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Forming the Culture of Cooperation Between Border Guard Officers in Poland

Introduction

The need to attach more importance to concepts that emphasize the high competences of the public sector is often underscored on the ground of public management. Moreover, the exceptional status of public service, as well as high organizational culture based on public values, are indicated. "Public management will surely be hybrid and broad cooperation-oriented".[1] Unarguably, to ensure that state tasks within the security system are carried out on an efficiency-driven level, they should create a type of organization with valuable social capital. The core of such an organization should build on cooperation as a constitutive element of a public institution leading to the creation of an organizational culture in which:[2] the mission is constructed on the motivation of cooperation, people who will be able to create a network of interpersonal contacts and implement the common good are chosen as superiors, knowledge-based decisions are made, competences based upon cooperation and express participation of employees are relevant, the ethical infrastructure is established, expanded, and strengthened.

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[1] K. Raczkowski, *Zarządzanie publiczne. Teoria i praktyka*, PWN, Warszawa 2015, p. 31.
[2] C.M. Ribeiro Saulo, *Organizational Culture and Paradoxes in Management*, Routledge, New York 2020.

The participants of this cooperation must become aware of the possibility of linking the above-mentioned cultural elements, have the ability to cooperate and thus assume the existence of common elements that unite and support the "team spirit" and "participation in common responsibility".[3] Spill-over effects constitute the actual content of the group life, i.e. they comprise an essential ingredient in all phenomena within it, all processes in which the members of the group are involved. Adaptation of an individual to a team, processes of cooperation and conflicts, as well as subordination and domination take place by way of mutual interactions. Coupled interactions run according to patterns adopted from the outside or generated in it. They enable a common communication platform between group members, based upon the values that concern ways of thinking, judging and behaving through group standards. Common objectives can only be achieved by means of the cooperation of team members, and group values and norms as well as related artifacts and basic assumptions[4] constitute a cultural platform for joint activities, which is a permanent distinguishing feature of the organization and, alongside structure and strategy, a complement of its image.[5] Organizational culture can be related to a number of cooperation-related elements, in all its layers: awareness (abilities), actions (implementation of tasks) as well as attitudes and social ties (creating and maintaining a group): synchronization of individuals in a group, good mood, emotional capacity, similar or common attitudes, harmonious and flexible work, collegiality, kindness, help from others.

Speaking broadly, one might say that organizational culture understood in this way integrates the organization around a common goal, and at the same time satisfies the needs and aspirations of individuals; it represents an intermediary element between the organization and individuals. Geert Hofstede[6] calls it the "autonomous nervous system of the organization" or "the collective programming of the mind", i.e. mental software. The purpose of culture is to eliminate organizational ambiguities of employees' attitudes and promote their pro-effective behavior. The purpose of this article is to analyze key aspects of the culture of cooperation among Border Guard officers. A selection was made of group values and norms, as well as elements of the culture of cooperation that

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[3] D. Pfeffer, *Group Integration and Multiculturalism*, Palgrave Macmillan, London 2015.

[4] E.H. Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership. A Dynamic View*, Wiley, Hoboken 2016.

[5] G. Morgan, *Images of Organization*, Sage, Thousand Oaks 1997.

[6] G. Hofstede, *Culture's Consequences: Comparing Values, Behaviors, Institutions and Organizations across Nations*, Sage, Thousand Oaks 2003.

may become apparent in organizational units of the Border Guard in Poland in the areas of:[7]

1. Cooperative competences, including: the ability to cooperate, understood as recognizing the need and necessity for cooperation; willingness, energy to cooperate; cooperative affiliation, manifested by the approval of an individual in a group, realized by means of joint action and mutual help; personal fulfillment in cooperation, achieved through the individual's activity for the benefit of the group by means of honest and reliable cooperation in the group and caring for a good reputation thereof; satisfaction with group work understood as commitment to work for the benefit of the group and identification with it; collegiality; group integration.

2. An ethos of service that includes: understanding the meaning and value of the service performed; the key skills essential in the service; knowledge of the professional roots and history of the Border Guard; identification with the mission of establishing one's own aspirations and goals; the core priorities of belonging to a professional group – pride and a sense of professional dignity; knowledge and compliance with the rules of professional ethics; the most useful professional qualities in an officer; personal and moral characteristics in an officer; caring for one's external appearance and psychophysical form.

3. The effectiveness of cooperation interpreted as the level of achievement of common goals, including fulfillment of ethical criteria (praxeological ethics), i.e. values and norms based upon a community of tasks and interests (needs) and other related measures of efficiency, such as: accuracy, diligence; maximizing effects; hierarchization of goals and tasks; vigorousness (initiative, entrepreneurship); focus on end results; organizational order; economic efficiency, profitability.

All these components of the culture of cooperation are associated with a set of positive interactions from the side of both the superior and the group, recognized by a cooperation-based system of values and norms. Their strength is determined by the following:

1. The superior-subordinate relationship is characterized by: the superior's authority among his subordinates; the superior's ability to recognize concrete values and group norms; selecting, accepting and implementing common values and standards (including building a sense of joint ownership of goals, applying the principles of participatory management, equal workload of the team asso-

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[7]   The article discusses some of the variables mentioned in full: L. Młodzik, *Kultura współ-działania służby ochrony bezpieczeństwa publicznego na przykładzie funkcjonariuszy Nadodrzańskiego Oddziału Straży Granicznej*, UZ, Zielona Góra 2018.

ciates, proper assessment, structuralizing officers' rewarding, shaping behavior based on professional ethos, applying and enforcing the principles of professional ethics, knowing the organization's mission and professional roots, instilling and consolidating pride in belonging to a professional group).

