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## STATE SECURITY AND PATRIOTISM VS THE IMPLEMENTATION OF OBLIGATIONS AND PROHIBITIONS RELATED TO COVID-19

### ABSTRACT

Security is a multi-faceted, ambiguous and very dynamic concept, in particular nowadays, in the light of a rapidly and constantly changing world and our approach to it.

The author points out that one of the most major categories of security is state security, which until recently was essentially associated with external threats. Presently, the notions of state security and national security are inextricably bound with the notion of patriotism. And when properly understood, patriotism is a pillar of state or national security.

Nowadays, patriotism is no longer a combat with the occupant, it is also not a fight with one's own state; it is concern for national security and the state. It is working in harmony and with respect for the law, for the sake of one's own homeland and fellow citizens.

**KEYWORDS:** *security, national security, patriotism, COVID-19*

## STATE SECURITY AND PATRIOTISM VS THE IMPLEMENTATION OF OBLIGATIONS AND PROHIBITIONS RELATED TO COVID-19

“Security – just like many other common phenomena of everyday life of individuals and societies – is perceived intuitively, and is not subject to unequivocal definitions” (Czuryk, Dunaj, Karpiuk, & Prokop, 2016, p. 17). Moreover, it has to be emphasized that security (in general terms and in its various kinds) is a multi-faceted, ambiguous and very dynamic concept, in particular nowadays, in the light of a rapidly and constantly changing world and our approach to it. One of the most major categories of security is state security, which until recently was essentially associated with external threats. The basic definitions that we could find in the literature on the subject describe it as a state obtained as a result of organized protection and defence against possible threats, expressed in the ratio of defence potential to the scale of threats, or the actual state of internal stability and sovereignty of the state that reflects the absence or presence of threats (Dworecki, 1994, p. 16; *Glossary of basic terms related to state security*, 1994, p. 6; *Glossary of terms on national security*, 2002, p. 16; Chodak, 2015, p. 9).

Presently, scholars indicate that “state security is not a category that could be subject to unambiguous definitions. Principally, it can be ascertained that it is about such a lack of threat that allows for its safe existence and development. (...). They can be characterized as the state’s ability to defend recognized values against internal and external dangers. Particularly it is about the survival of the state, securing its territorial integrity, preserving the biological existence of its inhabitants and maintaining political independence (sovereignty)” (Czuryk et al., 2016, p. 21). Bronisław Sitek writes: “Postmodernism creates a new look at safety, especially created on the border between the interests of the group – state and the individual. Globalization has increasingly strong emphasis on rights, including human and interests of the individual. Consequently, the system of values is being transformed and the state and its system of values suffers increasing weakness. This new situation leads to social and scientific discussion and evaluation of the decision of the state authorities through the eyes of individual rights. These new issues raise questions hardly to answer.

It affects the concept of safety defined in international, national law and case law” (Sitek B., 2015, p. 79).

It should be remarked here that state security occupies a special place not only in the subject literature, but also in the fundamental act, i.e., the Constitution of the Republic of Poland, in which the individuals creating the system frequently refer to state security as a category of a particularly protected value.

The notions of state security and national security are inextricably bound with the notion of patriotism. To paraphrase Kabayeva et al., it can be said that the formation of a patriotism is characterized by both specific features and general features. It is known that countries in transition have various development paths (Kabayeva, Imanmoldayeva, Zhanbayeva, Madalieva, 2020, p. 142). Whereas, paradoxically: “the modern shaping of the scope and essence of the concepts of <<patriotism>> (...) and <<security>> in the Republic of Poland began at the time when the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was already in a state of deep internal decay and a great external threat, i.e., in the middle of the 18th century. It was on the eve of the appointment of Stanisław August Poniatowski to the throne that the loudest and thorough discussions began on the issues how to be a patriot and how to build state security” (Wesołowska, Szerauc (ed.), 2002, p. 9).

The awakening of this patriotic awareness and way of thinking in terms of care for the security and integrity of the Republic of Poland had undoubtedly some influence, and, at the same time, the outcome of this ‘awakening’, was the adoption of the Constitution of 3 May 1791. And, regardless of whether we assume that the Constitution of 3 May 1791 was the first European constitution, or one of the first, the fact is that it was a pioneering solution for those times, nevertheless, unfortunately only valid for 14 months – until the king’s accession to the so-called Targowica Confederation.

