

---

## Social Responsibility of the Organization from the Perspective of the Military

---

Submitted 27/10/21, 1st revision, 05/11/21, 2nd revision 23/11/21, accepted 10/12/21

Waldemar Kaczmarek<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:**

**Purpose:** Presentation of the social responsibility of the organization from the perspective of the military as the organization's commitment to protect and strengthen society by building an appropriate strategy that fosters social interests and environmental protection.

**Approach/Methodology/Design:** Undertaking an attempt to answer the question whether solutions in the field of social responsibility in business organizations are reflected in a specific public organization, such as the armed forces?

**Findings:** The key to achieving the adopted goal of the work was also to present the contemporary functions and tasks of the Polish Armed Forces. The main research problem was specified in the form of a question: What is the essence of the social responsibility of the armed forces, perceived from the perspective of their functions and potential tasks?

**Practical Implications:** The basic value determining the meaning of the establishment and functioning of the armed forces, and thus the military service of the motherland. Value results from the inalienable right of every nation to defend its independence, territorial integrity, freedom, and the basis of its existence. It should be assumed that in a situation where there is a threat, the maintenance of the armed forces is socially justified. At the same time, there is no doubt that the armed forces cannot be alienated from society, serving only to maintain political power by the rulers. We deal with situations of this type in totalitarian regimes, where the armed forces are an important factor in keeping society under control.

**Originality/Value:** The declaration of originality of the subject matter is the analysis of the organization from the perspective of social responsibility and its wide research scope.

**Keywords:** CSR, military, armed forces, organization.

**JEL classification:** H55, B55., J29, L44.

**Paper Type:** Research study.

---

<sup>1</sup>Full Professor, Faculty of Management and Command, War Studies University in Warsaw, [w.kaczmarek@akademia.mil.pl](mailto:w.kaczmarek@akademia.mil.pl);

## **1. Introduction**

The period of socio-political transformation that took place in Poland after 1989 led to various changes, including changes in the perception of organizations, including public organizations (institutions). Organizations started to function in a new way, their role and functions also changed. The way of managing them, based on patterns, methods and methods proven in other countries, has also changed. However, a number of problems arose that affected not only the organization and their management, but also the society for which these organizations work. Social responsibility of the organization has become one of such new, previously overlooked problems. It particularly concerns the army (armed forces), perceived from the perspective of a specific public organization.

When considering the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) of the army (Armed Forces), one cannot ignore their functions in a democratic society. It should be noted, however, that the aforementioned functions derive from the role of the armed forces which the state authorities envisage for them (Born, 2006). Historical experience shows that the state's preparation for war is multilateral and comprehensive. It covers all areas of state activity, first of all, political, economic, military, internal security, public order and civil defense.

In the area of military activity, the organization and maintenance of the armed forces at an appropriate level and their preparation for military operations (armed struggle) is of particular importance. The preparation of the armed forces for hostilities throughout history has usually been subordinated to two basic goals. The first, who defined the preparation and destiny of various types of troops to defend the borders, maintain the independence and integrity of the state, and the second, who determined the purpose of the armed forces to conquer states (nations) in the name of achieving political, economic (economic) or ideological goals (religious).

In the first of these situations, the purpose of the armed forces is to discourage the enemy from aggression, and only if necessary, their task is to conduct an armed struggle to achieve a political goal. Therefore, they are an instrument of the state's political activity and an indispensable element enabling the state to function. They are created and maintained due to the need to protect the country from external attack, maintaining readiness to defend itself, which does not exclude the ability to conduct offensive activities. Their primary role is to ensure the territorial integrity of the state and maintain its independence.

Taking the above into account, assuming the area of the state and its surroundings (closer and further) as the criterion, basically two functions of the armed forces are distinguished:

- internal;
- external.

They are directly related to various states of state functioning (peace, crisis, war). The internal function is usually related to maintaining the social order, hence the armed forces can be perceived in terms of both a means of violence, a means of aid and a means of social integration.

