

ASSESSMENT OF BASIC ELEMENTS OF THE SECURITY SYSTEM OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES

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Received 10 January 2019; accepted 20 September 2019; published 30 December 2019

Abstract. The aim of the present paper is to present preliminary results of the pilot research pertaining to the assessment of the fundamental elements of the local security system, the research being conducted by the authors on the statistically significant sample (4 400 persons) of the inhabitants of local communities of the Kuyavian-Pomeranian voivodeship (an administrative unit in Poland). Since the research was very extensive indeed, the present paper contains only a fragment of its results. It transpired that the sense of security of the members of the local communities of the Kuyavian-Pomeranian voivodeship is at a relatively high level. With the assumed scale (ranging from 1 to 10), the greatest number of respondents assessed it at the level of 8 points, and the absolute majority of them assessed it at least at the level of 6. Among all the elements assessed, it was the operations of fire fighters that were evaluated as best. What was assessed as definitely the worst was the functioning of health care and of non-governmental organizations. What came as a sort of surprise are relatively poor (given the allegiance to tradition exhibited by Polish society) scores given to the influence of the Church on the sense of local communality, with a relatively frequent scores falling in 1-4 range. The research method thus put forward by the authors is innovative since it offers a combination of so-called hard elements of security elements with barely measurable sense of security, as assessed by particular persons. A relatively large research sample ensures that the results are significantly informative.

Keywords: the security of local communities, security threats, local community

Reference to this paper should be made as follows: Siemiątkowski, P., Tomaszewski, P., Jurgilewicz, O; Poplavska, Zh. 2019. Assessment of basic elements of the security system of local communities, *Journal of Security and Sustainability Issues* 9(2): 617-635. [http://doi.org/10.9770/jssi.2019.9.2\(20\)](http://doi.org/10.9770/jssi.2019.9.2(20))

JEL Classifications: F52, O18, P48, R59; H55

Additional disciplines: political sciences; sociology

1. Introduction

Security is nowadays one of the most popular issues, considered both in the realm of politics and on the media. It is also scholars that take interest therein. This concept is multi-dimensional and can be analyzed from different angles. However, the research conducted on security takes an entirely different shape depending on whether we assume the perspective of strategic objectives of the state, a group of people or the one of an individual person. Despite the fact that, regardless of a research perspective assumed, we deal with a similar sort of threats, we, qua citizens, are not always aware of the above fact. For an average person, which is indicated by the research in question (diagnoses of social problems from the position of a given commune), what matters most are current affairs related to their daily life; that is, permanent employment, the stability of household budget, health issues, and the order in the streets for that matter (Jankowska, 2014; Bernardi, 2019). Certainly, the above statement applies only when public authorities will ensure the satisfaction of the needs of an individual and there holds law and order in the public realm. In developed societies, public law and order is usually treated as a state of normalcy. Still, if the said order is brutally disrupted; for instance, by terrorist attacks, or by

ordinary crimes, the perception of security radically changes (Tyushka, 2019). Then the said perception thereof starts leaning towards traditional areas including basic elements ensuring the survival of an individual person (Kelly, 2005; Kordík, Kurilovská, 2017).

Under Polish conditions, in which the society feels relatively safe, what plays a key role in the local environment are the above-stated so-called soft determinants of the sense of security. These comprise mainly economic factors that allow for successful functioning in a society. It seems that nowadays their role reduces to one more important issue; namely, to the fact that economic resources enable us in extreme cases; that is, when the sense of threat exceeds the critical level, to change the local environment. The processes of migration in search of finding proper home are becoming a daily routine these days. This applies to internal migration. What is also conspicuous in the case of open borders of the European Union is that the scope of these processes was considerably extended (Czarnecka, 2018; Garczewski, 2016; Wawrzusiszyn, 2017; Todorov et al., 2018; Škuflić et al., 2018; Lialina, 2019).

The purpose of the present paper is to present introductory and fragmentary results of the pilot study on the sense of security, with the study being conducted by the authors on the statistically significant sample of the inhabitants of local communities of Kuyavian-Pomeranian voivodeship. One of the areas subject to the respondents' assessment were the elements of the system of local security, including public officers (fire fighters, policemen) and that is why the presentation of the results of the study shall be preceded with a succinct description of the system in question.

2. Theoretical background

A considerable part of local studies is related to victimization (Foster, Giles-Corti, & Knuiman, 2010; Guzik, 2000). The studies on the sense of security, in the authors' view, is the key to implementing the changes in the policies pursued by local authorities for the sake of improving safety of local communities. However, it must be stressed that they are of subjective character and they merely amount to the implementation to the coordination of operations on the part of services and institutions. Yet, it must be said that they are particularly related to an efficient cooperation between local communities and local authorities (Delbosc & Currie, 2012; Prause et al., 2019). The research on a smaller scale, with reference to already specified threats, mainly pertaining to the public order, was conducted in various places, such as, for example, Wellington City (Coggan & Gabites, 2007), Auburn (Shepherdson, 2014). What was also studied was the relation between human capital and housing development of metropolitan suburbs – Perth (Wood et al., 2008; Omelchuk, 2018; Sasongko et al., 2019); furthermore, there was also some research on fear of criminality in urban areas and in the countryside of Turkey (Karakus, McGarrell, & Basibuyuk, 2010), as well as on the influence of the quality of life on the sense of security (Baker & Palmer, 2006; Rakauskiene & Strunz, 2016; Bilevičienė et al., 2016; Moumen et al, 2019; Cherchyk et al., 2019).

The theory which comprehensively tackles the sense of security is a commonly known disorder theory (Kelling & Wilson, 1982). Also recognized under the label of broken-windows theory, it assumes that the sense of security may be contingent upon, say, the state of infrastructure, city development or living area. If the inhabitants of a given area notice so-called disorders (social ones – for instance, public drinking, or physical ones – for instance, broken window, neglected properties), they will subconsciously feel anxiety (Markowitz, Bellair, Liska, & Liu, 2001; Ross, Mirowsky, & Pribesh, 2001; Sampson & Raudenbush, 1999).

What is important for the present paper are the suggestions – from time to time appearing in the subject-matter literature – that the very malfunctioning of a society itself (for instance, public drinking) may directly arouse fear, even in the case when it is not accompanied by any genuinely dangerous event (e.g. picking a fight or assault) (Ross & Jang, 2000). Therefore, local security is a function of a social system developed by its inhabitants. Thus, local security is a variable that can be assessed with the help of surveys. The level of disorder may be a relatively easily available indicator of local security. It appears in the form of, say, poor conservation, ranging from loose waste to neglected greenery, or broken windows and doors (O'Brien & Wilson, 2011). Similar

research was conducted in Poland with respect to the city of Poznań (Bogacka & Siniecka, 2016), or Cracow (Market Research Word, 2017). Broad research over the sense of security was conducted by the authors of the present paper in the area of Kuyavian-Pomeranian voivodeship (Siemiątkowski & Tomaszewski, 2018).

