

THE ISSUE OF LEADERSHIP STYLES IN THE MILITARY ORGANIZATION

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ABSTRACT

Enormously studied by specialists, the leadership of organizations is a primordial issue because the leader's style conditions the efficiency of any social organization. This is one of the reasons why the current scientific concerns focus on studying the ways of improving leadership and the choice of leaders who have the skills and capabilities to successfully perform such functions. This paper deals with the characteristics of the military organization and the complex environment in which it operates, imposing major demands on the military leaders, who must develop certain skills and abilities in order to cope with the wide range of challenges they are confronted with on the modern battlefield. It also points to the features of charismatic leaders, drawing the attention to the relationship between subordinates and leaders, a relationship that is based on an emotional, spiritual, even non-rational bond between leaders and followers.

KEYWORDS: organization, management, leadership, charisma, style

1. Introduction

The current and future challenges faced by each state and the international community have a significant impact on the processes and phenomena that arise within the army – professionalization, feminization, reform, outsourcing of services and activities, its transformation – as well as on the assignments entrusted to it both internally and externally. In this context, characterized by interdependence, dynamism, the emergence and manifestation of new threats in defense and national and collective security, the army of each state is called upon to fulfill both traditional missions and new missions. The effectiveness and efficiency of these missions is closely linked to the leadership and management used by military commanders in leading their subordinates and in managing the military institution.

The army is an institution, since its purpose, objectives, organization, actions, behavior and the roles of its members, the allocated resources (human, material, financial) are specifically determined and regulated by normative prescriptions (laws, regulations, instructions, orders), but at the same time the army can also be seen as an organization because it is an ensemble of people structured in entities with specific roles, functions and responsibilities and which relates both to official and informal rules in the course of its life and activity, as a whole. Through its mission and specific administration and leadership system, the military organization differs and individualizes itself from other organizations.

The fundamental mission of the military organization is *“the unconditional fulfillment of constitutional missions and*

missions resulting from the quality of the respective state as a member of a political-military alliance” (Zaharia, 2014, p. 148). All this requires the commanders and the military chiefs to adopt some new methods of leadership, training and development of military and civilian personnel, motivation and engagement of staff in carrying out legally entrusted missions and tasks.

2. Leadership of Organizations – a Matter of Prime Importance

Contemporary theory and practice highlights the fact that organizations and groups need leaders, good management of organizations being insufficient. There is a need for leaders at all hierarchical levels to transform organizational culture and make organizations more efficient and competitive. The starting fundamental premise is that the leader counts, that people at the top of the hierarchy definitely influence the productivity of any organization. By setting standards, goals and priorities, a leader can bring about changes in the day to day performance. He permanently influences the direction of evolution by setting a strategic vision and formulating long-term goals. Among the different types of organizations, one of the most involved in the overall evolution of the whole society is the military organization. In the military field, leadership gains a special importance and distinction, because the staff training and the organization of activities are carried out in the perspective of future activity conditions and can provide a lot of unpredictable elements, by far different from the organizational expectations and expectations.

The rapid restructurings of the military profession, the implications of our country’s adherence to international military alliances, the participation with strengths in the theaters of operations, increasingly draw the attention to the attributes that the leaders of the military hierarchy must possess in order to organize and coordinate the activities being carried

out in the military system. The army is an organized system of social relations that embodies certain common values and working processes and responds to the fundamental needs of the society in which it functions. It has both human and material and financial resources to carry out legally assigned tasks. Through its fundamental mission, the military organization is individualized and personalized in comparison to other organizations. Also, the military organization, i.e. the army, has its own system of organization, leadership and hierarchy, the activity of which is carried out in accordance with the provisions of the laws of the state, with the provisions of the military regulations, orders of the commanders and chiefs. In fact, the army brings together people with different statuses and roles, according to the competencies and functions held within the organization. The military organization has characteristics that must be mentioned, as follows:

- *the prevailing relationship in the military organization is the formal one, with military regulations prescribing the behavior of individuals on different hierarchical levels. Behavior is expressed by external symbols, such as: military posture, military ranks, insignia, conduct, etc., and aim to identify the soldiers as a distinct group, united by a formal bond that generates power, influence and authority;*

- *the military organization is not constituted as a result of individual choices, but on rigorous criteria that take into account the capabilities, skills and abilities of the military to perform various missions. The hierarchy of appointments and ranks is a feature with real and obvious influences in creating a stimulating, competitive and efficient framework;*