As part of the external function, the armed forces are designed to maintain the external security of the state and protect its vital interests. They are a special instrument of state policy, contributing to maintaining its rank and importance as a member of the international community. The tasks of the armed forces in the field of state defense include, *inter alia*: ensuring the inviolability of the territory; elimination, prevention and reduction of threats and conflicts; fulfillment of allied commitments in the field of the use of armed forces and involvement in peacekeeping activities, under the auspices of international organizations.

## **2. Spheres of Activity of the Armed Forces**

The above reflections indicate that the armed forces remain one of the essential elements of the security of the (national) state in the modern world. However, it should be noted that they must change. The main determinant of changes is the changing security environment, and above all the dynamics and nature of threats. Changes in the armed forces, as in any other organization, concern various spheres of activity, hence they can be classified in various ways. Depending on the adopted criterion, changes may concern the dimension (content of the change, process of change), goal (formal, informal (hidden)), type (voluntary, compulsory, planned, adaptive, psychological, cultural, sociological, economic, technological) (Winslow, 2006).

In the case of the armed forces, they may relate to the functions performed by them. In traditional terms, the function of deterring against potential aggression and maintaining the sovereignty of the state and the inviolability of its borders is usually identified; a function related to participation in military conflicts, usually in international relations and within supranational organizations, focused on conflict resolution and stabilization of post-conflict areas, and a function which boils down to humanitarian aid for the civilian population as part of limiting and eliminating the effects of non-military threats (natural disasters, , cataclysms, etc.)

Nowadays, the above-mentioned traditional functions have been extended to new ones, including modernization, organizational and management, stabilization and implementation, as well as legitimization and humanitarian functions (Gocalski, 2012).

A telling example illustrating the changing functions of the armed forces is the Stability Policing concept, the theoretical assumptions and practice of which are related to the activities of the North Atlantic Alliance in post-conflict areas. It includes activities aimed at establishing a safe environment in the crisis area,

---

restoring order and public safety, and establishing conditions for the reconstruction of the state security system by implementing security sector reforms (Shamir and Ben-Ari, 2000).

The modern armed forces, and thus also their personnel, are prepared to participate in various types of undertakings, the most important of which, until recently, was preparation for participation in the war. However, the analysis and evaluation of the reality surrounding us, as well as the form and principles of the functioning of the armed forces clearly indicate that the emphasis of their use has been shifted from military operations to activities of a peaceful nature. The above reflection shows that they may be involved in future (hypothetically conceived) warfare, while currently they focus mainly on activities below the war threshold, carried out in peacetime.

### **3. Issues of the Social Responsibility of the Army**

In order to present the issues of the social responsibility of the army (armed forces) in a clearer way, it is worth explaining at the beginning some concepts that are important in the light of the considerations. At this point, a question should be asked about what is the corporate social responsibility? The simplest answer to this question is that it is an organization's set of obligations to protect and strengthen the society in which it operates. In other words, it is a concept according to which the organization, at the stage of strategy building, voluntarily takes into account social interests and environmental protection, as well as appropriate relations with various groups of stakeholders.

In the literature on the subject, there are many attempts to identify the social responsibility of an organization. One of them indicates that it is the management's obligation to choose such decisions and actions that contribute both to the care of self-interest and to the protection and multiplication of social welfare. In other terms, the social responsibility of an organization means that it is morally responsible and obliged to be accountable to the law and society for its activities (Walkowiak, 2009).

Organizational social responsibility is one of the most dynamic, complex and challenging issues facing management leaders today. Nowadays, public and private sector organizations are under increasing pressure to play a more active role in creating the conditions for a better life. CSR means an organization's commitment to ethical behavior and to contributing to multi-faceted development while demonstrating respect for people, local communities, nations and the environment.

From the point of view of the theory and practice of management, the social responsibility of an organization, which should be fully identified and applied by public institutions, is based on five spheres, which include the sphere of economic responsibility, the sphere of social responsibility, the sphere of environmental responsibility, responsibility in the sphere of knowledge and responsibility in the sphere of ethics (Gustafson, 2007; Mamun and Ahmed 2009).

