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**The Process of Restructuring the Polish Armed Forces as a  
Determinant of Changes in the Organisational Culture of the  
Polish Army**

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**ABSTRACT**

In the article, the author explained the basic concepts related to the restructuring process in the armed forces, she made an in-depth review of the definition of this concept. The author also explained the concept of organizational culture. The article contains the results of research conducted at the War Studies University among soldiers taking courses there. The results of statistical analyzes made it possible to show the relationship between the restructuring carried out in the Polish army and the changes in its organizational culture, and indicate a number of factors that are conducive to this change.

## **Introduction**

The restructuring process in the Polish Armed Forces is one of the most important topics discussed by practitioners and theoreticians. Therefore, it seems reasonable to consider how restructuring may affect the culture of organisation in the Polish Army.

Thus, in relation to the considerations undertaken, the definition of the concept of restructuring has been analysed and the issues directly related to the restructuring of the Armed Forces have been addressed, i.e. identification of objectives, assumptions and stages. Description of these areas has been important in the context of preparation and collection of empirical data presented in the final part of the article.

While discussing the subject, it has been decided solve the main research problem expressed in the form of a question:

*How did the restructuring carried out in the Polish Armed Forces affect the change in the organisational culture of the Polish Army?*

## **Restructuring - Definitions and Theoretical Assumptions**

Restructuring is a complex and multifaceted term. As a result of the analysis of the literature on the subject, the following examples of definitions by various authors have been collected: R. Borowiecki claims that this is *a systemic reconstruction, modernisation or contemporisation of the organisational structure and rules of enterprises and other economic research facilities functioning*. On the other hand, J. Filipczuk believes that *reconstruction of the structure, which consists in changing objectives of enterprise's operation, modernising its potential and adopting a new area of activities, which is to contribute to the improvement of its position on the market and to better operating effectiveness and development*. Another position is taken by I. Świątek-Barylska, claiming that this is *a process of changes of wide scope and significant for further functioning of an enterprise, undertaken, generally, as a reaction to the changes that have occurred or are anticipated in its surrounding*<sup>1</sup>. The above is only a selection of the numerous restructuring definitions presented in the source literature. On the basis of the analysis of not only the definitions presented in the article, one can put forward a thesis that restructuring is an activity which aims at introducing changes in a given company or an organisation.

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<sup>1</sup>R. Borowiecki, *Zarządzanie restrukturyzacją przedsiębiorstw i gospodarki*, wyd. Fundacja Uniwersytetu Ekonomicznego w Krakowie, Kraków 2014, pp. 14-18.

## **Organisational Culture in the Armed Forces**

Organisational culture<sup>2</sup> is one of the elements of every organisation's functioning. Organisational culture should be treated in the context of standards and systems of values which, according to Sikorski, become the stimulators of specific behaviours. Therefore, it is a social category that needs to be interpreted as subjecting the behaviour of people in an organisation to certain common patterns and models. Of particular importance are the role models used by people in life of a collective. The most important are those approaches to organisational culture that emphasize subordination to standards as a feature of cultural behaviour. They are therefore focused on human behaviour and not on the objects that result from it. Importantly, they also highlight the integrating role of culture<sup>3</sup>.

The main function of the organisational culture is to reduce uncertainty, which is connected both with changes taking place within an organisation and those resulting from the functioning in a changing environment. Organisational culture does not function in vacuum; therefore, it depends on a number of external and internal factors<sup>4</sup>. Thus, changes in the organisational culture are the result of general changes that take place in each organisation.

It can be said that the organisational culture is a kind of reference point for every member of an organisation, owing to which it influences the actions, behaviours and decisions taken by them.

## **Practical Dimension of the Organisational Culture in the Polish Army**

For the purpose of this article, the study was conducted using the diagnostic survey method, utilising the questionnaire-supported poll technique. The survey was conducted on a research sample based on targeted selection among 140 soldiers of the Polish Army who attended courses and studies and who were the employees of the War Studies University<sup>5</sup>. Finally, 107 higher and lower-ranking officers completed the questionnaire (23 April - 12 May 2018), including 7 women (6.54%) and 100 men (93.46%). The author is aware that the conducted study is not of a representative nature, but may be a starting point for taking up larger-scale studies.

