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THE ESSENCE OF EDUCATION FOR SECURITY IN THE LIGHT OF CONTEMPORARY THREATS

Abstract

In the contemporary world, there is a notable trend towards constant development and transformation, as well as progress in every aspect of life. While this brings numerous advantages, issues pertaining to security in its broad sense cannot be disregarded. This is the foundation upon which human life is built. As society develops, a number of new security threats emerge requiring everyone to prepare for. In the 21st century, it is of key importance to provide ongoing security education. This encompasses not only theoretical issues, defining fundamental concepts and identifying threats, but also cultivating prosocial attitudes and visions of development. Given the intricate and interdisciplinary nature of the discussed matter, it is imperative that education for security should not merely be restricted to educational institutions. It is crucial to provide this education not only in formal educational settings, but also through other activities and self-directed learning. Enhancing knowledge of security in its broad sense is a pivotal aspect of lives of children, adolescents and adults. A comprehensive approach that encompasses the entirety of the subject matter will enable a positive impact on security. This article provides a concise overview of fundamental definitions related to the subject matter and identifies the most significant security threats. It then proceeds to indicate specific forms of education in this domain and avenues for future development.

Keywords

security, security threat, forms of education, development, self-directed learning

Introduction

There are numerous definitions of the concept of “security”. Undoubtedly, it is a very complex issue covering many aspects. However, it is one of the basic needs in everyone’s life. Due to prevailing changes in the world, development of technology and globalisation, the catalogue of threats that can disrupt security has increased. It is, therefore, crucial to develop models and schemes to best prepare society for emerging dangers. One of the best ways to do this is to constantly develop, observe the current situation and absorb new knowledge. In the 21st century, education for security plays an important role in the entire security system. It presents not only determinants of emerging threats, but also possible solutions and adaptations to prevailing conditions. These activities should not only be learnt by children and adolescents, but also by adults. Such practice will advantageously affect security in its broad sense.

The Notion of Security

There is no single definition of the term “security”. There are currently many such definitions to be found in the specialist literature. Creating a uniform definition is complicated by the fact that security can mean something different to everyone. Thus, depending on the approach, the way it is categorised or the current conditions, the concept may have a lot of meanings. The author of this article will not focus on a thorough discussion of all definitions and determinants influencing understanding of this notion, but will only briefly outline the discussed issues. This will provide a basis for further deliberations.

Undoubtedly, security is one of the key needs in everyone’s life, regardless of age, gender, place of residence or currently prevailing conditions. According to Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, safety and security are one of the bases of human existence, directly following physiological needs. This shows the essence of the issue. It is only when these basic needs have been satisfied that an individual can peacefully undertake other activities, fulfil oneself and achieve success. Without meeting the need for safety and security, it will be impossible for society to develop¹.

Currently, the specialist literature offers many scientific publications describing basics of security and its definitions. Some of them put forward similar views on the issue, but they also differ in certain aspects. Nonetheless, most researchers agree on one point, namely, when defining security, they refer to constant development and change. It cannot be stated that “security is given once and for all”. It is a continuous process, a transformation influenced by many factors. It is ability to overcome threats that are independent of the human, *e.g.* natural disasters, technical failures, but also those that have arisen through human activity. In categorising this concept,

1 A. Maslow, *Motywacja i osobowość*, Warszawa 1990, pp. 72-92.

it is also important to point out preservation of identity and possibility of uninterrupted development of the subject².

It can be assumed that “security” consists of several aspects. It is, among others, certainty of survival, providing a kind of basis. If this is ensured, an individual, social groups or even society as a whole can focus on uninterrupted functioning, subsequently moving on to development. Of course, it is important to bear in mind the changing nature of the contemporary world. However, the above-mentioned certainty is not only due to absence of threats, but it also stems from measures taken to ensure security. All activities undertaken in this area may be referred to as a social process³.

The aspect of uninterrupted development is also pointed out by Włodzimierz Fehler. By including a vision of development in his definition of security, the author emphasises how the perception of this issue has changed over the years, influenced, among others, by the progress of civilisation and many changes taking place in the world. Furthermore, he presents a view that security is one of the priority needs essential for the proper functioning of both the state and individual. When peace and security are ensured, the individual will have a positive vision of development⁴.

