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POLISH CIVIL SECURITY IN REGIONAL CONTEXT¹

The aim of this paper is to provide an overview of the civil security in Poland. To start with, however, the notion of civil security itself deserves some attention. This is attempted in the first part of the paper where extant definitions related to the civil security are considered. In the second part, main outlines of the civil security in Poland are presented based on peoples' perception of non-military threats. Here, also the regional context is brought into debate. In the third and last section, the actual practice of civil security is compared with the theoretical approaches on the one hand; and with peoples' perceptions on the other hand.

CIVIL SECURITY – THEORETICAL APPROACHES

No accepted definition of the notion “civil security” exists. Generally, some authors see the civil security simply as a counterpart of the military one (Murray, 2007: 108–126). However, especially in European and North American societies, the notion has started to delimitate a specific sector of security, being distinct from the military security on the one hand; and from the field of law and order on the other hand (Shalamanov, Hadjitodorov, Tagarev, Stoyanov, Geneshky, Pavlov, 2006).

The notion is used synonymously to such terms as homeland security, crisis management or civil protection. However, also these terms remain often without any precise definition and their usage varies from one country to another. Generally, what these notions have in common is that they mark (in one way or another) a qualitative shift away from “civil defence” – a term associated mostly with the Cold War and a practice headed by the ministries of defence. Instead, new kinds of threats were recognized as eminent – such as natural disasters, terrorist attacks or critical infrastructure failures. With the changed threat perception, the object of security also changed. It is the people (or individual citizens) who have turned into the primary security object. Civil security should, thus, cover the threats lying closest to the citizens, rather than those related to sovereignty and integrity of the state (Bailes, Gylfason: 21–50). In such perspective, the idea comes somewhat closer to the “human security” as defined in the Human Development Report of 1994 (*Human Development Report*, 1994).

Although none of the currently used concepts in civil security is defined perfectly clearly, it is useful to take a look at these more in detail. Current definitions or practices, albeit imperfect, can serve here as a tool for a better delimitation of the field of civil security.

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Civil Protection

At the European Union (EU) level, the term “civil protection” is mostly employed. The first use of this term was documented as early as in 1985 when it was brought up during EC Rome meeting and upon which cooperation in training followed (Bremberg, Britz, 2009: 300). Also here, however, no single comprehensive definition exists. According to one of the definitions, the EU civil protection “aims at providing for the safety and security of people, the environment and property in the event of major emergencies” (ibidem: 289). In a narrower sense, this relates to disaster response teams, fire brigades and rescue services. Also this term has started to take on a broader understanding, however, including also other capacities and capabilities (ibidem). When the EU Community Civil Protection Mechanism (currently the most important tool to facilitate cooperation in civil protection assistance provision both within and without the EU) was established, the civil protection was understood by the defining Council Decision (*Council Decision*, 2007) as to “cover primarily people [...] in the event of natural and man-made disasters, acts of terrorism and, technological, radiological or environmental accidents, including accidental marine pollution [...]” (ibidem: art. 1.2). Such approach reflects a wide perception of threats leaving out pretty much only the classical military ones. In the *Eurobarometer* (EB) surveys which have been conducted so far, however, one could encounter civil protection being defined in rather narrow terms, as the preparation for natural and man-made disasters and the response to these disasters once they occur.

Societal Security

Although less frequently, one may encounter the term “societal security” to be used with respect to some Nordic countries (Bailes, Gylfason, 2008: 21–50). While a war or an internal violent conflict do represent the least probable threat and while political and economic threats are also relatively limited in Northern Europe, Bailes and Gylfason (ibidem) argue for a new security concept (namely the “societal security” in this case) which would include: 1) human processes indirectly affecting security (such as consequences of migration); 2) accidents affecting functioning of large-scale infrastructure (such as cyber-communication, heating or power, including nuclear events); 3) cut-offs of crucial supplies from outside (such as energy) by accident or intent; 4) natural processes (such as natural disasters and pandemic diseases) (ibidem: 24–25).

Homeland Security

Homeland security is mostly connected with the American perspective where the shift towards civil security occurred in January 2003 with the establishment of the *Department of Homeland Security* in reaction to the terrorist attacks in 2001. This shift of one whole area of security away from the auspice of the Department of Defence also included further changes in governance: from a top-down approach (with state/local im-

plementation and policy creation at the central level) the system transformed to a mixed approach (with state/local lead in planning and implementation) (Dory, 2003b: 7). Key components of homeland security were then identified in the literature as follows: risk education; preparedness; warning; and protective actions (ibidem: 1).