The age of the respondents was as follows – in the age group 19-29 there was 1 person (0.93%), in the group 30-40 there were 42 persons (39.25%), in the

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<sup>2</sup>More information in Ł. Srokowski, *Zmienić myślenie o firmie*, wyd. Poltex, Warszawa 2011.

<sup>3</sup>B. Nogalski, J. Apanowicz, R. Rutka, A. Czermiński, M. Czerska, *Zarządzanie organizacjami*, Dom Organizatora, Toruń 2002, p. 587.

<sup>4</sup>Ibidem, p. 593.

<sup>5</sup>More information on studies over the military surrounding organisational culture in M. Niemiec, *Teoretyczne i praktyczne aspekty kultury organizacyjnej w środowisku wojskowym*, wyd. AON, Warszawa 2015.

group 41-50 there were 63 persons (58.88%) and in the group over 50 there was 1 person (0.93%).

In the case of the job seniority category, most of the respondents, 67 persons (62.62%), had 16-25 years of service, followed by persons with 6-15 years of service – 18 persons (16.82%) – 22 persons (20.56%) had more than 26 years of service, and there was no respondent with 1-5 years of service.

Among the respondents there were people with the following educational background – the largest number of the respondents had post-graduate education – as many as 79 people (73.83%) – followed by persons with secondary education – 23 people (21.50%), 3 people (2.80%) had completed doctoral studies and there were 2 respondents declaring either having secondary education or receiving undergraduate education (0.93% each).

Among the respondents there were 69 (64.49%) higher-ranking officers and 38 (35.51%) lower-ranking officers.

The question concerning the impact of restructuring in the Armed Forces on the organisational culture was answered as follows: 85 persons (79.44%) stated that there was such a relationship, while 22 persons (20.56%) declared that there was no such relationship. Table 1.

**Table 1.** *Influence of Restructuring in the Armed Forces on their Organisational Culture*

| <b>Responses</b> | <b>n</b> | <b>%</b>       |
|------------------|----------|----------------|
| Yes              | 85       | 79.44%         |
| No               | 22       | 20.56%         |
| <b>Total</b>     |          | <b>100.00%</b> |

Source: own study.

Therefore, in the context of the data obtained earlier, respondents were asked to indicate how they view the importance of each of the four distinct restructuring steps in the Armed Forces. Thus, for the first stage, the answers were as follows: for 37 people (34.58%) it was an important stage, for 28 people (26.17%) it was perceived as having average importance, for 21 people (19.63%) it was very important, for 14 people (13.08%) it was not important, while 5 people (4.67%) did not make any indication for this category, and for 2 people it was an unimportant stage. Table 2

**Table 2.** *Restructuring of the Armed Forces in years 1989-1999*

| <b>Response</b>              | <b>n</b> | <b>%</b>       |
|------------------------------|----------|----------------|
| <b>No indication</b>         | 5        | 4.67%          |
| <b>Very important</b>        | 21       | 19.63%         |
| <b>Important</b>             | 37       | 34.58%         |
| <b>of average importance</b> | 28       | 26.17%         |
| <b>of little importance</b>  | 14       | 13.08%         |
| <b>Not important</b>         | 2        | 1.87%          |
| <b>Total</b>                 |          | <b>100.00%</b> |

Source: own study.

As regards the responses received in the context of the second stage of restructuring, i.e. since Poland joined NATO, 53 respondents (49.53%) said it was a very important stage, 33 respondents (30.84%) considered it an important stage, 14 respondents (13.08%) indicated that it was of average importance, 2 respondents (1.87%) considered it an unimportant stage and 2 respondents (1.87%) also did not provide any answer, while 3 respondents (2.80%) considered it to be unimportant. Table 3.

