

JAVNO MNENJE O TERITORIALNI OBRAMBI POLJSKE

THE PUBLIC'S PERCEPTION OF THE TERRITORIAL DEFENCE FORCES IN POLAND

Povzetek Vojaški urad za družbene raziskave Vojaškega centra za državljansko vzgojo, ki se ukvarja z družbenimi raziskavami v vojaškem okolju, med drugim proučuje tudi delovanje in dejavnosti Teritorialne obrambe Poljske ter vedenje njenih pripadnikov. Poljake so vprašali, ali menijo, da bi morale biti naloge te nove formacije predvsem pomoč pri obvladovanju posledic naravnih in drugih nesreč, obramba lokalnega prebivalstva in infrastrukture ali druge oblike vojaškega delovanja. Teritorialna obramba je sodelovala tudi pri obvladovanju posledic pandemije na Poljskem. Glavni cilj članka je predstaviti veliko poljsko raziskavo na temo Teritorialne obrambe Poljske.

Ključne besede *Teritorialna obramba, družbene raziskave, družbena percepcija, SARS-CoV 2, krizno upravljanje.*

Abstract The functioning and activities of the Territorial Defence Forces and the behaviour of its soldiers are among the many interests of the Military Office of Social Research in the Military Centre for Civic Education, which conducts social research in the military environment. Poles were asked if they believed that the tasks of this new formation should primarily be assistance in actions to combat the effects of natural and other disasters, defence of local people and infrastructure, or other military operations. The Territorial Defence Forces engaged in the fight against the consequences of the pandemic in Poland. The main goal of this article is to present the major Polish research dedicated to the Polish Territorial Defence Forces.

Key words *Territorial Defence Forces, social research, social perception, SARS-CoV 2, crisis management.*

Introduction

The Territorial Defence Forces (TDF) were formed on January 1, 2017, and are the fifth type of armed forces in Poland. The Command of the Territorial Defence Forces took over, and cultivates the heritage of, the tradition of the Home Army Headquarters (1942-1945). In addition to defence activities, the purpose of this formation is the implementation of tasks in the field of crisis management, combating natural disasters and eliminating their effects, and protecting property, as well as search and rescue operations.

Military human resources play pivotal and crucial roles around the world. Not only do they work for security, but they also serve society. The Military Office of Social Research (MOoSR) conducts research into the activities of all the Polish Armed Forces, based on specific methodology and statistical samples. In this article we present an analysis of the opinions and assessment of the Territorial Defence Forces by Polish professional soldiers and employees of the Ministry of National Defence. Additionally, the authors included some social research about the TDF which was carried out by the Public Opinion Research Centre and ARC The Market and Opinion.

Finally, we added information about the »Immune Spring 2020« operation. The Polish Armed Forces carry out numerous military operations, but this particular one is aimed not only at all the infected people, but also at all the potential victims of Covid-19. The Minister of National Defence resolved to include the Polish Armed Forces in the fight against this invisible enemy (Hac, 2020).

The main goal of the article is to present research conducted by the Military Office of Social Research (MOoSR) and other research institutions.

1 RESEARCH METHODS

The research was conducted among two groups of respondents. The target group was Territorial Military Service (TMS) soldiers who have an account on the Territorial Defence Forces Information Portal (almost every TMS soldier has one) (Predel G., Iwanek M., 2019). A purposive sample of professional soldiers was composed of respondents participating in military training together with the surveyed reserve soldiers. The field research was carried out with the use of quantitative methods, using a mainly anonymous auditorium questionnaire. Only the examination of the TMS soldiers was carried out using a different technique (anonymous internet survey), because the Territorial Defence Forces Command decided that this was a better solution, due to the specificity of the service of these soldiers (limited number of training days and their high intensity). The questionnaires included substantive questions (closed and open) and socio-demographic questions characterizing the respondents.

The study was carried out with the use of the MOoSR research panel, which has a constant number of about 4,000 respondents (Iwanek M., Kiciński Ł., 2021). It was attended by soldiers carrying out professional military service in the Polish

Armed Forces. It was a simple representative random sample, due to the fact that the respondents belonged to the corps of professional staff. The study was quantitative – a self-completion questionnaire was used. Out of 3,364 questionnaires sent, 1,724 correctly completed questionnaires qualified for the analysis, which constitutes about a 51% return rate. Taking into account the assumptions of the research panel, the presented results can be considered representative for the population of professional soldiers in the Polish Army.

CBOS (Centrum Badań Opinii Społecznej – The Public Opinion Research Centre) carried out the survey in 2017 in a representative random-quota sample of adult Poles with a two-fold over-representation in the provinces of Mazowieckie and Warmińsko-Mazurskie, and a three-fold over-representation in the provinces of Lubelskie, Podkarpackie and Podlaskie (the first TDF brigades were created in these provinces). The research sample comprised 1,502 people and the survey was carried out using the computer-assisted interview method (CAPI).

The research project »The Image of the Polish Army« was carried out in October 2019. This survey was conducted by ARC Rynek i Opinia (ARC The Market and Opinion, 2019) on a representative sample of the population of Poles aged 15 and older (N=1009) with overrepresentation added – 100 people aged 15-30, because people of this age are important to the army. So, in the end, there were 1,009 adults and 368 young people in the sample in the research project »The Image of the Polish Army«. The sample was representative in terms of gender, age, education and place of residence. This study was also conducted using the CAPI method.

Finally an analysis of literature focused on the Territorial services was carried out. Only those articles in which the author could refer to the theoretical and their own research conclusions and practical implementation for military human resources in the Polish Armed Forces and other military forces in the world were taken into account.