2. Interpersonal relationships are characterized by: a climate of cooperation and mutual assistance; mutual interests; kindness in contacts, also towards new officers; organizing joint trips and celebrations; knowledge sharing; creating bonds and community.

The approach to the culture of cooperation proposed in the article regarding the Border Guard in Poland is particularly relevant from the perspective of the VUCA world, which encompasses the pandemic and war world. It seems that as the complexity of the processes that take place in the social, economic, political and technological-digital environments increases, and above all in a wartime environment, internal and group cooperation based upon a system of values and norms is becoming more significant. And by no means is this a question of a certain fashion, a crisis of values of the modern day or an exaggerated emphasis on the ideal of service, but rather the necessity to build a cultural vision of organizations such as the Border Guard. It does not exclude, as it often appears, but rather strengthens reliable performance of duties, which is so important for officers.

Functioning of the Border Guards in Poland

The Border Guard in Poland was established by the Act of 12 October 1990 on the Border Guard[8] (hereinafter referred to as the Act on Border Guard), and it began operating on May 16, 1991 with the dissolution of the Border Protection Forces. It is also the heir of an institution from the interwar period, i.e. the Border Protection Corps and the Border Guard.

The Border Guard (hereinafter referred to as the BG) represents a unified, uniformed and armed formation intended to protect the state border on land and at sea and to control border traffic, being part of a special-purpose state administration.[9]

The tasks entrusted by the legislator of the BG in Poland were carried out by eight departments of the BG (Figure 1).

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[8] Ustawa z dnia 12 października 1990 r. o Straży Granicznej (tj. Dz.U. 1990 nr 78, poz. 462, z późn. zm.).

[9] *Ibidem*, art. 1.1.

Figure 1. Border Guards departments in Poland

OSG – Border Guard Unit; KGSG – Headquarters of the Border Guard

Source: Author's own study.

The Nadodrzański Border Guard Unit (hereinafter: the NBGU) based in Krosno Odrzańskie, is one of eight branches (2023) that carries out organizational tasks defined by the legislator, thus protecting the state border with Germany and the Czech Republic. is responsible for 716 km of the state border, including just over 347 km that connects with the Federal Republic of Germany and 438 km with the Czech Republic. The territorial shifts of the NBGU influenced the present shape of the formation's range.

The fundamental organizational cell of the unit headquarters is the department, which is managed by individual heads of department. The department includes divisions (several or a dozen, managed by a head of department). As part of the structure, we distinguish: Operational and Investigative Division, Border Division, Unit of the Foreigners Division, Bureau of Communications and Information Technology, Technology and Supply Division, Division of Analysis, Information and International Cooperation, Human Capital Division, Information Protection Bureau, Operation Coordination Division, Operation Security Division, Control Division, Chief Accountant Division, Guarded Center for Foreigners, Team of Independent Positions, NBGU Health Services, Internal Audit Bureau.

The department command is responsible for eleven NBGU Posts (hereinafter: PBG), led by individual chiefs of departments. Service in institutions takes place in groups and subordinate teams and departments, separated by the reach and range of management, adequately to the branch sections, headed by a superior. Each facility employs a different number of officers (from a dozen to

several dozen), depending on the distribution, tasks, and needs. Depending on the situation, service often takes place in interdisciplinary teams which consists of officers of various groups. Therefore, officers are "forced" to cooperate on a daily basis and it is what they should be evaluated for. As in other departments, the essence of the efficient implementation of tasks in the service of NBGU are the processes of cooperation and types of behavior associated with them.

Border guard participates in many environmental interactions. In terms of cooperation, it creates inter-organizational relations with various elements (organizations) that belong to the "Polish security management system, understood as the sum of public administration activities, specialized intervention units, prosecutor's office, police, courts and other services, non-governmental and private organizations and the society, individual citizens in the country".[10] The existing prerequisites for inter-organizational cooperation are closely linked to the need for cooperation within the organization itself. It appears that as the complexity of environmental processes grows, internal, group and intergroup cooperation, which consists in building relationships necessary to skillfully respond to unexpected opportunities and threats, becomes more important.

Creating suitable conditions for implementing the principles of efficient operation requires subjecting the existing situation in the functioning of the institution to analysis. This process should involve primarily superiors, but also officers who hold executive positions. Managing staff must be convinced that their role is primarily to involve their subordinates in the process of participation. Any institution that is looking to succeed and serve society well, including border guards, must make many changes and submit to them. It must improve in order to become a dynamic, flexible and creative organization that responds adequately to the needs of society. Each introduction of changes results in various resistance, resulting both from the organizational structure, lack of resources, as well as stereotypes of thinking and the resulting behavior of people. Overcoming psychosocial barriers requires unique skills. The majority of management theorists and practitioners believe that in many cases, the way to achieve goals in an organization (while solving problems) is teamwork.[11] This is especially important in a special type organization, such as border guard. Cooperation represents a value that promotes the achievement of goals. Furthermore, it is a constitutive feature of such an institution.

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[10] M. Sienkiewicz-Małyjurek, *Współpraca międzyorganizacyjna w systemie zarządzania bezpieczeństwem publicznym*, Scholar, Warsaw 2017, p. 89.

