Resilience of Local Communities to Hybrid Threats: The Role of Municipal Self-Government

Odporność społeczności lokalnych wobec zagrożeń hybrydowych: rola samorządu gminnego

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Abstract: The article examines the role of municipal self-government in building the resilience of local communities to hybrid threats. The aim is to identify the dimensions of resilience directly influenced by local authorities and the legal instruments available to them under the Civil Protection and Civil Defence Act. The study is based on an analysis of the literature and legal acts. The findings indicate that local resilience depends primarily on situational awareness, the protection of key infrastructure vulnerabilities and the adaptive capacity of the community, strengthened through cooperation with volunteer fire brigades and non-governmental organisations.

Keywords: resilience, local security, hybrid threats, municipal self-government, civil protection

Streszczenie: Artykuł analizuje rolę samorządu gminnego w budowaniu odporności społeczności lokalnych na zagrożenia hybrydowe. Celem opracowania jest wskazanie wymiarów odporności, na które samorząd ma bezpośredni wpływ, oraz narzędzi prawnych, którymi dysponuje po wejściu w życie ustawy o ochronie ludności i obronie cywilnej. Zastosowano analizę literatury przedmiotu oraz aktów prawnych. Wyniki wskazują, że odporność lokalna zależy przede wszystkim od świadomości sytuacyjnej, zabezpieczenia kluczowych słabości infrastruktury oraz zdolności adaptacyjnej wspólnoty, wzmacnianej współpracą z ochotniczymi strażami pożarnymi i organizacjami pozarządowymi.

Słowa kluczowe: odporność, bezpieczeństwo lokalne, zagrożenia hybrydowe, samorząd gminny, ochrona ludności

Introduction

Contemporary approaches to security go beyond the military dimension and encompass the political, economic, societal and environmental sectors[1]. Of particular importance is the process of attributing the status of a threat to certain phenomena, described in securitisation theory[2]. In the Polish literature, security is understood as an area of an entity's activity aimed at ensuring the possibility of survival and development in the face of threats[3]. This approach emphasises the dynamic nature of the category[4].

The aim of the article is to identify the dimensions of local community resilience that municipal self-government directly influences. The research problem is expressed in the question: to what extent do the legal and organisational instruments available to a municipality make it possible to strengthen residents' resilience to hybrid threats? The study uses an analysis of the literature and of legal acts.

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[1]B. Buzan, O. Wæver, J. de Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998, pp. 7–8.

[2]O. Wæver, *Securitization and Desecuritization*, [in:] *On Security*, R. D. Lipschutz (ed.), New York: Columbia University Press, 1995, pp. 46–86.

[3]S. Koziej, *Bezpieczeństwo: istota, podstawowe kategorie i historyczna ewolucja*, „Bezpieczeństwo Narodowe" 2011, no. 18, p. 20.

[4]*Ibidem*, p. 21.

Resilience as an Analytical Category

In management studies, resilience is described as an organisation's ability to anticipate disruptions, cope with them and adapt after they occur[5]. The model proposed by S. McManus and co-authors distinguishes three dimensions of resilience: situational awareness, management of keystone vulnerabilities and adaptive capacity[6]. The application of this model at the municipal level is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Dimensions of local community resilience

Dimension of resilience	**Essence**	**Examples of local government action**
Situational awareness	Identification of local threats, resources and interdependencies	Municipal threat map, information exchange with emergency services
Management of keystone vulnerabilities	Identification of elements whose failure paralyses the functioning of the community	Emergency power supply for water intakes, fuel reserves
Adaptive capacity	Flexible leadership, cooperation and post-event learning	Joint exercises with volunteer fire brigades and NGOs

Source: own elaboration based on: S. McManus et al., *Facilitated Process…*, *op. cit.*, pp. 82–84.

Legal Framework for Local Government Action

The legal basis for municipal tasks in the field of civil protection is the Civil Protection and Civil Defence Act, which defines, among other things, the tasks of public administration bodies in times of peace and war[7]. At the EU level, this framework is complemented by the directive on the resilience of critical entities[8]. Hybrid threats also extend to cyberspace, including attacks on telecommunications networks on which the communications of emergency services depend[9].

Conclusion

The analysis shows that the municipality has instruments that affect all three dimensions of resilience[10]. However, adaptive capacity is of decisive importance, as it is built through ongoing cooperation with local actors rather than through procedures alone[11].

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[5]S. Duchek, *Organizational Resilience: A Capability-Based Conceptualization*, "Business Research" 2020, vol. 13, no. 1, pp. 215–246. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1007/s40685-019-0085-7

[6]S. McManus, E. Seville, J. Vargo, D. Brunsdon, *Facilitated Process for Improving Organizational Resilience*, "Natural Hazards Review" 2008, vol. 9, no. 2, pp. 81–90. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1061/(ASCE)1527-6988(2008)9:2(81)

[7]Act of 5 December 2024 on Civil Protection and Civil Defence (Journal of Laws of 2024, item 1907), Art. 2.

[8]Directive (EU) 2022/2557 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 December 2022 on the resilience of critical entities and repealing Council Directive 2008/114/EC (OJ L 333, 27.12.2022, p. 164).

[9]*Vide* ENISA, *ENISA Threat Landscape for 5G Networks. Updated threat assessment for the fifth generation of mobile telecommunications networks (5G)*, Heraklion: European Union Agency for Cybersecurity, 2020. https://www.enisa.europa.eu/publications/enisa-threat-landscape-for-5g-networks-report [accessed: 20.10.2026].

[10]S. McManus et al., *Facilitated Process…*, *op. cit.*, pp. 82–84.

[11]S. Duchek, *Organizational Resilience…*, *op. cit.*, pp. 220–225.

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