In order to ensure security to its citizens, the state realizes a plethora of tasks and implements numerous initiatives (Moldovan, 2018; Szpak, 2015). This process is continuous, institutionalized and it requires proper legal regulations and some solutions of organizational nature. Government and self-government institutions, private entities and the legal regulations consolidating them which are responsible for the security of the state and of its citizens create the so-called national security, which is normally defined as “deliberately distinguished (from the system of the state) collective set of public authorities and public administration, other state authorities, armed forces, entrepreneurs and other organizational entities, social organizations of citizens performing some actions for the sake of ensuring national security (Chmieliński, 2018), internally coordinated and mutually dependent on each other by virtue of some management system with respect to the realized mission which is the defence and security of the state, with the state being a political territorial and social institution, and with a view to ensuring undisturbed living conditions conducive to the self-fulfillment of both an individual person and of the whole society; and with the intention to secure people’s life and health, their welfare (gauged by both tangible and intangible goods) and of natural environment in all the stages of the state’s functioning (in a state of normalcy, in the times of crisis and in the states of exception) (Kitler, Drabik, & Szostek, 2014, p. 11).

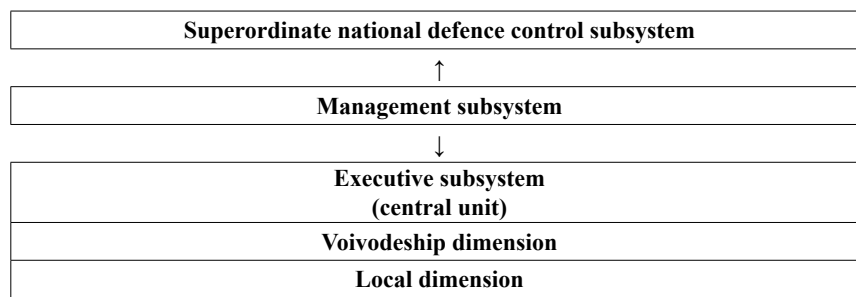


Fig. 1. The system of national security of the Republic of Poland

Source: Kitler, 2014, p. 243

The system of national security encompasses – among others – internal security. Actually, the framework of internal security system overlaps with thus presented system of national security (see: figure 1). The security of local communities, on the other hand, includes “[...]– proportionally to the size of a community in question – all the elements of the former system (that is, of the one of internal security), which are: regime security, social order, personal security, public security, public order, which are of nation-wide character; but it also includes the needs, problems, possibilities and forms of activity that are peculiar to a given local community” (Fehler, 2009, p. 24).

In the light of the fact that it is normally a commune that is an organization of local community and is also the form of the organization of its administration, it is a commune itself that will play a crucial role in the system of local security (Leszczyński, Gumieniuk, Owczarek, & Mochocki, 2013, p. 37). Its elements will be the same executive subsystems which comprise the system of national security; however, only with respect to the functions shifted from the governmental level to the one of local government (see: figure 2).

However, the scope of operations of particular tiers of territorial self-government was diversified. Satisfying collective needs of a community is one of the duties incumbent upon a commune. The said duties encompass – among others – issues related to public order, citizens’ security and anti-fire as well as anti-flood protection (Ustawa z dnia 8 marca 1990 r. o samorządzie gminnym, 2001, art.7, ust.1, pkt 14). Powiat, on the other hand, performs the legislated public tasks of supra-communal nature – among others – the ones regarding public order and citizens’ security (Ustawa z dnia 5 czerwca 1998 r. o samorządzie powiatowym, 2001, art.4, ust.1, pkt 15).

national security management system		
President of the Republic of Poland	← cooperation →	Council of Ministers
National Security Council, National Security Bureau	Advisory bodies	Committee of Ministers for National Security, Government Centre for Security

Executive systems in regional dimension		
Defence subsystems	Social subsystems	Economic subsystems
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rescue and civil protection systems • Infrastructure protection system • Public order system • Institution protection system • Cybersecurity and other systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National heritage protection system • Education for security institutions • Research institutions for security • local media • non-governmental organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • institutions for financial security • entities of energy security • strategic reserves • health care • institutions for environment protection • others
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Alertness and on-the-sport reacting - Preparations with respect to security - Planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preparation of human resources - Knowledge, science and technology - Law, education - National spirit, patriotism, culture of power, abilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creating financial and economic foundations of security

Fig 2. The security system of local communities

Source: (Kitler, 2014) and our own work.

A local government of a voivodeship executes voivodeship-related tasks which are regulated by legal acts – among others – those regarding public security (Ustawa z dnia 5 czerwca 1998 r. o samorządzie województwa, 2001, art.14, ust.1, pkt 14). At the same time, pursuant to art. 3 of Police Act, governor and the head of a commune (mayor, the president of a city) or starost wielding power of general administration or the bodies of a commune, powiat and local government of a voivodeship execute tasks pertaining to security provision or public order in accordance with the principles set forth in the relevant acts (Ustawa z dnia 6 kwietnia 1990 r. o policji, 2017). Furthermore, the local government may perform the tasks stemming from the acts and local law bills through appointing municipal police (Ustawa z dnia 29 sierpnia 1997 r. o strażach gminnych, 1997).

The security-related tasks with the exception of public order executed by the local government (commune and powiat) include, among others:

- Environment and nature protection;
- Fire protection ;
- Social support;
- Conservation of monuments;
- Supporting disabled people (Urban, 2011, pp. 33–40);
- Health promotion and health protection as such, including combating drug addiction and counteracting alcoholism.

At this point, it should be added that most frequently in the context of territorial self-government, security is perceived in terms of security and public order conceived of as a desirable state of affairs (when it comes to safety, order and public peace), which should enable normal development of social life involving abiding by the law holding at that time as well as obeying extra-legal norms pertinent to the enforcement of public order (Osierda, 2014, pp. 89–106; Serafin & Parszowski, 2014, p. 33). We can also assume, following the footsteps of Zdzisław Jagiełło, that public security reduces to “the entirety of the conditions and institutions protecting life, health and property of citizens as well as national wealth, regime and sovereignty of the state against the phenomena threatening the legal order and achievements of democracy” (Jagiełło, 2015, p. 10).

Therefore, oftentimes in the context of managing security of local communities, the issues related thereto are delegated to the operations of dedicated services and of inspection (combined administrations), which mainly consists in reacting to occurring events. Therefore, it is the paradigm of ‘combat readiness’ that prevails here. From this perspective, what plays the crucial role in the perception of local community security are services, organizations and the institutions directly dealing with public-security-related issues, such as police, fire brigades (both professional and volunteer ones), municipal police and also the following inspections: sanitary, veterinary, inspection of environment protections and of construction supervision. The above-stated approach downgrades important elements of local security such as, say, interpersonal bonds, social involvement of the people inhabiting a certain area; or else – the capability of cooperation between self-government power – non-governmental organization, and services.

