

# **Organizational Climate Assessment of the Bulgarian Armed Forces: Implications for the Military Leaders**

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## ***ABSTRACT***

*The paper presents a methodology to assess the organizational climate in the Bulgarian Armed Forces based on a 5-year representative trend surveys. The methodology comprises scales like Organizational justice, Perceived organizational effectiveness, Job satisfaction, Commitment to organization, Intention to leave organization, Trust in the leader, Job stress, Relationships with colleagues, Motivation of military personnel, Image of the military institution, Equal opportunities for professional realization, “Family-work” conflict, etc. Data collected each year is comparative and it is representative for the Bulgarian defence organization (Army, Navy, Air Force and directly subordinated to the MoD structures, N= 1655, 2017). The data analysis gives an opportunity to identify trends over the years, to identify statistically significant difference among services and to formulate implications for improvement leadership at strategic level.*

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Increasing the functionality of the administrative structures and the operability of the military formations in the Republic of Bulgaria is directly dependent on the efforts of the Ministry of Defence leadership and the command of the Armed Forces to timely diagnose and mitigate existing negative trends in the dominant organizational climate. A major tool for improving the governance practices in this direction is conducting periodic sociological surveys to assess its current status.

For the first time a study of the organizational climate in the formations and structures of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Bulgaria was conducted in 2013 by the Defence Advanced Research Institute in Rakovski National Defence College, followed by an order of the Minister of Defence to make it an annual event. By 2018, four studies were carried out, which contributed to the improvement of the applied research tools and the adequacy of the results obtained.

This report presents and analyses data from the latest representative survey conducted in 2017.

The main purpose of the sociological surveys is to establish the rate at which the Bulgarian militaries assess the various elements of the organizational climate in the formation/structure where they serve, as well as to identify the tendencies in the development of the organizational climate during the last 5 years.

The practical value and application of the study was to help develop and propose specific measures to the Ministry of Defence to increase the social and professional status of the military, to increase the importance of the military profession, and to retain and attract personnel to the Bulgarian armed forces.

This report aims to explore the relationship and influence of organizational climate dimensions on Job satisfaction, Commitment to organization, and Intention to leave organization by military personnel.

## **2.0 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **2.1 Definition of Organizational climate**

In theoretical conceptualization, the organizational climate is seen as a mental abstraction of the work environment, which is based on employees' perceptions and is considered at multiple levels of analysis.

A large number of researchers highlight the global nature of employees' perception of their organizations as a key feature of the organizational climate. In the spirit of this tradition, Schneider defines the construct as: "The atmosphere that employees perceive to be created in their organizations through practices, procedures and rewards ... employees monitor what is happening to them (and around them), and then draw conclusions about organizations' priorities. Then they define their own priorities" [33]. In this context, the organizational climate is perceived as a socially interactive construct that is part of the active process of attributing meaning and helps employees understand what behaviours are expected and rewarded [21, 34, 36].

The definition of Moran & Volkwein [27] presents a more detailed version of the essential aspects of the climate: "The organizational climate is a relatively permanent feature of an organization that distinguishes it from other organizations and (a) embodies the collective perceptions of members of the organization with regard to such dimensions such as autonomy, trust, cohesion, support, recognition, innovation and justice; (b) it is the product of the interactions between its members; (c) serves as a basis for interpreting the situation; (d) reflects the prevailing norms, values and attitudes in the culture of the organization; and (e) acts as a source of influence in shaping behaviour."

The presented definitions show that measuring the organizational climate is an important means of understanding employees' attitudes and the meaning they attribute to the organizational environment in which they operate. The climate influences their assessment, emotional responses and reactions to everyday situations in the process. The extent to which a person perceives the work environment as being favourable or harmful in general (i.e. in terms of his/her own well-being) determines emotionally significant knowledge and attitudes related to the working context [20]. Employees who have positive views about their climate and believe they were well-treated by the organization are in turn more likely to behave well with their clients [33].

An alternative but dominant approach to research in recent years is to focus on the specific dimensions of the organizational climate and their relationships with different individual outcomes [29]. The most common depending variables are Job satisfaction, Commitment to organization, and employees' Intention to leave the organization [13].

It has been found that the organizational climate acts as a mediating variable to improve the relationship of Commitment to organization with Job satisfaction. Both Job satisfaction and the organizational climate play a vital role in retaining workers by increasing their Commitment to organization [24], as well as a factor preceding it [25].

The organizational climate is crucial to any process of optimizing the organization that requires significant change or innovation. It is therefore an important factor in understanding how organizations work and the effectiveness they achieve.

## **2.2 Organizational Climate Dimensions**

There is a wide variety in the number and type of dimensions used by different authors to describe measure and to explain the organizational climate. Difficulties arise from different types of organizational contexts, practices and procedures that form relatively unique climates. To the extent that the organizational climate includes employees' perceptions of their work environment, the extraction of universal dimensions is a hard-to-reach procedure.

Regardless of the obstacles, the specification of appropriate organizational climate dimensions is an important challenge to solve because it is related to the ability to perform comparative research of different organizational environments [17]. In practice, this approach requires the identification of a limited number of dimensions that can characterize a wide range of social or working conditions [22].

Scientific literature contains numerous classifications of the organizational climate based on different contexts.

A universal, generally accepted model of organizational climate in a military context is not available either. Two examples of specifications of organizational climate dimensions in a military environment based on large scale research will be presented below.

In the past century, Jones and James [22] administered their 145-item tool on a large sample of 4,315 US Navy personnel. The analysis of the results obtained by factor analysis of the main components extracts a six factors solution: Conflict and Ambiguity; Challenge, Importance and diversity; Facilitating and supporting leaders; Cooperation, Friendly attitude and warmth; Professional and organizational spirit; Working standards.

