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Total Defence in a consumer society: a real possibility or wishful thinking? The case study of Sweden

Introduction

The general feeling that emerged after the end of the Cold War in the broadly understood West can be described as euphoria. The collapse of the Soviet Union encouraged the belief that history had come to an end. The essay of an American political scientist of Japanese origin entitled *The End of History and the Last Man*¹ was thus perfectly consistent with the expectations of both the ruling elites and the broader public. There was very strong pressure to quickly consume the dividends of peace and victory. This should be understood not only as the allocation of the resources so far consumed by the defence and security sector to other purposes, but above all, as the emergence of a conviction about the need of a significant reduction or even elimination of the risk of a nuclear war. Generations brought up in the shadow of

¹ F. Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, New York – Toronto: Free Press – Maxwell Macmillan Canada, [cop. 1992].

MAD (Mutually Assured Destruction) wanted to enjoy a very high standard of living without the spectre of the nuclear threat. The above issue needs to be clearly emphasised as a large group of researchers seem not to notice it and evaluate the decisions made in many countries after the end of the Cold War only in terms of short-sightedness, naivety, or even stupidity combined with a cynical desire to monetise peace. They are trying to play the same music also after 24 February 2022, i.e., after the outbreak of war in Ukraine.

This paper deals with two main scholarly areas: social sciences and security sciences. The main aim is to present short the fundamental dilemma of modern society, i.e. the impossibility to simultaneously maintain a high standard of living and a high level of defence readiness. Moreover, such threats to the defence system as an increase in the average age of the population and the breakdown of the ethnic and cultural cohesion of societies have not been sufficiently defined. The authors present these issues as research problems in the field of security sciences, which need to be addressed urgently. In Polish conditions, their rank is determined both by the war in the East and, above all, by the influx of over 2 million refugees. The above-mentioned problems have ceased to have a purely academic dimension and have gained key utilitarian significance. When preparing the article, selected methods in the field of social sciences were used, subordinated to the analysis of a case study (specifically, the civil defence component of the Swedish defence system). The historical method, institutional and legal analyses as well as the study of demographic data were employed here.

The return of history

The radical change in the situation brought about by the return of the Russian Federation to its imperial policy has dramatically altered this situation. The Kingdom of Sweden is also included among the countries threatened to a varying degree. Sweden does not border directly with Russia, but in Stockholm there is a deep conviction that the danger is real. It is interesting to note that in the Swedish case, the peace cure was relatively short-lived because as late as at the turn of 2012, the then-Chief of Defence, General Sverker Göranson, initiated a broad public discussion about the country's ability to deal with the new threats.² This was one of the steps leading to a fundamental reorientation of the defence policy, which found its clearest expression in the

² Quoted after: "Szwedzka armia nie jest przygotowana na obronę. 'Nie utrzymałaby się nawet przez tydzień'", Onet.pl, 5 February 2013, <http://wiadomosci.onet.pl/swiat/szwedzka-armia-nie-jest-przygotowana-na-obrone-nie-utrzymalaby-sie-nawet-przez/ep9yx> [accessed: 18 May 2022]. One gets the impression that this was a carefully prepared social engineering ploy aimed at arousing certain social emotions and preparing the ground for other actions. It should be noted that despite the unprecedented nature of his statement and the enunciation of the then-Attorney General Tomas Lindstrand that the General could reveal state secrets and harm Sweden, Göranson remained in office until the end of his term and only handed over his duties to Air Force General Per Micael Bydén on 11 September 2015.

state's spending. In April 2015, a non-partisan agreement was signed to increase the military (or more broadly – defence) budget. The so-called Big Five, or the strongest, historically stable parties on the Swedish political scene: Swedish Social Democratic Party (Sveriges Socialdemokratiska Arbetareparti), the Green Party (Miljöpartiet de gröna), the Moderate Party (Moderata samlingspartiet), the Centre Party (Centerpartiet), and the Christian Democratic Party (Kristdemokraterna) decided to raise spending in this area by 10.2 billion kronor between 2016 and 2020 (or by 11% on a 2.2% annual basis compared to the original plans).³ At the same time, the amount of about 1.3 billion kronor was allocated to the reactivation of structures and restoration of civil defence stocks.⁴ At that time, in Swedish documents and in public discussion, there appeared the concept of a holistic, systemic approach to civil defence, understood broadly and socially supported state defence. It eventually took on the form of total defence (*Totalförsvaret*).⁵