3. Methodology and research process

The fragmentary results of the pilot research described in the forthcoming part of the present paper constitute an introduction to an intended broader and deeper study on local security. The purpose of conducting this pilot research was to examine the sense of security of the inhabitants of Kuyavian-Pomeranian voivodeship. Moreover, the aim was to discover how they assess the selected (by them) factors that the level of the said security is a function of.

It was local communities of Kuyavian-Pomeranian voivodeship on the level of poviats that were subjects of this study. Therefore, the respondents inhabited the area of 19 poviats and 4 cities with poviat rights. It was also attempted to deliberately diversify the research sample in terms of gender and age.

The study poses three following research questions:

- P1: How do the respondents assess the sense of security in their local environment?
- P2: What are the basic areas posing a threat to security in their local environment?
- P3: How are the basic elements of the local security system assessed?
- P4: What and to what degree determines the sense of local communality?
- P5: What are the perspectives for changes in the sense of security on the part of the members of the local community?

Furthermore, the following hypotheses were assumed:

- H1: Due to a relatively low criminality rate in the region, security of the members of the local communities is mainly determined by the factors of economic nature.
- H2: There are considerable differences in the sense of security between the inhabitants of countryside and municipal areas.
- H3: The participation in local elections has a bearing on the perception of security in the local environment.

The study was conducted between November 2017 and February 2018. For this purpose, survey method was applied (a questionnaire) with the elements of field research (observation, free-form interview). This triangulation allowed for taking heed of these elements which were skipped in the prepared survey as well as for capturing the essence of particular poviats. It was third-year students of internal security major that dealt with the acquisition of empirical data during their classes pertaining to security of local communities. Then, the data was aggregated and subject to statistical analysis. As hinted upon above, this is pilot research. Due to the impossibility of ensuring complete reliability of the process of the acquisition of empirical data, the results obtained cannot justify drawing apodictically true conclusions. However, taking into the number of forms obtained and filled in (about 4,4 thousand), even potential and minute errors may be subsumed under the category of a statistical error.

In the present paper, what was presented were only introductory and (additionally) fragmentary results of the study conducted. However, due to the formal restrictions, related on the one hand to the size of the text publishable; and to the wide-scope nature of the study in question on the other, what is then presented below is a mere fraction of the much broader analysis. Still, the results presented are, in the present authors’ opinion, highly informative anyhow.

4. Results and discussion

The sense of security of the people being members of a given local community is a function of many various factors. Sometimes in subject literature, the local level of security is erroneously identified with security and public order; and thus only classical elements of the state's security system are considered. At the same time, one fails to take into account so-called soft security, the determinants of which play a vital role in ensuring well-being to the members of local communities. Therefore, they significantly fill in the gap in the framework of the indicators of security on the local level.

On the basis of the obtained results, we can make a claim that the inhabitants of local communities of Kuyavian-Pomeranian voivodeship feel rather secure in their habitat. When presented with 1-10 scale to assess the said sense of security, the majority of the respondents picked 8 – as much as 22,4% of them (see: fig. 3).

Still, it does not alter the fact that 19,4% of the respondents, presented after all with the same scale, judged their security in the place they inhabit as lying somewhere in the spectrum between 1 and 5. It means that 1/5 of the respondents, while making an assessment in the studied area, focused on threats rather than on the absence thereof. However, once we take into consideration the fact that almost 10% of this group of respondents in this case opted for value 5, there are less than 10% of persons left who really feel insecure in their habitat. Opting for 5 in thus modeled scale should be construed as the assessment “I feel neither secure, nor insecure”.

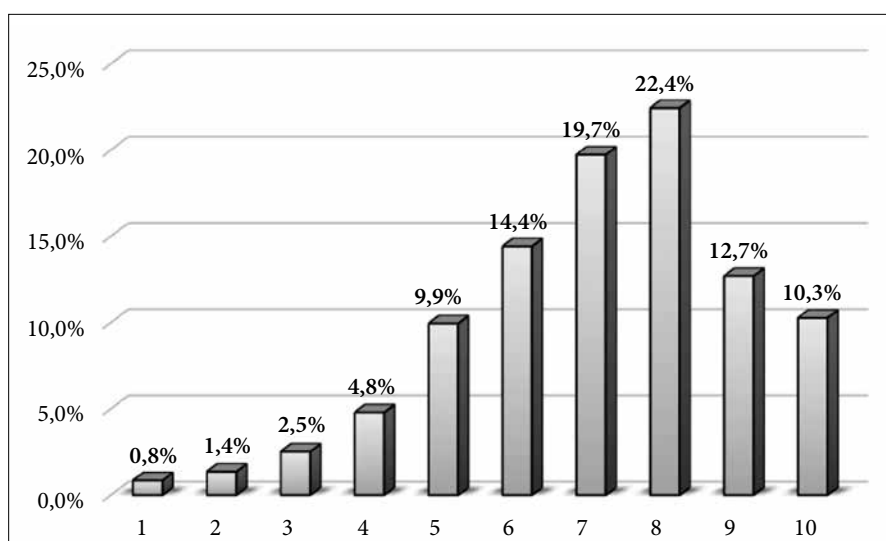


Fig. 3. Sense of security of the inhabitants of Kuyavian-Pomeranian voivodeship (in % of all the choices on 1-10 scale)

Source: our own work on the basis of the results obtained by studying the respondents.

Much more respondents assessed their sense of security within 6-8 spectrum. Overall, the answers of 56,5% of the respondents fell into this range. It means that the majority of the respondents who answered this very question feel relatively safe in their habitat. Therefore, in their assessment in this area, they mainly consider the advantages resulting from the fact of living with and keeping the company of a given community, rather than any potential dangers stemming therefrom.

In the cited study, what was subject to the assessment made by the inhabitants of Kuyavian-Pomeranian voivodeship was the functioning of particular (selected) elements of local communities security systems. One took into consideration those constituents of the system the inhabitants dealt with on a daily basis. They were also assessed by the respondents. Among all the elements assessed, it was the operations of fire fighters that were evaluated as best. The vast majority of the respondents assessed this group within the spectrum 8-10. Overall, 70% of all the respondents thus evaluated the fire department (see: fig. 4).

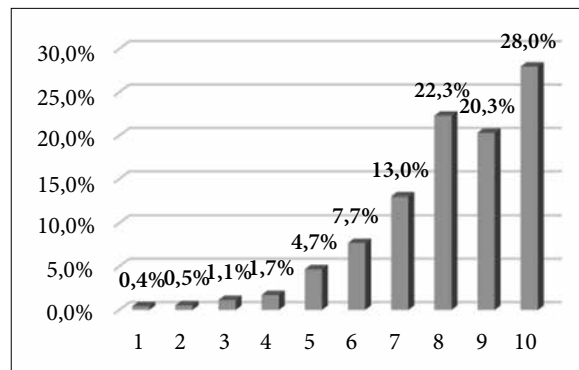


Fig. 4. Assessment of the functioning of the fire brigade by the inhabitants of Kuyavian-Pomeranian voivodeship (in% of all the choices on 1-10 scale)

Source: our own work on the basis of the results obtained by studying the respondents.

