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Sense of Security among the Residents of Warsaw. Survey Results**

1. INTRODUCTION

In conclusion of their project ‘Sense of security among inhabitants of large cities’, Janina Czapska and Krzysztof Krajewski referred to a very suggestive quotation from the 1987 work of Georges Kellens and Andre Lamaitre:

‘Never before have people been so well guarded as they are today. Never have they lived so long. Never have they also, in all likelihood, enjoyed such great freedom. Neither have inhabitants of small and large industrialized countries had, in theory, fewer reasons to be afraid of anything. Simultaneously, however, never before have such enormous, persistent and overwhelming sense of lack of security been present. In the past, people would know fear but not so widespread, arousing an internal feeling of lack of security suffocating all of us even when everything is in order’¹.

Over thirty years have passed since the fragment quoted was written and almost twenty years since the performance of the study on ‘Sense of security among inhabitants of large cities. Cracow and other European towns’. The present situation seems to be entirely different, both in Poland and in other countries. The high level of ‘safeguarding’ people in many aspects of life persists while, simultaneously, the

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¹ G. Kelles, A. Lemaitre, *Research on the ‘Fear of Crime’*, *Eurocriminology* 1987, vol. 1,31 quoted after: J. Czapska, K. Krajewski, *Podsumowanie* [in:] K. Krajewski (ed.) *Poczucie bezpieczeństwa mieszkańców wielkich miast. Kraków na tle innych miast europejskich*, Kraków, 2008, 201.

crime rate declines and the feeling of security is rising². In this situation, Andrzej Siemaszko asks ‘are criminologists going to face unemployment?’³ and should we abandon studying crime and fear of crime as well as security and criminal policy? Paradoxically, it seems that it is these ‘secure’ conditions that should induce us to have a better (or in other words a much closer and more targeted) look at these issues so as to not miss possible new sources and types of threat.

Stereotypically, it is the large cities that are believed to be foci concentrating various sources of social threats such as crime, social disorganization, poverty, weakened social control, waning of traditional values and interpersonal links, frequent contacts with strangers and people coming from other environments, noise or environmental pollution⁴. However, the sense of security is obviously a global as well as very local problem concerning both whole societies and individual people in specific situations. Consequently, analyses of security-related issues should be as comprehensive and multidimensional as possible.

The study findings analysed below constitute, to some extent, continuation and expansion of a series of projects implemented by the Institute of Justice and devoted to unregistered crime, fear of crime and punitivity of the Polish society in light of survey findings⁵. The study focuses on attitudes, experiences and fears of the residents of the largest Polish town, Warsaw. The thus established scope of the object of the analysis made it possible to attempt essential comparisons as well as attempt to diagnose both the ‘old’ (analysed and discussed already before) and the ‘new’ sources of threat and fears of reaction to them.

The whole article consists of the introduction, five main parts and summary. The first part describes the methodology of research and principal characteristics of the study sample. The second part deals with the general sense of security among inhabitants of Warsaw, the third part – about fear of crime and specific threats, the fourth – about victimization as well as assessment of police work while the fifth – about the attitude to adjudicating severe penalties to perpetrators of crimes, in other words – to punitivity.

2. METHODOLOGY AND DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY SAMPLE

The discussed study was conducted in the period from 27 September 2018 to 12 October 2018 on a 2000-strong sample of adult Warsaw inhabitants, by means

² Comp. e.g. *Mniej przestępstw, wysokie poczucie bezpieczeństwa Polaków – podsumowanie I półrocza 2018 roku*, http://statystyka.policja.pl/st/infomacje/161093.Mniej_przestepstw-wysokie-poczucie-bezpieczenstwa-Polakow-podumowanie-I-polrocz.html (accessed on 23 November 2018); *Raport o stanie bezpieczeństwa w Polsce w 2016 roku* (accessed on 23 November 2018), www.bip.mswia.gov.pl/download/4/31673/RaportostaniebezpieczenstwawPolscew2016roku.pdf (assessed on 23 November 2018).

³ A. Siemaszko, *Zamiast podsumowania. Czy kryminologom grozi bezrobocie?* [in:] A. Siemaszko, B. Gruszczyńska, M. Marczewski, *Atlas Przystępczości 5*, Warszawa, 2015, 225–232.

⁴ Comp. e.g. P. Ostaszewski, *Lęk przed przestępczością. Aspekty teoretyczne, metodologiczne i empiryczne*, Warszawa, 2014, 161–167 and K. Sessar, *Podstawowe założenia projektu Insecurities in European Cities z punktu widzenia kryminologii oraz socjologii miasta* [in:] K. Krajewski (ed.) *Poczucie bezpieczeństwa...*, 13–23.

⁵ For more information on the subject compare, among others, A. Siemaszko (ed.), *Geografia występków i strachu. Polskie Badanie Przystępczości '07*, Warszawa, 2008; A. Siemaszko, B. Gruszczyńska, M. Marczewski, *Atlas przestępczości w Polsce 4*, Warszawa, 2009; P. Ostaszewski, *Lęk przed przestępczością...*; A. Siemaszko, P. Ostaszewski, J. Klimczak, *Badanie poparcia dla zaostrzenia polityki karnej. Wyniki trzech badań sondażowych*, Institute of Justice Report, Warsaw, 2018, <https://iws.goc.pl/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/TWS-Siemaszko-A.-Ostaszewski-P.-Klimczak-J.-Badanie-poparcie-dla-zaostrzenia-polityki-karnej.pdf> (accessed on 20 November 2018).

of computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI). It used a measurement tool in the form of a questionnaire consisting of 29 questions, divided into six parts, including: 1) general sense of security; 2) personal experience; 3) possibility of improvement; 4) punitivity; 5) other problems; 6) respondent's particulars (demographics). The questions were directed to users of both landline and mobile telephones (1:4, proportionately)⁶.

45.1% of respondents taking part in the study were men and 54.9% women. The age of the respondents ranged from 18 to 98 years (average age – 49 years). The majority of the respondents (59.2%) had university education. The remainder had secondary school education (35.7%) vocational education (3.8%) and basic education (1.3%). In general, the majority of the respondents were professionally active (61%). As for the social-professional group of the sample population studied, people working full-time prevailed (45%), followed by old age and disability pensioners – 30%.

Two-person households (42.2%) and one-person households (30.9%) were most common. Three-person households (15.4%) and four-person households (8.7%) were less common while five or more-person households constituted a marginal fraction (2.8%) of the Warsaw inhabitants studied.

