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Terrorism and Political Radicalism in the Security Strategies of Poland and Spain versus Public Opinion

1. Introduction

Since the 9/11 attack on the World Trade Center in New York, the issues of terrorism and political radicalism have assumed their place among the leading dangers of the contemporary world. While neither terrorism nor radicalism are themselves new phenomena, since the aforementioned attack they have assumed a new form, becoming associated primarily with the Islamic fundamentalism. However, it should be emphasized that the level of threat posed by terrorism and radicalism is not uniform. In respect of the extent of the danger posed by terrorist attacks and the activities of extremist groups, Poland and Spain, which will be subjected to analysis in this article, undoubtedly display significant differences.

For years, Spain has been faced with terrorism by the ETA; it has also been a victim of terrorism following the March 11th, 2004 attack carried out by Islamic fundamentalists. Additionally, proximity to northern Africa and the number of immigrants arriving from that region has a direct impact on growing political radicalism grounded in religious fundamentalism. In Poland, however, we are faced with a relatively low prevalence of terrorist attacks and radicalism. It may be expected that the differences in the concentration of terrorist threats and escalation of radicalism will be reflected in legislation addressing such issues, including security planning. Nonetheless, it should be kept in mind that the creation of security strategies is influenced not only by the scale of the terrorist threat and the escalation of political extremism, but also by a broad range of both external and internal determinants. These include membership in international organizations, alliances, legislative trends, geopolitical position, and traditional military threats associated with them (war).

The objective of the first portion of this article is to analyze the security strategies and other strategic documents of Poland and Spain in respect of the weight given in each of them to the issues of terrorism and political radicalism. This will facilitate an assessment of the impact of those threats on the state security strategies as a whole. Next, an analysis will be undertaken of selected international factors conditioning the shape of security strategies in the analyzed countries.
Later on, we shall provide a presentation of the correlation between public opinion polling results and changes in legal regulations concerning terrorism and radicalism in Poland and Spain.

Structuring the investigations in this manner allows for an answer to the following questions: to what extent do the threats associated with terrorism and political radicalism constitute a factor shaping a given state's security strategy? To what degree do external determinants contribute to changes in security strategies in the two countries? If they do, to what extent are changes in strategic documents regarding national security a response to the increased perceptions among Poles and Spaniards of the threat of terrorism and radicalism? The first of the hypotheses to be tested is the following: with consideration given to the greater threat of terrorism and political radicalism in Spain when compared to Poland, each of these phenomena will exert a greater impact on the shape of security strategy in Spain than in Poland. Having regard to the similar geopolitical situation of the two countries, it is assumed that the influence of external factors on the content of strategic documents dealing with terrorism and radicalism will be comparable in Poland and in Spain. In Spain, changes in legal regulations regarding terrorism and radicalism are linked to a greater extent than in Poland with public opinion polling, which is itself the result of a far more immediate perception of the threat of terrorism. The date of September 11th, 2001, marking the beginning of the so-called “war on terror”, is regarded as a milestone date.

2. The Issue of Terrorism and Radicalism in Strategic Documents in Poland and Spain

Given the space limitations for this article, we shall not engage in an analysis of the body of legislation addressing the struggle with terrorism and radicalism. Instead, we will focus on national defense strategies and other strategic documents that are a sort of emanation of the attitude taken by public authorities toward such threats. Furthermore, it is worth adding that neither in Poland nor in Spain is there one overarching piece of legislation regulating the issue, and laws regulating anti-terrorist efforts are primarily contained in Penal Codes and other statutes regulating the activities of particular services.

In Poland, during the period 2001–2015, three national security strategies were in effect: the first was adopted in 2003, the second in 2007, and the third in 2014. Here, it is worthy to recall the first such strategy, adopted in 2000, before the attack on the World Trade Center. It was the result of Poland’s accession to the NATO in 1999. During the same period, a strategic conception for the Alliance was developed. However, Poland did not make use of its potential to affect
the NATO strategy, and its internal document was adopted around a year after it joined the organization, based on its conception. This was also a mistake if we take into consideration that, during a year of membership in NATO, Poland followed a strategy developed in conditions of strategic independence. In Stanisław Koziej’s opinion, this was the result of habits formed during the years of membership in the Warsaw Pact, when this strategic alliance was superior to national strategies.  

When examining more closely Polish security strategies, it may be observed that the issue of terrorism is present, but it is not perceived as one of the primary threats. It is generally listed along with other asymmetrical threats such as organized crime, arms proliferation or “failing states.” There is a fear about the security of secret information which can be the target of interest of not only foreign intelligence services but also terrorist and extremist organizations. Emphasis is placed on the necessity of cooperation in the fight against terrorism between the armed forces and special services, on the one hand, and civilian authorities, on the other. What is also underscored is the responsibility resting with the armed forces and intelligence services in the context of anti-terrorist activities. Because of Poland’s membership in NATO, the country is a participant in the struggle against international terrorism, which does expose it to the threat of attacks. The threat of terrorism associated with organized crime is also present in Poland considering its status as a transitive country. Counterterrorism is also a part of the European Union’s strategy. The issue of protecting the health of citizens

3 Ibid. p. 5.
7 Ibid. point 47: 13).
through combating radioactive, chemical and biological terrorism has also been addressed.References to terrorist threats in the strategies of 2003 and 2007 are diffuse, generally located alongside other threats or in reference to the tasks of various security services. Terrorism, as a subject in and of itself, has not been focused on, being perceived as a distant threat.

