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The Role of Territorial Self-Government in Ensuring Personal Security of Citizens in Poland

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Abstract:

Purpose: The aim of the conducted research was to define the role of local government in ensuring the personal security of citizens in Poland.

Design/Methodology/Approach: The analysis of determining the role of local government in ensuring public safety for citizens is based on a critical analysis of literature, analysis of documents and legal acts.

Findings: The state is responsible for ensuring the personal security of its citizens. This particular duty can be performed in different ways. In states which respect and enforce the principles of local democracy these responsibilities are shared by the institutions of local, mainly municipal, self-government. We shouldn't forget that security is a fundamental and primary human need. This paper presents various forms of direct and indirect operation of individual local government units in Poland in protecting security and public order.

Practical Implications: The presented research results are important for public authorities. They allow for better design of security systems. The level of involvement of public self government in matters of citizen security depends on the conditions of democracy and the scale of decentralization of public obligations. The effectiveness of the state's activities aimed at ensuring the personal security of its citizens, depends on the proper identification of needs in this respect.

Originality/value: The article presents the directions of improving the management of public security highlighting the need for continuous monitoring of citizens' expectations in terms of security, measures to fulfill the expectations to ensure high efficiency, quality and innovation.

Keywords: Public security, security of citizens, territorial self-government in Poland, local security.

JEL Code: N7, N70, R41, R42.

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1. Introduction

The creation of the most optimal safe human existence system in the natural environment is the subject of research by sociologists, representatives of legal sciences and the new scientific discipline, security sciences. The authors of this article undertake an attempt at an interdisciplinary approach to the studied problem. The Polish scientific literature is dominated by perception of the subject through the prism of administrative legal regulations. A very important aspect of social activity at the local level and the current problem of atomization of modern society is overlooked.

The issue of the different ways of managing security and public order, (having intentionally adopted a methodological simplification), comes down to two basic organizational solutions: centralist and decentralist (Misiuk, 1996). The underlying assumption delivers two fundamental model solutions in terms of organization and legal arrangements. This is, however, just a starting point for our considerations, since contemporary reality (in its entirety) lies between these two extremes. Managing security and public order is subject to continuous changes and transformations brought about by the factors classified below. It is our intention to determine the existing objective and subjective tendencies in the development of systems protecting public order and citizen security in Poland and in the wider European context. The factors which influence the nature and changes of the internal security model in a given state are as follows:

- A. State political and legal system (democratic or totalitarian).
- B. Social control of police operations. The role of local authorities in the protection of public order.
- C. Crime expansion in terms of quality and quantity.
- D. Changes in the scope of duties of police forces, resulting from technological and social progress.
- E. Historical conditions.

Thus, a certain proposal for classifying security and public order systems can be made by:

1. Single entity systems, which include the following:
 - a) governmental (depending on the characteristics of a given state, it is a less or more decentralized, or centralized system, with a certain involvement of local authorities and the social factor);
 - b) self-governing (historical form);
 - c) state (extremely centralized, occurring mainly in states with non-democratic governments).
2. Multiple entity systems:
 - a) systems with the centralist option – they assume the existence of many different types of police forces, differing in origin (including self-

government ones), subordination, chain of command, range of territorial influence, competence and functionality);

- b) systems with the decentralist option (Misiuk, Letkiewicz and Sokołowski, 2009).

At the turn of the 20th century, in particular, the involvement of the civic factor in the form of local authorities at various levels in the functioning of police forces played an essential role in the operation of efficient and, at the same time, legitimate systems for protecting public order and combating crime. It was recognized as the best evidence of how far democracy and civil society developed in a given country. Some states have even adopted quite radical systemic and organizational solutions. Local authorities played a hegemonic role in protecting public order and security, with the limited involvement of the state, and the approved system was totally decentralized. On the one hand, it was an indication of the predominance of liberal views on society and public life (the “free commune” theory), whilst on the other hand, it reflected the distinctive development paths of individual European states.

