Sense of security of local communities in Poland

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Abstract— **The aim of the study was to identify differences in the level of perceived safety in the Pruszków and Grodzisk districts as well as the nature of actions taken to increase the sense of security of residents in a place where until recently one of the most dangerous criminal groups in the country still operated. In order to examine the principles of human functioning in local society, the area of special interest - as a result of the exploration of the topic - was covered by the activities of two leading entities that play a particularly important function in shaping the process of local security. The analysis included evaluation of such categories as satisfactory relations with neighbors in the place of residence, permanent employment in the county, lack of crime in the county, unemployment in the county and evaluation of selected entities responsible for public safety.**

Keywords— community, process, infrastructure, threats, security environment, social aspects of security

I. INTRODUCTION

Beginning in the 1990s significant modifications have been implemented in the entities responsible for ensuring community security. Different worldviews and discourses of policy thinking lead to a variety of security views (Booth 2007).

The turn of the 20th and 21st century is a period of dynamic changes and processes in human life, nature, technology, etc. in both national, European and global dimensions. This affects the conditions and state of contemporary security. These changes include not only legal, organizational, technical, but also social aspects (Kappeler et all 2022).

Adler and Barnett claim that states are identifying new security issues that revolve around economic, environmental, and social welfare concerns and have ceased to concern themselves with military threats from others within the community (Adler, Barnett 1998, pp. 3-28).

A community is defined by three characteristics. First, members of a community have shared identities, values, and meanings. Secondly, those in a community have many-sided and direct relations; interaction occurs not indirectly and in only specific and isolated domains, but rather through some form of face-to-face encounter and relations in numerous settings. Thirdly, communities exhibit a reciprocity that expresses some degree of long-term interest and perhaps even altruism; long-term interest derives from know- ledge of those with whom one is interacting, and altruism can be understood as a sense of obligation and responsibility (Adler, Barnett 1998, pp. 29-65).

Security is a multidimensional category and highly dependent on the knowledge, capabilities and perspective of its perception (Wyrębek 2021)

According to Waever security is a practice, a specific way to frame an issue (Waever 1998, pp. 69-118.

He further explains that, in practice, it is not necessary that the word security is spoken. There can be occasions where the word is used without this particular logic is at play, and situations where security is metaphorically at play without being pronounced. We are dealing with a specific logic which usually appear under the name security, and this logic constitutes the core meaning of the concept security, a meaning which has been found through the study of actual discourse with the use of the word security, but in the further investigation, it is the specificity of the rhetorical structure which is the criterion - not the occurrence of a particular word (Pêcher et all 2009).

Security should be viewed as a specific sequence of changing states that make up an important social process on an international scale. Despite the relative permanence of states' aspirations, needs and interests, their external security is subject to the laws of motion of international systems, as the impulses for its evolution come out of both the domestic and international environments (Ciekanowski et all 2017).

The functional dimension sees security as a process in which functional challenges and threats, public perceptions and concepts of their resolution, and the actions and interactions of states and international institutions aimed at building their certainty of survival, possession and development freedoms clash. The processual concept of security makes it possible to note its changing dynamics over time, which prompts states to be constantly concerned about their own security. The variability of security over time for a single state or group of states is a factor in its evolution. The main driving force behind this variability and evolution is the security policies of states and international institutions (Waever 2011).

Striving to strengthen one's own national security is a constant goal of states' domestic and foreign policies. The actions of each state are accompanied by similar efforts by its adversaries and rivals. Additional strengthening of one side's security may entail a simultaneous reduction in the security of the other side, and vice versa. However, the interdependence of states' security interests is not necessarily a zero-sum game, but can also be positive in nature, which is best demonstrated in the international security system. International security activity is, therefore, a proven way to strengthen the national security of individual states Buzan, Hansen 2009). Its advantage is that states seeking to strengthen their individual security do not do so at the expense of the interests of other states, which are treated as partners rather than adversaries (Reveron, Mahoney-Norris 2018). In both situations presented, we are dealing with the variability over time and evolution of national security of individual states and international security.

