

# Dilemmas of Management Psychology in Building a Social Group in Military Institutions

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**Abstract:** technological progress on the battlefield and the evaluation of the tactics of soldiers' actions entail a change in the philosophy of human resource management in military institutions, and thus a reorientation in the preparation of commanders-leaders to perform this mission. The modern soldier represents a different level of psychophysical resources. The new, more precise and at the same time more complicated to use equipment forces a change in the concept of preparing a soldier to perform tasks. Directing the development of the contemporary battlefield forces the continuous expansion of the cognitive level, both in the general and specialist area. This new approach to soldier formation shifts the centre of gravity in leadership formation to the area of cognitive resource development. This changes the emphasis of training and education towards the theory of social communication underlying the creation of psychophysical resources and issues related to the contemporary psychology of management in the military environment.

**Keywords:** psychology, leadership, leadership, flow, social communication.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The modern field of military activity has changed a lot recently. The technological intensification of the equipment, as well as its progressive miniaturization, forces the operators to have more and more specialized intellectual and substantive preparation necessary for the effective operation of the tools. With technological progress, the way of conducting military operations is also changing, and hence the tasks and role of a man during the performance of his tasks. The direction of development of the modern battlefield forces the continuous development of the cognitive level so that the operator can master the complicated operation of military equipment and be able to perform tasks on the modern battlefield. The specialist knowledge required of a modern soldier entails the need to develop an individual cognitive resource on a general level, which in turn forces commanders to change the approach to command-management of subordinates. The philosophy of command that existed not so long ago must give way to new solutions. Transactional leadership based on personal interactions and transactions between a superior and a subordinate or authoritarian leadership, where the leader is an omniscient encyclopaedia, no longer fulfil their intended role. A new commander-leader is a person who can take care of his subordinates, listen to them and inspire them. This is a cognitively developed and emotionally mature person. A contemporary leader in military institutions motivates his team through his own commitment and passion for work. He is not a dominant and unavailable boss, but a brilliant coach, working in a group on a partnership basis, as well as ensuring the free flow of ideas and information throughout the team. He is also a man who can make decisions and take responsibility for them, because it is him who has the last say. It is someone who has an idea and is able to plant it in other team members' minds. There is no

leader without a team. Whoever only thinks he is leading and finds no one to follow him is merely a "walker", as John C. Maxwell can quote<sup>1</sup>. The new approach to leader shaping thus shifts the centre of gravity of leader shaping to the area of developing cognitive resources. Thus, it highlights the theories of social communication underlying the creation of psychophysical resources and issues related to the contemporary psychology of management with a focus on the military environment.

Man is a component of the environment in which he functions, which is why he is inextricably linked with it. We are dealing here with the influence of factors that can be generally divided into three groups. The first one is determined by biological-physical-chemical factors, which, for example, include: temperature, atmospheric pressure, air composition, acidity of the environment, geological structure, terrain, climate, water relations, soil and living organisms. Then - genetic factors passed on to us by our ancestors, and having an impact on the functioning of the body and social, which we will generally divide into family ones, including the entirety of the influence of the immediate family on the shaping of the human character and the social world, understood phenomenologically as a system of surrounding factors an individual and perceived by them subjectively as the real world. This system is constantly changing, therefore, in addition to the concept of the environment, we also use the concept of the situation. Tadeusz Tomaszewski captured this concept in a psychological context, as a system of mutual relations between a person and other elements of the environment, at a specific point in time<sup>2</sup>. Each situation is defined by the features of its components and their mutual relations over time. Man is the subject of the situation. So, every situation must always be someone's and cannot be defined without specifying the subject. If more than one person is involved in a given situation, we can consider a given situation for each of them separately. Each of the situations, apart from the reference to the subject, can also be classified according to: basic activity (e.g., problem situation, combat situation) and elements of the environment and their condition (e.g., road situation). We distinguish two aspects of the human situation: existential situations - these are: life, living (e.g., health, material, financial, housing, professional, family, social) and behavioural - functional situations (e.g. educational, therapeutic, examination situations, difficult situations, dangerous ones). This division is related to the two main types of human activity. The first is life-oriented and includes processes important for survival: biological processes, respiration, reproduction, activities related to living, getting dressed, spending time, and consuming). The second is "action", which includes various forms of human activity, by means of which he regulates his relations with the environment, transforming it or himself. Thus, each situation consists of situational factors that affect a person, shaping subjective behaviour attributes corresponding to different types of situations. Let us emphasize that the developed attributes are relatively permanent. Thus, the events experienced by an individual shape the character of the individual over time. However, the mere experience of an objective event is not sufficient to influence the further functioning of a human being. The perception of events that boils down to receiving information with the sensory organs, processing them in the central nervous system and then applying them to action makes sense only when the received stimulus brings information. This allows you to create (perceive) an image that reflects objective reality in the mind. Perception directs our behaviour, facilitates inference, allows us to formulate perceptions and predict them. Perception is built by assigning meanings to features, persons, things and events by creating a subjective image of objective reality in the mind of the subject.

