Changes as a Necessary Condition for the Development of the Polish Police

The 20th century was the age of organisations (the largest number of them in history), and the 21st century will be the age of constant change in organisations. Such a situation has been primarily forced by the pace of change in their environment, but also by the constantly growing ambitions and expectations of employees. This problem affects every organisation - including the police. Obviously, since 1989, the Polish Police have been through numerous attempts at reforming, which moved from a strongly centralised model, characteristic of the previous system, to a much more decentralised one. Over the years, structural solutions were also sought that would enable the service to function effectively while allowing society to evaluate their activities. This is because only such an evaluation can ensure the sustainability and evolution of the system towards serving the public, as well as increasing the effectiveness of police work.

It should be remembered that the adjustment process of police organisational units to the requirements of their rational functioning must always take place on different levels and in different areas of achieving objectives. There is no doubt that in order to accelerate these processes, the transformations in the management system and organisational structure as a tool to manage the police, will be decisive. The expression of these transformations should be organisational solutions characterised by:

— Innovation - the ability of a police unit to innovate in its activities, processes, structures and methods of unit management.
— Adaptability - the ability of a police organisational unit to adapt to changes in the attitudes of officers and civil servants, social expectations, legal regulations and availability of resources.
— Flexibility - the ability of a police organisational unit to increase or decrease the size of the organisation, changes in directions and strate-

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gies, implementation of joint ventures with the environment and creating specific coalitions with it.
— Effectiveness - the ability of a police organisational unit to maintain a permanently high level of public trust, ensure high crime detection, satisfaction with the work of police officers and civilian employees and high quality service for victims and interested parties.
— Speed - the ability of a police unit to respond to changes in its environment or inside the organisation.

Unfortunately, the introduced changes may encounter many obstacles. An important barrier of a psychological and social nature is the frequent lack of acceptance by officers for the implemented and planned changes. In every organisation, including the police, the process of implementing changes is always accompanied by natural resistance. Most often it results from the fear of losing a job and from the fear of changing the expectations of superiors regarding the knowledge and skills of subordinate officers and civilian employees. Therefore, the management, the motivation system and the results of the implemented change process should play an important role in overcoming these concerns. In order for this to be possible, it is necessary for police managers to acquire knowledge and skills to plan and effectively implement changes in police units.

It should be stressed that the introduction of changes is a basic condition not only for the survival, but above all for the development of any organisation. In order to be successful, organisations need to make many changes, transform their structure, change their area of operation, functions, and even the type and scope of activity. They must aim at being dynamic, functionally oriented and rewarding of creativity. Organisations must be able to make permanent changes to ensure that they have the necessary flexibility and dynamism in action, appropriate to the dynamics of change in their environment.

Introducing changes should be a natural way of behaving in any system. It can be said that nowadays, the only constant feature of any organisation is its changeability over time, i.e. gradual or continuous transition to qualitatively more beneficial states.

It should be noted that if an organisation is not willing to make changes, it is bound to perpetuate the existing state of affairs. With rapid changes in the environment, this means in practice agreeing to reduce their own efficiency. Interestingly, such behaviour is especially characteristic of large organisations, which are commonly perceived as well functioning. This is mostly due to the fact that such organisations are not willing to react quickly to changes and usually focus on improving internal processes rather than the final results. This behaviour is called “active inertia”. It consists in following established patterns of behaviour, even when changes in the environment should prompt managers to react immediately. The symptoms of such behaviour may be:
— failure to notice new phenomena, threats and opportunities,
— routine treatment of processes and procedures,
— dogmatisation of norms and values in force in the organisation,
— persistent adherence to the established strategy.

The police cannot just stand by the patterns of thought and activity that have ensured their success in the past. Nor can they behave in a reactive manner, merely eliminating the effects of past actions. They have to constantly transform and even create again their potential, adapting their new capabilities to the changing environment and becoming even more effective by generating innovative solutions and verifying them against the environment.

In any modern organisation, decision-makers should be aware of the fact that old habits can be a kind of burden that may have to be disposed of in order to have prospects in the future. Therefore, it is important to be able to search for new ways of doing things with all your potential in response to the speed of technological, economic and social change. The police should become an organisation that draws knowledge from their own interior and surroundings. They should create conditions in which the acquisition of knowledge will be required and not just simply tolerated. Conditions in which officers and civilian employees will be interested in continuous improvement of their own knowledge and their acquired skills, will be perceived as valuable in terms of achieving the goals of the organisation. The police should accumulate knowledge that will gradually become the axis of their adaptation to changing conditions. Such organisation of the police will create an intelligent whole, which will manage to collect, disseminate and use the new knowledge, and at the same time will be able to maintain and develop basic competencies. Thanks to this it will stand out positively in its environment\(^2\). It will increasingly rely on qualified and thoughtful people operating high-tech devices to fully exploit their capabilities. It will be an institution where thinking will not be the domain of top management alone, but will take place at every level. It will be a creative institution, listening to the signals coming from its surroundings, able to teach others, open to the outside world and oriented to possible changes\(^3\). The following features will be valued in such an organisation:

— commitment to a shared mission and vision,
— effectiveness and focus on identifying appropriate actions,
— reflection and potential for acquiring knowledge,
— multifunctional roles assuming cooperation between organisational units,
— managing results, not just potential,
— strategic thinking and the process of identifying ways to achieve specific goals,


— constant searching and learning, changing those elements (processes, solutions) that no longer pass the test in the face of changes in the environment⁴.

As already mentioned, the 21st century brings many new challenges. This is regardless of the economic level of a country, and it applies to a wide variety of organisations - both public and commercial. These challenges are the reason why it is necessary to observe the environment and introduce changes that will guarantee the success of the police in the long term.

The decisive factors here are primarily:
— Globalisation of the world economy and emergence of new types of crime.

— The phenomena of technological “leaps” that occur, especially in countries so far considered to be underdeveloped, which cause organisations to learn from the mistakes of others and naturally acquire the latest technologies without ineffective or wrong solutions.

— Dynamic formation of the so-called information society, which will have an increasing impact on the security and functioning of all organisations.

The reasons for changes can obviously be very different. In organisational practice, it may also happen that the proposed solutions will have some imperfections from the very beginning. In this case, it seems natural to try to correct these solutions. Other causes may be of external or internal nature. Some changes are planned well in advance, while others appear as a reaction to unexpected events. A planned change is a change prepared and implemented in an orderly manner and according to a certain schedule; its purpose is to anticipate future or potentially future events. An adjustment change, on the other hand, will be a reaction to circumstances occurring when they arise. Such changes are usually made in a hurry, and this increases the risk of error and misconceptions, which can lead to a failure to achieve the intended goal. Therefore, almost always a planned change should be preferred to an adjustment change. Unfortunately, this will not always be possible.

Obviously, organisational changes are also influenced by forces that can be divided into external (resulting from the general and purposeful environment of the organisation, e.g.: legal, economic, scientific and technical environment or the level and structure of crime) and internal, which are the result of the action of various forces within the organisation itself (e.g.: stage of the organisation’s development, internal dynamism, employees’ ambitions, staff fluctuation, hardware or software failure and many others). Changes may modify the operation of an organisation ‘superficially’ or ‘profoundly’. They can therefore be shallow, adaptive changes that are mostly inexpensive and easy to implement, or changes that are fundamental and complex. The latter transform the whole system of organisation (reengineering) and unfortunately can be very expensive. Besides, they often require the involvement of all powers and measures of the organisation. Unlike superficial changes, the consequences of profound changes will be serious for the organisation and may mean profound transformations or even disruptions to its balance.

However, it should always be remembered that the scope, area and structure of corrections and modifications made must be determined by the development of the situation (tendency) in the environment and/or inside the organisation. A change always means valuing the changes in the existing state of affairs in the organisation and its environment in terms of increase or decrease. If it is considered as contributing to a more effective functioning of the organisation and is made in the form

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5 Cf.: Penc J, Innowacje i zmiany w firmie. Warsaw, 1999, p. 94.
of progress, it will come closer to such concepts as innovation and rationalisation.

Changes can also be divided according to the speed of their implementation. With this criterion we divide changes into slow and fast (rapid) ones. The advantage of slow changes is the fact that they do not upset the balance of the organisation, they are easier to manage and more effective to implement. Moreover, they allow for a more favourable distribution of effort and cost over time. Their disadvantage is the danger of insignificant effects, and the fact that slow implementation of changes can make them obsolete. On the other hand, fast (rapid) changes expose the organisation to loss of its balance, as they create a new quality of working conditions and relations. They also require a large mobilisation of the organisation’s forces and resources. In addition, resistance to fast changes is always much greater than in the case of slow changes, and the degree of acceptance by employees will be much lower. However, it should be remembered that fast changes give a great chance to improve the situation of the organisation quickly. The ability to effectively implement fast changes is very important especially for organisations such as the police - operating under conditions of permanent changes in their environment.

A very important element of the change process is the method (the way) of their preparation and then implementation. In the literature you can find many proposals of methods.

One of them is a functional method based (as the name suggests) on a thorough analysis of the purpose of an organisation’s functioning (what it is supposed to do, what it is supposed to serve for, not what it is supposed to be). After defining the purpose of the whole organisation, as well as its individual elements, appropriate organisational solutions should be adapted to them.