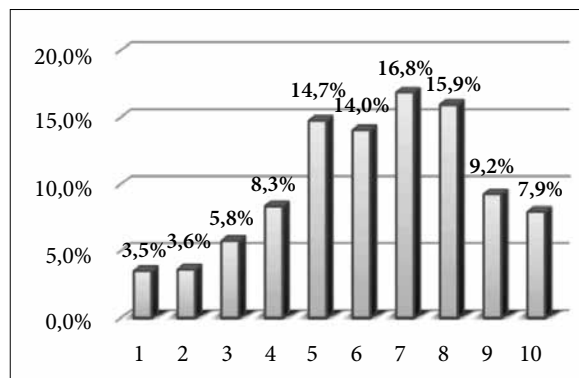


Fig. 5. Assessment of the functioning of the police by the inhabitants of Kuyavian-Pomeranian voivodeship (in% of all the choices on scale 1-10)

Source: our own work on the basis of the results obtained by studying the respondents.

Such a result is little wonder. The quality of services provided by fire brigades have been widely recognized and relied on by the society for years (GUS, 2015). The work that fire-fighters are doing is mainly a helping hand lend to a society as a whole, which applies not only in the case of fire but also in other critical situations. Volunteer fire stations oftentimes host a variety of events for local communities. Many inhabitants actively participate therein. The participation in the associations of volunteer fire department is often regarded as a tradition; or even – a duty. Fire department is not perceived as an oppressive constituent of the security system, which accounts for it being highly regarded. In this context, it should be underlined that both national fire service and volunteer fire department constitute one of the most important elements of security for local communities both during critical situations, natural disasters, situations related to technical, and especially medical, rescue. Furthermore, fire fighters are thought of as exerting direct influence on security on the local level.

What is slightly worse assessed is the second most important service providing security to the inhabitants of local communities that is the police (see: fig. 5). It would be an overstatement to say that the respondents assessed the police extremely negatively; however, the assessment in this case was conspicuously worse than in the case of fire department. In the distribution of the assessments within 1-10 scale, there are three clusters noticeable in this case. The first one occurs within the spectrum 1-4, into which 21% of the respondents' answers fall. These assessments should be regarded as relatively negative and it must be conceded that they are rather numerous. What can here serve as a viable explanation is the fact that among the respondents there was a large of number of young people, ranging between 18 and 24 years old. These people follow the trend of denying traditional norms and therefore, they treat the police as an oppressive service, thus perpetuating negative opinions on the malfunctioning of law enforcement agencies.

The most numerous group of respondents fell into 5-8 spectrum; overall there were 61% of the respondents within this range. The remaining part thereof; that is slightly more than 17%, gave the police the highest scores. To summarize, it must be stated that the inhabitants of Kuyavian-Pomeranian voivodeship assess the functioning of the police slightly above the average. However, there is a significant part of the inhabitants of local communities that is not satisfied with the workings of this group.

It would be worthwhile to juxtapose the above data with the results of all-Polish research. What stems from the latter is that in 2016, 72% of the respondents highly appraised the police, and 16,5% evaluated it negatively. In 2017, over three fifths of Poles (strictly speaking, 62%, which from March dropped by 8 percentage points) evaluate it positively; and one fourth (25%, an increase by 9 percentage points) criticize it (CBOS, 2017). One of the most significant constituents of the security system of local communities are local and regional self-government authorities. For it is these (as noted above) that are to a large extent responsible for the majority of important areas of security and they, being empowered by law, diligently discharge their duty to reduce the potential of local dangers. The assessment of local government is always essentially erroneous. The respondents, while making the said assessment, are presumably driven by their respective personal sympathies towards the representatives of a given local government. Still, it is worthwhile to take a closer look at how the members of local communities assess the institutions which are directly responsible for organizing the system of local security (see: fig. 6).

Analysis of the results of the conducted study indicated that within the spectrum of lowest scores, the highest authorities of local government (head of a commune, mayor, president of a city) are evaluated worse than previously-described police. It was as many as 25% of the respondents that chose the scores within 1-4 range, which is 4 percentage points more than in the case of the appraisal of the police. Also, the two highest scores; that is, 9 and 10, were given by a significantly smaller proportion of the respondents. It was only 10% of them that picked the above scores.

The reason for such an assessment is ambiguous. During the interviews, with the interviews being conducted parallel to surveys, the inhabitants of local communities recalled (the above-mentioned) political antipathies. This sort of attitude is (especially in the countryside) quite common. Even in the case when the authorities demonstrate some considerable initiative or when they attract some external funds to finance their investments, it still does not necessarily have a bearing on their being positively perceived by the inhabitants.

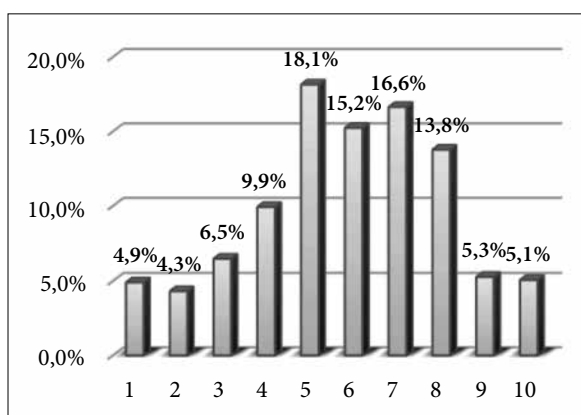


Fig. 6. Assessment of the functioning of the highest bodies of local government by the inhabitants of Kuyavian-Pomeranian voivodeship (in % of all the choices on scale 1-10)

Source: our own work on the basis of the results obtained by studying the respondents.

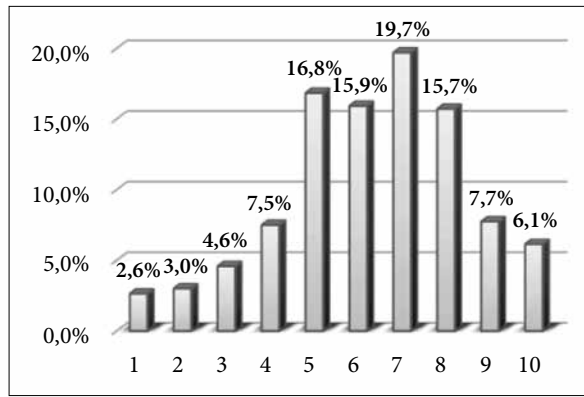


Fig. 7. Assessment of the functioning of school as an element of local community security system by the inhabitants of Kuyavian-Pomeranian voivodeship (in % of all the choices on scale 1-10)

Source: our own work on the basis of the results obtained by studying the respondents.

One of the key conditions for maintaining a high level of local security is the quality of education system, including education on security. In this respect, school is becoming a significant element of local communities security system. However, the role of school in this system is still more important. After all, school, for the most part of the day, becomes a guardian of children and youth. Ensuring security to one's descendants is an important determinant of the quality of life and of the efficiency of parents' labour.