Defining perception after M. Merleau-Ponty as: "a set of cognitive processes, the task of which is to provide a person with contact with reality and active interpretation of sensory data with the use of contextual cues, as well as previously acquired knowledge"<sup>3</sup>, we take communication as the basis for everyday construction

<sup>1</sup> Maxwell J. C., *Bądź liderem 2.0*, Wydawnictwo MT Biznes, Warszawa 2019.

<sup>2</sup> Tomaszewski T., *Człowiek i otoczenie*, [in:] Tomaszewski T. (ed.), *Psychologia*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 1975, p. 17.

<sup>3</sup> Maciejczak M., *Świat według ciała w fenomenologii percepcji M. Merleau-Ponty'ego*, Wydawnictwo IFiS PAN,

of mental representations of the world and therefore social communication. The key ability of the human cognitive system is to symbolically represent various aspects of reality. In order to gain meaning for the subject, stimuli reaching the senses must first be assigned to a certain symbol (*definiensa*). It is a certain social contract on the basis of which a given material object corresponds to a given symbol in the code in a given social group. Without this, the stimulus will not receive proper meaning from the subject, which will lead to communication and cognitive errors. As a consequence, inadequate behaviour may occur. In other words, in the communication process, there may be interpretations that are incorrect from the sender's point of view, as a result of the recipient's (interpreter's) inappropriate communicative competence<sup>4</sup>.

We can talk about communicative ineffectiveness leading to another interpretation or reinterpretation that changes the entire area of interpretation. This is also emphasized by Antoni Kępiński in his works, talking about information metabolism and energy metabolism<sup>5</sup>. These two processes are of considerable importance in the perception of reality. The absorption of information by the body (information metabolism) is the starting point for an individual to take action (energy metabolism) and improper absorption of this information may result in inadequate behaviour of the subject. This, in turn, generates communication errors during the subject's interaction with the environment, triggering another disproportionate response from the organism. The repetition of such schemas creates the attributions that a given subject will use for subsequent similar sets of stimuli, causing the persistence of inappropriate behavioural mechanisms<sup>6</sup>. We see this relationship in the classical cognitive approach. The mind is a system that controls and determines the behaviour of a system in complex and time-varying environmental factors. This system works with the help of many interacting mechanisms based on the possessed knowledge, i.e., a symbolic representation of the reality experienced. We can take such a system as a subjective, egocentric simulation model of the world. This ego-centricity determines intentionality as well as active search for meaning, hence the necessity of narrative giving meaning to the experienced events. This is confirmed in constructivist communication concepts. Constructivists take as their key assumption the statement that: "persons recognize the world through systems of personal constructs. They take as constructs mental templates or matrices that man adjusts to the experience of reality"<sup>7</sup>.