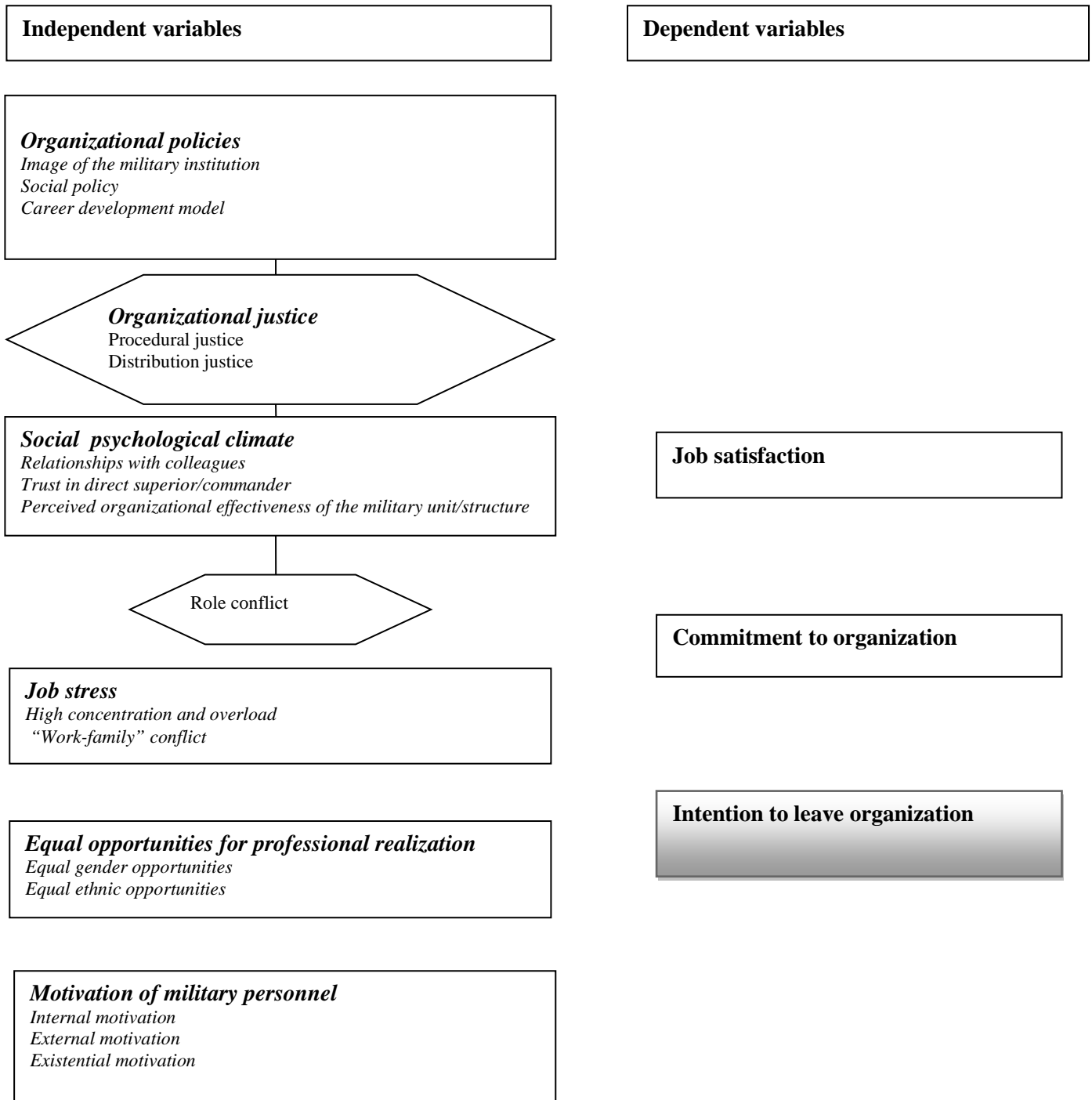
In a recent study, McKeithen [26], in a sample of 10,000 US military and civilian personnel, relies on 13 organizational climate dimensions: Job satisfaction, Supervisor-related commitment, Job role ambiguity, Job characteristics, Job stress, "Work-family" conflict, Commute stress, Commute safety, Organizational justice, Job Fit, Workplace values, High quality relationships, Demographics.

The dimensions investigated in McKeithen's research served as a basis for choosing the dimensions of the organizational climate in the Bulgarian study.

## **2.3 Organizational Climate Dimensions in the Bulgarian model**

In order to obtain an assessment of the maximum number of aspects of the working environment in the structures and formations of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Bulgaria, a large number of dimensions are included in the Bulgarian model for studying the organizational climate. Their initial systematization involves separating them into independent and dependent variables. Subsequently, independent primary factors were subjected to a secondary factor analysis with Varimax rotation (Appendix 1 presents the factorial solution), which grouped them into larger, meaning-recognizable blocks. The final model is

depicted schematically in Figure 1. Some of the secondary mega factors are composed of primary factors with high factor weights without significant inter-correlations with the other secondary factors (marked as rectangles in the figure), others exhibiting mixed weights of two or more mega factors (marked as diamonds in the figure). Mixed factors are considered as stand-alone variables. In Figure 1, mega factors are presented in a form that allows mixed factors to be located among the factors with which they inter-correlate.



**Figure 1-1: Theoretical model of the organizational climate dimensions in the Bulgarian study**

## **2.4 Independent variables**

### **2.4.1 Organization policies (media, social and personnel policy)**

*Image of the military institution* - includes three primary factors, each being an important indicator of military personnel motivation, the level of identification with the organization, and the power of belonging:

*Perception of the social status of the profession* - the assessment of the military for the social status of the military profession gives information about the level of perceived living standard, social realization, the opportunities for social development, which the military service provides, as well as the place of the military institution in society.

*Perception of work in a prestigious institution* - the prestige characterizes the hierarchical arrangement of professions according to public opinion. It is determined by the objective characteristics of the professional activity, by the conditions at the workplace it offers, by the particularities of the area where it is carried out, by the remuneration it can provide, and the opportunities for personal development [1, 2]

*A perception of security and predictability of work* - the subjective perception of the individual that he/she is unlikely to become unemployed for a long period of time is directly dependent on certain characteristics of the organization (e.g. stress, organizational justice, social policy, equal opportunities for professional realization), which form the attitude to stay or quit work.

*Social policy* - a set of activities and measures that, in addition to payment, are aimed at enhancing the social status and work satisfaction of military and civilian personnel in the Bulgarian Armed Forces (BAF) formations/structures. The following aspects of the social package have been assessed: payment for on-call duty; money for accommodation; per diem; housing; travel money; meals in mess halls; kindergartens for the children of military and civilian employees; distribution of working time; access to military recreation facilities; price of holiday packages; sports facilities; quality of uniforms; uniform prices.

*Career development model* - the conceptual framework that defines the process of planning, managing and realizing the potential capabilities of military service members for their development by appointing/occupying positions requiring equal or higher military ranks [6]. The Career development model of military personnel is assessed by the following elements: terms of recruitment; terms of job promotion; terms of promotion in military rank; terms of professional military training; qualification; terms of retirement; appraisal system.

*Organizational justice* – personnel's perception of the fairness level in the organization. Procedural justice is related to employees' perception of the accuracy and objectivity of the process of applying the organization's rules and procedures to achieve the outcomes. Distributive justice is defined as the employee's assessment of the extent to which their efforts are appropriately rewarded by the organization [14].

