Katarzyna Czornik

PhD, Associate Professor, University of Silesia in Katowice, Poland
https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9388-9467

The education system in the development of total defence. Poland's perspective

Introduction

The need for safety and security is a primary and existential one. Understood in personal terms, it pertains to individuals, small and large social groups, communities, and institutions which represent nations and states. Security understood negatively means a lack of threats. Security understood positively is the opposite of threats. According to Ryszard Zięba, national security is a category of individual nature and refers to individual states and their societies and nations, whereas international security pertains to a specified group of states, including the international system. It is often described as a sum of securities of particular states, including values that are common to a particular system.[1] However, Włodzimierz Fehler argues that the notions of national and international security constitute categories that are subject to change over time and space. It means that permanent state security, similarly to state position in the international arena, is impossible to achieve. It is the reasonable measures taken by political decision-makers who should take the national interest into consideration, that determine the creation of conditions for the secure development of a state.[2]

[1]   R. Zięba, Pozimnowojenny paradygmat bezpieczeństwa międzynarodowego, [in:] *Bezpieczeństwo międzynarodowe po zimnej wojnie*, ed. *idem*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Akademickie i Profesjonalne, 2008, pp. 15–16.
[2]   *Współczesne bezpieczeństwo*, ed. W. Fehler, Toruń: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Grado, [cop. 2005], pp. 11–15.

The essence of broadly understood security amounts to satisfying such funda-mental spheres as: existence and survival; the sense, protection and enrichment of identity; independence; integrity; confidence and certainty regarding functioning and development; and respect for such imponderabilia as honour and tradition. The last two are of particular importance for national security. As rightly pointed out by Roman Kuźniar, without these imponderabilia nations lose their soul and individuals lose the sense of patriotism and willingness to make sacrifices for their country. Without them there can be no stable and democratic states with stable economic systems, where nations benefit from civilisational development thanks to modern education.[3]

Modern education, which in a multifaceted and multidimensional manner ap-proaches and is devoted to issues related to security and its challenges and threats, as well as to social behaviours, including specifically defence in the event of broadly understood conflicts and wars, should constitute a pillar of education, especially at the beginning of the third decade of the 21st century.

This paper will present the education system model in Poland in terms of se-curity education at the beginning of the third decade of the 21st century. It will also analyse education system model modification in connection with the reform of the education system. The hypothesis of this paper is included in the assump-tion that Poland's security in the 21st century is based on the state's military capacity and on the military and political alliances formed by decision-makers. However, this model of building security is not sufficient in the face of constantly changing and evolving security threats and challenges. Security should be based not only on a hard dimension, but also on a soft one, whose main pillar is security education aimed at preparing society for responding in situations which pose a broadly un-derstood threat to security. Only an adequately educated society will be able to undertake effective actions in an emergency and avoid mass panic. The aim of this paper is to provide answers to questions concerning the targets, objectives, and effectiveness of the current security education module. Is the adopted educational model compatible with social expectations and does it correspond with the domi-nant challenges and threats to Poland and the world? Having completed this educa-tional module, is a young citizen of the Republic of Poland aware of the challenges and threats to state security, the necessity of defence, and above all, the possible lines of action to be taken towards increased security? The following research methods will be used in the study: analysis of sources, systemic analysis, and the comparative method.

---

[3]   R. Kuźniar, Wstęp, [in:] *Polska polityka bezpieczeństwa 1989–2000*, ed. *idem*, Warszawa: Wy-dawnictwo Naukowe Scholar, 2001, pp. 13–14.

From civil defence training to security education – a step towards total defence or merely a change in the name of the school subject?

As accurately pointed out by Marcin Lasoń, a state security policy should be of preventive nature, thus its objective is to prevent negative phenomena as well as to prevent and eliminate threats which may have a destructive effect on the values protected by the state. Therefore, each state should have a specified security strategy based on strategic culture, as those two elements constitute the pillars of state security policy.[4] The educational dimension of the society and its awareness of threats constitute one of the bases upon which the aforementioned strategy, culture, and security policy should be built, and which should definitely be taken into account.

