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Research Article

Thinking about Patriotism: Patriotic Education and Moral Formation in the Writings of Ignacy Kozielewski and Jadwiga Falkowska

Myśląc o patriotyzmie: Wychowanie patriotyczne i formacja moralna w pismach Ignacego Kozielewskiego i Jadwigi Falkowskiej

Sławomir Futyma, Zbigniew Rudnicki*
Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, Poland
ORCID: S.F. https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8495-9176; Z.R. https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5238-0100;
* Correspondence: zrudnic@wp.pl
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Abstract
This article examines the educational understanding of patriotism in selected writings of Ignacy Kozielewski and Jadwiga Falkowska, representatives of the formative tradition of Polish Scouting. Adopting a scholarly interpretative essay and a fragmentary approach, it reconstructs relationships between patriotism, moral formation, personal development, and responsibility for the common good. Particular attention is given to the educational significance of these concepts within the Scouting model of formation. Matters of social custom and practice that facilitate integration into the world of everyday experience will also be addressed. The study situates the Scouting conception of patriotism within broader traditions of classical virtue ethics, Christian moral thought, and contemporary discussions of patriotic and civic education. The analysis shows that patriotism in the selected writings can be interpreted as an educational and moral disposition in which personal development, freedom, service, and moral responsibility are integrated with participation in community life. In this perspective, patriotic education is understood not merely as the transmission of national attachment but as a process of moral and civic formation oriented towards the common good.

Keywords
patriotism, patriotic education, Polish Scouting, scouting, moral education, philosophy of education, civic education, moral formation, common good, youth formation

Abstrakt
Artykuł analizuje edukacyjne rozumienie patriotyzmu w wybranych pismach Ignacego Kozielewskiego i Jadwigi Falkowskiej, przedstawicieli tradycji formacyjnej polskiego skautingu. Przyjmując naukowy esej interpretacyjny i podejście fragmentaryczne, rekonstruuje relacje między patriotyzmem, formacją moralną, rozwojem osobistym i odpowiedzialnością za dobro wspólne. Szczególną uwagę poświęcono edukacyjnemu

znaczeniu tych pojęć w skautowym modelu formacji. Poruszone zostaną również kwestie zwyczajów i praktyk społecznych, które ułatwiają integrację ze światem codziennego doświadczenia. Opracowanie sytuuje skautowską koncepcję patriotyzmu w szerszych tradycjach klasycznej etyki cnót, chrześcijańskiej myśli moralnej oraz współczesnych rozważań na temat wychowania patriotycznego i obywatelskiego. Analiza pokazuje, że patriotyzm w wybranych pismach można interpretować jako postawę edukacyjną i moralną, w której rozwój osobisty, wolność, służba i odpowiedzialność moralna są zintegrowane z uczestnictwem w życiu wspólnoty. W tej perspektywie wychowanie patriotyczne rozumiane jest nie tylko jako przekazywanie więzi narodowej, ale jako proces formacji moralnej i obywatelskiej ukierunkowany na dobro wspólne.

Słowa kluczowe
patriotyzm, wychowanie patriotyczne, polskie harcerstwo, harcerstwo, wychowanie moralne, filozofia wychowania, wychowanie obywatelskie, formacja moralna, dobro wspólne, formacja młodzieży

Introduction

This article examines the understanding of patriotism reflected in selected writings associated with the formative period of Polish Scouting, with particular attention to the works of Ignacy Kozielewski and Jadwiga Falkowska. Its aim is to reconstruct and interpret the anthropological, moral, and educational foundations of patriotism emerging from these writings. The analysis will be guided by the following research questions: How is patriotism conceptualized in the selected writings of Kozielewski and Falkowska? What educational significance can be attributed to this understanding within the formative ideals of the Scouting movement? As the article has been conceived as a scholarly interpretative essay, it has adopted a fragmentary approach, focusing on selected passages and concepts rather than attempting a comprehensive reconstruction of the authors' works. The selected source material will be examined through close interpretative reading, with particular attention to recurring concepts concerning humanity, moral formation, harmonious personal development, freedom, service, and the common good. These concepts will provide the analytical framework for reconstructing the model of patriotism discussed here and for considering its educational implications.

