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FROM VOLUNTEER TO SOLDIER: VOLUNTARY BASIC MILITARY SERVICE AS AN INSTRUMENT FOR SHAPING SECURITY CULTURE

Abstract

The article examines the impact of voluntary basic military service on shaping security culture in Polish Armed Forces from a systemic perspective. The starting assumption is that security culture should not be reduced to formal procedures and regulations only, but should also include attitudes, values, organizational relations, and material conditions of functioning. The study adopts a three-dimensional approach to security culture, covering the individual, social, and material dimensions. On this basis, the role of voluntary basic military service is analyzed as an instrument influencing motivation and service awareness, the quality of command and training climate, as well as the level of logistical support and equipment. The analysis demonstrates that the effectiveness of voluntary basic military service as a tool for shaping security culture depends on the coherence between candidates' psychophysical preparation, the quality of training organization, and the adequacy of material support. The conclusions indicate that voluntary basic military service may perform not only a personnel function, but also a culture-forming one, strengthening the resilience of the military organization and, more broadly, the state security system.

Keywords

voluntary basic military service, security culture, Polish Armed Forces, airborne troops, systemic security, military training, military security

Introduction

Contemporary security requires considering not only threats and the means to neutralize them, but also factors influencing the long-term behaviour of individuals and organizations. In this context, security culture is particularly important, as it constitutes a crucial condition for the functioning and development of social and organizational entities. It can be understood as a kind of “hidden curriculum” that regulates the way of thinking and acting in threat situations. This means that the level of security depends not only on formal solutions but also on the quality of attitudes, values, and behavioural patterns present within a given community. This also applies to military organizations, where security culture determines the way training is implemented, the functioning of subunits, and preparation for military operations. This is particularly important in relation to voluntary forms of service, such as Voluntary Basic Military Service.

From this perspective, Voluntary Basic Military Service is not merely one form of active military service, but can be viewed as a solution with broader systemic significance. Its essence lies in combining the preparation of the Polish Armed Forces’ reserve personnel with the military training process for individuals without prior service experience. In this sense, it serves not only to supplement the state’s defence potential but also to develop basic competencies related to functioning within organized structures, carrying out tasks, and adhering to the principles of military discipline. This enables participants to prepare for the implementation of tasks within the state’s Defence system, while simultaneously developing attitudes of responsibility and readiness to act for the state’s security¹.

The issue of Voluntary Basic Military Service, as a relatively new systemic solution, has not yet received extensive and in-depth analysis in the scientific literature, particularly in the context of its impact on shaping attitudes and behaviours related to security. Analyses of the Voluntary Basic Military Service primarily focus on its legal basis, organization, and training process, pointing to its role in preparing personnel reserves and increasing the state’s defence capabilities². This means that it is justified to expand the research perspective to include a systems approach, taking into account not only the formal and organizational dimensions but also the impact on service participants, the functioning of military structures, and the conditions under which the training process is conducted. Consequently, it is justified to undertake an analysis that will determine the true significance of Voluntary Basic Military Service in shaping a culture of security within specific military structures.

The purpose of this study is to analyse the importance of voluntary military service in shaping a security culture in Polish Armed Forces from a systemic perspective. The adopted perspective assumes that the impact of voluntary service is not

1 Act of 11 March 2022 on the Defence of the Homeland (Journal of Laws 2022, item 655, as amended), Arts. 130–131.

2 S. Noworyta, *Wpływ DZSW...*, p. 18.

limited solely to formal preparation for service but also encompasses a broader dimension of attitudes, organizational relations, and material operating conditions. As a result, the analysis focuses on three interconnected areas: individual, social, and material. This approach is consistent with a layered understanding of culture, which considers both visible practices and structures, as well as deeper beliefs, norms, and values influencing the behaviour of security actors³.

Security culture

Security culture is a multidimensional category, referring not only to formal policies and procedures but also to less tangible factors, such as beliefs, motivations, habits, organizational relationships, leadership patterns, and the willingness to take appropriate actions in emergency situations. The literature emphasizes its layered nature, encompassing both visible organizational elements, such as procedures and training, and a deeper level of values, norms, and attitudes. It is this hidden layer that determines the actual functioning of security within an organization, as it determines whether adopted formal solutions are implemented in practice or remain merely declarative⁴.