In more specific terms, homeland security firstly focused predominantly on terrorism (Dory, 2003b). Yet, with the time (and with other notable challenges, such as natural disasters) the concept started to broaden in focus. Currently, the homeland security work is described as fragmented, disjointed and complex by nature. The fields covered include “everything from preparation for a terrorist attack, [...] natural disasters or [...] infections and pandemics, dealing with major accidents in industry and transportation or power outages and accommodating floods of refugees to product control, ICT, telecommunications, ABC weapons, intelligence and surveillance and potentially involves almost all areas of the public sector.” (Læg Reid, Serigstad, 2004: 8)

Crisis/Disaster Management

Crises are traditionally perceived as exceptional situations. Thus, also crisis management is seen as “the management of exceptional or out-of-the-ordinary situations” (Roux-Dufort, 2007: 105) Yet, from a theoretical point of view, crisis management suffers from under-theorization and from vagueness of definitions employed (ibidem). Indeed, it is possible to speak of crisis management in any sphere touching upon security. However, the concept as such does fail to identify these spheres. For our purposes, what is more useful is the distinction of phases which the crisis management employs, i.e. crisis management is not only about a response to a particular crisis, but also about planning and preparedness on the one hand and about long-term recovery activities on the other hand (Ulmer, 2001: 590–615).

Quite frequently, crisis management is associated with the so-called disaster management. As the name suggests, the main fields of concern here are the natural and man-made disasters. Building on the *EM-DAT* (the *International Disaster Database* of the *WHO Collaborating Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters*) definition, the *International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies* (IFRCRCS) understands under disaster management all activities included in “the organization and management of resources and responsibilities for dealing with [...] emergencies, in particular preparedness, response and recovery in order to lessen the impact of disasters (About Disaster Management).” These disasters, then, are either of a natural or of a technological nature. Under the natural disasters, such events are subsumed as geophysical (e.g. landslides), hydrological (e.g. floods), climatological (e.g. wildfires), meteorological (e.g. storms) and biological (e.g. disease epidemics) ones. Under the technological (or man-made) disasters, the following hazards are understood: complex emergencies (conflicts), famine, displaced populations, industrial accidents and transport accidents, including environmental degradation and pollution (Types of disasters).

Based on the delimitations provided above, Table 1 summarizes various conceptions of what does the civil security respond to. Although none of the concepts possesses an entirely precise definition, it still can be argued that such comparison does

shed some light into the different understanding of and different approaches to civil security.

Table 1

What Do Different Concepts of Civil Security Refer to

Type of threat/ disaster	Disaster management	Homeland security	Societal security	Civil protection (EU)	Civil protection (EB)
Natural disasters	x	x	x	x	x
Technological disasters; ABC accidents	x	x	x	x	x
Pandemics	x	x	x	x	
Human processes indirectly affecting security (migration, displaced populations)	x	x	x		
Energy security (security of supplies)		x	x		
Terrorism		x		x	
Ecological issues (pollution)	x			x	
Cyber security			x		
Critical infrastructure		x			
Famine	x				
Direct human processes (looting)	x				

Source: Author's own concept.

As it can be seen from the Table, all concepts unanimously include natural and technological (man-made) disasters. These can thus be perceived as the most common and agreed upon challenges that are faced by present-day societies and that represent the core of the civil security. Followingly, epidemics and pandemics of diseases are commonly included and could be, then, also counted as an indispensable part of civil security by broad consensus. Beyond these challenges, however, the concepts do differ substantially in what is considered to be a matter of concern.

Interestingly, quite some of the concepts include security challenges caused indirectly by human processes, such as migration or displaced populations. Yet, the approach to this challenge does somewhat differ among various concepts – while some see within this perspective migration as a potential security challenge; some focus rather on the security of the people themselves and are thus closer to the human security as proposed by the UNDP. It is the latter approach which is involved in the IFRCRC's definition of disaster management. Here, too, famine (i.e. food security) is included – a feature missing in all the other concepts.

Issues such as the security of energy supplies, terrorism or environmental pollution were part of some of the concepts, yet in a varying composition. This suggests, on the one hand, that these challenges do certainly touch upon the civil security. On the other hand, however, they surpass this field and overlap with such areas as the economy, environment protection or law and order.

At the same time, civil security cannot be seen as a purely matter of the state only. Although the state represents, indeed, the crucial provider of this public good, one must

also recognize the role of other stakeholders, such as the public or the private companies. As Dory puts it for the case of America: “Civil security requires increased efforts by the full range of homeland security players: individuals must participate in civil security on their own behalf, while governments pursue it for their constituents and businesses address it with their employees” (Dory, 2003a: 38). Similarly, Bailes and Gylfason (Bailes, Gylfason, 2008) stress the openness and democratization of the security policy at every stage which includes the involvement of a wide range of specialized agencies, private actors, non-governmental organizations and individual volunteers (Bailes, Gylfason, 2008: 23).

In the Polish literature on the subject, civil security (*bezpieczeństwo cywilne*) is defined as aiming at protecting people, property and the environment from accidents, natural disasters and catastrophes; and as preventing these to occur. Civil security is associated with civil protection on the one hand; and with the protection of critical infrastructure, on the other hand (Dworecki, 2011: 3–4).

As an activity, civil security includes identifying, monitoring and countering threats to the security of the citizens. It is described as crisis management and decision making at both the strategic level as well as at the operational one. In particular, civil security is concerned with sudden events such as “fires; chemical and ecological accidents; technical infrastructure failures; road, rail and air accidents; water accidents, including search for people and sunk objects; natural disasters (in peacetime and during a war)” (ibidem). The main role in this field is played by the national system of rescue and firefighting.