2 RESEARCH INTO THE TERRITORIAL DEFENCE FORCES 2017-2020

2.1 Basic training of TMS soldiers in TDF structures

Since the formation of the Territorial Defence Forces in 2017, they have been in the field of research interests of the Military Office of Social Research, operating as an internal unit of the Military Centre for Civic Education, which has been conducting social research in the military environment for the Ministry of National Defence for years, operating in the area of processes and social problems important to Poland's defence and security. During the period 2018-2020, two research projects were carried out to assess selected aspects of military service in the TDF.

In 2018 soldiers of the Territorial Military Service, who are not professional soldiers but volunteers who perform rotational service (during military exercises and training) and are available at other times (called up when needed), were surveyed.

Most of the surveyed TMS soldiers underwent basic training in the stationary course, more than half of whom had already done it as part of their initial training in the TDF (16 training days in one block). The remaining respondents had undergone training previously as part of a different type of service (e.g. basic or candidate). Weekend training as part of the Territorial Defence Forces applied to only one in 20 TMS soldiers (Figure 1).

Figure 1:
How did you complete the 16-day basic training for people who had not been in active military service or taken a military oath before being called up for territorial military service? (Responses of TMS soldiers)

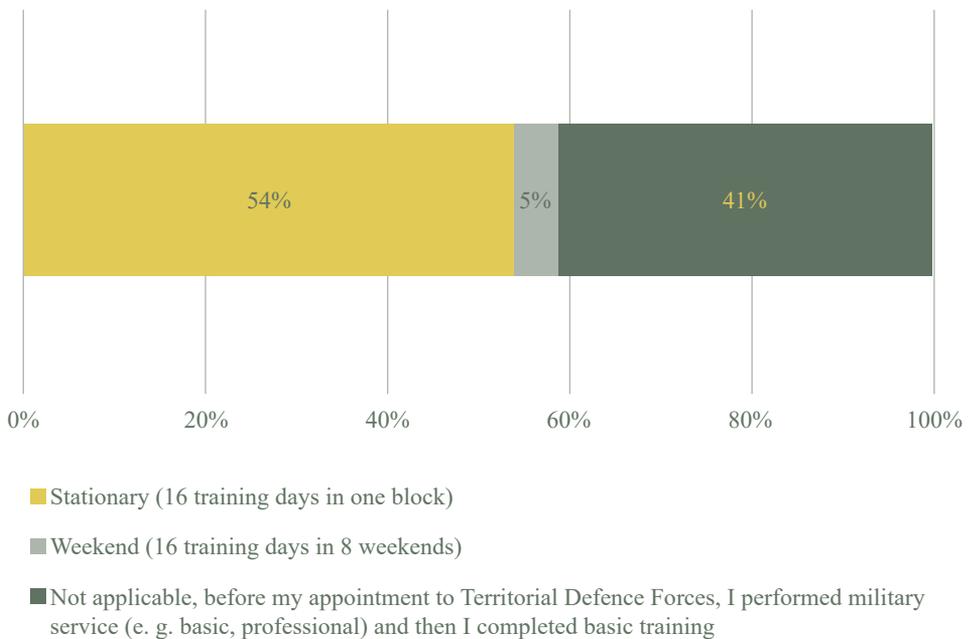
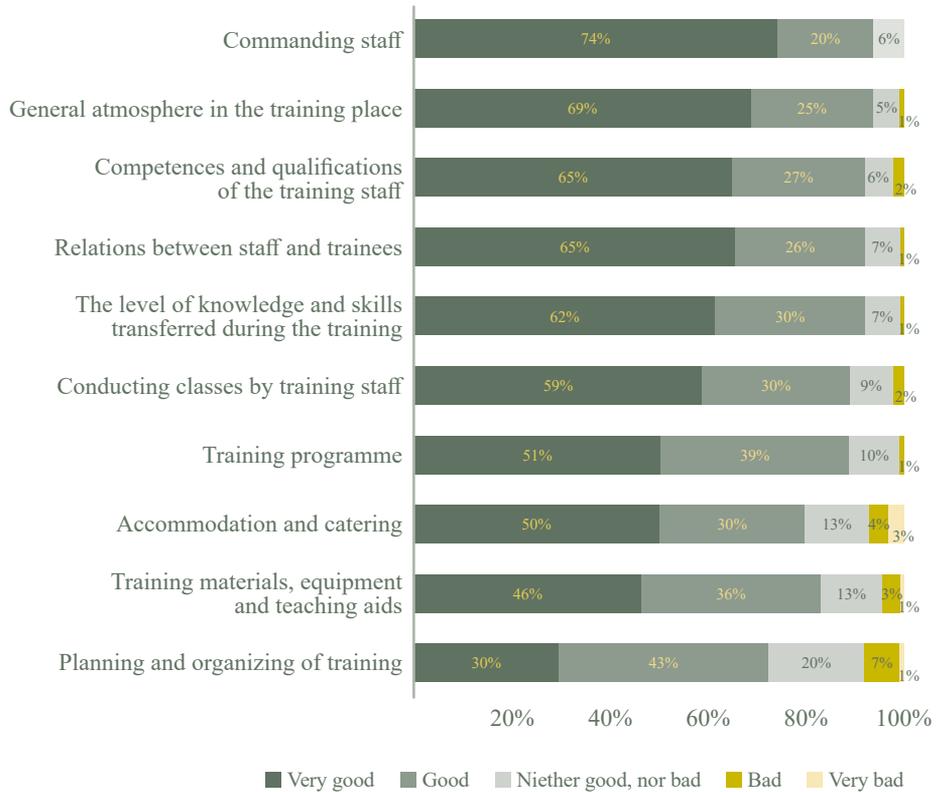


Figure 1: How did you complete the 16-day basic training for people who had not been in active military service or taken a military oath before being called up for territorial military service? (Responses of TMS soldiers)

The TMS soldiers assessed most aspects of the training very positively. The social and living conditions during the training, the planning and organizing of classes, and the material, equipment and teaching aids were rated slightly worse (Figure 2).