In the theory and practice of management, two basic models of corporate social responsibility are also identified, referred to as after-profit obligations and before-profit obligations (Nuciari, 2006). In the first model, there are four levels of organizational responsibility: economic, legal, ethical and philanthropic (Rybak, 2004; Prior *et al.*, 2008; Hemingway and Maclagan, 2004).

The second of the aforementioned models of corporate social responsibility - before-profit obligation - is characterized by the recognition of the primacy of moral values over other values and is based on three basic premises. Firstly, the primary goal of an organization operating in the social structure is to obey the rules that govern the social and economic order and, within these rules, to achieve the basic goals of the organization. Second, organizations are obliged to obey moral prohibitions and orders at every stage and in every sphere of their activity. Third, only organizations that meet social expectations deserve to exist.

When approaching the considerations relating to the social responsibility of the armed forces, they should first be identified in the aspect of a specific organization. In many scientific environments, especially in the sociological environment, it is stated that the military is a special organization characterized by a set of specific features. The armed forces are a public institution with a clearly defined hierarchical structure, identified with the bureaucratic structure popular in the science of management. What does this indicate? Firstly, it is an organization created for the efficient and effective achievement of precisely defined goals. Secondly, there is a strict hierarchical order in which to exercise control over the members of the organization. It is visible in a specific uniform, the presence of military ranks and other symbols which, in a sense, indicate the position of the members of the organization in its structure.

**Table 1.** *Social consequences of CSR*

Social consequences of CSR		
clearly marked hierarchy obliges to specific attitudes and behaviors not only when performing military functions (as in other social institutions), but also outside the military institution	the external symbols of the hierarchy have significant value for soldiers (promotions, decorations, types of uniforms, etc.) because of their position in the army, as well as for some psychological reasons. Therefore, they can be used in social engineering activities aimed at developing obedience, loyalty and behavior consistent with the standards of military life.	the importance of the hierarchy lies in the fact that it is a criterion for the evaluation of a soldier for civil society, because it is on this basis that the general value of a person wearing a uniform is assessed, which allows him to be placed on a specific scale of social prestige

*Source:* Own study based on Kołodziejczyk, 2016.

---

The presented (Table 1) social consequences indicate a precisely defined hierarchy to specific attitudes and behaviors during and outside of military functions. The external symbols of the hierarchy are of significant value to soldiers because of their position in the military, and for some psychological reasons. They are used in social engineering activities aimed at developing obedience, loyalty and behavior consistent with the standards of military life. The importance of the hierarchy for civil society is a criterion for assessing a soldier as the value of a person using a uniform as a symbol of a specific scale of social prestige (Kołodziejczyk, 2016).

The armed forces have specific means of action as a result of the purposes for which they were established. It has technologies to destroy enemy objects, and - what is especially important - a large amount of deadly weapons. This clearly distinguishes the armed forces from other organizations, mainly through the existence of clearly defined norms of behavior of soldiers; the specific organizational system of the army and the need to select people with high qualifications, pro-social values and appropriate psychophysical predispositions.

The armed forces cultivate patriotic traditions, which is indicated by the attachment to the uniform, markings and symbols of military ranks, specific nomenclature and vocabulary, military ceremonial and many other symptoms characteristic only for the army.

The armed forces are an organization that is obliged to operate exceptionally efficiently (De Graaff and Van Gils, 2012). It is said to be an organization with a high degree of reliability. Although this aspiration should characterize other social institutions, due to the nature of the army as a social group and as an institution, and due to the use of specific means of violence, as well as the fulfillment of extremely important functions for society and the state - in the organization of the armed forces, there will be a particular sensitivity to all manifestations of dysfunctionality in institutional operation (Ibid).

Common values for all its members are an important element of the armed forces. They share common values of various character, i.e., both moral and ethical, as well as ideological and political, organizational, professional, etc., which result from the values propagated by the existing political system or system. These values create a specific system of military group values, clearly recognizable in comparison with value systems existing in other social groups.