Piotr Małecki rightly indicates that Poland's security after 1989 was based on two extremely important determinants. One of them is the technical modernisation of the Polish Armed Forces and reforms of their structure as well as their command-and-control system. The other factor concerns building and strengthening alliances as well as the allied cooperation, which is expressed by Poland's accession to NATO, the Polish–American alliance, and regional cooperation. However, the main problem is that the most significant factor determining state security, which is society, has been practically left out in the whole process of building security. Meanwhile, in order to weather a crisis related to military aggression or a natural disaster, society must be resilient to crises. Society cannot succumb to mass panic in the event of a crisis or war. Society must be able to survive several weeks without access to electricity, running water, open shops, and the banking system. Society must have the appropriate knowledge of the safe shelter options. And finally, society must be able to support the fighting armed forces.[5] Adequate behaviour of society may be a factor having a significant impact on the course of a crisis or conflict and may even counterbalance the opponent's potential.

Therefore, the total defence strategy,[6] which assumes that the whole state and society should be involved in the defence of the state's sovereignty, while the armed forces constitute only one of the major elements of the defence system, becomes the basis for effective battlefield operations or actions in the face of danger. The total defence strategy, besides adequate technological and logistical preparation of the armed forces, also encompasses appropriate education and training on security

---

[4]   M. Lasoń, Bezpieczeństwo w stosunkach międzynarodowych, [in:] *Bezpieczeństwo międzynarodowe w XXI wieku. Wybrane problemy*, ed. E. Cziomer, Kraków: Oficyna Wydawnicza AFM, 2010, pp. 15–16.

[5]   P. Małecki, *Obrona Totalna – jak zbudować społeczeństwo odporne na kryzys [OPINIA]*, Defence24, 11 February 2020, https://defence24.pl/sily-zbrojne/obrona-totalna-jak-zbudowac-spoleczenstwo-odporne-na-kryzys-opinia [accessed: 10 February 2022].

[6]   P. Szymański, "New Ideas for Total Defence. Comprehensive Security in Finland and Estonia", *OSW Report*, 31 March 2020, pp. 11–13.

provided to the society and response to dangers, as well as civil defence preparation and adjustments made in the functioning of particular institutions in a situation of armed conflict.

In the case of Poland, teaching the theory and, to a small extent, also some practical skills within the framework of a school subject called security education (or, literally: "education for security") is one of the most significant educational pillars of the preparation of the society for total defence. Security education was introduced to lower secondary schools on 1 September 2009, and to schools above the lower secondary level on 1 September 2012. In both cases, it was only one hour per week. Importantly, security education replaced the subject included in the so-called old core curriculum, called civil defence training. This subject had been taught for two hours per week in secondary schools. Following the reform of the Polish education system and the abolishment of lower secondary schools, in accordance with the new regulations put into effect on 1 September 2017,[7] security education was taught in the eighth grade of eight-year primary schools and in post-primary schools. According to Article 166 [Obligation concerning security education] of the Act of 21 November 1967 on universal obligation to defend the Republic of Poland, "1. Security education is obligatory for primary and post-primary school students: general secondary school, technical secondary school, and stage I sectoral vocational school, with the exception of schools for adults. 2. Security education is a compulsory subject in the schools listed in clause 1. It is taught one hour per week in the education cycle."[8] The subject is taught only at the basic level.

The security education teacher – the key to success

When analysing the significance of security education for total defence, some conclusions can be drawn, which, regrettably, are not very positive. The first problem negatively affecting the quality of teaching security education, and thus resulting in poor preparation of the young generation for conscious actions in the event of a threat to security, is the security education teacher. The basic question arising at this point is: who can teach security education? The answer, in a way, seems to be banal. It can be any person who has graduated from a higher education institution with pedagogical preparation in any field and has completed a postgraduate security education course

---

[7]   Ustawa z dnia 14 grudnia 2016 r. – Przepisy wprowadzające ustawę – Prawo oświatowe, Dz.U. [Journal of Laws of the Republic of Poland], 2017, item 60, http://www.dziennikustaw.gov.pl/du/2017/60/1 [accessed: 22 February 2022].

[8]   Ustawa z dnia 21 listopada 1967 r. o powszechnym obowiązku obrony Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej, Dz.U., 2021, item 372 i.e., as amended on 21 December 2021, https://sip.lex.pl/akty-prawne/dzu-dziennik-ustaw/powszechny-obowiazek-obrony-rzeczypospolitej-polskiej-16787130?unitId=art(166) [accessed: 22 February 2022].