Figure 2:
How would you rate the following aspects of the basic training you participated in? (Responses of TMS soldiers who underwent basic training within the Territorial Defence Forces; N=210)



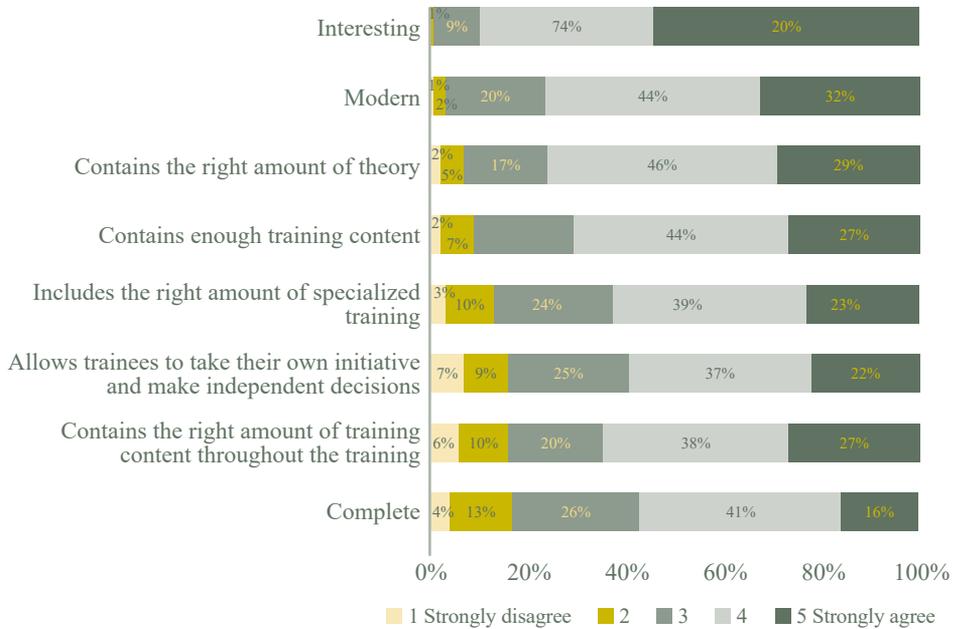
The basic training programme was rated on a scale from 1 to 5¹, with 1 meaning No and 5, Yes. Between these other values of the interval scale are marked with numbers 2, 3, 4. The respondents indicated the number that best reflected their opinion on a given element of the training. The values 1 and 2 were associated with more negative values, while 4 and 5 are associated with positive assessments. Choosing the value in the middle of the scale, 3, was neutral.

Overall, the training programme was assessed positively. The TMS soldiers confirmed that it was interesting and modern, with the right amount of theory, and it developed their knowledge and skills. Other aspects, including the completeness of the programme, the correct ratio between the volume of the material and the training time, the possibility of showing one's own initiative, and the amount of practical

¹ The scale used by the authors of the study was based on the Charles E. Osgood semantic differential method, but for technical reasons (the limited way of presenting questions in MS Forms), the scales were adapted in such a way that the respondent for a given scale had to assess whether their opinion was closer to grade »1« or »2« (assigned as »No« answers), or to a »4« or »5« rating (assigned as »Yes« ratings). Marking the number 3 meant that both answers were equally close to the respondent.

training were assessed slightly worse. There were between 13 and 17 percentage points of negative ratings (Figure 3).

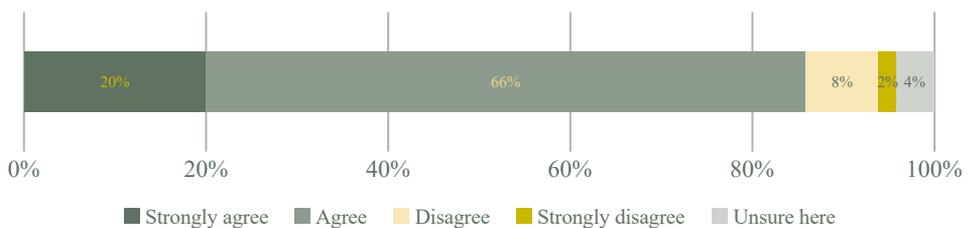
Figure 3:
How do you rate the basic training programme? (Responses of TMS soldiers who received basic training under the Territorial Defence Forces; N=210)



2.2 Attitude of professional soldiers of operational forces to the Territorial Defence Forces

According to the majority of the surveyed TMS soldiers, the basic training provided under the Territorial Defence Forces prepared them well for performing their official tasks. Only one in 10 soldiers were of the opposite opinion (mainly due to the short training time and insufficient number of practical classes) (Figure 4).