In the 2014 strategy, the issue of terrorism appears in combination with extremism, radical groups and radicalization of behaviors, all of which should be counteracted. Extremism is assessed as a threat, particularly in situations when it is associated with other asymmetrical threats such as the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and organized crime. The issue of cyberthreats is also brought up, including cyberterrorism. It should be observed that in the 2014 strategy, more space was devoted to terrorism and extremism than in previous documents. They remain classified not as primary threats, but rather as one of many potential threats. However, attention is clearly paid to the issue, and it is not taken lightly. This is no doubt associated with the growth of the so-called Islamic State, frequent terrorist attacks around the world and the fact that, while Poland has yet to experience such an attack, Polish citizens did perish in attacks in Madrid, London, New York and Bali. However, consideration is given to the potential for both domestic and international terrorist acts by the so-called “lone wolves” or small groups.

We may observe a similar approach to the issue of terrorism in the Strategy for Development of the Polish National Security System 2022, adopted by a resolution of the Council of Ministers on April 9th, 2013. In this document, terrorism is presented as one of several threats, including the proliferation of weapons of

8 Ibid. point 136: 34).
10 Ibid. point 28, p. 18.
11 Ibid. point 30, pp. 18–19.
12 Ibid. point 31, pp. 19.
14 Strategia bezpieczeństwa narodowego Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej 2014…op.cit., point 55, p. 25.
mass destruction, organized crime and cyberattacks. It is also mentioned in the context of armed conflicts around the world, and the problem of “failed states.” It is described as a threat that does not affect the territory of Poland as much as the country’s citizens staying in politically unstable regions, and soldiers participating in international missions. However, responsibilities under alliances do increase the level of the threat within the country as well. Counteracting terrorism is held to be one of the tasks for the special services, and the authors of the strategy direct particular attention to the issue of weapons of mass destruction in the hands of terrorists.\textsuperscript{15} In this strategy, the emphasis has been placed on the military aspect of national security; this is associated with the fact that it comprises one of the documents making up Poland’s long-term strategy of linking security policy with policy in the sphere of social and economic development. Other documents address issues of energy, social and ecological security, together forming a comprehensive picture of national security. The Strategy for Development of the Polish National Security System 2022 is the implementation of the postulates from the 2007 security strategy, whose assumptions included the necessity of preparing, maintaining and improving the state’s security system, as well as long-and medium-term development strategies.\textsuperscript{16}

Another document worthy of mention is the 2013 White Paper on National Security of the Republic of Poland. This document draws attention to the diffusion of anti-terrorist legislation, as well as of means for counteracting terrorism.\textsuperscript{17} This is significant, as the White Paper was prepared on the basis of the Strategic Review of National Security, and contains the key conclusions and recommendations regarding Poland’s national security policy, including improvements in the security system.\textsuperscript{18} In spite of the continuing minimal terrorist threat in Poland, the country’s authorities are aware of the problem; this awareness is expressed in the National Anti-terrorism Program for 2015–2019, adopted by the Council of Ministers in December 2014. It contains a broader diagnosis of the phenomenon of terrorism than

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{16} Ibid. p. 4.
\bibitem{17} Ibid. pp. 64–65.
\end{thebibliography}
in the previously discussed documents, taking into account both the national and international dimensions, as well as offering a broad review of the anti-terrorism system functioning within Poland, a definition of terrorism-related events, a list of legal regulations addressing terrorism, and a description of the anti-terrorist system in place. We can also browse a presentation of Poland’s contribution to international cooperation in the fight against terrorism.\textsuperscript{19} The National Anti-terrorism Program is the executive document in relation to the Strategy for Development of the Polish National Security System. The last document that should be mentioned is the Polish Cybersecurity Doctrine, from 2015. This document includes an identification of terrorist and extremist organizations as sources of cyberthreats, and cyberspace is defined as a field where such organizations can be active.\textsuperscript{20} The starting point for this doctrine can be found in the determinations of the national security strategy for cyberspace, as well as the Policy for the Protection of Poland’s Cyberspace and the EU Cyber Security Strategy.\textsuperscript{21}

The Spanish authorities have adopted two national security strategies to date, in 2011 and 2013. Previously, strategic issues were regulated primarily in National Security Directives issued every 4 years, beginning in 1992.\textsuperscript{22} One of the subjects discussed, as can be supposed, was terrorism. Already in 2003, the Strategic Security Review observed that following the attack on the World Trade Center, terrorism had emerged as the most prominent threat to national security, and the fight against it was a key issue in the strategy for organizing international security.\textsuperscript{23} In the 2004 National Defense Directive, the first issued during the period under review, emphasis is placed on the asymmetrical dimension of terrorism, and on the fact that when faced with threats of this nature, a traditional military advantage does not play any significant role;\textsuperscript{24} however, in the next Directive from

\begin{thebibliography}
\bibitem{19} Narodowy Program Antyterrorystyczny…op.cit., pp. 8–34.
\bibitem{21} Ibid. p. 7.
\end{thebibliography}
2008 there is no mention of terrorism or radicalism. In turn, the 2012 Directive was criticized for failure to address the real threat of terrorism associated with jihad. Under this directive, Spain’s national security should be primarily based on alliances and membership in international organizations, while the primary threat cited is the economic crisis.