- *the military organization has its own stratification system. The military hierarchy distinguishes itself from other hierarchies in that it is divided into various social groups. The social distance between the positions occupied by commissioned*

officers, warrant officers, non-commissioned officers and military personnel employed on the basis of a contract gives rise to relevant phenomena, which must be given the necessary attention. Studies conducted in some modern armies (USA, France, Germany, England and Italy) reveal that the existence of a large social distance between officers and non-commissioned officers, as well as between them and the troops exerts a negative influence on the morals of the latter;

– *the mission of the military organization is national defense. “The army is a basic component of the armed forces that ensures in times of peace and war the integration into a unitary conception the activity of all the forces involved in the country's defense actions”*. Representing the fundamental interests of Romania, subordinated exclusively to the will of the people, the army has the fundamental mission of “... *guaranteeing the sovereignty, the independence and unity of the state, the territorial integrity of the country and the constitutional democracy*” (The Constitution of Romania, 2003, article 118);

– *the military organization represents a specific educational environment*. The army prepares generations of young people to wage war but also to be good citizens, with respect for the law, the good, truth and justice. The educational factors in the army found their efforts on the specificities of youth: exuberance, dedication, inventiveness, sacrifice, the desire to assert oneself, etc. As an educational institution, the army prepares young people for integration and adaptation to the demands of society;

– *the military organization is involved in actions that are the subject of the present, but especially to the future*. In the case of humanitarian missions (earthquakes, floods, explosions, radioactive contamination, droughts, major environmental imbalances, etc.), the role of the military is to temporarily monitor a disaster zone, introducing military rigors, and so ensuring that the duration for eliminating the effects is as short as

possible and the suffering of the population as little as possible. Crisis management provides that, when law enforcement (police, gendarmes, fire brigades) cannot cope with the situation, rapid reaction military units can be used in the conditions of abiding the law, being capable of unblocking the destabilizing process by combating the destructive forces.

2.1. Leadership Styles in the Military Organization

In order to accomplish its missions, the most important role in the military organization is the human resource and the manner in which it is conducted. This is also the main reason why in the process of training and professional development of officers, a large part of the objectives aim at developing their capacity to lead (people, structures) and to be able to fulfill the roles of commander, leader, manager at the highest standards.

For the concept of leadership, the specialized literature offers multiple definitions, most of them advancing the idea that it is the leader that, through his qualities, can influence and motivate people for certain purposes, directions or for accomplishing missions. A good leader is the one having the skills and capabilities in the following areas: knowledge and skills, cognitive ability, social skills, personality, motivation and values (Moștoflei & Duțu, 2007, p. 11). All of these domains generate performance in tasks and missions, trust and respect from subordinates, safety since they are less exposed to risks, professional integrity, good working relationships and the development of personal contact networks. The knowledge and skills in exercising both tactically and technically the attributes of the occupied position in the field of military specialization, as well as the ability to solve problems effectively, to make decisions in a short time, to propose viable solutions, to effectively manage conflicts, persuade, empathize, adapt,

promote the defining values of the military organization, and be a moral and professional example for subordinates, are key factors in conducting leadership, and also factors that show the level of leadership efficiency. Leadership is an extremely complex concept that refers to many values. That is why there is no unanimously recognized definition of it. Rather, it is a set of different qualities that by combining form what is called leadership. Most of the specialists agree that *“the essence of leadership lies in the ability to create a vision, motivation, and enthusiasm in a group of people”* (Landsberg, 2005, p. 16). The distinction between leadership and other related concepts, such as authority, command, management, responsibility must be made. Leadership does not inalienably include authority, but also the capacity to lead other people. A commander will never be a leader, being only authoritarian and responsible if he does not know how to motivate his subordinates. Without giving an exhaustive definition, we can appreciate that leadership is the art of directly or indirectly influencing a group of people, using official powers or personal qualities, so that this group of people will act according to our intention or to the common purpose. The initial premise from which it starts is that the leaders, the personnel at the top of the hierarchical pyramid obviously influence the effectiveness and efficiency of any organization. The leader sets both long-term and short-term goals, by setting objectives, standards and priorities. In the military field, leadership is of particular importance by training staff and conducting activities that are being developed in terms of future activity conditions and that can provide unpredictable elements that are different from organizational anticipations. The restructurings of the military profession, our country's membership in the international political-military allied structures, and the participation in

