the retention rate for the DD’s officers from X+4 to X+5 is reduced by 48,8%. Conversely, the PBD officers’ retention rate is a lot more stable (and higher) when measured in the annual change. Five years after commission only 48,5% of the DD officers are still employed in the Army against 76,6% of the PBD officers.

The minority of JGOs, who pursue re-employment, is far from enough to balance the outflow of officers in 94,7% of the observed years. This adds to the importance of the Army pursuing an HR strategy ensuring a focus on retention, as the interplay between a military and civilian career does not favor the Army.

Overall, this thesis shows that there is a significant difference in the Army’s ability to retain its JGOs following the change in the recruitment strategy.

When using Herzberg et al.’s (1959) two-factor theory to explain these results, no significant differences between the PBDs’ and DDs’ motivational or hygiene factors were identified. In terms of motivational factors, both the PBDs and DDs expressed a high degree of satisfaction with the factors “responsibility” and “work itself” provided there is a focus on the Army’s core tasks, such as international deployments, training and leading professional soldiers. Ad-hoc tasks such as assisting with COVID-19 vaccinations, guarding the Danish border, and police supporting tasks were found to be unfavorable drivers of negative associations for both segments.

The PBDs and DDs interlinked the factors of “possibility of growth” and “advancement“, which were attributed to the focus on a few selected internal courses and their inherent link to an officer’s advancement opportunities in the Army’s rank-based hierarchical structure. These factors were perceived as negative due to a rigid career path, lack of involvement, and uninteresting, or irrelevant courses causing a decrease in motivation for both recruitment segments.

The PBDs and DD's perceptions of the hygiene factors were found to be almost identical. Their attitude towards "salary and benefits" was neutral, as it was unanimously expressed as being low, but not low enough to cause dissatisfaction. The factors of "working conditions" and "company policies and rules" were negatively associated by all interviewees. Similar underlying causes were expressed by both the PBDs and the DDs, who all pointed toward a lack of resources (financial, staffing and material) and regulative constraints. This, combined with many administrative tasks caused frustration and dissatisfaction. Conversely, the factors of "co-worker relations" and "supervisor conditions" were respectively positively and neutrally expressed.

The authors found that the violation of psychological contracts was the primary cause of turnover among PBDs and DDs, despite differences in the terms on which they based their contracts. This highlights the importance of listening to and involving employees in their own career and development plans, regardless of the recruitment segment. This could potentially decrease the current turnover for JGOs in the Army.

Despite the lack of significant dissimilarities in the recruitment segments' preferences capable of explaining the difference in retention rate, other probable underlying causes have been discovered. Factors such as a difference in age, educational background and work-life preferences constitute potential elements influencing job satisfaction and the discrepancy in retention rates between the DD and PBD officers.

The question that remains is whether the Army's current HR policies are adequate in providing the JGOs from the DD recruitment segment with sufficiently attractive career paths, and a relevant application of their competencies to alleviate the current issue of turnover.

# SECTION E: HR RECOMMENDATIONS & PERSPECTIVES



## **E1 HR Recommendations**

This section seeks to operationalize the academic findings in this thesis into four concrete HR recommendations for the Army in order to mitigate the turnover rate amongst JGOs. According to the top management in the Armed Forces, strategic HR and retention policies are a focal point.

A new Defense Agreement is expected to be presented prior to the NATO summit in Vilnius, Lithuania in July 2023 why the recommendations offer implementable suggestions with a focus on retaining JGOs.

### **E1.1 Change the Recruitment Strategy**

Based on the significant change in the retention rates between the DD and PBD educational structure it is recommended to rethink the recruitment segment with a focus on recruiting sustainable candidates. In this context, a sustainable candidate entails a younger candidate who is more willing to accept the uncertainty in job geography and the apparent challenges facing JGO's work-life balance.

Recruiting candidates directly from high school, which was the case with the PBD, offers this opportunity instead of candidates with a higher accredited education. The 2013-2017 Defense Agreement compelled the RDCC to change the educational structure due to a cost reduction, but the upcoming Defense Agreement (that is to be negotiated this summer), offers the possibility of reinstating the PBD educational structure. According to "The Code of Conduct in the Public Sector"<sup>9</sup> it is within the jurisdiction of the Minister of Defense to provide salary during a PBD education instead of student grants. This option was according to Wang (min. 45:20) not pursued in 2012 when the DD education was implemented. Reinstating the PBD, while providing salary to the cadets, should further heighten the potential for recruitment, as well as retention upon commission.