The assessment of school, perceived as a constituent of local communities security system, by the inhabitants of Kuyavian-Pomeranian voivodeship remains at a relatively high level (see: fig. 7). This institution was evaluated as better than authorities of local government and police. Over 17,5% of the respondents' choices fell within the range of the weakest scores, that is within 1-4, which is significantly less than in the case of the previously-described institutions. Taking into consideration the fact that a significant part of the respondents were young people, oftentimes being still beneficiaries of the education system, such assessments are to be regarded as highly positive. In case of the highest scores – 9-10 – the percentage of choices falling within this range was higher than in the case of the assessment of local government authorities; yet, lower than in the case of the police. Overall, almost 14% of all the respondents gave highest scores.

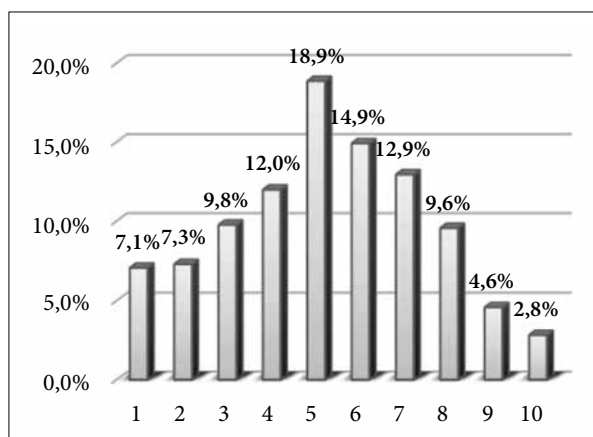


Fig 8. Assessment of the functioning of health care by the inhabitants of Kuyavian-Pomeranian voivodeship (in % of all the choices on scale 1-10)

Source: our own work on the basis of the results obtained by studying the respondents.

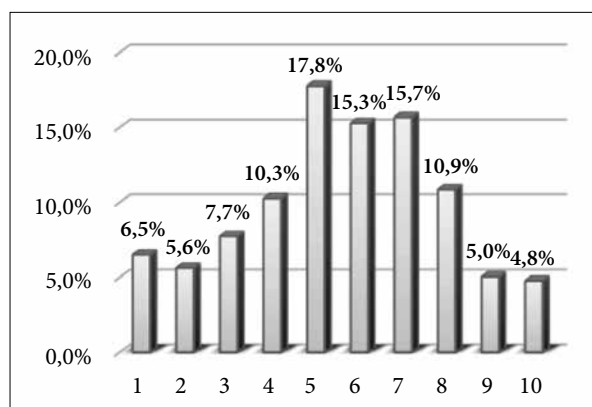


Fig. 9. Assessment of the functioning of local media by the inhabitants of Kuyavian-Pomeranian voivodeship (in % of all the choices on scale 1-10)

Source: our own work on the basis of the results obtained by studying the respondents

Health care has been for many years a target of, on the one hand, complaints by the society; and on the other hand, of desperate attempts at reforms initiated by successive governments. So far, one has not managed to work out in Poland such a model of health care that would fully satisfy social needs and which would not be at the same time a burden for the national budget. However, what can come as a surprise is the fact that given such overgrown welfare payments, health care is virtually forgotten. Hence, it is ill, elderly or disabled people that are deprived of the possibility of dignified life, treatment or rehabilitation.

Health care is another key element of local communities security system. It is on its conditions (including the competences of and the proper number of employees, technical level of the equipment used therein) that our health – and oftentimes even people’s lives – mainly depends. Without a proper quality of the service in question, the main goal of the security system would be under threat, the goal being assurance of the endurance of the main reference object of security, that is of an individual person. Hence, what is in danger is the persistence of local community, of which an individual person is the ‘most primitive constituent’.

The inhabitants of local communities of Kuyavian-Pomeranian voivodeship assessed the quality of health care moderately (see: fig. 8). The majority of the respondents gave it the score of 5 (on 1-10 scale) – this applied to as many as 19% of them. Over 36% of them submitted the score lower than 5. There were relatively few highest scores; that is ranging between 9 and 10 – slightly over 7%. The picture emerging from this data shows that in the eyes of the respondents, the quality of health care is barely average, which actually even leans towards a negative assessment. After all, there were more people submitting the scores within 1-5 (about 55% of the respondents) than within the range 6-10 (about 45%).

Certainly, one would be unwarranted in doing this sort of generalizing, especially having considered the fact that health care in Poland is underfinanced and taking into account the opinions expressed on this issue while the survey was being conducted, the assessment made by the inhabitants of local communities of Kuyavian-Pomeranian voivodeship is sufficiently good. The quality of health care is differentially assessed in the countryside and in cities. In Kuyavian-Pomeranian voivodeship, there were, in 2016, 612 health care facilities in cities; whereas in village areas, there were 222 of them (GUS, 2017, p. 236). Moreover, it was not specified whether what was meant was a general practitioner or specialist medical examinations. The age of the respondents in this respect was not irrelevant either.

The data stemming from the conducted study may be juxtaposed with all-Polish information from, unfortunately, 2016. Almost each fourth respondent (23%) is satisfied with the functioning of health care, whereas three fourths of them (74%) are dissatisfied. After a rather sharp increase in the satisfaction derived from the functioning of health care, with the said increase having been recorded two years ago; in this year we rather witnessed more severe criticism of the public service in question. A percentage of the people satisfied with its

workings dropped (by 5 percentage points), whereas the percentage of those dissatisfied increased (by 6 percentage points) (CBOS, 2016, p. 3).

The next element of local communities security system being subject to the assessment made by the inhabitants of various parts of Kuyavian-Pomeranian voivodeship was local media. Their role in the process of ensuring security is also vital. Most of all, they are a medium of information – among others – on threats and potential dangers. Nowadays, when reality changes dynamically, the promptness and reliability of received information cannot be overestimated. In order to effectively manage security, local security inclusive, one should ensure practically immediate access to a stream of information. It is precisely media and thus also social media (for instance, local web portals) that play a key role therein. Media (also referred to as ‘fourth power’) are not only a vehicle for information. They also shape opinions and to some degree the attitudes on the part of their receivers. Furthermore, media indubitably constitute one of the pillars of civil society. The assessment of local media (see: fig. 9) among the respondents was high if we assume that the score of 5 on the given scale was an average score. After all, as many as 17,8% of the respondents gave media the said score of 5 and 41,9% of the people under study assessed media within the range of 6-8. As far as extreme assessments go, their respective counts do not dramatically differ: the media is assessed as very good by 4,8% of the respondents; and as very bad by 6,5% of them.

