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CONTEMPORARY PERCEPTIONS OF SECURITY

Abstract

Security is perceived by various groups of theorists and practitioners in different ways, and at the turn of the 20th and 21st century, security theory research gained momentum. The concept of security has become important not only in the social, natural or technical sciences, but also in social life, in international relations, and in many research programmes and applications. The term security has systematically expanded as a result of civilization progress to include hitherto unknown challenges and threats and new means and ways of eliminating them. In the past, security was based mainly on the preservation of the military capacity to defend the vital interests of a given social group.

The multitude of definitions of security has led to the creation of a separate field of study in the literature, known as securitology. It represents an individual field of human-centred research and assumes that all actions of the human individual are directed towards maintaining security.

Security is a separate field of research focusing on the human being and assumming that all actions of the human individual are directed towards ensuring a sense of security. The issue is multifaceted, and the discipline indicated is new, and has only begun to be of interest since 2010.[1]

Keywords

security, state, human being, values, science, politics, citizen

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[1] More: A. Czupryński, Naukowe aspekty bezpieczeństwa, [in:] Bezpieczeństwo. Teoria – Badania – Praktyka, A. Czupryński, B. Wiśniewski, J. Zboina (eds.), Józefów 2015.

Introduction

Security has always been the basis of human existence. Over the centuries, the development of the human species and civilisation has determined new ways of protecting against imminent danger, generating safe living conditions. For thousands of years, humans, in their collective and individual development, have followed a strongly felt need to lead a secure life.

Security as the main existential need, placed on the Maslow's hierarchy of needs on the second level – just after satisfying physiological needs – is a universal and timeless category conditioning the social existence of a human being as an individual, various groups and social collectives, as well as the entire humanity. Security as a human good and need has existed since the beginning of human development, although it has not always been adequately and unambiguously expressed. Satisfying needs triggers specific human reactions, which in social functioning take on the status of cultural reactions. Security culture and security co-create each other in much the same way as the human individual and society do when they form a nation[2], most often organising themselves into a nation state, in order to be able to exist in a more secure and dignified manner.

According to Niccolò Machiavelli, "security" means not only the provision of security in the physical sense, but also all the other "satisfactions" that anyone can achieve through their diligence without being exposed to danger or harm[3].

Marek Leszczyński believes that security is an example of a non-rivalrous good, from the consumption of which no member of a given collectivity can be excluded[4].

In the literature, the universal concept of security is perceived in many ways, and the most common are the following pairs: subject and object security, negative and positive security, security as a need and a value, security as a state and a process, and others.

Research assumptions

The insight presented in this article is the result of the author's research, the aim of which was to identify the determinants that define security, and to characterise contemporary security on their basis.

Research carried out in three stages covering three phases: conceptualisation, implementation and finalisation. During the research process carried out for this article, qualitative methods were used. Among the most important, the author includes analysis, synthesis, generalisation and inference.

Due to the form of the paper, the author adopted one basic restriction – the use of Polish-language literature, mainly from the field of security sciences. This

2   A. Touraine, Samotworzenie się społeczeństwa, Zakład Wydawniczy NOMOS, Kraków 2010.

3   J. Delumeau, Skrzydła Anioła Poczucie bezpieczeństwa w duchowości człowieka Zachodu w dawnych czasach, Oficyna Wydawnicza Volumen, Warszawa 1998, p. 23.

4   M. Leszczyński, Bezpieczeństwo jako dobro publiczne w warunkach erozji państw naukowych, „Studia i Materiały Wydziału Zarządzania i Administracji Wyższej Szkoły Pedagogicznej im. Jana Kochanowskiego w Kielcach" 2017, no. 3, v. 2, p. 382.

procedure was aimed at popularising Polish scientific thought.

The importance of security

The essential category of security is subject and object security, with the primacy of the subject – personal or impersonal (institutional). From the subject's point of view, the most important thing is the current existence and survival, with real perspectives for development and positive changes in a consciously created future. As a subject of security, people should not be afraid of threats to their comfort and quality of life.

According to R. Rosa, security refers to the satisfaction of basic human needs for existence, certainty of survival, stability and quality of individual and social life.[5] In turn, B. Balcerowicz believes that the essence of security consists of a guarantee of inviolable survival and a guarantee of the possibility of development.[6] The first part relates to the traditional concept of narrow negative security, while the second is a vision of broad positive security. The typology of security proposed by R. Zięba, which is popular in political sciences, includes 5 basic areas concerning security[7]:

– subjective – national security and international security,
– objective – political, military, economic, social, cultural, ideological, ecological, information security, etc,
– spatial – personal security (concerning individual people), local (state and national), subregional, regional (coalition), supraregional and global (universal) security,
– time – a momentary state of security and the continuous process of shaping security,
– mode of organisation – individual (unilateral) – superpower hegemony, isolationism, neutrality, non-alignment, alliances (block system), cooperative security system, collective security system.

