Transformation of Military Leadership as an Element Constituting Military Security

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Abstract

The armed forces of NATO, the foundation of military security in the collective and individual sense, have been, for years, constituting the determinants shaping their interoperability and effectiveness. Such actions are taken with varying intensity by all members also in terms of military leadership. The scope and comprehensiveness of these actions mainly oscillate around the perception of leadership in the context of the tool for shaping interpersonal relationships. The goal of the organizational context, which less attention is put to, is the proper section and training of the leaders, who are not accidentally appointed, but were chosen on the basis of a thoughtful process. Therefore, in the area of leadership considered an important organizational phenomenon, a variety of transformations are carried out, which are intended to improve leadership and the units implementing them, so it is used for the benefit of the armed forces. The Polish armed forces have also undertaken such actions. Their scope is to be based on a broad analysis of leadership in conducted in 2018. However, ensuring the optimization of further action requires the recognition of the most significant leadership transformations that have been implemented by the Alliance's leading armed forces and are a guarantor of substantially higher quality of military leadership. These transformations are described and discussed in this paper.

Keywords: military security, military leadership, leadership transformations.

1. Introduction

The armed forces of the countries that have joined and join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization undergo transformations, whose goal is to improve their alignment with the general requirements of allied interoperability. These transformations concern not only military equipment, but also patterns that are related to the personnel image of the armed forces; they are necessary to create an adequate level of military security.

One of the important elements of the social transformation of the armed forces is the evolution of military leadership and its integration in command. In the modern model of the armed forces, leadership is intended to be a determinant not only of interpersonal relations, but also organizational culture and the atmosphere of service and work. At the same time, it does not undermine the principle of single-person command and does not interfere with the hierarchal nature of military organizations.

Such a formulated objective can be achieved by carrying out multifaceted actions in terms of full implementation of the goal combined with the building of a culture of military leadership. However, the scope of these actions differ in various NATO member countries. The best solutions are comprehensive leadership models that cover all relevant organizational,

interpersonal, and individual aspects. Polish efforts to develop military leadership have also been developed. However, as it is demonstrated by the 2018 extensive analysis of the Polish armed forces (RKP, 2018) the undertaken actions are far from the best NATO practices and models. These models, based on the achievements of management theories, point to a path that can be followed in order to create out of military leadership an organizational phenomenon that has the capability to affect the level of military security of the state and the Alliance as a whole.

The considerations presented in this paper are based on the results of the already mentioned analysis, in which the author participated as an expert and a member of the design team, as well as the author's qualitative comparative studies on military leadership models in NATO. The generalized results of this analysis and the research carried out focus on the most important aspects of leadership that determine its image and quality, and indirectly influence the level of military security in both the national and NATO context.

2. Leadership Philosophy

Military leadership in NATO countries is not based on uniform assumptions. National armed forces, when developing their own solutions, often rely on domestic management theories. However, the common denominator of the approach to leadership as a element that shapes military security treats it, as the Canadian Military Doctrine puts it, "as an important moral factor of the military power" (JDB, 2009, p. 3–4), or as the British Army (APD, 2010, p. 2.2.) or Dutch Army (NDD, 2005, p. 50) see it, namely, as a part of the moral component of the

combat force. This approach can also be much broader, as can be seen in the views expressed by the command of the American armed forces, where leadership is not only associated with morale, but is additionally a multiplication component that unifies other elements of combat power (Operation, 2011, p. 4–1.). Therefore, leadership in a number of NATO member states armies is not merely a relationship between the leader and their supporters, but it is also, from the perspective of military organization, a relevant phenomenon that is often referred to as "the lifeblood of an army" (DL, 2012, p. 1).

This approach to leadership is based on the generally assumed standpoint that success in combat depends on people more than on the best equipment or tactics. Moreover, effective leadership, as characterized by the British armed forces, is the externalization of personalities and objectives of the activities carried out (DL, 2012, p. 5) which, when directed towards people and situations, will ensure victory in the most demanding circumstances. At the same time, the basis of military leadership is a collection of moral values that are quite similar to those of many NATO member states, which is demonstrated in Table 1.