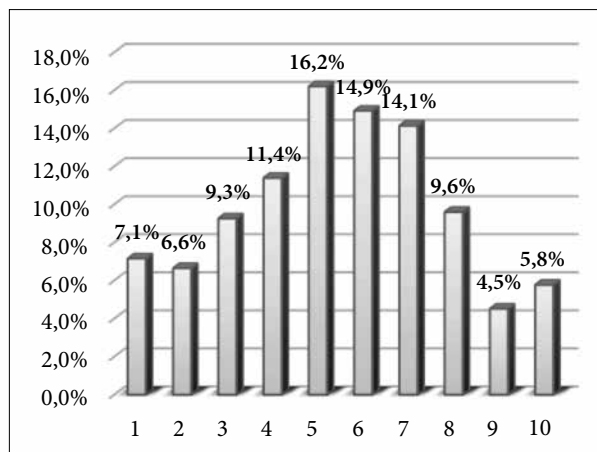


Fig. 10. Level of satisfaction with the functioning of non-governmental organizations in Kuyavian-Pomeranian voivodeship (in % of the all the choices on 1-10 scale)

Source: our own work on the basis of the results obtained by studying the respondents.

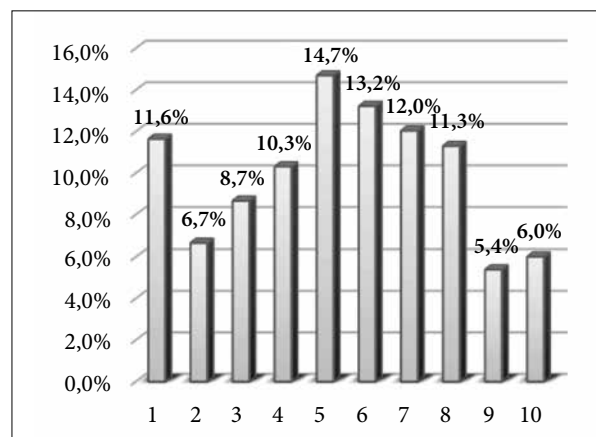


Fig. 11. The influence of the Church on the sense of local communality (in % of all the choices on 1-10 scale)

Source: our own work on the basis of the results obtained by studying the respondents.

The authors of the present paper came to the conclusion that an important element of the social environment which contributes to the sense of security is non-governmental organizations. Establishing non-governmental organization is always an expression of will of some group of people, with the group being centered around a specific problem or a need. Subject literature enumerates many functions normally attributed to non-governmental organizations. What is meant by 'a function of non-governmental organization' is its mission or role for which the organization in question was appointed in the first place. One and the same organization may successfully perform a few distinct roles. From the perspective of security, what plays an important role are both the organizations conducive to building local bonds; for instance, the associations of historical profile, and the ones oriented towards taking actions in the realm of security such as "Caritas", PCK [Polish Red Cross], WOPR [Volunteer Water Rescue Service] or OSP [Volunteer Fire Department]. It follows from the conducted study that the level of satisfaction with the activities of all sorts of non-governmental organizations is estimated as moderately good or relatively positively. On the other hand, zooming in on extreme scores again, it must be stated that negative opinions prevail - 7,1% (see: fig. 10). Taking into account whether the respondents participate in the elections, and thus they meet at least one of the minimal criteria of political involvement, non-governmental organizations are assessed in much worse a fashion by the respondents not taking part in the elections; that is, by as many as 10,3% of them; whereas it is only 4,5% thereof that assess the said organizations positively. The majority of the respondents gave the non-governmental organizations the scores ranging from 5 to 8, and this group constituted 54,9% of the overall number of respondents.

Very much alike as in the case of non-governmental organizations, the authors came to the conclusion that the involvement on the part the Church in the actions promoting security amount to a significant indicator. What was mainly at stake is the operations of Church organizations for the sake of social security. In this study, what was clearly delineated was the bad perception of the Church as an institution. Moreover, it was men that regarded Church more negatively than women did; and what is curious is that there were no significant differences in assessments between village areas and cities. In case of the most extreme negative opinions, which were selected by 11,6% of the overall number of respondents, the distribution of the choices in question between subjects inhabiting cities and village areas was as follows: 11,9 % of the respondents from cities and 11,2% of the respondents from village areas picked these extremely negative assessments under consideration (see: fig. 11). Similarly, when it comes to the most positive assessments, which were, incidentally, selected less frequently than corresponding positive ones, the differences between the respondents from cities and from village areas were only minute. 6% of the overall number of the respondents picking these extremely positive assessments was distributed between the respondents from cities and from village areas in the following manner: 6,7% of the respondents from village areas and 5,2% of the respondents from cities picked the extreme positive assessments under consideration. The negative assessments were made more frequently by men, which coincides with all-Polish tendency; whereas the positive scores were given by the society regarded as traditional, which basically implies the inhabitants of village areas.

Due to the space limits of the present paper, we cannot describe the results of the studies with respect to all possible variables (gender, habitat, participation in elections or age). That is why, the authors will merely pay attention to a few selected significant differences in the assessment of particular areas of the security system, with a more in-depth analysis dedicated to the more inquisitive reader, by putting all the relevant data in table 1.

The basic conclusion emerging after the analysis of the data included in table 1 is that, on average, there are no considerable differences in the distribution of the assessment of the elements of the security system under scrutiny once we consider the so-called respondents' particulars. It does not imply that it is impossible to point to some cases wherein the said differences are more conspicuous. The most significant (in the authors' opinion) differences in particular assessment on the 1-10 scale were marked in gray; and in one case – in red.

Tab. 1. Assessment of the functioning of the selected elements of the security system on the local level made by the inhabitants of Kuyavian-Pomeranian voivodeship – cross-sectional analysis (in% of all the choices on 1-10 scale)