The development of human civilization, technological and economic progress and, at the same time, the antagonization of social relations and the rise of common crime required the increased professionalization of the police forces in order to ensure public order. Thus, over time, the dominance of local police has become an anachronism. A slow process of moving police issues under the supervision of the state began. This was taking place in different ways, depending on tradition, the political and legal system in a given state and the role of local government in exercising administrative powers locally. Such a transformation resulted in establishing two types of systems that had significant implications in terms of the organization of police forces. The first type of local government developed in Anglo-Saxon countries and allowed for the administering of public affairs by the citizens directly through the bodies they had elected. The second type evolved in the states of Continental Europe, where residents influenced public matters by cooperating with civil servants. There are three categories to consider in terms of the scope of the field of security:

- the security of an individual;
- national (state) security;
- international (transnational) security.

In many statements given by renowned specialists these three planes are treated as separate and independent of each other. Assuming, though with some reservations, that we are still using the humanistic approach which claims that a human being is the greatest value and, as Plato said, humans are the measure of all things, these three levels need to be treated as complementary. Striving to provide security in the individual, national and even wider sense, imposes the following question: are we able to determine rationally the criteria for the lack of threat and potential for

leading a normal existence? As in other areas of life, such attempts turned out to be unsuccessful. Some tried to assume a priori seemingly objective conditions of the safe functioning of human beings and social structures. However, the subjective circumstances of changing human needs have not been taken into consideration. As early as in the 1960s, the behavioral movement became a leading tendency in human resources management. Its main representative was Maslow, who, drawing up the hierarchy of human needs, put the need for self- fulfillment at the very top (Maslow, 2006).

Figure 1. *Hierarchy of human needs by Maslow*



Source: A. Maslow, *Motywacja i osobowość*, pp. 62–76.

The sense of human personal security is a term used quite commonly and occurs in various classifications of the types of security. One of them is a division into global, national and local security while some authors also add regional security. The premise for this schematic breakdown is the territorial factor. Nonetheless, it is hard to put all the listed types (kinds) of security into a single set. They are not homogenous and they differ in nature. The considerations ought to be focused on the analysis of the social micro system, i.e.. the local community. In sociology, the following elements are indicated as constituting the local community:

- space (a geographically separated area) and territory (an area inhabited by a human population);
- community of people living in this territory;
- social interactions occurring among individuals living within this territory;
- common ties between people and institutions, which imbue this population with features such as internal integration, which in consequence, makes it possible to undertake joint operations aimed at solving local problems;
- a sense of fondness for one's place of residence (Sadowska, 2019).

At this level, members of this group are able to identify their needs. According to Maslow (2006), one of the basic human needs in his hierarchy is personal security. At present, some of these needs are being satisfied with the support of state institutions. In democratic systems, these tasks are partially carried out by government administrations and partially by local authorities, depending on the nature of public services and the management model applied to public matters. Naturally, the majority of these services are personalized but local communities redefine some of them as addressing citizens' collective needs (currently, the range is quite broad). By virtue of the law, modern states commit themselves to fulfill these needs directly using their own tools, such as government institutions.

2. Methodology

The subject of the study was public administration in Poland and public security. The main aim of the study was to analyze the role of local government in Poland after 1990. The following research problem resulted from the presented research objective: How has the role of local government in ensuring public security evolved? The data used in the study were source data from legal acts and long-term results of the authors' research.

To better understand the issue of the role of local government in Poland and achieve the research goal, the following methods were used: critical analysis of the literature and dogmatic and legal research.

3. Material and Methods

After 1990, the system for protecting public order and security in Poland was largely dominated by a single agent, that is the state. The police held the position of a monopolist of sorts within public administration, operating as an entity responsible for protecting people and maintaining public security and order. However, over time it started evolving towards larger decentralization, through the increased participation of local government administration and territorial self-government in security management. These actions demonstrated considerable inconsistency and a lack of imagination. In today's civilized world, there is a tendency towards the centralization of police services, resulting from globalization, the professionalization of crime structures and the application of cutting edge hi-tech instruments in police operations. States with decentralized political systems were not spared from the effects of this process.