The military as a group also determines the means of identification and separation from other groups. For example, a soldier's uniform, the wearing of which is legally restricted to military personnel, distinguishes soldiers as representatives of the army from members of other social groups and allows them to be identified. A similar meaning, distinguishing soldiers as representatives of a specific group, is the observance of military ceremonies, military customs and customs, as well as the

manner of behavior of soldiers in and outside the service defined by regulations, which is presented in Figure 1.

**Figure 1.** Behavior of soldiers in the armed forces



**Source:** Own study based on Kołodziejczyk, 2016.

Figure 1 presents the behavior of soldiers in the armed forces, which allows us to conclude that the armed forces are an organization with an advantage over a personal bond and a bureaucratic institution with a hierarchical structure. The armed forces are also a social environment with its own stratification system and are organized to engage in victorious struggle.

In view of the above, it is beyond dispute that a specific organizational culture and identity distinguishes the armed forces from other public organizations. They are characterized by a kind of disinterestedness in action, perceived as the lack of potential financial profits from their activities. There is also no doubt that the armed forces are highly organized and capable of operating in conditions of high risk.

Considering the above, an open question remains whether the armed forces can be considered (assessed) in the context of corporate social responsibility, which is quite broadly characterized in relation to business organizations? The answer to this question is not simple and straightforward. The results of the conducted investigations indicate that the armed forces can and should be perceived as a socially responsible organization, however, they should be subject to significantly different criteria and evaluation parameters. On the surface, if we recall the basic (Bourg and Segal, 1999), previously mentioned spheres of corporate social responsibility, the answer may be positive.

The armed forces are the beneficiaries of enormous funds from the state budget, amounting to at least 2% of GDP annually. Therefore, responsibility in the economic sphere should be based on proper, well-thought-out and rational spending. There is no doubt that the concepts of making purchases from domestic armaments companies, supplying the armed forces with domestic equipment and other products

(food, fuel, etc.) should have a special justification in this situation. However, how to evaluate this sphere in a situation where certain types (types) of equipment are subject to recycling (scrapping), and have never been used in the action? Doubts of this type can be multiplied without arriving at any rational conclusions.

Another problem concerns responsibility in the social sphere. On the one hand, the armed forces should provide soldiers with maximum safety under conditions of peaceful training. But how to perceive this problem in a combat situation in which soldiers take actions that may even lead to loss of life. This is a normal situation. Another issue is the so-called the apolitical nature of the armed forces, which radically restricts the sphere of freedom and human rights - soldiers cannot engage in political activity, have no right to strike, etc.

Another problem is the sphere of environmental responsibility. How to judge the armed forces in this context, if even a layman realizes that the use of basic means of combat causes irreparable damage to the environment. The use of conventional weapons causes, for example, spatial fires, water and soil contamination. Yet the experiences of wars and armed conflicts provide numerous examples of the use of weapons of mass destruction, e.g., nuclear weapons used by US troops during World War II, biological weapons massively used during the Vietnam War (Badash, 2005), uranium-core missiles used during the war in Iraq. We are aware that the decisions related to the use of the above-mentioned means of combat significantly limited the losses incurred by the fighting troops.

It is also difficult to rationally assess the responsibility of the armed forces in the sphere of knowledge, because they are not an organization established to implement projects in the identified sphere.

There is also the sphere of ethical responsibility, which concerns compliance with the law and ethical standards in all areas of the organization's activities and the promotion of ethical standards. The results of the research indicate that this is an area that clearly concerns the armed forces. It is worth noting here that similar views are expressed by many researchers, including in the form of publications on the ethics of military service, also perceived through the prism of armed struggle.

In many works devoted to professional ethics, basic principles of professional ethics are identified. These include the principles of trust, integrity, diligence and responsibility.

