

THE ROMANIAN ARMED FORCES - ORGANIZATION AND SYSTEM

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DOI: 10.19062/1842-9238.2024.22.1.6

Abstract: *This analysis explores the intertwined concepts of organization and system in defining the armed forces' role and purpose within society. Drawing from systemic theory and organizational studies, it delves into the complexities of societal structures, emphasizing the armed forces as a crucial component of a vast functional system. Examining various conceptual approaches to organization, the study delineates typological divisions and criteria for categorizing organizations, underscoring the armed forces' unique position as a socio-economic, adaptive, and technical-material system. Ultimately, it highlights the dynamic interplay between the armed forces and society, raising pertinent questions about their role, impact, and ethical implications.*

Keywords: *Armed forces, organization, system, society, functional system, systemic theory, typology, social structures, social impact, military ethics.*

1. INTRODUCTION

An analysis regarding the definition of the armed forces in terms of two concepts, organization or system, requires not only to focus on the two terms - organization and system - but also to determine the aim and, last but not least, the purpose of the armed forces.

To begin with, we will approach society as a system, and then, in approaching it as an organization, we will return to its systemic dimension.

2. SOCIETY - A HUGE FUNCTIONAL SYSTEM

Considering society a global social system and its components as a complex systems is a relatively new research method and it belongs to the general theory of systems created by Ludwig von Bertalanffy in 1937. This is a theory of organized complexities, which seeks to formulate principles, laws, concepts and systems methods. It is a scientific discipline of synthesis, which is based on a series of mathematical disciplines (information theory, strategic game theory, decision theory, operational research, differential equation theory, probability theory, abstract algebra, etc.), which gives it the advantage of introducing mathematical precision into research.

If we take into account the definition according to which the system represents a set of elements (principles, rules, forces, etc.), dependent on each other and making up an organized whole that puts order in a field of theoretical thinking, it regulates the classification of the material in a field of natural sciences or makes a practical activity work according to its intended purpose, then it can be concluded that everything that

exists in nature and society can be viewed as a system whose complexity can be judged according to the extent of internal processes and the consequences generated by its operation.

Therefore, human society and, ultimately, even the universe as a whole, represent a huge functional system, made up of a multitude of subsystems which are extremely complex and dynamic, with their own structures, mechanisms and functionality, with mutual and deep inter-conditioning. They are structured in such a way that the changes recorded within one of them produce effects in the operation of the others and, as a consequence, in the functionality of the overall system.

Systems cannot be thought of and created as autarchic, isolated and independent structures. In order to function, it is mandatory that they be interconnected with other similar or different systems. Material, informational, human, economic, etc. exchanges are established among them. At the same time, the real results of the operation of some systems are taken over by other systemic structures, which process the assimilated product, generating in turn other different products, which continue the cycle in a process that has no beginning and no end.

So, functional systems are characterized by the ability to assimilate various flows from the outside, to process them with the help of their own functional structures, to generate structures different from those entered into the system, which will be used either for their own needs or for the establishment of flows that will be outsourced.

Under no circumstances, however, does the functionality of the systems represent an end in itself, on the contrary, it only makes sense if the objective/purpose for which these systems were created is clearly known.

Any functional system is characterized by a state of dynamic balance, which is actually a result of the interaction between two or more contradictory processes manifested between its components.

In a philosophical view, the concept of balance expresses an essential moment of dynamic systems' stability. By the state of balance it is implied that between the component elements of the system - an optimal combination of relationships and interconnections is established on long term, which ensures the functionality of the system under the conditions in which the outcome is maximum.

In a dynamic and often unpredictable world, internal and external forces act upon each system which, by combined action, tend to bring it to a state other than that in which the values of the functional parameters that ensured the maximum results are modified. In the conditions where the action of the forces succeeds, it is obvious that the outcome of the operation of the system is reduced.

Any dynamic system creates and maintains a governance component - either rationally or just as an adaptive reaction to the environment. This component has the ability to steer the system, to establish strategic targets, to make sure that it possesses the necessary resources to function, to analyze the action of disruptive factors and to adopt strategies aimed at maintaining the optimum in its performance.