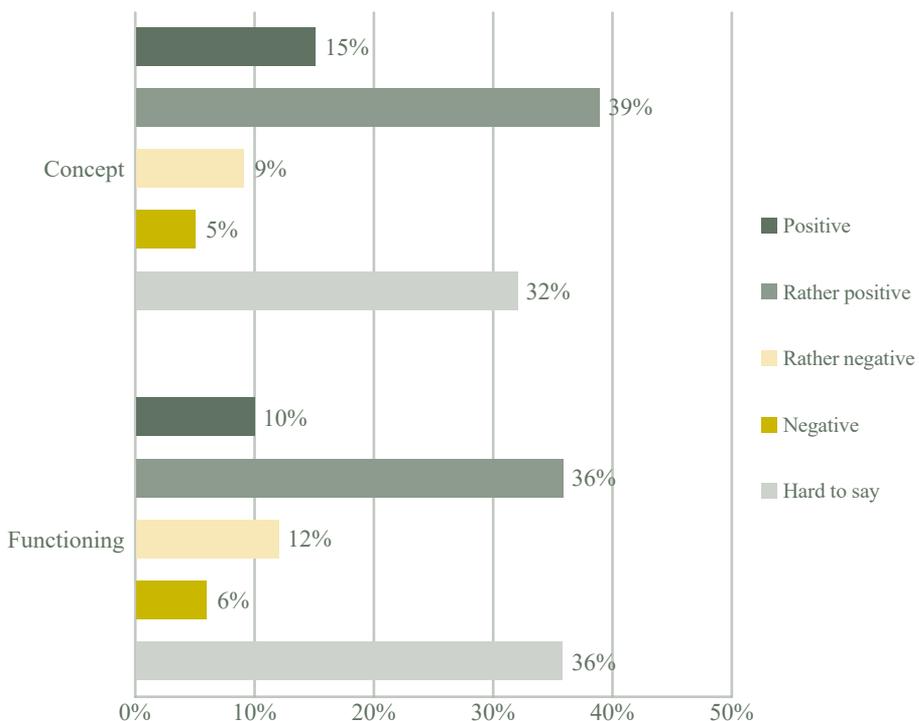
Figure 4:
Generally speaking, do you think that basic training prepares you well for your job? (Responses of TMS soldiers who received basic training under the Territorial Defence Forces; N=210)



In 2020 the Military Office of Social Research researched the attitude of selected circles of the Polish Army to the Territorial Defence Forces.

More than half of the surveyed soldiers of operational troops positively assessed the concept and functioning of the TDF, and about one in 6 were of the opposite opinion. However, it should be noted that about one third (1/3) of the respondents did not have a specific opinion on this subject (Figure 5).

Figure 5:
How do you generally evaluate the Territorial Defence Forces in terms of concept and functioning?



The soldiers of the operational troops justified their opinions in open statements.

In the positive aspects of the TDF they included:

- The TDF's support for operational units and relieving them of participation in crisis tasks;
- The TMS soldiers come from the area of TDF unit's location.

Among the negative aspects were:

- The financing of the TDF, which takes money from the other military units;
- Lower level of training of TDF soldiers than other soldiers in the Polish Army (Table 1).

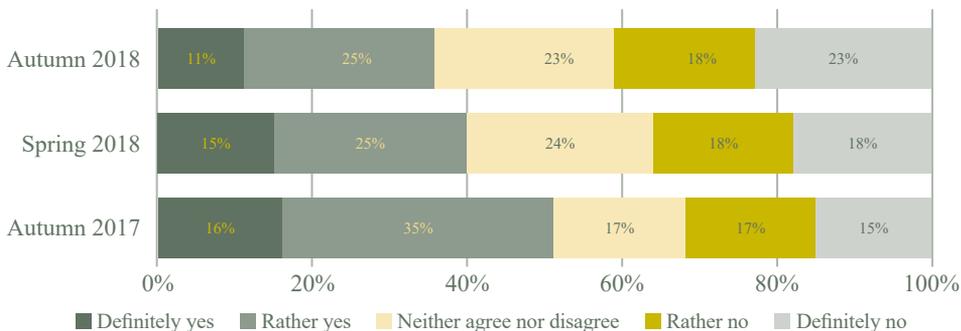
Table 1:
Positive and
negative aspects
of the TDF's
existence

| | positive aspects | negative aspects |
|--|---|---|
| VOCATION CONCEPT OF TERRITORIAL DEFENCE FORCES | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The concept is rational and meets the needs of the Armed Forces. 2. Supports the state defence system. 3. The formation of the Territorial Defence Forces relieves the army from crisis tasks. 4. Works according to the established guidelines and strategy. 5. The territory of TDF operation is the soldier's place of residence. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The idea of Territorial Defence Forces needs improvement. 2. The concept of Territorial Defence Forces assumes insufficiently specialized formation. 3. The positive image of the TDF is mainly created by the mass media. 4. The training of TDF soldiers is too short. 5. The formation of the TDF is treated by young people mainly as a financial source. |
| ACTUAL OPERATION OF TERRITORIAL DEFENCE FORCES | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The formation of the TDF increases the possibilities and defence potential of the state. 2. TDF activities can significantly support operational units. 3. The formation is effective in emergency and crisis situations, where it is necessary to help the civilian population. 4. Volunteers engaged in service to the homeland serve in Territorial Defence Forces. 5. They increase the prestige of the entire armed forces. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Territorial Defence Forces soldiers are poorly trained and unprepared for official tasks. 2. The TDF formation is overinvested, created at the expense of other types of troops. 3. The TDF has a much lower value than is presented by the media. 4. Territorial Defence Forces soldiers do not cooperate with other types of troops. 5. Many TDF soldiers are inexperienced. |

2.3 Opinions of the TDF from selected military environments

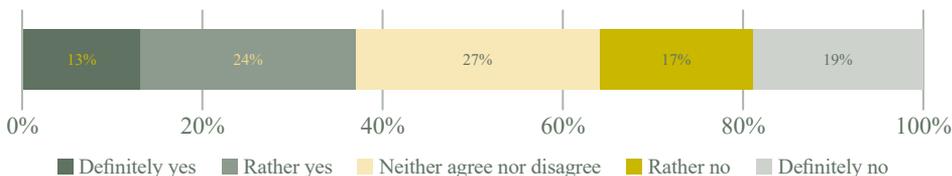
Since the formation of the Territorial Defence Forces, the Military Office of Social Research has found a gradual decline in the support of professional soldiers for the TDF. In 2017-2018 this trend led to there being more opponents than supporters of the TDF among professional soldiers (Figure 6). This was determined by the type of service; regular service soldiers more often supported the formation of the TDF than contract service soldiers.