Another method is the structural method, which aims to prepare a scheme of organisational structure that will correspond to the challenges of the future. In order to do so, it is necessary to determine precisely the number and type of organisational units, to divide tasks between them (the division of tasks also results in the formation of specific organisational ties), to determine the number of levels of management and decision-making competences. By applying this method, the structure can be created in two ways: either by building the structure from above (first defining the scope of tasks, powers and responsibilities of the top management and then the executive and support units) or by building the structure from below (doing exactly the opposite, i.e. from dividing the work, grouping and merging the positions into organisational units through creating organisational ties, coming to the top).

The structural-functional method combines these methods into one. Owing to this, we can obtain the organisational structure of the future with the simultaneous indication of the performers’ behaviour.

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6 Ibid., p. 95.
Another solution is a system method that allows for comprehensive development of the project of an organisation. The starting point in this method is the assumption that each organisation is an open system and functions in a changing environment. Such a situation determines certain activities that bring the organisation into line with its environment or bring about changes in the environment in accordance with the organisation’s expectations (e.g.: preventive police activities). Such an organisation must have a system controlling all its elements. In order to facilitate the design process with the system method, the organisation is divided into first-level subsystems, and those into second-level subsystems and so on, up to elementary systems. Such an approach ensures the classification of subsystems in the organisation, which allows the preparation of a project of regulation of their functioning. By using the system method we obtain the principles of structural and regulatory regulation for the whole organisation and then for the subsystems of individual levels.

The method mentioned here will be the adaptation method, which consists of adopting certain solutions that are successfully applied by other existing organisations with similar or the same profile of activity. It is important to remember that making changes is an ability that not every manager is able to master. It requires not only organisational and managerial skills, but also knowledge of psychology, sociology, economics, etc.

When starting the process of preparing changes in the organisation, we must first identify the very need for these changes. The following questions will help us to do this:

1. Are there any irregularities in the achievement of the organisation’s objectives, and if so, what are they?
2. What is the extent of these irregularities?
3. Do difficulties in implementing the changes stem from the formal structure of the organisation?
4. Can problems be solved without interfering with the structure (e.g. personnel or technical changes)?
5. Are the difficulties in making changes not the result of other changes previously introduced?
6. Are the changes economically justified?
7. Do we have the appropriate personnel, technical and legal capacity to make changes?
8. Are we not currently busy with other, more important tasks?

The Polish police suffered from the excessive intensity of ideas taken from other countries, especially in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Almost every foreign visit by the Commander in Chief of the Police “resulted” in an attempt to transfer solutions from other police to forces the Polish reality. Unfortunately, the sense and possibilities of their implementation fed into the conditions of the Polish Police.

Implementation of organisational changes in the Polish Police

While recognising the need to develop a model for the implementation of organisational changes in the Polish Police, an attempt was made to create it on the basis of the results of research conducted among police officers\(^9\). During the collection of materials a survey interview method was used.

During the research, information was collected on factors influencing the effectiveness of introducing organisational changes in situations, when the change was assessed as successfully or unsuccessfully implemented. Among the factors analysed, the following were distinguished:

— the necessity to introduce organisational changes in a police unit,
— clearly defined purpose of changes,
— understanding of the purpose of changes,
— approval of planned and implemented changes,
— informing employees about the planned and conducted changes,
— conducting training on planned and implemented changes, the necessity of their implementation and meeting participant expectations,
— preceding the introduced changes with a diagnosis of the current state of the organisation,
— referring to informal authorities,
— respondent activity in introducing changes,
— the impact of planned and implemented changes on the effectiveness of the work of a police unit,
— the moment employees are informed about organisational changes,
— conducting a promotional campaign for changes,
— attitude of the management to introduced changes,
— expected form of management commitment to changes,
— the attitude of the unit employees to introduced changes,
— the changeability of the managerial interest in the activities carried out during the implementation of changes,
— the occurrence of disturbances during changes,
— resistance among employees to introduced changes,
— cooperation of those introducing changes with the employees of the entity,
— co-authorship of introduced changes,
— checking and verifying new solutions,
— the impact of the introduced changes on improving the social image of the police.

The analysis of the results of the conducted research, as well as the in-depth interviews, led to the creation of a model ensuring effective implementation of organisational changes in the Polish Police. His model was also validated. Of the 349 middle and senior managers in the Polish Police who were surveyed, as many as 91% considered the model effective.