As regards the financial situation of the respondents, most of them assessed it as good. The majority of the respondents (50.3%) were of the opinion that they were bearably or moderately well-off while 37% thought they were rather well-off and 4% – very well-off. 6.7% of the respondents assessed their financial situation as rather bad while some 2% said they were poor-off and in a bad financial situation.

The survey included each of the eighteen districts of Warsaw. The respondents were most frequently inhabitants of Mokotów (13%) and Praga-Południe (11%) while most rarely of Wilanów (1.3%) and Rembertów (1.5%).

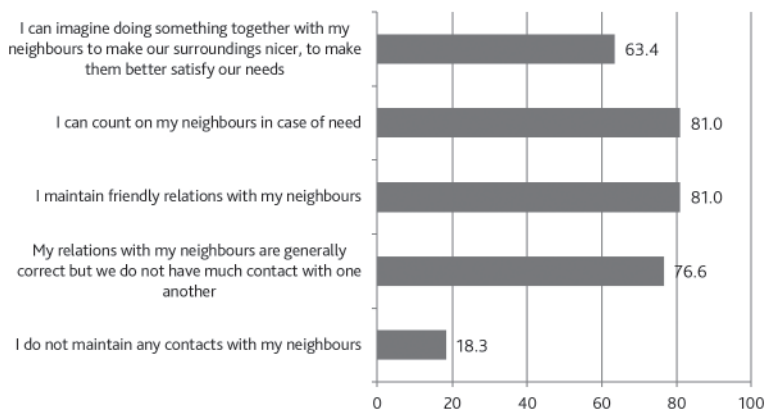
Most frequently, the respondents were born in Warsaw (58%). Among the remaining respondents, a vast majority (85%) were inhabitants of Warsaw for over 15 years.

The majority of the respondents (94.5%) were satisfied with living in Warsaw. Most of them maintained friendly contacts with neighbours (81%) and agreed with the statement that they can count on their neighbours in case of need (also 81%). Over 60% declared that they could imagine themselves doing something together with their neighbours to make their surroundings nicer so that they would better satisfy their needs. Simultaneously, however, 3/4 of them admitted that they did not have much contact with their neighbours in spite of describing their relations as generally good. In the sample population only 18.3% of the inhabitants were found to not maintain any contacts with their neighbours. As revealed by comparison with the 2002 In Sec study covering three districts of Cracow, relations of Warsaw inhabitants with their neighbours are similar to those of inhabitants of other large towns⁷.

⁶ The percentage of refusals amounted – to 40%.

⁷ K. Krajewski (ed.), *Poczucie bezpieczeństwa...*, 164. The Warsaw study revealed a slightly higher percentage of the answer 'I can imagine that together with neighbours we are doing something to make our surroundings better satisfy our needs' (63.4 vs. 49.1 and 39.9) as well as 'I maintain friendly relations with neighbours'.

Figure 1.
Relations with neighbours⁸



The percentages do not total 100 – multiple choice possible.

Source: Author's own study.

2/3 of the respondents have acquaintances close to their place of living with whom they meet regularly. 34% do not have such acquaintances. In this respect, the results do not differ in any significant way from the results of studies concerning other large towns. In the In Sec study referred to above, the percentages were 72.1% (for the Nowy Bieżanów district), 52.3% (for Kazimierz) and 56.9% (for Grzegórzki)⁹.

3. GENERAL SENSE OF SECURITY

Approximately 87% of Warsaw inhabitants believe that Poland is a safe country which should be considered as a very high, though not at all unexpected, result. It is actually as high as the result revealed in the study carried out by the Centre for Public Opinion Studies (hereinafter referred to as CBOS) in April 2018 in which 88.7% of respondents assessed Poland as a safe country¹⁰.

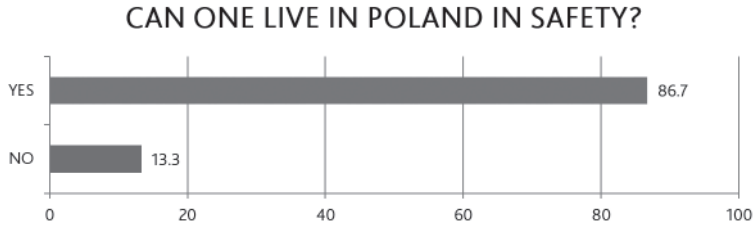
In spite of the commonly expressed view with respect to the security situation in the country as much as one fourth of Warsaw respondents is of the opinion that the crime rate in Poland keeps increasing and almost a half that it remains unchanged. Only 1/3 of the respondents, according to clear hard data¹¹, believe that it is decreasing. This distribution of results is certainly surprising and can be evidence of the fact that endorsement bodies (including, in particular, Police) are doing too little to make public opinion aware of the optimistic facts concerning criminality in our country.

⁸ The question was: 'Please, say whether the statement which I will read describe correctly your relations with your neighbours?'. It was a multiple choice question. The responder could give a 'Yes' or 'No' answer in response to each answer give in Figure 1. That is why the percentage given in Figure 1 does not total 100.

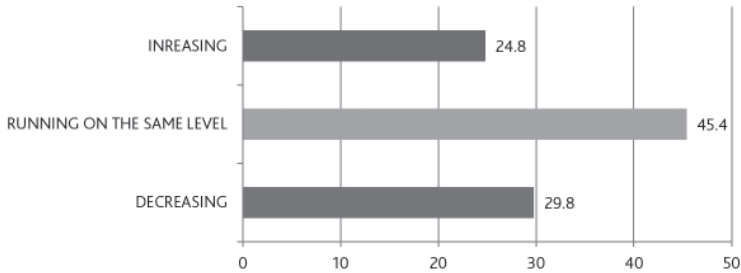
⁹ K. Krajewski (ed.), *Poczucie bezpieczeństwa...*, 166.

¹⁰ Comp. *Poczucie bezpieczeństwa i zagrożenia przestępczością*, Communiqué from the study, May 2018, https://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2018/K_061_18.PDF (accessed on 20 November 2018).

¹¹ Comp.: e.g. *Mniej przestępcstw...; Raport o stanie bezpieczeństwa w Polsce w 2016 roku*.

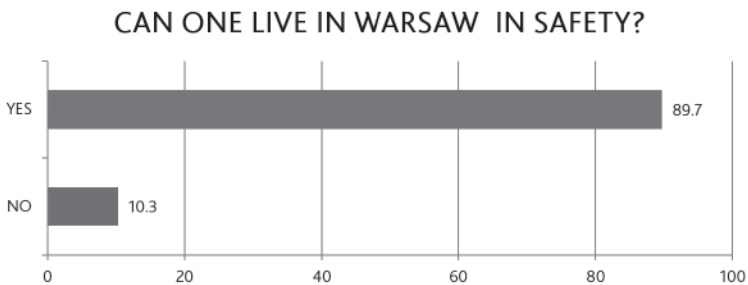
Figure 2.Sense of security in the country¹²

Source: Author's own study.

