

Jerzy Trocha, Paradigm of railway station security¹

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James Watt's invention of the steam engine in 1763 changed the face of the world. Nearly 200 years ago, the world's first steam railway traction was created, and over 180 years ago, the first railway line was inaugurated on Polish soil. This mode of transport primarily 'made the world smaller' and became the driving force behind the development of civilisation. Railway lines quickly became strategic arteries serving the military purposes. The military first used rail transport in 1839 in the United

¹ J. Trocha, *Paradygmat bezpieczeństwa dworców kolejowych* (Eng. Paradigm of railway station security), Warszawa 2025, Akademia Sztuki Wojennej, 200 p.

Kingdom on the Liverpool–Manchester route, but this was only a one-off event. In 1836, a short text by Prussian General Helmuth von Moltke entitled *Über die militärische Benutzung der Eisenbahn* (Eng. On the military use of the railway) was published. Thirteen years later, at the request of Emperor Franz Joseph, the Russians used this means of transport to move a 15 000-strong division from Kraków via Koźle to Uherské Hradiště to fight Hungarian insurgents. Many later experiences were gained also from the American Civil War, the Austro-Prussian War, the Franco-Prussian War, the Boer War and, above all, World War I and World War II. Today, railway plays an important role in the hostilities in Ukraine.

There is a lot of talk about airports and stadiums, while railway stations – places that people use every day – remain in the shadows. Yet in an era of terrorist threats, growing passenger and freight traffic, safety at railway stations is a topic that should be the focus of attention. However, it is rarely discussed in the Polish scientific literature. Until now, there has been no comprehensive, in-depth treatment of this issue. Jerzy Trocha's publication entitled *Paradigm of railway station security* undoubtedly fills the gap and deserves the attention not only of security and defence experts, but also of anyone interested in the functioning of railways as part of a country's critical infrastructure. This is all the more so because the author approaches the subject with great expertise.

Trocha co-authors publications on public safety and crisis management, and his earlier works, including those on civil protection, have attracted the attention of academic and expert circles. He is an author with a solid academic and practical background. He does not write 'from behind the desk', but from the position of a person who knows the functioning of security structures from the inside. He belongs to a rare group of authors who are able to integrate three perspectives: that of systems analyst, that of an officer responsible for safety, and that of a citizen. This combination means that his book is not merely an academic intellectual exercise, but has a strong implementation potential.

What can we find between the covers

Trocha's book is a solid academic monograph. Its structure has been carefully thought out to allow the reader to be gradually introduced to the subject, and the language remains understandable even to those

outside the expert community. This is not a textbook or a collection of legal provisions, but an analytical story about railway stations, places so familiar that we cease to notice them.

The book is divided into four parts, which form a logical structure: from the historical and structural characteristics of railway stations in Poland, to an analysis of the typology of threats, to a description of security systems and a set of recommendations aimed at improving the current situation.

The first chapter is introductory and contextual in nature. In it, the author reviews the origins of rail transport in Poland, placing the development of the railways in the context of the historical, economic and political conditions of particular eras. He pays particular attention to the impact of the partitions on the development of the railway infrastructure and the processes of its reconstruction and development after regaining independence in 1918. Later on, he presents the contemporary legal conditions governing the operation of railway stations in Poland, including issues related to their ownership and organisational structure. He also classifies types of railway stations according to their functions and the scale of passenger traffic they handle.

The second chapter provides a critical analysis of factors threatening the safety of users and station infrastructure. Trocha identifies and describes in detail both intentional threats (such as terrorist activities, crimes and offences), as well as random threats, including fires, technical failures and other emergencies. The author emphasises the specific nature of railway stations as places with a high concentration of users, which, combined with their public character, significantly increases their vulnerability to crisis incidents. In the context of contemporary threats, the author discusses the impact of the migration crisis related to the armed conflict in Ukraine on the level of security in railway areas, which is particularly important.

In the third chapter, which is systemic and descriptive in nature, Trocha focuses on institutional and technical mechanisms for ensuring railway station safety. He discusses primarily the role of physical protection, technical security systems as well as specialised entities and services, including the Railway Station Safety Centre, the Railway Security Guard, the Police, as well as forms of cooperation between them. He also analyses the functioning of crisis management structures in the railway sector as well as the importance of international standards and supranational

organisations for shaping practices in the area of critical infrastructure protection.