The key to behaviour change is the conscious perception of the outside world. We can call it, after Antoni Kępiński, the metabolization of information. It happens at the level of information metabolism consisting in the segregation and assimilation of that part of the information which, according to the subject, is important from a subjective point of view<sup>8</sup>. The acquired information triggers a subject's reaction, i.e. an energy exchange between the subject of the situation and the environment. A. Kępiński calls this process energy metabolism. This verification very often takes place at the unconscious level, and the information that is not rejected is of importance for the subject first at the level of the first and second biological law, and then other subjectively important spheres adopted by the subject. There is a constant exchange of energy and information between the organism and the environment. We can also see here the tendency of each subject to maintain its own order understood as the balance of the organism and the surrounding environment, which is obtained by satisfying the needs and realizing the assumed goals. Thus, the individual order determines the organism's homeostasis,

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Warszawa 2001, p. 209.

<sup>4</sup> Keeney, B. P., *Aesthetics of Change*, Guilford Press, New York 1983.

<sup>5</sup> Kępiński A., *Lęk*, Wydawnictwo Literackie, Kraków 2002, pp. 38-40.

<sup>6</sup> Försterling F., *Atrybucje. Podstawowe teorie, badania i zastosowanie*, Gdańskie Wydawnictwo Psychologiczne, Gdańsk 2005, pp. 90-97.

<sup>7</sup> Griffin E., *Podstawy komunikacji społecznej*, Gdańskie Wydawnictwo Psychologiczne, Gdańsk 2003, pp. 136-137.

<sup>8</sup> Kępiński A., *Lęk...* op. cit., pp. 14-16.

which allows it to resist entropy<sup>9</sup>. Getting out of this equilibrium can create a situation that the subject is unable to deal with and can consequently lead to the subject's agony.

A man coming out of his individual environment that shaped him and him for many years. He knows his place and role. In which he lives in a developed sense of security. Entering the military environment, he enters a new reality, completely unknown to him and incomprehensible. New symbols, new concepts, new behaviour patterns, new roles and social place, and a new environment all cause the need to re-acquire general cognitive competences and specialist competences. A person entering this environment feels completely helpless at first. Like a child, he has to learn the basics all over again. In the military environment, it is called "learning to walk" because the young adept cannot even walk in accordance with the requirements prevailing in this institution. The military prepares the participants of its organization to function and perform their duties in environments which for most people seem impossible to function normally. In psychology, they are referred to as extreme<sup>10</sup>. The military, in accordance with its intended purpose, is preparing, among other things, to function in depriving situations. The working environment in which the soldier is to function is practically constantly exposed to the lack of meeting both biological, social and psychological needs. After Charles Figley and William Nash<sup>11</sup>, areas of deprivation can be divided into physical stressors (temperature, humidity, noise, dehydration, dirt, odours and fumes, poor nutrition, illness or trauma), cognitive stressors (information deprivation, information overload, contradictory information, change of rules). while performing a task), emotional stressors (emotional bond with a comrade-in-arms, fear, anxiety, shame, guilt, frustration), social (isolation from social support, lack of privacy, media and public opinion), spiritual (loss of faith in God, inability to forgiveness, not feeling forgiven). A soldier should be so prepared and equipped with psychophysical resources that he can perform his tasks regardless of favourable external conditions, both environmental and social. Another important factor contributing to the highly specific work of a soldier is the highly hierarchical structure of military institutions. In this respect, this institution can be classified as total institutions<sup>12</sup>. The vertical hierarchy objectively imposes both the system of performing tasks and the level of making certain decisions. The specificity of the military institution thus dictates the model of the leader it adopts. Therefore, military leadership in the perspective of the current trend of shaping the leader is very specific. The days of infallible commanders and obedient soldiers are slowly but surely becoming a thing of the past. Nowadays, the commander-leader is still dominant in such institutions, but he must turn his previously cherished authoritarianism into a permanently built authority. Such a change is forced by technological progress and the accompanying necessary level of education for a single soldier. The commander-leader is still dominant in military institutions. It is he who makes the final decision and he is responsible for all successes, but also for all failures of his team. This is dictated by the specificity of institutions with a highly hierarchical vertical dependence and the specificity of the environment in which soldiers are prepared to perform tasks, which must be taken into account when shaping the leader and building a communication system. Operating in conditions of permanent deprivation, high levels of stress and in conditions of high health and life threat, i.e., in difficult and extreme environments, effective management of teams of people requires in-depth, additional and well-established resources, both cognitive and emotional. In military leadership, unlike civil leadership, it is all the more important, because during real military operations, due to the physical threat to health and life, there is no room for shaping skills. During action, you use what you have learned during preparation, exercise or training. Hierarchy and formalization impose certain rules that constitute the starting point for the formation and shaping of the leader and his

