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Abstract of the doctoral dissertation on:

The Sense of Security of Dąbrowa Tarnowska District Residents. Sociological and Criminological Study.

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Nowadays, security is a fundamental value in both individual and social dimension. In the individual aspect, this means that for every individual it is a value on which meeting other needs depends. Security is undoubtedly an extremely complex issue as it encompasses psychological, sociological, legal, pedagogical, biological, medical, cultural and other aspects. It has been known to mankind since the dawn of time. In scientific research it is defined as a positive state whose characteristic elements are the sense of certainty and the absence of threat. Security can also be understood as a social issue. In this case, the anthropocentric dimension of security is taken into consideration. In addition to military-political, economic, ecological and demographic factors, the concept also includes social, environmental, humanitarian, national and cultural components. From the sociological point of view, security is not only the possibility of existence of an individual or the whole society, but also the possibility of survival.¹

When trying to define local security, citizens' experiences in this field play an important role. People who have experienced a situation that threatened their safety will rate it lower than those who have not experienced such a situation. The sense of security is a variable phenomenon, determined by the situation in which the individual experiencing security or lack

¹ E. Moczuk, *Spoleczne poczucie bezpieczeństwa mieszkańców powiatu mieleckiego, Ius et Administratio. Zeszyt Specjalny*, Wydawnictwo Mitel, Rzeszów 2006, p. 39.

of it finds themselves. Accumulation of many positive circumstances may cause ‘anchoring’ of the sense of safety in the individual's consciousness, accumulation of negative events - the opposite phenomenon.²

The sense of security is shaped by numerous factors and depends on the situation one is in. Individuals’ sense of security is not normally determined by big crimes and serious felonies, but by everyday experiences, i.e. hooliganism, street harassment and verbal abuse, pick-pocketing, disturbances at night-time, but also beatings and assaults and robberies.³

The subject of this present dissertation is a sociological and criminological study of the sense of security of Dąbrowa Tarnowska district residents. The dissertation has an empirical character, while the logical theoretical and methodological sequence has been maintained. The presented theory was selected so as to be able to conduct the research as well as to determine the its methodological basis. The study makes use of extensive literature on sociology, criminology and research methodology as well as supplementary literature on social policy, pedagogy and psychology. To a large extent the literature concerns issues related to security as a category of scientific analysis on the grounds of sociology. This scope includes the sociology of security, command groups and sociological aspects of local security. The primary source literature includes publications dedicated to local community safety, social problems and the role of the police in creating local safety. The dissertation was divided into four parts (chapters). The first one presents theoretical aspects of security as a category of scientific analysis on the grounds of sociology. The issues concerning the sociology of security, social sense of security, command groups as well as the participation of the police in the creation of local security and its perception in society are also presented. The second part presents the theoretical framework of sociological aspects of local security, taking into consideration introductory problems and basic issues of security sociology. The local community is also depicted in the light of the literature on the subject and a review of research in the aspect of safety in the local community was made. Additionally, it articulates issues related to social problems, with reference to the situation in Poland. The third part contains the characteristics of methodological basis of the research including its aim, scope and problems together with research hypotheses. Furthermore, this part specifies the sample selection, characteristics of the studied population as well as the research organisation. The fourth part is devoted to the analysis of empirical research. It presents the results of quantitative and qualitative research referring to the issues related to the

² E. Moczuk, P. Szulich, J. Żak, *Bezpieczeństwo lokalne w opiniach mieszkańców Tarnobrzega*, Wydawnictwo PWSZ w Tarnobrzegu, Tarnobrzeg 2007, p. 69

³ B. Hołyst, *Policja na świecie*, Wydawnictwo LexisNexis, Warszawa 2013, p. 186

perception of local safety by the residents of Dąbrowa Tarnowska district. In this part an aspect of the surveyed community, assessment of the state of safety threat by the 'Powiśle' residents together with their opinions on crime as a social problem, dysfunctional behaviours and pathology are raised. The opinions of the respondents are also presented as well as press articles on the participation of law enforcement bodies in the case of the murder of Iwona C. A comprehensive assessment of Dąbrowa Tarnowska district residents concerning the police is also presented in the form of an analysis.

The main idea of the conducted research was the best knowledge of the society in the local realm on the county level. According to the assumptions, the research with sociological and criminological background answered the question what the social sense of safety of the residents of Dąbrowa Tarnowska district is, taking into account the serious changes in the sphere of criminal phenomena in Poland in recent years. The key question was how the phenomenon of crime functions in the social awareness of the residents and what the level of knowledge of the local community is as regards the evolving phenomena affecting the threat level. The state of awareness and the residents' approach to preventive and precautionary tasks in the area of security, carried out by institutions, was also examined. According to the main hypothesis, which read: 'The sense of security of the residents of Dąbrowa Tarnowska district is influenced by threats disturbing local security', the fundamental research issue became the assessment of the sense of security of the adult resident population of Dąbrowa Tarnowska district. One of the main research objectives was to determine the perception of the local community residents as regards the aspect of safety in the immediate surroundings and in the place of their residence. Apart from that, the research showed the attitude of the residents of Dąbrowa Tarnowska district to the threats connected with natural disasters and crime phenomena as well as presented the way in which the local community perceives the police, i.e. one of the state bodies appointed to ensure the safety and public order of citizens.

Thanks to the sociological and criminological research, it was possible to deepen the knowledge and get to know the community members of Dąbrowa Tarnowska district better. Moreover, it was possible to assess the sense of security of its residents and identify factors that cause the sensation of threat. The level of social awareness in the context of crime, natural disasters and other negative social phenomena was also diagnosed. In addition, the determinants that affect the perception of security aspects in the immediate environment were identified. The state of awareness and attitudes of the local community towards the police and the activities carried out by the institutions in the field of prevention and policing were determined as well.

In the conclusion, the dissertation's applied character is presented. The provided recommendations and proposals for initiatives are aimed at developing a strategy of action for all interested institutions in the field of social security prophylactics.

Keywords:

- security,
- sense of security,
- local safety,
- local community,
- crisis management
- command groups,
- threats to security.