The fourth chapter includes summary, conclusions and recommendations. The author identifies the most important problems and shortcomings in the current station infrastructure security system in Poland and presents proposals for modernisation and implementation measures aimed at improving security level at the design stage and during the operation of railway station facilities. Of particular value is the list of author's recommendations concerning organisational, legal and technical changes. According to Trocha, the solutions described allow the railway station security system to be adapted to contemporary threats and social expectations.

Each of the chapters serves a separate but complementary function: from outlining the context, to analysing threats and protective measures, to recommending systemic changes. As a result, the book provides a comprehensive overview of the subject and can serve as both a source of academic knowledge and a practical guide for those involved in the security of critical infrastructure.

The publication *Paradigm of railway station security* includes interesting iconographic material – the charts and tables complement the author's reflections and allow the reader to better understand the content. The monograph has clear typography and a legible layout. This makes the text easier to work with, which is a significant added value in this type of publication. In other words, the structure of the book was planned in a manner that enables a smooth transition from the diagnosis of the actual state and risk analysis, through the assessment of available protective mechanisms, to the formulation of proposals for changes aimed at improving public safety at railway stations. Such an arrangement of content allows for an in-depth understanding of the issue and, at the same time, provides a starting point for further scientific research and practical considerations in this area.

Strengths and weaknesses of the publication – subjective reflections

The greatest strength of the publication is its interdisciplinary nature, as it combines knowledge in the fields of security, history, law and management.

Reliable bibliography, up-to-date information and the author's experience build the reader's trust in the proposed conclusions.

One of the shortcomings may be the occasional use of specialised language, which makes some passages difficult to understand for readers who are less familiar with the subject matter. There is also a lack of in-depth comparisons with solutions used abroad, which could broaden the perspective of the publication. It seems that the main shortcoming of book, is the lack of explanation of the term 'paradigm' – how the author understands this and what the paradigms of railway station security are. This expression appears only once – in the title. The lack of definition of a key concept constitutes an understatement that may hinder the classification of the book within the established discourse of security sciences. According to the reviewers, setting a clearly defined research problem would have allowed this mistake to be avoided. Taking into account the broader scientific apparatus specific to security studies would further enhance the scientific value of this monograph.

Summary – who is this book for

Paradigm of railway station security is a publication which defies simple categorisation. It is not a typical academic monograph, although it meets all scientific requirements. Nor is it a practical guide, although it can certainly serve as a guide for infrastructure managers or officers. It is more like a well-thought-out analytical and social project and diagnosis of the current situation, as well as an appeal for sensible and responsible planning of public space.

The way the author shows railway station is particularly interesting. It is not only a physical facility, but also, a place where different social groups, interests, cultures and, unfortunately, also threats meet. It is a space, where security ceases to be an abstraction and becomes part of everyday experience.

There is no intrusive didacticism here, but neither is there any tolerance for mediocrity. Trocha writes with responsibility that spreads to a reader. After reading this book, it is difficult to view the railway station as just a place to change trains.

The reviewed publication deserves careful reading. It was written with specialists in mind, but it is also understandable to a wider audience,

including people who are not professionally involved in security issues. We recommend it especially to:

- students and lecturers in fields related to security, defence, transport and public administration,
- employees of structures responsible for protection of the critical infrastructure,
- local government officials and spatial planners,
- as well as all citizens who wish to consciously participate in shaping safety public space.

The reviewed monograph² is a rare example of a book that successfully combines expert knowledge with a sense of social responsibility. The book not only diagnoses the problem but also inspires further reflection and action. We need more publications like this in times of growing uncertainty.

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² We encourage readers to get acquainted with another review of this monograph. The review was published in issue 33 of the journal "Przegląd Bezpieczeństwa Wewnętrznego" published by the Internal Security Agency (editor's note). See: E. Jakubiak, *Jerzy Trocha, Paradygmat bezpieczeństwa dworców kolejowych*, "Przegląd Bezpieczeństwa Wewnętrznego" 2025, no. 33, pp. 217-221. <https://doi.org/10.4467/20801335PBW.25.027.22644>.

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