In the complex process of systems governance, information represents the basic element that ensures decision-making process consistency, regardless of whether it is conceptualized or reflexive. An effective management activity - demonstrated by the optimal functioning of the systems cannot be conceived, without real information supporting the adopted decisions. In order to be correct, the decisions adopted at the level of coordination and management structures, must be based on correct information- both regarding the system's functionality (that is the value of the characteristic parameters), and related to the value of the representative parameters of external factors, which act upon the system, tending to change its entropy.

Correct information involves effective information collecting tools, as well as the processing and operative delivery of decisions.

The coordination and management centers analyze the received information, pinpoint the deviations from what is considered to be the normal value of the functional parameters, as well as adopt the decisions delivered on the information flow, which are intended to correct the irregularities found in the system's functional process.

It is easy to understand that, in order to be in a permanent contact with all the components of the system, the management structure needs mechanisms for tracking and collecting information, which are capable to synthesize the collected data and deliver optimal information to the coordination and management center.

In another step, these mechanisms must follow the way in which the measures ordered by the coordination and management center were applied and the effects generated by the application of these measures.

On the other hand, these mechanisms must follow and report any disturbance registered in the operation of the system. For this, it is necessary that, at their level, the values and limits between which the system works optimally be known. Knowing these values, tracking mechanisms can detect abnormal deviations and inform the coordination and command center about functional anomalies. These tracking and control mechanisms have the possibility to act automatically within the limits of pre-set competences in order to correct certain categories of malfunctions, or they can only remain at the stage of collecting and transmitting data and information.

3. ORGANIZATION-CONCEPTUAL APPROACHES AND TYPOLOGICAL DIVISIONS

While studying various speciality materials, I came across an approach, which I consider very interesting in relation to defining an organization, and consequently, would be suitable for our study of the armed forces.

The specialized literature offers a wide variety of approaches regarding the organization - the structural and procedural component of the national economy and society, at the level of which economic goods are produced with the aim of satisfying social needs -, deeply marked by the degree of macroeconomic development, by the roles that macroeconomic and social management attributes to them, the centralization/decentralization relationships existing at a given moment in the economy and in the society, etc.

Regardless of the way an organization is viewed, it is unanimously recognized that it represents "a group of people who carry out joint activities aimed at achieving one or more objectives".

A similar definition is also proposed by R. Steers, in the sense that "organizations are collectivities of individuals and groups that work together to achieve shared objectives."

Moreover, starting from the origin of the word, derived from the Greek organon (tool or instrument), M. Vlăsceanu believes that organizations are "tools for achieving a goal, respectively that they have a set of specific and clear objectives, and their internal structure is designed in such a way that it can contribute to the achievement of the objectives." Their multiplication (extension), as well as their presence in practically any field of economic-social life, led to the conclusion that contemporary society is a "society of organizations", whose value is decisively marked by the value of the organizations that compose it.

H. Mintzberg showed (in 1989) that a society of organizations is one in which organizations infiltrate and insinuate themselves into our lives in such a subtle way that

they often end up not only controlling or influencing, but also dominating them. As the aforementioned author remarked, "it is an irony of fate that the organization, probably initially intended to serve its objectives, interests and goals, finally ends up, not supporting but exploiting it, not offering it benefits and satisfactions, but discontents and sufferings, not to offering it a generous space for thought and action, but, on the contrary, limiting it to the point where sometimes freedom and dignity themselves are threatened."

Hence the need for a comprehensive approach to the organization and its intimate functioning mechanisms. First of all, as O. Hoffman showed, the organization is defined by: individuals and groups, tasks and technology, structure, processes and, as an essential aspect, management.

H. Mintzberg also showed that organizations mean the collective action of pursuing a common mission, a disguised way of saying that a bunch of people gather in order to produce a service or product of some kind. Amitai Etzioni highlights the fact that organizations are social annuities (or human groups) built and reconstructed intentionally to pursue specific objectives.