Figure 3.Assessment of criminality in Poland in the past years¹³

Source: Author's own study.

The assessment by the respondents of security in Warsaw itself, as compared with the country as a whole, is even better – 90% declared that living in Warsaw is safe. The differences are slight and statistically insignificant though a little counterintuitive as the level of security in Warsaw could have been expected to be perceived as worse than in Poland as a whole.

Figure 4.

Source: Author's own study.

¹² The question was: 'Is Poland, in your opinion, a country in which one can live safely?'. The respondent could choose one of the three answers: 'Yes', 'No', 'Hard to say'. Like all the other figures further on this material, Figure 2 does not include the last of them. Consequently, the percentages given refer to the total of factual answers, in this case 'Yes' and 'No'.

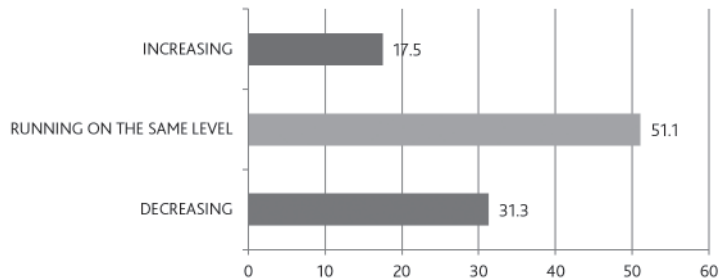
¹³ The question was: 'Has, in your opinion, the crime rate in Poland been increasing, running on the same level or decreasing?'. The respondent had a choice of four answers: 'increasing', 'running on the same level', 'decreasing', 'hard to say'.

¹⁴ The question was: 'Is Warsaw, in your opinion, a town in which one can live in safety?'. The respondent had a choice of one of the three answers: 'Yes', 'No', 'Hard to say'.

As regards the assessment of the crime rate in Warsaw and in the country as a whole, significant differences were observed. Over 7 percentage points fewer respondents believe that criminality in the capital is increasing while more or less the same percentage believe that it is decreasing or running on an unchanged level. In other words, Warsaw respondents are a little more optimistic in their assessment of criminality in their town than in the country as a whole which can be considered as a certain surprise.

Figure 5.

Assessment of criminality in Warsaw over the past years¹⁵



Source: Author's own study.

The sense of security during a lonely evening walk has long been considered a good indicator of fear of crime¹⁶. The distribution of results presented in Figure 5 is absolutely clear and leaves no doubts: an overwhelming majority (almost 85%) of the inhabitants of the capital feel safe in the situation referred to. What should also be mentioned in this context is the fact that this is a historically high result in fear of crime studies among Warsaw inhabitants. It is worth noting that inhabitants of Warsaw, as shown by a comparison with the results of the Polish Crime Survey carried out at the beginning of 2017, feel slightly more secure during a lonely evening walk after dark than inhabitants of Poland as a whole (a difference of 3.8 p.p.)¹⁷.

4. FEAR OF SPECIFIC THREATS

In spite of the commonly declared general sense of security, and to some extent against declarations, a fairly large part of the respondents (over 1/3) fear that they can fall victim to crime. This percentage should be considered to be very high and to some extent arousing doubt as to indicative value of the previously analysed variables, in particular those of very general and abstract nature. It is also consistent with the results of studies conducted by CBOS in April 2018, in which 38.8% of the respondents declared feeling fear of becoming a crime victim¹⁸.

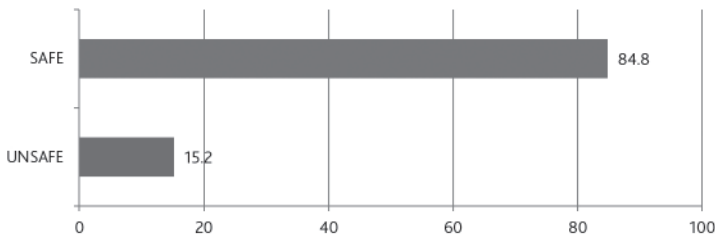
¹⁵ The question was: 'Has, in your opinion, criminality in Warsaw been increasing, running on the same level or decreasing?'. The respondent had a choice between three questions: 'increasing', 'running on the same level', 'decreasing', 'hard to say'.

¹⁶ Comp.: e.g. P. Ostaszewski, *Lęk przed przestępczością...*

¹⁷ The Polish Crime Rate Study was conducted by Police on a sample of 17 000 people. 81% of the respondents declared that they felt safe during a walk after dark, <http://bip.kgp.policja.gov.pl/download/18/85912/OcenaPolicjiPoczuciebezpieczenstwaPBP2007-2017.pdf> (accessed on 20 November 2018).

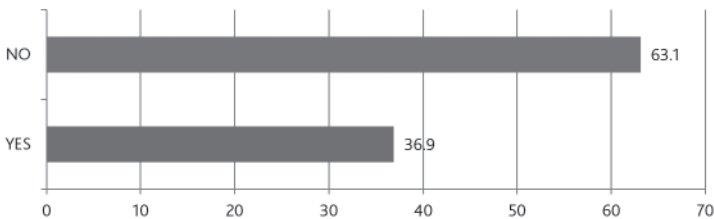
¹⁸ Comp.: *Poczucie bezpieczeństwa i zagrożenia przestępczością*, Communiqué from studies, May 2018.

Figure 6.
Sense of security during a lonely walk after dark¹⁹



Source: Author's own study.

Figure 7.
Fear of becoming a victim of crime²⁰



Source: Author's own study.

What is very interesting and can give much ground for thought (especially to Police) is the distribution of answers to the question about individual dimensions of the feeling of threat in the area of residence. The respondents are definitely most afraid (43% indications, as much as 13 p.p. more than the next factor) of reckless drivers which is evidence of the severity of the problem (or low significance of the remaining threats). In addition, the problem seems to remain unsolved as testified by similar results obtained in the study conducted a decade²¹.

Approximately one fourth of the indicators concerned: being accosted by groups of aggressive youths, damage of public property by vandals, being accosted by drunk people and burglaries. The remaining problems, including such serious acts as robberies, fights and battery, were pointed to much more rarely (by 7% of the respondents each). Only a little over 3% of the indications referred to a terrorist attack, even fewer (merely 1.5%) to extortions and ransoms. In turn, only some 11% of the declarations express absence of any fears in the vicinity of the place of residence.