Probably the broadest understanding of natural and man-made threats to civil security is in Polish literature provided by Walas-Trębacz (Walas-Trębacz, 2010). The author divides the threats stemming from human activity into five categories, covering: 1) technological accidents (such as chemical and biological, industrial, transport accidents or fires); 2) humanitarian threats (such as migration and displacement, homelessness, joblessness and hunger and poverty); 3) societal threats (civilization diseases, dangerous ideologies, irresponsible waste management or an overall moral decay); 4) threats to the law and public order (such as terrorism, common or organized crime or political-military conflicts); and 5) threats economic activity (air pollution, ecosystems degradation, thinning of the ozone layer or biological degradation of waters). The natural threats are, then, also understood quite broadly to include threats stemming from: 1) the cosmos; 2) the climate (e.g. floods or draughts); 3) tectonic activity; and 4) biological threats (such as communicable diseases) (ibidem: 20–39).

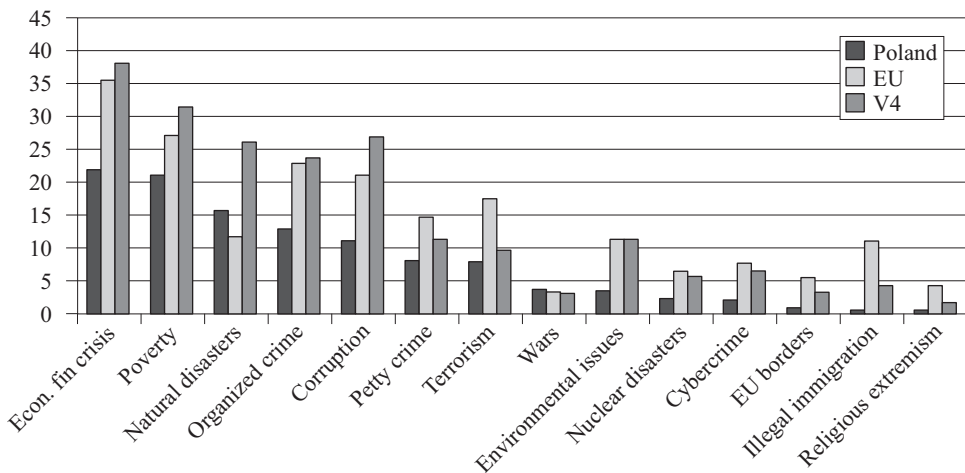
It can be argued, nevertheless, that although such understanding is very insightful, in the end the range results to cover almost everything, except for a classical military conflict. On the one hand, this approach could prove useful from a long-term perspective, as it does not concentrate solely on immediate and sudden threats (such as different large-scale accidents or disasters) but it takes into account also a long-term perspective, i.e. threats which might have a significant impact on civil security over a long period of time (such as e.g. the ecosystem degradation). In such way, it could be indeed inspiring for the security policy making in the country. On the other hand, however, the very broad coverage makes it rather difficult to work further with such all-encompassing understanding of civil security.

CIVIL SECURITY – CITIZENS’ PERCEPTION

Delimitating civil security based on theoretical approaches and definitions is one thing, yet – following from the very logic of the concept – the actual threat perception of the people is equally, if not more important. The following part is based on the Eurobarometer 77.1 (*Eurobarometer*, 2012) and Eurobarometer 75.4 (*Eurobarometer*, 2011) data and discusses the findings for Poland. The Eurobarometer 75.4 survey focused (among other things) on the topic of internal security and was conducted in 2011, in the wake of the adoption of the European Internal Security Strategy in 2010. Quite logically, the fields covered within the internal security in the questionnaire were identical with those in the aforementioned EU strategic document – ranging from organized crime, border management and terrorism to natural and man-induced disasters.

When the respondents were asked to identify the most important challenge to the (broadly defined) security in Poland, the highest percentage spontaneously opted for “soft” security issues such as the financial crisis or poverty (21.9 % and 21.2% respectively). On the other hand, from all challenges that can be subsumed under the narrower understanding of civil security – as defined through large-scale crisis events affecting immediately the population – the natural disasters (15.8%) took the leading position as the biggest challenge to the Polish security. Terrorism was identified as the most important challenge by 8% Poles, while issues as nuclear disasters or cybercrime were perceived to be among the biggest challenges only by less than 3% of the people, each. The threat perception is summarized in Chart 1.

Chart 1. Spontaneously perceived challenges to the security in Poland, in the EU and in the V4 (in %)



Source: Author’s own concept based on Eurobarometer 75.4 (2011).

The type of community (i.e. village/small or middle town/large town) did also play some role in the spontaneous answers regarding important challenges. This was especially true for the natural disasters and for corruption, yet in a different way in each of

these cases. Both with natural disasters and with corruption, the type of community did matter.¹ In the former case, people from rural areas or villages tended the most to identify natural disasters as a threat, followed by those living in large cities. The least concerned about natural disasters, then, were people coming from small or middle towns. In the latter case, corruption was perceived to be an imminent challenge especially in large cities and to be the least important in rural areas and villages. The mention of terrorism, too, did depend on the type of community.² It occurred increasingly with the increasing size of the community. One may say that the latter finding is not much surprising, given the fact that potential targets of terrorists are largely associated with the cities (McCartan, Masselli, Rey, Rusnak, 2008: 60–79). However, such difference did not exist in the case of cybercrime, nuclear disasters, organized crime or environmental issues. All these challenges were identified (or not) by the respondents regardless of the type of community they live in.