All these definitions highlight several particularities:

a. organizations are groups of people which run work processes in order to to achieve common and specific objectives.

b. organizations cannot exist without appropriate management, by which the objectives are established (forecasting), the procedural and structural-organizational conditions necessary for accomplishing them (organization) are ensured, the coordination of the individuals' efforts and their training-motivation, depending on the results are ensured, and each one's performance is adequately controlled and evaluated.

c. organizations have a formal organizational structure, focused on well-defined principles, rules and relationships that are unanimously adopted and respected by the group's members.

Without going into further details, from a predominantly socio-human perspective, the organization is:

- a structured system of human interaction in order to achieve common and specific objectives.

- a collectivity oriented towards the pursuit of relatively specific goals and presenting relatively highly formalized social structures.

- a collectivity whose participants pursue multiple interests, both different and common, but who recognize the significance of the perpetuation of the organization as one which represents an important resource. The informal structure is very powerful and allows the understanding of organizational behavior better than the formal structure.

- a system of interdependent activities linking the changing coalitions of the participants; the system is imprinted in -, dependent on continuous exchanges with -, and formed by - the functional relationships.

By reviewing the coordinates that determine its appearance and functionality, we manage to highlight the fact that the organization is a "socio-human construction", it is a "socio-cultural reality", whose "human purpose" is represented by the satisfaction, from multiple points of view, of the individual who created it.

From this perspective, two ways of treating the organization are outlined: a functionalist one, according to which the problems it faces are subordinate to accomplishing performance, work processes being a means of fulfilling the organization's purpose. Employees benefit from great "power" to fully bring their contribution to achieving results; another, a democratic one, which offers employees a greater control over important aspects of their work and life in the organization.

They participate both in achieving the goals of the organization and in satisfying their own interests. Regardless of the approach, we highlight the fact that the organization is, at the same time, a source of social change and motivation and responsible for social successes and failures.

4. TYPOLOGY OF ORGANIZATIONS

Next, we will present some criteria for categorizing the organizations and, obviously, the main types of organizations, with their defining characteristics:

- a. Form of ownership and management of the heritage (public-private axis):
 - public organizations (belonging to the public sector, managed by the state);
 - private organizations (belonging to the private sector);
 - independent or non-profit organizations (belonging to the independent or non-profit private sector, but which can be categorized according to their purposes, by offering for consumption some "collective goods").
- b. Mode of operation (dominant management system):
 - mechanistic (bureaucratic) organizations;
 - organic organizations (also found in human-centered management).
- c. Prevailing organizational structure:
 - organizations with a simple structure;
 - mechanical bureaucracies; professional bureaucracies;
 - organizations with cut-out (divisional) structures;
 - adhocracy (organizations with matrix structures).
- d. Organizational analysis models, centered on two criteria: the relationship between organizations and the environment, respectively the functioning of organizations as systems:
 - closed and rational organizations: open and rational organizations; closed and natural organizations; open and natural organizations.
- e. Dimensional characteristics:
 - large-sized organizations (found mainly in the form of enterprises or companies), medium-sized, small-sized, very small-sized (micro-enterprises).
- f. Nationality:
 - national, mixed, international, multinational, translational organizations
- g. Membership to the sectors of the national economy:
 - organizations from the primary sector, from the secondary sector, from the tertiary sector (services)
- h. Membership to branches of the economy:
 - industrial, agricultural, trade, tourism, transport, construction, culture, education, research-development, local and central public administration, banking, etc. organizations.

The typologies presented above highlights the following essential aspects in their managerial approach:

- each of these types has a well-defined place and role in the economy and the society;
- each one acts in a different, national and international environment, with variables with different percentages. Overall, this environment is very complex, turbulent, unpredictable, and the form of reaction to its challenges can be unique, depending on the managers' professionalism.
- each benefits from a specific management, which tries to capitalize on both endogenous and exogenous variables that mark the establishment and functionality of the respective organization.