The model developed differs in several places from the general model of making changes in organisations. The first step should be to diagnose the current state of the organisation. It is important to find not only the effect, but above all, the cause of a possible organisational dysfunction. Only a correctly performed diagnosis can be the starting point for effectively determining the purpose, scope and methods of organisational change. When setting the goal(s) of the change, it should be remembered that the management should (from then on until the end of the change) show commitment to the change. At the same time, the management should develop

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an incentive system in the unit, which should also support the implementation of new solutions. The next step, which is probably characteristic only of uniformed services, is the need to make an official decision (order) to introduce the change. The decision must be formal and should be made public as binding on the whole unit. The management should also prepare and, together with the introduction of the decision, implement a professional promotional campaign of the change implemented, with particular emphasis on the benefits of its implementation.

In order for the implementation of the changes to be successful, the so-called informal authorities should be involved in the process of preparing the unit’s management. This is a prerequisite for convincing to change those people in the organisation who are most affected by experienced and respected officers.

Source Author’s: own elaboration
Another factor that may affect the effectiveness of the prepared change is training for the staff of the unit. First of all, it should include the acquisition of the ability to function after the introduction of the change, but also during its implementation. The training raises the awareness of the staff and increases the probability that the prepared change will be accepted by ‘ordinary’ officers and employees of the unit. A special role in this case can also be played by the prepared motivation system.

The last step before the actual implementation of the change should be the involvement of the highest possible number of police officers and civilian employees of the unit in the process of its preparation (in addition to the management and informal authorities). They will then feel like co-authors of the change. Inclusion of employees will reduce or completely eliminate any possible resistance that always occurs when making organisational changes. Unfortunately, it is not always possible to include all employees in the process (it depends on many factors, such as the scope of the change or the size of the unit or organisational unit involved in the change process). Therefore, it is very important that the management of the unit know the officers and employees, and that they should optimally select the number and structure of people involved.

Only after a full and properly organised preparation phase, can an organisational change be made according to the previously prepared schedule. However, the introduction of the change, even with a professionally conducted preparation phase, does not guarantee final success. It is very important to monitor and control this change and its partial effects. This will enable the obtaining of feedback, which will make it possible to return, if necessary, to the previous stages in order to make corrections, if any.

It should be remembered that the presented model is of a general nature and sometimes other factors that are not included in the model may play a decisive role in implementing changes. This may be due, for example, to the specifics of the implemented change, cultural (regional) factors or time constraints.

**Summary**

Regardless of the different evaluations, the Polish Police require changes and continuous personal improvement. There is still a lack of a stronger link between the tactical tasks of the Polish Police and their strategy. Organisational structures constantly need to be improved, indicating the need for more frequent use of flexible solutions (network structures). Another problem is the area of training and professional development, where the deficit in number of trainings in demand is constantly increasing, which results from insufficient training offers, both in terms of numbers and quality. This problem is largely related to high staff fluctuation and often wrong changes in the police education system (including staff). The cure seems to be a return to increasing the role of professional development at the local level, *i.e.*, implemented in the regional and county police
headquarters. This would also allow of a greater inclusion of community policing elements in the activities of community police officers and patrol officers. Moreover, it seems advisable to consider establishing a new service within the Polish Police - the road traffic service. With the very dynamically developed road infrastructure in our country and the related growing traffic volume, such proposals seem logical. So far, the traffic police are only a part of the uniformed branch of the Polish Police, and due to the growing number of new challenges, such a solution may prove insufficient.

The foundation of changes in the Polish Police should be a decisive shift in the orientation of the management from ‘today’ to ‘today and tomorrow’ and the elimination of ubiquitous statistics that kill creativity and strategic thinking. We will be able to achieve full organisational success by including all officers in the improvement process, in every position. Promoting an innovative approach to change in the Polish Police will require the use of anticipation instead of reaction and achieving a high quality of individual internal actions. It will be necessary to act quickly beforehand and not to wait until the changes in the functioning of a police unit are forced by the environment. We should require the managerial staff to adopt an active attitude, which should be manifested in the preparation and implementation of processes relating to technical, organisational and psychosociological changes that improve the quality of police activities.

The Polish Police should move strongly towards a learning organisation and use the tools developed and proposed by science more often. Adequate funds are an essential element which can ensure continuity and effectiveness of changes improving its functioning. Therefore, it is worth considering a guarantee in the state budget of 2% of GDP. Of course, this should be a process spread over time, for example over five years. Without taking anything away from the Polish Army, the Polish Police are constantly at war with the criminal world and need adequate resources for this purpose. Everyone should care about this, because the success of the Polish Police will be the success of the whole society.

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**Summary:** In the article, the author discusses the necessity to constantly introduce organisational changes. In addition, the principles of effective implementation of changes in the Polish Police have been discussed, based on the model developed on the basis of research conducted in 2000, 2004 and 2016.