[11] D. Coyle, *The Culture Code the Secrets of Highly Successful Groups*, Cornerstone, New York 2019.

Research methodology

The research was carried out in 2019–2020[12] (pre-pandemic) and 2023[13] (after the outbreak of war in Ukraine) in all twelve organizational units of the NBGU in Poland, including: five from the Lubuskie Voivodeship (four border guard posts – including the Polish-German border crossing in Świecko and at the headquarters of the branch), two from the Greater Poland Voivodeship (including the Poznań–Ławica Airport) and five from the Dolnośląskie Voivodeship (including in Zgorzelec – on the section protecting the boundary of the Polish-Czech and Polish-German state border and at the Wrocław–Strachowice Airport).

A quasi-comparative method was used. The research objects were selected by means of determining comparable communities and the objects in them. A set of officers from all organizational units of the NBGU was adopted as a general community. The compared collectivities were represented by the communities of officers in these units, while the objects in these collectivities were teams of officers. The study included three hundred and ninety officers,[14] according to the sample selection. The social category subject to empirical analysis stems from different social backgrounds of the three mentioned voivodeships. They are united by a common service in border guards, but the specificity of the organizational unit differs: the number of officers employed in the organizational unit, the number of people in the group, as well as the characteristics of individual officers, including: rank in the corps, seniority in service, total length of service, education, gender, place of residence. The respondents were not surveyed in terms of the specificity of their departments, assuming the "officer" category as the common denominator.

Employee groups were selected with deliberation depending on the number of officers in the organizational unit. The research covered 36% of the officers from the entire branch. The percentage distribution of respondents in individual organizational units ranges from 1 to 21.9%. The research was carried out in structures employing a different number of officers. This is conditioned by the location of the units and the scope of their duties. The branches employ from a dozen to about one hundred and eighty people. One exception is the

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[12] Some results are from 2018 and are similar to later ones.

[13] Also, the 2023 results are similar to previous ones.

[14] The research included both women (32.5%) and men (67.3%). Solely for the sake of simplification, the term "officer" is used in the analysis of results.

headquarters of the branch in Krosno Odrzańskie, which employs the largest number of officers.

Depending on the size of organizational units, the empirical analysis covered employee groups of officers from several to over a dozen people. The largest number of six- and seven-people teams was examined – the most common in organizational units of the NBGU.

The following tools were used:

1. A questionnaire designed by the author to research the culture of co-operation among BG officers. The questionnaire contains forty-two questions (including open, closed – filtering, cafeteria, Likert, sociometric questions). The form was not sent by electronic means; although it would probably shorten the research time, according to the author this would violate the principle of ano-nymity of the respondents. For the purposes of statistical analysis, integrated software IBM SPSS Statistics 24 was used.

2. Tabulation of the obtained data and information concerning the compo-nents of the culture of cooperation – declared in BG groups (from the organiza-tional documentation – Organizational Regulations of the NBGU Headquarters, statutes – Border Guard Training Center in Kętrzyn, BG Association of the Pensioners' Union, Health Services NBGU, Independent Self-governing Trade Union of Border Guard Officers, BG Corruption Risk Mapping, tests for the BG, code of ethics, uncategorized intelligence, and others).

3. Tabulation of the obtained information on the previously mentioned characteristic elements that are complied with (mainly from observation and interview).

4. The General Self-Efficacy Scale – GSES.[15]

5. The Belbin questionnaire, profiling team roles.[16]

6. A case study containing the reconstruction of one day in the professional life of an officer and his personality traits.

The author used developmental scales, the essence of which is the assump-tion that a general feature and its more detailed aspects develop continuously on a continuum, but for practical reasons we distinguish certain stages of this process close to the normal distribution. In addition, the interval scale proposed, for example, for the study of praxeological ethics, was used.

[15] R. Schwarzer, M. Jerusalem, Z. Juczyński, *Narzędzia Pomiaru w Promocji i Psychologii Zdrowia*, PWN, Warszawa 2009.

[16] M. Belbin, *Twoja rola w zespole*, GWP, Gdańsk 2008.

Shaping the culture of cooperation – research results

The analysis of the elements within the culture of cooperation of the NBGU in Poland included an examination of, among others, their dependence on socio-demographic traits. The cross-correlation results were much more interesting: superior recognition of group values and norms, changes in the behavior of the superior and officers and cooperative affiliation and self-fulfillment of officers.

The superior's recognition of group values and norms vs. the reinforcement system

The superior who is seeking to effectively manage the group should be aware of its values and norms against the background of cooperation. Therefore, the question should be asked: Do the chiefs of BG in Poland have the ability to recognize (diagnose) group values and norms?

According to the respondents, half of the superiors have a very good and good ability to recognize group values and norms. There is a strong correlation between gender and education, and a superior's ability to recognize group values and norms. Women and people with higher education indicate the aforementioned managerial skill more often (Table 1).

Table 1. The superior's ability to recognize group values and norms vs. gender, education, superior orientation towards officers

Recognition by the superior of values and group norms			
Factor	Gender	Education	Orientation of the superior on officers
Lambda	–	0.647	0.765
Tau	0.593	0.339	0.721
Phi	0.592	0.338	0.806
Cramér's V	0.592	0.338	0.806

Source: Author's own study.