It is worthwhile to compare these results with the results of the Polish Crime Survey of 2017 conducted on a sample of 17 000 respondents. They allow to see fairly interesting differences between the inhabitants of Warsaw and the inhabitants

¹⁹ The question was: 'Do you feel safe walking alone in your area after dark?'. The list of possible answers to this question consists of: 'very safe', 'rather safe', 'rather unsafe', 'very unsafe', 'hard to say'. The data given in the figure referring to the 'safe' variable are a total of the 'very safe' and 'rather safe' answers. Similar data referring to the 'unsafe' variable are a total of the answers 'very unsafe' or 'rather unsafe'.

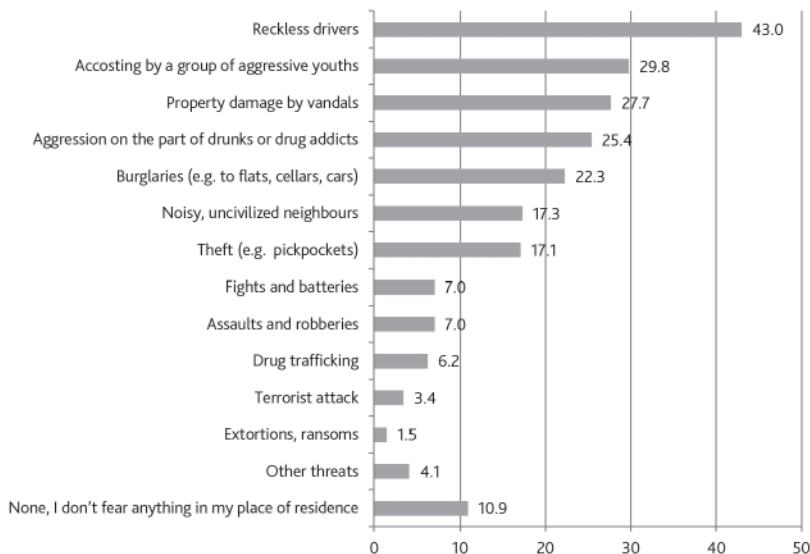
²⁰ The question was: 'Sometimes people wonder whether they will not become a crime victim in future or will not become seriously victimized or injured in another way. Do you, generally speaking, fear that you can become a crime victim?'. The respondents had a choice between three answers: 'Yes', 'No', 'Hard to say'.

²¹ Comp.: A. Siemaszko (ed.), *Geografia występku...*, 113 et seq.

of Poland. What the inhabitants of Poland fear most are burglaries (34.5%), reckless drivers (29.5%), assaults and robberies (23.7%). By comparison, what the inhabitants of Warsaw fear most are reckless drivers (43%, i.e. 13.5 p.p. more). Their fears of burglary as well as assaults and robberies are definitely lower, a difference of 17.2 p.p. and 16.7 p.p., respectively. Visible differences can also be seen with respect to the fear of being accosted by aggressively behaving groups of youths. These behaviours are feared by 17.5% of the inhabitants of Poland and 29.8% of the inhabitants of Warsaw²².

Figure 8.

Fear of threats in the vicinity of the place of residence²³



The percentages do not total 100 – multiple choice possible.

Source: Author's own study.

For the sake of comparing the sources and the specific object of fear, the respondents were also requested to express their opinion on selected 'non-criminal' threats related to everyday living, i.e. access to electric energy and potable water. Only every fifth respondent worries about possible breaks in electric energy supply while every third about possible lack of access to potable water. In both cases, these fears are much lower than the fear of becoming a crime victim (15.6 and 8.3 p.p., respectively).

5. VICTIMIZATION AND ASSESSMENT OF POLICE WORK

Over 1/4 of the respondents, and thus a fairly large part of them, were victims of one of the array of crimes listed in the answer at least once over the five years preceding the study. Most frequently, they were thefts (almost 17%) and burglaries (10%).

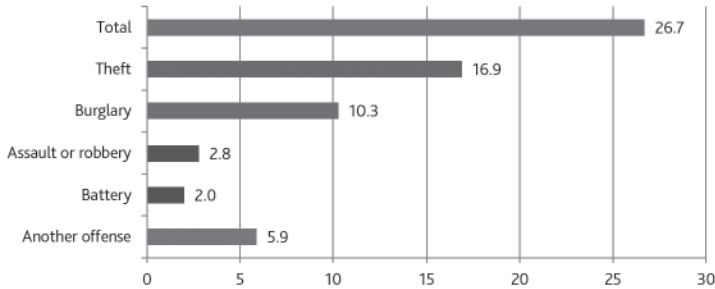
²² Comp.: *Polskie Badanie Przemocności – 2017 ROK*, 4–5.

²³ The question was: 'What, what threats do you fear most in the vicinity of your place of residence? Please, indicate no more than 3 most important answers'. Given the possibility of more than one answer being chosen, the percentages found in the figure do not total 100.

Approximately 3% of the respondents fell victim to robbery while 2% – battery. Some 6% of the respondents were victims of another crime (e.g. Internet crime). It is also worthwhile to compare the results of this study with the results of the Poland-wide study conducted in April 2018 by CBOS. What follows from the CBOS study is that 15% of Polish residents were victims of theft, 7% of burglary, 3% of battery or deliberate injury, 3% of assault or robbery, 4% of another crime²⁴.

Figure 9.

Victimization of the respondents over the past 5 years²⁵

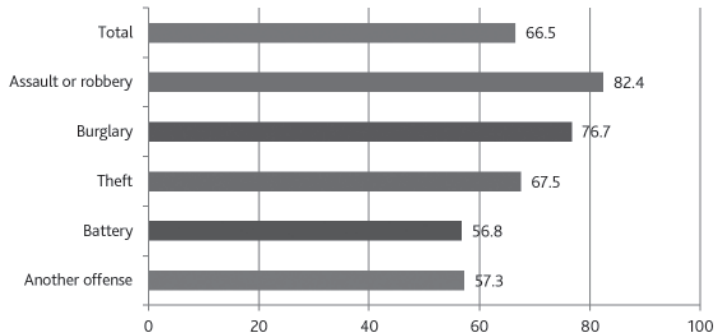


The percentages do not total 100 – multiple choice possible.

Source: Author's own study.

Figure 10.

Notification of falling victim to a crime over the past 5 years



The percentages do not total 100 – multiple choice possible.

