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## Comparison of conscripts, militia and professional armed forces

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## COMPARISON OF CONSCRIPTS, MILITIA AND PROFESSIONAL ARMED FORCES

### PORÓWNANIE POBORÓW MILICJI I ZAWODOWYCH SIŁ ZBROJNYCH

**Streszczenie:** Głównym celem niniejszej pracy jest porównanie trzech modeli sił zbrojnych broniących bezpieczeństwa na terytorium swojego kraju w dzisiejszym świecie. Porównanie opiera się na wynikach analizy SWOT. W procesie gromadzenia materiałów do niniejszego opracowania wykorzystano metodę studiowania dostępnych źródeł książkowych, periodyków i innych dokumentów drukowanych, a także stron internetowych dotyczących omawianego zagadnienia. Metody oceny wykorzystane w artykule obejmują porównanie, analizę, analizę SWOT, syntezę, indukcję i dedukcję. Zastosowanie powyższych metod doprowadziło do następujących wniosków: armia zawodowa lub armia poborowych z trzonem armii zawodowej to najbardziej skuteczny model. Milicja jest w pewnym sensie armią poborowych głównie dlatego, że obie te modele system uniwersalnej służby wojskowej.

**Słowa kluczowe:** siły zbrojne, armia poborowa, siły milicyjne, armia zawodowa, szwajcarskie siły zbrojne

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**Abstract:** The main aim of the article "Comparison of conscript, militia and professional armed forces" is the comparison of three main models of armed forces that secure territories of its states in today's world. The comparison is based on the results of SWOT analysis of each of the models of armies that are subjected to the comparison in this article. In the process of collecting the research material we used the method of studying available books, journals and other printed documents including web pages related to our topic. Among evaluation methods, we mainly used the method of comparison, analysis, SWOT analysis, synthesis, induction and deduction. Application of the methods finally led to these conclusions: the professional army or conscript army with a broad professional core are the most efficient models. A militia army is a certain type of a conscript army, mainly because they both apply the system of a universal military service.

**Key words:** armed forces, conscript armed forces, militia armed forces, professional armed forces, Swiss Armed Forces

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## INTRODUCTION

The main aim of the paper, as the title suggests, is the comparison of conscript (CAF), militia (MAF) and professional armed forces (PAF) on the basis of the results of particular SWOT analyzes of each model of mentioned armed forces. In our opinion, thanks to SWOT analyzes of particular models of armed forces it is easier to compare them together and find their places in the contemporary security environment. As the main goal that all the armies should be able to fulfil we have chosen the defence of a country because a war of aggression is considered illegal by the international law.

For the realization of the aim we used adequate methods of gathering and evaluation of research material. For the process of gathering material we used the method of studying available books, journals and internet sources. As methods of evaluation of research material we used comparison, analysis, SWOT analysis, synthesis, induction and deduction.

The paper is divided into three main chapters. In each of the chapter we firstly mention strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the analyzed model of army. We continue by the score evaluation of particular strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats based on our knowledge of topic. All scores are provided in the tables 1,2,3. The third step is the graphic assessment of SWOT analysis in figures 1,2,3 which recommends a specific behaviour to make an army as strong and efficient as possible. At the end of each chapter we sum up information we mentioned before and clarify why the strategy is most sufficient for the researched model of an army.

## CONSCRIPT ARMED FORCES

The CAF is an old model which has its roots in all-people the *French Revolutionary Army*. We consider this fact as one of the strengths of CAF because till today it has undergone a long historical development that enables it a high degree of self-reflection.

The CAF is inseparably linked to military conscription. If a national state is constituted only by one nation, there is an assumption that the whole nation is in arms so army equals nation and nation equals state. In this manner the national identity has been established since 19 century. At the same time military conscrip-

tion wipes local differences, promotes a common language as well as understanding within the state, brings together individuals and creates cohesion within nation [Flynn, 2001].

Military conscription allows an army to conscript more soldiers for much lower prize if compared with professional army. Coercion allows a state to pay conscripts much less [Duindam, 1999].