- each capitalizes on a varied range of resources (material, financial, human and informational) in obtaining goods (products or services) aimed at satisfying certain needs.

- each is marked by variable work processes (management and execution), whose finality is decisively influenced by managers and executors' competence.

- finally, the degree of interdependence among the various types of organizations is increasingly stronger, even in the situation where managerial decentralization is increasing and, implicitly, the decision-making and operational autonomy is wider (we are primarily referring to public institutions -so called "decentralized")

Returning to the typology of organizations, even if each one has a special place and role in the economy and society, there is minimal appreciation according to which the organization or enterprise has a special importance.

As predicted by O. Nicolescu and I. Verboncu, two important concepts have emerged in the approach to the organization: the first concerns the priority given to the organization in the wider context of economic activities, on its profitability depending on the well-being of all economic and social actors, including the national economy ; the second one places the national economy first, underestimating the role of its component enterprises.

If the latter is overcome, it is obvious that, in order to be effective, a national economy must include and be based on profitable, competitive enterprises. Why? Because work processes are designed and carried out at their level, the real economic substance is produced by them, large countries' economic power and living standard being dependent on their profitability.

The organization or enterprise is, therefore, a group of people, organized according to certain legal, economic, technological and managerial requirements, which design and carry out a complex of work processes, most often also using certain means of work, embodied in products and services , generally in view of obtaining a profit that is as high as possible.

The organization or enterprise has a much wider scope, it is not limited only to the economic field, its object of activity can be from any field, provided that it has in view of obtaining profit. Within each country, besides companies, which predominate numerically, there are also numerous cultural, educational, health, etc. institutions, intended to satisfy the social needs of the population, financed by the state, trade unions, various public organizations and foundations, etc.

Seen as a system, the organization presents several defining dimensions or features:

a) The organization is a complex system, as it incorporates human, material, financial and informational resources, each of which is made up of an appreciable variety of elements. Human resources are composed of all the company's employees, who present different characteristics from the point of view of the level of training, specialty, position held, age, sex, seniority in the unit, etc. The set of raw materials, materials, fuels, together with machines, buildings and other materializations of production factors, each presenting certain dimensional, functional and economic parameters, represent the material resources. The financial availability, in cash and at the bank, available to the organization, form its financial resources, information, both of exogenous and endogenous origin, embodied in forecasts, technologies, consumption or quality norms, accounting or technical-economic records, statistics etc., make up the organization's informational resources. It should be noted that the four categories are combined, giving birth to different subsystems within the enterprise, such as construction sites, production sections, workshops, the transportation system, etc.

b) The organization is a socio-economic system, in the sense that, within it, groups of employees, whose components are in close interdependence, carry out work processes

that generate new uses. Human resources' quality – (that of being the main producers of new values) – gives them a central position within the enterprise, whose consideration is essential for the effectiveness of the activities that are carried out.

c) The organization is an open system, in the sense that it manifests itself as a component of numerous other systems with which it is in continuous relations on multiple levels. Actually, its character as an open system is expressed by the input flow - machinery, raw materials, materials, fuels, electricity, information, money - and by its output, mainly products, services, money and information intended for the systems which it is a part of.

d) The organization is an adaptive organic system, that is, it changes permanently, under the influence of endogenous and exogenous factors, adapting both to market evolution and to the requirements generated by the sustained dynamics of the incorporated resources. It should be remembered that the enterprise is not a passive system, but, in turn, it influences by its output some of the characteristics of the systems with which it comes into contact. The share of this influence depends on the nature, absolute and relative size of the outputs it generates, etc.

e) The economic organization is a technical-material system, in the sense that between the labour means, the raw materials and the materials used within it there are certain links that are manifested by the technological interdependence among its subdivisions, obviously with priority among the compartments in which production activities are carried out.

f) The analysis of industrial companies in the Romanian economy reveals their predominantly operational character. Actually, most of the work processes within them have an effector character. The organization is valid both for the execution attributions, primarily the production ones, which represent the majority of them, as well as for the management ones. Managerial processes of strategic and tactical nature, although particularly important, still have a small share at the level of commercial companies and state companies, manifesting in the form of forward-looking decisions adopted by the upper management, usually the general meeting or the directorate.