The first Spanish security strategy, “Shared Responsibility,” was confirmed on June 24th, 2011. The second Spanish strategy currently in force, “Joint Project,” was drafted in May 2013. These strategies are characterized by continuity in their content and identification of threats. In the new one, the definition of national security has been rendered more precise – for the first time it appears in an official Spanish document.

Proceeding to the content of the national security strategy, it should be pointed out that a significant amount of space has been devoted to the issue of terrorism. First and foremost, it is listed among the most important threats in both strategies. Alongside reference to terrorism in conjunction with such threats as organized crime, cyberattacks, piracy and arms proliferation, this issue is given consideration in separate sub-chapters.

It should be pointed out that this issue was given significant attention in the 2011 strategy, and apart from the general identification of the problem, both institutional solutions and a strategy for action in the fight with the terrorist threat

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are presented. Two types of terrorism are distinguished: the threat from ETA, and the threat from jihadist movements (Al Qaeda, Islamic State). This threat is enhanced by such factors as participation in international missions, the presence of Islamic fundamentalist groups in Spain promoting radical ideas, including the reconstruction of the Islamic Al Andalus, proximity to the unsettled region of Maghreb, the existence of “failed states,” and the potential for immigrants coming to Spain to adopt radical ideologies, including second-generation immigrants. The war on terrorism is to be conducted through the following means: simplifying the exchange of information among security services, invocation of the EU solidarity clause (Art. 22 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union), the functioning of the National Centre for Coordination of Anti-terrorist Activities (since 2014 the Intelligence Centre for the War on Terrorism and Organized Crime), enhancements to the domestic judicial system and international judicial cooperation in terrorism-related cases, participation of the armed forces and all of public administration, increased financing and human resources, strengthening the National Intelligence Centre, development of a planned response to nuclear, radiological, biological and chemical attacks, improved transport security and greater effectiveness of external border controls, special penitentiary policy in cases of terrorism, and participation in international missions. However, it is emphasized that in spite of potential future attacks, terrorists do not have the capacity to destabilize the rule of law or democracy as such. Attention is also drawn to the fact that radical and extremist ideologies can intensify threats to national security.

In the 2013 strategy, less attention is devoted to the issue of terrorism, with only a diagnosis of the threat offered. The Spanish government’s priority is to prevent terrorists from being able to conduct their activities. It is emphasized that the

30 Recordings from ISIS have appeared in recent days in which terrorists have discussed punishing Spaniards for driving Muslims out of Spain, and have expressed the desire to rebuild the Islamic Al Andalus, F. Carrión, El IS advierte a España que “pagara muy caro” la expulsion de los musulmanes de Al Andalus, “El Mundo” 31.01.2016, available at http://www.elmundo.es/internacional/2016/01/31/56adefc1268e3e5d0d8b4580.html, accessed 1 February 2016.


coordination of responses across all of the state services and society has led to the neutralization of ETA. The prime terrorist threat is perceived in the activities of jihadist groups, which take advantage of extensive technological capacities and the globalized nature of the contemporary world. Potential justifications for Spain as a terrorist target are listed, such as proximity to the failed states of the Sahel, and Spain’s role in the struggle against international terrorism. Spain’s experiences in this battle are referred to. A greater portion of the document is devoted to issues of energy, economic and cyber security.

This last threat was the subject of separate documents, i.e. the National Cyber Security Strategy of 2013 and the National Energy Security Strategy of 2015. These documents constitute an elaboration of the national security strategy in the spheres of energy and cyber security. In recent years, these areas have become increasingly important, and will continue to do so. They have developed into very important elements of the national security picture, with cyber security evolving into a particularly serious challenge considering the difficulty in predicting the targets and impacts of cyberattacks, as well as the constant development of information technology.

Lastly, we may recall the National Maritime Security Strategy of 2013, important in view of Spain’s geographical location. Terrorism can also be a threat to the country’s stable maritime policy, as can piracy, illegal immigration by sea, illegal use of maritime resources, or the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The hijacking of passenger ships or attacks on transport and navy vessels may be used later on to engage in attacks on land.