### **E1.2 Focus on Working Conditions**

This thesis has found that the current "working conditions" in the Army are cause a cause of negative associations of the JGOs. The working conditions are negligent in terms of a lack of

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- 1) <sup>9</sup>Bekg. 543 14/9 1988 om tjenestefrihed med hel eller delvis løn til uddannelsesformål for tjenestemænd i staten og folkekirken <https://www.retsinformation.dk/eli/ta/1988/543>
  - 2) Skm. cirk. 8/3 1990 om tjenestefrihed med hel eller delvis løn til uddannelsesformål for overenskomstansatte i staten. <https://www.retsinformation.dk/eli/mt/1990/35>
  - 3) Personaleadministrativ Vejledning kapitel 8.3.

physical resources and a high job vacancy rate which is shown to have an impact on the JGO's job satisfaction.

The JGOs experience frequent job changes, due to a lack of personnel, which makes career planning challenging. When the Army faces unexpected turnover it causes a change in the organizational structure and a ripple effect of job rotations. Where civilian organizations have the possibility of hiring external candidates, this option is not viable at the JGO-level. To counter this effect the Army needs a buffer, i.e. overcapacity, of JGOs to mitigate these ripple effects. This buffer should come from an increased intake at the RDMA. The increased intake is possible, due to a larger recruitment base of high school graduates as described in the aforementioned section. A small overcapacity of JGOs allows for the opportunity of improving their work-life balance as there are more officers to choose from when selecting employees for international deployment and when the JGO are undertaking internal education and courses.

In terms of physical resources, the JGOs in this thesis emphasized the lack of ammunition, facilities, uniforms, etc. as unsatisfying and a key driver of dissatisfaction. The issue of dilapidated barracks has reached a point where all of the soldiers' unions point to this as a focal point in the new Defense Agreement. The challenge is recommended by increasing the defense budget and assigning future spending to key areas that are cause for dissatisfaction amongst JGOs. Resources such as accommodation, ammunition, and everyday equipment are of the utmost importance. An increase in these basic working conditions will further emphasize the core tasks, which should lower the current dissatisfaction. Furthermore, modern equipment, sufficient supplies, and up-to-date technology are important for the success of military operations and the safety of soldiers.

### **E1.3 HR in an Organizational Context**

Based on the findings related to the job factors "possibility of growth", "advancement" and expressed discrepancies in relation to a lack of applied competencies, the following initiatives are recommended.

A holistic view of the JGOs and their career possibilities. In order to retain JGOs in the Army, the HR-responsible supervisors should evaluate the JGOs holistically. This entails to evaluate the JGOs and other (officers) not only based on their military education and experience but also on their competencies and job experience in a broader context. This could counter the JGOs current perception of their current career path being rigid and narrow, thereby heightening retention.

In order to ensure that the challenge of rigid career paths and a lack of involvement is addressed, it is suggested that an HR function covering career planning and JGO coaching is developed. Hereby providing the JGOs with a broader view of their possibilities in the Armed Forces as a whole, and not just in their current regiment in the Army. This also carries the potential to mitigate some of the work-life challenges since the JGO job opportunities will be increased. In some of the inevitable cases where a JGO is assigned a job, this HR function should preferably make use of remediation and voluntariness to counter the negative effects of a potential violation. If such a function is not possible to implement, it is suggested that the current regimental HR Partners are trained in the use of remediation, involvement and voluntariness, as well as their ability to guide JGOs to pursue alternative career paths in the Armed Forces instead of leaving the Army.

A holistic view of the requirements for all positions. Currently, there are relatively strict job requirements for the majority of positions in the Army, as well as in the Armed Forces. This hinders JGOs in applying for positions for which they do not have the expected military education or experience, despite having the described competencies and equivalent civilian experience. By re-evaluating what is considered as required competencies and experience, the JGOs would experience more relevant job opportunities, which in turn should strengthen the retention rate. This approach is suggested to include the whole Armed Forces, thereby allowing JGOs to apply for job positions within the PA, DALO, or MoD even if their military resume is atypical.