If we analyze the study presented above, which we have divided into four sections (A,B,C,D), and at the same time, we compare it with the idea expressed in our article, we can draw certain conclusions:

Section A:

a) regardless of the way the organization is treated, the armed forces represent a group of people who carry out joint activities aimed at achieving an objective, in our case the defense of the national territory and national security, etc.

b) the armed forces are a collective of individuals and groups that work together to achieve shared objectives; if we take the origin of the word, derived from the Greek organon (tool or instrument), we can consider that the armed forces represent a tool for achieving a goal, i.e. they have a set of specific and clear objectives, and the internal structure is designed in such a way that it can contribute to the achievement the objective of national defense.

c) yes, we can say, as H. Mintzberg also showed (that a society of organizations is one in which organizations infiltrate and insinuate themselves into our lives in such a subtle way that they often end up not only controlling or influencing, but also dominating them). As noted by the above-mentioned author, we can say that the armed forces initially assigned to serve its objectives, interests and goals, finally ends up not supporting society but exploiting it, not offering benefits and satisfactions, but discontents and sufferings, not providing a generous space for thought and action, but, on the contrary, limiting it to

the point where sometimes freedom and dignity themselves are threatened - see military dictatorships, attacks against other states, armed interventions on one's own people, etc.

Section B:

a) first of all, as O. Hoffman pointed out, the armed forces are also defined by: individuals and groups, tasks and technology, structure, processes and, as an essential aspect, management.

b) the armed forces also represents the collective action of pursuing a common mission, a disguised way of saying that a bunch of people gather under a distinctive sign, i.e. coat of arms, insignia, symbols, uniforms, combat technique, etc., so as to produce a service, in order to defend the homeland. We can also accept Amitai Etzioni's idea which highlights the fact that organizations are social annuities (or human groups) built and reconstructed intentionally to pursue specific objectives, see the organization and reorganization of the armed forces over time.

c) related to the definitions presented in relation to the organization and the parallel made, I highlight some particularities, which exist and are applied in the military system:

- the armed forces are a group of people who carry out work processes (training) for the achievement of common and specific objectives

- the armed forces cannot exist without a proper management, through which the objectives are established (forecasting), the procedural and structural-organizational conditions necessary for their realization (organization) are ensured, the coordination of the efforts of individuals and their training-motivation depending on the results is ensured, each person's performance is adequately controlled and evaluated.

- the armed forces have a formal organizational structure (organizational statements drawn up down to the smallest details), focused on well-defined principles, rules and relationships unanimously adopted and respected by the group's members.

Without going into details, from a predominantly socio-human perspective, the armed forces are:

- a structured system of human interaction in order to achieve common and specific objectives.

- a community focused on pursuing relatively specific goals and presenting relatively highly formalized social structures.

- a community whose participants pursue multiple interests, both different but also common, but which recognize the importance of the perpetuation of the armed forces as because they represent an important resource. The informal structure is very powerful and allows the understanding of organizational behavior better than the formal structure does.

By reviewing the coordinates that determine its appearance and functioning, we are allowed to highlight the fact that the armed forces are a "socio-human construction", a "socio-cultural reality", whose "human mission" represents the satisfaction, from multiple points of view, of the individual or the society that created it.

We can also mention that the two ways of treating the organization are also emerging in the military system: a functionalist one, according to which the problems it faces are subordinate to its performance, work processes being a means of fulfilling the organization's purpose. Employees benefit from great "power" to fully bring their contribution to achieving results; another democratic one, which offers employees greater control over important aspects of their work and life within the organization.

Section C:

Regarding the typology of organizations, the armed forces are a public organization with exclusive state funding, with a well-established, closed and rational structure, large in size, but composed of small organizations (battalions, if we refer to the states of

organization), national in the tertiary sector , being represented by the Ministry of National Defense.