The proposed solutions recognize that the sound and authentic moral values, adopted as the basis of the leadership of all military leaders, are intended to make that leadership moral, fair, and accepted by the collective of soldiers and civilian personnel at different levels of command of the armed forces. However, the pursuit to base military leadership on the commonly adopted values and moral principles should bring forth the realization that both the leaders and their supporters can interpret specific values, moral standards, or sets of norms differently. Justice, honesty, equality, and responsibility can

Table 1. The Fundamental Moral Values of the Selected NATO Armed Forces

Canada	United Kingdom	U.S.A.	Germany	Poland
courage	courage	personal courage	courage	courage
duty	selfless engagement	selfless service	allegiance and conscientiousness	patriotism
loyalty	loyalty	loyalty	camaraderie and tactfulness	vocational solidarity
	discipline	obligation	discipline	responsibility
	respect for others	respect		dignity
integrity	integrity	honor		honor
		honesty	honesty and tolerance	honesty
			openness to other cultures	prudence
				justice
			competency and willingness to learn	bravery
			righteousness in relation to to oneself and other	truthfulness

Source: Based on (DWH, 2006, p. 16 & next); (APD, 2010, pp. 2-19-2-22); (IF, 2008, paragraph 102), (KHZZ, 2008).

have divergent interpretations, even among people with high moral standards. Therefore, extensive explanations, which are included in the best solutions, are needed because they introduce proper interpretation schemes.

Still, the adopted standpoints do not overestimate these values. It is recognized that even the best set of values is only a necessary, but insufficient condition for effective military leadership. The rightness of the act depends as well on the person, time and place, the nature of the environment, the participating people, the resources used, and many other factors. This is particularly important in military leadership at higher organization levels, where ethical choices are much more complicated and difficult to make. That is why other areas of transformation are also important, including comprehensive organizational solutions and appropriate educational and training models to improve the skills of military leaders at different levels of organization.

3. Organizational Solutions

Comprehensive models of military leadership, as in the case of most leadership theories, pay special attention to the importance of dynamic relationships between the leader, supporters, and the situation, including the factor of various elements that strengthen or weaken the leader's authority. The consequence of this approach is the emphasis on the issue of the proper selection of candidates for military leaders in the armed forces using such models. Real leaders do not appear accidentally, but rather on account of a selection process that identifies individuals who fit the military academies' programs and training centers, and further training based on established criteria.

The eligibility and selection criteria for candidates to participate in an education program or training are formulated on the basis of the general and detailed characteristics of the leader the given education form is designed for. An example of the general characteristics is the *Leadership Requirements Model* (LRM) (ADP, 2019, p.1–6), which contains the competences and attributes of the leader additionally described and explained in detail (in chapters 2 to 7), so that they are properly understood and can be accurately assessed.

On the other hand, the general characteristics are detailed, as in Canadian solutions, with a simplified model of leadership based on the system approach. It assumes a number of relationships between the various factors affecting the functioning and influence of the leader. These are four main groups of variables in this model, namely, the characteristics and behavior of the leader, individual and group factors, situational factors, and the achieved results. Effective leadership, according to the adopted assumptions, is to be ensured by the proper characteristics of the leader, which consists of: knowledge and skills, cognitive abilities, social competences, individual characteristics, vocational motivation, and adopted values. It is the foundation of the developed *Leader Development Framework* (LCF, 2007, p. 150), which differentiates four levels of leadership skills necessary to appropriately fulfill the leadership role at different organizational levels, as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Framework Model of Leader Development

Leader levels	EXPERTISE	COGNITIVE CAPACITIES	SOCIAL CAPACITIES	CHANGE CAPACITIES	PROFFESIONAL IDEOLOGY
SENIOR	STRATEGIC	CREATIVE ABSTRACT	INTER-INSTITUTIONAL	PARADIGM SHIFTING	STEWARSHIP
ADVANCED					
INTERMEDIATE					
JUNIOR	TACTICAL	ANALITICAL	INTER-PERSONAL	OPEN	INTERNALIZE

Source: LCF, 2007, p. 150.

In order to achieve an adequate level of assessment, candidates for leaders of various levels must demonstrate different capacity ranges in five areas and related to them 16 attributes characterized in the descriptive part of the model (Edwards, Bentley, Walker, 2006, p. 10). Particular capacity areas include the following elements:
- expertise, including technical and specialist skills;
- cognitive abilities, including analytic skills, ability to make decisions, creativity;
- social skills, including flexibility, interpersonal, team and communicative skills;
- ability to change, including self-development, ability to form a group, ability to learn and build a learning organization;
- professional ideology, i.e. acquiring ethos, moral reasoning, reliability (LCF, 2007, p. 130).