international missions highlight and complete the skills that the commanders, the chiefs of the military hierarchical structures must have. Due to this, the selection and formation of military leaders requires increased attention and a thorough knowledge of their psychic peculiarities. One of the most important categories of qualities required by the military leader is represented by the intellectual qualities. The evolution of the military phenomenon and the transformations taking place at the level of the modern battlefield impose superior qualities of this kind for the military personnel, especially for those who hold leading positions. Starting from the primary forms of the armed conflict and the first wars to the current 21st-century confrontations, history shows us that glorious were those whose leaders were efficient in thinking, acting to capture the enemy and gain superiority. Among other things, *“the intellectual qualities manifest themselves through modesty, empathy, autonomy, integrity, trust and intellectual objectivity”* (Roman, 2013, p. 71). Also, the moral qualities and personality traits have a substantial share in the perfection of the leader profile. The moral qualities are those that guide the leader to act ethically and morally according to military principles, norms, values and virtues, building a performance-oriented climate. And the personality traits, such as self-confidence, dignity, emotional stability, adaptability, generate trust and respect from subordinates, but also efficiency in solving difficult situations. As far as the leaders' tasks are concerned, depending on their hierarchical level, they differ in both content and complexity. Along with career advancement and accession to higher echelons, *“the complexity of tasks increases because responsibilities are more diverse, the factors and interactions to be taken into account are more numerous, there is more uncertainty, and the activities extend over longer periods”* (Moștoflei & Duțu, 2007, p. 24). The current

configuration of the military organization and the complex environment in which it operates impose major demands on military leaders, who must be competent in a wide range of tasks, quickly cognitively and emotionally adapt to the unexpected challenges of the actions, acquire competences in new contexts of action and provide moral support to subordinates as they perform various actions in this complex environment. In the military-type social organizations, the leader has always been the person who played roles of prime importance in organizing and conducting specific actions. The forms under which he has functioned within the social organization were historically different, being customized by factors of a social, cultural, economic, or merely military nature.

2.2. Charismatic Leadership – the Solution for Efficiency and Success

Charismatic leaders are leaders with a profound emotional effect on those who follow them. They are seen by them not as chiefs, but rather as models and heroes. Charismatic leaders have a series of common characteristics of personality and behavior. One of the characteristics that define charismatic leaders is self-confidence and confidence in their capacities, in the fairness and high morality of their beliefs and actions. The special trust they have in them motivates those who follow them. The more confident the leader is, the more motivated are his followers and the goals are easier to achieve. This motivation and hard work increase the chances of success, which confirms the correctness of the leader's goals.

Besides the high level of self-confidence, charismatic leaders are characterized by a lot of energy. They are enthusiastic about their ideas and actions, very expressive, and use many non-verbal elements to give more weight to the verbal message. Their exceptional qualities of communication help them convey their ideas and attachment to these ideas to their subordinates.

Charismatic leaders place a special emphasis on the common past of the group, their common identity, their future hopes and their common goals, emotionally addressing the subordinates. Charismatic leaders attentively and carefully build their message and present themselves to those who follow them as a model, being true masters in creating impressions.

Leadership expert Jay Conger has identified four general characteristics of charismatic leaders:

- they have a strong and clear vision and know how to present it to the target audience;

- they know how to expose their vision so that issues become apparent and the solutions proposed are not just justified but also desirable;

- they have the credibility, professionalism and vision needed to propose changes to the old traditions;

- they conduct by example, motivating the public to follow them.

A key element in a charismatic leadership situation is the manner in which leaders emerge in groups lacking a leader or when they replace an existing leader. Many charismatic leaders acquire leadership status without being formally appointed. Although charismatic leaders are elected or appointed in organizations, they have often been recognized as charismatic leaders by the group they lead. Their official recognition is the last step in their access to power, which usually occurs in times of crisis (Anderson & Anderson, 2005, p. 95). Thus, they emerge in situations where there is a need for change and a new vision, and when those who follow the leader are ready to start in a different direction. In an emotionally charged situation, leaders promise a new beginning, radical solutions and a break away from the undesirable values of the past. They use dramatic symbols to resolve the crisis. As a result, subordinates are convinced that the charismatic leader is the only one who can provide help. In the military organization, the

charismatic leader distributes the tasks according to the pedagogical goals of developing the skills and abilities of his subordinates. He treats each subordinate as an individual (integral individuality), taking into account their specificity. It induces changes in thinking and seeing things differently, encouraging problem solving, innovation. Besides, the charismatic leader has a substantial influence on the subordinates because there is a considerable affection between them.