in accordance with the Regulation of the Minister of Science and Higher Education of 25 July 2019 on the standard of education preparing for the teaching profession.[9] The postgraduate programmes in the field of security education usually last three semesters (334 hours) and comprise the following thematic blocks: *The defence system and the armed forces in the Republic of Poland*; *Legal aspects of security management*; *Civil protection and civil defence*; *Dangers and threats in wartime*; *Dangers and threats in peacetime*; *Psychological foundations of actions in crisis situations*; *Methodology of working with a group*; *Basics of sanitary and medical rescue*; *Interpersonal communication*; and *Practical teacher training*. Completion of the course does not involve the need to possess specialist knowledge or specific abilities or skills. Security education can be taught by a teacher who has completed the postgraduate programme, that is a teacher of physical education, geography, history, but also mathematics or Polish. Hardly ever is the subject taught by a person who is truly passionate about security, a person experienced in the broadly understood uniformed services or a graduate from studies in the field of national and international security. Furthermore, in most cases such teachers teach security education only a few hours per week, in addition to their primary subject (which does not ensure full-time employment to them), which often means teaching part-time in several schools. The person teaching security education does so only in order to be employed full-time, which would not be possible if they taught only their primary subject. This is the reason why security education has become a subject of secondary importance to teachers, and teachers themselves do not treat it as a priority. Teachers' indifference to the educational process results in pupils also becoming indifferent to the theory and, even more importantly, to the practical dimension of security education.

Prestige of security education – can security education be a matriculation subject?

Another matter of some concern is the fact that both teachers and pupils frequently raise the argument that security education is not a GCSE (secondary school leaving examination) subject and thus it is not worth investing their intellectual efforts, which often has a negative impact on the pupils' and teachers' motivation. It is simply enough to "get through" and get a grade on the certificate. It is worth noting that this problem is wider in scope and cannot be solved by teachers or pupils. It is the state and political decision-makers, and also the Ministry of Education, who should take the status of security education in schools into consideration, if they take seriously

---

[9]   Rozporządzenie Ministra Nauki i Szkolnictwa Wyższego z dnia 25 lipca 2019 r. w sprawie standardu kształcenia przygotowującego do wykonywania zawodu nauczyciela, Dz.U., 2019, item 1450, http://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/download.xsp/WDU20190001450/O/D20191450.pdf [accessed: 20 February 2022].

the objective to educate and make the society aware of security challenges and threats and the ways of coping with them. To achieve this, it seems necessary to resort to past solutions. The subject called "civil defence training" taught only in schools at the secondary level was a far better solution which had and still has its advantages. Older youth are more aware of the knowledge they acquire and of its applicability in practice, especially when it concerns the fundamental sphere of security of individuals, societies, and states. Teaching security education in the eighth grade of primary school is not substantially justified. Certainly, it would be preferable to increase the number of teaching hours in security education in post-primary schools and make security education a GCSE subject. This idea is not impracticable. It should be noted that several years ago the subject called social studies was treated in exactly the same way as security education is at present. Increasing the number of social studies teaching hours in classes in which it was an extended level subject and adding social studies to the list of GCSE subjects taken into account in the higher education recruitment process,[10] has considerably increased the youth's interest in this subject and has had a positive effect both on teaching and learning. Security education could thus follow in the footsteps of social studies. What is required, however, are reasonable and responsible political decisions and a will to make changes on the part of politicians at the central level.

Practical limitations to teaching security education – dividing classes into groups and a lack of professional equipment

Practical limitations to teaching security education constitute the third problem related to the low teaching standard of this subject. This is due to several factors, the most important of which is the fact that the subject is taught in large groups, usually whole classes, which often comprise over 30 students. Such large groups do not pose a serious obstacle in theoretical knowledge instruction. However, they constitute a significant limitation as far as the practical part is concerned. Is it possible to effectively practise saving human life with resuscitation in a 45-minute lesson attended by a group of thirty or more people? Such a task seems to be simply impracticable. In this case, however, the problem does not lie with the teachers or pupils, but with School Directors and authorities responsible for running schools, who do not agree to teaching the subject in classes divided into smaller groups due to financial reasons. It is important to note that Directors and authorities responsible for running schools do not comply with the provisions of the Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 28 August 2009 on the implementation of security education. According to

---

[10] *Egzamin maturalny: wiedza o społeczeństwie, poziom rozszerzony. Sprawozdanie za rok 2021*, Centralna Komisja Egzaminacyjna, 17 September 2021, https://cke.gov.pl/images/_EGZAMIN_MATURALNY_OD_2015/Informacje_o_wynikach/2021/sprawozdanie/EM_wos_sprawozdanie_2021.pdf [accessed: 21 February 2022].