From the perspective of security science, it is particularly useful to conceptualize security culture in three interconnected dimensions: mental (individual), organizational (social), and material. The mental dimension refers to individual characteristics and attitudes, such as motivation, threat awareness, readiness to act, and psychological resilience. The organizational dimension encompasses the relationships and mechanisms of structural functioning, including the quality of command, communication, level of trust, discipline, and the organization of the training process. The material dimension, in turn, concerns infrastructure, equipment, logistical support, and the technical and organizational conditions for task execution. This approach allows for the capture of the actual mechanisms shaping security, indicating that effectiveness depends not only on the preparedness of the individual but also on the quality of the organizational environment and available material resources⁵. This approach provides a basis for interpreting security culture from a systems perspective and is consistent with, among others, the concept of security culture developed by J. Piwowarski, who points to its multidimensional and systemic nature. This is why security culture cannot be reduced solely to educational or upbringing activities. It constitutes a systemic category in which factors from all three dimensions intertwine, determining the system's ability to respond to threats⁶. In the systemic approach, security is not only a state of absence of threats, but also results from

3 K. Trochowska, „Kultura bezpieczeństwa narodowego w cyberprzestrzeni – wprowadzenie”, „Kultura Bezpieczeństwa” 2016, No 5, p. 168–179.

4 Cooper D., *Improving Security Culture. a Practical Guide*, Wiley, p. 27.

5 Ł. Trzciński, J. Piwowarski, Z. Kuźniar [red.], *Kultura bezpieczeństwa. Nauka – praktyka – refleksje*, Kraków 2018, p. 14.

6 J. Piwowarski, *Nauki o bezpieczeństwie. Zagadnienia elementarne*, Kraków 2016, p. 148.

the relationship between the system and its environment, encompassing both the potential for threats and the system's ability to neutralize them⁷. This means that the level of security is the result of the interaction of many elements, and its development requires taking into account both the attitudes of individuals, the quality of the organization, and the available resources.

This understanding of security culture finds direct application in military structures, where the process of training and preparation for military operations is influenced by numerous interdependent factors. This particularly applies to Voluntary Basic Military Service, which is an element of the state's defence system, regulated by the provisions of the Homeland Defence Act⁸. Consequently, it is justified to undertake an in-depth analysis of the role of this form of service in shaping the security culture, with particular emphasis on the specificity of selected types of troops.

Voluntary Basic Military Service as an element of the system for shaping a security culture

Voluntary Basic Military Service is a crucial element of the modern national security system, but its importance is not limited solely to supplementing the personnel resources of the Polish Armed Forces. Its introduction has created a new space for systemic influence on security culture, stemming from the fact that military structures are staffed by individuals with varying levels of preparation, experience, and threat awareness. This means that the training process within this service serves not only a preparatory function but also an adaptive and formative one, influencing the attitudes, behaviours, and understanding of security among service participants. In this perspective, Voluntary Basic Military Service is part of a broader process of shaping security culture, understood as a complex system of influences encompassing both the mental, organizational, and material spheres⁹.

From a systemic perspective, Voluntary Basic Military Service can be viewed as a mechanism that simultaneously impacts all dimensions of security culture. Mentally, it influences the internalization of values and norms related to discipline, responsibility, and preparedness to act in emergency situations. Organizationally, it influences the functioning of subunits, including relationships between soldiers and command staff, the level of trust, and the quality of communication. Materially, it generates specific requirements for training infrastructure, equipment, and logistical support, which determine the effectiveness of military preparation. This approach is consistent with the understanding of security culture as a system of interconnected elements, the coherence of which determines the actual level of security¹⁰.

7 P. Sienkiewicz, *Analiza systemowa zarządzania bezpieczeństwem*, „Zeszyty Naukowe Akademii Morskiej w Szczecinie” 2010, No 24(96), p. 93.