The research analysis shows that the superior's ability to diagnose group values and norms is quite common among the BG superiors in Poland. It represents another element that connects the social environment of all organizational units in the NBGU, as it is similar there (47–52%).

The aforementioned managerial skill is most strongly related to gender and education. Women who are characterized by empathy, intuition, community, harmony[17]

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[17] C. Cherrey, S.R. Madsen, F.W. Ngunjiri, *Women and Leadership Around the World*, Information Age Publishing, Charlotte 2015.

pay more attention to the superior's ability to recognize group values and norms. In the case of education, the acquired theoretical and practical knowledge (especially in law, political science, management, sociology and economics – which is the case here) helps to assess the aforementioned competence.

Moreover, the discussed skill depends on the superior's orientation towards the officer. The respondents believe that superiors who give them more attention better recognize these variables.

Owing to the ability to recognize values and group norms, the superior has a better understanding of the regularities that govern team development and behavior as well as the needs and aspirations of his subordinates. The superior can and should use the knowledge gained in this way and shape it in the management process. For example, by means of a system of incentives that enhance pro-efficiency norms.

The results provide information about the remuneration system in most teams, resulting from the act on the border service and the regulations issued on its basis. On this foundation, officer may be awarded discretionary awards and regulations issued. The internal affairs minister, in consultation with the minister of labor and the minister of social security, uses regulations to determine the fund for annual awards, discretionary awards and allowances for officers, taking into account the organizational units of the BG, in which the fund is established, the method of determining the amount of financial resources allocated to awards and allowances, the rules for increasing the fund amount, as well as the method for determining the amount of resources at the disposal of the chiefs of the Border Guard organizational units intended for awards. The distribution of these funds and the use of non-financial awards is at the discretion of the superiors.

The respondents believe that the superior very rarely, and rather occasionally (57.5%) uses non-financial forms of positive reinforcement in the team. Every third officer (33.8%) believes that his superior uses the above-mentioned awards from time to time. Only a few (6.7%) respondents claim that their superiors often 'enhance' their subordinates in a non-material manner. When it comes to cash prizes, the majority of respondents (88%) believe that they are divided via previously known criteria.

With regard to penalties, an officer is subject to disciplinary liability for violating official discipline (non-compliance with the obligations that arise from the oath taken, as well as the provisions of the Act and regulations issued on the basis thereof), non-compliance with the principles of ethics, in particular the honor and good name of the service.[18] An officer may be subject to disci-

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[18] Ustawa..., art. 135.1.2.

plinary penalties: 1) admonition; 2) reprimand; 3) severe rebuke; 4) reprimand with a warning; 5) warning about incomplete suitability for service in the position held; 6) appointment to a lower official position; 7) lowering the rank; 8) warning about incomplete suitability for service; 9) expulsion from service.[19] As many as 89.5% of the surveyed officers claim that their superiors often refer to the above-mentioned provisions and place great emphasis on them, even they are ultimately failed to be applied. On the other hand, 80% of the respondents declare frequent use of reprimands by their superiors as a disciplinary measure.

It appears that superiors treat the above-mentioned issues more in terms of a catalog of legal norms and limit themselves to them, forgetting about the diversity of their forms and nature. One point to note is that effective impact through the use of rewards and punishments is a difficult matter that requires knowledge; it is dependent on the individual needs and many characteristics of officers. Therefore, it seems incomprehensible that superiors can recognize group values and norms skillfully and use this knowledge when applying "enhancement" to a limited extent in practice.

The superior's use of positive and negative enhancement in BG groups is related to:

– age (very strong relationship) – people over 36 feel the strongest use of rewards and punishments system,

– seniority (strong relationship) – the longer the seniority at the BG, the greater the individual's perception of the system of rewards and punishments in the group,

– gender (weak relationship) – women have a greater perception of the use of rewards and punishments than men (Table 2).

Table 2. The superior's influence through rewards and punishments vs. gender, age and seniority of officers in service

Factor	Gender	Age	Seniority
Lambda	-	0.317	-
Tau	0.410	0.765	0.721
Phi	0.409	0.749	0.806
Cramér's V	0.409	0.749	0.806

Source: Author's own study.

To conclude, with the acquisition of professional experience by officers, measured by seniority and age, in their opinion there is an increased popularity and frequency of awarding non-material rewards and their various forms by

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[19] *Ibidem*, art. 136.1.

superiors, as well as referring to penalties and their application. However, the way in which we are motivated by the reward and punishment system proves that there is much to be done in this regard.

Discipline as not only readiness and ability to obey certain rules, adherence to rules of conduct and instructions, but also discipline and executing official orders, represents one of the most important values in uniformed services to this day. Its significance is sustained, which is understandable, because keeping to safety procedures is a necessity. However, the necessity of conscious discipline has been pointed out for quite a long time – the observance thereof not (only) because the superior requires it, but (mainly) as a result of understanding the reasons, usually of a higher order, for which it is necessary. Only then can we talk about self-discipline. It seems necessary in this respect to enhance officers by group values and norms recognized by superiors in a skillful manner.