In Poland, at the same time the regional self-government was established, lawmakers included duties relating to the protection of public order and security among the fundamental obligations of local government units. Initially, this included the commune level self-government, reestablished in 1990 (Act on Local Government of March 8, 1990, Journal of Laws of 1990 No. 16). Then, as a result

of the territorial administration reform carried out in 1998, two more levels of local government were set up: the county level (powiat) and province level (voivodship).

The scope of operations of the particular levels of local government was differentiated. The fulfillment of the collective needs of the community is the direct responsibility of individual local self-government units. Thus, the commune (municipality), as the basic unit of local government, seeks to satisfy the collective needs of its self-government community, the county performs supra-municipal public tasks, which are set out in relevant acts, whereas the self-government at the province level carries out tasks of a regional nature and is specified in applicable laws (Misiuk, 2008). The commune's direct responsibilities include, among others, issues related to public order and citizen security, as well as fire and flood protection (Misiuk, 2008). The county implements public tasks of a supra-communal nature specified in the acts, covering, among other things, those that refer to public order and citizen security (Journal of Laws of 2001, No. 142, item 1592). Yet, the authorities of the province are in charge of the tasks at the level of the province regarding public safety, set out in the applicable laws. Simultaneously, pursuant to Art. 3 of the Police Act (Journal of Laws of 2002, No. 7, item 58, as amended), the provincial governor and commune administrator (mayor and city mayor) or the prefect of the county (starosta) exercising general administration authority as well as commune, county and province self-government units perform tasks involving the protection of public security and order in compliance with provisions set out in relevant acts.

However, there are significant terminological differences in defining tasks performed by the individual levels of local government units. On the commune and county level, public tasks are fulfilled relating to "public order" and "citizen security", whilst the provincial authorities are assigned tasks concerning "public security". At the same time, the Act on Commune Self-Government and the Act on County Self-Government differentiates tasks covering public order and citizen security from those that are meant to provide fire and flood protection (and preventing from other extraordinary risks to life and health of humans and the natural environment), whereas the Act on Province Self-Government – separates tasks related to public security from those of flood protection.

The systemic acts on territorial self-government units quoted above explicitly specify – only in the case of communes – that these local government units perform duties relating to public order and citizen security as their own direct responsibility. But, determining the tasks covering public order, citizen security and public security as the direct responsibility of local government units follows directly from the Constitution of the Republic of Poland and other systemic provisions. Under Art. 166, item 1 of the Constitution of the Republic of Poland, public duties serving to fulfil the needs of self-governing communities are performed by territorial self-government units as their direct responsibility (Art. 166 of the Constitution of Republic of Poland of April 2, 1997, Journal of Laws of 1997, No. 78, item 483).

In case of the justified needs of the state, local government units may be instructed to carry out other public duties on the strength of the same act. A separate constitutional act sets out the mode of delegation and performance of delegated tasks (Art. 166, item 2). Thus, the Constitution divides public duties of the self-government into those that are its own direct responsibility and those which are delegated. Public duties meant to satisfy the needs of the self-government community are delivered by the local self-government unit as its direct responsibility, while allocated duties are performed by the local government units if it results directly from the provision of the act. Thus, the Constitution introduced the principle of performing public duties by local government units as their direct responsibility. The previously mentioned principle is also reflected in the systemic laws governing territorial self-government units:

- the commune performs public tasks on its own behalf and at its own risk (Art. 2, item 1). However, allocated tasks relating to the government administration could be imposed on the commune solely upon the explicit provision of the act (Art. 8, item 1);
- the county performs public tasks on its own behalf and at its own risk (Art. 2, item 1). Yet, relevant laws may specify some issues to be carried out within the county's scope of duties as tasks relating to government administration, to be executed by the county (Art. 4, item 4);
- the self-government of the province (voivodeship) performs applicable public duties on its own behalf and at its own risk (Art. 6, item 1, point 1). The laws may specify some issues to be carried out within the province's scope of duties as tasks relating to government administration, to be executed by the province's management (Art. 14, item 2).