Although security is one of the basic needs in human life, it often goes unnoticed. It is only when a difficult situation, threat or natural disaster occur that an individual or society as a whole realise how important it is for their proper functioning. Security is forgotten at the time of peace, certainty of existence and undisturbed development. Although society is aware of the need for security, it can sometimes forget about it or simply set it as a secondary objective. This is most often the case at the time of certainty; however, security re-emerges as a priority when its foundations are disrupted through various activities. Society seeks support and sense of existence in permanent, familiar things. It is conviction that basic needs are met and confirmation of beliefs that provides certainty and peace of mind⁵.

The culminating definition of the security concept may be that by W. Kitler, who, in describing this phenomenon, refers to peace and certainty of the subject's existence in perilous situations. The essence of security is conviction that, should various adversities, challenges, difficulties or even threats occur, both an individual and society will be prepared to resist them. Emphasising simultaneously that security is not only absence of threats, but also building certainty and development opportunities, the author presents security in two aspects: subject- and object-related. The subject of security is always the human as an individual, social group or structures created thereby (organisations, self-governments). In turn, the subject is complemented by the aspect of object. The object of security is relationships occurring in this domain,

2 W. Pokruszyński, *Teoretyczne aspekty bezpieczeństwa*, Podręcznik akademicki, Józefów 2010, p.8.

3 R. Zięba, *Wprowadzenie. Pozimnowojenny paradygmat bezpieczeństwa narodowego*, [in:] *Bezpieczeństwo międzynarodowe po zimnej wojnie*, R. Zięba (ed.), Warszawa 2008, p. 16.

4 W. Fehler, *Bezpieczeństwo wewnętrzne współczesnej Polski: aspekty teoretyczne i praktyczne*, Warszawa 2012, p. 7.

5 K. Górecka, *Potrzeba bezpieczeństwa a zagrożenia cywilizacyjne*. In: *Katastrofy naturalne i cywilizacyjne. Terroryzm współczesny. Aspekty polityczne, społeczne i ekonomiczne*, Wrocław 2006, pp. 205-208.

phenomena, procedures and processes. Linked to this aspect are types of security, which include political, military or economic security⁶.

Security Threats

As mentioned at the beginning of this article, due to constant changes taking place in the contemporary world, kinds and nature of threats have also changed. Many new factions emerge undermining security in both domestic and international arenas. However, threats accompanying mankind since the dawn of time cannot be underestimated; they have not disappeared, but only transformed. Moreover, many new threats occur that were once not faced. This is why it is so important to constantly develop and learn about the world, not only in terms of opportunities it brings, but also risks and possible ways of minimising them.

When considering types of threats, it is essential to look at security from two perspectives: internal and external. Security viewed from an internal perspective is the basis for the functioning of both the state and its citizens, assuring order and stability within the subject, thus enabling peace and development opportunities. Threats in this area are mainly associated with destabilisation of internal structures and ensuring peace, unshakable power and order⁷. On the other hand, security in external terms is currently regarded as absence of threats from other subjects, states, international organisations, hence allowing the state to conduct sovereign policies, freely take actions and make decisions related to security, interests, national values and strategic goals without external subjects' interfering in security issues⁸.

Nonetheless, irrespective of adopted categorisation, threats will undoubtedly always exist, being an inevitable part of security. Although their type, nature or definition may change, no subject or organisation can completely eliminate them. In order to take the most effective measures to prevent and, if that fails, mitigate undesirable effects of these threats, it is essential to properly identify them and continuously develop and educate in that scope. Only by properly identifying and defining a threat will it be possible to take adequate actions. Therefore, education in this area is necessary in the light of the changing nature of threats⁹.

One of the most common divisions of threats in the Polish literature is to categorise the concept into the following threats:

- military – related to the area of defence and military science, most often when policy objectives of a state are counter to (different from) those of other states.