### **2.4.2 Socio-psychological climate**

*Relationships with colleagues* - interpersonal relationships in the workplace form the immediate psychological climate in which daily work activities in an organization take place. The establishment of an organizational environment dominated by trust, support and good rapport is an important prerequisite for successful teamwork and for quality performance. Positive psychological climate is particularly important in situations typical of the military profession where risk, vulnerability and uncertainty are high and interdependent is required [15].

*Trust in direct superior/commander* - leadership moderates the vertical relations in organizations and is a

powerful factor in shaping the Social psychological climate in teams. Leaders at different levels have the authority to make decisions with significant impact on the quality of life of their subordinates (e.g. promotions, salaries, rewards, redundancies), which raises the question of confidence in them. The present study is based on the assumption that the relationship between military personnel and their immediate superiors/commanders, i.e. the people with whom they most frequently communicate and interact, gives us important information about the state of leadership in the BAF [3, 4, 30].

*Perceived organizational effectiveness of the formation/structure* - perceived effectiveness of the formation/structure is the service members' assessment of the quality of work (for example, achieving quality products with shortened deadlines, shortage of resources, heavy workload, etc.). Previous research has shown that organizational effectiveness perceived by employees is related to their productivity, adaptability and efficiency in the work environment [9, 10, 15].

*Role conflict* – a role conflict occurs when conflicting roles are assigned to the individual, or when the role-related expectations are incompatible. Indications of a role conflict are dysfunctionality in performing the role in the organization, which has the effect of tension, dissatisfaction, anxiety, and lower productivity [32].

*Job stress* - the working environment is one of the main sources of stress. Multiple factors may exceed the abilities of individuals (physical, mental, social, etc.) to deal with them and cause stress. Two sources of stress are assessed in this study. The first one is *High concentration and overload* - includes indicators - constantly maintaining high levels of concentration in work, difficulty in work due to demanding high levels of knowledge and technical skills, daily overload, labour force, 24-hour obsession with work [35]. The second source of stress is related to "*Work-family*" conflict – "work-family" conflict is a form of inter-role conflict that occurs when the demands of work and family are incompatible to a certain degree." Sources of pressure may be due to difficulties in temporal synchronization of duties, to stressors that cause tension, or to the inability to reconcile the different behavioural patterns required by these two contexts of individual life. The construct is included in the research to determine whether it is a potential source of stress that affects the effective performance of military service obligations [19, 28].

#### **2.4.3 Equal opportunities for professional realization**

*Equal gender opportunities for professional realization* – increasing the proportion and career opportunities of women in the armed forces of the country has led to a loss of purely male unification of the military profession and raised questions of a different nature related to gender interaction. In connection with that it is interesting to note that as a percentage we stand very well in the international environment - Bulgaria has one of the highest percentage of women within the military in comparison with other NATO members. The women in the Bulgarian armed forces are already more than 14% of the military personnel, but they represent only 1.41% of the officers, which is very unsatisfying. [5]. In order to diagnose the degree of problems in this area, the research of organizational climate in the formations and structures of the BAF includes questions about the sexist beliefs and attitudes of the service members [10, 15].

*Equal opportunities for the professional realization of ethnic groups* - ethnic tolerance is a term that denotes the tolerance and respect for social, cultural, historical, sexual, or religious differences between individuals from particular ethnic groups. The presence of proportions of service members of different religions and ethnicity in the Bulgarian armed forces provokes the assessment of ethnic tolerance in the context of the Bulgarian military organizational environment [10, 15].

#### **2.4.4 Motivation of military personnel**

In the present study, the two main types of motivation are measured: *external motivation* (pay, bonuses, career promotion, etc.) and *internal motivation* - satisfaction and interest in the work itself, regardless of the



material remuneration it offers [7]. The following types of military personnel's motivation are assessed: challenges of the military profession; interest in military equipment, arms and technology; interest in the particular military specialty; rate of pay; secure and guaranteed workplace; a desire to serve the country; internal propensity for leadership, command and management of others; public prestige of the military profession; possibility to use military accommodation; opportunity to participate in missions abroad; early retirement; longer annual leave; opportunity for qualification.

## **2.5 Dependent variables**

*Job satisfaction* - job satisfaction is the individual's overall experience of the aspects of his/her work or career. Job satisfaction is associated with higher levels of professional performance, higher commitment to the organization and lower turnover. The following indicators of job satisfaction are included: workplace security, training opportunities, qualification and career development, public prestige of the military profession, guaranteed civil rights, medical insurance, normative base, health and safety at work, arms and technique, payment, clothing and equipment [8].

*Commitment to organization* – commitment to organization is the stabilizing force that keeps the individual at his present workplace despite the better alternatives in other organizations or the difficulties encountered. Thus, commitment to organization is a "pledge" to engage staff with a certain attitude towards the organization even when certain circumstances influence change [10, 15].

*Intention to leave organization* - Intention to leave organization is described as deliberate consideration of leaving the organization, while actual withdrawal refers to the real termination of the work contract. The intention to leave is related to negative factors in the workplace such as poor organizational climate, perceptions of job insecurity, availability of employment alternatives, interpersonal conflicts. Previous studies have shown that there is a link between the intention to leave organization and the actual withdrawal. The intention to leave organization may be detrimental to organizational results. High turnover rates are costly for the organization due to the need to recruit and train new employees. Leadership is needed to stabilize withdrawal intentions by cultivating the desired organizational climate [12].

## **3.0 EMPIRICAL STUDY OF THE ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE IN THE BAF: STAGES OF THE STUDY**

This report section presents the empirical study results. The relationships between organizational climate dimensions and service members' Job satisfaction, Commitment to organization and Intention to leave organization are analysed and discussed.

### **3.1 Basic Research tasks:**

1. To evaluate the *links* between organizational climate dimension and service members' Job satisfaction, Commitment to organization, and Intention to leave organization;
2. To identify *the influence* of organizational climate dimensions on service members' Job satisfaction, Commitment to organization and Intention to leave organization;
3. To identify *the influence* of *organizational climate dimensions blocks* on service members' Job satisfaction, Commitment to organization and Intention to leave organization;

### **3.2 We assume following Hypothesis:**

1. The organizational climate sub dimensions included in the Organizational policies' block of dimensions

(Image of military institution, Social policy, and Career development model) will have the most positive impact on service members' Job satisfaction, Commitment to organization and a negative impact on their Intention to leave organization.

[The hypothesis is based on the view that the organizational climate sub dimensions included in the Organizational policies' block of dimensions embody the most important features that people believe the ideal job shall possess in order to meet their needs - prestige, security, status, stimulation, career development.]