Behavioral changes of the superior and officers

The results indicate that the behavior of officers based on the values and norms of cooperation may cause a positive behavioral change in superiors towards the group. These are the following behaviors and attitudes of officers: kindness in professional contacts, constant improvement of the quality of work, integration around a common task, timely fulfillment of assigned tasks, initiating new ideas in the implementation of tasks, willingness to participate in joint non-obligatory trips and professions related to service, initiating celebrations (joint successes, promotions, anniversaries, etc.). The majority (89.5%) observed a significant positive change in the superior's behavior caused by the group's behavior based on the group's system of values and norms. This lies in the fact that the superior is more oriented towards people: he maintains good team relations, two-way communication, takes into account the needs and aspirations of his subordinates, attaches great importance to listening to suggestions and providing the officers with favorable working conditions, undertakes activities such as providing guidance in professional matters, explaining matters related to the goals of the organization.

The fact that there is a major positive change in the behavior of the superior through the group's behavior based on the system of group values and norms is indicated by similar (oscillating between 80 and 89.5%) indications of the officers across all the teams surveyed. Therefore, it represents another variable – an element of the culture of cooperation that links the social circles of the BG in the entire surveyed unit.

There is an identified distinct relationship between gender and education and the change in the superior's behavior caused by the group's behavior, based on the system of values and group norms. Men, as well as respondents with higher education, indicate fundamental changes in the superior's behavior in this aspect more often (Table 3).

Table 3. Group behaviors that cause a change in superior's behavior vs. gender and education of respondents

Group behavior and change of superior's behavior		
Factor	Gender	Education
Lambda	–	–
Tau	0.935	0.917
Phi	0.895	0.916
Cramér's V	0.895	0.916

Source: Author's own study.

In a situation of such major shifts in the behaviors of the superior, it would be worth investigating into whether there exists and if so, what is the set of influences on the group from the superior and officers, recognized through the group values and norms system. The relationship between the superior and subordinates may involve a strong positive feedback loop in this respect. On the one hand, the group changes the superior's behavior, and on the other, the superior can (and should) use and modify the attitudes of his subordinates. These relationships constitute another important element in the process of management by organizational culture.[20]

Over half (51.8%) of officers believe that their behavior changes (positively) in terms of cooperation as a result of the superior's application of group values and norms. This means that the superior: a) skillfully recognizes the values and group norms, thanks to which he knows the needs and aspirations of his subordinates; b) uses the regularities that govern the development and behavior of the working group in a skillful manner. A major (32.6%) shift in employee behavior that stems from the superior's use of group values and norms provides information about minor "imperfections" in the process of positive group impacts from the superior's standpoint. Merely every seventh employee believes that group values and norms comprise a "weak tool" in the hands of the superior, causing a slight shift in the behavior of officers. It is worth noting that the research confirms the

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[20] G. Hamel, M. Zanini, *Humanocracy: Creating Organizations as Amazing as the People Inside Them*, Harvard Business Review Press, Brighton 2020.

dependence that the superior's behavior influences the group norms to a greater extent than that of other group members.

There is a strong association between education and the corpus degree and a positive change in the behavior of the respondents as a result of the superior's use of the discussed values and group norms. Respondents who have a higher education and a higher degree indicate these behavioral changes more often than people with secondary education (Table 4). Acquiring knowledge helps to assess these changes in employee behavior and perhaps understand their causes.

Table 4. Changes in the behavior of officers and their education and rank in the corps

Changes in the behavior of officers		
Factor	Education	Degree in the corps
Tau	0.743	0.537
Phi	0.742	0.531
Cramér's V	0.742	0.292

Source: Author's own study.

In the case of the officers' influence on the team, the following case was examined: the introduction of a new standard by one of them, i.e. failure to sign the attendance list. The research results are hardly surprising. Refusal in such a situation (72% of the respondents) seems an appropriate reaction of the group, especially in uniformed services with strictly defined officer duties and tasks.

There exists a very strong correlation between gender and the discussed influence of the team on the officer. Men have a greater influence on the person who introduces the mentioned norm than women (Table 5). This may be due to male characteristics and males' numerical superiority in the studied groups.

Table 5. The influence of the team on the officer in the form of failure to sign the attendance list vs. the gender of respondents

Failure to sign the attendance list	
Factor	Gender
Tau	0.946
Phi	0.946
Cramér's V	0.946

Source: Author's own study.

The research results conducted so far have revealed that the influence of the discussed changes in the behavior of both superiors and their subordinate officers causes the emergence of ties between superiors and subordinates. The

following indicators testify to this: more willingly undertaken joint work (88%), more frequent conversations regarding business issues, including ethical issues (56%), greater mutual kindness (48%), better exchange of information (49%), more frequent perceptions of the officer's needs by the superior (44%). The results of the analysis of the literature indicate the bond as a very important constitutive element of the group. As Dan Pfeffer[21] reports, it is an expression of duration, i.e. it concerns the duration of the team, and its quality determines the integration and sense of connection of the individual with other members. On the other hand, a stronger bond makes group management easier for the superior.

The results indicate that in the surveyed organizations there emerge ties which can be attributed to the system of group values and norms, i.e. strong ties between the superior and the subordinate (80.3% of the surveyed officers) and very strong ties (13.8% of the respondents). A small percentage of responses (5.9%) relates to poor superior-subordinate ties, created by the system of values and group norms. This proves that the management staff of the BG in Poland employs group values and norms to a large extent in the management of their subordinates.

There is a relationship between a number of variables: gender (very strong relationship), education and seniority in the BG (strong relationships), age (weak relationship) and generation of the aforementioned ties (Table 6).