Among the authors dealing with this subject, there are significant discrepancies as to the place of the Polish constitution on the list that organizes the basic acts according to the order in which they were created. Undoubtedly, it was one of the first constitutions in Europe, and even in the world. Many Polish sources even indicate that it was the first constitution in Europe, and the second one in the world. In order for such a statement to be considered

true, it should be added here that we only count formal and ‘modern’ constitutions. Whereas:

- ‘Formal’ here means – written in a form of a single legal act. It should be borne in mind that at that time there was already a constitutional monarchy in Great Britain. Nonetheless, due to the different legal system operating in Great Britain, although we [were and are] dealing with a constitutional monarchy there, there was no constitution as one formalized legal act. The Constitution existed in the material sense – as a set of norms and principles concerning the exercise of power, written in various legal acts, or constituting an element of tradition;
- ‘Modern’ (as the three mentioned by many authors as the first, i.e. American, Polish and French) – means: reflecting the Enlightenment political thought, with particular emphasis on the concept of the tripartite division of power, national sovereignty and the idea of human fundamental rights. Based on such approach, the basic law passed by the parliament of the rebellious Corsica in 1755 and the Swedish constitutions of 1720 and 1772 are omitted.

Simply put, the concept of patriotism is defined as love for the motherland and readiness to make sacrifices for it (Sychowicz, 2017, p. 186)<sup>1</sup>. The Dictionary of the Polish Language defines patriotism as love for one’s homeland and readiness to sacrifice for one’s own nation, and distinguishes local patriotism, which is characterized by a strong attachment to the place where one lives (<https://sjp.pl/patriotyzm>; Szymczak, 1994, p. 621).

In the course book of the subject *Civics* for grades 8 of primary schools, we encounter a slightly more extensive definition of patriotism, in which it is defined as:

- recognition of the common good as an important value,
- readiness to sacrifice one’s own good for the good of the motherland,
- love for one’s country combined with respect for other nations (Krzesicki, Kur, Poręba, 2018, p. 89).

*Glossary of security-related terms* included in a collective work entitled *Patriotism, Defence, Security* defines patriotism as a socio-political and moral attitude expressed by a feeling of love for one’s nation, commitment to its defence, attachment to one’s homeland, and based on the principles of unity and

solidarity with one's own nation (Wesołowska, Szerauc, p. 310). According to the authors of the above definition, "the main contents of patriotism include love for the homeland, reliable education, service and work; sacrifice for the motherland; active attitude and shared responsibility for the future of the country; defence of the country and the fight for peace and security" (Wesołowska, Szerauc, p. 310). In the above definition, attention is drawn to the extension of the meaning of patriotism to everyday activities for the good of the state and the fatherland (such as: "reliable science, service and work"), and not only the struggle to regain or maintain independence oscillating around the issue.

We have to agree with the statement of Altıkulaç: "the word Patriotism etymologically comes from Latin and can be characterized as being loyal to the sovereign. There are different perspectives towards the description of patriotism on its content and its distinctive characteristics. The most basic description of patriotism is defined as a group's loyalty towards their members and the land they share in living (Altıkulaç, 2016, p. 27).

It is impossible to talk about contemporary patriotic attitudes without referring to national historical experiences. As far as Poland is concerned, as already signalled above, it is significant that the time of shaping the concept and patterns of patriotic attitudes, in the case of the Polish nation, fell on the period of the fall/lack of statehood of the Republic of Poland – its partitions, one world war, a short interwar period of regaining independence, another world war, and, finally 45 years, during which many Poles believed that the state they live in was not their true and independent homeland. The above-mentioned conditions meant that for centuries, the patterns of patriotic attitudes focused almost exclusively on armed, open or guerrilla warfare, as mentioned by many authors, as well as sabotaging state activity or at least not supporting it. Hence, on the one hand, during many centuries, Poles repeatedly testified to their almost heroic patriotism, while, on the other hand – they developed a number of antagonistic attitudes towards everything that was related to state and law.

A rarely discussed subject is the distortion resulting from the above, or even the devastation that the historical experiences of the Polish nation caused in the area of the social approach in Poland to the issue of working for the state, respecting civic obligations and the applicable law, i.e., state orders and bans. Attitudes such as reliable education, service and work for

the state and in accordance with its laws, which other nations associate as propatriotic attitudes on a par with armed combat, for many centuries under foreign rule – 123 years under partitions<sup>2</sup>, 5 years of German occupation, and 45 years of peculiar Polish People's Republic (PRL) independence, were associated with collaboration with the invader or occupant. Throughout this time, when there was no independent Polish state, the patriotic struggle with the enemy was, among other issues, a fight against... the state apparatus and with everything that symbolizes official power – power that was not ours.