8 Act of 11 March 2022 on the Defence of the Homeland (Journal of Laws 2022, item 655), Arts. 130–132.

9 M. Cieślarczyk, *Istota kultury bezpieczeństwa i jej znaczenie dla człowieka i grup społecznych*, „Kultura bezpieczeństwa” 2014, 1., p. 28.

10 Ibidem, p. 28–29.

Therefore, Voluntary Basic Military Service is not just a staffing solution, but an element influencing the quality and integration of the functioning of the security system as a whole.

This approach is supported by approaches that treat security culture as a dynamic system, encompassing both the awareness of individuals and the mechanisms of organizational functioning, as well as the material conditions for implementing activities. It is argued that only the coherence of these elements allows for achieving a realistic level of safety, while their discrepancy leads to reduced system effectiveness¹¹. This means that the process of shaping a security culture cannot be limited to a single area of influence but requires the parallel development of individual competencies, the improvement of organizational structures, and the provision of appropriate material conditions. In this context, any change in the military training system, including the introduction of new forms of service, affects not only the level of soldier preparation but also the overall quality of the security system.

Individual dimension: motivation, awareness of service, readiness for long-term commitment

The impact of Voluntary Basic Military Service on security culture is most clearly visible in the individual dimension. The voluntary nature of this form of service means that individuals who join the military are largely conscious and internally motivated. Joanna Łatacz's research shows that the vast majority of volunteer service participants considered their choice of service thoughtfully, and the most important reasons included: the desire to transition to professional military service in the future, the opportunity for personal development, the opportunity to undergo military training, and the opportunity to obtain additional qualifications and authorizations¹². This motivational profile fosters the development of attitudes desirable from a security culture perspective, as it strengthens identification with the service, willingness to exert effort, and acceptance of organizational requirements. At the same time, our research findings indicate that an aspirational component also plays a significant role, related to the perception of military service as a part of achieving life goals and building a professional identity¹³.

At the same time, the mere fact of high motivation does not determine the durability and quality of the security culture. In the military realities, what becomes particularly important is not only the readiness to start service, but also the ability to accept its real burdens: subordination to discipline, functioning in conditions of intensive training, and, in the longer term, also availability for tasks performed outside the place of permanent service. Our own research indicates that some respondents

11 M. Cieślarczyk, *Teoria i praktyka zrównoważonego rozwoju w naukach o bezpieczeństwie*, p. 27.

12 J. Łatacz, *Dobrowolna Zasadnicza Służba Wojskowa w opiniach jej uczestniczek i uczestników*, „Bezpieczeństwo Obronność Socjologia” 2023, 1 (18), p. 94-97.

13 S. Noworyta, *Wpływ DZSW...*, p. 103.

declare limited readiness for long-term trips, which may indicate incomplete recognition of the realities of service¹⁴.

In this sense, the individual dimension should not be identified solely with the motivation to enter the system, but with the process of maturing for service. Especially in airborne forces, where psychophysical demands are higher than average, security culture must be based not only on enthusiasm but also on a realistic awareness of service and appropriate mental preparation. As our own research shows, this includes, in particular, motivation, self-discipline, commitment, and the ability to make decisions under pressure¹⁵.

This is why Voluntary Basic Military Service can only strengthen a culture of security if, in addition to motivation, it also develops mental resilience, adaptability, and a willingness to commit long-term. Otherwise, perceptions and practical service may clash, resulting in decreased engagement and weakened security attitudes. Therefore, the training process should gradually confront participants with the realities of service, strengthening their mental and organizational preparation¹⁶.

Social dimension: leadership, communication and training climate

The impact of Voluntary Basic Military Service on the culture of security in society depends primarily on the quality of the organizational relationships within which training takes place. Research by J. Łatacz shows that participants in this form of service generally have positive opinions about the military units in which they train, and the highest-rated elements of training organization concern the competences and qualifications of the training staff and the communication methods used by superiors¹⁷. This is of fundamental importance because it is in everyday contacts with staff and within the unit that a practical attitude towards security procedures, discipline and responsibility for others is shaped.

