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Review of "Global Views on Military Stress and Resilience" by Allister MacIntyre, Daniel Lagacé-Roy and Douglas R. Lindsay, eds.

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Allister MacIntyre, Daniel Lagacé-Roy and Douglas R. Lindsay, eds. *Global Views on Military Stress and Resilience*. Kingston: Canadian Defence Academy Press, 2017. Pp. 272.

The general audience of this journal will presumably be familiar with the concept of stress and coping with difficult times; however, the notion of resilience may be a novel one. The origin of research on resilience has deep roots in the science of child development.¹ In the past, research efforts had primarily focused on understanding irrational behaviours of patients during stressful events, as opposed to those exhibiting adaptive patterns of behaviour.² By the 1970s, behavioural science researchers were motivated to investigate difficult conditions that influenced positive adaptations in children. Research on resilience in the last two decades has evolved to explore the influences of external and protective factors central to the prevention of stress and poor mental health.³

Global Views on Military Stress and Resilience is an impressive international compilation of novel strategies that examines individuals' ability to adapt and cope successfully during times of stress and that build resilience within the military community. The book offers an international approach by considering seven different countries in fifteen chapters, although the book largely focuses on the Canadian context. The themes of resilience and coping are prominent in each of the chapters and can be categorised as either a capacity building effort or as an outcome. When there is an absence of medical symptoms or the presence of positive functioning after a traumatic or stressful event, resilience is perceived as an outcome.⁴ Conversely, resilience is regarded as a capacity which is learned when efforts in the form of psychological treatments, interventions or support are provided. The majority of the chapters in the book theorise resilience as a capacity, which reflects a consensus on the importance of investing in

¹ Michael Rutter, "Resilience as a Dynamic Concept," *Development and Psychopathology* 24, no. 2 (May 2012): 335-44.

² Suniya Luthar et al., "The Construct of Resilience: A Critical Evaluation and Guidelines for Future Work," *Child Development* 71, no. 3 (May 2000): 543-62.

³ Staci M. Zolkoski, et al., "Resilience in Children and Youth: A Review," *Children and Youth Services Review* 34, no. 12 (December 2012): 2295-2303.

⁴ Monique Crane, et al., "General Self-efficacy and Psychological Resilience Promote Skill Acquisition Rate Under Psychological Pressure," *Australasian Journal of Organisational Psychology* 10 (2017): 1-12.

individual and organisational resilience in the military as highlighted in Chapter 10.

The book places heavy emphasis on both the ambitious efforts in introducing strategies to increase the accessibility of psychological treatments for military personnel and the imperative need for various forms of social support. Chapters discussing support from knowledgeable leaders that enhances opportunities for military personnel to build resilience and allows them to grow after being exposed to traumatic events were equally pivotal.

Proactive resilience building intervention efforts, such as the use of religion as a coping mechanism for individuals to comprehend traumatic events and mindfulness-based mind fitness training, are discussed in Chapters 13 and 15. Mind fitness training, which has been effectively used in military personnel suffering from Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (i.e. emotional and physical distress resulting from trauma exposure) post-deployment, was successfully applied to military personnel prior to their deployment, thereby promoting resilience. Besides being proactive in character, this training offers an alternative to past strategies of building resilience amongst military personnel. While the effectiveness of this treatment is not known in other high-risk occupational settings, the change in mindset to prioritise good mental health amongst military personnel is encouraging.

Global Views on Military Stress and Resilience consists of chapters that build on each other's recommended strategies and interventions. In addition to select chapters conferring on individual strategies to improve resilience, a combined approach towards doing so is also discussed. Self-efficacy, known as an "internal capacity" and is a vital protective factor in reducing stress, is only discussed by the Dutch authors in Chapter 14. Military self-efficacy is a military member's belief in their ability to use their military skills to cope during hostile situations. Combining both home front support and self-efficacy in pre-deployment training for soldiers was an effective research effort undertaken by these authors. Access to this combination during deployment was seen to effectively reduce post-deployment fatigue and stress. This reaffirms that collective training of resilience building capacity factors are integral for military personnel well-being.

This assertion was aptly followed up by Ian de Terte's chapter on the psychological-based framework known as the Three Part

Model of Psychological Resilience (3-PR) which is designed to be utilised both as a teaching and preventative measure in an attempt to increase resilience among individuals in high risk occupations. In this model, resilience is viewed as a skill building technique rather than a reaction to stress. Effectively used, this model has the potential to benefit individuals in male-dominated lines of work, such as the police or the military, by reducing stigma, which is a well-documented obstacle surrounding seeking psychological intervention within this population. de Terte theorises that resilience is a developing multi-dimensional construct that can be enhanced for high-risk occupations to improve an individual's personal capacity to cope during stressful events. Hence, the 3-PR framework can be used both as a treatment-focused intervention and a prevention strategy for pre-deployment soldiers or in police training. The 3-PR conceptualised framework warrants further research in examining its effectiveness in a form of treatment modules as a preventative psychological intervention effort to decrease psychological distress in personnel of high risk occupations.⁵

Some of the topics in the book which conceptualise resilience as an outcome include psychological strategies used to reduce physiological effects of combat exposure in personnel affected by work-related stress injuries. Others address the needs of military couples and their families in order to sustain familial well-being and resilience. The need for both formal and informal organisational support and family-friendly policies to reduce work demands in order to build and sustain resiliency and simultaneously reduce stress is strongly emphasised in Chapter 5.

The importance of resilient leaders is captured in a quote from Chapter 6 that states that the "best counterterrorism policy is resilience" (p. 108). This quote is further elaborated in the same chapter which highlights the "contagious" effects resilient leaders have on their subordinates in reducing the after-effects of psychological warfare. This notion is re-emphasised in another chapter, Chapter 11, on incorporating formal and informal strategies for training leaders to apply a more human element of leadership. This is relevant to military

⁵ See, for example, Sara Chettiar, "Engineering Human Capacity Through Psychological Resilience Treatment Manual," *Psychreg* (17 May 2018), <https://www.psychreg.org/psychological-resilience-treatment-manual/>.

members in experiencing work with less distress and maintaining resilience as a unit.

Global Views on Military Stress and Resilience's compilation of research work can be regarded as an emerging and pertinent initiative that is both viable and effective in enhancing individual and organisational potential in reducing psychological stress and improving resiliency in military personnel. Its functional findings are a valuable resource for adaptation in other areas of pure science and social science research avenues.

Historians who study the changing landscape of human behaviour may appreciate the trajectory of enhanced human coping through effective strategies that lead to resilience in military environments. Military organisations and their personnel will greatly benefit from this trend-changing body of work as a way of instigating resilience training with their personnel.

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