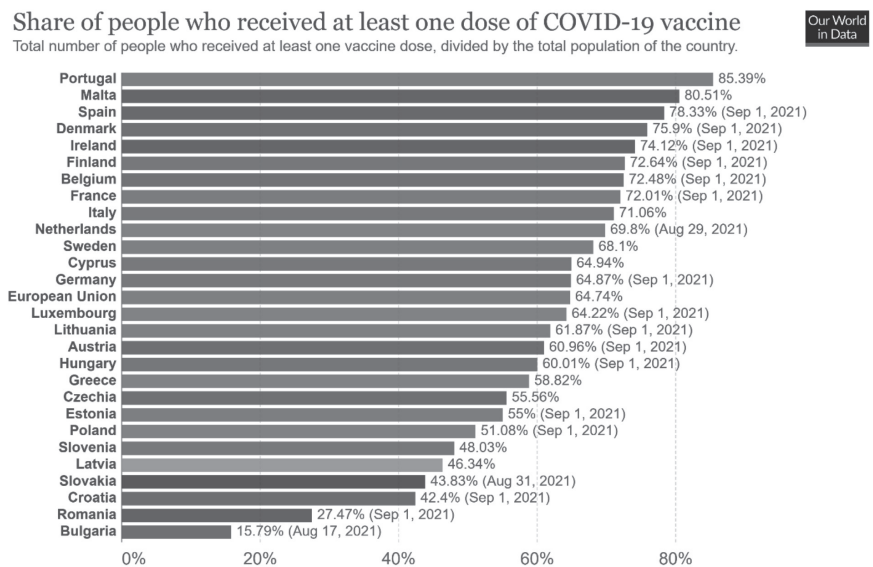
That is why, what in other countries is considered as a normal civic reaction, the fulfilment of civic duty in Poland is still often stigmatized as an act unworthy of a Pole. An example of it may even be the prosaic matter of destroying public utility property (city, communal), or the problem of drunk-driving, which is common in Poland. In other countries, a citizen who sees such an action feels a civic duty to call the appropriate services – since someone destroys our common good, which serves all of us, which is built from our taxes, with our money. A drunk driver is a potential (highly probable) killer of someone's child, wife, husband, father or mother – thus a citizen-patriot, in a country without a centuries-old tradition of fighting the state apparatus – feeling a sense of duty – calls. In Poland, no matter how serious the offence is, the transfer of information about a person (especially a countryman) who commits the offence or crime towards the law enforcement apparatus is still perceived as a hideous reporting on someone.

For almost 200 years (counting from the first partition of Poland to the political system transformation), as a society, we learned to plot, avoid the state and established law, and to make war against the state and its law, bypassing it and scheming against it – for us Poles, this was patriotism. Referring to the above, patriotism in Poland is often equated with armed struggle, or even readiness to die for the homeland, and very rarely with ordinary work, paying taxes or, for example, complying with the law, including orders and bans issued in connection with the epidemic threat. Let us focus on the data (*Our World in Data*, <https://ourworldindata.org>) on statistics on the percentage of vaccinated people by country in the EU (Fig. 1). In September 2021, Poland was ranked 21st out of 27 member states in such a ranking, with a result that only 51.08% of the entire population consisted of those vaccinated with at

least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine (11 countries obtained a result above 68%, which means that more than 2/3rds of their entire population was made up of vaccinated members). At the same time, it is worth highlighting the countries that accompany Poland in this ranking. A country immediately ahead of Poland – Estonia (55%) is a country that was established after the First World War. The majority of the countries placed lower in the ranking are the countries that gained independence in the early 1990s – Slovenia (1991), Latvia (1991), Slovakia (1992) and Croatia (1991). In these countries, as in the case of Poland, national values were cultivated, probably also patriotism, but the state for many years was not ‘our country’, but a foreign government, and the orders of the state authorities were foreign coercion.

Fig. 1.

### Percentage of subjects who received at least one dose of COVID-19 vaccine.



Source: Official data collated by Our World in Data.