The Americans use a very similar classification in their armed forces, distinguishing five categories of military leadership levels (Riley et al., 2013, p. 5), ranked according to the level of capability and opinion achieved in the assessed areas, as presented in Table 2.

Each of these categories is described in detail (Riley et al., 2013, p. 7 & n.), including proper indicators and their measurements, which provide an adequate assessment of individual efficiency and in relation to the particular organizational levels. Moreover, each category is enriched by specific saturation conditions that are treated as additional variables.

Due to the transformation of organizational structures and the new challenges faced by the armed forces, more and more attention is paid to leadership concepts in the functioning of the leader in various teams at every organizational level. At the same time, at the level of command, where there is a need for cooperation between lieutenants and officers, the relationship between the commander and the senior non-commissioned officer that ensures the building of the right image and good level of leadership is an element that is strongly emphasized as is the case in Canadian (Banks, 2006, p. 3), English, or American solutions. This approach stems from experiences from contemporary conflicts, which have shown that the rank of non-commissioned officers has increased not only as direct leaders of different levels, but also as leaders whose action can affect achieving goals at a much higher level, including

Table 2. Categories of Leadership Levels and Their Description

Exceptional leaders	Demonstrate excellence in leadership
High-performing leaders	Demonstrate very effective leadership; generally exceed basic expectations
Proficient leaders	Demonstrate sound leadership; generally meet basic expectations
Low-performing leaders	Have potential for improvement; strive toward basic expectations, but are still learning
Non-performing leaders	Have questionable potential for improvement; failing to meet most basic expectations

Source: Riley et al., 2013, p. 5.

the strategic ones (English, 2006, p. 48). Therefore, there are solutions that indicate the need to jointly train officers and non-commissioned officers at the proper levels of leadership in order to provide the opportunity to learn how to *be flexible in terms of style, but hardly follow the rules* (Kouzes, Posner, 2010, p. 47), what is supposed to enable appropriate contact with others on an emotional level.

Treating leadership as an organizational phenomenon also requires noting that creating effective solutions related to selection, competence management, and developing leadership skills is conditioned by the adoption of three organizational leadership levels. This division, currently used in many solutions of the Alliance army, and initiated by the Americans, is based on the structure of organizational levels found in management theory and specifies the following types of leadership:

- direct leadership – related to constant, direct contact and influencing leaders – typical for the commanders of the squad-company level, and often battalion, as well as the superiors in relation to the group of direct associates;
- organizational leadership – related to influencing on the organization (structure) indirectly through direct leaders, and a group of direct associates – typical at the level of regiments, brigades, divisions and corps, as well as in staff positions;
- strategic leadership – related to influencing by establishing objectives, standards, and various concepts for the whole organization – typical of the military executives.

This division is also of great importance for shaping military security by classifying and preparing potential units that can have a significant impact on it.

Leadership transformations also include building national structures responsible for creating and improving assumptions, as well as educating and training leaders at all levels. In the German army, such a solution was established in 1956 in the form of a school, and then a center – *Zentrum Innere Führung* in Koblenz. The Center is an active creator of leadership objectives, and an institution that is responsible for education and training in that field, as well as organizing various courses. The Center is also the implementer of new solutions in the area of shaping leadership skills..

The Center for the Army Profession and Leadership (CAPL)[1] is currently playing a similar role in the U.S. military.

The Center develops doctrines and leadership development programs at different levels; it conducts research on requirements, developmental trends, improvement of capabilities and skills necessary for effective leadership. Furthermore, it develops other products and services used in the education of leadership candidates and creates new resources for the e-learning system with materials on leadership.

In contrast, in the British Army, the institution that focuses on leadership issues, the Defence Leadership Centre, established in 2002, operates as part of the Defence Academy of the United Kingdom in Shrivenham. The center deals with the educational aspect of leadership and supports various research projects that refer not only to the definition of its framework, but also tries to identify the fundamental differences between leadership and command or management in the military environment.

Of course, also at the NATO level, due to the rank attributed to leadership and its impact on military security, there are actions taken to institutionalize leadership.