This is also confirmed by research results, which indicate that for soldiers, the way procedures function in practice and their consistency with the actual actions of their superiors are of key importance¹⁸. The literature on the subject clearly indicates that effective development of a security culture requires personal involvement of management, open communication, participation, systematic education and analysis of errors¹⁹. Edward Jarmoch emphasizes the importance of informing about threats and reinforcing safe behaviours²⁰, while Kochańska and Kowalski, on the other hand, point to the role of communication, collaboration, and organizational learning. In

14 Ibidem, p. 104.

15 Ibidem, p. 183.

16 Ibidem, p. 186-187.

17 J. Łatacz, *Dobrowolna Zasadnicza Służba Wojskowa w opiniach jej uczestniczek i uczestników*, „Bezpieczeństwo Obronność Socjologia” 2023, 1 (18), p. 108–109.

18 Ibidem, p. 110.

19 M.H. Kochańska, C. Kowalski, „Kultura bezpieczeństwa...”, p. 12.

20 E. Jarmoch, „Diagnozowanie...”, p. 20–21.

relation to airborne forces, this leads to the conclusion that in formations with high levels of demands, stability and consistency of the training process are particularly important. Research shows that issues such as staff turnover and lack of training continuity can weaken the social foundations of a security culture²¹. Consequently, it is justified to strive to reduce staff turnover and ensure greater training continuity. This confirms the thesis that security culture is relational in nature and is developed through organizational practice, not solely in normative documents.

Material dimension: service conditions, equipment and the feasibility of security standards

Voluntary Basic Military Service also impacts security culture in a material sense, which is one of its key, yet often underestimated, elements. J. Łatacz's research shows that assessing service conditions, equipment, and logistical support is crucial for participants in this form of service²². At the same time, they point to certain shortcomings in the quality and availability of military equipment.

Our own research also shows that organizing Voluntary Basic Military Service is a significant logistical challenge, including the implementation of numerous training sessions and long-term specialist training²³. In such conditions, even minor material shortages can affect the quality of training and the level of safety.

This is where a key relationship becomes apparent: the discrepancy between requirements and the ability to implement them leads to a weakening of security culture. If a soldier perceives that the organization does not provide adequate conditions for task execution, this can lead to a decrease in trust and adaptation to systemic constraints.

The literature emphasizes that effectively shaping a security culture requires ensuring appropriate working conditions, equipment, and workspace organization. This dimension is particularly important in airborne forces, as specialized training is more demanding and equipment-intensive.

Voluntary Basic Military Service and modern security competencies

The connection between Voluntary Basic Military Service and the acquisition of specialist skills deserves special attention. J. Łatacz's research shows that a significant portion of participants take advantage of, or plan to take advantage of, opportunities to acquire professional qualifications²⁴.

21 S. Noworyta, *Wpływ DZSW...*, p. 182.

22 J. Łatacz, *Dobrowolna Zasadnicza Służba Wojskowa w opiniach jej uczestniczek i uczestników*, „Bezpieczeństwo Obronność Socjologia” 2023, 1 (18), p. 114-115.

23 S. Noworyta, *Wpływ DZSW...*, p. 182.

24 J. Łatacz, *Dobrowolna Zasadnicza Służba Wojskowa w opiniach jej uczestniczek i uczestników*, „Bezpieczeństwo Obronność Socjologia” 2023, 1 (18), p. 99.

From the perspective of our own research, it should be recognized that the opportunity to develop competencies is an important factor strengthening motivation and identification with the organization²⁵. This ultimately leads to a shift from a model of passive subordination to one of active participation in the security system. In the case of airborne troops, this aspect is particularly important, as training should reflect the real demands of the operational environment. Therefore, developing specialist competencies should be considered an integral element of building a security culture, combining knowledge, skills, and responsibility.