This concept includes the reintroduction of conscription. Sweden has opted for a rather special solution. All conscripts (men and women) born in a certain year are subject to registration. Compared to the Cold War period, the requirements concerning health status have been radically tightened. As recently as the mid-1990s, about 40,000 men of each birth year were considered fit for service. In 2017, 13,000 young people of both sexes were considered fit to serve. In reality, the armed forces call up about 4,000 to serve for 12 months. Compulsory military service is thus effectively voluntary in nature. This solution, according to Swedish officers, makes it possible to maintain an organised reserve adequate to the needs of the armed forces. It should also be emphasised that the reintroduction of conscription has been done in accordance with the Swedish understanding of strengthening gender equality. This should be seen first and foremost as an expression of the Scandinavian social culture, and only later as a demographic necessity.⁶

³ Statista, Expected defence budget for Sweden from 2016 to 2020 (in million SEK), <https://www.statista.com/statistics/695937/expected-defense-budget-for-sweden> [accessed: 11 February 2021].

⁴ Regeringskansliets, Försvarsuppgörelse stärker försvaret med 2.7 miljarder per år, 16 August 2017, <https://www.regeringen.se/pressmeddelanden/2017/08/forsvarsuppgorelse-starker-forsvaret-med-27-miljarder-per-ar/> [accessed: 17 February 2022].

⁵ The process of Sweden reaching the concept of total defence and the first phase of its implementation is synthetically presented in J. Gotkowska, *Sweden's Security. The Long Way Towards Total Defence*, Warsaw: Centre for Eastern Studies, 2021. Detailed formal and legal solutions planned for implementation in 2021–2025 were outlined in the Total Defence Act (*Totalförsvaret 2021–2025*), adopted in early February 2021. Cf. *Totalförsvaret 2021–2025*, Regeringens proposition 2020/21:30, <https://www.regeringen.se/4a965d/globalassets/regeringen/dokument/forsvarsdepartementet/forsvarsproposition-2021-2025/totalforsvaret-2021-2025-prop.-20202130.pdf> [accessed: 3 February 2022].

⁶ A. Persson, F. Sundevall, "Conscripting women: gender, soldiering, and military service in Sweden 1965–2018", *Women's History Review*, vol. 28, issue 7, 2019, pp. 1039–1056, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09612025.2019.1596542>.

Total defence – as understood in Sweden

The notion of total defence adopted by Swedes has caused some confusion in Polish literature, especially since the literal translation has been used. This was because it naturally led to references to the concept of “total war”, a term which in Polish literature (and not only) evokes the worst possible associations. After all, quoting from *Encyklopedia wojskowa* [Encyclopaedia of Military Science], total war is “a war, in which all means and methods are used to achieve the aims; the supporters of total war do not recognise legal or moral restrictions, they reject international agreements and conventions which make achieving the aims difficult; in total war one affects not only the enemy’s armed forces, but the whole nation.”⁷ The entire concept is attributed to the German general Erich Ludendorff, who was an apologist of war, calling it the highest expression of a nation’s will.⁸ Meanwhile, the Swedish solutions have very little in common with the thoughts of the Kaiser general born at Kruszewnia near Poznań. The potential ambiguity of the term “total defence” was noticed in Finland and Estonia. The term translated to “comprehensive security”⁹ was instead introduced into the public discourse in both countries.

What then is Swedish total defence? It seems that the first thing to consider is the way the issue has been presented to the Swedish society. Massively circulated materials state: “The term ‘total defence’ denotes all of the activities needed to prepare Sweden for war, and comprises both military and civil defence. Civil defence refers to society as a whole’s resilience in the event of the threat of war and actual war.”¹⁰ The two components of total defence are defined as:¹¹

- military defence: “Sweden’s military defence comprises the Swedish Armed Forces and the Home Guard,¹² together with a number of other authorities. The Armed Forces defend our territory and our borders”;
- civil defence: “Civil defence refers to the work carried out by central government agencies, local authorities, regions, private companies, and voluntary organisations to protect the civilian population and to ensure that health care services and transport systems, for example, work. Sweden’s civil defence is also tasked with supporting Sweden’s Armed Forces.”