<sup>9</sup> Kępiński A., *Rytm życia*, Wydawnictwo Literackie, Kraków 2001, p. 32.

<sup>10</sup> Tomaszewski T. (ed.), *Psychologia*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 1975, pp. 32-36.

<sup>11</sup> Figley Ch., Nash W., *Stres bojowy. Teorie badania profilaktyka i terapia*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2010, p. 23.

<sup>12</sup> Goffman E., *Instytucje totalne. O pacjentach szpitali psychiatrycznych i mieszkańcach innych instytucji totalnych*, Gdańskie Wydawnictwo Psychologiczne, Sopot 2011, p. 14.

communication system specific to militarized institutions. The commander, despite the fact that he is to have the last word, is forced to rely more and more on the knowledge and skills of his subordinates. The ability to share knowledge is becoming more and more important by creating an effective communication system, delegating tasks, positive motivation, creating a certain independence by setting boundaries in line with the level of skills of subordinates, and thus creating an empowerment climate. Subordinates, on the other hand, must be sure that the final decision is made by their superior it was worked out taking into account all circumstances and their commander is absolutely sure of its rightness - they see it as an authority. The creation of task groups which at the same time fulfil the canons of the social group is gaining importance. The creation of an effective communication system and the use of the principles of social communication in shaping the logic of building messages gains importance. This corresponds to the cognitive complexity possessed by the subject, i.e., the level of development attained. This approach is consistent with the principle of coordinated meaning management<sup>13</sup>. According to this principle, people in verbal interaction co-construct their own social realities. The social creation of reality is an anthropological human necessity. Full human development did not end in foetal life as it is in animals. New-born animals are fully adapted to life in a specific environment for their species. Man, unlike them, is not born so adapted. Adaptation to his environment acquires during interpersonal contacts with other human beings and the physical object that make up this environment. Man does not have his own, specific world. Such a world he has to create for himself, find his place in it and shape it through his actions. Man creates his reality, which is a relatively permanent element of human culture<sup>14</sup>. A single person, as A. Lech writes, remains a being on the animal level, and his development is social and is the result of adopting ready-made patterns of the existing social order<sup>15</sup>.

We see here a very important role of social communication, consisting in establishing and creating interpersonal relations, and thus creating a social group. Interpersonal verbal and non-verbal interaction without direction or meaning, referred to as "fantasies", initiates group energy. Fantasies create a chain reaction within the group, fuelling their inner energy and pace of conversation. It unifies the definiens of the definienda mentioned in the conversation, creating phantasms appropriate to a given social group. Cultivating shared fantasies allows you to transform a community of individuals into a common team. Bormann calls this process "symbolic convergence." With the help of the dynamics of this process, individuals build a community feeling and group awareness. As he proceeds in verbal integration and individual thinking, the pronouns in the first person disappear and the following appear: "we", "us", "our". As more and more collective imaginations emerge, the group becomes more compact and the chains of phantasms become more coherent<sup>16</sup>. These processes are confirmed by both the semiotic tradition, defining communication as a process of sharing meaning, and the sociocultural tradition, where communication is perceived as creating and playing out social reality. The first one defines words as symbols that are not related in any natural way to the objects or phenomena that we use to describe them. To illustrate an example, the word "rifle" or the word "pen" can be used. Nothing in the sounds or in the visual signs of the letters that make up these words resembles the objects for which they are concepts. It might as well be given a different wording and terminology. Nevertheless, most people associate these words with specific and no other objects. According to I. A. Richards<sup>17</sup>, particular meanings are not found in words or symbols, but in people who give meaning to words and symbols. In turn, in the sociocultural tradition, based on the premise of creating and recreating culture through interpersonal communication. People functioning