Interestingly, citizens of all European countries taken together (including Poland) perceived natural disasters as less threatening (only 11.7% said that natural disasters are an eminent threat). In contrast to that, all Europeans tended to fear almost all other kinds of threats more. Terrorism was perceived to be a threat by 17.5% Europeans – a figure almost twice as high as it was in the case of Poland. Also illegal immigration, cybercrime and religious extremism (11.1%; 7.8%; and 4.4%, respectively) were generally feared more in the whole EU than it was the case in Poland.

When looking at the average Central European (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia) responses, the differences compared to Poland alone are even more striking. On average, there was much higher threat perception regarding natural disasters and other environmental issues (26.1% and 11.4%) than in the case of Poland alone. Terrorism, on the other hand, seems to be a low profile threat in the whole Central European region, being feared by only 9.8% of the people.

Similarly, in 2012, when another *Eurobarometr* survey was conducted, touching upon the topic of civil protection, natural disasters could be said to represent the most serious security challenge in Poland. When asked how concerned they were about the natural disasters in Poland, almost half (49%) of the respondents claimed to be “very concerned”, with another 38% being “fairly concerned”. Man-made disasters in Poland ranked second with 42% being very concerned and further 41% being fairly concerned. Terrorism, on the other hand, was considered to be a reason of big concern by 35%, while 20% people were not too concerned about this issue.

When compared with the results for the *Visegrad Group* (V4), the following picture appears: the concern about security challenges did not differ much in the V4. Generally, it can be said that the results for the V4 were similar to those for Poland in all aspects. Natural disasters in their countries were source of a large concern for 48% of respondents from the Visegrad area. The man-made disasters, again, came after the natural ones with 44% people being very concerned by these. In this case, the slightly higher percentage than in Poland as such can be perhaps best explained by the then relatively

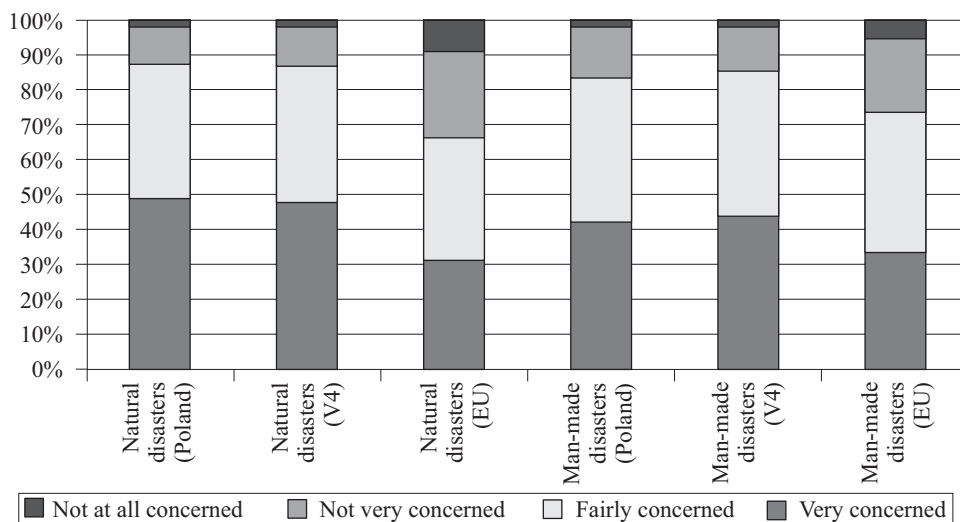
¹ Pearson Chi-square, P-value: 0.001, N=998.

² Pearson Chi-square, P-value: 0.016, N=998.

recent memory of the Ajka aluminium plant disaster which occurred in Hungary in late 2010.

In the EU as a whole (including Poland), on the other hand, the man-made disasters were of more concern than the natural ones with 34% and 31% of respondents being very concerned by these, respectively. Terrorism, then, was of a large concern for 26% (compared with 35% in both Poland and the V4). The comparative data for natural and man-made disasters are summarized in Chart 2.