**Table 3.** *Restructuring of the Armed Forces after joining NATO*

| <b>Response</b>              | <b>n</b> | <b>%</b>       |
|------------------------------|----------|----------------|
| <b>No indication</b>         | 2        | 1.87%          |
| <b>Very important</b>        | 53       | 49.53%         |
| <b>Important</b>             | 33       | 30.84%         |
| <b>of average importance</b> | 14       | 13.08%         |
| <b>of little importance</b>  | 2        | 1.87%          |
| <b>Not important</b>         | 3        | 2.80%          |
| <b>Total</b>                 |          | <b>100.00%</b> |

Source: own study.

In the case of the next stage, i.e. technical modernisation, which took place between 2001 and 2006, the respondents' answers were as follows: for 56 persons (52.34%) it was an important stage, for 28 persons (26.17%) it was of average importance, while for 10 persons (9.35%) it was of little importance, for 9 persons (8.41%) it was of great importance, while for 2 persons (1.87%) it was of no importance and 2 persons (1.987%) did not make any indication. Table 4.

**Table 4.** *Technical modernisation of the Armed Forces in years 2001-2006*

| <b>Response</b>              | <b>n</b> | <b>%</b>       |
|------------------------------|----------|----------------|
| <b>No indication</b>         | 2        | 1.87%          |
| <b>Very important</b>        | 9        | 8.41%          |
| <b>Important</b>             | 56       | 52.34%         |
| <b>of average importance</b> | 28       | 26.17%         |
| <b>of little importance</b>  | 10       | 9.35%          |
| <b>Not important</b>         | 2        | 1.87%          |
| <b>Total</b>                 |          | <b>100.00%</b> |

Source: own study.

Another issue concerned the stage of professionalisation of the Armed Forces, which took place between 2008 and 2010, and so in this category the respondents' answers were as follows: for 50 people (46.73%) it was important, for 29 people (27.10%) it was very important, for 17 people (15.89) it was of average importance, while for 8 people (7.48%) it was of little importance, for 2 people (1.87%) it was not important, and 1 person (0.93%) did not make any indication. Table 5.

**Table 5. Professionalisation of the Armed Forces in years 2008-2010**

| <b>Response</b>              | <b>n</b> | <b>%</b>       |
|------------------------------|----------|----------------|
| <b>No indication</b>         | 1        | 0.93%          |
| <b>Very important</b>        | 29       | 27.10%         |
| <b>Important</b>             | 50       | 46.73%         |
| <b>of average importance</b> | 17       | 15.89%         |
| <b>of little importance</b>  | 8        | 7.48%          |
| <b>Not important</b>         | 2        | 1.87%          |
| <b>Total</b>                 |          | <b>100.00%</b> |

Source: own study.

On the basis of the obtained empirical data, it can be stated that virtually each stage of the restructuring activities carried out in the Armed Forces was, in the opinion of the surveyed respondents, important or very important.

**Table 6. Changes in the Polish Army over the last couple of years**

| <b>Responses</b>   | <b>n</b> | <b>%</b> |
|--|----------|----------|
| <b>Replacement of military equipment</b>                 | 69       | 15.03%   |
| <b>Better IT capabilities in the army</b>                | 57       | 12.42%   |
| <b>Establishment of the National Reserve Forces</b>      | 10       | 2.18%    |
| <b>Poland joining NATO</b>                               | 92       | 20.04%   |
| <b>International training operations</b>                 | 67       | 14.60%   |
| <b>Women in the army</b>                                 | 28       | 6.10%    |
| <b>Increased financing of the army</b>                   | 57       | 12.42%   |
| <b>Openness for cooperation with other allied states</b> | 79       | 17.21%   |

Source: own study.