Source: Author's own study.

The respondents were also asked to propose actions which could improve security in Warsaw. Over 80% of the suggestions referred to such Warsaw security-improving actions as: providing young people with better possibilities of spending their free time, expanding the monitoring of public places with the help of cameras or better cooperation between citizens and Police.

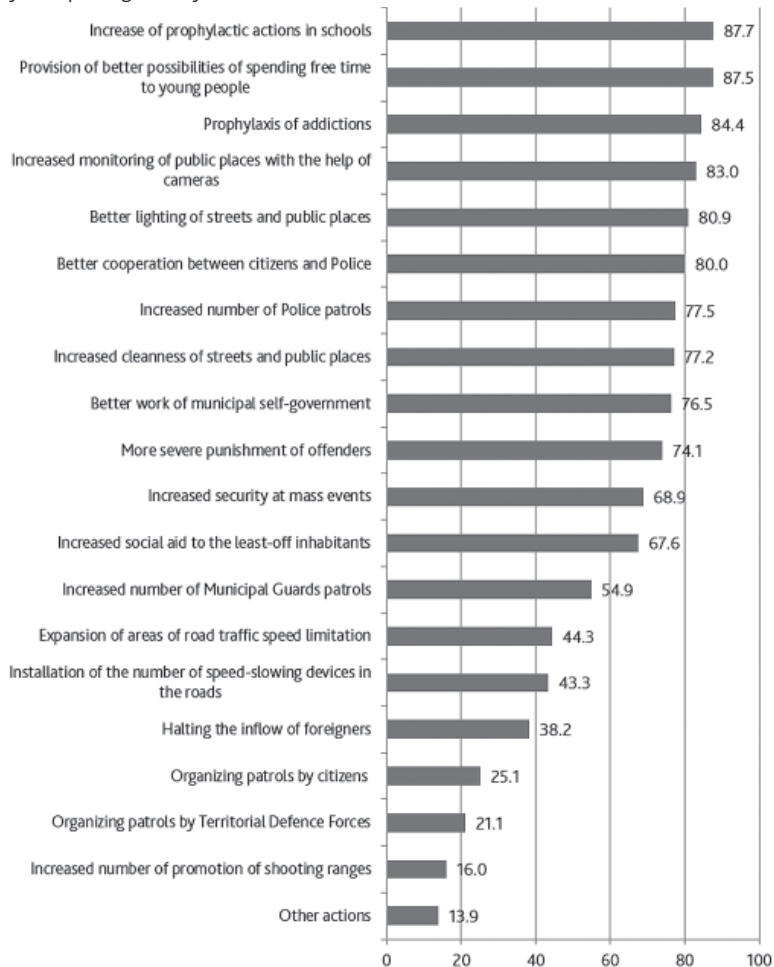
²⁴ Comp.: *Poczucie bezpieczeństwa i zagrożenia przestępczością*, Communique from studies, May 2018.

²⁵ The question was: 'Have you experienced any of the situations specified below over the past five years?'. The respondents could give a 'No' or 'Yes' answer next to each of the situations. They were also asked to indicate 'how many times' the event had place as well as 'how many of the events were reported to Police'. The crime notification rate can be seen in the figure which follows.

Although the suggestion that punishment for crime perpetrators be made more severe (close to 3/4 of choices and thus seemingly very many) received 70 to 80% of the indications, the rank and significance these declarations seems to be weakened by the fact that a few more percentage points were gained by indications concerning making the city more clean, followed by the need to increase social aid for the least well-off inhabitants.

What should also be signalled is yet another result: in Warsaw, believed to be liberal, approximately 40% indications concerned the view that limitation of the inflow of foreigners could also contribute to improvement of security.

Figure 11.
Possibility of improving security in Warsaw²⁶



The percentages do not total 100 – multiple choice possible.

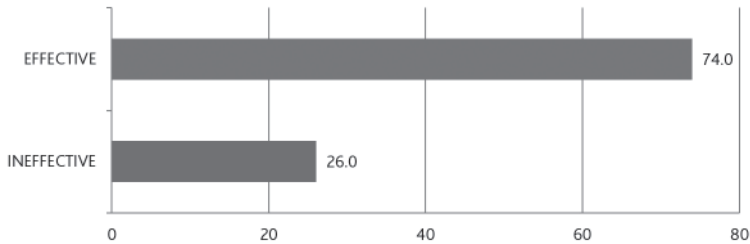
Source: Author's own study.

²⁶ The question was: 'What should be done to improve security in Warsaw?'. Answering this question the respondents had a possibility to refer to each of the 20 elements of the proposed answers by choosing the answer: 'Yes', 'No', 'Hard to say'.

Moving on to the question of the assessment of the work of the formation the main aim of which is to prevent threats, it should be pointed out that as many as 3/4 of the respondents were of the opinion that Police are effective in combating crime. This high percentage of positive assessments of this formation can, however, derive from the overall decline in crime which needs not be a consequence of the Police work being more effective. It is also slightly lower (by 4 p.p.) than the percentage for the Polish national sample²⁷.

Figure 12.

Assessment of the effectiveness of Police work²⁸



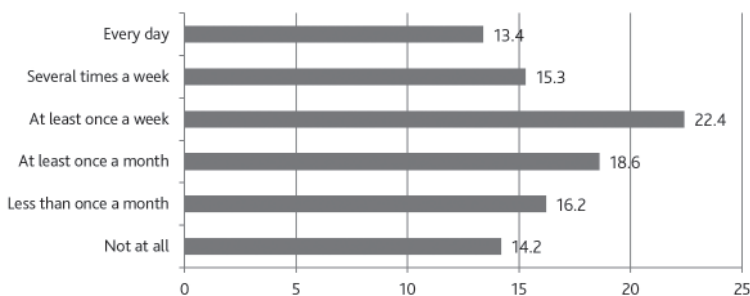
Source: Author's own study.

The 'bucolic' picture of the work of Police emerging from the previous figure changes drastically when the distribution of answers to the question concerning the 'visibility' of Police patrols near the place of residence of the respondents is analysed. Surprisingly, almost one third of them declared not seeing Police patrols or seeing them less than once a month which should be deemed an unexpectedly low result.

In turn, barely a little over 13% of the respondents, which should rather be a standard in a capital, see Police every day while another 15% – several times a week.

Figure 13.

Seeing Police close to the place of residence²⁹



Source: Author's own study.

²⁷ Comp.: *Polskie Badanie Przemocności – 2017 ROK*, 1.