Figure 6:
Do you support the formation of the Territorial Defence Forces? (Comparison of soldiers' responses in 2017-2018, data in %)



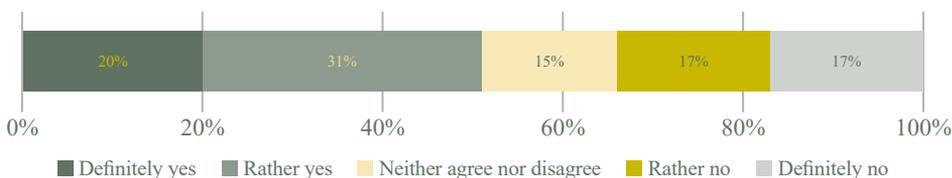
Employees of the Ministry of National Defence of Poland were also asked for their opinion on the formation of the TDF. They are very divided in their opinions. More than a third of them supported this formation and the same number were against it, while over a quarter had no opinion (Figure 7).

Figure 7:
Do you support the formation of the Territorial Defence Forces? (Responses of military employees, data in %)



On the other hand, the majority of cadets supported the formation of TDF (Figure 8).

Figure 8:
Do you support the formation of the Territorial Defence Forces? (Cadets' responses)



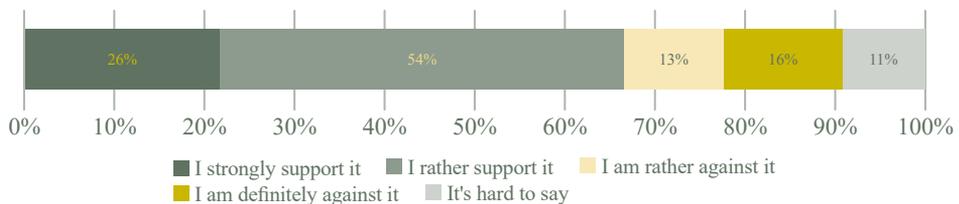
2.4 The opinion of Poles on the Territorial Defence Forces

In 2017 and 2019, the Military Office for Social Research developed two research projects concerning, among others, the Territorial Defence Forces (TDF).

The year 2017 was when this formation began to be set up in Poland. The Ministry of National Defence wanted to know whether Polish society supported the TDF building programme. The CBOS (Centrum Badań Opinii Społecznej – the Public Opinion Research Centre – research report), on behalf of the Military Centre for Civic Education, carried out the survey on a representative random quota sample of adult Poles with a two-fold over-representation in the provinces of Mazowieckie and Warmińsko-Mazurskie, and a three-fold over-representation in the following provinces of Lubelskie, Podkarpackie and Podlaskie. The first TDF brigades were created in these provinces. The research sample comprised 1,502 people and the survey was carried out using the computer-assisted interview method (CAPI).

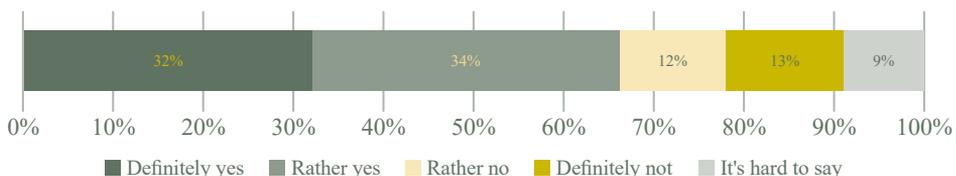
The participants were asked if they had heard about the creation of the TDF, and 64% confirmed they had. The respondents were also asked the question: *Do you personally support the creation of the Territorial Defence Forces or are you against it?* The creation of the Territorial Defence Forces was supported by most of the respondents (Figure 9).

Figure 9:
Support for
the creation
of a Territorial
Defence Force
(N=1,502)



The participants were also asked if the creation of a territorial defence formation in Poland was appropriate, regardless of which party was in power in the country. Most of the respondents agreed with this (Figure 10).