The holistic view on requirements, could in turn also have a positive effect on the re-hiring of former JGOs. As concluded in this thesis, the number of JGOs that return from an unpaid absence of leave is very low. This could potentially be heightened, if the former JGO's civilian job experience is taken into account upon re-entering the Army. With a holistic view of their competencies, and job experiences the Armed Forces would increase its potential for re-hiring. This task could be assigned to the HR function, who with a greater knowledge of the Armed Forces and its inherent job opportunities should be able to advise the JGOs and identify possible jobs in the organizations. This should in turn lead to a heightened amount of re-hiring.

#### **E1.4 Core Tasks and Purpose**

The findings in regards to the job factor "work itself", showed a negative association towards tasks outside of the scope of the Army's core tasks and purpose. All JGOs expressed that tasks concerned with civilian support, either COVID-19, border patrol, or guard duty, are perceived to be tasks for the Police, rather than the Armed Forces.

In order to counter the current negative trend in the Army's retention rate, as well as the Armed Forces as a whole, the Defense Agreement should entail an unequivocal focus on the core tasks and their purpose. All JGOs, whether PBD or DDs, expressed positive associations towards tasks of training and development of soldiers, as well as international deployment. Emphasizing a clear focus on training and development in the framework of sovereignty assertion, as well as deployment and contribution to NATO, UN, and other international allies in a military context is at the essence. This can in turn increase retention rates, as soldiers are more likely to stay in the military when they feel that their needs are being met and their work is meaningful. The Army should actively pursue a focus on the positively associated attributions of the job as a soldier and JGO. This should in turn heighten retention, simply through a heightened motivation.

## **E2 Perspectives**

Based on the findings in this thesis, further studies in retention rates amongst all three branches of the Armed Forces are recommended. Simultaneously with the Army, the change from a PBD to a DD was also implemented in the Navy and Air Force.

The change in the recruitment criteria for all three branches presents an opportunity for a larger study, increasing the number of observations on JGOs. A study of the retention rates in the Navy and Air Force, similar to that of section B, would set the ground for a quantitative comparison between the three branches. A comparative analysis between the Navy, Air Force and Army, could potentially infer whether the retention challenge identified in this thesis is isolated to the Army. Investigating whether the Navy or Air Force have experienced similar low retention rates, would provide a perspective as to whether the Army has neglected to adapt HR policies matching the new recruitment segment. Alternatively, the Armed Forces as an organization, face a challenge in retaining JGOs with an academic background.

An in-depth study of the underlying causes of turnover, similar to the one in section C, could be used to clarify whether the Navy and Air Force JGOs share similar preferences and challenges as their colleagues in the Army. This knowledge could present itself as useful for HR decision-makers in order to mitigate the current turnover challenge in relation to JGOs in the Army, and the rest of the Armed Forces

The current turnover rates of JGOs are so high, that the Army will soon be lacking enough JGOs to conduct the tasks set forward by the politicians (Lomholt, 2023). Furthermore, the current lack of JGOs due to the inherent low retention rate could lead to a lack of SGOs in the future.

As this thesis solely focuses on retention amongst JGOs in the Army, a similar study could be conducted on both NCOs and enlisted soldiers in the Army. The 2013-2017 Defense Agreement also entailed significant changes to the NCO-school, despite not changing the recruitment criteria.

A comprehensive study on turnover in the Army, including exit interviews and questionnaires upon leaving the Army, could potentially uncover the underlying causes of the personnel shortage. Understanding what affects and drives NCOs' and enlisted soldiers' decision to leave the Army could add perspective to the issues flagged by the JGOs in this thesis. Alternatively, it might reveal that the factors influencing the different personnel groups vary, which calls for isolated action-taking.

A study of all personnel groups is relevant as the Army currently needs both JGOs, NCOs and enlisted soldiers, due to the recent years' high turnover rate. A focus on retaining all personnel groups is essential for the Army to be able to fulfill its current and future NATO obligations. Denmark has agreed to a 2% of GDP commitment to NATO, and that obligation cannot be fulfilled merely by acquiring new military equipment. Personnel, and specifically JGOs, are needed to implement and train soldiers in the usage of new military capabilities. For this reason, it is of the utmost importance that the Army seizes the initiative and focuses on personnel retention.