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3. Impact of the International Environment on the Contours of Security Strategies in Poland and Spain

The first of the Polish strategies in the analyzed period was developed in 2003, and was associated with the emergence of new challenges and threats in the international sphere, as well as with a transformation of the security environment. The first factor was undoubtedly the 11 September 2001 attack on the World Trade Center. Alliance with the USA and support for that country’s battle with terrorism meant that from that time on, Poland also had to contend with the possibility of becoming a target for terrorist activities. Not without importance was Poland’s participation in war in Afghanistan and Iraq. Membership in NATO required that Poland’s strategy be adapted to the conditions of participation in a military alliance, consideration for shared interests and challenges. NATO itself underwent a transformation, expanding and shoring up its cooperation with Russia and Ukraine. Poland’s imminent accession to the European Union constituted another new context for the country’s security policy. The document’s authors therefore felt that the dynamics of the changes required Poland to revise its security strategy and policy.36 National security was captured in a holistic manner, as a category encompassing all aspects of state security: external and internal, military and civilian. However, it offered no definition of national interests, which are precisely what should constitute the starting point for determining strategic objectives and the entire national security strategy. This strategy was consistent with many new trends in the spheres of domestic and international security, focused on the most prominent issues at the moment. Having said that, one should also be aware that it had numerous weaknesses, including that of excessive brevity, which is why work on its revision was quickly undertaken.37

Several reasons can be cited for the creation of the next strategy, adopted in 2007. Apart from the aforementioned weakness of the 2003 strategy and necessity of updating it, Poland’s national security situation was subjected to a significant change with the country’s accession to the European Union in 2004. Poland’s new security strategy was adapted to be compatible with the 2003 European Security Strategy, as well as with the assumptions adopted during the 2006 NATO summit in Riga. This strategy made up for the substantive shortfalls in the previous ones, including national interests and strategic objectives, alongside analysis of the conditions of security and the opportunities and threats facing it. A holistic

36 Strategia rozwoju systemu bezpieczeństwa narodowego Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej 2022 …op.cit., p. 1.
37 S. Koziej, A. Brzozowski, 25 lat…op.cit.; pp. 22–27.
approach to security was employed, which led to significant amounts of space in the document being devoted to its various sectors, such as energy and society.\textsuperscript{38}

The strategy presently in force was adopted in 2014, and experts are generally in agreement that this was later than the dynamic changes occurring in the international arena would have dictated. The first such symptom was the eruption of the Russia-Georgia war in 2008. Another factor was the change in the USA’s policy toward Russia and withdrawal from the missile shield project in Poland. Work on a new strategy was, however, hindered by the intensifying political conflict taking place in the country, and by the tragic crash of the presidential plane in Smolensk. In December 2010, the order was given to conduct a Strategic Review of National Security, completed in September 2012; the year 2013 saw the publishing of the White Paper on National Security. The results of the strategic review spurred the work on the new strategy. During that period, conflict in Ukraine also broke out.\textsuperscript{39}

The increased significance of cybersecurity was influential on the development of the new national security strategy, as were fears about the security of the country’s energy supply. Additionally, work was undertaken within the EU and NATO concerning security and a strategic conception. In 2010, the European Union Internal Security Strategy was adopted. That same year, the summit in Lisbon saw the introduction of a new NATO Strategic Conception, which was later updated at the September 2014 summit in Newport, following the outbreak of hostilities in Ukraine. At the time, it was decided that NATO’s eastern flank would be strengthened through joint exercises, the establishment of logistics bases, and of forces capable of rapidly reaching a threatened territory.\textsuperscript{40}

The Strategy for Development of the Polish National Security System 2022 arose as the implementation of the provisions contained in the 2007 national security strategy, which assumed a more systematic organization of the state’s security system, as well as the elaboration of postulates for the country’s medium and long-term development. It was also adopted in conjunction with the necessity of consolidating the national security system in the face of the challenges listed in

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{38} Ibid. pp. 28–32; \textit{Strategia bezpieczeństwa narodowego Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej 2007 …} op.cit., p. 7.
\end{itemize}
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the document, primarily doubts as to the effectiveness of the international security architecture, differences among NATO members, and weakening interest on the part of the USA in European matters. The adoption of a strategy through 2022 results from the need to harmonize its time horizon with executive documents concerning defense planning, themselves determined by the NATO planning cycle.\footnote{P. Kmiecik, Nowastrategia.org.pl, \textit{Analiza krytyczna strategii rozwoju systemu bezpieczeństwa narodowego RP do 2022 roku}, 2015, available at http://www.nowastrategia.org.pl/analiza-krytyczna-srsbn/, accessed 8 February 2016.} This strategy also determined the creation of the National Anti-terrorist Program for 2015–2019. The existence of such a program results from efforts at consolidating the functioning of Poland’s anti-terrorist system, which – as has been previously mentioned – is quite diffuse. The need to place considerable emphasis on the issue of terrorism is the result of the Islamic State’s increased activities, as well as the high frequency of attacks around the world. In turn, the development of a Cybersafety Doctrine is linked to the rapid development of technology, accompanied by highly unpredictable cybercrime, which is becoming increasingly dangerous as a result of the ever-expanding presence of information technology in every aspect of life.

In respect of the creation of a Polish national security strategy, we may cite the impact of membership in the NATO and the EU among the external factors affecting the shape of these documents. Their authors also place strong emphasis on the involvement of the USA in Europe. The period in which these strategies were drawn up cannot be associated directly with a particular terrorist attack, perhaps apart from 9/11; nevertheless, that event itself was not the sole factor influencing the adoption of the strategy in 2003; rather, it has stimulated the general change in the international situation after the attack. The impact of the international situation is clearly visible in documents focused on individual aspects of national security. These include a response to the growing threat of terrorism (if not within the borders of Poland itself, at least toward its citizens) or of cyberattacks.