Figure 10:
The
appropriateness
of creating
a Territorial
Defence Force
(N=1,502)



We were also interested in what the TDF's functions should be, according to the respondents. So we asked them: *Regardless of your assessment of the Territorial Defence Forces, what tasks do you think they should perform?* Most of the respondents' answers were positive with regard to:

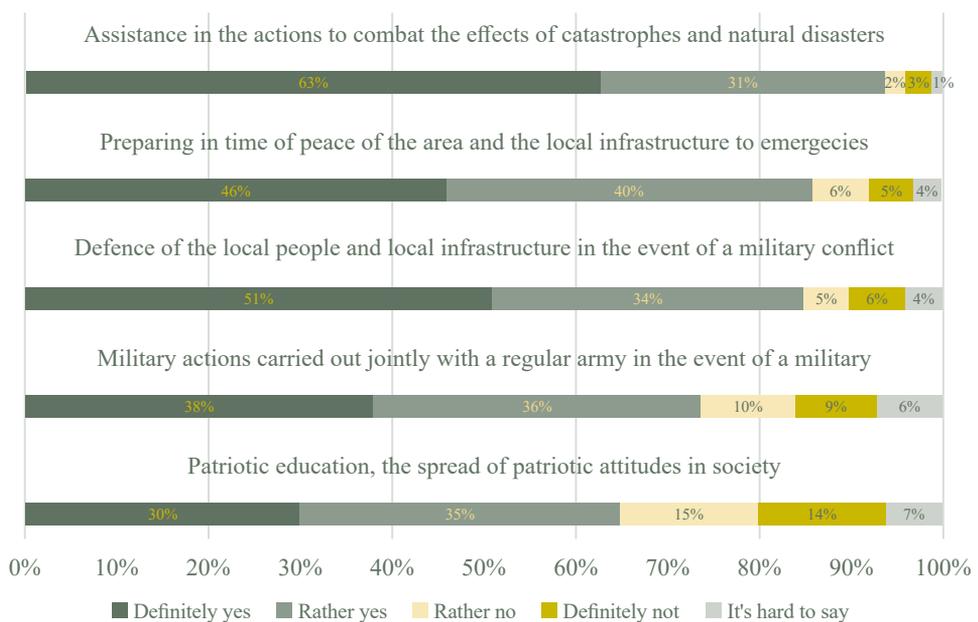
The first task (in terms of choice) – *Assistance in actions to combat the effects of natural and other disasters* – 94% endorsement;

The second task – *Preparing areas and local infrastructure for emergencies in peacetime* – 86%;

The third task – *Defence of the local people and local infrastructure in the event of a military conflict* – 85%.

Fewer of them thought that the tasks of the TDF should include: *Military actions carried out jointly with a regular army in the event of a military conflict* – 74%. The least support was given to – *Patriotic education, the spread of patriotic attitudes in society* – 65%. The detailed data are presented in Figure 11.

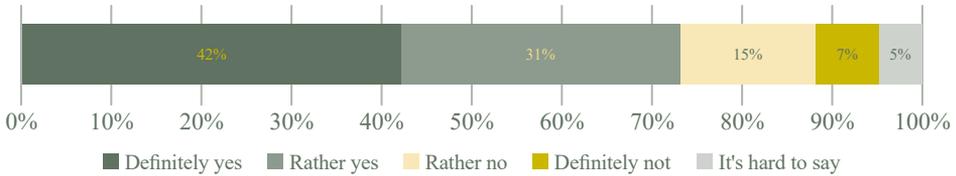
Figure 11:
Tasks of the
Territorial
Defence Force
(N=1,502)



On the other hand, the majority of the participants believed that only professional soldiers can successfully defend the homeland. The question was: *Today's methods of warfare require specialized knowledge, so the country's security can only be ensured*

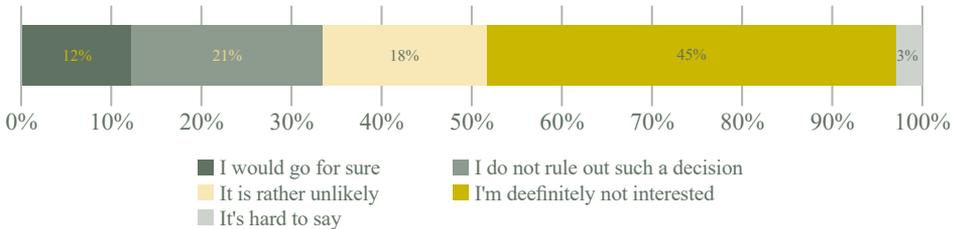
by highly trained professional soldiers. The distribution of responses is shown in Figure 12.

Figure 12: Opinions on ensuring security for the country (N=1,502)



One very important consideration for the future of a new military formation is whether there are people willing to join. The respondents were asked the question: *Service in the Territorial Defence Forces will be voluntary and will be paid. If you had the opportunity to join this formation, would you choose to do so?* Near half of the adult Poles were definitely not interested in this and only 12% would certainly want to (Figure 13).

Figure 13: Willingness to join the Territorial Defence Forces (N=1,502)



In October 2019, the research project »The Image of the Polish Army«, commissioned by the Ministry of National Defence, was carried out. The survey was conducted by ARC Rynek i Opinia (ARC The Market and Opinion – Report, 2019) on a representative sample of the population of Poles aged 15 and older (N=1,009) with overrepresentation added – 100 extra people aged 15-30, because people of this age are important to the army. So, in the end, there were 1,009 adult people and 368 young people from both representative samples. The samples were representative in terms of gender, age, education and place of residence. The study was conducted using the CAPI method.