Contemporary research shows that patriotism remains an important and contested issue in education, closely connected with questions of citizenship, national identity, and civic participation. Comparative research on patriotic education indicates that the subject has attracted sustained scholarly attention across different educational and national contexts (Malkoç and Öztürk 2021). Studies of citizenship education further demonstrate that the educational interpretation of patriotism is shaped by wider cultural, social, and political contexts (Hejwosz-Gromkowska 2023; Elerian, Yemini, and Jasikowska 2025). Recent research in Poland also points to the multidimensional character of patriotic attitudes, distinguishing between heroic, heroic-civic, and civic forms of patriotism and showing differences among students, teachers, and adults (Wilk 2026).

Against this contemporary background, revisiting the educational ideas developed within the formative tradition of Polish Scouting may contribute a historical perspective to current discussions by showing how patriotism was connected with personal formation, moral responsibility, service, and commitment to the common good.

A world of people united by brotherhood and working for the common good is a way of thinking about social reality characteristic of the founders of the Scouting movement, which was the equivalent of British Scouting. This type of mindset is characterized by a shift from the tangible parameter of identity towards an immaterial idea. After all, we are first together with the "world of life," and then we seek immaterial goals for self-fulfilment within a community of people. This fulfilment occurs by providing basic components for articulating answers to fundamental human questions like: "Who am I? What am I striving for? What is the meaning of human life?"

The anthropological and educational ideas examined in this paper can be situated within a broader tradition of classical reflection on human formation, virtue, and the common good. Greek philosophy gradually shifted attention from explanations based on myth towards rational reflection on reality and the principles governing human life. This intellectual tradition, particularly as developed by Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, provides an important conceptual background for understanding the emphasis on virtue, moral formation, and the development of the person that can also be identified in the selected writings of the founders of Polish Scouting. All these endeavours of the enlightened minds of Antiquity focused on the discovery of general and immutable principles. W.K.C. Guthrie, the foremost authority among experts of this period, wrote of Plato: "... unlike Socrates, he was deeply interested in reality, but he was also drawn to ethical problems" (Guthrie 1996, 71).

Following Socrates's teachings, he considered the most important problem to be how to make people better so that they would take care of their souls by practicing virtue, but first of all, he would try to understand and define "[...] the nature of justice, courage, and courtesy that underlie proper behaviour" (Guthrie 1996, 70). From the perspective of classical thought, human formation cannot be reduced to its material or practical dimensions; it is also oriented towards ideas and values that give direction and meaning to human life. In this sense, virtue and moral development provide a framework for understanding the relationship between individual formation and participation in a community. A comparable perspective can be identified in the selected writings of the founders of Polish Scouting, where personal development is closely connected with

moral responsibility, service, and commitment to the common good.

1. Patriotism

A reconstruction of the concept of "patriotism" cannot be undertaken without describing the image of the people who make up this community. This reconstruction is not based on naive romanticism. It is based on a pattern leading from the private world, the world of the individual's rational condition, to the world of conscious commitments, to the world of awareness and consequences, for example, the continuity of public obligations. Thus, this path, along with the tools necessary to achieve a precisely defined goal, fits into the understanding of the conceptual category of "patriotism." A world of people united by brotherhood and working for the common good emerges as a desirable and necessary vision of "tomorrow." This necessity stems from a diagnosis of the then world, in which people, as throughout human history, fell into extremes. This was often mentioned by Jadwiga Falkowska, who co-created the foundations of the women's scouting movement, and by Ignacy Kozielewski, creator of the "Scout Hymn," editor of the magazine "Skaut," a soldier of the Polish Legions, and a long-time practicing educator. In an article originally published in the quarterly *Harcerstwo* in 1935 and later reprinted in *Znak*, Jadwiga Falkowska, a researcher at the Warsaw University of Technology and the Stefan Batory University in Vilnius, a physicist and Scoutmaster of the Republic of Poland, wrote: "[...] The changeability of human life appears to us as a wave line: around the axis of age-old progress, we see fluctuations now in one direction, now in the other. [...] Yesterday, the pursuit of individuality and criticism—today, templates and 'fashion.' There, the overthrow of authority—here, the craving for authority, easy submission and even artificial shaping. There, the cult of intellect and inhibition of will—here, the cult of force, the apotheosis of action, and then brutality and careerism. There, digging and getting lost in the subtleties of theoretical and life issues—here, the simplification of views and a superficial ease in overcoming issues" (Falkowska 1980, 1043).

Read in the context of the present analysis, Falkowska's diagnosis points to a recurring tension between opposing tendencies in individual and social life. Rather than treating these observations as a general theory of human behaviour, they can be interpreted as an educational diagnosis: human formation must take account of the instability of individual choices and the tendency to move between extremes. From this perspective, the ideal of social brotherhood and education for the common good does not presuppose a perfectly ordered human reality but responds to its internal tensions. This interpretation provides a basis for understanding why the Scouting model of formation discussed below places particular emphasis on balance, self-discipline,

responsibility, and harmonious personal development.