In Spain, the army exercised strong influence over politics and played a significant role in society, beginning in the 19th century. This continued through the next century, as the military dictatorship established during the Civil War by Gen. Franco was preceded by the governments of Gen. Primo de Rivera (1923–1930). At present, the armed forces are among the institutions in Spanish society that enjoy the highest level of trust.\footnote{Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas (CIS), \textit{Barómetro de Abril 2015, Estudio no. 3080}, pp. 9–10, available at http://www.cis.es/cis/export/sites/default/-Archivos/Marginales/3080_3099/3080/es3080mar.pdf, accessed 8 February 2016.} This is also why a traditional approach to issues
of security was employed, with the issue perceived primarily in military terms. It was not until the White Paper on Defense in 2000 that issues associated with new challenges in security were captured. Attention was drawn to the globalization processes shaping the modern world, as well as the threats and opportunities for state security that resulted and the concomitant necessity to engage in global-scale strategic thinking.\(^43\) A reversal in thinking about asymmetrical threats, including terrorism, was brought about by the 9/11 attack. It was one of the factors that contributed to the 2003 Strategic Security Review, in which terrorism was recognized as a key threat to countries belonging to international defense-oriented alliances.\(^44\)

The drafting of Spain’s first security strategy was a response to the previous lack of a comprehensive strategic conception and the exclusive focus on the military aspects of security. Statements appearing in the documents to the effect that the Spanish strategy was developed under the influence of similar documents in effect in neighboring countries, such as France, the United Kingdom, and the Netherlands, as well as the 2003 EU security strategy, indicate a particular trend in legislation as one of the roots of the strategy’s adoption.\(^45\) Another factor is the new NATO Strategic Conception that emerged during the Lisbon summit.\(^46\)

The strategy’s update in 2013 was most certainly influenced by changes in the international situation, such as the Arab Spring, and changes in the USA’s strategic assumptions.\(^47\) In spite of the significant place occupied in Spain’s security strategies


by the issue of the terrorist threat, it was not specific attacks, that influenced the updating of documents. The national security strategy was adopted 7 years after the attack in Madrid. It has led to practical changes, such as in the structure of state institutions – attention was drawn to the necessity of their coordination. On the doctrinal plane, the largest influence was had by the attack of 9/11, as it demanded a reflection on the new nature of terrorism.

National defense directives are adopted in accordance with the regular, four-year cycles of defense planning in effect. Events around the world and at home therefore impact the content of the directives, but not the frequency with which they are adopted. Defense planning and strategies are developed as forecasts for the future, but are prepared in response to events taking place around the globe and the evolving geopolitical panorama\textsuperscript{48}. In the 2004 Directive, the following factors are listed as influential in the formation of such documents: changes in the international strategic situation, the presence of Spain in the international arena, the development of society, and successive governments.\textsuperscript{49} In the case of the 2008 Directive, the factors impacting its contours included terrorist attacks in Madrid, London and Beslan, on the one hand, and the passage of the National Defense Act, on the other.\textsuperscript{50} These directives reflect the parallel development of European security and defense policy, and also invoke references to membership in such organizations as the NATO, the EU and the UN as guarantors of security. In conjunction with the intensification of migration to Spain, the 2008 Directive devotes greater attention to sub-Saharan Africa. The 2012 Directive emphasizes the importance of the alliance with the United States.\textsuperscript{51}

Analogically to the situation observed in Poland, three directives have been adopted in Spain, which focused on the issue of sectoral security: cyberspace, energy and national maritime security. In the case of cyberthreats, the motivation is similar to that in Poland – we are facing a highly-developed technology which entails not only a great deal of benefits but also threats. One of the ways in which the Internet is used by terrorists is in the recruitment of new supports, which must be viewed as a potential threat when considering the existence of jihadist cells in Spain. The use of cyberspace for criminal activity is also inexpensive, and it does not present barriers, such as the necessity of traveling.\textsuperscript{52} The energy security strategy emphasizes the importance of energy resources in the modern world, as

\textsuperscript{48} \textit{La Directiva de Defensa Nacional 2012}…op.cit., p. 2;
\textsuperscript{49} \textit{Directiva de Defensa Nacional 2004}…op.cit, p. 1.
\textsuperscript{50} \textit{La Directiva de Defensa Nacional 2012}…, p. 4.
\textsuperscript{51} Ibid. pp. 6–8.
\textsuperscript{52} \textit{Estrategia de Ciberseguridad Nacional}…
well as the necessity to diversify sources in order to ensure security stable eco-
nomic growth and social development. Spain is a consumer of energy resources
and is dependent on their import. Stability of supply is therefore paramount, and
such stability can be impacted by unforeseen events in exporting states. One of
the factors influencing the contours of the strategy under discussion is the Arab
Spring. A mention should also be made about the maritime security strategy,
which is a priority owing to Spain’s geographic situation. Many factors come into
play here: guaranteeing supplies of energy resources, general trade, piracy, and
ecological disasters along the Spanish coast. All three documents taken together
constitute the development and implementation of the national security strategy.