2. Service members' Job satisfaction and Commitment to organization will show a strong negative impact on their Intention to leave organization.

[The hypothesis is based on the results of large number of studies] [18, 23].

3. The organizational climate sub dimensions included in the Social psychological climate's (Relationship with colleagues, Trust in the direct superior/commander, Perceived organizational effectiveness of the formation/structure) and Organizational justice's (Procedural and Distributive justice) blocks of dimensions will have a significant impact on service members' Job satisfaction, Commitment to organization, and Intention to leave organization, controlling for the influence of the variables included in the Organization Policies' block of dimensions (Image of military institution, Social policy, Career development model).

[The hypothesis attempts to address the practically important question as to whether and to what extent the presence of a positive Social psychological climate and high Organizational justice is capable of neutralizing a possible negative functioning of the Organizational policies.]

### **3.3 Sample**

Four surveys were conducted on the topic during the period 2013-2017. This report presents the results of the latest study (2017). On the basis of this sample the proposed theoretical model has been further developed and refined. The sample includes 1,655 service members from 59 structures and military formations. Its development passed through *two stages* and it is *representative* of the Ministry of Defence, the structures directly subordinated to the Minister of Defence and the BAF. The representative character of the sample of the general population (the service members of the whole BAF) was achieved through stochastic (random) selection.

The realized model and the sample size ensure the extrapolation of results for all the service members from the Ministry of Defence, the structures directly subordinated to the Minister of Defence and the BAF with a maximum stochastic error rate of  $\pm 2.5\%$ .

By gender, service members are distributed as follows: 81.7% men and 18.3% women.

According to the category military personnel, respondents were divided as follows: senior officers - 9,4%, junior officers - 13,0%, sergeants / warrant officers - 22,9%, privates / seamen - 36,1% , and cadets – 18,5%. The share of cadets is higher as the sample is reinforced for military academies.

### **3.4 Methods and Procedure**

The study procedure includes a group anonymous poll among the service members in the formations where each respondent individually filled out the questionnaire. After submitting the instruction, respondents answered by circling a digit on the corresponding scale that most closely matches their opinion.



The methodology presents the questionnaires, which are the original product of the research team from the Defence Advanced Research Institute. Questionnaires are the methods for measuring the various aspects of the organizational climate in military formations and structures. Table 1 presents the main psychometric characteristics of the questionnaires.

**Table 1-1: Psychometric characteristics of the questionnaires included in the study.**

Questionnaire name/ Construct	Author/s of the original questionnaire	Name and number of factors	Number of items on the scale	Total % explained variation	Cronbach's Alpha	Scale of responses
<b>Career development model</b>	Original team work	1 factor "Satisfaction with the elements of the Career development model"	7	68%	$\alpha = .92$	Five degree agreement scale
<b>Social policy</b>	Original team work	1 factor "Satisfaction with the Social policy aspects"	13	42%	$\alpha = .88$	Three degree agreement scale
<b>Organizational justice</b>	Colquitt, J. A [13]	1 factor "Procedural justice"	7	64%	$\alpha = .87$	Five degree agreement scale
		2 factor "Distributive justice"	3		$\alpha = .87$	
<b>Equal gender opportunities for professional realization</b>	U.S. Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute – DEOMI (adapted for the Bulgarian Armed Forces [16]; Yanakiev, Gerganov, Petkov) [10]	1 factor "Privileges of women"	5	68%	$\alpha = .87$	Five degree agreement scale
		2 factor "Privileges of men"	2		$\alpha = .66$	
<b>Equal ethnic opportunities for professional realization</b>	U.S. Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute – DEOMI [16] (adapted for the Bulgarian Armed Forces Yanakiev, Gerganov, Petkov) [10]	1 factor "Ethnic Intolerance"	4	50%	$\alpha = .66$	Five degree agreement scale
<b>Job stress</b>	Brief Job Stress Questionnaire -	1 factor "Role conflict"	9	51%	$\alpha = .87$	Five degree

Questionnaire name/ Construct	Author/s of the original questionnaire	Name and number of factors	Number of items on the scale	Total % explained variation	Cronbach's Alpha	Scale of responses
	BJSQ (English version) [35] and Rizo scale for role conflict [32]	2 factor "High concentration and overload"	5		$\alpha = .77$	agreement scale
<b>Relationships with colleagues</b>	Brown, A. L. & B. D. Adams et. al.[11]	1 factor "Relationships with colleagues"	8	60%	$\alpha = .90$	Five degree agreement scale
<b>Trust in direct superior/commander</b>	Trust in Leader at Work Scale (in Podsakoff et al.; Allister's Trust Scale [30])	1 factor "Trust in direct superior/commander"	13	61%	$\alpha = .94$	Five degree agreement scale
<b>Perceived organizational effectiveness of the formation/structure</b>	U.S. Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute – DEOMI [16] (adapted for the Bulgarian Armed Forces; Yanakiev, Gerganov, Petkov) [10]	1 factor "Perceived organizational effectiveness of the formation /structure"	5	60%	$\alpha = .83$	Five degree agreement scale
<b>Motivation of military personnel</b>	Original team work	1 factor "Internal motivation"	7	58%	$\alpha = .82$	Five degree agreement scale
		2 factor "External motivation"	4		$\alpha = .71$	
		3 factor "Existential motivation"	2		$\alpha = .72$	
<b>"Work-family" conflict</b>	Netemeyer, R. G. & R. [28]	1 factor "Work-family" conflict"	4	75%	$\alpha = .89$	Five degree agreement scale
<b>Image of the military institution</b>	Original team work	1 factor "Image of the military institution"	3	66%	$\alpha = .74$	Five degree agreement scale
<b>Job satisfaction</b>	Original team work	1 factor "Job satisfaction"	11	53%	$\alpha = .91$	Five degree agreement scale

Questionnaire name/ Construct	Author/s of the original questionnaire	Name and number of factors	Number of items on the scale	Total % explained variation	Cronbach's Alpha	Scale of responses
<b>Commitment to organization</b>	U.S. Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute – DEOMI [16] (adapted for the Bulgarian Armed Forces, Yanakiev, Gerganov, Petkov) [10]	1 factor "Commitment to organization"	5	65%	$\alpha = .86$	Five degree agreement scale
<b>Intention to leave organization</b>	Original team work	"Do you intend to leave your current job?"	-	-	-	Three degree agreement scale

## 4.0 DATA ANALYSIS

### 4.1 Methods and Procedure

Estimation of the relationships of each primary and mega factor with each of the dependant variables is accomplished by correlation analysis and in particular by the Pearson coefficient. Table 2 shows the correlations of the independent variables with service members' Job satisfaction, Commitment to organization, and Intention to leave organization.