Chart 2. How concerned are people about natural and man-made disasters (in %)



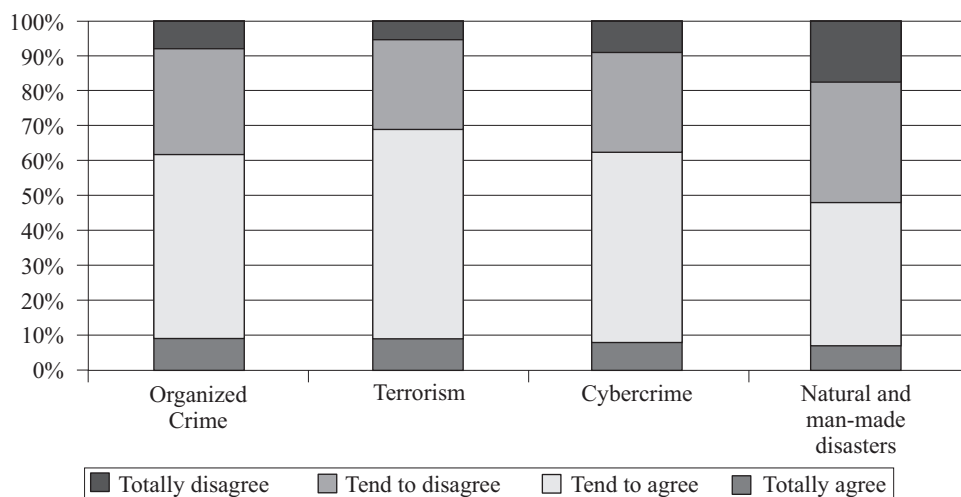
Source: Author's own concept based on Eurobarometer 77.1 (2012).

In 2011, over 50% of Poles did also think that challenges such as terrorism (54.6%), cybercrime (60.5%) or natural disasters (56.9%) will increase in the future. A decrease in all these challenges in the future, on the other hand, was expected by only some 13% of the people in Poland. While in the case of cybercrime – given the current low number of people perceiving it as a challenge – it is somewhat understandable that people do view this threat to be possibly increasingly present in the future; in the case of natural disasters the future expectations of the challenge to increase couple with the already relatively large threat perception relating to the present. Having said that, it can be argued that natural disasters do currently represent a major challenge to civil security in Poland, according to the people's perception.

In line with the actual threat perception goes also the question if the country is doing enough to fight the challenges that people perceive as important. With terrorism, cybercrime or organized crime, more than 60% of the people agreed that Poland is doing enough in countering these challenges. At the same time, only less than 10% of the respondents definitely did not see the country as doing enough in all three cases. Somewhat different picture, however, can be drawn with respect to the disasters (both natural and man-made ones). Here, contrary to the aforementioned challenges, Poland is seen

as not doing enough by more than 50% of the respondents. Indeed, there were almost 18% of the people who disagreed with the statement completely. Hence, speaking about natural and other disasters, it is not solely a threat perception as such, but there is also a relatively strong perceived insufficiency of the security provision in this respect in Poland. Chart 3 shows the distribution of citizens' perception regarding the sufficiency of Poland's activity in countering the mentioned threats.

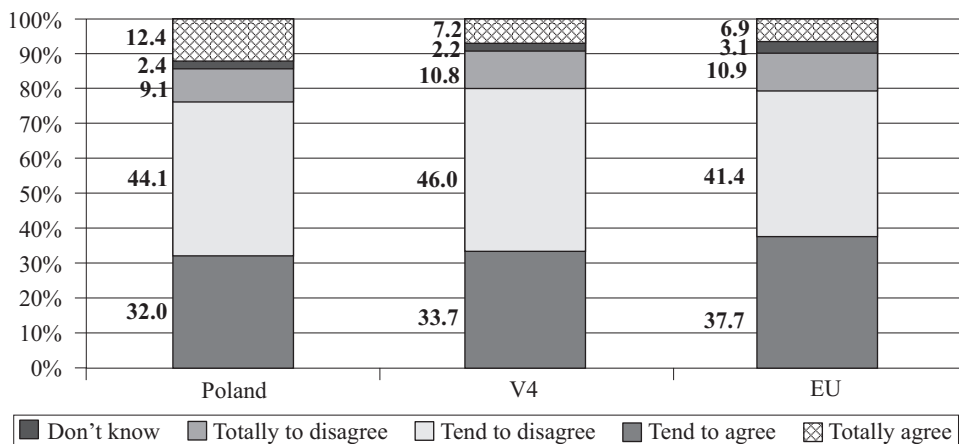
Chart 3. Is Poland doing enough to fight the challenges? (in %)



Source: Author's own concept based on Eurobarometer 75.4 (2011).

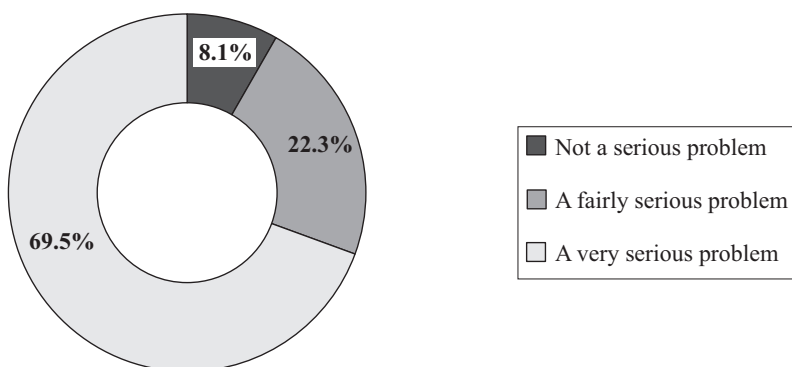
In 2012, an absolute majority (83%) of respondents in Poland expressed the opinion that the countries of the EU should be obliged by law to prepare and publish disaster management plans. In this respect, only 10% of the Poles were against such obligation. This can be seen to be quite in line with the finding above, i.e. that the state could do more about the disasters. At the same time, such opinion did not distinguish Poland too much from the V4 or the EU as a whole. Here 85% (EU) and 86% (V4) of respondents agreed to such obligation, while some 9% were against it in both cases.