In summary, much like in the case of Poland, far-reaching impact on the de-
sign of Spain’s security strategy can be found in the fact of its membership in
international organizations, as well as the activities of those bodies. The attitude
of the United States toward the international situation plays a significant role.
Because of its geographical location, events in the Mediterranean basin, such as
the Arab Spring, do not go unnoticed in Spain, whose ties with the other coun-
tries in the region are strong and proximity does not allow for indifference. Spain
is also one of the countries hit hardest by illegal immigration, and has been for
years. Another factor that can be named is trends in the legislation of neighbor-
ing countries, as well as evolving strategic conceptions of organizations in which
Spain is a member.

4. Security Strategies and Public Opinion in Poland and Spain

Is the adoption of a security strategy and other documents related to the issue of
terrorism and radicalism correlated to some degree with public opinion? Do the
previously discussed changes in strategic documents comprising the security model
in place in Poland and Spain constitute a response to increased perceptions of the
threat posed by terrorism and radicalism in those societies? Analysis of the results
of Eurobarometer polling from the period 2005–2015 does not allow us to say de-
finitively. It is clear that in the period 2005–2009, Spanish respondents more keenly
felt the threat of terrorism than did citizens of Poland. In 2005, as many as 46% of
respondents indicated terrorism as one of the two most important problems facing
Spain, while only 3% of Polish respondents held the same opinion, and the European
average was 10%. The situation was similar in 2006, except for the difference that
10% fewer Spanish respondents than in the preceding year indicated terrorism as

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53 Estrategia de Seguridad Energética Nacional…
54 Estrategia de Seguridad Marítima…
one of the main issues to be dealt with, while these percentages in Poland and Europe as a whole remained essentially unchanged. In 2007, as many as 47% Spanish respondents declared that terrorism was one of the country’s two most pressing issues, while in Poland only 1% did so, with the EU average being 12%. In 2008 as well the number of Spanish respondents pointing to the issue of terrorism was high, reaching 31%, while in Poland it grew by just 1%, and the European average dropped to 7%. Beginning in 2009, the number of Spanish respondents declaring terrorism to be one of the country’s two most important issues fell dramatically: in 2009 it was 5%, in 2010 and 2011 – 10%, in 2013 and 2014 – 1%, and in 2015 – 5%. In Poland, except for 2010 and 2011, the numbers were quite similar to those in Spain: in 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012 – 1%, 2013, 2014 – 2%, 2015 – 5%. In 2012 and 2015, these values were identical in Poland and Spain, while in 2013 and 2014 even more respondents in Poland felt that terrorism was one of the two most important issues.

Graph 1: The two most important problems facing each country at the current time

Analyzing the Eurobarometer results for Poland, we may observe a slight growth in the number of respondents pointing to terrorism as one of the two main problems facing the country. However, it should be emphasized that in the period 2005–2015 this number oscillated between 1% and 5%, which puts respondents from Poland below the EU average (2%–12%). When we examine the results of Eurobarometer performed in Spain, it is not difficult to see that with the explosion of the economic crisis in 2009, Spaniards primarily indicated the economic situation (2009 – 40%,
2010 – 51%, 2011 – 50%, 2012 – 61%, 2013 – 50%, 2014 – 36%, 2015 – 29%) and unemployment (2009 – 32%, 2010 – 72%, 2011 – 76%, 2012 – 76%, 2013 – 79%, 2014 – 78%, 2015 – 69%) as the two primary issues facing Spain. Thus, for citizens of Spain, the largest challenges to their country were economic issues rather than terrorism. This does not necessarily mean that issues surrounding terrorism ceased to be of importance, but only that they were not among the two most pressing issues faced by Spain.

Domestic public opinion polling gives a better picture of the perception of the threat posed by terrorism among respondents in Poland and Spain. In Poland, we may come across public opinion polls addressing the issue of terrorism and security as a general proposition, while in Spain these polls discuss terrorism and political radicalism in the form of Islamic extremism, which makes it difficult to compare the two countries. Additionally, one may be surprised by the fact that in Spain there is a lack of studies concerning feelings about security or assessments of the degree to which state authorities and institutions are prepared to counteract terrorist attacks. A small number of polls have been carried out by the public think tank Real Insituto Elcano, but none by the most prestigious polling institution Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas (CIS).

In Poland, reports of studies by CBOS inform us that in 2010, 32% of respondents felt that there was a real threat of terrorism in Poland, while in 2013 it was 46%, and in 2015 the number reached 53%. At the same time, the number of respondents who felt that the terrorist threat was overstated or non-existent dropped: in 2010 it was 30% and 26%, in 2013 28% and 24%, and in 2015 it was 22% and 8%. Thus, in comparing the growth in the perception of the terrorist threat, one may risk the conclusion that successive changes in strategic documents concerning security may be correlated with it to some degree.

