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Empirical Social Research in and on the Armed Forces

Comparative and National Perspectives



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Foreword

It is one of the core missions of the Center for Military History and Social Sciences of the Bundeswehr (ZMSBw) to conduct and publish studies in military history and the social sciences on behalf of the German Federal Ministry of Defense. The main audience of these studies are the armed forces, the academic community, and the interested public. A central goal of our research is to provide information as a base for decision-making. Another core mission is to conduct basic research in both disciplines. Our military sociology research branch follows the latter by publishing this anthology on empirical social research in and on the armed forces. It provides an international comparison of the structures, methods, and results of empirical military sociology in different countries and analyses the impact of the national background on the respective research. The volume at hand offers an overview on current trends in international military sociology. The large number of renowned contributors from various countries points to the strong international links in military sociology that clearly go beyond joint participation in scientific conferences. This volume definitely is an important step towards a more standardized and comprehensive analysis of military sociology which reveals the strengths and weaknesses as well as the similarities and differences of the respective national military sociologies. The main purpose of the editors and contributors is to start and accelerate a debate on prerequisites, conditions, and consequences of research in military sociology by looking at research practices in a selected number of countries: France, Germany, Israel, Japan, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States. They examine in which areas military sociology research is already widely independent of the national context, and where it pursues general questions with theories, methods, and instruments that leave the national context behind.

The international and comparative perspective of this volume is particularly important for me as commander of the ZMSBw with our institute's strong links to military history and military sociology research institutions across the world. The close cooperation with a large set of different partners on joint publication projects and scientific events is one of the strengths of our institute. Our connections across the world definitely help to gain deep and broad insights into the military as a prime topic of research. The book at hand is complemented by another volume in German ("Empirische Sozialforschung in den Streitkräften", edited by M. Elbe, H. Biehl, and M. Steinbrecher) that concentrates on the methodological problems,

and selected areas of application of the discipline. It shows the breadth and depth of the discipline in a single country.

I would like to thank the editors of this book, Dr. Markus Steinbrecher, Dr. Heiko Biehl, and Prof. Dr. Martin Elbe for the realization of the project and the compilation of its content. In addition, I send my deepest gratitude to all contributors for their participation in the project and their support for the work of ZMSBw. Finally, I would like to thank our colleagues in the publications department at ZMSBw for realizing the book in cooperation with the Berliner Wissenschafts-Verlag. I wish this volume on empirical social research in the armed forces a large readership.

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