Table 1. Framework of educational theory according to Jadwiga Falkowska

The table presents Jadwiga Falkowska's view of educational development as a process shaped by tensions between opposing tendencies. It contrasts individualism with conformity, rejection of authority with submission to authority, intellectualism with the cult of force and action, and excessive complexity with superficial simplification. The table shows that the educational task consists in seeking balance between these extremes.

The logic of life that dictates the pattern of building educational theory is placed between extremes	
The pursuit of individuality and criticism	Conformity to templates and "style"
Overthrowing authorities	Craving for authority, easy subordination, and artificial shaping of authority
The cult of intellect and inhibition of the will	The cult of strength, apotheosis of action, brutality, and careerism
Getting lost in the subtleties of theoretical and practical issues	Simplification of views and superficial treatment of issues

Source: Own study based on Falkowska (1980, 1043–1044).

The contrasts identified by Falkowska can, therefore, be interpreted as a point of departure for an educational model aimed at balancing competing tendencies in personal and social development. This concern acquired particular significance in the context of restored Polish independence and the challenge of rebuilding a society previously divided by the partitions. Within this historical and educational context, Falkowska presented the Scouting method as a means of forming individuals capable of combining personal development with responsible participation in community life. The aim was not merely individual self-improvement but the formation of a person whose dispositions would enable both personal fulfilment and constructive participation in a wider social community. This understanding is expressed in the following description of the Scouting method: "[...] providing modern humanity with a method for achieving the old, familiar ideal of a man with harmonized dispositions that give him full strength and happiness, while at the same time being in harmony with his environment and capable of creating collective units of the highest order' (quoted in Zimmer 1939, 48–49).

This educational perspective raises the question of how personal formation relates to the individual's identification with a wider community and homeland. In this respect, J.M. Bocheński's account provides a useful conceptual point of reference by emphasizing the role of homeland in the formation of identity. He writes: "[...] homeland is an ontologically complex, yet ethically simple, object [...]. Following the thought of St. Thomas Aquinas [...], we understand the country, the human group, history, culture, etc., called 'homeland' when it comes to patriotism, from the perspective of the source of our being, understood comprehensively,

that is, both physically and spiritually. We are who we are because we were born in such a country, climate, in such biological conditions, and to such parents, because we were raised in such a culture, because we were influenced by powerful influences of all kinds, accumulated over the centuries, from the physical and chemical to the religious" (Bocheński 1989, 9).

The influence of these factors is extraordinary and—as J. M. Bocheński states elsewhere—makes "love of one's homeland and compatriots by no means a superstition, but a virtue worth cultivating, just like love of one's homeland" (Bocheński 1994, 98). Thus, it can be assumed that the entire "package" mentioned above, taken together with spiritual factors reflected in culture, makes us who we are. The author of the monumental work "History of Poland" approaches this matter similarly, drawing on the writings of Wincenty Kadłubek, who, using the phrase "amor patriae," points to its constitutive feature, which he describes as "identitas mater est societatis" (identity is the mother of community) (Nowak 2015, 360).

Kazimierz Dąbrowski, a distinguished Polish humanist (perhaps surprisingly, better known in North America than in Poland), physician, psychiatrist, clinical psychologist, philosopher, and educator, founder of the Institute of Mental Hygiene, which he directed from 1935 to 1949, also focused his research on the questions mentioned above, fundamental to the human condition. He considered them "relevant to anyone who concretely realizes a specific personality ideal" (Dąbrowski 1986, 77).

2. Towards the Ideal of a Harmonious Man or the Foundation of Patriotism

Kazimierz Dąbrowski's reflections provide a useful conceptual point of reference for interpreting the relationship between personal development and social responsibility. He emphasized moral and social dispositions oriented towards understanding others, assistance in their development, empathy, and cooperation, arguing that the attitude towards human reality should be structured "according to the principle: to know everything is not only to understand and forgive, but also to strive to help others in their developmental difficulties, to develop an attitude of empathy and cooperation" (Dąbrowski 1986, 77).