Another organizational aspect of leadership, the importance of which has been significantly increasing in recent years is the culture of leadership. It stems from the fact that there is a similar interaction between leadership and organizational culture as between the leader and the ones who follow them, i.e., a mutual influence that determines both the form of leadership and behavior of the leader, as well as the shape of the organizational culture. At the same time, the leader often becomes, as E.H. Schein points out, a kind of animator of organizational culture in organizations that are created from scratch or have undergone significant reorganization changes. Then it is the leader's values, principles, behaviors, and rituals they have initiated that can significantly create the basics of the organizational culture (Schein, 1997, p. 82). Leaders with strong authority, thanks to their actions, adopted and conveyed values, behaviors, as well as the methods of conduct shape their followers, and indirectly, forge the culture of leadership in the community. Such a created culture of leadership demonstrates several important features, among which there are:

- an organizational climate conducive to unity, cohesion, and trust;
- promotion and rewarding mental skills of individuals and their ability to break with established paradigms and employ new solutions;
- choosing and rewarding leaders who have clear priorities and are focused on a specific mission;

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[1] It is part of The U.S. Army Combined Arms Center in Fort Leavenworth Kansas and has been operating since April 2019.

- requiring and rewarding the transfer of responsibility by leaders;
- providing support to individuals and leaders using emerging opportunities.

However, the development of such a culture will not happen spontaneously, because it is initiated by properly prepared top-level leaders who understand and convey a clear vision of creating a working environment that will attract the staff sharing the same values. Still, despite the great consistency of the military environment in creating a culture of leadership, cultural differences must also be taken into account. These difference are manifested with the meaning given to the attributes that refer to particular people, e.g., a pilot, ship's captain, commando, tank soldier, artillery officer, as well as their distinctive attributes. They should be also seen between the personal corps and in all kinds of armed forces and troops. It means that only an adequate understanding and use of these differences, based on the knowledge gained by the leaders during their education and training, can result in a culture of leadership that has the power to transform the level of military security.

4. The Education and Improvement of Leaders

Effective education and teaching strategies are an essential element of military leadership models. They arose, like current leadership concepts, in a number of NATO armies at the end of the last and the beginning of the present century. They are based on the assumption that the development of the leader must cover all functional groups and components, and is continued from the moment of candidacy until the end of military service.

In comprehensive models of leadership, it is assumed that leaders "are developed through the career-long synthesis of the training, education, and experiences acquired through opportunities in the institutional, operational, and self-development domains" (ATDL, 2017, p. 247).

The current training challenge, in terms of military leadership, seems to be the optimization, synchronization, and support of education at military universities and training centers, in military units, and self-development that ensure the preparation of leaders at all levels capable of responding in various military operations. Therefore, the training of leaders in the currently adopted solutions is based on the principle of learning through interaction of theory (principles) and practice (experience), or vice versa, i.e., supported by exercises, examples, and case studies, as it is shown in Figure 2.

Generally speaking, the education and training of leaders is now divided into two types, namely:
1. education and training consisting in preparing candidates for leadership positions;
2. education and training improving leadership skills during the stay with the group they lead.

Although the unification of this element of leadership seems crucial, the detailed solutions of the various armies of the Alliance are significantly different. This results from the diversity of the approach to the education of individual

personal corps and the traditions associated with the relationship of the officer and non-commissioned office, which are not yet uniform in all NATO armies. It is then an aspect of leadership that will be reorganized in many armies over the coming years in order to ensure an adequate level of allied interoperability.

Mentoring is the last element of improving leadership skills. It is becoming increasingly important. Its revival, because historically it is not a new phenomenon, is intended to make leaders reach successive levels of leadership responsibility better and faster, as well as to increase staff satisfaction. At the same time, as it is known from more than 20 years of research conducted by J.M. Kouzes and B.Z. Posner (Kouzes, Posner, 2008, p. 106), each skill can be strengthened, trained, improved if the leader has the motivation, will, and a chance to train and the opportunity to receive preliminary guidance and feedback that are provided by proper mentoring. Therefore, the current approach in comprehensive leadership models points out that organizing counselling sessions on professional development and feedback provided by senior leaders can significantly affect subordinates in terms of being able to identify one's own strengths and developmental needs, as well as designing a development plan as a leader (ADP, 2019, p. 3–6).