Similarly, most of the people were in favor of potential pooling of civil protection resources in the EU as a means to a more cost-effective disaster management. As can be seen in the Chart 4.39% totally agreed and next 44% tended to agree that pooling civil protection resources in the EU can be more cost-effective than each country managing their own resources. Against such efforts were only 9%. In the EU as a whole, on the other hand, the respondents were even more enthusiastic about potential pooling of resources in civil protection. 38% of Europeans totally agreed with such statement while in the V4 it was 34% of those who totally agreed. Somewhat interestingly, the number of people who did not have any opinion on this was relatively high in Poland (12.4%), compared with the 7% in both the V4 and the EU, which might suggest that the topic of potential sharing resources as a means to increased efficiency is rather absent on the public agenda.

Chart 4. Agreement with pooling of resources in civil protection (in %)

Source: Author's own concept based on Eurobarometer 77.1 (2012).

The increasing quantity and intensity of natural disasters (especially floods and storms) is often understood as a result of the climate change (Knieling, Leal Filho, 2013). In this respect, it is not without interest, how is this phenomenon perceived in Poland. While for 8% of people the climate change does not represent an important challenge, almost 70% consider it to be a serious problem. Figures are provided in Chart 5. At the same time, the type of community (i.e. village/small or middle town/large town) did somewhat determine the answer³ with the people from rural areas or villages tending to see the climate change more as a serious problem. The gender of the respondents, too, did play some role in here with women being more prone to classify the climate change as a very important challenge.⁴

Chart 5. Climate change perception in Poland (in %)

Source: Author's own concept based on Eurobarometer 75.4 (2011).

³ ANOVA, P-value: 0.027, N=948.

⁴ T-test, P-value: 0.001, N=949.

CIVIL SECURITY – THE PRACTICE

As it was argued at the beginning, civil security cannot be seen as a purely matter of the state only. In Poland, as in the majority of other European countries, the state is the crucial provider of civil security. In particular, the role of the Minister of Interior is essential, as it is connected with the responsibility for the maintenance of public order, civil protection in emergency situations and for the prevention of disasters.

Overall, the crisis management at the national level is associated with the *Council of Ministers*. The President and the Parliament act only during the state of natural disaster. With respect to the civil protection, key players are the *Ministry of Interior* (MoI), the *Government Center for Security* and the *National Headquarters of the State Fire Service* (subordinated to the MoI) whose Chief Commandant is also the *Chief of the National Civil Defence* (Matczak, Abgarowicz, 2013). Operationally, the role of Governors is crucial. They coordinate the prevention, support local governments in their efforts and assist lower levels of administration if their resources are inadequate to counter a disaster. Important role is – in operational sense – played by the State Fire Service, by the specialized services which are subordinated to different ministries and by the armed forces which are engaged upon request. The Police plays a supplementary role, sustaining public order during a crisis (ibidem).

From the civic sector, the *Voluntary Fire Service* is definitely the most important organization in the field of civil security in Poland (although it covers the countryside and smaller towns only, being almost absent in larger cities), cooperating closely with the *State Fire Service*. There is also a number of civil society organizations active either in specialized fields (such as e.g. the *Voluntary Water Rescue*), or operating at lower levels of administration (such as the *Polish Amateur Radio Union*, the *Gymnastic Society Sokół* or the *Catholic Charity Caritas*). Despite the importance of the Voluntary Fire service, however, the role of civil society organizations is much lower when compared to the countries of Western Europe (ibidem). The role of the private (for-profit) organizations is then most accentuated in the field of critical infrastructure and its protection. As prescribed by the law, owners and holders of critical infrastructure facilities are obliged to protect these, prepare crisis management plans, etc. There are also private companies contracted by the state for specific tasks in the field of civil security, such as transportation companies securing logistics for a case of emergency. Ambulance, sanitary equipment and temporary shelters also belong among the contracted services (ibidem).

Apart from the actors involved, it is rather hard to conceptually delimit the field of civil security in Poland. In practice, the term civil security does not appear in Polish legislation. The key legal act governing the field of civil security is the *Act on Crisis Management* of 2007. This act, however, does not use the term “civil security” at all. Instead, “crisis management” is the concept used here to refer to the state’s role in the area of civil security. It is described as the activity of public administration with the aim of “preventing crisis situations, preparing to take control over them [...], responding in case of emergencies, removal of their effects and the reconstruction of the resources and critical infrastructure” (*Act on Crisis Management*, 2007).