Therefore, both the county's duties relating to public order and citizen security and the duties performed by the province self-government in the sphere of public security are considered as the direct responsibility of the county and province self-government, respectively (Gierszewski, 2017).

Here, it is advisable to focus on explaining the terms referred to above. The issue of public security is, in the doctrine of administrative law, closely related to the term public order (Sulowski, 2009). If we consider them separately, public security can be perceived in two ways. In the first, material, approach it provides all the citizens in the state with a stable existence. It consists in the entirety of the social, legal and organizational relationships serving to limit the risks threatening the operation of the state and the execution of its interests, allowing for its normal and free development. A formal warranty of maintaining this very state are adequate rules of law, while an institutional guarantee is ensured by competent state organs. Thus, this term encompasses the security of all state citizens, understood comprehensively – both the security of every human being, his/her life, health, property, the execution of personal rights as well as any forms of collective existence within the state organization, where people coexist, which also implies

the security of all public institutions, social and private organizations, etc. In the second approach, public security consists in the protection of public security, i.e., the system of organizational operations and authorizations for applying coercive measures through specialized state institutions.

Moreover, it should be noted that public security signifies the absence of any risks to the existence of a given human community. It includes security in communications, safety of road, rail, water and air traffic as well as the lack of threats from catastrophes, natural disasters, epidemics and, finally, the absence of dangers caused by man-induced criminal actions against life, health or property. It should also be emphasized that it is impossible to list all the threats to security that might occur in life. With the progress of civilization, new social relations are established bringing new, so far, unknown risks to individuals or the society as a whole. Therefore, the general term “security” refers to all kinds of conditions free from risk, both those that we can currently identify and those that will occur in the near or distant future.

Thus, the term “public security” is closely related to human functioning and various social structures within state institutions. For this reason in the narrower meaning it is also present in legal regulations but it is expressed through a more precise phrase, i.e., state security. On the other hand, public order signifies an actually existing system of social relationships, regulated by a set of legal rules and other socially approved principles, providing uninterrupted and conflict-free functioning of individuals in society. Public order includes all social relationships controlled by the law and rules of other systems that are formed mainly in public places. It may also refer to the relationships established in non-public places, but only if their violation results in the disturbance of the regular operations of state, social and public institutions, or if it offends social morality when the law recognizes such an offence to be a crime or misdemeanor. This is why acting in compliance with the norms which ensure public order is a crucial element of public order. It contributes significantly to the strengthening and overall approval for social relations which belong to public order.

Public order is not only guaranteed by the rule of law, as this is merely one of the many normative systems that are present in each community. Those include other standards generally accepted in a given society, such as moral, religious, ethical standards and rules of social coexistence. Their common trait is that, similarly to the rules of law, they allow for maintaining harmony in collective existence. Especially significant rules of conduct, regulated with non-legal norms, are eventually given the status of law by the state. However, as morality and ethics are always changing some of these norms remain outside the area of laws. The objective of public order is to provide public integrity and peace as well as the normal (i.e. harmonized and coordinated) coexistence of people within society and ultimately indirectly ensure the safety of people and public security. Detailed goals would include the protection of life, health, personal deeds and property, as well as

ensuring regular operating conditions for government agencies, social and private organizations as well as the establishment of a suitable environment for the coexistence of people in all spheres, including, in particular, the provision of relevant conditions for work and leisure (Gierszewski, Piwowarski and Pruchniak, 2016).

At the same time, personal security of citizens is understood as “the security of people”, as one of the special aspects of security, that can be defined as “the state of absence of risk to any legal interest of a human being”. This mainly refers to all personal rights and property, belonging to each and every individual, such as life, health, personal dignity, honor, immunity, freedom of conscience, artistic, inventive and technical creativity, ownership and other property related rights. Thus the security of the people, in the most general terms, needs to be understood as the security of each and every individual, irrespective of his/her nationality, as well as religious and political views.

In democratic societies local authorities can affect citizens’ security in two ways – directly, by performing tasks related to public security and order or indirectly, through the police services, which operate under state legal regulations. In this regard, the commune (commune self-government) plays the main role. On the other hand, on the county level (supra-local level) the self-government plays an equalizing role in that it coordinates preventive and enforcement actions. The province self-government plays the most limited role.