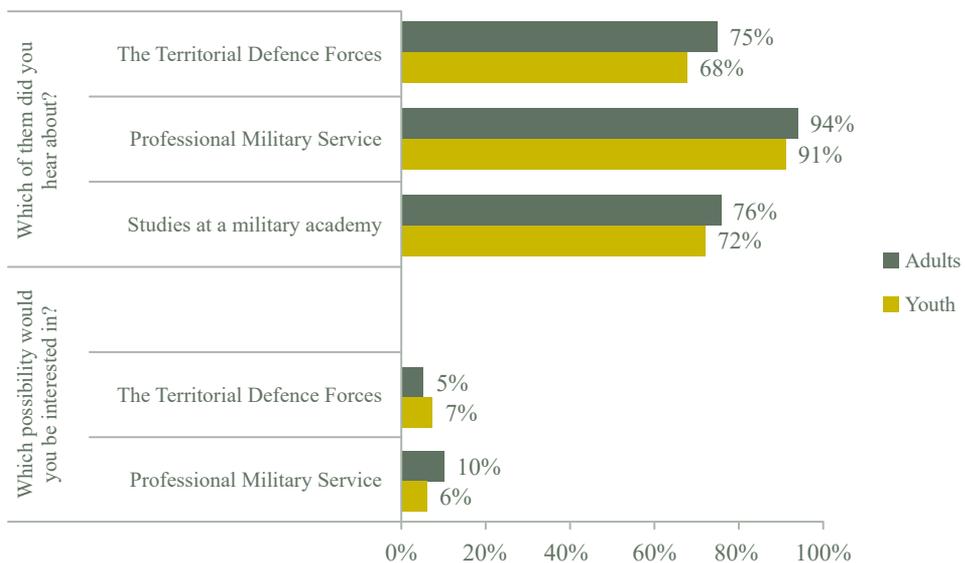
We wanted to investigate what people know about the types of armed forces. It was an open question: *What are the main types of troops in the Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland?* The Territorial Defence Forces was mentioned by 28% of adult Poles and 25% of young people. In comparison, Land Forces were indicated by

82% of adults and 77% of young people; the Air Force by 76% of adults and 70% of young people; and the Navy by 71% of adults and 67% of young people. The other formations were less well known.

Aided knowledge of the various forms of military service was better. The respondents were asked: *Which of these various possible forms of military service/military training have you heard of?* As many as 73% of adults and 68% of young people had heard of the Territorial Defence Forces. In comparison, 94% of adults and 91% of young people had heard of professional military service, and 76% of adults and 72% of young people had heard of studies at a military academy.

We also asked: *Which of these various possible forms of military service/military training would you be interested in?* Only 5% of adults and 7% of young people were interested in serving in the TDF; in comparison, 6% of adults and 10% of young people were interested in professional military service. These data are presented in Figure 14.

Figure 14:
Recognition of
and interest in
the Territorial
Defence Forces
(N= 1,009)



As we can see, many people are interested in joining the Territorial Defence Forces.

3.5 The pandemic as a challenge to the Polish Armed Forces

Today, both leaders and soldiers seem to be flexible and well-qualified enough to cope with the symptoms, range and outcome of a pandemic (Horyń, 2019).

Military human resources and crisis management cooperate and merge with such groups of society as doctors, nurses, qualified rescuers and other medical forces. Both military human resources and crisis management are regarded as defensive resources to play a top-mind role in a potential occurrence of biological invasions (Jakubczak, Marczak, 1998).

Odporna wiosna (»Immune Spring«) was a military operation of Territorial Defence Forces units involving 2,500 soldiers. Below, we present the crucial links between the military, social and medical standpoints.

From the military point of view, the soldiers of Territorial Defence Forces were involved in:

- Support of the Polish police, Polish Border Guards, and regional and local government officers in preventing the spread of the SARS-CoV-2 virus, and support to infected people who were in quarantine.
- Limiting the danger of transmitting Covid-19 to members of the soldiers' families;
- Personnel and environmental education in the area of prevention and limiting infection (Kukuła, 2020).

From the social point of view, these soldiers supported the Polish people in many cases during the pandemic by:

- Carrying out an information campaign, i.e. distributing handouts;
- Encouraging social resistance by information and communication (Kukuła, 2020, Gąsiorek, Marek, 2020).

The »Territorials« activated a hotline for anyone who needed psychological support. They gave knowledge and guidance to those who feared being infected or isolated, and advised on how to cope with family members who were infected. They took care of Polish people who felt helpless and had strong feelings about the necessity of protecting their health.

From the medical point of view, the »Territorials« assisted the hospital and sanitary service by:

- Building field admission rooms for hospitals, which are still in operation;
- Providing personnel for the health service, especially in temporary hospitals;
- Supporting medical personnel's families and running a kindergarten for their children;
- Taking temperatures at the entrance to medical, civil and military facilities;
- Taking swabs at the state border and in other specially appointed facilities;
- Transporting infected patients from overcrowded hospitals to less-crowded ones;
- Organizing blood donation facilities in mobile stations in front of the National Defence Ministry and in other places (Gąsiorek, Marek, 2020).

They evacuated old people from social welfare homes into temporary accommodation, and supported veterans, providing them with shopping and other essential items.

2.6 The specific character of the »Territorials«, or diversity management in the Polish Armed Forces

On balance, the »Territorials« is a tactical formation whose members can be classified as special; their engagement and mode of behaviour jointly define the modern form of their service. The notion of »being brave« is augmented by »being socially responsible«. The modern warrior seems to be more about being talented and having a big heart than being strong. The Minister requires that the military service of today be multidisciplinary and multidimensional. So what about the main function of the up-to-date Polish Armed Forces? The times are changing and so are the requirements.

Both crisis management and military human resources are the guidelines for modern leadership and for many management sciences, and they are applied in research into the real functions of the Army and the expectations of the role that it is supposed to play today (Kaczmarczyk, 2018). The personality of the soldiers of this tactical formation consists of being on time, determined, positive, open, and empathetic, and understanding other people, especially seniors and the sick.