Without implying a direct intellectual dependence between Dąbrowski and Falkowska, a comparable emphasis on the integration of personal and social development can be identified in Falkowska's writings. Her account of formation brings together honesty and truthfulness, autonomy and courage, love and empathy, striving for personal development, as well as sensitivity to the moral, aesthetic, and spiritual dimensions of human life. Within the interpretative framework adopted in this article, these elements can be read as components of the ideal of the harmoniously developed person. Falkowska characterizes this ideal through

the following dispositions:

- Strength and at the same time wisdom and chivalry (chivalrous means not making one's way at the expense of others);
- Being creative where commitment (work) will be efficient and useful, and a career in the noble sense (honest and selfless, characterized by harmony, simplicity, moderation and excellent quality);
- Developed personality, where the most important thing is the ability to work with others and for others;
- Discipline (however active and critical);
- Socialization without reducing individual wealth,
- Feeling happy by serving others and being there for others and for the IDEA (Falkowska 1980, 1044).

After all, truthfulness and honesty directly influence a sense of justice, courage, or heroism, and they are the ones that demonstrate beliefs about the appropriateness of our chosen direction. Kazimierz Dąbrowski similarly emphasized the role of autonomy and courage: "The richer the life experience, the greater the sensitivity, the stronger the transformation of experiences, the clearer and more concrete the personal ideal, the greater the capacity for sacrifice, for subordinating the personality to instinctual needs, the stronger the disposition for courage and heroism" (Dąbrowski 1986, 84).

3. Morality, or Decency, Is the Foundation of a Harmonious Man

A further component of the model of patriotism reconstructed in this article is the relationship between moral formation and action. This relationship is particularly evident in the writings of Ignacy Kozielewski, who treated morality as a matter of practical significance for both individual and social life. As he argued, moral questions are important because they concern life itself and because neglecting them has serious consequences. Moreover, Kozielewski reflected on the terminology used to describe morality, seeking to express this concept in terms that emphasized its practical and culturally embedded meaning (Kozielewski 1911, 5). For the purposes of the present analysis, however, the most significant feature of his account is the close connection he established between morality and active engagement.

In Kozielewski's account, morality is not presented merely as an abstract system of principles but as a disposition that must be realized in action. This practical dimension is particularly important for the educational interpretation developed here, because moral formation becomes visible through active responsibility towards others and the wider community. Kozielewski expressed this relationship between morality and action particularly strongly: "Without action, there is no morality; inaction is immorality, and it

is precisely the immorality of inaction that is the mortal everyday sin of contemporary Poland, causing unspeakable harm to the present and future of the nation. Scouts must cleanse their nation of this inconceivable shame of inaction; for the entire world is working hard; everything is in motion, in action, in life; everything is constantly changing to achieve ever better, ever higher forms—so the Scout's motto is always active! And his shame is every moment wasted in slack hands and inert spirit" (Kozielewski 1911, 5).

Table 2: Social systems and the consequences of their use, according to I. Kozielewski

The table contrasts two social and moral orientations derived from Ignacy Kozielewski's writings. "Moral Activity" is associated with work, action, change, an active spirit, unity of feelings and thoughts, enthusiasm, development, and improvement. "Immoral Inaction" is associated with idleness, harm to the nation, an inert spirit, chaos, passivity, degradation, and regression. The table emphasizes the educational and social importance of active moral engagement.

System	The state of involvement in socio-development processes	Distinguishing features of the system	The essence of the system	The effect of using the system
Moral	Activity	Work; action, change guarantees increasingly higher form/quality	Active spirit/unity of feelings and thoughts	enthusiasm, zeal, and development
Immoral	Inaction	Idleness, harm to the present and future of the nation/shame of inaction	Inert spirit/state of complete chaos	passivity, degradation, regression

Source: Own study based on Kozielewski (1911).

Within the interpretative framework adopted in this article, Kozielewski's emphasis on action gives morality a distinctly educational dimension. Moral formation does not consist solely in accepting principles; it involves reflecting on experience and integrating moral judgement with personal conduct. Such reflection is not reduced to external instruction given by an educator. Rather, it develops through the individual's interpretation of experience in relation to both the self and the community. In this sense, everyday situations become a field of moral learning in which values are translated into dispositions and actions. This connection between reflection, experience, and action helps explain why morality occupies a central place in the model of patriotic formation reconstructed here.

4. Experiencing Adventure as Moral Patriotism

The relationship between morality and action discussed above also provides a framework for interpreting the role of adventure in the Scouting experience. In the context of the present analysis, adventure can be understood not merely as an extraordinary or exciting event but as an experience that confronts the individual with uncertainty, requires personal engagement, and creates opportunities for moral choice. Read

in this way, it becomes a practical setting in which dispositions such as courage, responsibility, perseverance, and service can be tested and developed.