At the commune level, the self-government may pass public order legislation, undertake operations aimed at prevention of social pathologies and initiate preventive measures. A local uniformed protective formation, the so called commune guards, can be set up in charge of enforcing public order within the commune territory. Currently, commune guards operate in accordance with the Act on Commune Guards of August 29, 1997 (Journal of Laws No. 123, item 779 as amended). In municipalities, they are called “municipal guards”. The phrase “can be established” applied in Art. 1, item 1 of the Act on Commune Guards means that the commune is not obliged to establish them. The operation of commune (municipal) guards is therefore one of the many acceptable forms of discharging the commune’s direct responsibilities meant to protect public order within its territory.

Joint commune guards could also be established by adjacent communes within a single province under an agreement, particularly in the case if one of the communes is not able to finance such a service on its own. Commune (municipal) guards are always established by virtue of the resolution of the commune council and preceded by a mandatory opinion of the locally competent Province Police Chief Officer. A similar procedure is also used in appointing common guards for several communes, provided that in such a case a communal agreement is concluded between the interested communes under Art. 74, item 1 of the Commune

Self-Government Act. The legislator provided the commune guards with the following functions:

- protective – related to maintaining order within the commune area;
- maintaining order – law enforcement in local communities in the sphere of public order;
- counteractive – permanent patrolling of streets and housing areas in communes and responding to calls submitted to the guards in regard to public order protection;
- preventive – preventing crime, offences and crime generating situations, education among children and teenagers;
- informative – informing relevant services and institutions on threats being noticed, notifying the local community on the status and types of existing risks and ways of tackling them;
- social and administrative – cooperating on public security and order with interested government and self-government authorities as well as social organizations;
- integrating local communities – through participation in sports, cultural and charity events organized by the commune, social organizations, schools and commune (municipal) guards.

Commune (municipal) guards perform tasks involving the protection of public order, resulting both from legal acts and local laws. Pursuant to Art. 11 of the Act on Commune Guards, their duties include the following:

- protecting peace and order in public places;
- monitoring order and controlling road traffic – within the scope set out in road traffic regulations;
- collaborating with relevant entities on saving lives and the health of citizens, assisting in the removal of technical failures and the effects of natural disasters and other local risks;
- securing the site of crimes, catastrophes or other incidents, or sites endangered with such incidents from bystanders or preserving traces and evidence until the arrival of competent units as well as finding witnesses, if possible;
- guarding community facilities and public utilities;
- cooperating with the organizers and other services in order maintenance during public gatherings and public events;
- bringing intoxicated persons to detoxification detention centers, if such persons' behavior offends public decency, or they have found themselves in a situation that threatens their life or health, or they constitute a threat to someone else's life or health;
- informing the local community on the status and type of risks as well as initiating and participating in actions aimed at preventing crimes and

offences, and crime-related situations as well as cooperating on those issues with government, self-government authorities and social organizations;

- escorting documents, valuables or cash, as required by the commune and, most importantly, establishing self-government order protecting units, i.e. the commune guards.

Another form of the commune's involvement in local security issues is its entitlement to pass public order legislation. The Constitution of the Republic of Poland of April 2, 1997, stipulates that enactments of local law shall be the sources of universally binding laws in the territory of the organs that have enacted them. Certain key groups of local laws could be specified on the basis of existing practice and the jurisdiction of the Supreme Administrative Court, on the strength of the subject of the regulation. One category includes: order regulations issued by the units of local self-government (i.e. communes and counties). The legal basis for passing order regulations, constituting enactments of local laws, shall be found in constitutional laws, relating to the indicated units of local self-government. So, pursuant to Art. 40, item 3 of the Act on Commune Self-Government of March 8, 1990, the commune council, may pass public order legislation in the matters not specified in separate laws or other generally applicable regulations if it is deemed necessary for the protection of the life or health of citizens, and for ensuring order, peace and public security (Journal of Laws 142, item 1591, as amended). The commune self-government may have an indirect impact on the security of its inhabitants by exerting influence over police operations within the commune by:

- financing operations of police units (stations, departments and beats);
- providing opinions on establishing police stations and beats in the commune;
- giving opinions on candidates for chiefs of police stations and departments;
- requesting the police to restore conditions to their former state, in compliance with law and order, or taking actions aimed at preventing law violations as well as removing risks to public safety and order;
- submitting annual statements to the commune authorities on the operation of police departments as well as information on the state of public security and order (Misiuk, 2013).