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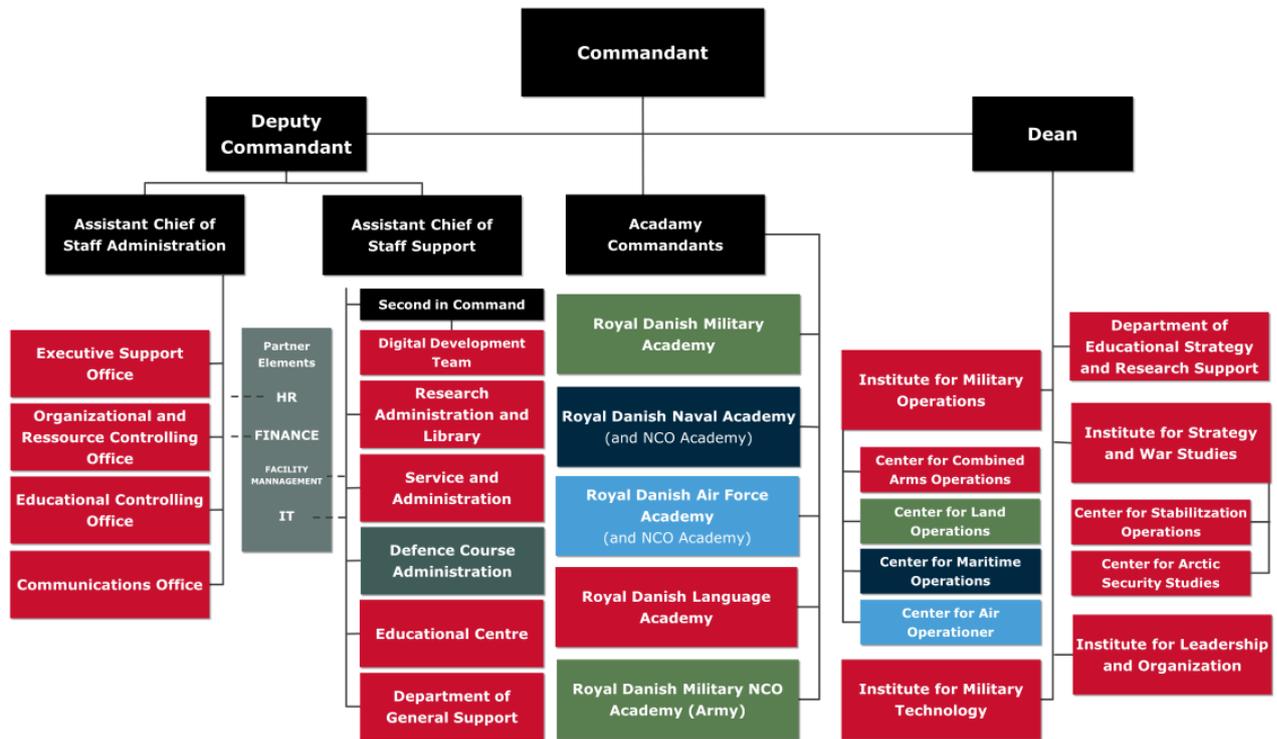
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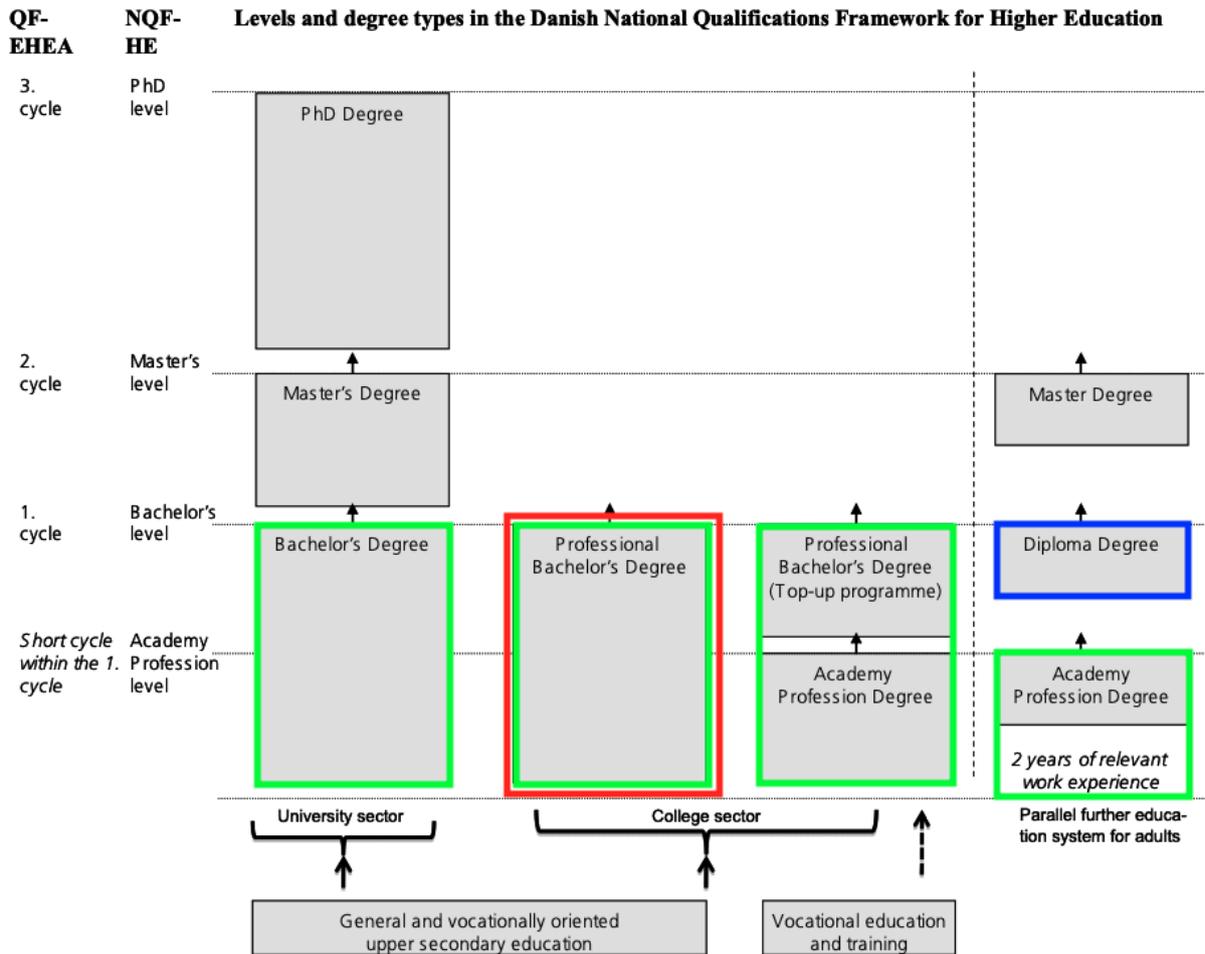
# Appendices