Taking into account the above content, it is possible to try to formulate the assumptions of the ethics of a soldier, perceived as a member of a specific organization, which is the armed forces. It can be assumed that it is adequate to the ethics of state service functionaries, the detailed description of which was made by J. Itrich-Drabarek (Itrich-Drabarek, 2016). In its considerations, it includes soldiers among those specified in Art. 115 of the Criminal Code, a group of public officials,



in addition to, inter alia, judges, employees of the government administration, policemen and others (Ibid).

In the group of public officials, the aforementioned author distinguishes a group of uniformed officers. He identifies them as members of special-purpose, disposable and uniform groups, distinguished on the basis of two criteria:

- remaining members of the group in a specific (defined by law) social relationship;
- the special role they play in society.

The disposable layers include all units whose source of existence is belonging to organized groups of a special nature, i.e., the army, police, other uniformed and paramilitary services (Ibid). At the same time, the author states that (...) dispositional groups are located in the sphere of politics, because the reason for their creation by the state is maintaining state power, public peace, preventing and combating crime, etc (Ibid). It should be emphasized that officials of public services are assigned a specific system of values, which is presented in Figure 2.

**Figure 2.** *Value system for public service officers.*



**Source:** *Own study.*

The listed values should characterize the soldiers who are the personnel of the armed forces. Therefore, they should be seen as an important component of the sphere of ethical responsibility, which is an integral part of the social responsibility of the armed forces. As previously noted, professional ethics consists of various codes of ethics, oaths or oaths that certain professional groups undertake to observe. From the point of view of the armed forces, the most important ethical obligation of a soldier is connected with taking a military oath.

Taking into account the above considerations, several conclusions can be drawn, which constitute their specific summary. Interesting views on this issue are expressed by P. Kocoń, wondering whether (...) is the army a socially responsible institution? In other words, is it in addition to its primary task, which is, *inter alia*, ensuring national security, the military provides other services to its stakeholders (...). He also notes that (...) more and more often the military is not engaged in ruthless crusades and "total wars", but in ensuring peace, protecting human rights or extinguishing conflicts. These actions do not exclude the use of armed force, but in a way add to the military component actions which - practiced by companies - we would call corporate social responsibility (...) (Kocoń, 2011).

To sum up, it should be stated that the specific nature of the armed forces results from the goals and tasks that the forces should achieve and implement. The basic value determining the sense of establishing and functioning of the armed forces, and thus the military service of the motherland. This value results from the inalienable right of every nation to defend its independence, territorial integrity, freedom and the protection of the foundations of its existence. It can be undoubtedly assumed that in a situation where certain, even hypothetical threats exist, the maintenance of the armed forces is socially justified, or even necessary. At the same time, there is no doubt that the armed forces cannot be alienated from society, serving only the maintenance of political power by the rulers. We deal with situations of this type in totalitarian regimes, where the armed forces are an important factor in keeping society under control.

In democratic countries, the armed forces serve society by becoming like organizations dedicated to a specific task. However, the basis of their activity is still honor, fidelity to the motherland and sacrifice for it, including the sacrifice of one's own life. The observance and cultivation of the above-mentioned values in the armed forces makes the armed forces a socially responsible organization.

#### **4. Conclusion**

In the summary of the conducted research, it should be emphasized that the social responsibility of the organization is considered to be one of the greatest challenges of the 21st century. The dissemination of the principles of social responsibility in organizations concerning various dimensions, including social, economic, ecological and ethical, is gaining more and more importance. However, it is still associated mainly with business organizations.

It should also be emphasized that the concept of corporate social responsibility covers scientific research in various fields and scientific disciplines, including philosophy, sociology, psychology and political science. However, corporate social responsibility is an important area of inquiry in management and quality sciences. Currently, corporate social responsibility begins to play an increasingly important role in public organizations, but there is still no justified theory, supported by

organizational practice. This problem in its entirety concerns the armed forces and soldiers that are part of them.