The CAF has a huge strength in rapidity of organizing armed forces. Only system based on coercion lets the state create sufficiently big army in as little time as possible. Furthermore, the military conscription is still the only means to create mass army. It is even very difficult to imagine that the same amount of citizens would join army voluntarily. The system of military conscription enables variability. By variability we mean the ability of an army to regulate the number of soldiers in an active military service.

The system of military conscription allows state to make proportionally huge portion of population undergo military training. This is a cornerstone of the reserve system. Reserves can be called into arms and carry out aims of army in a short time. Reserves are kept in the state of readiness by continuous military trainings that usually take place in regular intervals.

Weaknesses of CAF are stressed in the article of Barátová. She describes unwanted features that arose in Czechoslovak army. Parallel hierarchic structures were created by conscripts on the basis of served years. Two groups were created- rookies- soldiers freshly conscripted and old sweats- conscripts who have already served for a longer time period. Old sweats often humiliated rookies [Barátová, 2011]. The creation of parallel hierarchical structures is from our point of view the sign of the loss of discipline in the army. According to what Barátová wrote it is obvious that problem of CAF is an insufficient flexibility to adjust to updated conditions. Except of this problem Barátová describes the problem of insufficient training as well. We are of the opinion that training of a huge number of conscripts cannot be conducted as well as training of smaller amount of soldiers.

The CAF are cheaper for a state. This financial expediency has its limits [Just, 2005]. All able bodied citizens, that fit conditions of enrolment act are conscripted without difference of their previous function in society and their previous life standards. This phenomenon might later reflect in loss of professionalism of work

force but also in dissatisfaction of conscripts serving in the army, especially if their situation and the salary are considerably worse than in civilian life [Duindam, 1999].

The CAF are based on the coercion which might also have negative effects. Young people are taken from their homes into barracks. In these conditions they are forced to keep strict discipline and obedience. For the lack of discipline there is a threat of punishment or even imprisonment for soldiers. A lot of conscripts do not even meet requirements for being soldiers.

In SWOT analysis we proceed to external factors. The great opportunity of CAF is in exchange of proportion between conscript and professionals. By exchange of proportion we mean the growth of the professional part of an army and the reduction of the part of an army that is created on basis of military conscription. Thus the qualitative growth would be guaranteed but there will be space for enlargement and decrease of soldiers in CAF and all positive effects would remain.

The exchange of proportion between conscripts and professionals that allows better adaptation to contemporary threats we perceive as the greatest opportunity to keep the capability of the CAF to fulfil the aim we have described in the introduction. This statement can be approved by the fact that even Russian federation made the reform of armed forces in a very similar way. The most important fact for the purposes of this paper is that Russian army aimed reforms on professionalization of chosen parts of army. Rapid Reaction Forces should be fully professionalized. Together with professionalization the decreasing of number of soldiers in the army is taking place [Krejčí, 2003].

Another opportunity for the CAF is to improve public relations. In several countries the CAF were exchanged by professional, because most of the society found itself in better conditions than before and situation as a whole was changed by an increased democratization.

From our point of view there are more disadvantages than advantages for the CAF. The first threat to mention is the readiness for the current conflicts. CAF are most suitable in conflicts where the number of soldiers is decisive, where it is real to estimate from which side the attack will come and finally where the strike force decides. Today's security environment is far from the description from the last sentence [Załęski, 2011]. In today's security environment modern equipment,

technology and quality training is far more important. Hence contemporary security environment is great threat for the CAF.

The improvement of economic situation in a country is another external factor that might negatively affect the functioning of CAF. Hand in hand with increased economic production the life standard of citizens of a country in which such a change took place grows. A developed life standard further affects rising individualism and turns away to traditional values as, for example, shared identity that is one of the main ideological basis of military service and hence CAF [Haltiner, 1998].

In this point we do not intend only to discover a link between the better life standard of society and the reluctance to serve in the army. It is important to stress that the development of technological equipment of army is in a strict contrast with the CAF based on compulsory military service.