Graph 2: Views on the subject of the terrorist threat in Poland during the years 2010–2015 (in %)


*Which response best matches your feelings about terrorism in Poland?
However, when we review responses to the question “Do you personally fear terrorist attacks or not?” in other studies conducted by CBOS, this tendency does not repeat itself. When analyzing the results of studies carried out on ten separate occasions in the period 2001–2015, we may say that the personal perception of a threat on the part of respondents remains at a constant level. In 2001, 39% of those polled responded that they were afraid of terrorist attacks, while in 2015 this number was 41%. It is worth adding that in 2010 and 2013 Poles felt the safest, with 25% and 26%, respectively, in fear of such a threat, whereas in the years 2003, 2004 and 2005 the largest number of respondents expressed fear of terrorist attacks, with percentages in those years of 52%, 64% and 56%. Such significant growth in the perception of the threat of terrorist attacks should most likely be associated with attacks taking place at the time around Europe.

Graph 3: Personal fears of Poles regarding terrorist attacks in the years 2001–2015 (in %)

Source: Centrum Badań Opinii Społecznej (CBOS), Zagrożenie terroryzmem, no. 50/2015, Warsaw April 2015, p. 2.

*Are you personally afraid of terrorist attacks or not?

We can therefore observe the absence of correlation between the results of studies on the threat of terrorism facing the Polish state and those examining personal fears of terrorist attacks. There is a greater degree of cohesion between the results of studies concerning the feeling of security and those concerning the personal perception of terrorist threats. Summarizing responses to the question of whether Poland is a country where one may live safely, a growth tendency can be observed, and thus over the preceding few years respondents have responded positively to that question with increasing frequency. Analysis of graph no. 4 allows us to observe that Poles perceive their country as becoming more and more safe. In 2001, only 18% felt that Poland was a country where one could live safely, while 81% expressed the opposite opinion. However, in 2014 these proportions were...
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exactly reversed, as 70% of respondents claimed that Poland was a safe country, while only 28% declared different position.

*In your opinion, is Poland a safe country to live in?

These results demonstrate that over the last 14 years, Poles’ feeling of safety and security has grown. This may be the result of a wide range of factors, but there can be no doubt that if Poles perceived a large danger of terrorist attack, they would not feel so safe. All the more so when considering that in successive opinion polls, they do not provide a favorable assessment of the preparations of Polish authorities and state institutions to prevent terrorist attacks. In 2013, 28% of respondents declared that Polish authorities and institutions are well prepared (total of responses “strongly agree” and “agree”), while in 2015 this number was even lower, reaching 26%. During the same years, 58% and 55%, respectively, were of the opinion that they were not well prepared (total of responses “strongly disagree” and “disagree”).
Graph 5: Opinions of Poles concerning the preparation of Polish authorities and state institutions to prevent terrorist attacks in Poland in the years 2013 and 2015 (in %)

Source: Centrum Badań Opinii Społecznej (CBOS), Zagrożenie terroryzem, no. 50/2015, Warsaw April 2015, p. 4.

*Do you agree that Polish authorities and state institutions are well prepared to prevent terrorist attacks in Poland?

As has already been mentioned, in Spain we may only find fragmentary research on the subject of perception of the threat posed by terrorism and political radicalism. In the period 2004–2011, public opinion polling conducted by Real Instituto Elcano contained a question asking respondents to declare the greatest threats, including international terrorism, to Spain’s strategic interests. Spanish respondents were uniform in their assessment of the significance of the terrorist threat (graph no. 6). When adding together responses indicating that this is a “very serious threat” or “serious threat,” it turns out that in the years 2002–2015 the percentage of such responses oscillated between 84% and 96% (in 2002: 85%, 2003 95%, 2004 90%, 2005 and 2006 95%, 2007 93%, 2008 81%, 2009 92%, 2010 96%, 2011 94%, 2012 85%, 2013 84%, 2014 84%, 2015 92%). The results of this poll allow us to state with full confidence that the threat of terrorism is perceived as a significant one in Spain.
The situation is similar with the results of studies concerning the perception of the threat posed by Islamic fundamentalism (graph 7). Also here, the number of respondents pointing to such a threat is very high; however, it is slightly lower than in the case of international terrorism. In 2002, 68% of respondents declared that this threat was “very significant” or “significant,” while in subsequent years this number was 80%, 73%, 87%, 88%, 84%, 91%, 84% and 78%. Thus, in the opinion of Spanish society, the level of the perception of threats posed by terrorism and Islamic fundamentalism is very high. This is consistent with the Ministry of Internal Affairs announcing in 2015 that it was raising the terrorist attack threat indicator from 3 to 4, and thus the second-highest level on the scale, which was also captured in the Plan for Counter-terrorism Prevention and Protection (Plan de Prevención y Protección Antiterrorista).55

Graph 7: Social perception of the threat posed by Islamic fundamentalism for Spain’s strategic interests in the years 2002–2015 (%)