System recommendations

The recommendations formulated are systemic in nature and stem directly from our own research and analysis of the relevant literature. The results of our analyses lead to the conclusion that strengthening the impact of Voluntary Basic Military Service on security culture requires parallel actions at individual, social, and material levels. This approach is consistent with both the understanding of security culture as a system of interconnected mental, organizational, and material elements, as well as with the systemic understanding of security as a state and process dependent on the relationship between an entity, its environment, and its resources²⁶. The literature on the subject emphasizes that security is not a simple sum of legal solutions, procedures or technical resources, but the effect of coherent operation of many system elements that must remain in a functional relationship with each other²⁷. This means that improving one area while neglecting others does not lead to a lasting increase in security, but only to partial compensation for system weaknesses. This is particularly significant in the case of Voluntary Basic Military Service, as its formula combines training, organizational, and social objectives, and its effectiveness depends not only on formal solutions but also on the quality of practical implementation by military units.

First, on an individual level, better psychophysical preparation of candidates is needed, as well as a more realistic understanding of the nature of service. Our research findings show that volunteer motivation is high, but it is not always accompanied by a full awareness of the realities of service, especially in terms of long-term availability, mental and physical demands, and readiness to function outside of their hometown²⁸. In practice, this means strengthening the information component at the recruitment stage, as well as expanding preparation with elements that enhance mental resilience, stress management, and a realistic understanding of the demands of the service. This approach aligns with the recommendation that training be designed with participants' actual needs and prior preparation levels in mind, so as

25 S. Noworyta, *Wpływ DZSW...*, p. 101.

26 M. Cieślarczyk, *Teoria i praktyka zrównoważonego rozwoju w naukach o bezpieczeństwie*, p. 11–12.

27 P. Sienkiewicz, „Analiza systemowa zarządzania bezpieczeństwem”, *„Zeszyty Naukowe Akademii Morskiej w Szczecinie”* 2010, No 24(96), p. 98.

28 S. Noworyta, *Wpływ DZSW...*, p. 104–105.

not to demotivate them or create a gap between the requirements and their ability to receive the training content²⁹.

It should be emphasized that psychophysical preparation cannot be understood solely as improving physical fitness. In military service, especially in units with a higher level of demands, emotional resilience, the ability to function in a situation of limited comfort, acceptance of the rhythm of service, and the ability to adhere to group goals are equally important. In this sense, the proposed improvement in candidate preparation should also include psychological prevention and initial military socialization. The sooner a candidate gains a reliable understanding of service – not only its developmental benefits, but also its limitations and personal costs – the greater the chance that their motivation will become lasting, not merely declarative. Therefore, we can speak of a need to shift the emphasis from simply recruiting volunteers to consciously preparing them for a real entry into the military's organizational culture.

Secondly, from a societal perspective, it is necessary to improve the quality of training organization by stabilizing staff, reducing instructor turnover, and better coordinating the training process. Research clearly indicates that excessive rotation in positions, limited access to training facilities, and an excessive number of tasks undermine the quality of soldiers' preparation³⁰. These are not just organizational problems, but issues that directly impact security culture, as they hinder the development of consistent patterns of action, weaken the predictability of the training process, and reduce trust in the organization. The literature consistently emphasizes that security culture requires leadership commitment, communication, collaboration, education, and the participation of organizational members in shaping it³¹. In the context of airborne troops, this means the need to create more stable training structures, including solutions based on the continuity of the instructor staff and the use of the experience of reserve soldiers with experience in this formation.

This postulate requires further development. Security culture is not a set of abstract principles, but rather the daily functioning of a unit. If a soldier encounters inconsistent command standards, inconsistent assessments of the same behaviours, or a lack of training continuity, the acquisition of security norms is disrupted. As a result, a soldier may learn not so much what is standard, but rather what is tolerated within a given personnel structure. For this reason, the stability of the instructor staff is important not only for educational purposes but also for cultural reasons. It is the instructors and direct superiors who become the carriers of patterns of action, discipline, organizational language, and how to respond to errors. The greater the predictability of these patterns, the greater the chance of their lasting internalization. This is particularly important in the case of airborne forces, as the operations of these units require not only efficiency but also a high level of trust in procedures and personnel.