In the *Act on Crisis Management*, a crisis situation is further defined as “a situation that impacts negatively on the safety of people, property in large sizes or the environ-

ment” (*Act on Crisis Management*, 2007: Art. 3). In addition to that, crisis situation is understood as an exceptional one, extending beyond the actual capabilities and resources of the competent authorities of public administration. At the same time, much attention in the present version of the Act is devoted to critical infrastructure. One defining point of the critical infrastructure is the key importance which it has for the security of both the state and the citizens. Secondly, particular fields (or “systems”) of critical infrastructure are enumerated. These are: energy supply; communication; tele-information networks; finances; food and water supply; health protection; transportation; rescue; continuity of public administration activities; and production, storing and usage of chemical and radioactive substances (*ibidem*). Terrorism, too, is included, but rather indirectly. The *Act on Crisis Management* mentions a terrorist attack, yet it treats it separately from the aforementioned issues. Terrorism as such is defined by the Penal Code and from the crisis management perspective it is solely seen as an act “which might lead to a crisis situation” (*Act on Crisis Management*, 2007: Art. 4.12).

Natural disasters, on the other hand, do receive additional attention as they are the subject of the *Act on the State of Natural Disaster* of 2002. Despite the name of this Act, the disasters covered are both natural and technical (man-made) ones. In the Act, conditions for implementing extraordinary measures are specified, including the rights and restrictions imposed on the public under the state of natural disaster. The *Act on the State of Natural Disaster* is embedded in the Constitution in which situations of particular danger are stipulated, upon which extraordinary measures can be introduced (*Constitution*, 1997: Art. 228). In particular, the act deals with natural disasters and technical failures, “the consequences of which threaten the life or health of a large number of people, property in a large size or the environment on a large scale” (*Act on the State of Natural Disaster*, 2002: Art. 3). It is stipulated by the act that the extraordinary measures are to enable an effective assistance and protection with different bodies, institutions and specialized services operating under a single guidance. Natural disaster is defined as a situation related to the forces of nature, such as lightning, seismic activity, strong winds, heavy rainfall, long-lasting extreme temperatures, landslides, fires, draughts, floods, but also mass occurrence of pests or plant, animal and human diseases. Technical failure, then, is described by the law as a sudden and unforeseen damage or destruction of assets, such as buildings or technical facilities, causing a break in use or property loss. According to the act, both natural disaster and technical failure can be also a result of incidents in cyberspace or of a terrorist activity (*ibidem*).

When comparing the approach given by the Polish legislation with the different approaches to civil security as provided above, in the first part of this chapter, we can see that the closest match in understanding civil security is here with the “civil protection” concept as used by the EU. Indeed, the most stress is put on natural disasters, including diseases (and thus also epidemics and pandemics), technological disasters and ecological issues (such as large-scale damages to the environment). In the Polish case, also cyber security is mentioned. Together with terrorism, however, these are understood to be rather indirect threats to civil security, i.e. they are understood as a threat to the civil security especially insofar as they result in natural or technological disasters.

The approach to the critical infrastructure, on the other hand, resembles rather the concept of homeland security as proposed above. Although it is indisputably a part of the civil security, somewhat state-centric orientation does prevail here, acknowledging the necessity of a functional state for the security of the citizens. Hence, it does touch upon a relatively wide range of fields, such as energy security, finances or the continuity of the public administration as such.

Except for the crisis management, there is also a concept of civil defence still used in Poland, regulation of which is part of the *Act on General Obligation to Defend the Republic of Poland* of 21 November 1967. The concept of civil defence has been introduced during the Cold War era, in 1972 and has remained in place ever since, although the responsibility therefore has been shifted from the *Ministry of Defence* to the *Ministry of Interior* in 2000 (Gołębiewski, 2003: 161–167). The area of civil defence and citizen protection is, however, not clearly defined by law, as several attempts to do so failed in the past (Matczak, Abgarowicz, 2013). In general, the abovementioned act defines the role of the armed forces, including their potential involvement in the fight against natural disasters and elimination of their consequences, in countering terrorism as well as in the protection of property, search and rescue works or performing crisis management tasks (*Act on General Obligation to Defend the Republic of Poland*, 1967: Art. 3). According to the act, the aim of civil defence is to protect the people, public facilities and cultural goods and to rescue and assist victims during war time or to cooperate in fighting with natural disasters and with threats to the environment as well as in removing their consequences (ibidem: Sec. 4).

If we look back at the citizens' perceptions as presented in the second part of this chapter, we see that the largest challenge from the civil security perspective were natural disasters. At the same time, many people did share the feeling that Poland is not doing enough in countering this challenge, especially when compared to other ones, such as terrorism or cybercrime. This resonates quite well with reality as the people could have experienced it. The most eminent disasters in Poland are natural ones. Floods, in particular, have been both the most costly and affecting the most people over the last two decades, especially the floods of 1997 and 2010 (Matczak, Abgarowicz, 2013). At the same time, e.g. the so-called Great Flood of 1997 is believed to be largely miss-managed. As for its scale, this flood was an unprecedented event. The experience with such large-scale action was missing, as well as a clear idea of how to efficiently manage rescue and relief works. Overall, the role of civil security was somewhat underestimated: "No real civil defence was available; what existed was oriented towards war rather than natural disaster" (Kundzewicz, Szamalek, Kowalczak, 1999: 867).