⁷ Wojna totalna [headword], [in:] *Encyklopedia wojskowa: dowódcy i ich armie, historia wojen i bitew, technika wojskowa. N–Ż*, ed. A. Krupa, Warszawa: WN PWN – Bellona, 2007, p. 494.

⁸ E. Ludendorff, *Wojna totalna*, transl. by F. Schoener, foreword S. Zielicz, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Ministerstwa Obrony Narodowej, 1959, p. 27.

⁹ P. Szymański, *New Ideas for Total Defence. Comprehensive Security in Finland and Estonia*, Warsaw: Centre for Eastern Studies, 2020.

¹⁰ Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency, Total defence – all of us together, p. 1, https://www.msb.se/siteassets/dokument/amnesomraden/krisberedskap-och-civilt-forsvar/stod-till-kommuner/krisberedskapsveckan/kampanjmaterial/material-2021/faktablad-totalforsvar/faktablad_totalforsvar_engelska.pdf [accessed: 4 February 2022].

¹¹ *Ibidem*.

¹² In Sweden, the formation is called Hemvärnet – Nationella skyddsstyrkorna.

While the question of the military component of total defence is not in much doubt, as its scope can be defined as “conventional defence against conventional attack,” its civilian component requires a few sentences of commentary of a geographical, demographic, and social nature. Without an understanding of the Swedish specifics, one might easily be tempted to absolutise the Scandinavian solutions.

Thus, the civilian component of total defence is the overall effort made by the state understood as the central administration, specialised services and agencies, state local administration and bodies of local self-government and social defence organisations,¹³ as well as economic entities, in order to provide the civilian population with basic services and benefits during a crisis situation, war threat and war.¹⁴ In essence, this is a return to the solutions developed and institutionalised in the years 1939–1945, and then successively developed and improved during the Cold War.¹⁵ The civil

¹³ The following organisations with this status operate in Sweden: Volunteer Air Corps (Frivilliga Flygkåren, FFK), Volunteer Motorcycle Club (Frivilliga motorcykelkåren, FMCK), Volunteer Radio Organization (Frivilliga radioorganisationen, FRO), Swedish Defence Training Union (Försvarsutbildarna, FBU), Swedish Service Dog Guide Association (Svenska Brukshundklubben, SBK), the Swedish Drivers Association (Sveriges Bilkärrers Riksförbund, SBR), the Association of Swedish Women Volunteers in Lotta Traffic (Riksförbundet Sveriges lottakärer, SLK), the Sea Volunteer Service (Sjövärnskåren, SVK), and the Volunteer Aviation Association (Flygparenfrivilliga, FVRF). In addition, there are various historical and hobbyist associations operating under separate regulations, cooperating with military authorities, the central and local governments, and often having at their disposal substantial resources in terms of personnel, and premises (for example, maintaining facilities from which the military withdrew after the Cold War). An illustration of this phenomenon may be Swedish Air Force Historic Flight (interestingly, appearing in public space only under its English name and using the acronym SwAFHF), whose mission is to preserve and maintain historical aircraft in an airworthy condition. Currently in possession of 13 aircraft (including 7 jets), it is humorously called “the reserve fleet of the Air Force.” It operates in tandem with the infrastructural parts used by the disbanded 7th Flotilla.

¹⁴ P. Larsson, *Civilbefälhavare – en övergripande historisk belysning*, Rapportnr FOI-R--4795--SE, FOI, August 2019, <https://www.foi.se/rest-api/report/FOI-R--4795--SE>; B. Johansson, K.D. Mattsson, E. Mittermaier, N.H. Rossbach, *Det civila försvarets utgångspunkt i krisberedskapen. En övergripande analys av förutsättningar och utmaningar*, Rapportnr FOI-R--4431--SE, FOI, June 2017, <https://www.foi.se/rest-api/report/FOI-R--4431--SE> [accessed: 16 February 2022].