The area assessed	Section	Scale of scores									
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Sense of security	Women	0,8	1,1	2,3	5,0	11,6	14,4	20,4	22,4	11,8	8,7
	Men	0,8	1,7	2,7	4,5	8,0	14,4	18,9	22,4	13,7	12,2
	Cities	1,0	1,2	2,6	5,2	20,4	14,8	17,5	18,2	10,0	7,4
	Village areas	0,6	1,6	2,3	4,2	9,3	10,8	13,1	25,9	16,9	14,3
	Participation in elections	0,8	1,2	2,0	4,5	9,2	14,9	20,6	23,4	12,6	9,8
	Non-participation in elections	0,9	1,5	3,1	5,2	10,8	13,8	18,7	21,3	12,8	10,8
Fire department	Women	0,3	0,6	1,2	1,7	4,8	7,6	13,2	23,4	19,7	27,1
	Men	0,5	0,5	1,0	1,7	4,5	7,8	12,9	21,0	21,0	29,0
	Cities	0,4	0,6	1,0	1,4	5,1	9,2	13,8	23,1	20,5	24,6
	Village areas	0,5	0,5	1,4	2,3	4,0	5,4	11,7	21,1	20,1	33,1
	Participation in elections	0,4	0,4	1,0	1,8	4,0	6,9	11,7	22,5	20,9	30,1
	Non-participation in elections	0,4	0,6	1,3	1,6	5,5	8,7	14,6	22,0	19,6	25,4
Police	Women	1,9	3,3	5,3	8,1	15,3	13,6	17,1	16,4	10,0	8,7
	Men	5,4	4,0	6,3	8,6	14,1	14,5	16,5	15,3	8,3	7,0
	Cities	3,1	3,6	6,2	8,5	14,5	15,1	17,1	15,8	8,9	7,0
	Village areas	4,2	3,6	5,0	8,0	15,1	12,4	16,5	16,0	9,8	9,4
	Participation in elections	2,0	2,6	5,1	7,7	14,8	14,2	17,1	17,4	10,4	8,5
	Non-participation in elections	5,3	4,8	6,5	9,1	14,7	13,8	16,5	14,2	7,8	7,3
Head of a Commune/Mayor/President	Women	4,9	4,2	5,9	9,8	17,8	15,6	17,0	14,0	5,8	4,8
	Men	4,9	4,4	7,2	10,1	18,5	14,8	16,2	13,6	4,6	5,4
	Cities	4,5	3,6	6,6	9,7	18,4	16,0	17,1	13,9	5,0	5,0
	Village areas	5,5	5,4	6,3	10,2	17,7	14,1	16,0	13,5	5,6	5,2
	Participation in elections	3,1	3,6	5,4	10,8	17,7	16,0	17,2	14,9	5,4	5,9
	Non-participation in elections	7,1	5,1	7,8	8,9	18,7	14,4	16,0	12,5	5,1	4,1
School (the level of education for enhancing security)	Women	2,6	3,0	4,0	7,4	16,0	15,7	20,4	15,6	8,9	6,2
	Men	2,6	3,0	5,2	7,6	17,8	16,2	18,9	15,8	6,4	6,1
	Cities	2,2	3,3	4,5	7,8	16,7	17,5	19,0	14,9	8,2	5,7
	Village areas	3,3	2,6	4,7	7,1	17,0	13,5	20,8	17,0	7,1	6,9
	Participation in elections	1,8	2,3	4,2	7,2	16,0	16,6	20,5	16,6	8,4	6,2
	Non-participation in elections	3,6	3,8	5,1	7,9	17,8	15,1	18,7	14,7	7,0	6,1
Health care (the quality of its services)	Women	0,3	0,6	1,2	1,7	4,8	7,6	13,2	23,4	19,7	27,1
	Men	7,4	7,2	10,2	11,8	18,2	15,7	12,8	8,9	4,9	2,7
	Cities	7,1	7,1	10,3	11,8	19,1	16,3	12,7	8,9	4,1	2,5
	Village areas	7,1	7,7	8,9	12,3	18,4	12,8	13,3	10,5	5,3	3,4
	Participation in elections	5,9	6,9	10,1	12,1	17,9	15,4	13,5	10,2	4,8	2,7
	Non-participation in elections	8,5	7,8	9,3	11,8	20,0	14,4	12,3	8,8	4,3	2,9
Satisfaction with the functioning of local government authorities	Women	6,8	7,4	9,4	12,2	19,4	14,3	13,1	10,1	4,3	2,9
	Men	5,4	5,9	8,6	13,0	20,1	15,7	15,1	9,4	3,5	2,8
	Cities	4,6	5,3	9,2	13,2	21,4	16,6	13,9	8,8	3,6	2,8
	Village areas	5,5	5,3	9,6	12,2	19,1	14,4	16,7	9,4	4,2	3,3
	Participation in elections	3,1	4,2	8,4	11,8	19,9	17,3	16,4	10,6	4,3	3,4
	Non-participation in elections	7,0	6,6	10,5	14,0	21,1	13,9	13,4	7,2	3,3	2,6

Local media	Women	4,9	4,9	5,9	7,9	13,7	13,7	16,1	15,0	8,2	9,3
	Men	6,8	5,8	8,4	11,5	17,0	15,0	14,7	11,2	4,9	4,5
	Cities	4,6	4,7	7,6	10,2	18,1	16,0	16,5	11,2	5,7	5,0
	Village areas	9,5	7,1	8,0	10,4	17,2	14,1	14,4	10,3	4,0	4,5
	Participation in elections	5,4	4,8	6,8	10,4	18,0	16,3	16,6	11,9	4,8	4,7
	Non-participation in elections	7,8	6,7	8,9	10,1	17,5	14,1	14,5	9,7	5,4	4,9
Satisfaction with the functioning of non-governmental organizations (associations, the farmers' wives' association, LGD [Local Action Group])	Women	7,2	7,7	11,8	14,1	19,1	14,1	11,6	9,0	3,1	1,8
	Men	7,8	6,4	9,1	12,3	16,8	15,8	13,1	8,3	4,4	5,7
	Cities	6,6	7,4	9,4	12,1	17,7	15,1	14,1	8,6	4,4	4,1
	Village areas	8,0	5,5	9,0	10,2	13,8	14,7	14,2	11,2	4,7	8,3
	Participation in elections	4,5	5,5	8,1	11,3	16,4	15,6	16,0	10,9	5,0	6,1
	Non-participation in elections	10,3	8,0	10,6	11,5	15,9	14,1	11,9	8,1	3,9	5,4
The influence of the Church on the sense of communality	Women	4,5	4,8	10,1	12,7	20,8	15,7	15,0	8,7	4,1	3,2
	Men	20,0	8,9	7,0	7,5	7,5	10,3	8,6	14,3	6,9	9,3
	Cities	11,9	6,6	9,3	11,0	14,8	13,4	12,1	10,3	5,1	5,4
	Village areas	11,2	6,8	7,7	9,2	14,6	13,0	11,9	12,8	5,8	6,9
	Participation in elections	8,6	5,9	8,1	10,4	14,9	14,0	12,9	12,5	5,9	6,7
	Non-participation in elections	15,2	7,6	9,3	10,2	14,5	12,3	11,0	9,9	4,8	5,2
Estimation of prospective changes in your (<i>qua</i> member of a local community) sense of security in the forthcoming year	Women	1,7	3,4	5,3	8,0	22,5	16,5	18,3	14,4	4,4	3,9
	Men	2,2	2,5	5,0	8,3	21,6	16,9	19,8	13,1	5,1	4,2
	Cities	1,6	3,2	6,2	9,2	23,2	17,3	18,5	11,8	3,9	3,6
	Village areas	2,6	2,6	3,7	6,5	20,3	15,9	19,8	16,9	6,0	4,6
	Participation in elections	0,8	2,3	4,6	7,2	20,3	17,5	20,9	14,9	5,8	4,6
	Non-participation in elections	3,4	3,7	5,9	9,3	24,2	15,8	16,8	12,4	3,5	3,3

Source: our own work on the basis of the results obtained by studying the respondents.

When assessing sense of security by the inhabitants of local communities of Kuyavian-Pomeranian voivodeship, there occurred some differences when it comes to the highest scores. It was men, rather than women, who opted for such a high sense of security, which comes as no surprise. Furthermore, the inhabitants of village areas felt more secure than city dwellers. Fire department was assessed much better by the inhabitants of village areas as well as by the persons taking part in the last local government elections.