## Appendix A: The Royal Danish Defense College's Organizational Chart



Source: *The Royal Defense College (2020)*.

## Appendix B: The Danish National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education



Source: Uddannelses- og Forskningsministeriet (2009).

## Appendix C: Budget Reductions in the 2013-2017 Defense Agreement

De konsoliderede provenuier og den estimerede indfasningstakt fremgår af nedenstående tabel.

Tabel – provenu ved effektiviseringsinitiativer, mio. kr., 2013-niveau.

Initiativ	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Indkøb – kategoriprogram	94	302	374	457	754
Lagerbeholdninger – indkøbsreduktion	25	51	76	101	101
Lagerbeholdninger – engangsprovenuier	66	81	187	137	35
Lager og logistik	23	88	100	105	105
Materielvedligehold	63	122	117	185	198
HR opgaver og administration	58	135	199	213	216
Sundhedsydelse	15	45	92	92	92
Ansættelses- og kontraktformer	18	37	55	74	78
Aflønning under uddannelse	123	254	332	288	290
Lønudvikling og faste tillæg	119	142	166	187	187
Arbejdstid og midlertidig tjeneste	258	258	258	258	258
Særlige fastholdelsestiltag	132	145	145	164	164
Effektiviseringstiltag i alt	994	1.660	2.101	2.261	2.478
Provenu, korrigeret for overlap m.v.	984	1.640	2.071	2.221	2.428

Source: “The 2013-2017 Defense Agreement” (The Danish Ministry of Defense, 2012, p. 32).

Tabel – provenu aflønning under uddannelse, mio. kr., 2013-niveau

Initiativ	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Akkrediteringsmodel for officersuddannelser	86	170	211	159	161
Sergentuddannelser på SU	15	44	59	59	59
Militære lærlinge på elevløn	4	13	26	35	35
Praksis for udnævnelse	18	27	35	35	35
Aflønning under uddannelse i alt	123	254	332	288	290

Source: “The 2013-2017 Defense Agreement” (The Danish Ministry of Defense, 2012, p. 35).