¹⁵ It was a very elaborate structure with significant capabilities for the dispersal and protection of the population (managing a network of shelters and hiding places), rescue and firefighting operations, including those aimed at eliminating the effects of weapons of mass destruction, defense against propaganda-psychological influence, and communication and transportation system. Civil defense managed a system of depots and warehouses housing non-military supplies, a prearranged system of rationing food and other scarce goods (along with coupon-cards and war currency prepared by the Sveriges Riksbank). Civil defense also took care of mass burial sites. Membership in civil defense structures was compulsory for numerous groups of state and local governments employees. Cf. G. Andersson, *Civilförsvarsförbundets Historia*, Civilförsvarsförbundet, 2018, <https://civil.se/medlemmar/wp-content/uploads/sites/320/2018/05/Civilfo%C3%B6rsvarsfo%C3%B6rbundets-historia.pdf> [accessed: 24 May 2022].

defence system was deactivated at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries, accompanied by the sale or function change of about 70% of its infrastructure. Restoration began in 2016 under the reactivated concept of total defence.¹⁶

The civilian component of total defence: geographical and social conditions

Compared to Polish realities, one of the primary factors determining the organisation of the civilian component of total defence in Sweden is the vastness of the territory and density of population. The country stretches meridionally in a belt of about 1560 km (from the Smygehuk lighthouse in the south to the “tri-junction” of the Norwegian, Swedish, and Finnish borders in the north), while latitudinally it is about 410 km long (from the border crossing with Norway, located between Orje and Töcksfors in the west, to the eastern shore of the island of Gisslingö). The area of Sweden is 449,964 square kilometres, i.e., 144.2% of Poland’s territory. The Swedish population is 10.45 million people (February 2022), distributed unevenly; however, as you move north, the population density decreases. The largest population centres are the agglomerations of Stockholm, Greater Malmö, and Greater Gothenburg.

Relatively high population density is also found in the south of the country and in the coastal lowlands. The interior of the country is in many areas virtually uninhabited, with the exception of the Strömsund-Östersund area in the central interior, from where the route to Trondheim in Norway leads. In the same areas, most of the authority (political and administrative centres), various services and production are concentrated. Thus, the above situation justifies considering the polygon defined by the cities of Gothenburg, Karlstad, Uppsala, Stockholm, Kalmar, Karlskrona, Ystad and Malmö as the “strategic core.” The length of the perimeter thus defined is about 1300 km. It is a compact area of about 90,000 square kilometres. It should be noted that outside this “strategic core” there are only smaller centres such as Umeå, Piteå, Sundsvall and Östresund, Luleå, Boden, and Kiruna.

Sweden is thus characterised by a concentration of population in the south and southeast, but at the same time, there is only one city with a population of about 1.5 million (2 million in the metropolitan area). Moreover, it is the large cities that have the highest per centage of elderly people (a result of the cumulative influx of people into the cities and the accelerated pace of various social changes), which places additional demands on the welfare system, which must, by necessity, also

¹⁶ O. Jovanovic, *Möjlighet till implementering av det nya totalförsvaret. En studie gällande möjlighet till implementering av totalförsvaret för Sveriges kommuner*, Handledare: E. Deverell, Försvarshögskolan, 2020, <https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1528260/FULLTEXT01.pdf> [accessed: 10 February 2022], (civil defense training material).

include total defence solutions. In contrast, the 25 municipalities in the north of Sweden have the most favourable ratio of those economically active to the total population.¹⁷

In the south and centre, the population outside the large cities is distributed fairly evenly within the “strategic core,” while towards the north, the population density decreases and is therefore naturally dispersed. This reduces the scale of organisational and technical challenges associated with the need to ensure the functioning of large concentrations of people in times of crisis and war. In smaller towns, there are also stronger and much more developed interpersonal relations than in agglomerations, which adds up to a social dimension of “defence capital” which is difficult to assess. At the same time, apart from the “strategic core,” it is necessary to build a dispersed civil defence system, in which the most serious complicating factors, apart from the intentional actions of the enemy, are distance, terrain and weather. The realisation of related tasks with the use of forces of the military sector only, taking into account its size, even including Hemvärnet – Nationella skyddsstyrkorna, is impossible. This implies broad participation of local administration in the implementation of tasks aimed at protecting the population and local administration.

In estimating the defence resilience of Swedish society, at least three more factors need to be taken into account: population growth in relation to median age and migration processes, standard of living, and the quality of institutions. The first issue is relatively simple to capture and synthesise. With the overall population growing from 7.04 million in 1950 to 10.32 million in 2020, the median age increased by 9,6 years during this period from 34.2 to 43.8 years¹⁸ (in Poland the average age in 2020 was 41.7). This results in a lowering of the proportion between those able to serve in military combat and the rest of the population, which naturally forces the search for ways to rationally use the older population in the defence system, as is clear from the assumptions of the civilian segment of Sweden’s total defence.