**Table 1-2: Correlations of primary and mega factors with dependent variables - service members' Job satisfaction, Commitment to organization and Intention to leave organization.**

Dependent variables→	Job satisfaction	Commitment to organization	Intention to leave organization
Independent variables↓			
<b><i>Organizational policies</i></b>	<b>.76**</b>	<b>.38**</b>	<b>-.39**</b>
Image of the military institution	.31**	.31**	-.39**
Social policy	.56**	.24**	-.29**
Career development model	.64**	.37**	-.26**
<b><i>Organizational justice</i></b>	<b>.55**</b>	<b>.57**</b>	<b>-.28**</b>
Procedural justice	.51**	.53**	-.25**
Distributive justice	.42**	.46**	-.24**
<b><i>Social psychological climate</i></b>	<b>.36**</b>	<b>.63**</b>	<b>-.22**</b>
Relationships with colleagues	.22**	.46**	-.14**
Trust in direct superior/commander	.36**	.52**	-.24**
Perceived organizational effectiveness of the formation /structure	.24**	.67**	-.09*
<b><i>Role conflict</i></b>	<b>-.38**</b>	<b>-.35**</b>	<b>.28**</b>
<b><i>Job stress</i></b>	<b>-.27**</b>	<b>-.08*</b>	<b>.30**</b>
High concentration and overload	-.06*	.11**	.11**
"Work-family" conflict	-.36**	-.22**	.35**
<b><i>Equal opportunities for realization</i></b>	<b>.33**</b>	<b>.23**</b>	<b>-.22**</b>

Dependent variables→	Job satisfaction	Commitment to organization	Intention to leave organization
Independent variables↓			
Equal gender opportunities for realization	.28**	.19**	-.24**
Equal ethnic opportunities for realization	.24**	.16**	-.09*
<b>Motivation of military personnel</b>	<b>.14**</b>	<b>.31**</b>	<b>-.11**</b>
Internal motivation	.28**	.40**	-.21**
External motivation	negligible	.11**	negligible
Existential motivation	-.05*	.13**	negligible

*Links between organizational climate dimensions and service members' Job satisfaction*

The correlation matrix forms a clear picture of the factors and mega factors that are associated with service members' Job satisfaction in a great extent. The Career development model (r =.64), Social policy (r =.56) and Procedural justice (r =.51) are the primary factors that show the strongest positive relationship with the dependent variable considered. A weaker but moderate positive relationship is provided by the Distributive justice (r =.42) and Trust in the direct superior/commander (r =.36).

Moderate negative relationships are shown by the stress factors - Role conflict (r= - .38) and Work-family conflict (r=-.36).

At Meta level, the aggregate correlation coefficient of the mega factor Organization policies shows the highest positive relationship with Job satisfaction (r =.76), followed by the moderate positive correlation of Organizational justice (r =.55) and moderate negative correlation of the Role conflict (r =- .38).

*Correlations between organizational climate dimensions and service members' Commitment to organization*

The correlation coefficients of service members' Commitment to organization show that the highest significant positive links with this dependent variable show the primary factors associated with the Social psychological climate (r=.63), namely Perceived organizational effectiveness of the formation/structure (r =.67), Trust in direct superior/commander (r =.52) and Relationships with colleagues (r = .46). High levels of positive links show both types of Organizational justice (r=.57), Procedural justice (r=.53) and Distributive justice (r=.46).

*Correlations between organizational climate dimensions and service members' Intention to leave organization*

The levels of links between individual primary and mega factors and service members' Intention to leave organization are weak to moderate. Only two primary factors show higher moderate levels, namely the Image of the military organization (r=-.39) and the Work-family conflict (r =.35). Overall, the highest correlations with the Intention to leave organization shows the mega factor Organizational policies (r=-.39). Table 3 shows the intercorrelations between the dependent variables in the model.

**Table 1-3: Correlations between dependent variables in the model - Job satisfaction, Commitment to organization and Intention to leave organization.**

Dependent variables	Job satisfaction	Commitment to organization
Intention to leave organization	-.43**	-.29**
Commitment to organization	.46**	-

\*p< .05. \*\* p< .01.

The service members' Intention to leave organization correlates with their Job satisfaction in a moderate negative degree ( $r = -.43$ ), and with the Commitment to organization - in a low negative degree ( $r = -.29$ ). The correlation of Job satisfaction with Intention to leave organization is a moderately positive ( $r = .46$ ).

#### **4.2 Influence of organizational climate dimensions on service members' Job satisfaction, Commitment to organization and Intention to leave organization**

The predictors of each of the dependent variables in the model are established by the regression analysis method. The linear regression model proves to be adequate for all subsequent regression analyses.

The results of stepwise linear regression are presented in Table 4.

**Table 1-4: Correlations between dependent variables in the model - Job satisfaction, Commitment to organization and Intention to leave organization.**

JOB SATISFACTION			
Independent variables with significant impact	Beta	R <sup>2</sup>	Change of R <sup>2</sup>
Image of the military institution	.332	.465	.465
Career development model	.325	.605	.140
Social policy	.166	.641	.036
Procedural justice	.108	.667	.026
Distributive justice	.108	.677	.010
COMMITMENT TO ORGANIZATION			
Perceived organizational effectiveness of the formation/ structure	.457	.434	.434
Image of the military institution	.130	.510	.077
Internal motivation	.177	.556	.046
Rapport with colleagues	.111	.581	.025
Distributive justice	.098	.596	.015
INTENTION TO LEAVE ORGANIZATION			
Image of the military institution	-.290	.188	.188
"Work-family" conflict	.203	.244	.056
Social policy	-.115	.253	.009
Internal motivation	-.142	.262	.009
External motivation	.112	.273	.011
INTENTION TO LEAVE ORGANIZATION			
Work satisfaction	-.216	.207	.207
"Work-family" conflict	.177	.238	.032
Commitment to organization	-.147	.254	.016
Image of the military institution	-.138	.264	.010
External motivation	.078	.270	.006

#### *Influence of organizational climate dimensions on service members' Job satisfaction*

The high value of multiple coefficient of determination (R<sup>2</sup>) of the regression model shown in the table demonstrates that predictive power of independent variables on Job satisfaction are extremely well chosen because they account for 68% of its variation. The *Beta* coefficient ranks the variables according to their predictive power. The primary factors that predict Job satisfaction in the highest extent are Image of the military institution and Career development model, followed by Social policy and the two types of Organizational justice.