International security can be seen as a given state of international relations at a given time. However, due to the volatility and dynamics inherent in these relations, it is necessary to see security as a social process on an international scale; a process of varying intensity and dynamics that are determined by the interdependence, compatibility and contradictory interests of states and international systems. The driving force behind this process is the individual and collective interactions of states aimed at protecting and shaping their individual and group societies. As threats to the basic values relevant to states and international systems, as well as the public perception of these threats are constantly changing, the means and methods of ensuring security are also evolving. Varies, therefore, the intensity and dynamics of the development of the process of strengthening international security. It decreases during periods of aggravation of international contradictions and tensions, and increases during times of international relaxation. This compatibility and contradiction of the interests of states in dynamic terms can be seen as the pulsation of the process of strengthening national and international security. Particularly in the process of shaping international security, one can observe alternating phases of growth and weakening of the common (collective) prevention of war and other threats to the survival, status and development of nations and states.

A political science approach should also take into account the variability of the intensity and dynamics of international security in different regions and international systems (Huysmans 2022). This will make it easier to grasp the geographic diversity of emerging challenges and threats, as well as the means and ways of addressing and eliminating them. Security is subject to the laws of motion of social systems, and as such should be grasped in a dynamic manner, using the rules of dialectics; it should be analyzed comprehensively, describing the variability over time of its subjective and objective aspects, recognizing the essence and specificity of security vis-à-vis other international phenomena and processes, as well as its subject, object and spatial differentiation.

Overall, national security consists of the laws, decisions and behaviors aimed at protecting the fundamental assets of a nation (Valla 2022).

The state is based on the possession of a fixed territory and formal membership with an administrative body, whereas society on the contrary is about identity, and the way in which communities and individuals identify and perceive themselves. Societal insecurity, therefore, emerges when communities feel that their identity is being targeted or threatened (Saleh 2011).

Citizens are now central to national security strategies, yet governments readily admit that little is known about public opinion on security (Stevens, Vaughan-Williams 2016).

Although the specifics of local security functioning are firmly located in the known and most common past threats related to, for example, climate, geopolitics, or cultural determinants, it is important to monitor these events and the ways in which they are interpreted by an area's community. The catalog of threats that currently exist in the security environment and may occur in the future is constantly expanding (Miller et all 2016).

Security depends not only on the status quo in the area of existing threats, but also on the opportunities for the growth of possessed wealth and multi-area development(Ciekanowski 2019).

One of the tasks of a democratic state is to ensure security and public order. Security is a value identified with internal, external, social or international dimensions. Security has importance at individual as well as collective level (Guillaume, Huysmans 2013).

From the position of human security, of course, one can talk about safe and unsafe situations, in different areas of human existence (Jarmoszko 2020). Starting from this perspective, any research attempt that cares about the improvement of the smallest fragment of social life and makes an attempt to understand it can contribute in some aspect to the improvement of the local feeling of security. The goal of local security is to ensure an adequate standard of living for residents of a local community (Moczuk 2009).

For local authorities to respond effectively to residents' needs, they should rely on their knowledge of the social voices of their residents. This is because not always the investments

made by the authorities are the goods that satisfy the common pressing needs. It seems that cooperation between the authorities and the community can create a synergy value that really improves perceived safety. This value becomes particularly important at the moment of crisis when a sudden event (whether realized or not) destabilizes the existing order and forces to act under time pressure (Ciekanowski et all 2017).

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The ambiguity of the concept of security sometimes becomes a problem for researchers because it is difficult to create one common definition. According to Zdrodowski, security can be discussed in three categories: epistemological, ontological, object-oriented (Zdrodowski 2014). The study of problems and specifics of functioning of social groups connected by territorial value within the local environment is based on monitoring and responding to emerging threats. They often occur cyclically, as they are conditioned by constants related to the nature of the climate, economic potential or cultural conditions, forming the so-called small homelands (Ciekanowski 2013, pp. 203-2018; Nowicka et all 2021, pp.157-176). According to Leszczynski, Gumieniak, Owczarek and Mochicki, a local community is a territorial collectivity with specific types of ties. When these ties disappear, there is a return of the local community to the state of territorial collectivities (Leszczyński et all 2013).