Men more often than women indicate the formation of ties under the influence of group values and norms. People over 40 claim that the strongest ties between superiors and subordinates are created through the system of group values and norms.

Table 6. Generation of the superior-subordinate tie vs. respondents' gender, age, education, seniority in service

Generation of the superior-subordinate bond				
Factor	Gender	Age	Education	Seniority
Lambda	–	0.249	–	0.696
Tau	0.753	0.404	0.482	0.469
Phi	0.753	0.374	0.481	0.378
Cramér's V	0.753	0.374	0.481	0.378

Source: Author's own study.

Officers who have a higher education notice a stronger relationship between the discussed variables and the formation of ties between officers and their superiors compared to people with secondary education. When it comes to seniority in service, people with longer seniority indicate stronger ties.

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[21] D. Pfeffer, *op. cit.*

In summary, the analyzed variables concerning mutual interactions on the part of the superior and officers in the studied groups are strongly related to a number of socio-demographic characteristics: age, education, and seniority, which most often coincides with seniority in the group and gender. These qualities are linked to the social maturity of employees.[22] The formation of ties in the work group is a long-term process, which usually lasts for years. The research results show that people over the age of 40 most often indicate very strong ties created by the system of values and group norms. Furthermore, the acquisition of experience, measured by seniority and education, determines a greater change in the above-mentioned behavior of the superior. In the case of gender, this time it is men who more often recognize the fundamental changes in the superior's behavior caused by the group's behavior based on group values and norms. This may stem from such typical male features as: rationality, objectivity, observation, reliance on instrumental experience, as well as individualism and competition, assuming that most superiors are men.[23]

The results demonstrate that management is a two-sided process which consists in exerting influence, whereby the behaviors of both the superior and the subordinates are mutually correlated. However, it must be remarked that the subordinates believe that the leader uses the system of group values and norms to influence the behavior of officers to a greater extent than the employees do on the superior or on one another.

Cooperative affiliation and self-fulfillment

The analysis of the research results reveals that the impact on cooperative affiliation, manifested by the approval of an individual in the group, implemented through joint action and mutual assistance, is characterized by (Table 7):

– taking into account the group values and norms by their superiors (strong relationship) – the more often superiors interact with the officers by the above-mentioned values and norms, the more approved they are in the group,

– orienting the superior towards the officer, consisting in: ensuring favorable working conditions (organizational and technical, regarding the nature of work in the given position and the manner of performing tasks as well as the organizational climate), maintaining friendly relations with subordinates, professional assistance, taking into account the individual needs and aspirations of officers, delegation of goal-setting and decision-making powers (strong relationship) –

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[22] D. Katz, *Zachowanie człowieka w organizacji*, PWN, Warszawa 1991.

[23] C. Cherrey, S.R. Madsen, F.W. Ngunjiri, *op. cit.*

a more frequent orientation of the superior toward the officer makes him feel approved by the group.

Table 7. Cooperative affiliation of officers vs. group values and norms

	Cooperative affiliation	
Factor	Taking into account the values and group norms by the superior	Orientation of the superior on officers
Lambda	–	0.593
Tau	0.885	0.537
Somers' D	0.514	0.949
Phi	0.810	0.495
Cramér's V	0.810	0.423
Tau b	0.514	0.949
Spearman correlation	0.507	0.920

Source: Author's own study.

Individuals join the group because it can give them approval and a sense of high value.[24] If a person feels approved by the team, their sense of affiliation is stronger.[25] The test results support the opinion that the superior can grant the officers approval.

There is a strong link between the employee-oriented management style (Likert scale) as a result of taking into account the values and norms of cooperation and group affiliation. The more the superior's attention is focused on the needs of group members and maintaining good relations with them, the more the officer feels approved and connected with the group, which in turn ties in with the unit's better work towards common goals.

Another dependent variable adopted for the purpose if analysis is self-fulfillment in cooperation, achieved through the individual's activity for the benefit of the group via honest and reliable cooperation within it. The research results on self-fulfillment indicate its dependence on (Table 8):

– a positive change in the superior's behavior in relation to the group caused by the team's behavior based on the system of values and norms (strong relationship) – the stronger the change in the superior's behavior, the greater the degree of self-fulfillment of officers in the group,

– the superior-subordinate ties created by the system of group values and norms (strong relationship) – the stronger these ties, the greater the degree of self-fulfillment of officers in the group,

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[24] S.P. Robbins, T.A. Judge, *Organizational Behaviour*, Pearson, Harlow 2017.
[25] S. Paramananda, *The Self Beyond Psychology*, Austin Macauley Publishers, London 2020.

– a positive change in the behavior of officers under the influence of the superior's use of group values and norms (weak relationship) – the greater the change in these behaviors in co-workers, the more individuals pursue self-fulfillment in the group.

Table 8. Self-fulfillment of officers in the group through diligence and reliability

Ways of self-fulfillment: conscientious and reliable cooperation			
Factor	Change in superior's behavior	Superior-subordinate ties	Change of officers' behavior
Lambda	0.886	0.785	0.392
Tau	0.850	0.797	0.118
Somers' D	0.678	0.389	0.827
Phi	0.632	0.642	0.196
Cramér's V	0.632	0.642	0.225
Tau b	0.678	0.389	0.827
Spearman correlation	0.447	0.450	0.829

Source: Author's own study.