*Influence of organizational climate dimensions on service members' Commitment to organization*

Five key factors with significant influence on Commitment to organization are identified. All of them account for 60% of the variance in the dependant variable. The *Beta* coefficients ratios show that the dimension with the strongest predictive power on Commitment to organization is Perceived organizational effectiveness of the formation/structure followed by Internal motivation, Image of military institution, Relationship with colleagues and Distributive justice.

*Influence of organizational climate dimensions on service members' Intention to leave organization*

The regression model shows that the included variables in the study poorly predict service members' Intention to leave organization - barely 27%. In order to achieve a higher predictive power it is necessary to consider and systematize additional factors that influence the respondents' Intention to leave organization and to explore them in future studies of the organizational climate in the formations and structures of the BAF.

As can be seen from the table, the factors with the greatest influence on the studied dependent variable are the negative Image of the military institution, the existence of "Work-family" conflict, the poor (or bad) Social policy of the organization, low Internal motivation and high External motivation of the service members.

Regarding the dependent variable Intention to leave organization, a second linear regression method is applied, where, besides the independent variables, the dependent variables Job satisfaction and Commitment to organization are also entered. The idea is to measure to what extent the insertion of these variables will form a second more powerful predictive avenue to the service members' Intention to leave organization. The results shown in the table do not support the existence of more powerful model, because the coefficient of the explained variation in the answers remains the same - 27%.

The dependent variable Job satisfaction takes the role of the strongest negative predictor of the service members' Intention to leave organization. Particularly important is the fact that the independent variable "Work-family" conflict retains its predictive power from the previous model and is more influential than the factors Commitment to organization, Image of military institution and External motivation. This result implies focusing on defining the dimensions of this type of conflict in a military environment and setting out measures in the normative documents to minimize it.

**4.3 Predictive power of Social psychological climate' and Organizational justice's blocks of dimensions on service members' Job satisfaction, Commitment to organization and Intention to leave organization while controlling for the Organization policies' block of dimensions**

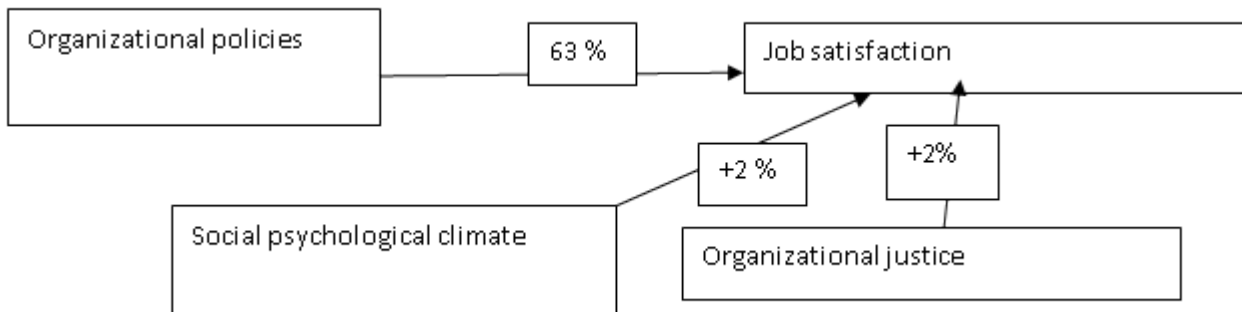
Examining the influence of the Social psychological climate' and Organizational Justice's block of dimensions over the three dependent variables in the study while controlling the Organization policies' block of dimensions, is caused by the following presumption: The organization's policies are more stable and more difficult to change due to the fact that they are directly dependent on its budget and ideology, while the internal organizational influence of the leadership on the Social psychological climate and Organizational justice (variables that appeared to be significant in most regression models so far) seems to be a more reachable task. Thus, if the Social psychological climate' and Organizational justice's blocks of dimensions show a strong influence on the three dependent variables while controlling the Organization policies' block of dimensions, they could be considered as factors capable of neutralizing the negative performance level of the Organization policies.



Demonstration of the aggregate group influence of several dimensions in the blocks require the implementation of *multiple hierarchical regression models* in which independent variables are entered as *blocks* at different levels.

#### **4.3.1 Predictive power of Social psychological climate’ and Organizational justice’s blocks of dimensions on the service members’ Job satisfaction while controlling for the Organizational policies’ block of dimensions**

In the regression equation, the dimensions included in Organizational policies are set as the first block, the second is the Social psychological climate, and the third one is Organizational justice. Figure 2 shows the percentage of variance explained in the first, second and third steps of the model.



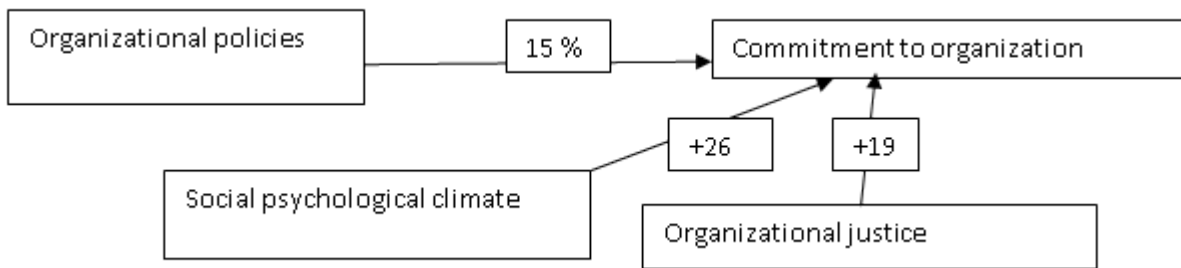
**Figure 2: Influence of the Social psychological climate and Organizational justice’s blocks of dimensions on service members’ Job satisfaction while controlling the Organization policies’ block of dimensions.**

The presented on the figure coefficients show that the dimensions of the Organizational policies explain 63% of the variance in the service members’ Job satisfaction, while the Social psychological climate’ and Organizational justice’s blocks of dimensions - only 2%.

Consequently, it can be concluded that the Social psychological climate and Organizational justice have little effect on service members’ Job satisfaction even when the Organization's policies are controlled.

#### **4.3.2 Predictive power of the Social psychological climate’ and Organization justice’s blocks of dimensions on the service members’ Commitment to organization while controlling for the Organizational policies’ block of dimensions**

The coefficients presented in Figure 3 show a different picture regarding the service members’ Commitment to organization.