The decision to make a transition from CAF to PAF can be influenced by public opinion. The more a democracy is developed in the state and the better conditions are in the state the minor the will of citizens to serve in the army would be.

There are many angles which we can observe a state from. In the organic point of view a national interest is in the centre of importance. So if the financial point of view is more important, the CAF would serve the interest of a state the best. In opposition, there is mechanistic perception of state where government is perceived as an operative organ that is based by individuals to serve their needs. Compulsory military service is understood as a burden that most of the population does not want to bear [Duindam, 1999].

Next threat for the CAF is the political system in which it exists. As Flynn writes in "Conscription and Democracy: France, Great Britain and the United States", to mobilize human resources for army is much easier in a dictatorship than in a democracy [Flynn, 2001].

It is true that this threat is a threat only for democratic systems because for a dictatorship it is an opportunity. In our point of view, the threat mentioned in the last paragraph is affected by partial threats that we have already mentioned, for example, the influence of public opinion in democratic systems and a good life standard in most democratic states on basis of which citizens do not want to participate in army because they perceive it as a burden as well.

Table 1. SWOT analysis of a model of the CAF

Strengths:		Weaknesses:	
Historically first developed model- chance of self-reflection	2	Creation of parallel hierarchic structures	3
Army = nation	4	Inability to react to changed conditions	4
Fast creation	4	Chicanery, conscripts are not disciplined	3
Variability	5	Worse training	5
Prize	3	Reluctance to serve	3
Creation of reserves	4	Low initiative of conscripts	3
22		21	
Opportunities:		Threats:	
Quantitative growth of professional part of army	5	Changed security environment	5
Improvement of relations with society	4	Improvement of economy situation of citizens	5
		Usage of modern technologies	4
		Public opinion	3
		Burden for society	3
		Democratic system	4
9		24	

Źródło: made by author

From the SWOT analysis of a model of the CAF we found out that for its future functioning strategy WT is most suitable. This strategy recommends reducing of weaknesses to minimum and facing its threats. The biggest threat from our point of view is changed security environment. CAF should pay much more attention to training and increase the number of professionals, who would be able to operate with modern technologies effectively. If the compulsory military service is reduced to minimum there is an assumption that citizens would not consider it as a burden and it would not be that economically challenging for them.

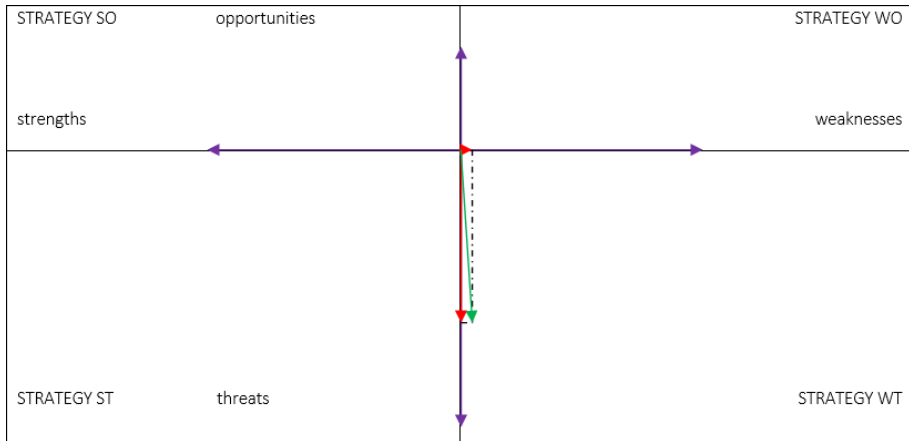


Fig. 1. Vector evaluation of SWOT analysis of a model of the CAF

Źródło: made by author

## MILITIA ARMED FORCES

From our point of view, the MAF created in Switzerland is very good model that has a lot of strengths. A great opportunity of the model is its historical development. MAF have been developed in Switzerland for many years, basically from the year 1291 when first cantons made an alliance. This development of MAF allowed the model to adapt to external conditions.