²⁸ The question was: 'Taking everything into account, is Police in your area very effective, fairly effective, rather ineffective or very ineffective in combating crime?'. The respondents had a possibility to choose one of the five answers: 'very effective', 'fairly effective', 'rather ineffective', 'very ineffective'. The percentage referring to the 'effective' variable given in the figure is the total of the 'very and fairly effective' answers. A similar procedure was applied with reference to the 'ineffective' variable – the calculated percentage covers the 'very or rather ineffective' answers.

²⁹ The question was: 'How often do you see pedestrian or motorized Police patrols close to the place of your residence?'. The array of possible answers included those listed in the Figure. The respondent could choose one of them.

6. PUNITIVITY

The punitivity, in other words, the tendency (greater or smaller) to severely punish the perpetrators of offenses happens to vary significantly from country to country though Polish society is generally considered to belong to those in which punitivity is fairly high.

The said differences in approach to punishing offense perpetrators (in a mild or severe way) can however refer also to a specific country, in particular as large as Poland (differences existing, for instance, between urban and rural areas or even regions). What should also be kept in mind is that punitivity is by no means a fixed value, its severity tending to vary over time.

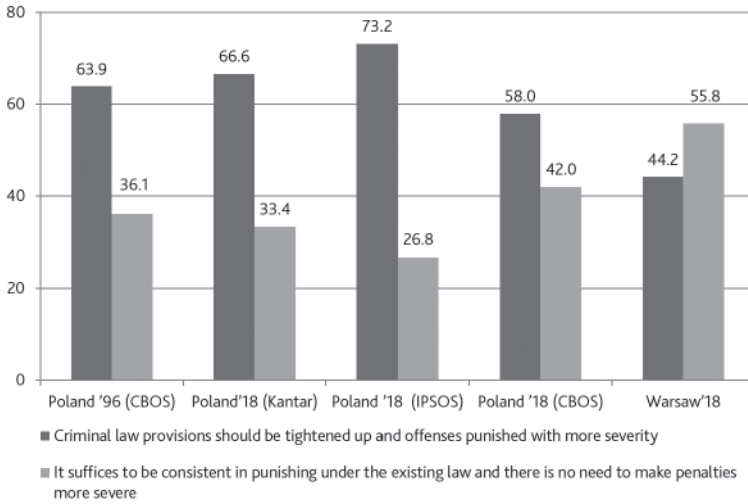
One of the more crucial aims of the study described in this article was thus, first, to determine the level of punitivity of Warsaw residents and secondly, to compare the obtained results with the results of other studies. To this end, three blocks of questions were used.

Over a half of the Warsaw respondents are of the opinion that consistent application of the already existing regulations will suffice to reduce criminality and the severity of penalties need not be raised. An opposite view ('the provisions of criminal law should be tightened up and crimes should be punished more severely') is expressed by 44% of the respondents (and thus fewer – a difference of barely 12 p.p.). The opinion of a relatively liberal attitude of Warsaw residents to the punishment policy (as the said percentage concerning more severe punishment must be nevertheless considered insignificant) finds its confirmation, in particular in the comparative context, i.e. when viewed against other studies on the punitivity-related issues (comp. Figure 13). The first study in which an identical measure was applied, was conducted by CBOS in 1996 on a nation-wide sample. The percentage of the proponents of severe punitivity (64%) was then markedly higher than the share of those opposing this view (36%).

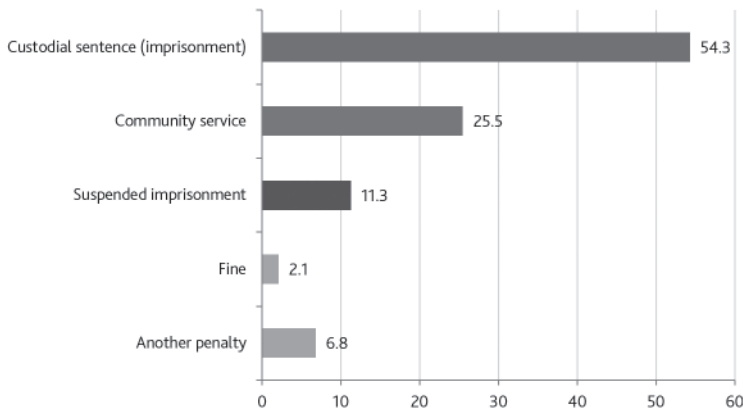
It thus seems, to some extent against the thesis of the fluctuation in the level of punitivity over time, that the attitude to punitivity in Poland tends to be exceptionally stable. It turns out that the averaged results for the three studies conducted over twenty years later (in 2018) generated almost the same results³⁰.

The second measure of the level of punitivity of Warsaw residents was the question about the penalty suggested for the commission of a specific offense. Among the proposed penalties for a youthful knifer without a criminal record, over a half of the respondents were for imprisonment, 1/4 for the community service. Interestingly, very few proponents (barely every tenth) are for conditionally suspended penalties (an approach common in court practice). The penalty in the form of a fine received practically no support (2%).

³⁰ In 2018, the Institute of Justice commissioned that three firms, Kantar, CBOS and Ipsos, conduct independent public opinion polls concerning criminal policy. Each poll was conducted with the use of the Omnibus method, that is a cyclical, multi-subject public opinion poll conducted on a nation-wide representative sample of residents of Poland. The studies were carried out with the use of the computer-assisted direct interviewing technique (CAPI). See: A. Siemaszko, P. Ostaszewski, J. Klimczak, *Badanie poparcia...*

Figure 14.Assessment of the proposal of actions aimed at reducing criminality and improving the security of citizens³¹

Source: Author's own study.

Figure 15.Proposal of penalties for a 'knifer' without a criminal record³²

Source: Author's own study.

