**ABSTRACT**

In the course of the last 20 years, comprehensive changes and important reforms have taken place within the Polish system of government, at all levels: local, regional, national and supranational. The aim of this paper is to contribute to an understanding of the influence of cultural factors on the contemporary management of territorial organizations (or territorial units). The challenges posed by globalization, affecting all managerial levels, and Poland’s accession to the European Union force the Polish public administration to overcome certain weaknesses crippling its potential. The paper presents the cultural nature of the conditionings of these restrictive factors. The author notes that the deepening of the public sector transformation in Poland is conditioned by common acceptance of such managerial patterns or practices as: public participation, transparency and confidence in the environment of networked, multi-level, public or private organizations. Thus, the identified cultural constraints must be seriously considered in the process of setting rules for governing a contemporary, democratic and complex society.