<sup>13</sup> Pearce W. B., *A sailing guide for social constructionist*, In: Leeds-Hurwitz W. (ed.) *Social Approaches to Communication*, Guilford, New York 1995, pp. 92-106.

<sup>14</sup> Lech A., *Spoleczne konstruowanie rzeczywistości obiektywnej*, "Zeszyty Naukowe Politechniki Śląskiej. Organizacja i Zarządzanie", 65 (2013), pp. 183-195.

<sup>15</sup> Lech A., op. cit., pp. 183-195.

<sup>16</sup> Bormann E., *Small Group Communication Theory and Practice*, Harper and Row, New York 1990, p.122.

<sup>17</sup> Richards I. A., *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*, Oxford University Press, London 1936, p. 30.

in a certain culture are convinced that the words they use reflect objective reality, however, according to this theory, it is quite the opposite. The perception of reality shapes the language we use. In this sense, words have only a contractual meaning. Such perception of the role of social communication confirms its special role in building and consolidating the social community. Nevertheless, the objective world that surrounds man is to a large extent built on the basis of the linguistic habits of the social group in which they function. The process of communication creates, supports, transforms and repairs the reality surrounding the subject. Thus, the existing interpersonal communication between persons creates a subjective social world. The condition of good and correct communication is the clarity of the message manifested in a precise, unambiguous and understandable message of thoughts both in verbal and non-verbal form, listening skills as well as maturity and responsibility of both the sender and the recipient. Openness in communication deepens the emotional ties, mutual respect and trust that are necessary in the performance of difficult tasks by the group. At this point and at this level, the need to demonstrate emotional maturity becomes apparent. Because people who are socially immature, conflicting or with disturbed personality, with openness in communication, can gain the opportunity to manipulate a partner or a social group<sup>18</sup>. When creating and then nurturing a social group, direct communication should be used. This type of communication reduces the occurrence of disruptions related to unclear or inconsistent messages. In addition, it builds the recipient's sense of autonomy, identity, gaining feedback about himself and allows the release of emotional tension<sup>19</sup>. All this forms the basis of an effective communication environment that deepens mutual understanding, expands common fields of meaning, leading to a feeling of group unity<sup>20</sup>. This feeling, together with the feeling of separateness, forms a social group. As the basis for effective communication, we can take communication competence consisting in having both knowledge and skills adapted to the requirements of a given social situation<sup>21</sup>. In turn, following A. Adler, we can define it as: "the ability to obtain the desired results in relations with others by building mutual contact on the terms accepted by each party"<sup>22</sup>. W. Sapir-Whorf<sup>23</sup>, the founder of linguistic relativism, emphasizes that "the structure of the language of a given culture determines the shape of human thoughts and actions. Also, in the works of B. Pearce and V. Cronen<sup>24</sup> we can see a similar approach to this issue. These researchers maintain that the interviewees co-construct their own social reality but are at the same time shaped by the worlds they create. Speech and action create the social environment in which a person lives and functions. Common use of language and concepts creates, shapes and delimits the boundaries of various social worlds in which people live. This is clearly demonstrated by the theory of coordinated meaning management, where the experience of people in conversation is the basic social process in human life. Interpersonal communication shapes people as they are, creates or breaks their relationships. We can define social communication here as "the process of creating a unique meaning shared by a group of people"<sup>25</sup>, and language as the most powerful tool invented by people to create social worlds.