Section D:

In this section we start from the approach of the organization as a system, with several dimensions or defining features, analyzing the fact that the military can fit into these features.

The armed forces can be considered a complex system, as it incorporates human, material, financial and informational resources, each of which is made up of an appreciable variety of elements. Human resources are composed of all military personnel, which present different characteristics from the point of view of the level of training, specialty, position held, age, sex, seniority in the unit, etc. The set of raw materials, materials, fuels, together with machines, buildings and other materializations of the training system (assimilated to production factors), each presenting certain dimensional, functional and economic parameters, represent the material resources. The financial availability, in cash and at the bank, at the disposal of the military units, forms its financial resources, the information, both of exogenous and endogenous origin, embodied in forecasts, technologies, consumption or quality norms, accounting or technical-economic records, statistics, etc., form the informational resources of the armed forces (organization). It should be noted that the four categories are combined, giving birth to different subsystems within the military organization, such as training grounds, ranges, car parks, storage sectors, etc. (building sites, production sections, workshops, transport column, etc. of other organizations).

The armed forces are also a socio-economic system, as, within it, groups of employees, whose components are in close interdependence, carry out work processes that generate new values. The quality of human resources to be the main producers of new values gives them a central position within the military units, whose consideration is essential for the effectiveness of the activities carried out.

We can say that the military organization is an open system, in that it is in continuous relations on multiple levels. Specifically, its character as an open system is expressed by the input flow - technology, raw materials, materials, fuels, electricity, information, money - and by its output, mainly the service of ensuring national sovereignty and security, as well as information intended for the systems to which it belongs.

At the same time, we appreciate that the Military Organization - the Armed forces are an adaptive organic system, that is, it changes permanently, under the influence of endogenous and exogenous factors, adapting both to the evolution of the military equipment market and to socio-political factors. Also, the armed forces are not a passive system, but, in turn, it influences through its capabilities and some of the characteristics of the systems with which it comes into contact. The weight of this influence depends on the equipment, the degree of staff preparation and training, etc.

As an economic organization, the armed forces are a technical-material system, in that between the means of work, the raw materials and the materials used within it there are certain links that are manifested through the organizational dependence between its subdivisions, obviously with priority between the compartments in which combat training activities are carried out.

The analysis of the military units in the Romanian armed forces reveals their predominantly operational character. Specifically, most of the work processes within them have an effector character. This is valid both for execution attributions, primarily instructional ones, which represent the majority of them, as well as for management ones.

Managerial processes of a strategic and tactical nature, although particularly important, still have a low weight at the level of military units, manifesting themselves in the form of perspective decisions adopted by the higher management sample, usually the Defense General Staff.

5. CONCLUSIONS

From what is presented comparatively in sections A,B,C, it can be stated with certainty that the Armed forces are an organization, a group of people who carry out common activities to achieve an objective; a tool for achieving a goal, a set of specific and clear objectives; the pursuit of a common mission, a group of people gathered under distinctive signs, having a common goal; the existence of an appropriate management that establishes the objectives, ensures structural and organizational conditions for their achievement, control and adequate evaluation of the performance of each member of the entity; formal organizational structure-organizational statements drawn up to the smallest details, etc.

Regarding the aspects enumerated in section D, in which it is stated that the Armed forces are also a complex, socio-economic, open, organically adaptive, technical-material system, we can consider the Armed forces as a system, a subsystem within society, defined as a huge functional system.

Based on the aforementioned conclusions, we can state that, according to certain currents, the armed forces are an organization, while according to other trends they are a system.

From our point of view we could conclude that the armed forces are at the same time an organization, in that it represents a group of people with common goals and well-established objectives, organizational structure and well-defined material means, but at the same time they are also a system, since the activities are carried out according to well-defined laws within the global system. So we can state the fact that the ARMED FORCES ARE BOTH AN ORGANIZATION, AND A SYSTEM.

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