Mentoring is also intended to help mentees to identify and prepare for the positions that best fit their needs and interests. Its implementation, although stereotypically perceived as the younger-older relationship, can also depend on the length of employment, experience, or knowledge, and then the younger person can mentor the older one as a field expert. Mentoring relationships in leadership give both mentors and mentees a great opportunity to broaden their skills, not only leadership related, but also interpersonal and technical, which, especially in senior positions, can have a significant impact on military security. Preparation to become a mentor requires proper formation. It seems, however, that that need is still not recognized enough to commence the education and training of leaders in many armed forces.

The author's research and analysis carried out in the Polish armed forces indicates that intensification is required in another aspect of the leader's training, namely in

Figure 2. Interaction between Theory and Practice during the Process of Leader's Training
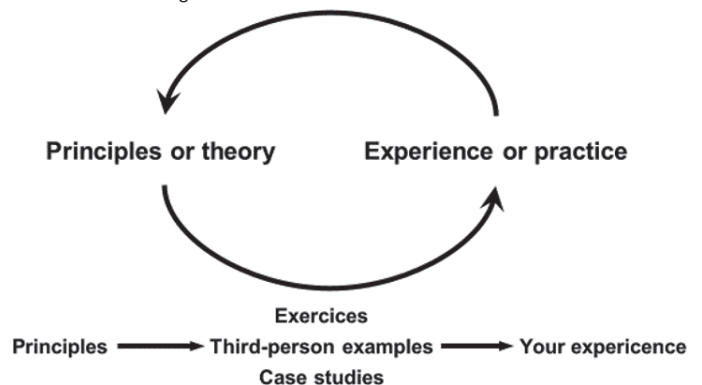
Source: Adair, 2007, p. 97.

self-development. After more than 30 years of research, R. Boyatzis (Goleman, Boyatzis, McKee, p. 129 & n.) points out that it is an equally important form of improving leadership skills as education and training. Self-development, however, is possible in organizational conditions conducive to learning and improving one's leadership skills, i.e., with significant support from higher-level leaders, who can themselves also initiate it through their own example of culture of learning. At the same time, it is necessary for the trainees to be aware that military leaders must learn on their own, and that it is required by the organization, which will also take this aspect into account in the individual assessment of the level of leadership.

5. Conclusion

Leadership in the military environment will be subject to continued transformations resulting from its role as a component of functional operational capabilities and a multifaceted organizational phenomenon. In the armed forces, as well as in other areas of life, the basis of these transformations is mainly the progressively higher awareness of the participants on the relationship necessary to build the position of the leader and the virtualization of the functioning of personnel. The latter problem related to the technological modernization of the armed forces will, in particular, force individuals who claim to be the leader, at each level, to keep acquiring new skills, and use, in their surroundings, solutions to ensure the most valuable aspects of leadership, namely, a direct relationship between the leader and the ones they lead.

The guidelines and comprehensive leadership models created by the Alliance's leading armed forces are very extensive. They are there to address the comprehensive organizational needs necessary for efficient functioning as a foundation for military security. That is why they take into account various aspects of the functioning of leaders at all organizational levels. This is the direction of military leadership transformation, which, if applied in other NATO armies, will significantly affect the performance of interoperability. It will also shape military security by improving the quality of the moral component of the military (combat) of particular armed forces. The scientific facts presented demonstrate that this is possible if a broader and more comprehensive view of military leadership and its impact on the functioning of the armed forces is adopted, and many important aspects of military leadership will be recognized, as well as the possibility of their further modification.

Solutions that seem most important in constituting models of military leadership, which is meant to positively influence military security, are, i.a., the following aspects: the proper selection of candidates for leaders at all levels, a precise definition and description of the leadership levels and sets of leadership skills for all leadership levels. A coherent framework model for the development and improvement of military leaders also seems necessary. An important element of support is the creation of a culture of leadership and the expansion of mentoring and intensification of self-development shaping the military leaders, especially at the operational and strategic levels.

The new challenge for further transformations of military leadership are the problems that have occurred during contemporary operations, e.g., in counter-insurgency operations. The valuable conclusions that can be used to modify national solutions for military leadership are the experiences of the national and allied armies acquired during the operations in Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, and Syria. Monitoring civil environment solutions that bring about increasingly refined, sometimes surprising, solutions to leadership approaches also appears to be necessary.

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