It should further be noted that the relatively rapid population growth was largely the result of migration. After World War II, Sweden saw several waves of inflows of foreigners, among them there were those who came after World War II, refugees from the Baltic States, economic migrants from Norway and Finland, and in the late 1960s and early 1970s foreign workers attracted by the opening labour market as well as

¹⁷ P.T. Finnsson, “Sweden: Inequality in Sweden grows much faster than in the Nordics overall”, *Nordregio Magazine*, <https://nordregio.org/nordregio-magazine/issues/state-of-the-nordic-region-2020/sweden-inequality-in-sweden-grows-much-faster-than-in-the-nordics-overall> [accessed: 21 February 2022].

¹⁸ Cf. Statista, Sweden: Average age of the population from 1950 to 2050 (median age in years), <https://www.statista.com/statistics/375459/average-age-of-the-population-in-sweden>; *EU population in 2020: almost 448 million more deaths than births*, Eurostat, 10 July 2020, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/2995521/11081093/3-10072020-AP-EN.pdf/d2f799bf-4412-05cc-a357-7b49b93615f1> [accessed: 14 February 2022].

political refugees from various parts of the world.¹⁹ As a result, about 2 million citizens (19%²⁰ according to public data) originate (first generation) from outside their country of residence. For decades, this has not been a major problem and integration issues have rarely arisen and have been effectively addressed. However, in the critical year 2015, Sweden admitted 163,000 migrants. This *de facto* led to an exhaustion of the absorption capacity of the state and a drastic change in immigration and social policy towards newcomers.²¹ In 2020, only 13,000 migrants were admitted, mostly political refugees. And this is still happening, even though the role of migrants in the labour market is difficult to overestimate.²²

The factor outlined above is compounded by a progressive income disparity. While in the early 2000s Sweden had the lowest income and standard of living disparities among the OECD countries, it is now behind the other countries in the Nordic region. Moreover, a vast majority of those recording the lowest incomes are unsurprisingly immigrants from recent waves, but it also includes second-generation immigrants from culturally different areas. The relationship between the influx of migrants and income stratification is, of course, practically inevitable.²³ This has negative social consequences on a scale that is difficult to diagnose unequivocally, regardless of the fact that the phenomenon is taking place in a very wealthy country, which has one of the highest incomes per capita in the world at the level of 55 thousand dollars a year and invariably ranks among the top ten countries with the highest standard of living.²⁴

¹⁹ The problem of emigration from Poland to Sweden has been the subject of abundant literature, but it is also worth mentioning that Sweden is home to the third largest Chilean diaspora in the world, after Argentina and the United States, with about 45,000 people. It was formed during the dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet (1973–1990).

²⁰ For Iceland and Norway, it is 16%, for Denmark – 12%, and Finland – 7%. Cf. P.T. Finnsson, *op. cit.*

²¹ This was manifested, among other things, in a speech by the chairwoman of the Swedish Social Democratic Party, Magdalena Andersson, after taking office as Minister of Finance for the second time in January 2019 (she became Prime Minister on 30 November 2021). Addressing migrants, she delivered a statement that only a few months earlier had been described as “racist”: “If you are young, [...] you must obtain a high school diploma and go on to get a job or higher education.’ If you receive financial aid from the state, ‘you must learn Swedish and work a certain number of hours a week.’ [...] ‘here in Sweden, both men and women work and contribute to welfare.’ [...] [This] applies ‘no matter what fathers, mothers, spouses, or brothers think and feel.’” Cf. J. Traub, “Even Sweden Doesn’t Want Migrants Anymore”, *Foreign Policy*, 17 November 2021, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/11/17/even-sweden-doesnt-want-migrants-anymore-syria-iraq-belarus> [accessed: 19 February 2022].

²² Of the 166,000 jobs generated by the Swedish economy between 2008 and 2016, most were filled by migrants. P. Nilsson, “Swedish society’s big divisions – in 6 charts”, *Financial Times*, 29 August 2018, <https://www.ft.com/content/3b9566e4-941a-11e8-b747-fb1e803ec64e> [accessed: 20 February 2022].

²³ *Ibidem.*

²⁴ The World Bank, GDP per capita, PPP (current international \$), <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.PP.CD> [accessed: 16 February 2022].