As signalled above, over a half of the respondents demanded that the knifer given in the example be sentenced to a penalty of imprisonment. As regards its length, two brackets prevailed: five years (over 22%) and from six to ten years (16%). However, after all the proposals for shorter penalties (from a month to three years) are summed up, it turns out that all their proponents make up a total of almost

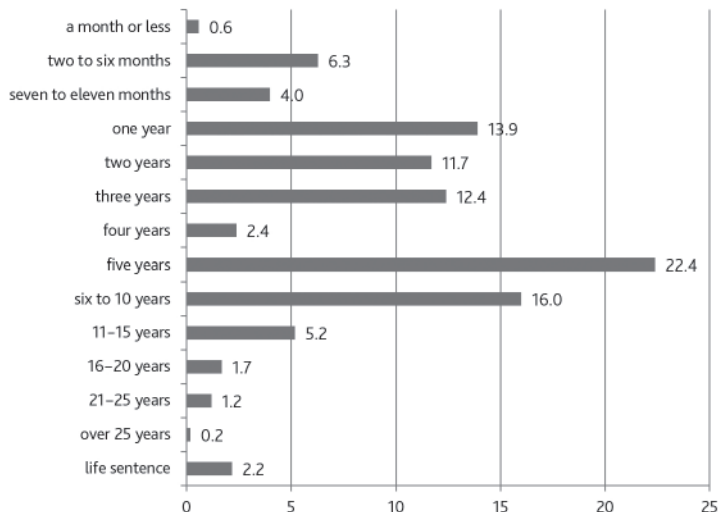
³¹ The question was: 'Do you believe that in order to reduce criminality and to improve the security of citizens (...)?' The respondents had a possibility to choose one of the two answers given in the figure.

³² The question was: 'People have different views as to how severely punish criminals. For instance, a 21-year old man, with no prior convictions, takes part in a assault and causes serious body injury to another person with a knife. What penalty should he receive, in your opinion? Choose on answer'. The answers available are listed in the figure.

a half of the respondents. In general, the mean length of the proposed imprisonment amounted to almost 62 months while the median to 48 months.

Figure 16.

Proposals for the duration of the imprisonment for a 'knifer' without a criminal record³³

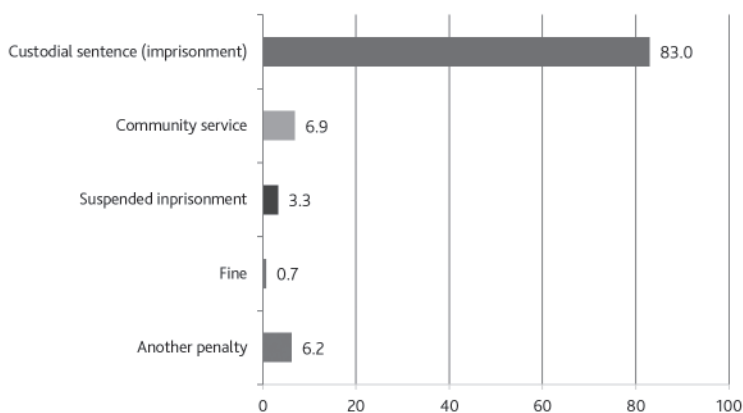


Source: Author's own study.

As it could be expected, much more severe penalties were demanded for an exemplary knifer who committed the offense as a repeat offense – over 80% of the respondents opted for the penalty of an imprisonment (against 54% in an analogous case of a knifer without a criminal record).

Figure 17.

Proposals of penalties for a 'knifer' being a recidivist³⁴



Source: Author's own study.

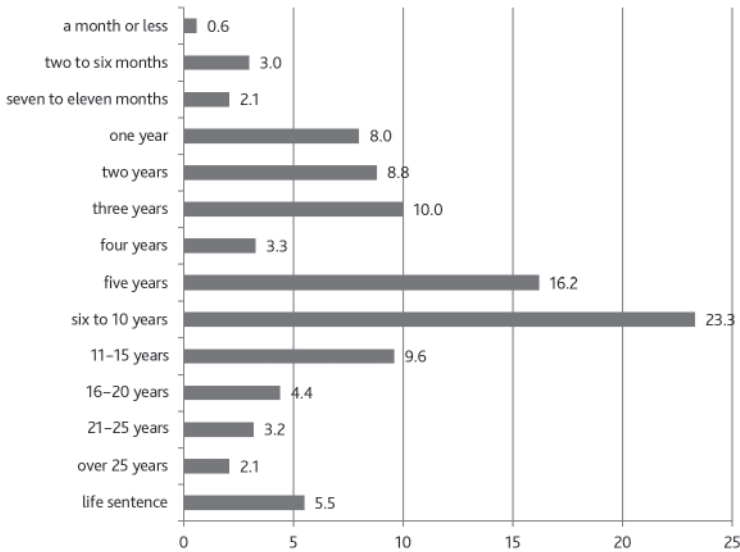
³³ The question was: 'How long should the perpetrator remain in prison, in your opinion?'. It was a single-choice question.

³⁴ The question was: 'And what penalty should the same man receive, in your opinion, in case he had already been punished for a similar offense? Please choose one answer'. The proposed answers are given in the figure.

The distribution of the proposed duration of penalties was also different: nearly 40% of the respondents opted for a penalty ranging from five to ten years of imprisonment while every tenth for a penalty ranging from 11 to 15 years. Proponents of yet longer penalties amounted to as much as 15%, including 5.5% being for a life sentence. The average penalty amounted to 96 months, the median being 60 months. The penalties were thus much higher than in the case of the knifer without a criminal record.

Figure 18.

Proposals of a penalty of the imprisonment for a 'knifer' being a recidivist³⁵

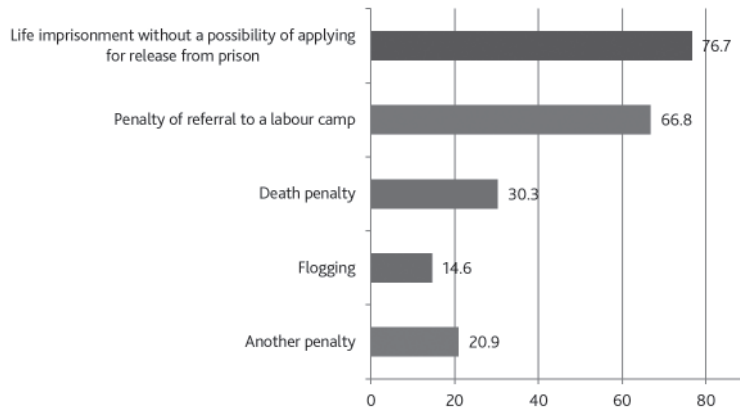


The final block of questions concerning penalties and punishment were those about support for sanctions not provided for in the criminal code or international law in force. Among the four proposed sanctions the Warsaw respondents most frequently expressed support for the penalty of life imprisonment without a possibility of conditional release from prison (as many as 3/4% of them). An only slightly smaller number of respondents were for sending the perpetrator to a labour camp. Every third respondent would welcome restoration of the capital punishment while 14% were for the penalty of flogging. Other proposals included most frequently compulsory referral to work. Sporadically (in 8 cases), a proposal appeared to make the image of the perpetrator known to the public.

7. SUMMARY

The article constitutes a report on a large-scale study devoted to security issues affecting the residents of Warsaw. It was carried out at the turn of September and October 2018 on a fairly large (2.000) random sample of respondents.