The activities of the Territorials shape the personality of Polish society. They teach it how to cope with crisis situations and how to be close to the Polish people and their problems, which makes them more suitable as citizens. They give guidance on how to help, how to be the »right« Polish. Apart from this, they set up role models for those young teenagers who do not know how to manage their futures and what career pathway to choose. The Army is the best way to test their psychological condition, their heart; the way to make out their sense of patriotism and readiness of being close to Polish citizens' needs, especially seniors. The realization of this may prove to be a starting point; an incentive to re-evaluate their attitudes and, consequently, become better, braver, more humane and emphatic people. Such qualities definitely contribute to the appreciation of the Polish soldiers' involvement in various cases of national expediency. The Polish Armed Forces owe this favourable social recognition to their displayed empathy. Regardless of their efforts and tiredness, soldiers are ready to meet challenges at any time. Polish society and the Polish Armed Forces teach each other how to look after the national goodness which is our country, Poland. Due to the fact that they attended infected Polish citizens, they truly set an example to follow. The programme (»Immune Spring«) is only one of a series implemented by the Polish Armed Forces. To sum up, the »Territorials« were and still are one of the irreplaceable forces, because of their suitable role in society.

Figure 15:
Relationships
between
management
in the Polish
Armed Forces



The pandemic is the reason for the soldiers' attitude and innovative behaviour. From the scientific point of view, it is worthwhile to analyze them in order to match the internal and external factors which changed the medical situation and conditions (Franken, 2013). The internal factors are how soldiers should behave on their own, unaffected by the opinions of their colleagues in the Polish Armed Forces. External behaviour relates to real-life activities and the social side of personality: their cooperation and reliance on mutual trust, the role of luck and intuition in the operational and tactical teams of the Armed Forces. Internal and external engagement constitutes complementary evidence to the present research. The notion of an internal option refers to thinking about the way to be successful on the promotional ladder in the structures of the Polish Army, which motivates them to act and cope with all their operational and tactical tasks as a soldier (Zimbardo, Johnson, McCann, 2013). From the psychological point of view, motivation is the effect of biological, chemical and physiological reactions in the body or the brain, together with their emotional sides. Motivation also has another »face« – the reason for adjusting to the individual and collective pace of military service (Gasiul, 2021).

The roles demand both internal and external determinants. The pivotal external determinants are the world political situation and pharmaceutical companies' relations including many countries both on the European continent and beyond. The crucial internal determinants are the political situation of our country, internal military strategy, and military human resources. The conclusion is that, the external and internal elements determine the soldiers' behaviour and attitudes as an individual

source of challenging and being active in social-military programmes, which also contributes to the protection of health and life.

Both soldiers and their leaders must cooperate in the especially difficult environment, because Polish society requires more than being brave and empathic. They may not forget about abiding by the restrictive, medical regime during their daily military service. Diversity in the Polish Armed Forces should be taken into account by leaders and each soldier. All soldiers are trained how to cope with medical situations. The soldiers problem-solving can be exemplary for those Polish people who do not know how to be close and supportive to a citizen, neighbour and how to be a good person in the modern world.

Table 2:
The internal and external advantages of diversity management of soldiers in the Polish Armed Forces

| Internal advantages | External advantages |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Growing motivation and engagement of the soldiers - Multi-aspects of creating positive human relationships - Support of values and reinforcement of organizational culture - Support links in the Polish Armed Forces - Correcting flexibility in Polish Armed Forces - Correcting internal culture - Developing human capital by developing diverse knowledge and skills - Increasing innovation and creativity of soldiers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creating a positive reputation of the Polish Armed Forces - Growing flexibility in coping with the additional challenges of the changing environment - Changing the local work market for citizens - Advantages of developing social responsibility of the Army |

Effective cooperation of the soldiers in the Polish Armed Forces requires both diversity (heterogeneity of knowledge which gives the opportunity to increase higher creativity and innovation) and similarity. The recruitment of candidates for soldiers to the team must be balanced heterogeneously and homogeneously for the soldiers to be an example to other soldiers and citizens. The necessity of developing skills and knowledge is a permanent feature and condition for changing all modern organizations, including the Polish Armed Forces.

To sum up, they promote how to be close to Polish citizens. The soldiers' motivation is the result of active and flexible military human management and leadership in the Polish Armed Forces. The logistic challenges of the Polish Armed Forces seem to be less important than human ones, because leaders have planned logistic reorganization and solutions before all military operations.

Conclusion The Territorial soldiers implement the social, defence, psychosocial, and medical activities which have saved thousands and millions of Polish people – their lives and health.

Research conducted by the Military Office of Social Research shows that soldiers of the Territorial Military Service join the Territorial Defence Forces for patriotic reasons and a desire for personal development, both mentally and in knowledge and skills. They evaluate the programme and the course of the basic training positively, because it gives a good preparation for the service. The vast majority of TMS soldiers declare their willingness to stay in the army for a longer period, and half would like to become professional soldiers.

The soldiers of the operational troops believe that the actions of the TDF should primarily concern emergency and crisis situations, support the civilian population, and defend the nearby territory. Half of them assess the TDF positively in various respects, such as the concept of their function, training, or communication with other types of Polish Armed Forces.

The social research presented in the article shows that Polish citizens expected the actions of the Territorial Defence Forces in the context of combating the effects of modern natural and other disasters, which became real during the Covid-19 pandemic. Research also shows that the acceptance of the creation of the Territorial Defence Forces does not always go hand in hand with the willingness to enter such service personally. However, a positive attitude towards this type of armed forces, especially among the younger generations of Poles, seems to be important.

This article does not include all knowledge of the Territorial Defence Forces, but it can be a reason to have discussion about their roles, structures, and payment system, including the motivation system. To sum up, the authors recommend that social perception should be researched and analyzed.

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