After another large flood which occurred in May 2010, reports of the *Supreme Audit Office* investigating the response also pointed to substantial deficiencies in the civil defence. Overall, the whole system of civil defence was considered in its present form inadequate. Especially the preparation phase was evaluated negatively and it was pointed out that civil defence plans were incomplete and containing provisions which were already outdated (Matczak, Abgarowicz, 2013: 27). This resonates well with the Eurobarometer responses where majority of the people in Poland expressed themselves in favor of the obligation, that the public authorities should have by law, to prepare and publish disaster management plans.

* * *

In sum, it can be said that the state is, indeed, the crucial provider of civil security in Poland. The role of private sector is, at least so far, rather limited and encountered especially in the area of critical infrastructure protection (although some other services, such as ambulance, are contracted by the state). The voluntary sector does enjoy more importance from the civil security point of view, with the *Voluntary Fire Service* representing its largest component. Yet, the overall civic involvement is rather low compared to other Western European countries.

Conceptually, the field of civil security in Poland remains unspecified in practice. Basically, it can be thought of as including anything which threatens lives, property values or the environment in a large size. Indirectly, one gets an idea of the coverage by looking at the fields covered by respective legal acts. Thus, based on the *Act on the State of Natural Disaster*, it can be claimed that the approach is the closest to the “civil protection” approach which is used by the EU. Based on the *Act on Crisis Management*, and in particular on the different fields of critical infrastructure which it covers and which, by the logic of the wording in the act, are essential for the security of the citizens and of the state, one might see some resemblance with the concept of homeland security as introduced at the beginning of this chapter. The approach to civil security is here broadened to include fields essential for the functioning of the state and the society, hence not only the individual citizens. In this way, the field of e.g. finances or the continuity of public administration also come to the forefront.

The most eminent challenges to civil security in Poland since early 1990s have been natural disasters, particularly floods. It is, thus, not surprising that natural disasters are perceived to be the most important threat by the people. At the same time, dealing with these floods (and especially with the large ones of 1997 and 2010) was not always one hundred percent successful. The extant analyses as well as official reports point to serious deficiencies in civil defence with the preparedness and planning being the proverbial “weakest links”. This, again, finds its reflection in the public opinion as majority of the people believe Poland should do better in fighting natural disasters and that disaster management plans should be prepared based on legal obligation.

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ABSTRACT

The chapter provides an overview of the civil security in Poland. At the beginning, the notion of civil security is explained and delimited using the most common current definitions related

to civil security, such as civil protection or disaster management. Theoretical conceptualizations from the Polish literature on the subject are included as well. In the second part of the chapter, main outlines of the civil security in Poland are presented based on peoples' perception of non-military threats. This is done based on the data from *Eurobarometer* surveys from 2011 and 2012, both of which had a civil security component. Here, also the regional context is brought into debate, as the outcomes for Poland are compared with the ones for the *Visegrad Group* and with those for the whole EU. In the third and the last section, the organization of civil security in Poland is outlined, together with the appreciation of the role of the non-governmental (i.e. civic and for-profit/private) sector. The section then proceeds with the understanding of civil security as provided by the extant Polish legislation. Such understanding and practice is then compared with the theoretical approaches which were provided at the beginning. Peoples' perceptions, too, are brought again into the forefront as they are linked here to the actual civil security practice in Poland.

POLSKIE BEZPIECZEŃSTWO CWYILNE W KONTEKŚCIE REGIONALNYM

STRESZCZENIE

Artykuł przedstawia zarys problematyki bezpieczeństwa cywilnego w Polsce. Na początku wyjaśniono pojęcie bezpieczeństwa cywilnego i określono jego zakres w oparciu o najpopularniejsze współczesne definicje pojęć z nim powiązanych, jak np. ochrona cywilna czy zarządzanie w warunkach katastrof. Uwzględniono również konceptualizacje teoretyczne zawarte w polskiej literaturze przedmiotu. W drugiej części artykułu, zaprezentowano zarys stanu bezpieczeństwa cywilnego w Polsce w oparciu o publiczną percepcję zagrożeń niemilitarnych. Dokonano tego w oparciu o dane badań *Eurobarometru* z lat 2011 i 2012, które zawierały komponent dotyczący bezpieczeństwa cywilnego. Na tym etapie wprowadzono kontekst regionalny, przez porównanie polskich wyników z odnotowanymi w *Grupie Wyszehradzkiej* oraz UE jako całości. W trzeciej i ostatniej sekcji, zarysowano organizację zapewniania bezpieczeństwa cywilnego w Polsce, wraz z oceną roli sektora pozarządowego (np. organizacji społecznych lub prywatnych, nastawionych na zysk). Następnie ukazano, jak bezpieczeństwo cywilne jest pojmowane w polskim ustawodawstwie. Tak ujęte definicje oraz praktyka zostały skonfrontowane z podejściami teoretycznymi przedstawionymi na początku tekstu. Ponowne uwzględniono również percepcję społeczną, gdyż jest ona powiązana z praktyką bezpieczeństwa cywilnego w Polsce.