This can cause tensions between states and give rise to armed conflicts or wars,

6 W. Kitler, *Bezpieczeństwo narodowe RP: podstawowe kategorie: uwarunkowania, system*, Warszawa 2011, pp. 22-25.

7 Z. Nowakowski, *Bezpieczeństwo narodowe: ewolucja pojęcia i zakresu*, Warszawa 2008, p. 27.

8 S. Sulowski, *O nowym paradygmacie bezpieczeństwa*, [in:] *Bezpieczeństwo wewnętrzne państwa. Wybrane zagadnienia*, S. Sulowski, M. Brzeziński (ed.), Warszawa 2009, p. 14.

9 Z. Ciekankowski, *Rodzaje i źródła zagrożeń dla bezpieczeństwa*, Warszawa 2010, p. 48.

- political – related to maintaining power in a state and upholding compliance with the law. In this case, manipulation and disinformation techniques can be applied to disrupt state functioning,
- psychosocial – related to influencing public awareness through propaganda and manipulation. To urge destabilisation of state structures by arousing certain emotions,
- economic – related to the area of the country's economy, which is linked to the fear that basic needs may not be provided for and various human activities and livelihoods may be disrupted,
- ecological – related to human impacts on the environment, which can have many undesirable and unstoppable effects¹⁰.

Regardless of the typology adopted for the classification of security threats, there is undoubtedly an increasing number of new (hitherto unknown) threats in the contemporary world. Their causes are related to an impact of nature or human activities. While natural threats have been faced by humans since the beginning of time, a number of new challenges and threats have appeared in the path of mankind along with civilisation development. Moreover, it is often difficult to place an occurring danger in one of the above categories, as actions taken in this area overlap. It cannot be unambiguously determined whether dangers associated with the impact of nature are not a consequence of human activity too. Nevertheless, threats undoubtedly affect primarily individual citizens. This can be experienced directly or indirectly. All activities undertaken in this regard may bring (both positive and negative) effects in the future¹¹.

In the specialist literature, considerable attention is paid to threats connected with operation of nature. The author of this article also demonstrates that this remains a relevant subject. Threats in this sphere have always accompanied people and, despite the development of technology, science and economy, human activity cannot oppose the power of nature. This has been shown, for example, by recent floods not only in Poland, but also worldwide. Although society is aware of these dangers, it is not in a position to undertake such actions and activities that would fully eliminate dangers associated with *e.g.* hurricanes, intense precipitation or other meteorological phenomena. Furthermore, technological development and progress, along with bringing numerous positive aspects, creates many threats too. These are new areas of danger linked to the development of civilisation and modern technology¹².

Another threat the author would like to consider for the purpose of this article is that within the military sphere. In the past, this used to be one of the most serious threats regarded as a priority. Although it is now rightly said not to probably be the most important or only threat, it should not be underestimated. Military threats are still a very significant part of security in the broad sense. Such dangers have not

10 T. Bąk, Z. Ciekankowski, *Bezpieczeństwo państwa*, Jarosław 2014, p. 47.

11 *Ibid.*, p. 29.

12 A. Kiepas, *Ryzyko techniczne a bezpieczeństwo społeczne. Wokół idei „społeczeństwa ryzyka” U. Becka*, „Biuletyn Oświaty” 2005, nr(4), p. 17.

been completely eliminated. Although forms of warfare between subjects may have changed nowadays, war still poses threats to uninterrupted existence and development of societies. Military threats are most commonly associated with security involvement of external subjects or organisations wishing to adversely affect continuity of internal power and order. Consequences of these actions will impact on both authorities and individuals¹³.

In the light of emerging threats, those in the area of information security cannot be omitted either. This is currently one of the most important determinants shaping security in its broad sense. Evolving social media, media messaging and globalisation render properly verified information of the utmost value. However, where key media messages and news can emerge, inspiration and disinformation activities may also be undertaken. These can cover every area of life. They are designed to mislead the recipient, transfer erroneous data or convey actually correct data, but in such a way that it can adversely affect the perception of a phenomenon. Through specific activities, decision-makers' choices and perceptions of a given issue can be influenced, thus gaining their favour or leading to such decisions that will be beneficial to the subject undertaking these activities. The scope of these measures is extensive and may relate to political, social or economic spheres. Carried out inspiration and disinformation activities are spread over time and finding evidence of these methods faces many difficulties due to their covert nature. Many a time one piece of information can significantly affect the overall perception of security. This is why information security is so important in the 21st century¹⁴.