The need for self-fulfillment, according to Swami Paramananda,[26] potentially represents the broadest basis for effective motivation. The results are proof that in fact, a lot depends on the superior. The superior should positively enhance the officers, ensure that they know exactly what to do to receive the award, inform their subordinates what they are being rewarded for (this also applies to situations when the subordinates do not receive awards). The distinct dependence of this reinforcement on specific work outcomes (no delay in time and proportionality to achievements) determines its effectiveness. It is worth recalling that the research results reveal that superiors forget about these fundamental principles and apply positive non-material reinforcements to their officers rather rarely.

There is a relationship between an individual's self-fulfillment in a group and a positive change in the superior's behavior towards the employee group caused by the analyzed team behavior. It is worth recalling that the results of the research analysis reveal a significant difference in the aforementioned changes in managerial attitudes. This is positive from the perspective of shaping the organizational culture in the surveyed organizations.

Self-fulfillment of officers in a group is also more often pursued under the influence of the superior-subordinate ties, created by the system of cooperation values and norms in the group. They are mostly strong. The aforementioned ties are conducive to modeling organizational culture in the surveyed organizations.

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[26] *Ibidem*, p. 203.

Furthermore, officers pursue self-fulfillment in the group thanks to superiors who direct the behavior of other units in the group. The superior applies group values and norms, and thereby influences a positive change in the behavior of his subordinates. It should be recalled that this is a fundamental and significant change in behavior. Research confirms that officers, influenced by the superior's application of group values and norms, are active and have a "seeking attitude; they pursue self-fulfillment in the group and have higher professional aspirations".[27]

Research summary

The results confirm that cooperation-based group values and norms in the NBGU in Poland constitute a major element of management through organizational culture. Owing to them, the surveyed officers believe that the management staff of the BG shapes the behavior of their subordinates in the following way:

1. It causes a change in the behavior of officers by using group values and norms. This change has a significant impact on: a sense of affiliation in the group; activity for the benefit of the group.

2. It focuses on officers by way of: providing the respondents with favorable working conditions (organizational and technical, regarding the nature of work in the given position and the manner of performing tasks, organizational climate); maintaining friendly, trusting and respectful relations with subordinates; helping employees in professional matters; taking into account the needs and aspirations of employees; encouraging subordinates to set goals and make other decisions.

Such an approach of the superiors to their subordinate officers determines: having and developing the competences of cooperative group members; approval in the team; group integration.

In addition, the following are observed in the researched organizational units of the BG in Poland:

1. The occurrence of superior-subordinate ties, shaped by the system of values and group norms, which favor: activities for the benefit of the group, more reliable and honest group cooperation; demonstrating cooperative competences in service; creating a working community; influencing the superior's behavior (greater orientation towards officers).

2. Changing the superior's behavior through the group's behavior based on a system of values and standards of cooperation, which serves: self-fulfillment in the group; group integration.

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[27] J. Torfing, L. Andresen, K. Greve, K.K. Klausen, *Public Governance Paradigms – Competing and Co-Existing*, Edward Elgar Publishing, Cheltenham 2020.

Shaping the organizational culture in the NBGU in Poland is associated with an impact, which originates primarily from the superior, but also from the team, recognized through the system of values and group norms related to cooperative competences, service ethos and the effectiveness of cooperation, namely: conscientiousness and reliability in service; a sense of dignity; activity; responsibility; pride in belonging to a professional group; presence, personal culture; self-confidence; mutual help and willingness to cooperate.

The superior influences the group of officers through the system of values and group norms in such a way that they: are approved by others; are realized through activity for the benefit of the group and conscientious and reliable cooperation as part of it; make every effort to perform their job in a professional manner; integrate in the group; maintain collegiality.

Moreover, officers have a positive influence on the superior through their behavior based on the system of values and group norms. They make the superior more oriented towards subordinates, and therefore their leader: provides them with favorable working conditions; maintains friendly, trusting and respectful relations with them; helps them in professional matters; takes into account their needs and aspirations; encourages them to participate in setting goals and making other decisions.

Owing to the recognition and application of values and norms by the superior and team members, there is a feedback loop between the behavior of officers and their superiors in the group. The superior influences the subordinates and *vice versa* – the group influences the superior, thus shaping pro-effective organizational behavior. Significantly, the results of the research are similar in the period before and after the pandemic, as well as after Russia's expansion into Ukraine. The formation of a culture of interaction is therefore not dependent on the variables mentioned. In this context, there arise some practical remarks.

First of all, each superior should be aware of the sources of his power, its scope (what kind of subordinate behavior can and cannot be changed by the superior) and strength (how much resistance managerial influence can overcome). Since group authority is based on the acceptance by group members of a certain type of leadership "claims", it is important to understand the expectations of group members and to lead in line with them.

Second, effective management is about varying commanding influence according to individuals and situations. Effective leaders must be aware of an important pattern – different foundations of power exhibit effectiveness in varying conditions. A good superior should develop his leadership skills in all directions so that he can cope with any situation and with any subordinate. They must also bear in mind their double responsibility in the political and administrative spheres (it is more complex in the public sector than in the private one).

Third, the superior's interaction should be self-confident, but with avoidance of impulsive or egotistical demonstrations of their imperious abilities. In an organization like the Polish BG, leadership is expected by the subordinates, but it should not be manifested too often. Expecting decision-making and unambiguous decisions from subordinates, especially in emergency situations, must result from skillful management and knowledge, and not from external signs of authority.