This interpretation connects the experience of adventure with the broader ideal of a community united by responsibility for the common good. Kozielewski's reflections on morality and freedom provide a basis for this reading: "must not only be constant (habitual in every moment of life) but must also be active in goodness, i.e., full of knowledge and virtue, must constantly enlighten itself [...]. One must be moral who wants to serve goodness. The highest good of man is freedom: freedom from illnesses of body and spirit, freedom of his homeland from external enemies. Therefore, one must be moral who wants to be free; who wants to be free himself and who wants his nation to be free" (Kozielewski 2015, 312).

Kozielewski's argument establishes a close relationship between morality, the pursuit of the good, and freedom. Freedom, in this perspective, is not presented simply as the absence of external constraints but acquires moral significance through the way in which it is exercised. This relationship is important for the present analysis because it connects individual freedom with responsibility for both personal conduct and the wider community.

A later conceptual parallel can be found in John Paul II's reflections on the moral use of freedom. Asked by Józef Tischner and Krzysztof Michalski about the prospects for exercising freedom after the fall of totalitarian systems, he wrote: "If I am free, it means that I can use my freedom well or ill. If I use it well, I become good myself, and the good I do positively affects those around me. If I use it ill, the consequence is that evil takes root and spreads within me and my environment" (John Paul II 2005, 41). According to Ignacy Kozielewski, the root of evil is axiological subjectivism, variously understood. Evil can arise from various disruptions in the hierarchy of values; hence, "Whoever wants to serve good must be moral" (Kozielewski 2015, 312).

5.Patriotism as the Degree of Integration of Morality with the World of Everyday Experiences, or about Human Pride

The analyses presented above make it possible to reconstruct patriotism as a form of commitment in which personal moral development is connected with responsibility for a wider community. Within the interpretative framework adopted in this article, patriotism is, therefore, not reduced to attachment to symbols, territory, or collective identity. It also involves the integration of values with everyday choices and actions, through which the individual participates consciously in the life of the community. This relationship between

the tangible dimensions of homeland and its cultural and moral significance also provides a context for considering the role of collective pride in the formation of communal identity.

Taken together, the elements identified in the preceding sections suggest a model of patriotism grounded in the formation of the person and oriented towards the common good. In this model, individual identity and attachment to the homeland acquire educational significance when they are integrated with moral responsibility, freedom, service, and active participation in community life. Patriotism is thus understood not merely as a sentiment or declaration of belonging but as a disposition expressed through conscious obligations and everyday conduct. The reconstruction undertaken in this article consequently points to a close relationship between the understanding of patriotism and the underlying image of the human person: the capacity to participate responsibly in a community depends on the moral and personal formation of its members. From this perspective, the movement from individual formation towards conscious responsibility for others provides the link between the private and public dimensions of patriotic commitment.

Conclusion

The analysis undertaken in this article suggests that patriotism, as reflected in the selected writings of Ignacy Kozielewski and Jadwiga Falkowska, can be interpreted as an educational and moral disposition rather than merely as attachment to a nation, territory, or set of symbols. The reconstruction developed here points to a model in which patriotic formation begins with the formation of the person and extends towards responsible participation in community life.

Several interconnected elements of this model emerge from the analysis. Falkowska's reflections emphasize the need to balance competing tendencies in personal and social development and orient education towards the ideal of a harmoniously developed person. Kozielewski's writings, in turn, highlight the relationship between morality and action: moral formation acquires practical meaning when values are translated into responsible conduct. Within this framework, freedom is connected with moral responsibility, while experience and active engagement provide opportunities for the development and practical expression of moral dispositions.

These elements help answer the research question posed in the Introduction. In the selected writings examined here, patriotism can be understood as a form of commitment in which personal development, moral responsibility, service, and concern for the common good are mutually connected. Its educational significance lies in integrating the individual and social dimensions of formation: the development of the person is directed

not only towards individual fulfilment but also towards responsible participation in a community. Patriotism, from this perspective, is expressed through everyday choices and actions rather than through declarations of belonging alone.

The fragmentary and interpretative character of the study also defines its limits. The article does not attempt to reconstruct comprehensively the thought of Kozielewski and Falkowska or to present a complete history of the Polish Scouting conception of patriotism. Instead, by examining selected writings and concepts, it identifies a set of relationships between personal formation, morality, freedom, service, and the common good that may provide a basis for further research into the educational understanding of patriotism in the Polish Scouting tradition. Further studies could broaden the source base and examine how these formative ideas developed in later Scouting thought, and how they relate to contemporary approaches to patriotic and civic education.

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