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As Agnieszka Durska (political scientist, editor of [dajemyrade.pl](http://dajemyrade.pl) website) said in one of her interviews: “Modern patriots are those people who are aware of their rights and obligations towards the state. If we do not learn this, our patriotism will be a source of complexes and shame, not pride in the state and nation. (...) Polish patriotism, especially for young people, has bad associations: with something clichéd, needlessly romantic, pointless as it is linked with ineffective bloodshed. Many young people are also fed up with putting us on a pedestal.

Meanwhile creating a sense of national unity in young people is a huge social force and creates broad conditions for the management, education, labor and creativity of this part of society, which is an important social stratum. Youth is the most important moving and influential part of society. Even if they receive the education of the older generation, they do not remain within the limits of these educational opportunities, and self-awareness in a person is largely dependent on the psychological environment in the family, on the personal example of the parent. They first understand their ethnicity; understand the history, culture, and interests of their nation. This creates the basis for the formation of a sense of national duty and responsibility (Abdurakhmonov, Abdurakhmanova, 2020, p. 993).

The scratch on our patriotism is the fact that we usually adore and honour our defeats and sacrifices, and we completely do not think about the daily work for the nation, that today the greatness is no longer evidenced by its historical merits, or at least not as much as it used to be. (...) Unfortunately, as a nation, we had bad luck – at the crucial moment in the formation of modern society, we were deprived of the state, we regained it for too short a time to learn to respect its institutions and rights. After the war, anything that was equated with the state and power was not even <<ours>>, only imposed by force, and thus did not require respect, but quite the contrary” (Krziesicki et al., p. 143).

One should agree with A. Durska and emphasize that one of the amazing features of Polish ‘systemic’ patriotism is that until recently, it was mostly the victims and our defeats (!) that were usually commemorated and honoured. We ignored victories, glorious events, significant firsts or, for instance, the outstanding achievements of our countrymen, even though we do have something to be proud of. Just to provide some examples, we can ask rhetorically: who



of us remembers: Ignacy Łukasiewicz (b. 1822) – the inventor of the kerosene lamp and founder of the world's first oil well; Janie Szczepanik (b. 1872) and Kazimierz Żegleń (b. 1869) – the inventors of the bulletproof vest; Henryk Magnuski (b. 1909) – the creator of one of the first walkie-talkies, who are the fathers of products known and used widely all over the world. An example from another area may be our national revolts to regain independence – paradoxically, we are talking more about the failed uprisings and less about the victorious ones (Greater Poland, Silesia provinces). Almost all Poles know when World War 2 broke out, when the Germans invaded Poland and the tragic defence of the country began, but regarding the date of victory many people will think for a moment before answering, and many of those asked will not indicate the correct one.

Moreover, what the Polish patriotism lacks, above all, is respect for the state and its institutions. We have not learned that it is our common 'home' and that living in it requires respect for the law and social rules. There are still few civic attitudes such as: I am, I understand, I want to participate in the creation of the state and nation. Participation in elections, or ordinary interests and understanding of the affairs of the country, may be an expression of modern patriotism, as well as the citizenship of which this patriotism is associated with (Krzesicki et al., p. 144). In certain respects, today's patriotism may be more difficult than the old one.

“Contemporary Polish society, overwhelmed with democracy, cares first of all about its own affairs, not tied to the national interest” – this is how Ewa Borowiec-Moczulska writes about the crisis of Polish patriotism (Borowiec-Moczulska, 2011, p. 80). It is time to change that.

Moving on to the issue of implementing the orders and prohibitions related to COVID-19, it should be emphasized that they are the result of a real and common threat to human health. The threats of the beginning of the third decade of the 21st century are faced not only by Poland, but also by many other nations around the globe. It is not a fabrication of the Polish government. Without engaging in a discussion on the individual restrictions – obligations and prohibitions (because it is not the purpose of this article to analyse and evaluate the restrictions themselves), it can be stated that, based on the general assumptions, they are intended to guarantee the security of people staying

in the territory of the Republic of Poland, and to ensure national and state security. Bearing this in mind, and in line with what has been said before, patriotism, among other values, stands for work/activities on behalf and for the good and security of the nation, homeland and local community. The implementation of restrictions and respecting them are, therefore, manifestations of patriotic attitudes.