A regional security complex is defined as a set of units whose major processes of securitization, de-securitization, or both are so interlinked that their security problems cannot reasonably be analyzed or resolved apart from one another (Buzan, Waever 2003).

The regional level is where the extremes of national and global security interplay, and where most of the action occurs (Buzan 2003, Nowicka 2017).

Combining the issues of locality with security issues and trying to define the security of local communities, the authors recognize that it concerns both the entities responsible for security, the object of interest, and spatial conditions (Zięba 2012; Cieślarczyk 2008). It should also be understood through the prism of multidisciplinarity (Wivel 2010).

Obviously, the awareness of the occurrence of new, hitherto unknown factors is an indispensable competence when creating, for example, crisis management plans, nevertheless, the perspective of community research is largely based on the modification of security activities, the main premise of which is to broaden and deepen the existing practice and knowledge in the area of security (Brzeziński 2014).

Arising from different philosophical traditions, different approaches to risk determine different perspectives in risk management, hinting at competing understandings of politics/the political and security(Aradu et all 2006).

This type of approach concerns not only infrastructure elements, but also properties concerning social aspects of perception of given events. The opinion of local communities creates a cultural value and is a force that cannot be ignored when trying to build bonds of mutual trust at the level of individuals, groups and organizations, entities responsible for

maintaining the desired state of feeling safe.

Sense of security is the most important need and value of a human being, therefore it is the aim of various entities in social life, especially in the local environment. A noteworthy definition is the proposal of Brzeziński who claims that security is also an anthropocentric category. It accompanies man as an individual or his organized forms (society, nation, state). Without man there is essentially no security, there are only physical or natural phenomena. It is only the relationship with humans that makes them threats and includes them in the study of danger (Brzeziński 2014).

The term feeling is defined as being aware of certain facts, phenomena occurring in the surrounding world, internal states: awareness, sensation, impression (Sulowski, Brzeziński 2009). On the one hand man is accompanied by a constant sense of threat: both real and imagined, i.e. resulting from individual sensitivity and imagination, on the other hand - the desire for a safe living environment.

Security appears as a certain state of the individual or group, which does not contain threats to the continuation, stability and development but gives the individual a sense of security, support in other people and the system of law (Measor 2006, Nowicka 2016). The sense of security is very individual and depends on many stimuli, in the case of local research, the answers will be influenced by whether the person lives permanently in the area and is, or has lived there for a short time (Siemiątkowski, Tomaszewski 2018).

A sense of security can be distinguished in research on specific, unusual, difficult situations or life experiences. It has its place in attachment theory, a developmental theory that describes the construction of appropriate social references based on a young person's relationship with close people (Pervin et all 2011). Sense of security is also an aspect of references in the area of stress and human coping in threatening situations. It is used as an explanatory element for the distinctiveness and quality of functioning of various specific groups of people, such as the elderly, those receiving social assistance services or those living in poverty(Fagerström et all 2011, Underlid 2007). It refers to the issue of internal resources (Carnelly, Rowe 2010). It also appears in research on employee functioning in organizations in the context of job security and social identification (Veenstra et all 2004).

It is in these areas of human activity that the sense of security turns out to be an important predictor of the references and actions taken. Koziej described the concept of security in question, linking the sense of security of the human individual with the issue of development. This means that the social and economic development of the country, the world or the human individual is possible when a person takes care of stability, and the conditions in which this process is to take place will be conducive to it and will allow for its implementation. In the simplest terms, development will be possible when the world is safe, however, the foundation of this relationship will always be a sense of security (Koziej 2011, Nowicka 2019).

III. MATERIAL AND METHODS

The research problem undertaken in the study was to identify differences in the level of perceived community safety of Pruszków and Grodzisk Counties in Poland, and the nature of measures taken to increase residents' sense of safety in a place where, until recently, one of the most dangerous criminal groups in the country still operated.