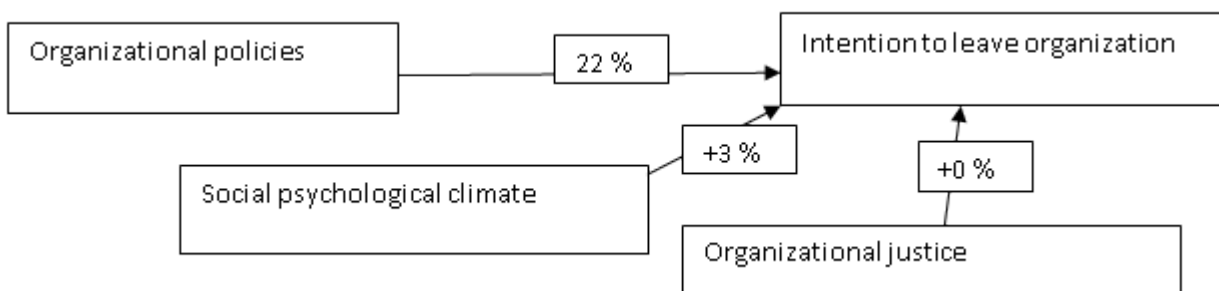


**Figure 3: Influence of the Social psychological climate' and Organizational justice's blocks of dimensions on service members' Commitment to organization while controlling the Organizational policies' block dimensions.**

Dimensions from the Organization policies' block account for only 15% of the variance in the dependent variable; Organizational justice adds an additional 19%, while the most influential of the three independent variables considered is the Social psychological climate – 26%. It has to be concluded that the Social psychological climate' and Organizational justice's blocks of dimensions have a stronger influence on the service members' Commitment to organization than the Organization policies' block of dimensions.

**4.3.3 Predictive power of the Social psychological climate' and Organizational justice's blocks of dimensions on the service members' Intention to leave organization while controlling for the Organizational policies' block of dimensions**

The influence of the independent variables on the service's members' Intention to leave organization is presented in Figure 4.

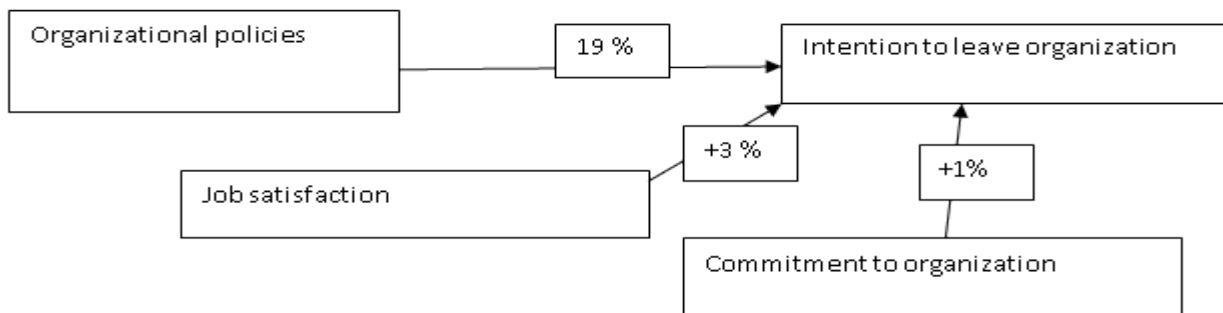


**Figure 4: Influence of the Social psychological climate' and Organizational justice's blocks of dimensions on the service members' Intention to leave organization, while controlling for the Organizational policies' block of dimensions.**

The figure illustrates that the Organizational policies' block of dimensions is the most powerful predictor of the service members' Intention to leave organizations (22%), while the influence of the other two blocks of dimensions is negligible. Thus, neither the Social psychological climate, nor the Organizational justice is able to keep the military from leaving the military if they perceive the Organizational policies as unfavourable.

**4.3.4 Predictive power of the service members' Job satisfaction and Commitment to organization on their Intention to leave organization while controlling for the Organizational policies' block of dimensions**

Figure 5 shows the second route of influence on the service members' Intention to leave organization, which is assumed to be through their Job satisfaction and Commitment to organization.



**Figure 5. Influence of service members' Job satisfaction and Commitment to organization on their Intention to leave organization while controlling for the Organizational policies' block of dimensions**

In the case considered, the picture again does not differ significantly from the previous one - the service members' Intention to leave organization is predicted most strongly by the Organizational policies (19%), while their Job satisfaction and Commitment to organization appear to be very weak predictors.

#### 4.4 Examining the conformation of hypotheses

*Hypothesis 1 was formulated as follows:*

1. The organizational climate sub dimensions included in the Organizational policies' block of dimensions (Image of the military institution, Social policy, Career development model) will have the most positive impact on service members' Job satisfaction, Commitment to organization and a negative impact on their Intention to leave organization.

Data analysis showed that this hypothesis was partially confirmed. Dimensions included in the Organizational policies' block are the strongest positive predictors of service members' Job satisfaction, and the strongest negative predictors of their Intention to leave organization, but not of the Commitment to organization. Regarding Commitment to organization, the Social psychological climate and Organizational justice are the most influential.

*Hypothesis 2 was formulated as follows:*

2. Service members' Job satisfaction and Commitment to organization will show a strong negative predictive power on their Intention to leave organization.

In regressions models where the predictive power of the primary organizational climate dimensions is examined, Job satisfaction really shows the most negative influence on the service members' intention to leave organization ( $r^2=20\%$ ), but in the hierarchical regression models, the Organizational policies' block of dimension decline the strong influence of Job satisfaction and  $R^2$  drops to 3%. The Commitment to organization has a significant but weak influence on the service members' Intention to leave organization.

*Hypothesis 3 was formulated as follows:*

The organizational climate sub dimensions included in the Social psychological climate' (Relationship with colleagues, Trust in the direct superior/commander, Perceived organizational effectiveness of the formation/

structure) and Organizational justice's (Procedural and Distributive justice) blocks of dimensions will have a significant predictive power on service members' Job satisfaction, Commitment to organization, and Intention to leave organization, controlling for the influence of the variables included in the Organizational Policies' block of dimensions (Image of military institution, Social policy, Career development model).

The third hypothesis is confirmed only in terms of Commitment to organization. Even when controlling the Organizational policies' block of dimensions, the predictive power of the Social psychological climate and Organizational justice on service members' Job satisfaction and Intention to leave organization is weak.

## **5.0 CONCLUSIONS: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE MILITARY LEADERS**

The representative study of the organizational climate in the formations and structures of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Bulgaria is a serious scientific challenge requiring a sound theoretical model that organizes the variables into a common framework of connections and influences and a reliable and valid measurement tools.

The study provided an opportunity to test the instruments as research methods in a military environment. The analyses revealed a theoretical model with considerable explanatory power in terms of the present state of the organizational climate in the formations and structures of the BAF, and possibilities for prediction for its improvement. The model has proved that the selection of variables included in the study is adequate and correct. At the same time, we have reached conclusions of considerable practical value.