Next, the surveyed soldiers were asked about their opinion on the changes taking place in the Polish Army as a result of the conducted restructuring. The answers were as follows: 48 people (44.86%) assessed the situation as good, 23 people (21.50%) stated that the situation is bad, 18 respondents (16.82%) indicated the answer very good, while 7 people (6.54%) stated that they assessed the situation after restructuring very badly, 1 person (0.93%) did not give any indication for this question. Table 7.

**Table 7. Assessment of Changes occurring as a Result of Restructuring**

| <b>Responses</b>              | <b>n</b> | <b>%</b>       |
|-------------------------------|----------|----------------|
| <b>No indications</b>         | 1        | 0.93%          |
| <b>Very good</b>              | 10       | 9.35%          |
| <b>Good</b>                   | 48       | 44.86%         |
| <b>I noticed no influence</b> | 18       | 16.82%         |
| <b>Bad</b>                    | 23       | 21.50%         |
| <b>Very bad</b>               | 7        | 6.54%          |
| <b>Total</b>                  |          | <b>100.00%</b> |

Source: own study.

The last issue that the respondents were asked about was the question of identifying the most important change that in their opinion had occurred in the context of the restructuring of the Polish Army, regardless of the stage that could be indicated. The answers were as follows: Poland's accession to NATO, replacement of military equipment, international exercises, openness to international cooperation, increased expenditures for military financing and improved computer equipment capabilities of the army.

**Table 8. Most Important Changes occurring in the Context of Restructuring of the Polish Army**

| <b>Responses</b>   | <b>n</b> | <b>%</b> |
|--|----------|----------|
| <b>Military equipment replacement</b>                    | 63       | 16.6%    |
| <b>Better IT capabilities in the army</b>                | 53       | 13.9%    |
| <b>Establishment of the National Reserve Forces</b>      | 12       | 3.2%     |
| <b>Poland joining NATO</b>                               | 76       | 20.0%    |
| <b>International training operations</b>                 | 59       | 15.5%    |
| <b>Women in the army</b>                                 | 17       | 4.5%     |
| <b>Increased financing of the army</b>                   | 48       | 12.6%    |
| <b>Openness for cooperation with other allied states</b> | 52       | 13.7%    |

Source: own study.

On the basis of the obtained data, it can be concluded that the surveyed soldiers assess the conducted changes with regard to the restructuring as good. The answers obtained are broadly in line with those obtained in the question regarding the most important changes in recent years. This indicates consistency in the respondents' answers, and shows that these elements are actually significant for the surveyed soldiers.



## Summary

There is no doubt that the process of restructuring the Polish Armed Forces was demanding and very complex. Nevertheless, it contributed to the improvement of the Polish Army in many aspects, such as: reduction of personnel levels and significant amounts of obsolete (morally and technically) equipment and military weapons, but it also launched the process of standardisation, compatibility and interoperability of the Polish Armed Forces with the armies of other NATO member states, as well as consisted in the reconstruction and technical modernisation and financing of the Polish Armed Forces.

From the point of view of the ongoing research process, the aforementioned stages and the objectives of the broadly understood restructuring of the Polish Armed Forces described above may be connected with changes in the organisational culture of the Polish Army. According to the empirical data obtained, the surveyed soldiers see the connection between restructuring and its impact on organisational culture. Respondents to the survey notice changes in the organisational culture of the Polish Army that have failed as a result of restructuring in the Armed Forces.

Responding to the main problem, the collected results of empirical study constitute arguments indicating a positive impact of the restructuring carried out in the Armed Forces.

It can be stated that the surveyed soldiers perceive changes in all these elements of the organisational culture of the Polish Army. The most important aspects of change include all the specific elements that make up the organisational culture.

The most important change, in the opinion of the respondents, was Poland's accession to NATO, its openness to international cooperation, followed by the replacement of military equipment with new equipment, international exercises, increased expenditure on financing the army, as well as the issue of better computer equipment capabilities in the army.

The author is aware of the fact that the results of the study are not representative in nature and generalisations in the context of all soldiers should not be made. Nevertheless, the empirical data collected show the need for more extensive studies in this area.

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