<sup>18</sup> Roztowska T., *Konflikt międzypokoleniowy w rodzinie*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego., Łódź 2001, p. 52.

<sup>19</sup> Grzesiuk L., Trzebnicka E., *Jak ludzie porozumiewają się?*, Wydawnictwo Nasza Księgarnia, Warszawa 1978, pp. 79-83.

<sup>20</sup> Ryś M., *Ku dojrzałości osobowej*, In: Ostrowska K., Ryś M. (eds.), *Wychowanie do życia w rodzinie. Książka dla nauczycieli, rodziców i wychowawców*, Centrum Pomocy Psychologiczno-Pedagogicznej Ministerstwa Edukacji Narodowej, Warszawa 1999, pp. 276-286.

<sup>21</sup> Frydrychowicz S., *Komunikacja interpersonalna w zarządzaniu*, Wydawnictwo Forum Naukowe, Poznań 2009, p. 97.

<sup>22</sup> Adler R. B., Proctor II R., Rosenfeld L., *Relacje interpersonalne. Proces porozumiewania się*, Wydawnictwo Rebis, Poznań 2011, p. 30.

<sup>23</sup> Klimczuk A., *Hipoteza Saphira-Whorfa - przegląd argumentów zwolenników i przeciwników*, "Kultura-Społeczeństwo-Edukacja" 3 (2013)/1, pp. 165-182.

<sup>24</sup> Cronen V. E., Pearce W. B., *Logical force in interpersonal communication: A new concept of „necessity” in social behaviour*, "Communication" 6 (1981), pp. 5-67.

<sup>25</sup> Griffin E., *Podstawy komunikacji społecznej... op. cit.*, p. 72.

Building cognitive resources influences the development of analysis, synthesis and deduction<sup>26</sup>, predispositions for independent thinking, evaluation and decision making<sup>27</sup>, the ability to establish interpersonal relationships, as well as the formation of self-awareness<sup>28</sup>. Also, having the right cognitive resources that determine coping with an unfavourable constellation of factors requires from a human being to function effectively in various situations, including stressful ones. It is emphasized in their works by, among others, A. Antonovsky<sup>29</sup>, A. S. Billings and R. Moos<sup>30</sup>. They assume that resources constitute a complex system of dispositional, cognitive and personality factors that create the psychological reference of coping. Antonovsky described these resources as a sense of coherence, which is contained in the perception of reality through the prism of three dimensions as understandable, controllable and as meaningful. The sense of coherence, which is understood as: "... global orientation of a person, expressing the degree to which the person has an overwhelming, permanent, or dynamic feeling of certainty that the stimuli flowing in the course of life from the internal and external environment are structured, predictable and explainable; resources are available to enable it to meet the demands of these stimuli; these requirements are worth the effort and commitment to him."<sup>31</sup> These components occurring together, but with varying intensity, build strong motivation, enthusiasm and understanding in relation to the activities performed. The sense of coherence understood as a "generalized" and permanent way of seeing the world and one's life in this world is the strongest resource of an individual to overcome the difficulties of everyday life. High motivation and resistance to stress therefore largely depend on the sense of coherence as a whole. People with a strong sense of coherence show a significant intensity of these components<sup>32</sup> and a stronger motivation to act. It is worth noting that all three components of coherence are highly correlated and inseparable. According to the author of this theory, people with a high sense of coherence have a greater ability to accurately assess reality. For such people, the development of events does not come as a surprise. These people do not give in to fate and in difficult situations they cope on their own or know who to turn to for help. The sense of coherence is therefore perceived as a resource of people who come into contact with stressors. Following Billings and Moos<sup>33</sup>, we can assume that resources constitute a complex system of dispositional, cognitive and personality factors that create the psychological reference of coping. Antonovski, introducing the term "general immune resources", included in them the physical and biochemical resistance of the organism, education and professional position, intellectual abilities, interpersonal abilities and socio-cultural characteristics of the community in which the individual functions. Thus, for Antonovski, resources are the properties of the person and the environment that build the cognitive domain of an individual, which in turn shape the sense of coherence. Antonovski emphasized that people with a high sense of coherence, compared to people with a low sense of coherence, will not perceive strong stimuli as stressors, but rather, in such situations, they will use the right strategy to deal with emerging adversities.