To controversial strengths of MAF belongs the right of an individual to keep a gun after completing compulsory military service. On one hand it is an ideal way to keep many people in the state of readiness but on the other hand guns have negative effect on society and they are misused easily [Ball, 2011].

The next strength is a link between the army and the society through universal conscription. It joins the country by shared experience of its citizens in the army. Universal conscription allows the army to gain the sufficient number of soldiers required for proper functioning. It provides the MAF with all positives of the CAF.

Universal conscription affects positively the budget needed for the army. The statement is proved also by the president of Gruppe Giardino – Herman Suter who refuses the professional army in Switzerland because of the significantly higher costs of maintaining fewer troops than in MAF [Das Prinzip der Milizarmee, 2013].



The MAF in Switzerland is democratic to a high degree and it enables everybody, without any difference according to civic employment, to apply for cadre positions. At the same time the MAF is able to use skills from civic employment in its structures. The strength of this model is also the system of gradual preparedness that is able to prepare a large part of the army in set intervals of time for resolution of occurring security situation. Also reserves might be called into arms [Rettore, 2004].

The last great strength of the MAF is the ability to cooperate with other armies in international missions- interoperability. It is a fact that the MAF, at least Swiss MAF, is able to compete with professional armies of other countries that makes it exceptional and widely applicable [Rettore, 2004].

In a case of armed conflict MAF behave like a mass army. It keeps universal conscription, has less professionals than conscripts and conscripts go just through short training. It is obvious that Swiss army is better for the defence of territory than to conduct postmodern tasks [Schmidlin, 2004].

In introduction we wrote that the main need of state that state delegates to army is defence of its territory. According to Schmidlin's book Swiss army is especially meant for the defence of country. We consider this fact as a positive phenomenon of direction of the development of the army.

MAF have some weaknesses that are the same as weaknesses of the CAF. As an example serves reluctance of citizens to serve on basis of socioeconomic changes that began in the society but also on basis of changed security environment.

The army makes it difficult for citizens in their civil job. In this point it is important to stress that the MAF is cheaper but in further consequences it might negatively affect the development of economy because citizens earn much less in the army than they would in their civil job [Neidhart, 2002].

The weapons kept by all who went through compulsory military service are often used for crime or for homicides and suicides. It is an indisputable fact that usage of guns in this way is the weakness that arises as a by-product of the functioning of the MAF. On the other hand, public opinion in Switzerland supports keeping weapons by soldiers after the end of compulsory military service. In 2011, 57% of citizens of Switzerland said yes to guns at home [Ball, 2011].

Leading structures in the army pretend to allow everybody to reach cadre positions even if one is not rich and has no lucrative job. In reality this system does not function the way it should. Army reflects the arrangement of the Swiss society to quite a large extent. In 1973 National-Zeitung published civil jobs of officers from the second border division. Most of these officers had great civil job but what is more important there was no worker between them [Neidhart, 2002].

Opportunities of Swiss army as a representative of MAF are in deepening reforms that have already started and in increasing of links between army and security organizations that could help to defend the country in the state of need. Therefore, MAF has to improve its ability to cooperate with armies of other allied countries [Schmidlin, 2004].

Table 2. SWOT analysis of a model of MAF on the example of Swiss army

Strengths:		Weaknesses:	
Historically old model- chance of self-reflection		Reluctance to serve	2
Right to keep a gun	4	Economic burden for population	3
Army = nation	3	Misuses of army weapons	3
Fast creation	4	Officers and their advantages in society	4
Variability	4	Democracy in army has its limits	4
Creation of reserves	5		3
The use of civilian capabilities of conscripts	4		
Democracy			
Prize	3		
Interoperability	3		
	3		
	3		
	3		
	36		15
Opportunities:		Threats:	
Improvement of cooperation with armed forces of other countries	4	Reduction of the number of soldiers	4
Public support	5	Many views on the functioning	3
		The trend of reducing budget	4
	9		11

Źródło: made by author

The Public opinion seems to be opportunity too. Most of the population of Switzerland said yes to compulsory military service and thus to the MAF. In referendum from 2013 citizens were interviewed whether they want to keep the MAF or they want the transition to the professional army. Most of the citizens voted for keeping the MAF – 73,2% [Geiser, 2013].