The frustration of individuals and social groups results from their own situation, opportunities and the “here and now” attitude, while global indicators tend to be unconvincing. Meanwhile, numerous groups of migrants settled in Sweden, partly due to the value system brought from their country of origin shaping their customs and behaviour, including educational engagement and activity in the labour market, encounter a socio-economic “glass ceiling,” invisible at first glance, but nevertheless very hard and persistent. It should be emphasised that in the official Swedish discourse, the problem of coincidence between the phenomena outlined above and defence issues is not addressed – at least not directly.²⁵ Meanwhile, it is difficult to assume that they will not have an impact on social cohesion, which is a factor difficult to quantify and whose importance is manifested primarily in situations of threat and instability of both institutions and intergroup ties.

However, it should also be remembered that Sweden (as well as other Scandinavian countries) is characterised by a very high level of political consensus on defence issues. It has become a tradition, a custom and a norm that the main parties work out a long-standing agreement on the matter before elections, and defence issues, procurement policy and the like are not usually raised in the then-current political competition. This is a value in itself which most European countries are unable to achieve. It also has a direct bearing on the coherence of the defence system *en bloc*, and that includes the coherence of the civil defence subsystem.

²⁵ The problem of internal security crisis, after all, is recognised, and the phenomenon is counted among the most serious threats? At the same time, the non-discriminatory policy of state agencies has not, quite reasonably, allowed the phenomenon to be explicitly and simplistically associated with a particular group or groups. Therefore, the The Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (Brottsförebyggande rådet) stopped short of stating that the increase in homicides in Sweden since 2005 is not related to trends in the country’s international environment but has been generated internally. Cf. K. Hradilova Selin, *Gun homicide in Sweden and other European countries. A comparative study of levels, trends, and homicide by other means. English summary of Brå report 2021:8*, Stockholm: Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention, 2021, https://bra.se/download/18.1f8c9903175f8b2aa70ca53/1621930415477/2021_8_Gun_homicide_in_Sweden_and_other_European_countries.pdf [accessed: 7 January 2022]. Analyses of investigative documents and prosecutions show that 50% of serious crimes are committed by migrants. In the case of homicides, murders, and attempted murders they account for 73% of the perpetrators, and in the case of robberies and burglaries for 70%. G. Adamson, “Migrants and Crime in Sweden in the Twenty-First Century”, *Society*, vol. 57, 2020, pp. 9–21, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12115-019-00436-8>. Migrants, in turn, account for 58% of prisoners with long sentences and 58% of the unemployed; benefits for migrants consume 65% of the welfare budget, 77% of children living below the poverty line are from migrant families, migrants account for 90% of those suspected of using firearms in public places. Cf. T. Sanandaji, *Mass Challenge. The Socioeconomic Impact of Migration to a Scandinavian Welfare State*, transl. by J. Vesterberg, Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020, s. 63–65, 67–69, <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-46808-8>. The situation is so serious that Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson announced an increase in the number of police officers by 7,000 within three years.

Conclusions

The above considerations are not an attempt at disavowing the solutions adopted in Sweden while building the civilian component of “total defence”. The intention of the authors was, on the one hand, to broaden the perception of this problem with a segment related to very dynamic social processes, including migration; and on the other hand, to show what dangers are involved in a mechanical implementation of solutions borrowed from the past, be it only two decades away. Generally speaking, the described solution is a very interesting attempt at finding some answers to two fundamental questions: how to ensure effective defence of a vast country with a weak population and how to minimise the destructive impact of crisis situations (including conflict and war) on the functioning of a wealthy yet aging society. The Swedish solutions are deeply rooted in an organisational culture shaped both under the distant influence of historical experience and the one provided by nearly a century-long and still ongoing building of a welfare state. They are specific to Sweden and very difficult to implement in other political, economic, and social reality. This does not mean, however, that they are not worth studying or even adopting, because so many of them are truly interesting and original.

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Total Defence in a consumer society: a real possibility or wishful thinking?

The case study of Sweden

Abstract

The article presents the demographic and social conditions of the Swedish civil defence subsystem known as total defence (*Totalförsvaret*). The authors explain the original meaning of the term and its role in the national defence system. They draw attention to the existing threats related mainly to the uneven distribution of the population and the aging of the population. The issue of the progressive ethnic and cultural differentiation of the Swedish society has been treated separately.

Key words: war, defence, total defence, society, Sweden