The sense of coherence contained in Antonovski's autogenetic theory corresponds to Mihály Csíkszentmihályi's motivational theory of flow and its merits, i.e., the state of "flow". The author created its characteristics based on 9 dimensions:

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<sup>26</sup> Zimbardo P. G., Gerrig R. J., *Psychologia i życie*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2012, pp. 341-345.

<sup>27</sup> Ibidem, pp. 347-348.

<sup>28</sup> Aronson E., Wilson T. D., Akert R. M., *Psychologia społeczna. Serce i umysł*, Wydawnictwo Zysk i Spółka, Poznań 1997, p. 217.

<sup>29</sup> Antonovsky A., *Rozwikłanie tajemnicy zdrowia. Jak radzić sobie ze stresem i nie zachorować*, Instytut Psychiatrii i Neurologii, Warszawa 2005, pp. 128-130.

<sup>30</sup> Billings A. S., Moos R., *Work Stress and the Stress-Buffering Roles Of Work and Family Resources*, "Journal of Occupational Behaviour" (1982)/3, pp. 215-232.

<sup>31</sup> Antonovsky A., op.cit., p. 34.

<sup>32</sup> Ibidem, p. 32.

<sup>33</sup> Billings A. S., Moos R., *Work Stress and the Stress-Buffering Roles...* op. cit., pp. 215-232.

- The task ahead of you is tailored to your skills. It is difficult, but you have everything you need to do.
- Your actions are "automatic" - you don't have to think about what to do. You just know it.
- Your goals are clearly formulated - you know perfectly well what you are doing and what you can achieve with it.
- You have no problems interpreting the feedback that comes to you. You do not have to think about their meaning, you immediately know how to react to them and what to improve.
- You are completely focused on what you are doing. Nothing distracts you, only action matters.
- You have a complete sense of control over the situation - it's up to you how the events go on, you control them.
- You don't worry about anything, don't worry about what could go wrong or what the consequences will be.
- You think time has stopped. You are so engrossed in activity that you do not pay attention to it.
- The most important thing is satisfaction with the performed activity. The result is irrelevant, the activity itself is the main source of happiness<sup>34</sup>.

Each of us misses the state of positive arousal, the state of creative elation, full commitment, focus and full satisfaction with the activity performed. The process of acting and creating can be more satisfying than the end result itself. The word "process" is the keyword here. The occurring elevation, setting our perception only to a narrow perception of our current activity, is precisely the state of "flow", that is, flow or absorption. The state of flow tells us that the subject is maximally focused on a specific action. His activity and attention are focused on the activity performed, which is important to him to such an extent that he completely absorbs his activity and perception. The state of "flow" gives the subject a feeling of very deep satisfaction, joy and energy. The person in this state is focused on the process of creation itself, not on its end result. There is an automation of action here, no sense of passing time which ceases to exist for a person immersed in action. A person in the state of "flow" functions as if in a different reality, in a different time dimension. The level of focus on the task is so high that the subject seems absent. We can achieve the "flow" state by meeting a few rules that make it up. The level of requirements must correspond to the level of our competence. The undertaken action must meet the subjective condition of sufficient difficulty to engage more effort than usual and qualify the skills as high. A person in this state has a full sense of control over his action and full concentration over its execution. The goals set are very specific and clearly formulated. In such a situation, the emerging challenge motivates us to act. We engage our resources (skills) and fully devote ourselves to action, deriving only full satisfaction from it. Therefore, in the "flow" state, the activity acquires autotelic value. The reverse of this plane of action is to operate in a situation that requires from us much more resources than we have. In this case, a sense of fear arises, limiting perception and having a demotivating effect. A similar situation occurs when performing tasks that require much less skills than the entity has in its resources. In this case, we are dealing with the occurrence of a state of frustration, which also reduces perception and significantly reduces motivation.