The essential typological category of security is subjective, object and spatial security. The time criterion is an immanent feature of security dynamics, referring to the instantaneous state of security and the progressive security process. The mode of organisation refers to the normative and formal, and organisational and technical aspect of security application. Universal security is both a temporary state and a continuous process. The state of security is its current dimension, scale of persistence, territorial coverage, etc. The security process, on the other hand, is the continuous shaping and strengthening of security, resulting, among others, from the growing scope of subjective, objective and spatial security.

In terms of political science, the subjects of security are considered to be individuals, social groups and all forms of organisation of social life, including mainly the state and various public institutions.[8] Most political science concepts relate the concept of security

5   More: R. Rosa, Filozofia i edukacja do bezpieczeństwa, AP, Siedlce 1998.
6   More: B. Balcerowicz, Bezpieczeństwo polityczne Rzeczypospolitej Polski, AON, Warszawa 2004.
7   R. Zięba, Instytucjonalizacja bezpieczeństwa europejskiego: koncepcje. Struktury – funkcjonowanie, WN Scholar, Warszawa 1999, pp. 30-32.
8   M. Brzeziński, S. Sulkowski, Bezpieczeństwo wewnętrzne państwa, Wybrane zagadnienia, Dom Wydawniczy ELIPSA, Warszawa 2009, pp. 33-34.

to the category of the state, as the main organiser of social life, responsible for actions for the individual good and the common good. From the point of view of the subject whose vital interests are protected against threats, national (state) security and international security are distinguished, which can be shaped in two areas: internal, as internal security – concerns ensuring the internal stability of the subject; external, as external security – concerns counteracting external threats. In addition to the subject classification of security, there is a comparative subject classification which specifies the detailed security areas of a subject that is being an object of security. Security, in subjective terms, includes the protection of the vital interests of a subject – an individual, a social group, a nation, a state in terms of its effective functioning in a specific area of social, political, economic activity, etc. Popular typologies of object security cover fields such as political, social, economic, military, cultural, environmental, social, public, technological, ideological, health, energy, information security and others. An original classification of the so-called sectoral security was proposed by a group of researchers representing the Copenhagen School, which includes 5 sectors, i.e., military, political, economic, social and environmental security.[9]

Despite the fact that the object classification is auxiliary and secondary to the subject classification, its importance is now constantly growing due to the emerging new challenges and threats posed by the turbulent development of civilisation. Subject security is the most dynamic and impressive area of contemporary security theory, which is largely due to the enormous dynamics of socioeconomic life and the piling up of new challenges, which can be transformed either into real threats, causing the destruction of the state of security, or into hypothetical opportunities that constructively influence the level of security. The object typology allows a precise analysis and evaluation of the current state of security in a strictly defined field, in order to determine the optimal strategy for comprehensive shaping of security of a specific subject.

Taking the above into account, it is worth stressing that "in the general social sense, security includes satisfaction of the needs: existence, survival, certainty, stability, integrity, identity, independence, protection of the standard of living and quality of life. Security, being the main need of human beings and social groups, is at the same time the basic need of states and international systems. Its absence causes anxiety and a sense of threat".[10]

Contemporary aspects of security

When considering contemporary perceptions of security, one cannot ignore the category of security relating to the so-called negative security, i.e., a convention in which security is commonly defined as the absence of threats, resulting in a sense of freedom from fears

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[9]   B. Buzan, O. Wæver, J. de Wilde, Security: a new framework for analysis, Lynne Rienner, Boulder 1998, p. 7.

[10] R. Zięba, Pojęcie i istota bezpieczeństwa państwa…, p. 50; B. Wiśniewski, Praktyczne aspekty badań bezpieczeństwa, Difin 2020, p. 17.

and dangers. The eternal confrontation between the spectrum of threats and the sense of security has traditionally been the essence of the negative, narrow perception of security. A negative perception of security is one that defines safety narrowly, as the opposite of threats, and focuses on effective prevention and preventive protective measures. Meanwhile, the absence of threats is an idealised state that does not exist in social practice. One might say that the category of positive security, focusing on progressive development strategies and expanding the horizons of all national freedoms and civil liberties, is much more useful. This trend has become the philosophical basis for the functioning of the so-called Copenhagen School promoting all aspects of positive security nationally and internationally, as well as subjectively and objectively.