The results cited above are also consistent with successive studies conducted by Real Insituto Elcano concerning the threat of terrorism coming from the ETA, and international terrorism, implicitly understood as Islamic. On the basis of their results, it can be observed that in the years following the March 11th, 2004 attack, respondents indicated international terrorism as the type posing the greatest threat to their safety; in 2004, the percentage of people who felt so was 45%, in 2005 it was 30%, in 2006 as much as 53%, in 2007 31%, after which this number declined in 2008 and 2009 to 15%, to again grow in 2010 to 24%, and in 2011 it was 34%. At the same time, responses point to terrorism from the ETA fluctuated; in 2004 they accounted for 15%, in 2005 it was 30%, in 2006 27%, in 2007 24%, in 2008 23%, in 2009 34%, in 2010 45%, and in 2011 38%. Also, in the case of answers indicating both types of terrorism, it is difficult to discover any universalities as in 2004 there was a total of 38% such responses, in 2005 27%, in 2006 20%, in 2007 43%, in 2008 60%, in 2009 49%, in 2010 28% and in 2011 26%. However, if we add the category “both types of terrorism are a threat,” in respect of international terrorism we obtain an average of 67%, while for terrorism from the ETA it is 66%. Thus, what we can conclude from the data presented is that terrorism by the ETA continues to be perceived as a threat to security, as does international terrorism. It is worth mentioning here that this type of survey was last conducted in 2011,
when ETA announced it was laying down its arms. The absence of attacks by ETA in recent years, accompanied by the increased activities of Islamic fundamentalists, may give rise to different results.

Graph 8: Evolution of the assessment of the terrorist threat from ETA and international terrorism in the years 2004–2011 (in %)

Thus, in the case of Eurobarometer results, it is not easy to precisely determine the degree to which people feel the threat of terrorism, considering the specificity of the study being described and taken together with the outbreak of the economic crisis. In respect of Poland, this task is somewhat easier, for terrorism has not been and is not the primary problem facing Poland in the opinion of respondents. As for the other results from Poland, apart from the study concerning respondents’ views on the threat of terrorism in Poland, the remaining ones indicate that the sense of this threat is low. Furthermore, even in the case of studies regarding opinions on the subject of the terrorist threat in Poland, the highest percentage of respondents (in 2015) was recorded at a level of 53%, while in Spain similar questions received scores of 84% to 96% in the years 2002–2015. In the case of Spain, all of the results from domestic public opinion polls are consistent. There is a very high sense of the threat from terrorism and political radicalism in public opinion, but this sense remains at a stable level and is not growing.

5. Conclusion

Terrorism and radicalism are among the factors shaping security strategies in Poland and Spain. Considering the far more significant threat posed by these
phenomena in Spain than in Poland, they occupy a more important position in the strategic planning of the former country, and more space is devoted to them in strategic documents. Terrorism is listed in Spanish documents as one of the primary threats, in both the domestic and the international dimension, while the issue of terrorism by the ETA would seem to be resolved for the moment, as opposed to Islamic terrorism, which is growing in prominence on a global scale. In Poland, the far lesser threat of terrorism means that this issue occupies a much less prominent place in security strategies. It is listed alongside other types of threats, and generally linked to them. In the case of Poland, dangers coming from terrorism are primarily perceived in categories of citizens staying in unstable regions or soldiers participating in missions abroad, but not for the territory of Poland itself. Thus we may say that the first of the tested hypotheses is confirmed, considering the greater threat of terrorism and political radicalism in Spain compared to Poland, each of these phenomena exert a greater influence on the contours of security strategies in Spain than in Poland.

It is also relatively simple to take note of the impact of external factors on amendments to both countries’ security strategies, such as membership in international organizations, these organizations’ activities in the international sphere, relations with the USA, and, to a lesser extent, trends in the legislation of the region’s most influential states. These influences are similar in both of the countries under analysis. Changes in the strategic conceptions of the NATO or the EU also exert a comparable impact on the security policies of Poland and Spain. Some differences result from geographical location and different neighboring countries, which lead to the emphases in strategies also being different – relations with Russia are key for Poland, while Spain is most concerned with the situation in the Mediterranean basin. However, cyberthreats, inherently of a global nature, exert similar influences on both states. Energy security policies also exhibit some shared characteristics – both states are importers of energy resources. Another hypothesis has thus been confirmed, that the impact of external factors on the contours of strategic documents addressing terrorism and radicalism will be comparable in Poland and in Spain.

As for dependencies between changes in strategic documents concerning national security and growing fears of the threat of terrorism and radicalism among citizens of Poland and Spain, they are not so obvious. The hypothesis that changes in legal regulations concerning terrorism and radicalism are correlated with public opinion polling results to a greater extent in Spain than in Poland, owing to the far greater perception of the threat of terrorism in the former country, is only partially true. In respect of Poland, we cannot identify a dependency between changes in strategic documents addressing national security and growth in the perception
of the terrorist threat, as the feeling at the personal level of being threatened by terrorism has remained stable for years; this does not, therefore, explain the changes to strategic documents that have been made. Thus, Polish security strategies, the Strategy for Development of a National Security System, the White Paper on National Security of Poland, the National Anti-terrorist Program, and the Cybersecurity Doctrine were not drafted as a result of terrorism being perceived as among the greatest challenges facing the Polish state. As for Spain, the feeling of threat from terrorism and political radicalism in the form of Islamic extremism has grown to a small extent, which may be more indicative of a correlation between the results of public opinion polling and changes in Spanish legislation.

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M. A. Franco García, De las Directivas de Defensa Nacional a la Estrategia de Seguridad Nacional: tendencia a la integración de capacidades cívico-militares


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