Variables such as relations with neighbors at the place of residence, permanent employment in the county, the feeling that the City/Community Guard watches over the safety of county residents, the feeling that the Police watch over the safety of county residents providing constant care , identification with community life, crime in the county, unemployment in the county were analyzed and evaluated. The research sample consisted of adult residents of Pruszków and Grodzisk Counties, ranging in age from 18 to 65.

Theoretical and empirical methods were used in the research process. This allowed us to learn about the subject of the study and verify the adopted hypotheses. The theoretical methods that were used at each stage of the conducted research process and the solution of research problems included scientific methods such as analysis, synthesis, abstraction, generalization, comparison, analogy and inference. These methods were used during the study of literature and source documents and statistical data.

The method of analysis and synthesis was related to the critique and review of the literature related to the topic of the study. The method of comparison made it possible to identify differences and changes from year to year, in terms of the aforementioned data, related to the sense of security of the communities of Pruszków and Grodzisk Counties. This, in turn, through the method of analogy, generalization and inference, made it possible to formulate the directions of change in the form of predictive forecasts, with regard to Poland and Pruszków and Grodzisk Counties in particular.

The research method of inference, was an integral part of conducting research throughout the research proceedings. The results of the research, expressed in the form of conclusions, were formulated on the basis of the collected research material. The research method of abstraction, made it possible to remove from the research area features and relationships of little importance for the conduct of the research process, and thus focus on the most important elements determining the solution of the established research objectives.

From among the empirical methods that complemented the theoretical methods, making it possible to verify in the course of the research procedure the initially obtained partial results of the research, the scientific method of diagnostic survey using interview and questionnaire techniques was adopted.

The methods used provided a thorough understanding of the subject of the study and contributed to the verification of the working hypotheses.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In assessing the dynamics of the sense of security of the residents of the surveyed counties, the level of sense of security in the county over two years was indicated first. The result obtained was determined by percentage, where 0% means no sense of security and 100% means full sense of security. As established, the level of sense of security in the county in 2021 among all respondents (both groups - county councils in two locations) is characterized by mean M=62.50, dominance of 70.0, median 70.0, standard deviation SD= 21.68, obliquity -0.27, kurtosis -0.57 and minimum 10.00 and maximum 100.0. Significant parameters are presented in the body of Table 1. Student's t-test shows that there are no statistically significant differences, but differences in the level of sense of security in 2016 in the study sample exist.

The level of sense of security of residents of Pruszków County (2021) has a mean of M=58.89, a dominant of 70.0, a median of 60.0, a standard deviation of SD= 21.72, a obliquity of -0.21, a kurtosis of -0.39 and a minimum of 10.00 and a maximum of 100.0. On the other hand, the level of sense of security of people living in Grodzisk County (2016) has a mean of M=67.14, a dominant of 70.0, a median of 70.0, a standard deviation of SD= 21.25, an obliquity of -0.38, a kurtosis of -0.54, and a minimum of 30.00 and a maximum of 100.0.

TABLE 1. LEVEL OF FEELING OF SAFETY IN THE COUNTY IN 2021 AS ASSESSED BY RESPONDENTS

Level	Total		Pruszków County		Grodzisk County		Compare	
	frequency	%	frequency	%	frequency	%	t°	P
Low (0–30%)	7	14,6	4	14,8	3	14,3	-1,320	0,193
Average (40–60%)	16	33,3	11	40,7	5	23,8		
Hight (70–100%)	25	52,1	12	44,4	13	61,9		
Total	48,0	100,0	27	100,0	21	100,0		

Source: own elaboration based on own research.

Thus, based on the average values, it can be concluded that the level of sense of security of residents of Grodzisk County (2016) is higher by more than 8.0% than residents of Pruszków County. Analyzing the average values of the level of feeling of safety (2021 and 2022), it should be noted that the level of feeling of safety (2022) in both groups is higher by nearly 4% from two years ago - respectively, in Pruszków County the level of safety is higher by nearly 9%, and in Grodzisk County by nearly 5%.

Due to the large amount of data, raw results were grouped into the following ranges: low level - 0 to 30%, average level - 40 to 60% and high level - 70 to 100%.