³⁵ The question was: 'How long should the offender remain in prison, in your opinion?'. It was a single-choice question.

Figure 19.Support for penalties not stipulated by the criminal code³⁶

The percentages given do not total 100 – multiple choice possible.

Source: Author's own study.

The studied group of Warsaw residents is characterized by an exceptionally high sense of security: an overwhelming majority of the respondents (90%) believe that the capital is a secure place to live in while 85% do not experience fear during a lonely evening walk and nearly 2/3 express no fear of becoming a crime victim.

Despite such a high level of security, only one third of the respondents think that criminality in Warsaw is decreasing. The remainder are of the opinion that, contrary to obvious facts, it is running on the same level or is even increasing.

The overall level of victimization (that is of becoming a victim of any of the acts specified in the questionnaire) should be found quite considerable: 1/4 of the respondents confirmed that they had become crime victims over the 5 years preceding the study. Theft was the offense reported most commonly.

The crime notification rate was very high (overall 66.5% but, for instance for robbery – 82.4%, for burglary – 76.7%) which can be evidence of high trust placed in Police. The fact that it must actually be so is confirmed by the highly positive grades given to this formation: 3/4 of the respondents find Police effective in combating crime.

What seems to be the greatest problem for residents of Warsaw in their place of living are reckless drivers. This problem was indicated by over 40% of the respondents, i.e. by a significantly higher number of percentage points than the second listed – accosting by aggressively behaving youths groups. Only every fifth respondent fears a break in electric energy supply and every third possible lack of access to potable water.

Though the percentage of proponents of severe punishment among the Warsaw respondents is relatively high, they are much less numerous than in the country

³⁶ The question was: 'If it were possible, would you be for the introduction to the Polish criminal code [of the penalties listed in the figure]'. The respondent had a possibility to mark each of the penalties with 'Yes', 'No', 'Hard to say'.

as a whole, which actually comes as no surprise. The number of the opponents of the tightening up of penal policy is 10 p.p. higher (44 and 56%, respectively) than of its proponents. This is a result totally different from the results obtained in the national, Poland-wide, studies, carried out at approximately the same time and with the use of the same indicators, where proponents of making the criminal code stricter clearly dominated.

What the respondents most frequently opted for when indicating the penalty to be given to the sample 'knifer' was a penalty of the deprivation of liberty of an average length of 62 months (i.e. over 5 years). It should also be emphasized that the conditionally suspended penalties, still frequently used in practice, met with approval on the part of barely every tenth respondent while the penalty of a fine was supported by barely 2%.

The penalty of the absolute deprivation of liberty, of an average duration of 96 months, i.e. 8 years, dominated even more clearly in the distribution of proposals of penalties for the sample perpetrator of an analogous act with a criminal record of a similar offense. Proposals of penalties for the sample recidivist were thus much more severe than for a perpetrator without a criminal record which should after all not be surprising.

The Warsaw respondents were also asked about sanctions which are not provided for by the criminal code in force. The penalty of a life imprisonment without a possibility of conditional earlier release from prison and referral to a compulsory labour camp gained the largest number of proponents, 3/4 and 2/3 of the respondents, respectively. Every third respondent was for the restoration of the death penalty, every seventh for the introduction of the penalty flogging which, bearing in mind the alleged ultra-liberalism of the residents of the capital, should be considered a surprisingly high result.

To sum up, it should be said that residents of Warsaw are characterized by:

- very high sense of security, accompanied by high assessment of Police work;
- rather high level of victimization as well as an unexpectedly high rate of the notification of crimes;
- punitivity lower than in the country as a whole.

The obtained results should be considered of great significance and interest. They also induce to continuation of analyses of related topics. What seems worthwhile to be given more attention to and demand further study is, among others, the question which revealed most surprising data in this project, namely, victimization. This is one of the reasons why the Institute of Justice has planned a national, Poland-wide, survey to be carried out in 2019 on a much larger sample of respondents, ensuring greater precision of results. This survey will allow to determine, among others, the scale of the victimization as regards individual types of crimes in the society, the level of fear of crime, the punitivity rate and social opinions about the functioning of the endorsement bodies, the system of justice as well as the scale of other social problems.

Abstract

Andrzej Siemaszko, Paweł Ostaszewski, Joanna Klimczak,
Justyna Włodarczyk-Madejska, *Sense of Security among the Residents
of Warsaw. Survey Results*

In the second decade of the 21st century, Poland manifests a high level of 'safeguarding' of people in numerous aspects of their life, while, simultaneously, the crime rate is decreasing and the sense of security is increasing. Paradoxically, it is these 'safe' conditions that should induce us to have a closer (or rather more thorough and more focused) look at these issues so as to not miss the possible new sources and types of threats.

The article analyses the results of a survey concerning the attitudes, experiences, and fears exhibited by the inhabitants of Poland's largest city, Warsaw. The scope of the analysis determined in this way allowed the authors to make important comparisons as well as to attempt to diagnose both the 'old' (previously analysed and described) and new sources of threats and forms of responding to them.

Keywords: *fear of crime, sense of security, crime rate, punitivity, Warsaw*

Streszczenie

Andrzej Siemaszko, Paweł Ostaszewski, Joanna Klimczak,
Justyna Włodarczyk-Madejska, *Poczucie bezpieczeństwa mieszkańców Warszawy.
Wyniki badania sondażowego*

W drugiej dekadzie XXI w. utrzymuje się w Polsce wysoki poziom „zabezpieczenia” ludzi w wielu wymiarach życia, zaś jednocześnie spada przestępczość i rośnie poczucie bezpieczeństwa. Paradoksalnie, to właśnie te „bezpieczne” warunki powinny skłonić nas do dokładniejszego (czy inaczej drobiazgowego lub bardzo ukierunkowanego) przyjrzenia tym zagadnieniom, tak by nie przeoczyć ewentualnych nowych źródeł i rodzajów zagrożeń.

Artykuł analizuje wyniki badania sondażowego dotyczącego postaw, doświadczeń i obaw mieszkańców największego polskiego miasta, czyli Warszawy. Takie zakreślenie przedmiotu analizy umożliwiło prowadzenie istotnych porównań, a także podjęcie próby zdiagnozowania zarówno „starych” (analizowanych i opisywanych już uprzednio), jak i nowych źródeł zagrożeń oraz form reakcji na nie.

Słowa kluczowe: *lęk przed przestępczością, poczucie bezpieczeństwa, przestępczość, punitivność, Warszawa*

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