The discussed security threats form merely a basis and show the concept's extensive scope. In today's world, there is a complexity of processes, structures and determinants influencing the overall perception of security. Owing to the comprehensive definition of the concept, the thematic scope of security threats is wide as well. On the basis of the above threats, it can be concluded that education for security is an important part of the discussed issue.

Security Education

Education for security can be understood not only as imparting knowledge of security in the broad sense, but also as shaping right attitudes among the public. It is not solely acquired theoretical knowledge, but also directing people towards appropriate behaviours, patriotism or helping others. Education in this domain has taken various forms over the years. Education for security can be said to have evolved along with the developing conceptual scope of the discussed subject. It originates from such areas as, among others: defence education, defence training or civil defence¹⁵. However,

13 W. Kitler, *Bezpieczeństwo narodowe...*, pp. 39, 40.

14 L. Belza, *Gra informacyjna o wpływy i dominację*, „Bezpieczeństwo narodowe” 2011, No. 17, 1-2011, Warszawa 2011, pp. 29-44.

15 B. Przybysz, *Edukacja dla bezpieczeństwa jako przedmiot nauczania*, [in:] *Edukacja dla bezpieczeństwa. Współczesne kategorie*, I. Urych (ed.), Warszawa 2018, pp. 186-190.

considering changes taking place in the contemporary world, the development of education for security should not just stop at these transformations. It is important nowadays to continuously transform it to take into account the changing environment and new threats. Education for security should also consider the complexity and multidimensionality of the discussed issues.

The main objective of education for security can be spreading awareness of threats, but not only in terms of dangers. It can be pointed out that a threat, if properly identified and early detected, may also become an opportunity. However, the essence of this aspect is continuous development and self-improvement. Early identification of a threat and attempts to address it can have a positive impact on security. It is through this type of education that appropriate models, patterns, attitudes and values should be formed, which will constitute an important element in building a safe world¹⁶. Education for security ought to indicate main issues in the discussed area and shape defence awareness. One of its tasks is also to identify threats, although this is only one of the components. It is important that its subject matter should refer to opportunities too. The key is to identify actions and activities that can be undertaken to influence security in a positive way. This is the indication of projects aimed at activating the public to jointly care for security and peace in the immediate vicinity¹⁷.

One of the most accurate definitions of the concept of “education for security” was created by R. Stępień. He presents this issue as the entirety of activities undertaken by both the state and other subjects. He points out that, in the education domain, upbringing is important along with education itself and transfer of knowledge. This is the key element of security. Imparted knowledge is to form the basis for society to build national and state security. Preparing people to function and act efficiently under conditions of danger is taken as the main goal of this issue. In order for appropriate actions and activities to be undertaken, society must be ready for various options and aware of threats. Knowing how to cope when a dangerous situation arises is crucial too. Education for security is an interdisciplinary subject and includes areas such as politics, economics, law or ecology. Psychosocial education within education for security should not be forgotten either. It can certainly be stated that orientation of patriotic attitudes in society is an important element of the discussed issues. This is a vital aspect along with security and defence education and knowledge acquisition. Due to the broad scope of the topic, educational activities should be undertaken by schools, families, organisations and social groups, as well as by the mass media. Currently, the media are one of the primary sources of information. However, thus provided information should be properly verified and checked. Such comprehensive transfer of knowledge and values at every stage of life,

16 R. Rosa, *Edukacja dla bezpieczeństwa i pokoju w obliczu wyzwań XXI wieku. Część I. Filozoficzne i teoretyczne aspekty bezpieczeństwa i pokoju*, Siedlce 2001, p. 14.

17 A. Pieczywok, *Wybrane problemy z zakresu edukacji dla bezpieczeństwa. Konteksty, zagrożenia, wyzwania*, Warszawa 2011, p. 70.

through various forms of activities, should positively influence internal and external security of the state¹⁸.