Based on the percentage data, it can be concluded that residents of Grodzisk County are more likely to report a high level of feeling of safety in the county (2021) (61.9% of

choices) than residents of Pruszków County (44.4% of indications).

An average level of feeling safe in the county (2021) was more often felt by residents of Pruszków County with 40.7% of the election and nearly one in four residents of Grodzisk County (23.8% of indications). Only a small percentage of respondents from both counties describe the feeling of safety in the county as low (14.8 and 14.3).

The next step in the research procedure was to determine the level of sense of security of the residents surveyed in 2022. The variable level of feeling of safety in the county (2022) was also determined by percentage, where 0% means no feeling of safety and 100% means full feeling of safety. The level of sense of security in the district (2022) of all the respondents (both groups) has a mean of M=66.25, a dominant of 80.0, a median of 70.0, a standard deviation of SD= 21.70, an obliquity of -0.89, a kurtosis of 0.85 and a minimum of 0.00 and a maximum of 100.0.

From the empirical data and Student's t-test of significance of differences for independent pairs, it follows that residents of Pruszków County and residents of Grodzisk County declare a similar level of feeling of safety in the county (2022) - the empirical t-value is |1.560| at p=0.127. The empirical value is smaller than the critical t (1.960). The Student's t-test shows that there are no statistically significant differences, but differences in the sample exist.

The level of sense of security of residents of Pruszków County (2022) is characterized by a mean of M=67.85, a dominant of 70.0, a median of 70.0, a standard deviation of SD= 18.41, an obliquity of -0.85, a kurtosis of 0.16, and a minimum of 20.00 and a maximum of 90.0. On the other hand, the current level of sense of security of people living in Grodzisk County is characterized by mean M=71.90, dominance of 80.0, median 80.0, standard deviation SD= 24.62, an obliquity -1.38, kurtosis 2.28 and minimum 0.00 and maximum 100.0.

Thus, based on the mean values, it can be concluded that the current level of sense of security of the residents of Grodzisk County is higher only by 4.0% than the residents of Pruszków County.

Due to a large number of data, raw results were grouped into the following ranges: low level - 0 to 30%, average level - from 40 to 60% and high level - from 70 to 100%, which is presented in the text of Table No. 2.

TABLE 2. LEVEL OF FEELING OF SAFETY IN THE DISTRICT (2022) AS ASSESSED BY RESPONDENTS

Level	Total		Pruszków County		Grodzisk County		Compare	
	frequency	%	frequency	%	frequency	%	t°	p
low (0–30%)	3	6,3	2	7,4	1	4,8	-1,560	0,127
average (40–60%)	16	33,3	11	40,7	5	23,8		

high (70–100%)	29	60,4	14	51,9	15	71,4		
Total	48	100,0	21	100,0	21	100,0		

Source: own elaboration based on own research.

Based on percentages, residents of Grodzisk County are more likely to report a high current level of feeling safe in the county (71.4%) than residents of Pruszków County (51.9%). The average level of feeling of safety in the county (20222) is more often felt by residents of Pruszków County with 40.7% of the choices and nearly one in four residents of Grodzisk County (23.8% of indications). Only a small percentage of respondents from both counties describe the feeling of safety in the county as low (2022) - 7.4 and 4.8%. When rating the different aspects of local security, the different response options were assigned ranks on a scale of 1 to 3, where 1 point means very important, 2 points - moderately important, 3 points - less important. Thus the lower the rank of the respondents answers (the lower the average), the more important a given aspect of local safety is. The respondents evaluation is presented in Table 3.

TABLE 3. RESIDENTS' EVALUATION OF VARIOUS ASPECTS OF LOCAL SECURITY (MEAN VALUES)

Aspects of local security	M	SD
Satisfactory relationships with neighbors where you live	1,50	0,77
Permanent employment in the county	2,06	0,89
A sense that the City/County Guard is watching over the safety of county residents	1,79	0,82
The assurance of constant medical care	1,38	0,73
Identification with community life	1,71	0,80
The feeling that the police ensure the safety of county residents	1,42	0,74
Lack of crime in the county	1,44	0,68
Low unemployment in the county	1,79	0,77

M – mean, SD - standard deviation
Source: own elaboration based on own research.