## **Appendix D: Data Management Plan**

### **Revision:**

To ensure an updated and coherent DMP, the authors will update it, once a month, in accordance with their Gantt Chart.

### **Responsibility:**

Both authors have the responsibility of updating the DMP and ensuring data security. This is further elaborated in point 8.

### **1) Ethics and legal compliance**

Throughout the creation of our thesis, the authors will consolidate the Danish code of conduct<sup>10</sup> in order to ensure correct ethical solutions. Furthermore, the authors will use internal discussion and the principle of “bonus pater”, to ensure the democratic understanding of ethics.

The authors will handle all personal data in accordance with DMP and GDPR laws. Our data will not be linked to any personal data, when conducting our research.

It is the authors' intent to manage all material, in accordance with copyright laws and as stated by the CBS as well as the general rules of GDPR.

### **2) Data collection**

Firstly, the authors will collaborate with the Armed Forces Personal Agency, which will provide data on commissioned classes from the Royal Danish Military Academy and data on currently employed junior-grade officers. This data complies with all GDPR rules and regulations.

Secondly, through interviews with former junior-grade officers. These will be conducted with one interviewee and both authors present. The interviews will be recorded and used for transcription, in which personal data will be scrambled. Furthermore, any personal statements are removed from the audio recordings. This way, all the participants, will be anonymous, which removes risks in regard to personal data within our project.

Thirdly, through interviews with key stakeholders. These interviews are recorded and transcribed. These interviews are not scrambled in relation to personal data, as the respondents have agreed to participate in the thesis. However, the authors ensure member-checking, so that the participants can confirm that their words are in no way mistaken or misinterpreted.

### **3) Documentation and metadata**

The authors have included their raw excel spreadsheet data from the quantitative analysis. Furthermore, the recordings from all interviews are included, and named in accordance with the naming conventions in the thesis.

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<sup>10</sup> <https://ufm.dk/publikationer/2014/filer-2014/the-danish-code-of-conduct-for-research-integrity.pdf>

#### **4) Information security**

The authors estimate that there are no risks involved with the data since there is no personal information linked to the thesis. However, the authors will be protective of the empirical findings along the way of our project. No sensitive data will be gathered throughout this thesis.

#### **5) Data storage, backup, and sharing during your project**

The data will be stored on a password-protected and encrypted cloud service only accessible to the authors. Monthly backups will be done on a USB drive, which is password protected.

Both authors will have the right to access the data gathered for this thesis. This is to ensure transparency between the authors and to create a lean working flow when working remotely.

The authors expect CBS will ensure that the data along with the assignment, written at the end of this thesis is safely stored.

#### **6) Data publishing**

The authors do not plan on publishing our data. Data will not be published, except within the CBS assignment library.

#### **7) Data preservation**

The data of this thesis is not under any regulation, other than that of CBS storing policies regarding written assignments.

The data gathered, is exclusively used by the authors up until the hand-in of our thesis, which is the 15th of May 2023. Potentially, if a need for a re-exam comes up, this will have to be prolonged until the 26th of August 2023.

No data will be preserved for the long term and the chosen repository does not allow for FAIR data preservation.

#### **8) Roles and responsibilities**

Both authors are responsible for the implementation and reviewing of the. However, the authors recognize that through time, a primary driver for this is needed, and therefore Christian will ensure that the DMP is reviewed and revised throughout the duration of the writing process.

The author who is the primary interviewer is responsible for the particular data handling. Even if the task of transcription is delegated, the primary interviewer is still responsible for the data, stemming from that interview. This way, responsibility is clearly delegated.

There are no internal written agreement in relation to this master thesis project, other than that of the agreement between the authors and CBS which, is in accordance with CBS guidelines.

## Appendix E: Coded Qualitative Data

Table 10: Example of coding in the qualitative interviews.