Firstly, the Image of the defence institution in the perceptions of the military personnel has proved to be an extremely powerful construct with a high predictive power, both in terms of their Job satisfaction and in their Intention to leave organization. The public image of an institution is formed on the basis of its performance and significant public functions, as well as on the basis of its interaction with other entities. In this regard, the analysis of research results has led to conclusions with great practical significance both for the management of the Ministry of Defence and the basic policies of the military organization, and for future interaction with other structures in the society.

The Image of military institution has shown strong correlations with the Career development model and its Social policy, which are basic policies that affect the working conditions of an institution or organization. In other words, the perceived Image of the military institution is a constituent element of the attitude of the service members towards their job, together with such objective characteristics of the organization as a Career development model and Social policy, and at the same time is the central core of their Job satisfaction and Intention to leave organization.

Secondly, the three factors examined - the Image of military institution, the Career development model, and Social policy explain 64% of the variation in the dependant variable measuring service members' Job satisfaction. Service members' Job satisfaction is an extremely important, because of all others variables, it is most closely related to their Intention to leave organization.

It is well known that at the moment one of the main problems facing the BAF is the incompleteness of staff and turnover of trained personnel. In this context, it is extremely important to emphasize that even when the Organizational policies' block of dimensions are controlled, Social psychological climate' and Organizational justice' block of dimensions have little predictive power on service members' Job satisfaction. *The practical conclusion to be drawn is that the negative perceived Image of the military organization, the poor Career development model, and the insufficient Social policy cannot be compensated by any other factors.* If the goal is to discourage the service members from leaving the Bulgarian armed

forces, the development of these three components to a satisfactory level should become a primary, unconditional task for implementation by the military leaders.

Thirdly, Commitment to organization is the second dependent variable, which, to a lesser but significant degree, is related to the service members' Intention to leave organization. This dependant variable is predominantly predicted by the Social psychological climate' and Organizational justice's blocks of dimensions. Thus, the positive Social psychological climate and high Organizational justice could, to a lesser extent, offset the inadequate status of the Organizational policies by enhancing Commitment to organization and hence minimize the service members' Intention to leave organization. On the other hand, the fact that the service members' Internal motivation has a significant impact on their Commitment to organization\* implies the possibility to use questionnaires to study this kind of motivation for the selection of those whose behaviour is more driven by interest in the specifics of the military profession, and not just by the rewards (salary, security, career development, etc.).

*Fourth*, the Intention to leave organization not only mediated, through Job satisfaction, but also directly (in the regression models where it is a dependent variable) is influenced to the highest degree by the Organizational Policies' block of dimensions. This result again demonstrates their key role in overcoming the problem of leaving the military. It is also important to emphasize that in the regression model, where the independent influence of the variables is studied, the "Work-family" conflict and External motivation (pay, bonuses, awards) appear as a trigger mechanism, and the high Internal motivation (interest in work per se and in the military profession) is to some extent a deterrent to leaving the service. In the indirect model in which the Intention to leave organization is predicted by the inclusion as dependent variables of Job satisfaction and Commitment to organization, it is obvious that besides them, the "Work-family" conflict again plays a noticeable role in provoking an intention to leave the organization. The consistency of the result draws attention to the definition of the boundaries of the "Work-family" conflict in the military environment and the formulation of measures to minimize its impact in the normative documents.

*Fifth*, it is necessary to draw the attention of the military leaders to strict observance of fairness in the application of procedures and the distribution of awards in accordance with individual contributions. Contrary to expectations, the dimensions associated with perceived Organizational justice proved to be a factor with a stronger influence on the organizational climate than the dimensions included in the Social psychological climate's block of dimensions. The two types of justice, independently or in combination, show effects of influence on the three baseline variables, which means that it is imperative to observe their precise application in the daily work of military formations and structures. The fair application of procedures and the distribution of resources in accordance with merit of everyone is an important factor for higher service members' Job satisfaction, higher Commitment to organization and, accordingly, minimization of the contingent of people who intend to leave the military profession.

*Sixth*, the stressors (with the exception of "Work-family" conflict) and gender and ethnic inequalities in the military environment play a weaker role in predicting service members' Job satisfaction, Commitment to organization and Intention to leave the military, compared to initial expectations. They do not participate as factors with significant influence in any of the predictive models, although they show certain correlations with the dependent variables. In other words, High concentration and overload at work, Role conflict, gender and ethnic inequality do not appear as predictive factors of the service members' Intention to leave organization.

*Seventh*, the low rate of variation in the response of military personnel to the service members' Intention to leave organization shows that not all the factors that provoke the desire to quit the organization are included in the model. Further efforts are needed for their complete manifestation.

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\* In regressions where the influence of independent variables is examined independently.

Overall, the explored explanatory effects of the developed and tested model suggest that the most important variables relevant to diagnostics and interventions to improve the organizational climate in the Armed Forces of the Republic of Bulgaria are the Image of military institution in the perception of the service members, the Career development model, Social policy, Procedural and Distributive justice. Certain significant influences manifest the “Work-family” conflict, Internal motivation for service, Relationships with colleagues and the Perceived organizational effectiveness of the formation/structure. Each of these variables requires specific treatment to achieve the planned results.

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### APPENDIX 1. FACTOR STRUCTURE OF MEGA FACTORS AFTER VARIMAX ROTATION

KMO & Bartlett's Test	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy						.824	
	Bartlett's Test of Sphericity						Approx. $\chi^2$	2840,86
							df	120
							Sig.	,000
		Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5		
Number of Initial Eigenvalues >1	5							
Initial Eigenvalues >1	4,321	2,125	1,365	1,269	1,012			
Explained variation of mega factors	27%	13%	9%	8%	6%			
Total % of explained variation	<b>63%</b>							
Relationships with colleagues	<b>.77</b>							
Trust in direct superior/commander	<b>.75</b>							
Perceived organizational effectiveness of the formation / structure	<b>.66</b>				.32			
Procedural justice	.60	.46						
Distributive justice	.54	.49						
Role conflict	-.54				.41	-.35		
Image of military organization		<b>.80</b>						
Career development model		<b>.72</b>						
Social policy		<b>.70</b>						
Internal motivation			<b>.81</b>					
Existential motivation			<b>.80</b>					
External motivation	.32		<b>.62</b>					
High concentration and overload					<b>.89</b>			
“Work-family” conflict			-.31		<b>.65</b>			
Equal gender opportunities for realization							<b>.77</b>	
Equal ethnic opportunities for realization							<b>.78</b>	