The main threat for the MAF that is visible in Switzerland is decreasing of the budget for army and lowering numbers of soldiers in active service. Also reserves were dissolved and time of training and army courses was decreased [Neidhart, 2002].

Steinberg in his book writes that in Switzerland the army penetrates the society so deep that it could become dangerous. There is a problem arising from this practice. All people who served in the army have their own ideas of how it should function and what is most important for its development [Steinberg, 1996].



Fig. 2. Vector evaluation of SWOT analysis of a model of MAF on the example of Swiss army  
 Źródło: made by author

The result of the SWOT analysis of a model of MAF on the example of Swiss army is strategy ST that recommends using the strengths to face threats. In our point of view, it is the most suitable strategy for the model of the MAF. By analysing MAF we proved it is an efficient model that is able to function in today's security environment and it seems to be very effective for defence of its country. The model has fewer opportunities than threats and thus according to recommendations of strategy ST it should aim to fully develop strengths to overcome the threats that limit its effectiveness.

### PROFESSIONAL ARMED FORCES

Professionalism is the first strength by which we mean mainly the ability of soldiers to use modern technologies and good preparedness for threats defined

by today's security environment as well. A professionally trained soldier can be better specialized to cooperate with armed forces of other countries by conducting joint missions.

Adam Smith writes that a CAF can never equal a professional one because professionals are better trained and they are better integrated into the army, which means they have better discipline [Smith, 1908].

Next strength of the PAF is that there is no coercion to join the army. There is a presumption that such a soldier is more dedicated to army and willing to conduct commands. Economic situation of professionals is thus much better and so is their life standard. The money motivation is another plus of the PAF that makes soldiers work more efficiently than conscripts.

The main weakness of PAF is the prize. A professional soldier has to be paid according to labour market and it means for his employer, state, huge expenses. This could be very challenging mostly for small states. They might consider keeping CAF as only possibility because of much lower prize [Mite, 2003]. Next weakness is amount of soldiers that is proportional to prize of one soldier in this model.

Modern armed forces have changed the field of activities comparing to mass armies of the Second World War. They act as a police department. It means they try to avoid armed conflict. Their main focus is on political settlement of conflict [Segal, 1986]. Despite of the fact that security situation has changed and there is no need for mass armies, a situation may occur that would require high number of soldiers. Countries did not cancel the enrolment act at the time of war but we think that training of conscripts would last too long in the case of small states and the country would not be able to withstand greater military threat.

As we mentioned before PAF are an opposite to a CAF. It means that most of the pros of the CAF are cons of the PAF such as decreased variability, decreased ability of fast creation of armed forces and less numerous reserves.

The period after the end of the Cold War is the period of expansion of PAF and also the period of changes in security environment. The trend of professionalization together with changed security environment which is more suitable for professional armed forces are both opportunities.

The most widely known problems of PAF are insufficient financing and insufficient number of recruits. This problem is not only a problem of small countries

but the problem of the army of the United States as well. Despite of the fact this is a serious threat, there is a way to solve it. Solution to this problem is technological modernization [Budget cuts, 2013]. „...There are people that want to change the way the Army fights and they believe we do not need ground forces and we can do everything with technology, stand-off weapons, missiles “[Odierno in Budget cuts, 2013].

From our point of view, the growth of technological abilities of an army is very good way to compensate the lack of human resources. PAF, as we wrote in strengths of this type, has advantages in the use of technology as the staffs are well trained.

Each organization involved in the security of more than one country requires a high degree of interoperability which also requires a higher degree of professionalization. PAF are surely more suitable for such conditions than CAF.