Base	Factors	PBD	DD
Motivational	M1 Possibility of Growth	<p>“In my experience, it has been a challenge [to find the needed time].” (PBD-1, M2, 04:13).</p> <p>“If you have a desire to advance in the Army you must follow a very specific path. You need to have held specific job positions and attend specific courses such as the staff officers course and a master in military studies” (PBD-1, M1, min. 03:47).</p>	<p>“I think that the Army does a poor job of continuously developing its JGOs” (DD-2, M1, 04:04).</p> <p>“In my latest position, a career plan was presented to me. At no point was I involved in the making of it, it was just produced and shown to me. It was quite odd, as they did not even know me...” (DD-2, M2, min. 05:05).</p>
	M2 Advancement	<p>“Studying for a master's in military studies and the "Command and General Staff Officers" [requirements for advancing] while working is not feasible. It is really just a battle not to get a divorce” (PBD-3, M2, min. 04:12).</p> <p>“You need to have held some very specific positions and have studied the right education which has not necessarily been in my personal interest” (PBD-1, M2, min. 03:54).</p>	<p>“The career path [to become a captain] takes a long time. Longer than what I am ready to wait for.” (DD-3, M1, min. 04:28).</p> <p>“From my point of view the Army only offers one career path which is quite restrictive” (DD-1, M2, min. 04:04).</p>

<p>M3 Responsibility</p>	<p>“In some areas, the Army is very reluctant to delegate decision-making competencies in comparison to the level of responsibility they entrust you with” (PBD-3, M5, min. 05:17).</p> <p>“Yes, most definitely. Actually, I believe that throughout my time as a first lieutenant, I have had a lot of responsibility” (PBD-1, M5, min. 10:07).</p>	<p>“I felt as though I was given a lot of responsibility. It is very different than many other places, as I was given 100% responsibility for the soldiers’ training...” (DD-3, M3, min. 06:04).</p> <p>“When you are done at the RDMA you are given the responsibility for 30 soldiers. If you have to lead them in war it can have serious consequences” (DD-1, M3, min. 06:18).</p>
<p>M4 Recognition</p>	<p>“I believe that all of us in the Army are not particularly good at acknowledging progress. We are very results-oriented” (PBD-3, M4, min. 08:38).</p> <p>“...it varies a lot depending on who your boss is” (PBD-1, M1, min. 09:13).</p>	<p>“I think that I, as an individual, received recognition, whether it was in the form of distinction awards, a bonus, or merely the fact that my contributions were noticed” (DD-3, M4, min. 10:04).</p> <p>“Ideally he [the supervisor] should recognize all the contributions and efforts that are done continuously. My main appeal would be that of noticing work effort and not only tangible results” (DD-2, M4, min. 10:12).</p>
<p>M5 Work itself</p>	<p>“I feel that it is a very important job to develop future leaders ... it is a large responsibility because if I succeed, it will be of great importance [to the Army]” (PBD-2, M6, min. 12:12).</p> <p>“I would agree that my job is normally meaningful, but there are also times where I think to myself that: this does not make any damn sense” (PBD-1, M4, min. 15:18).</p>	<p>“I found it to be meaningful, knowing that I could make a difference for my country, in time of war and training people for that scenario, that gave purpose” (DD-2, M5, min. 11:21).</p> <p>“...but before I quit the Army I lost my motivation for several reasons. One of them was a lack of connection between the</p>

			<p>military training we did and the tasks we were given e.g. COVID-19” (DD-2, M7, min. 11:35).</p>
Hygiene	H1 Work conditions	<p>“It has been extremely difficult, getting what is needed” (PBD-1, H1, min.17:02).</p> <p>“It is a logistical problem. We lack everything from uniforms to all classes of logistics [ammo, fuel, vehicles]. Everything is lacking” (PBD-3, H1, min 13:43).</p>	<p>“I have been in positions where there has been a clear lack of resources both in terms of being understaffed but also financial” (DD-1, H1, min. 10:56).</p> <p>“In my time in the Army [2015-2023] I have only experienced deteriorating work conditions. I honestly feel that the Army basically lacks resources everywhere, even in places where a small investment can make a very large difference” (DD-1, H1, min. 13:09).</p> <p>“...old, worn-down facilities with bad lighting. Stuff like that... I just think that you are so deeply embedded in a culture that it just does not bother you anymore. Or at least it did not bother me.” (DD-2, H1, min 13:48).</p>
	H2 Co-worker relations	<p>“They are strong. It is one of the things that mean a lot to me” (PBD-3, H2, min. 15:10).</p> <p>“I have always had good co-worker relations. I have felt a strong esprit de corps, because of what we have been through” (PBD-2, H2, min. 15:06).</p>	<p>“The co-worker relations are really strong. You create a unique and very strong bond while at the NCO school and RDMA. Upon commission and working with professional soldiers these strong relations continue because you are always dependent on each other to accomplish your mission” (DD-1, H2, min. 11:50).</p>