29 Cooper D., *Improving Security Culture. a Practical Guide*, Wiley, p. 196–197.

30 S. Noworyta, *Wpływ DZSW...*, p. 203–207.

31 R. Socha, *Aksjologiczny wymiar bezpieczeństwa*, p. 45

Third, material standards for fees and equipment should be adjusted to the real requirements of specialized training. The findings of the dissertation clearly indicate that the most noticeable shortages concern sleeping bags, sleeping mats, sleeping bag covers with frames, and protective eyewear, and their shortage impacts the quality of life and the implementation of activities in diverse terrain and weather conditions³². As a result, some soldiers resort to private equipment, which in itself signals an inconsistency between the organization's requirements and its level of security. In light of the literature on security culture, this situation should be considered particularly undesirable, as material conditions are not merely a backdrop for operations, but contribute to the actual level of security and determine the ability to comply with standards³³. If a security culture is to be taken seriously, it must be supported by adequate equipment, infrastructure and logistics.

It's not just about the comfort of service. In a military organization, equipment serves a normative function: it communicates to soldiers how seriously the organization takes the tasks it assigns them. If a specific training regime is required, yet the full conditions for its implementation are not provided, a double message emerges. Formally, the organization states, "security is a priority," but in practice, it allows conditions that undermine this priority. From the perspective of shaping a security culture, this is particularly dangerous, as it can lead to trivialization of deficiencies, a habit of improvisation, and a familiarization with lower standards. In the long term, such a situation can result not only in worsening training conditions but also in lower trust in the institution and a decline in identification with the service.

Fourth, training should be developed that is relevant to the modern battlefield and highly valued by participants. This applies particularly to technical and specialist competencies that combine a military dimension with practical service utility. Joanna Łatacz's research indicates that the opportunity to acquire additional qualifications and professional authorizations is a significant motivation for undertaking voluntary service, and a significant proportion of soldiers declare interest in participating in specialist courses. a similar trend is confirmed by interest in authorizations such as driving licenses for categories C, C+E, and D, drone operator, parachutist, and operator of lifting and transporting machinery and equipment³⁴. Drone training is particularly important, as it addresses contemporary reconnaissance, logistical, and operational needs. At the same time, the findings regarding parachute and airborne training demonstrate that not every desired training can be simply added to the program; it must be embedded in the participants' realistic health, physical, and organizational capabilities.

This area is worth exploring more broadly. The development of specialist competencies is not only functional but also culturally influential. a service member who

32 S. Noworyta, *Wpływ DZSW...*, p. 218.

33 E. Jarmoch, „Diagnozowanie i doskonalenie kultury bezpieczeństwa społecznego”, *„Kultura Bezpieczeństwa”* 2018, No 9, p. 20.

34 S. Noworyta, *Wpływ DZSW...*, p. 117.

sees that the organization is investing in qualifications that reflect the realities of the modern battlefield identifies more strongly with the purpose of service and better understands the connection between training and security. In this perspective, specialist training is not a reward or a perk, but a tool for building agency and responsibility. A soldier equipped with specific competencies begins to perceive themselves not only as an executor of orders, but as a conscious participant in the security system. This is particularly important for young volunteers, for whom the practical utility of training remains a key source of motivation. Properly designed specialist training can therefore combine national defence goals with the development of human capital, further strengthening the positive public perception of voluntary service.

Fifth, it's worth treating voluntary service as an environment requiring modern training methods. This applies not only to the content but also to the way it is delivered. Since a significant portion of service participants obtain information about the voluntary service from military recruitment centers, conversations with fellow soldiers, recruitment portals, and social media, it means that a coherent communication system should be built and the goals, requirements, and conditions of service precisely presented at the recruitment and preparation stages.³⁵ The literature on improving security culture emphasizes the importance of proper training planning, clear definition of objectives, content sequence, requirements for participants and providing them with conditions conducive to learning³⁶. In the context of voluntary service, this is particularly important because it reduces the level of uncertainty, limits the dissonance between expectations and reality and strengthens the willingness to internalize security norms.

It's important to note that modern training doesn't mean lowering requirements. Instead, it means adapting communication methods to the social and generational characteristics of volunteers. Candidates for Voluntary Basic Military Service operate in an environment of rapid information, extensive exposure to visual messages, and growing expectations for institutional transparency. If the military doesn't respond to this context early and consciously, the risk of unrealistic expectations will increase. Therefore, recruitment, training, and organizational communication should form a coherent system in which the same message – concerning the purpose of service, requirements, threats, and responsibilities – is consistently reinforced at every stage of entry into the organization.