Table 3. SWOT analysis of a model of PAF

Strengths:		Weaknesses:	
Professionalism	5	Prize	4
Ability to operate with modern technologies		Lower number of soldiers	3
Voluntary employment	5	Limited variability	3
Higher motivation of professionals	3	Limited reserves	3
Interoperability	3		
	4		
	20		13
Opportunities:		Threats:	
Security environment	5	Lack of recruits	4
Exchange of people by technologies	3	Problems with financing	3
Trend of professionalization	4	Loss of relations with the public	4
Socioeconomic situation	4		
	16		11

Źródło: made by author

The end of conscription relates to growing specialization and division of labour. This situation also affects the technological and economic development of the military which ultimately means the transition to PAF which are better adapted to such a changed socioeconomic situation [Haltiner, 1998]. According to improved economic situation we expect that the professionalization of armed forces will continue and expand to other regions of the world.

The United States of America are one of the examples of countries where insufficient recruitment causes problems. Armed forces of United States need to

recruit citizens on regular basis to conduct their basic functions. The problem reaches further because not every applicant meets the requirements for the function in the military he applies for. Another difficulty is the uneven distribution of recruits among the army. This situation also raises the problem of financing [Military Recruitment, 2006].

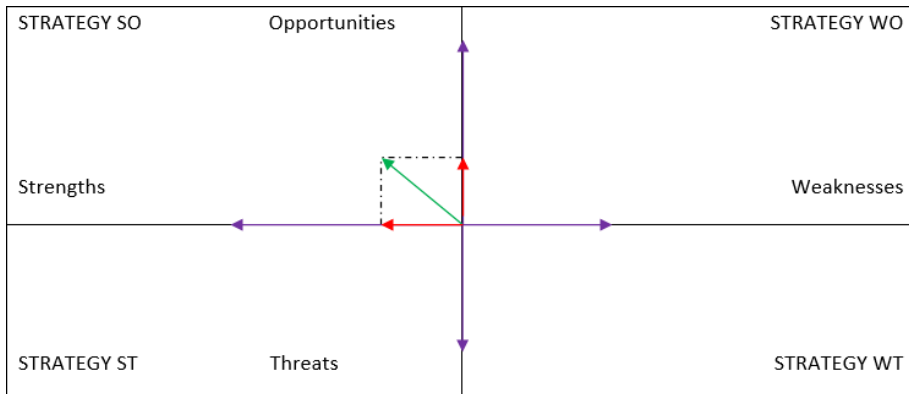


Fig. 3. Vector evaluation of SWOT analysis of a model of PAF

Źródło: made by author

The loss of relationship with the public is another threat for the PAF. Among the most serious negative impacts there is public disinterest in the military. American public was strictly against the war in Vietnam also because of the fact that the US had the CAF and young Americans were conscripted.

The strategy SO is a result of SWOT analysis for PAF. The strategy recommends using strengths to gain a competitive advantage over other models of armed forces. PAF despite of having some almost unsolvable problems seems to be the most suitable model for current security environment and socioeconomic situation.

## CONCLUSIONS

To conclude it is necessary to compare particular types of armed forces on basis of results of SWOT analyzes. The CAF is the model that does not fit

today's security environment and socioeconomic situation of people as well. We still think that it has a chance to become more efficient by changing the proportion between professionals and conscripts towards professionals. Applying this change CAF would be able to face security threats easier and it would become a better equivalent for PAF. It would fully exploit its potential which PAF do not have - better link with society, variability and creation of numerous reserves. The MAF is a certain middle position between PAF and CAF. It is ready to protect its country and it has the ability to conduct foreign missions which becomes inseparable feature of today's security environment. PAF, as we wrote before, is the most suitable army for today's security environment. The trend of professionalization of armed forces is a strong trend and even a partial professionalization might have positive effect on the army. None of the models we have mentioned is the model of past. MAF and CAF need some reforms indicated in this paper to deal more efficiently with security threats they have to face.

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