§1 "1. Classes of over 30 pupils shall be divided into groups in security education lessons which include practical training in first aid. 2. Classes of 30 or fewer pupils may be divided into groups during practical training referred to in clause 1, with the agreement of the authority responsible for running the school [...]."[11] In Polish schools, modern foreign languages, physical education, and sometimes extended level subjects are usually taught in smaller groups, but certainly not security education.

When analysing the limitations related to the possibilities of effective security education teaching, it should be added that the fourth negative factor is the lack of appropriate equipment in the classrooms where security education is taught. Security education labs simply do not exist. The subject is taught in various subject-based classrooms, and it is the teacher's task to provide didactic aids if the class is of practical nature. The teacher frequently does not have any professional equipment as the school has limited financial resources, which means that the purchase of items such as phantoms, masks, training defibrillators, splints for bone fractures or even ordinary medical supplies, including dressing materials and disinfectants, becomes a secondary need. In reality, this means that practical training, which should account for 10% of the overall number of security education classes, is carried out far less frequently or does not take place at all. In this situation the question of how to teach pupils to respond to crisis situations if it is not possible for them to practise emergency procedures, becomes a rhetorical one. In this case theory is highly insufficient!

Security education curriculum

The final obstacle to be discussed in this paper, which makes it impossible for security education to become an effective instrument in strengthening total defence, is the course curriculum and the fact that is has been divided into two educational stages. The security education curriculum is based on the core curriculum defined in the Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 30 January 2018 on the core curriculum of general education for general secondary schools, technical secondary schools, and stage II sectoral vocational schools.[12] The security education

---

[11]   Rozporządzenia Ministra Edukacji Narodowej z dnia 28 sierpnia 2009 r. w sprawie sposobu realizacji edukacji dla bezpieczeństwa, Dz.U., 2009, no. 139, item 1131, http://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/download.xsp/WDU20091391131/O/D20091131.pdf [accessed: 21 February 2022]; Rozporządzenie Ministra Edukacji Narodowej z dnia 14 czerwca 2017 r. zmieniające rozporządzenie w sprawie sposobu realizacji edukacji dla bezpieczeństwa, Dz.U., 2017, item 1239, http://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=WDU20170001239 [accessed: 21 February 2022].

[12]   Rozporządzenie Ministra Edukacji Narodowej z dnia 30 stycznia 2018 r. w sprawie podstawy programowej kształcenia ogólnego dla liceum ogólnokształcącego, technikum oraz branżowej szkoły II stopnia, Dz.U., 2018, item 467, http://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/download.xsp/WDU20180000467/O/D20180467.pdf [accessed: 17 February 2022].

curriculum is based on four modules, which also specify general objectives defined for this subject. They are: 1) state security; 2) training in rescue activities in emergencies (mass casualty incidents and disasters); 3) first aid basics; 4) health education – individual and collective health and health-promoting behaviours.[13] It should be stressed that the curricula in primary schools and post-primary schools are practically identical. What is the point in implementing such a solution and what is the purpose of teaching virtually the same material twice? It is hard to provide a reasonable answer to this question. Revised textbooks with a more modern layout are not sufficient for security education to be taught effectively and to become interesting, and above all, to be helpful in social life. Introducing a new module called "Health education" to the new security education curriculum in post-secondary schools does not make this subject more valuable or useful. Perhaps it would be worth following the example of other European countries, especially Scandinavian, where a huge emphasis has for many years been put on actual "education for security" and not on "education about security" with a great deal of unnecessary information, which is typical of Polish schools.

Conclusion

Increased social resilience to aggression, which is inextricably linked to an adequate model of security education, is the key to effective protection and defence of society and a state against internal and external threats. Security education is thus a part of national education and constitutes one of the key elements of total defence. However, the idea of an effective model of security education is that, apart from teaching theoretical knowledge of wars and armed conflicts, challenges and threats to state security or the ability to identify structures and activities of uniformed services in Poland, it is necessary to instil in young people practical skills related to a response in crisis situations, including situations posing a threat to human health and life.

Therefore, the call for an increased number of security education teaching hours in post-primary schools, and above all, for an increased number of practical classes dedicated to medical rescue, and even battlefield rescue, as well as the basics of weapon handling, seems to be well justified. Such measures would certainly make a positive contribution to the training – at the basic level – of at least the younger part of society and to strengthening the social dimension of total defence. Placing greater emphasis on practical skills, raising the prestige of security education by adding it to the list of GCSE subjects, as well as selecting the teaching staff who can

---

[13] B. Boniek, *Edukacja dla Bezpieczeństwa. Program nauczania dla szkół ponadpodstawowych (liceum i technikum)*, Gdynia: Wydawnictwo Operon, 2019, pp. 3–16.

teach this subject (with emphasis placed on specialists in the field of security and graduates from faculties related to national and international security) is definitely the key to success in building the educational pillar of total defence.