Examples of the dominant definitions of negative security in the literature are as follows:

– "Security – a sense of calm, absence of danger, confidence in the future"[11]
– "Security – an objective state of being free from threats, subjectively perceived by individuals or groups"[12],
– "Safety – is a function of threats, the degree of which is accepted and controlled".[13]

Negative perceptions of security include such colloquial phrases[14] as the absence of threats, in particular to life, health and property, a sense of freedom from danger, a sense of calm and comfort in life, a smooth co-existence in the social and natural environment, and a belief in the effectiveness of assistance and support in the event of danger. The opposite is the positive approach which exposes prospective visions of existence, survival and development, offering opportunities for the free and rational shaping of the various freedoms of the subject of security. This approach draws attention to the possibility of improving living standards, introducing desired social changes or freely creating the subject's own visions and plans[15]. The classic negative approach to security stems from historical traditions and the military threat as the main foundation of national (state) identity and independence prevalent for centuries. For many centuries, armed conflict was treated as the greatest threat to the individual and the social group, as well as the nation and the state. In turn, the strength and military power of the state dominated the national security space and was its most important attribute. It was not until the stabilisation of the geopolitical situation in the world in the post-Cold War period that the world of science, politics and social practice became more interested in the positive side of security and its theoretical foundations.

Due to the fact that the level of military threats still plays an important role

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[11] Nowy słownik wyrazów bliskoznacznych, Zielona Sowa, Kraków 2006, p. 38.

[12] R. Jakubczak, B. Wiśniewski (eds.), Wyzwania, szanse, zagrożenia i ryzyko dla bezpieczeństwa narodowego RP o charakterze wewnętrznym, Wydawnictwo Wyższej Szkoły Policji, Szczytno 2016; L. Korzeniowski, Podstawy nauk o bezpieczeństwie, Difin, Warszawa, p. 76; K. Jałoszyński, B. Wiśniewski, T. Wojtuszek (eds.), Współczesne postrzeganie bezpieczeństwa, WSA, Bielsko – Biała 2007, p. 9.

[13] J. Wolanin, Zarys teorii bezpieczeństwa obywateli, DANMAR, Warszawa 2005, p. 65.

[14] P. Tyrała (ed.), Zarządzanie bezpieczeństwem, PSB, Kraków 2000, p. 56.

[15] J. Szczepański, Elementarne pojęcia socjologii, PWN, Warszawa 1972, p. 275 et seq.

in the perception of security, at least at the international macro scale, the negative approach to security is very relevant in practice and is still intensively explored, not only in the theoretical sphere, by scholars and researchers. Currently, in addition to traditional military threats, a whole spectrum of political, social, economic, as well as ecological and civilisational threats has emerged, proving the strong position of negative security in the minds of many entities, both personal and institutional (structural). It should be emphasised that, in addition to traditional threats, new categories of threats are increasingly being mentioned, mainly related to turbulent development and inevitable civilisation risks as well as the progressive processes of globalisation.[16] In today's world, paramilitary threats are playing an increasingly important role, including in particular asymmetric, hybrid as well as information and cyber threats. Today, multidimensional cyber security practically plays the leading role, not only in technologically advanced societies.

Poland is a democratic state under the rule of law with a market economy and which respects international law binding upon it. Poland is strengthening its national security potential to ensure the country's stable development and improve the living conditions of its citizens. It is an active participant in international cooperation. It develops friendly relations and cooperation with countries in the neighbourhood and beyond. It goes on to point out that, to the best of its ability and interests, as part of the international community, it engages in solving global problems. It maintains diplomatic relations with non-European partners and develops mutually beneficial political and economic cooperation with them.[17] The Republic of Poland ensures the security of the state and its citizens by creating conditions for the implementation of national interests and the achievement of strategic objectives.[18] One of the chapters of the most important legal act, the Constitution of the Republic of Poland, states that „the Republic of Poland shall safeguard the independence and integrity of its territory, ensure the freedoms and rights of persons and citizens, the security of the citizens, safeguard the national heritage and shall ensure the protection of the natural environment pursuant to the principles of sustainable development."[19] The national interests and objectives of the Republic of Poland in the area of security are translated into actions and tasks, as far as possible according to the security conditions as well as the possibility of their implementation. The objectives raised in the area of security relate primarily to:

– maintaining and demonstrating the readiness of an integrated national security system to seize opportunities, address challenges, reduce risks and counter threats;
– improving the integrated national security system, in particular its control

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[16] U. Beck, Społeczeństwo ryzyka. W drodze do innej rzeczywistości, WN Scholar, Warsaw 2002, p. 12 et seq.