As early as 1921, Freud in an essay "*Psychology collective et analyse de Moi*" (*Collective psychology and self-analysis*) emphasized the existence of the affectionate relationships (libidinaux) between the chief and the members of the group he leads. Psychoanalysis warns that charismatic leaders have an exciting function for their subordinates because they are a model of behavior for them.

This connection certainly "facilitates" the work of subordinating another to one's will, but each leader must be aware that he is responsible for the urges he launches. The power of competence comes from the personal knowledge of a person who is superior to another, who recognizes this fact and is ready to comply with the instructions of the former. This is the power of the experts, who inspire the confidence and certainty that they do not abuse their knowledge to deceive him. The charismatic leader must stimulate subordinates, bringing them new visions through his charisma, influence, intellectual stimulation. The charismatic leader must find a positive feed-back when he brings new insights to his subordinates on the battlefield. He must motivate them, influence them and at the same time improve his subordinates, and this can be achieved by the level of trust they have in him, by the power of the example he sets.

The leader has to instill his subordinates the desire to enrich their technique, the knowledge in the field, and this breath can be accomplished on the basis of the emotional intelligence, personal and

social skills of the leader, as well as his attitude towards personal training. In essence, the charismatic leader has a vision that he communicates effectively and has the competence that he conveys to the others. The charismatic leader is a person who, through the force of his personal style and abilities, is able to exert a special effect on the members of the organization. He succeeds in enforcing himself with a special energy, self-confidence and introduces to the others the special states of ethics and order. The charismatic leader generates excitement and strengthens the employees' hope and confidence in his vision of the future.

Howell's research has shown that charismatic leadership is based on what employees perceive. There are lucky individuals born with such qualities, but most charismatic leaders learn and impose this style of great success. Both the theory and the experience show that any manager succeeding such a leader finds it very difficult to carry out his activity. "Born" or "formed", or one and the other, the authentic leader has the charisma that cannot be simply reduced to a pleasant presence, to a pleasant voice, to a penetrating look and to significant gestures, residing in essence in his wisdom and tenacity, creative and pragmatic thinking, nobility of character, goals and aspirations that are consonant with those of his fellow men.

If in the old theories of charismatic leadership the greatest share had the qualities and exceptional qualities of the leader, by virtue of which he achieved remarkable results and successes, more recently, the attraction felt by subordinates to the leader plays central role. This brings about an overturning of paradigm, charisma no longer being considered almost exclusively an attribute of the leader, of the person, but also a social relationship. Transformational leadership has been specifically delineated within military organizations because of its direct effects at the group level and implicitly on its response capacity: strong and positive emotional

impact, in the form of an offer of an idealized model, higher motivation, stimulation of intelligence and creativity, individualized consideration, personal development, etc. Recent studies have indicated that it is necessary for the military leader to have both charismatic effects on subordinates, as well as the ability to control the situation with classical, transactional means. This involves high values of features such as psychosocial competence, flexibility, interpersonal ascendance and, above all, emotional intelligence, translated into empathy, assertiveness, emotional self-control, and self-awareness and self-actualization. Although the charismatic leader is largely determined in any situation, it is still possible to categorize certain charismatic personalities, as might be described, for example, the military leaders who have led great military action successfully. However, any serious examination of the charismatic personality must continue to draw attention to the relationship between the subordinate and the leader, a relationship that includes an emotional, spiritual, or non-rational feeling of the subordinate for the leader.

3. Conclusions

In the military organization, leadership is a very important element and is studied and perfected as much as

possible. In order to achieve effective and qualitative leadership, competent leaders need to be able to demonstrate as many qualities as possible, to combine them harmoniously and timely. The leader has a primary role in the military organization because he productively influences his subordinates by setting standards, goals and priorities, establishing long-term objectives to promptly respond to any task. Such a leader is the charismatic leader, who has clear visions and knows how to impose them, being credible and showing professionalism by making his subordinates easily follow him through the power of example. In conclusion, we can state that charismatic leaders are confident in approaching actions involving the intellect, have verbal fluency, think before doing something and effectively deal with people, sharing the credit with others, and being concise and clear in making decisions. Charismatic leaders are pleased with the work they do, both in terms of their mode of organization, as well as in terms of what they receive for their work (material or moral rewards) and of the interpersonal climate in which they work. The performance achieved by the organization, assessed by achieving goals, cutting costs and the positive image obtained is directly influenced by charismatic leadership.

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