References

Boniek B., *Edukacja dla Bezpieczeństwa. Program nauczania dla szkół ponadpodstawowych (liceum i technikum)*, Gdynia: Wydawnictwo Operon, 2019.

Egzamin maturalny: wiedza o społeczeństwie, poziom rozszerzony. Sprawozdanie za rok 2021, Centralna Komisja Egzaminacyjna, 17 September 2021, https://cke.gov.pl/images/_EGZAMIN_ MATURALNY_OD_2015/Informacje_o_wynikach/2021/sprawozdanie/EM_wos_ sprawozdanie_2021.pdf [accessed: 21 February 2022].

Kuźniar R., Wstęp, [in:] *Polska polityka bezpieczeństwa 1989–2000*, ed. *idem*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar, 2001, pp. 13–18.

Lasoń M., Bezpieczeństwo w stosunkach międzynarodowych, [in:] *Bezpieczeństwo międzynarodowe w XXI wieku. Wybrane problemy*, ed. E. Cziomer, Kraków: Oficyna Wydawnicza AFM, 2010, pp. 9–32.

Małecki P., *Obrona Totalna – jak zbudować społeczeństwo odporne na kryzys [OPINIA]*, Defence24, 11 February 2020, https://defence24.pl/sily-zbrojne/obrona-totalna-jak-zbudowac-spoleczenstwo-odporne-na-kryzys-opinia [accessed: 10 February 2022].

Rozporządzenia Ministra Edukacji Narodowej z dnia 28 sierpnia 2009 r. w sprawie sposobu realizacji edukacji dla bezpieczeństwa, Dz.U., 2009, no. 139, item 1131.

Rozporządzenie Ministra Edukacji Narodowej z dnia 14 czerwca 2017 r. zmieniające rozporządzenie w sprawie sposobu realizacji edukacji dla bezpieczeństwa, Dz.U., 2017, item 1239.

Rozporządzenie Ministra Edukacji Narodowej z dnia 30 stycznia 2018 r. w sprawie podstawy programowej kształcenia ogólnego dla liceum ogólnokształcącego, technikum oraz branżowej szkoły II stopnia, Dz.U., 2018, item 467.

Rozporządzenie Ministra Nauki i Szkolnictwa Wyższego z dnia 25 lipca 2019 r. w sprawie standardu kształcenia przygotowującego do wykonywania zawodu nauczyciela, Dz.U., 2019, item 1450.

Szymański P., "New Ideas for Total Defence. Comprehensive Security in Finland and Estonia", *OSW Report*, 31 March 2020.

Ustawa z dnia 21 listopada 1967 r. o powszechnym obowiązku obrony Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej, Dz.U., 2021, item 372 i.e., as amended on 21 December 2021.

Ustawa z dnia 14 grudnia 2016 r. – Przepisy wprowadzające ustawę – Prawo oświatowe, Dz.U., 2017, item 60.

Współczesne bezpieczeństwo, ed. W. Fehler, Toruń: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Grado, [cop. 2005].

Zięba R., Pozimnowojenny paradygmat bezpieczeństwa międzynarodowego, [in:] *Bezpieczeństwo międzynarodowe po zimnej wojnie*, ed. *idem*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Akademickie i Profesjonalne, 2008, pp. 15–39.

The education system in the development of total defence.
Poland's perspective
Abstract

One of the key pillars of total defence is an increased social resilience to aggression, which is inextricably linked to an adequate model of security education. Poland's security in the 21st century is based on the state's military capacity and on the military and political alliances formed by decision-makers. However, this model of building security is not sufficient in the face of constantly changing and evolving security threats and challenges. Therefore, security should be based not only on a hard dimension, but also on a soft one, whose main pillar is security education. The idea of an effective model of security education is that, apart from giving young people theoretical knowledge, it is necessary to instil in them practical skills related to responding in crisis situations, including situations posing a threat to human health and life. Security education should constitute the first stage in training society in total defence. The educational model currently functioning in Poland definitely needs to be reformed.

Key words: security education, education system, Poland, total defence, security