Due to the constantly changing environment and emergence of more and more threats, education for security should keep pace with these developments. It is necessary to constantly model the forms, structures and presented content related to this issue. Education for security should be adapted to current variables. It should convey the kind of content that can be used in an emergency situation, but will be relevant to currently existing determinants. Education in this field should develop as quickly as does the concept of “security”.¹⁹

Education for security ought to convey the kind of content that allows society to function safely in the face of contemporary threats. The knowledge imparted in this area should be constantly updated since the current very dynamic global situation provokes many changes. It is imperative for society to be able to recognise and identify threats and manage to prevent those as early as possible. On the other hand, if a danger does occur, it is important to respond appropriately. Through education for security, individuals should be prepared for challenges of the contemporary world, whatever the global situation may be. Acquired competences will allow appropriate action in times of peace as well as crisis and war²⁰.

A comprehensive definition of the term “education for security” can be found in the “Handbook of Security” [*Vademecum bezpieczeństwa*]. It indicates the importance of promoting prosocial attitudes and self-directed learning of society. In an age of modern threats and constant change, this should form the basis for the development of society. Certainly, education for security is provided through both formal and informal interaction. It is the development of security knowledge, skills and competences in children and adolescents, as well as adults. This issue presents threats society may face, but also opportunities to respond to and prevent dangerous situations. A comprehensive approach to this issue will enable understanding of emerging challenges and threats, both internal and external. Personal development of the individual is also a vital element of education for security. This will allow for a proper interpretation of the current security situation²¹.

It can be noted in the specialist literature that education for security should not only be provided by educational entities, but also by other institutions or workplaces whose aim is to impart knowledge of security in its broad sense²².

18 R. Stępień, *Teoretyczne zagadnienia edukacji dla bezpieczeństwa*, [in:] *Bezpieczeństwo personalne i strukturalne wobec wyzwań współczesnego świata. Materiały z międzynarodowej konferencji naukowej zorganizowanej w dniu 21 października 1999 r.*, L. Kanarski, B. Rokicki, J. Świniarski (ed.), Warszawa 2000, p. 37.

19 M. Zadorożna, *Ewolucja teleologicznego wymiaru edukacji dla bezpieczeństwa*, [in:] *Edukacja dla bezpieczeństwa...*, p. 99.

20 E. Jagiełło, G. Wierzbicki, *Edukacja na rzecz bezpieczeństwa dzieci*, Siedlce 2017, p. 23.

21 E. Włodarczyk, *Edukacja dla bezpieczeństwa*, [in:] *Vademecum bezpieczeństwa*, O. Wasiuta, R. Klepka, R. Kopeć (eds.), Kraków 2018, p. 282.

22 J. Świniarski, *Filozoficzne podstawy edukacji dla bezpieczeństwa*, Warszawa, 1999, p. 119.

Summary

Nowadays security education is an important element in understanding the contemporary world and emerging threats. It is implemented not only by educational entities, but also through activity of families or social organisations. A comprehensive approach in the field of education for security is the basis for generating pro-social attitudes and recognising contemporary threats. All activities carried out in the framework of this issue allow society to find its way around in the contemporary world, identify threats and take effective steps for common security. Constant changes occurring in the world can cause boundaries of some values and structures to be lost. Education for security shows a path for appropriate actions during peace, crisis and war alike. It also indicates opportunities to develop and protect both internal and external security. Due to the fact that it is a broad subject area, also this type of education ought not to be limited to educational activities; it should be conducted by other subjects, bodies and institutions too. Security knowledge acquisition should not only concern children and adolescents, but also adults. Considering the fast pace of changes and current developments, education for security should incessantly adapt to prevailing conditions. The catalogue of threats is extensive and new ones are constantly emerging, either on the basis of existing ones or those completely unknown. In the light of so many determinants and complexity of security issues in the broad sense, the author of this article emphasises importance of education for security. Knowledge gained in this area will help to understand occurring processes, recognise threats and skilfully overcome them. If they are properly interpreted at the right time, we can also attempt to prevent their negative consequences. Security is such an important issue that knowledge in this scope should be systematically consolidated and expanded at every stage of life. Considering the entirety of the discussed problems, the concept appears to be very broad and constitutes one of the pillars of building security in the contemporary world with education for security being an important component of security in its broad sense.

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