Cognitive concepts of motivation are derived from studies showing that the lack of informational stimulation is a negative state for higher organisms. These were studies on sensory deprivation when the body was heavily burdened or completely deprived of the supply of stimuli. The consequences of sensory deprivation consisted of disturbances in perception, disturbed thought processes, memory disturbances, experiencing hallucinations, daydreams and experiencing negative tension and fears. In such a situation, providing information was a positive state, acting as a reinforcement, and it resulted in the reintegration of the brain processes. Information became a reward here. These conclusions are linked to the research of D. Berlyne, who discovered that exploratory behaviour is triggered by such features of information as novelty, change, inconsistency, complexity,

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<sup>34</sup> Csíkszentmihályi M., *Przepływ. Psychologia optymalnego doświadczenia*, Biblioteka Moderatora, Wydawnictwo Moderator, Taszów 2005.



ambiguity or vagueness<sup>35</sup>. There is then uncertainty and conflict in the body that the person tends to overcome. Cognitive conflict is a negative factor that interferes with the proper functioning of the individual. Conflict inspires motivation to reduce it. The beginning of all motivated activities is therefore a cognitive conflict, which directs you to thinking related to solving cognitive problems. The problem of cognitive conflict was developed by the theory of cognitive dissonance by L. Festinger, which brought many interesting explanations about motivation<sup>36</sup>. The assumptions of this theory are as follows: first, people collect cognitive data, which is part of all knowledge; second, these data can be compared with each other; third, the result of comparing cognitive data may be one of three relationships between them: consonance, dissonance, or no relationship. The lack of a link between cognitive data is motivational indifferent. Consonance, on the other hand, appears when, while analysing two cognitive elements at the same time, the content of one of them results in the content of the other. Consonance is a positive state that motivates a person to maintain it or restore it if it has been disturbed. Dissonance occurs when, while analysing two cognitive elements at the same time, the content of one of them results in the opposition or denial of the other. Leon Festinger also talks about the magnitude of the dissonance and consonance, and the overall magnitude of the dissonance. The magnitude of the dissonance / consonance assumes that the dissonance or consonance is greater the more important the related cognitive data is, and the overall magnitude of the dissonance experienced by an individual is the greater, the more favourable the proportion of weighted dissonance relationships to all significant relationships. Dissonance occurs only when there is an exclusion relationship between the cognitive elements, and not when the elements, although inconsistent, do not contradict each other. The size of the cognitive dissonance does not depend on the size of the discrepancy, but on the importance of the cognitive data. Dissonance is an unpleasant state, similar in its action to drive, and it activates actions aimed at removing contradictions.

Summing up, building adequate cognitive resources, both at the general and specialist level, is an indispensable component in preparing a person to function in extreme situations, which is important during the training of participants in task-oriented military groups. Building meaning and thus co-constructing one's own social reality correlates both with Antonovski's salutogenetic theory, Csíkszentmihályi's flow psychology and Festinger's theory of cognitive dissonance. It was not without significance to show the correlation of these scientific areas. The use of their dependencies facilitates the development of resources necessary for effective team leadership, achieving effective stress resistance, building a task force and maintaining its high motivation to act. These areas should constitute the base level and should be developed throughout the training period during training in military institutions, regardless of the level of preparation achieved. Thus, the concepts of social communication, cognitive concepts, management psychology and motivation should be used as mainstream philosophy in preparing an individual task force member and commander for leadership roles in military institutions.

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