Fourth, the value of service discipline should be directed towards self-policing and adherence to certain rules not (only) because it is required by the superior, but because the reasons behind it are understandable. It will not be an expression of "decompression" and a feeling of losing control on the part of the superior, but on the contrary, of cementation and group self-control.

Fifth, it seems that, on the one hand, the relationship between the immediate superior and team members, and between the team leader and a senior management level, are of fundamental importance in the analyzed organization in determining the degree of group autonomy. That said, the results reveal that the importance of horizontal ties of cooperation is great. The bigger they are, the more autonomous teams can be. This direction should be pursued in view of the need to increase the flexibility of border guards due to a complex and precarious environment. In this respect, behavior in teams based upon elements of the network structure, cooperative ties, in a process oriented towards achieving goals, rather than merely centers of power or functional specializations. The argument of organizational hierarchy, a strong official tie, seems insufficient (although it cannot be omitted in an organization such as the border guard) to ensure security.

Sixth, the group superior should employ a variety of measures to deal with the negative consequences of "group thinking", for example, allow team members to express critical opinions and set as an example those who choose to do so; assigning one of the officers (each time someone else) the role of "devil's advocate" during briefing.

In analyzing the perception of the need and the necessity for cooperation, the author verified, on the one hand – organizational possibilities, and on the other – the „awareness" and conditions for meeting the officers' own needs. Probably one of the four dimensions of differences in the cultural background is marked in the Polish BG, defined by Hofstede[28] as: collectivism vs. individualism, although it should be taken into account that the scale of the second, i.e. the so-called IDV, reflects the cultural state from before the era of e-mail or mobile phone, which significantly disturbed the aforementioned division. "Nevertheless, the Ameri-

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[28] G. Hofstede, *op. cit.*

canization of various areas of life in Poland does not change its collectivist core of the culture of the Middle States".[29] The Globe research,[30] which is a correction of reports from Hofstede, distinguishes institutional collectivism measured by indicators that accentuate group interests at the cost of individual achievements and benefits. An operationalization of this concept are independent rules of psychological functioning, which correspond to the private or public level of negotiating relationships with people. The practices of (institutional) collectivism are associated among Polish researchers with two variables: the degree of avoidance of uncertainty and the type of identification.[31] It can be concluded that in the case of border guards in Poland, there is, in a sense, individualism in the collective. This phenomenon should not be treated as a variable negatively correlated with group identity, but rather as a key element of behavior in the context of cooperation (as indicated by the results of the conducted research) and taken into account in managerial practice.

On the other hand, relations with other groups as part of the organization are most often considered in the context of cooperation, but as mentioned, they also contain elements of competition. This seems completely natural. It is important that there is no future isolation of individual teams from others or the emergence of a dependence of domination or subordination. The available results (this research analyzed group relationships) rather point towards cooperation than restricting intergroup interaction.

To conclude, it can be stated that the management of the culture of cooperation within the Border Guard in Poland leads to a state often marked as "cultural balance", in which the elements of organizational culture evoke positive reactions of officers, leading to the formation of motives in their consciousness to act in line with formal goals organization. These issues require introducing categories of individual objectives and mutual dependence of team members in striving to achieve these objectives to these observations and conclusions.

The power of the broad impact of "soft" organizational managerial instruments, which include culture, proves fundamental regardless of external conditions. This is confirmed by the research results over several years. Skillful shaping of the organizational culture becomes the foundation of its identity, a part of a positive image, and a determinant of efficient operation.

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[29] P. Boski, *Kulturowe ramy zachowań społecznych*, PWN, Warszawa 2009, p. 98.

[30] J.P. House, P.J. Hanges, M. Javidan, P.W. Dorfman, P.W. Gupta, *Culture, Leadership, and Organization: The Global Study of 62 Societies*, Sage, Thousand Oaks 2004.

[31] J. Bieńkowska, Cz. Sikorski, *Ewolucja zarządzania. Dyktat struktury, strategii i kultury*, Wyd. UŁ, Łódź 2016.

It appears that as the complexity of environmental processes grows, internal, group and intergroup cooperation, which consists in building relationships necessary to skillfully respond to unexpected opportunities and threats, becomes more important.

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Abstract: Effectiveness of public organization is determined by the organizational culture. The border services, fit in this context. This article aims to analyze the key aspects of the culture of cooperation between Border Guard officers in Poland. The study involved a chain of connections between cultural elements – distinguished values and group norms that make up the culture of cooperation. A number of interesting correlations was observed when the research methodology was adjusted accordingly.

Keywords: organizational culture; public officers; security cooperation; border guards

Kształtowanie kultury współdziałania funkcjonariuszy Straży Granicznej w Polsce

Streszczenie: Efektywność organizacji publicznej zależy od jej kultury organizacyjnej. Służby graniczne wpisują się w ten kontekst. Celem artykułu jest analiza kluczowych aspektów kultury współpracy funkcjonariuszy Straży Granicznej w Polsce. Badaniami objęto łańcuch powiązań pomiędzy elementami kultury – wyróżnionymi wartościami i normami grupowymi, które składają się na kulturę współpracy. Po odpowiednim dostosowaniu metodologii i metodyki badań zaobserwowano szereg interesujących korelacji.

Słowa kluczowe: kultura organizacyjna; funkcjonariusze publiczni; współpraca w zakresie bezpieczeństwa; Straż Graniczna