		<p>“The social relations that are built are very strong due to the external pressure that you experience together” (DD-2, H2, min. 16:11).</p>
H3: Company policies and rules	<p>“In some areas, it would be relatively simple to implement procedures and policies from the private sector, e.g. approving employee time records. I still have to sign every single employee's time record every month on a fucking piece of paper” (PBD-3, H3, min. 14:14).</p> <p>“I think that the HR policies are hopeless because it makes things harder than necessary” (PBD-1, H3, min. 20:05).</p>	<p>“Everything revolved around counting and registering hours worked. Time management was a major issue as it controlled everything and had first priority” (DD-2, H3, min. 17:47).</p> <p>“I used to say that ... moving a trash bin half a meter, was a huge problem in the Army as it would not be the normal way of doing things around here” (DD-2, H3, min. 18:35).</p> <p>“I was a cell in a spreadsheet, not an individual. At one point I was told that I would be changing positions, which was done by sending an email stating that the spreadsheet had been updated” (DD-3, H3, min. 17:59).</p>
H4: Supervisor conditions	<p>“I have had some really good supervisors and leaders” (PBD-3, H4, min. 16:21.) and “I have experienced really great leadership in the Army” (PBD-1, H4, min.23:00).</p> <p>“The higher you advance in the Army ... there is a career, and there is the right thing to do. Sometimes these two things conflict, and I think that is the worst part of our system in the Army” (PBD-3, H4, min. 16:39).</p>	<p>“In my experience, the company commanders are really competent and motivating. My perception is that they genuinely desire to be good leaders” (DD-2, H4, min. 19:27).</p> <p>“At company-level, there is a willingness to listen to what I have to say and a desire to help me in my future career” (DD-3, H4, min. 20:08).</p> <p>“JGOs like myself feel distanced from decision-making which affects us a lot. The fact that you are not really able to change</p>

			anything despite having a lot of good ideas is frustrating. There is no opportunity to present your good ideas" (DD-1, H4, min. 14:43).
	H5: Salary and benefits	<p>"On an everyday basis, I don't give my salary a lot of thought as my bills are paid, and I have a lot of other benefits in my job" (PBD-3, H5, min. 18:06).</p> <p>"If I work extra hours I can take time off on another day, or I receive overtime pay - I think that is pretty good" (PBD-1, H5, min. 24:34).</p>	<p>"I think that it is obvious that the salary is too low compared to your level of responsibility. But I have to admit that the salary does not affect me positively or negatively" (DD-2, H5, min. 21:15).</p> <p>"the salary was low in comparison to your level of responsibility but I had come to accept that" (DD-3, H5, min. 23:08).</p>
Psychological Contracts	Contract creation	<p>"Did not expect to be able to leave "office" at 15:30. I was committed to work, no matter how much time it would take..." (PBD-1, P1, min. 31:29).</p> <p>"You must be able to adhere to the demands that you require of others. You have to take charge and make decisions even though it is tough. And you must be able to work under deficient working conditions" (PBD-3, P1, min. 22:17).</p>	<p>"I expected to gain hands-on leadership experience, which I did not have. Dealing with tricky situations such as conflict management, and employees with stress, ... basically gaining practical experience with all the leadership theory we were taught while at the academy." (DD-3, P1, min. 29:41).</p> <p>"I expected that I would be able to be in the same job position long enough to gain a lot of experience" (DD-1, P1, min. 21:14).</p>
	Discrepancies and violations	"The master's in military studies and the "Command and General Staff Officers" course while working full time is an issue. Right now, I am not motivated to give up so much of my free time for studying." (PBD-2, P2, min. 35:30).	"I expected to spend more time as a leader since we spent the majority of our time at the academy discussing and preparing for leadership dilemmas. Unfortunately, the reality was that I

“... it was disappointing in the way that I assumed that I would be surrounded by like-minded individuals” (PBD-1, P2, min. 33:34).

spent little time exercising leadership as I found myself buried in administrative tasks” (DD-3, P2, min. 27:09).

“The uncertainty of being tossed around without being involved was the final drop. The fact that I was transferred to Holstebro, to Varde, and back to Holstebro without asking me, while pretending this is normal was too much” (DD-2, P2, min. 35:32).

*Table 10 provides an overview of the most predominant quotes that appeared in the interview process.*

## **Appendix F: Raw Excel & audio files**

See separate attachments.