Conclusions

Voluntary Basic Military Service is a crucial element of the state's security system, but its importance goes beyond simply increasing personnel resources. In light of our own analyses and research, it is also a tool for shaping a security culture at the

35 J. Łatacz, *Dobrowolna Zasadnicza Służba Wojskowa w opiniach jej uczestniczek i uczestników*, „Bezpieczeństwo Obronność Socjologia” 2023, 1 (18), p. 114.

36 D. Cooper, *Improving Security Culture. a Practical Guide*, Wiley, p. 195.

individual, social, and material levels – aspects that determine the sustainability and quality of a military organization's operations³⁷. Only such a systemic approach allows us to capture its real value.

The individual dimension shows that Voluntary Basic Military Service attracts motivated individuals, who often associate service with personal development, patriotic duty, and the prospect of a further military career. At the same time, both Joanna Łatacz's research and our own indicate that high motivation does not always go hand in hand with full awareness of the realities of service, especially in terms of availability, long-term deployments, and the scale of psychophysical demands³⁸. This means that voluntariness enhances motivational capital, but it does not, in itself, guarantee maturity for service. From the perspective of security culture theory, this is crucial, as it demonstrates that the level of security depends not only on formal entry into the system but also on the degree of internalization of norms and understanding of the meaning of requirements.

The social dimension, in turn, reveals that a security culture does not automatically develop with the existence of procedures. Its sustainability depends on the quality of command, communication, and organizational climate. It is in the daily functioning of the unit – in the way standards are communicated, requirements are justified, and problems are solved – that a soldier learns whether security is a real organizational value or merely a formal requirement³⁹. Therefore, a good assessment of the social dimension of security culture in airborne troops should not lead to complacency, but rather to the conclusion that there is a solid base that can be strengthened by greater structural stability, continuity of training and better use of staff experience.

The material dimension, however, confirms that security cannot be built solely through values, norms, and procedures. If an organization fails to provide adequate equipment, appropriate infrastructure, and efficient logistical support, the security culture remains incomplete. Deficiencies in protective and household equipment are not merely a technical problem; they also have psychological and organizational consequences: they undermine trust in the institution, generate the need for improvisation, and can lead to the emergence of "false security." In this sense, material issues are an integral part of the security culture, not its external environment.

The most important conclusion, therefore, is practical and systemic: the effectiveness of voluntary conscripted military service as a tool for shaping a security culture depends on coherence between people's motivation, the quality of the organization, and the level of material security. If these three areas are developed in parallel, voluntary conscripted military service can become not only a form of voluntary service but one of the most important instruments for strengthening the resilience of the state and society. However, if any of these elements remain neglected,

37 S. Noworyta, *Wpływ DZSW...*, p. 223.

38 J. Łatacz, *Dobrowolna Zasadnicza Służba Wojskowa w opiniach jej uczestniczek i uczestników*, „Bezpieczeństwo Obronność Socjologia” 2023, 1 (18), p. 108-109.

39 S. Noworyta, *Wpływ DZSW...*, p. 168-169.

the cultural impact will be limited. Therefore, assessing the impact of Voluntary Basic Military Service should not be based solely on the number of soldiers trained, but on the quality of the changes it produces in the three fundamental dimensions of security culture⁴⁰.

In this light, Voluntary Basic Military Service should be viewed not as a temporary solution, but as a laboratory for a modern security culture. It is within this framework that the motivations of young volunteers, the requirements of the military organization, the need for modern competencies, and the necessity of ensuring the material conditions for effective operation converge. If this system is developed consistently, taking into account both the conclusions from our own research and the literature on the subject, it can truly strengthen not only the personnel potential of the Polish Armed Forces but also the broader security culture of society. From this perspective, Voluntary Basic Military Service is not only an instrument of defence policy but also a tool for the long-term shaping of the state's security culture.

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