Based on the mean values of the responses obtained from all respondents (both groups), it can be concluded that the most important aspects of local safety are the provision of constant medical care (1.38), the feeling that the Police watch over the safety of county residents (1.42), the absence of crime in the county (1.44) and satisfactory relations with neighbors in the place of residence (1.50). Of medium importance to residents of both counties are identification with community life (1.71) and feeling that the City or Township Police Department is watching over the safety of county residents (1.79) and low unemployment in the county (1.79). Of all the aspects of local safety, the least important to all respondents is steady employment within the county (2.06).

Empirical data and Student's t-test of significance of differences for independent pairs show that residents of Pruszków County and residents of Grodzisk County have different opinions on one aspect of local safety, i.e., lack of crime in the county - the empirical t-value is |2.440| at p=0.021. The empirical value is greater than the critical t (1.960). The mean values of the responses show that for residents of Pruszków County (1.22), the lack of crime in the county is a more important aspect of local security than for residents of Grodzisk County (1.71). A comparison of parameters in both

counties is presented in the contents of Table 4.

In case of other aspects of local security, residents of Pruszków County and residents of Grodzisk County have similar opinions: satisfactory relations with neighbors where they live - empirical t-value is |0.180| at p=0.857, permanent employment in the county - empirical t-value is |1.070| at p=0.289, feeling that the Municipal/Commune Guard watches over the safety of county residents - empirical t-value is |0.490| at p=0.629, provision of constant medical care - empirical t-value is |1.590| at p=0.122, identification with community life - empirical t-value is |0.310| at p=0.761, feeling that the police ensure the safety of county residents - empirical t-value is |1.630| at p=0.112 and low unemployment in the county - empirical t-value is |0.230| at p=0.816. The empirical value is less than the critical t (1.960).

TABLE 4. RESIDENTS' EVALUATION OF VARIOUS ASPECTS OF LOCAL SECURITY (MEAN VALUES)

Aspects of local security	Pruszków County		Grodzisk County		Compare	
	M	SD	M	SD	t°	P
Satisfactory relationships with neighbors where you live	1,48	0,70	1,52	0,87	-0,180	0,857
Permanent employment in the county	2,19	0,83	1,90	0,94	1,070	0,289
A sense that the City/County Guard is watching over the safety of county residents	1,74	0,86	1,86	0,79	-0,490	0,629
The assurance of constant medical care	1,22	0,58	1,57	0,87	-1,590	0,122
Identification with community life	1,74	0,71	1,67	0,91	0,310	0,761
The feeling that the police ensure the safety of county residents	1,26	0,59	1,62	0,86	-1,630	0,112
Lack of crime in the county	1,22	0,42	1,71	0,85	-2,440	0,021
Low unemployment in the county	1,81	0,79	1,76	0,77	0,230	0,816

Source: own elaboration based on own research.

Although statistically significant differences occur only in the case of the absence of crime in the county, it can be noted that clear differences are also present in the evaluation of the importance of other aspects of local safety: residents of Pruszków County consider more important the provision of permanent medical care (1.22), the feeling that the police ensure the safety of county residents (1.26), while residents of Grodzisky County rate higher the identification with the life of the local community (1.67) and permanent employment in the county (1.90). Summary data for both study groups are presented in the body of Table 5.

TABLE 5. RESPONDENTS' EVALUATION OF VARIOUS ASPECTS OF LOCAL SECURITY - BOTH GROUPS (DATA IN %)

Aspects of local security	Very important	Medium important	Less important
Satisfactory relationships with neighbors where you live	66,6	16,7	16,7
Permanent employment in the county	35,4	22,9	41,7
A sense that the City/County Guard is watching over the safety of county residents	45,8	29,2	25,0
The assurance of constant medical care	77,1	8,3	14,6
Identification with community life	50,0	29,2	20,8
The feeling that the police ensure the safety of county residents	72,9	12,5	14,6
Lack of crime in the county	66,6	22,9	10,5
Low unemployment in the county	41,7	37,5	20,8

Source: own elaboration based on own research.