When it comes to assessing the police, there were the sharpest differences occurring in case of the lowest scores granted thereto with regard to the respondents' gender, wherein it was men that gave a larger number of negative scores than women did. In case of the highest scores given to the police, the inhabitants of local communities participating in the elections assessed the police much better.

Assessments of a head of a commune/mayor/president radically differed within the range of the lowest scores in case of the people not having voted in the last local government elections. This subset of respondents evaluated their authorities much worse. The most notable diversities occur in the assessment of health care as an element of the local security system. Within the range of the lowest scores (1-5) the above area of security is assessed more negatively by men than by women. Overall, it was 55% of all male respondents that gave scores falling into 1-5 range, whereas only 9% of all female respondents made corresponding assessments. It means that it was women that made the majority of positive assessments. As many as 70% of the overall number of women granted the scores within 7-10 range, as compared with 16,5% of all the male respondents assessing health care. How to account for this difference? Perhaps women more frequently become beneficiaries of health care (due to the fact – among others – of their guardianship over children), whereas men made their respective assessments based on hearsay.

The dissatisfaction with the functioning of local authorities was expressed (within the range of the lowest

scores) by a greater number of women than that of men. Also, the respondents not participating in the local government elections were dissatisfied with local authorities to a greater degree. The assessment of local media was slightly better in case of women, who definitely gave a large number of higher scores as compared with men. On the other hand, the respondents participating in the local government elections gave media significantly smaller number of the lowest scores.

Within the higher scores possible (10), it was rather men and village-area dwellers that expressed their satisfaction with the functioning of non-governmental organizations. On the other hand, the people not participating in the last local government elections gave non-governmental organization a greater number of the lowest scores (ranging with 1-3). There were significant differences when it comes to the assessment of the influence of the Church on the sense of local communality. It was men who gave significantly larger number of negative scores to this institution (20%) rather than women (4,5%). When it comes to the score of 5 (which is to be considered the middle point of the scale), considerable differences can be observed. In case of the score of 5, 20% of the overall number of women went for this evaluation and only as many as 7,5% of all the men subject to analysis. Finally, within the range 9-10 fell a greater number of assessments made by women than men, both evaluating the influence of the Church. This distribution demonstrates that in case of men, what is observable is a considerable polarization of the assessment of the said institution.

Conclusions

The sense of security of the inhabitants of local communities of Kuyavian-Pomeranian voivodeship was at a relatively high level. The great majority of the respondents assessed it (on 1-10 scale) at the level of 6 or more. The sense of security is a function of many factors and is nothing but a derivative of a complex system of local security sketched in the first section of the present study. Among the selected elements of the system in question, the respondents assessed the functioning of fire department as best. What was assessed as definitely the worst was the functioning of health care and of non-governmental organizations. What came as a sort of surprise are relatively poor (given the allegiance to tradition exhibited by Polish society) scores given to the influence of the Church on the sense of local communality, with a relatively frequent scores falling in 1-4 range.

On the basis of the above-stated fragmentary results of the study, it is worthwhile to refer again to hypotheses 2 and 3 formulated in the introduction. When it comes to the former, there are genuine differences in the sense of security city dwellers and inhabitants of village areas. The respondents inhabiting village areas assessed their respective security much better than city dwellers. However, as far as particular constituents of local security system go, the differences were not so significant. Still, the estimation of prospective changes in the sense of security was again more hopeful (believing in greater security in the future) in case of the inhabitants of village areas. sense of security.

When it comes to hypothesis 3, which assumes that the participation in elections influences one's perception of security in the local environment, the results of the study were slightly different. The authors assume that the very act of voting is a symbol of a conscious perception of one's own local community; and hence, it was believed that the respondents who took part in the last local government elections are bound to regard both their sense of security and particular constituents of local security system higher, compared to the respondents who refrained from the participation in the elections. However, this hypothesis was to a large degree falsified. Actually, the results of the study do not indicate any significant differences in the sense of security of these two distinct groups. What is noticeable is that the persons not participating in the last local government elections – and hence, not taking an elementary action for the sake of the administration of local community – evaluate the administration in question as worse as compared to the people that did take part in the elections. The similar situation applies when it comes to the assessment of the remaining constituents of local security system, especially within the range of lowest scores. It might be conjectured that this results from some general assessment of the state, which is also reflected in the perception of community-based organization on the local tier.

The respondents were asked to make an assessment of prospective changes in the sense of security of local communities. What is interesting is that the majority of them gave in this respect the scores ranging from 5 to 8, which amounts to 71,6% of all the respondents; which basically demonstrates that optimists prevail over pessimists (see: fig. 12). These results closely approximate the estimation of the sense of security within 5-8 range. Overall, this kind of response was then recorded in 66,4% of all the subjects (see: fig. 3).

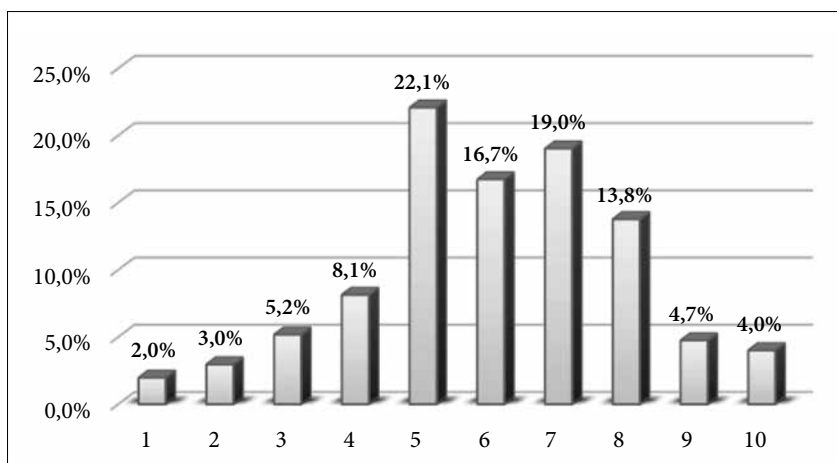


Fig. 12. Assessment of prospective changes in the sense of security of the inhabitants of local communities of Kuyavian-Pomeranian voivodeship (in % of all the choices on 1-10 scale)

Source: our own work on the basis of the results obtained by studying the respondents.

Therefore, it should be claimed that the inhabitants of local communities of Kuyavian-Pomeranian voivodeship assess the prospects for the changes in question moderately, with a slight inclination towards more-than-average scores. The prospective changes in the sense of security are evaluated more hopefully by the inhabitants of village areas than by city dwellers. 27,5% of the respondents inhabiting village areas' responses fell into the range of the highest scores (7-10). At the same time, only 19% of city dwellers estimated the said prospects that high (7-10). A slightly larger number of the lowest scores in this respect was given by the respondents not taking part in the local government elections.

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