[17] Strategia bezpieczeństwa narodowego, Warsaw 2014, pp. 9-10 (deleted).
[18] Constitution of the Republic of Poland of 2 April 1997 (Dz.U. /Journal of Laws/ No. 78, item 483.
[19] Constitution of the Republic of Poland of 2 April 1997 (Dz.U. /Journal of Laws/ No. 78, item 483, Art. 5.

elements, including providing the necessary resources and capabilities;
– developing a defence and security capability adequate to the needs and capabilities of the state and enhancing its interoperability within NATO and the EU;
– strengthening NATO's readiness and capacity for collective defence as well as the coherence of EU action in the field of security; building a strong position of Poland in both these organisations;
– developing close cooperation with all its neighbours and building partnerships with other countries, including those aimed at preventing and resolving international conflicts and crises;
– promoting the principles of international law and universal values such as democracy, human rights and civil liberties in the international arena, and raising the Polish society's awareness of human and civil rights;
– ensuring public security by improving the National Firefighting and Rescue System and the system for monitoring, notifying, warning about threats and eliminating the effects of natural disasters and catastrophes, as well as implementing legal and organisational solutions with regard to the system of civil protection and civil defence;
– improving and developing a national crisis management system to ensure its internal consistency and integrity as well as to enable seamless cooperation within the crisis management systems of international organisations of which Poland is a member;

– protecting Poland's borders, constituting the external border of the EU; counteracting organised crime, including economic crime; protecting public order;
– improving system solutions for preventing and combating terrorism and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction;
– ensuring secure functioning of the Republic of Poland in cyberspace;
– ensuring secure conditions for the development of human and social capital, of innovation, efficiency and competitiveness of the economy, as well as of the financial stability of the state;
– ensuring energy and climate security and protecting the environment, biodiversity and natural resources, in particular water resources, as well as shaping the spatial development of the country in a manner that increases resistance to various threats, in particular military, natural and technological threats;
– ensuring food security;
– conducting an effective family policy and adapting the migration policy to new challenges;
– increasing public awareness of security issues and enhancing citizens' competencies enabling them to respond appropriately in crisis situations.[20]

Everyone has the right to liberty and personal security. The state is obliged to maintain an internal order that guarantees personal security. The aim of the activities of the Republic of Poland as

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[20] Strategia bezpieczeństwa narodowego, Warsaw 2014. pp. 11-12.

a democratic state under the rule of law is to provide all citizens with a sense of security and justice. In the area of social security, the task of the state is to ensure a rapid and perceptible improvement in the quality of life of its citizens. The priorities in this respect include an increase in employment, with particular emphasis on the activation of social groups in a difficult life situation, as well as an increase in social integration and improvement of the social security system. These also include the levelling of the differences between urban and rural areas as well as counteracting unfavourable demographic changes and migration. The Strategy for the Development of the National Security System of the Republic of Poland 2022, adopted by a resolution of the Council of Ministers on 9 April 2013, indicates that ensuring the security of the state and its citizens is one of the vital national interests of the Republic of Poland. National security means the ability of a state and its society to ensure the conditions for its existence and development, territorial integrity, political independence, internal stability and quality of life. This capacity is shaped through the actions of seizing opportunities, taking up challenges, reducing risks as well as eliminating external and internal threats, which ensures the persistence, identity, functioning and development freedoms of the state and the nation (society).[21]

The main favourable international conditions for Poland's security are its membership in NATO and the European Union. They contribute to strengthening the security of our country, create opportunities for sustainable, comprehensive and balanced development, as well as provide opportunities to strengthen Poland's international position and increase its impact (role) on the international environment. The evolution of NATO's strategy is favourable to Poland's interests, as it proposes strengthening NATO's function as an instrument of collective protection while continuing the conduct of expeditionary and crisis response operations outside the territories of NATO member states. Following the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon, the European Union has become a comprehensive international community that develops its defence component within the framework of the Common Security and Defence Policy and has established a casus foederis alliance obligation modelled on political-military alliances.[22]

Conclusions

There is no clear definition of the term security in the literature, nor is there a precise answer to how we perceive security. There is no doubt that security is a complex, multifaceted phenomenon and its level is determined by many factors, as demonstrated above in the body of this article. An individual's right to security has a personal dimension, while in relation to the state it has a social dimension. The most common threats identified by individuals are loss of life, health, liberty, and property. According

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[21] More: Zięba R., Zając J., Budowa zintegrowanego systemu bezpieczeństwa narodowego Polski (expert opinion commissioned by the Ministry of Regional Development as part of work on the update of the mid--term national development strategy), Warsaw 2010.

[22] Ibidem.

to sociologists, a person can feel threatened when another person behaves in a way that is not in keeping with the accepted norms, functions in such a way that their behaviour becomes dangerous for the subject and the environment. When someone violates their personal dignity, they feel anxious, which destroys relationships between people and leads to fear and anxiety.[23] Multifacetedness is inseparable from an individual's subjective assessment of the phenomena occurring around said individual. As long as the individual feels that these phenomena have a limited negative impact on their existence, they feel secure.

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[23] Cieślarczyk M., Niektóre psychospołeczne aspekty bezpieczeństwa (wyzwania, szanse i zagrożenia), Zeszyty Naukowe AON 1999, No. 1, pp. 232- 233.

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