The aim of this work was to present the results of research on the issues of corporate social responsibility, perceived as a specialty (subdiscipline?) In management and quality sciences. It was also an attempt to answer the question whether solutions in the field of social responsibility in business (economic) organizations are reflected in a specific public organization, such as the armed forces. The presentation of contemporary functions and tasks of the Polish Armed Forces was also important for the achievement of the adopted goal of the work.

In order to achieve the adopted research goal, the main research problem was defined in the form of a question: What is the essence of the social responsibility of the armed forces, perceived from the perspective of their functions and potential tasks? In the author's opinion, the research results confirmed the adopted research assumptions. Research problems have been solved, hence it should be assumed that the research goal has been achieved. It should be emphasized, however, that the undertaken issues, due to their complexity, require further research studies that capture the social responsibility of the armed forces from various cognitive perspectives.

### **References:**

- Badash, L. 2005. American physicists, nuclear weapons in World War II, and social responsibility. *Physics in Perspective*, 7(2), 138-149.
- Born, H. 2006. Democratic control of armed forces. In *Handbook of the Sociology of the Military*, 151-165. Springer, Boston, MA.
- De Graaff, M.C., Van Gils, M.J. 2012. Military professionalism, an organizational challenge by itself. *Threats to military professionalism, international perspectives*, 57-70.
- Gocalski, W. 2012. Transformacja zagrożeń, funkcje sił zbrojnych, migronacjonalizm. In: M. Adamkiewicz (red. nauk.), *Interdyscyplinarny charakter bezpieczeństwa*, Warszawa.
- Gustafson, J. 2007. Czym jest społeczna odpowiedzialność biznesu? In: *Biznes t. 1, Zarządzanie firmą*, Warszawa.
- Hemingway, C.A., MacLagan, P.W. 2004. Managers' personal values as drivers of corporate social responsibility. *Journal of business ethics*, 50(1), 33-44.
- Itrich-Drabarek, J. 2016. *Etyka zawodowa funkcjonariuszy służb państwowych*, Warszawa.
- Kocoń, P. 2011. Społeczna odpowiedzialność sił zbrojnych. In: Polok, G., (red. nauk), *Społeczna odpowiedzialność – aspekty teoretyczne i praktyczne*, Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Ekonomicznego w Katowicach „Studia Ekonomiczne”, Katowice.
- Kołodziejczyk, A. 2016. Wojsko jako zbiorowość i grupa społeczna. *Bezpieczeństwo, obronność, socjologia*, nr 4(6), WCEO Warszawa.
- Mamun, M.A., Ahmed, Z.U. 2009. Manager's vision for corporate social responsibility. *European Journal of Scientific Research*, 30(4), 631-648.
- Nuciari, M. 2006. Models and explanations for military organization: an updated reconsideration. In *Handbook of the Sociology of the Military*, 61-85. Springer, Boston, MA.

- 
- Prior, D., Surroca, J., Tribó, J.A. 2008. Are socially responsible managers really ethical? Exploring the relationship between earnings management and corporate social responsibility. *Corporate governance: An international review*, 16(3), 160-177.
- Rybak, M. 2004. *Etyka menadżera – społeczna odpowiedzialność przedsiębiorstwa*. Warszawa.
- Rybak, M. 2001. *Społeczna odpowiedzialność biznesu – idea i rzeczywistość*. Warszawa.
- Shamir, B., Ben-Ari, E. 2000. Challenges of military leadership in changing armies. *Journal of Political & Military Sociology*, 43-59.
- Soeters, J.L., Winslow, D.J., Weibull, A. 2006. Military culture. In: *Handbook of the Sociology of the Military*, 237-254. Springer, Boston, MA.
- Walkowiak, R. 2009. *Społeczna odpowiedzialność organizacji, w Społeczna odpowiedzialność organizacji. Od odpowiedzialności do elastycznych form pracy*, praca zbiorowa pod redakcją R. Walkowiaka, K. Krakowskiego, Olsztyn.
- Winslow, D. 2006. Military organization and culture from three perspectives: the case of army. In *Social Sciences and the Military*, 81-102. Routledge.