Analyzing the percentage distribution of responses from all respondents together, it can be seen that the greatest number of people considered as very important aspects of local safety the provision of constant medical care (77.1%), the feeling that the police are watching over the safety of county residents (72.9%), satisfying relations with neighbors where they live (66.6%), the absence of crime in the county (66.6%) and identification with the life of the local community (50%). The data broken down by each county surveyed is presented in the body of Table 6. The distribution of answers is similar in each group: for residents of Pruszków County, the most important aspects of local safety are: the provision of permanent medical care (85.2%), a feeling that the police are watching over the safety of county residents (81.5%), the lack of crime in the county (77.8%), satisfactory relations with neighbors in place of residence (63%) and a feeling that the Municipal/Government Guard is watching over the safety of county residents (51.9%). A slightly different definition of the importance of safety aspects is given by residents of Grodzisk County. For them, satisfying relationships with neighbors where they live is most important (71.4%), followed by the provision of constant medical care (66.7%), identification with the life of the local community (61.9%), the feeling that the police watch over the safety of county residents (61.9%), and the absence of crime in the county (52.4%).

TABLE 6. RESPONDENTS' EVALUATION OF VARIOUS ASPECTS OF LOCAL SECURITY (DATA IN %)

Aspects of local security	Very important		Medium important		Less important	
	P	G	P	G	P	G
Satisfactory relationships with neighbors where you live	63,0	71,4	25,9	4,8	11,1	23,8
Permanent employment in the county	25,9	47,6	29,6	14,3	44,5	38,1
A sense that the City/County Guard is watching over the safety of county residents	51,9	38,1	22,2	38,1	25,9	23,8
The assurance of constant medical care	85,2	66,7	7,4	9,5	7,4	23,8
Identification with community life	40,7	61,9	44,5	9,5	14,8	28,6
The feeling that the police ensure the safety of county residents	81,5	61,9	11,1	14,3	7,4	23,8
Lack of crime in the county	77,8	52,4	22,2	23,8	-	23,8
Low unemployment in the county	40,7	42,9	37,1	38,1	22,2	19,0

*P – Pruszków County *G – Grodzisk County
Source: own elaboration based on own research.

V. CONCLUSIONS

Creating a state of insecurity and opportunity for community development is crucial to living a life that can be called relatively peaceful. This tranquility is influenced by a number of factors related to individual needs, and local authorities are obliged to monitor group and community feelings of security in

order to strengthen potentially destructive areas and listen to the urgent needs of the area's residents. In the analysis presented here, the two investigated neighboring counties show some differences in the perceived level of security.

In summary, it should be stated that the analyses conducted showed that in the years studied (2021 and 2022), there was an increase in the sense of safety in both Pruszków and Grodzisk Counties. However, it is more often the residents of Grodzisk County who perceive a positive change in public safety in their place of residence than residents of Pruszków County.

Thus, they feel more safe (2022 data). The sense of community safety in Pruszków County remains at a similar level. However, the level of feeling of safety of residents of Grodzisk county in 2016 was 8% higher than that of residents of Pruszków County in 2022. This may indicate that county residents are becoming concerned about their safety.

They rank the following as the most important factors for local safety: the provision of consistent medical care, a sense that the police are watching over the safety of residents, the absence of crime in the county, and satisfying relationships with neighbors where they live. However, there is a slightly different distribution of emphasis on safety issues.

While residents of Pruszków County consider the provision of constant medical care and a sense that the police are watching over the safety of residents to be most important, residents of Grodzisk County place greater importance on identifying with community life and being able to obtain employment within the county. The research was conducted before the SARS-CoV-2 virus swept the world in 2022, triggering the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic situation had a devastating impact on many areas of social functioning, but the institutions responsible for saving human health felt it most acutely. Thus, the greatest fears of the representatives of the surveyed local communities, highlighted in the research, were realized.

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