Summing up, it should be voiced that when properly understood, patriotism is a pillar of state or national security. As Borowiec-Moczulska writes: "A vital constituent of national security is love for one's nation and country, called patriotism, which – depending on the situation and emerging threats – takes various forms" (Borowiec-Moczulska, p. 80). It should, hence, be recognized that now – at the beginning of the third decade of the 21st century, when the cultural mixing of people is a fact, the internationalization of trade, services, capital and scientific thought, also cause mental changes that affect philosophical currents (Sitek, 2009, p. 368) as well as other aspects of social life and individuals. Therefore, changes must also take place in the area of shaping and in presenting patriotic attitudes. Nowadays, patriotism is no longer a combat with the occupant, it is also not a fight with one's own state; it is concern for national security and the state. It is working in harmony and with respect for the law, for the sake of one's own homeland and fellow citizens.

Today we can say that patriotic people are those who do their job the best and have the sense of "us". "A patriotic person should do more than his/her best, whatever his/her job is, i.e. no matter it is a garbage man or carpenter, a teacher or a doctor, that is, regardless of the sector or field he/she is working or serving in" (Öztürk, Malkoç, Ersoy, 2016, p. 210).

We have to agree with the statement of Władysław Bartoszewski that "there is one patriotism, just as there is one honesty, one morality, dignity, and there is one honour – it only works in a different way" (Bartoszewski, 2001, p. 14). At the same time, though, it should be accentuated that patriotism requires different attitudes and behaviours in times of war, and different ones – in times of peace. "Today, its manifestations are concern for the political fate of the homeland, respect for the law, and *the Polish Constitution*, but also concern for the good of the local community, for the family, respect for private and social property and the natural environment,

diligent performance of duties in the workplace, fair payment of taxes regardless of financial status, placing the common good over one's own, and caring for the good image of the country" (Krzyszicki et al., p. 88). In line with this thought, currently, a manifestation of proper patriotic attitude is, for instance, the implementation and respect of bans and government orders aimed at limiting the spread of the epidemic, as mentioned in the title, as well as building national immunity to this peril.

Evans and French (Evans, French, 2021) – in an interesting manner – write about creating a demand for COVID-19 vaccination and overcoming reluctance towards these vaccinations. The authors of the paper "Influence of family on acceptance of influenza vaccination among Japanese patients" (Takahashi, 2003, pp. 162-166) write compellingly about the importance of the impact of the opinion of the family and immediate environment (friends) on the decisions to take vaccinations. Nevertheless, it is arduous to find information in the literature about the links between patriotism and the level of compliance with obligations and prohibitions related to COVID-19, including the obligation to vaccinate against the virus. In the author's view, this proves that it is an area within which it is worth conducting more detailed research.

The presented material constitutes a summary of the author's preliminary research carried out in relation to his speech on patriotism delivered at a conference at the University of Euroregional Economy in Józefów (Poland). Primarily, the research was based on the methods of non-standard observation (Skarbek, 2013, p. 68) as well as an analysis and logical construction (Czupryński, Wiśniewski, Zboina, 2017, p. 140).

Currently, patriotism stands for concern for the fate of the homeland, the good of the nation, local community, and family – thus the implementation of obligations and prohibitions related to COVID-19 undoubtedly means thinking not only about yourself, but above all about other citizens, about the local community and family. Therefore, the refusal to implement orders and disrespecting prohibitions aimed at protecting the common good/health implies thinking only about oneself. To that end, in the author's opinion, the present implementation of the orders and prohibitions related to COVID-19 is a manifestation of care for the good of both the local community and one's family, as well as the entire nation – it is a manifestation of patriotism.

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<https://polskiedzieje.pl/polska-pod-zaborami/nie-do-konca-123-lata.html>

<https://sjp.pl/patriotyzm>

### ENDNOTES

[1] More about patriotism in: Sadowski J. (2009), *Oblicza patriotyzmu*.

[2] 123 years is, of course, a considerable simplification, often passed on in various sources – the beginning of the period called “Poland under partitions” is considered to be 1795, in which the Republic of Poland disappeared from the maps of Europe (and then until 1918, when regaining independence, mathematically it was 123 years), yet the first partition of Poland took place in 1772. It was that time when a large part of the Republic of Poland found itself within the borders of Austria, Prussia or Russia. We also may not forget that these 123 years were punctuated by various wars. And so, for instance, in 1807, Napoleon Bonaparte entered Polish territory and created the partially independent Duchy of Warsaw, which in 1809 extended its rule to the territories of the Third Austrian Partition. The Duchy of Warsaw survived a short period of time, but still... More: <https://polskiedzieje.pl/polska-pod-zaborami/nie-do-konca-123-lata.html>