The role of self-government units in the execution of tasks meant to provide security to local communities ought to be based in particular on the following:

- Firstly, organs of self-government units should coordinate the actions related to ensuring security within a certain area and within a given timeframe. This role must not only concentrate on isolated events (e.g. one-off mass events, festivals), but cover all scheduled activities in their entirety, taking into consideration the large quantity of risk-inducing situations and aim at working out

algorithms of conduct for each entity and service, in accordance with their competences.

- Secondly, security does not solely mean individual or collective human behavior. It also entails organizing social life in such a way so as to eliminate threats and threat-inducing situations. In this respect, self-government institutions should stimulate security-oriented investments, particularly when it comes to the monitoring of endangered spots, or consulting new architectural and urban solutions with the Police.

- Thirdly, self-government units should coordinate and organize the leisure time of teenagers. Family and school commitments should be supplemented with establishing new facilities for social life in the places where children and teenagers reside. This is particularly important in metropolitan areas, where spontaneous peer groups appear that are not subject to parental control. Keeping in mind the fact that many dedicated organizations and institutions deal with arranging free time activities for children and teens in their locations, self-government units should become the coordinator in this area, mostly through providing strong support for such initiatives as, for instance, giving access to playgrounds, gyms, meeting rooms, co-organizing and co-financing cultural centers and clubs, etc. Moreover, it is essential to deliver such forms of assistance that provide the family with favorable conditions for fulfilling its basic functions, particularly when it comes to education.

- Fourthly, in the event of potential threats, self-governmental units shall establish good working relations with the mass media. It should comprise of reliable information on the actual state of security, absolutely free from the element of sensation as a risk-enhancing factor.

While considering the supra-local level, i.e. the county, functions of local authorities relating to citizen security focus on coordinating, planning and supporting Police activities and those of other services such as inspection and fire brigades. It should also be acknowledged that, in order to execute the tasks of the administrator (starosta), the county's body that supervises county services, inspections and guards, as well as perform duties set out in the acts on public order and citizen security – the counties set up committees on security and order.

This committee on security and order is unique as an institution enshrined in law. It has been established under the law that amended the Act on County Self-Government by adding to it the provisions of Art. 38a – 38c, governing the establishment and rules of conduct for these committees (Act on Amendment to the Police Act of July 27, 2001, insurance-related acts, acts – Banking Law, acts on county legal authorities and acts – Implementing provisions to the act reforming public administration, (Journal of Laws, No. 100, item 1084).

The aforesaid act has also granted exclusive jurisdiction to the county council to adopt the county program for crime prevention and protection of citizen security and public order (Art. 12, item 9b of the Act on County Self-Government). The

county councils and county (municipal) Police chiefs are obliged to delegate, and county administrators to appoint members of the committee on security and order, no later than 3 months following the day the above-mentioned act had become effective. At the same time the relevant district attorney was required to indicate the competent attorney to participate in the works of the committee (Gierszewski, 2013). The duties of the security and order committee include:

- providing an evaluation of risks to the public order and citizen security within the county area;
- giving opinions on the performance of the Police and other county services, inspections and fire brigades as well as organizational units carrying out tasks within the county, relating to public order and citizen security;
- preparing the draft of the county program for crime prevention and protection of citizen security and public order;
- providing opinions on drafts of other programs for the cooperation between the Police and other county services, inspections, fire brigades and organizational units charged with carrying out tasks within the county, in regard to public order and citizen security;
- assessing drafts of the county budget – relating to public order and citizen security within the county area.

Currently, local government at all levels implements tasks in the field of protecting public order and security. The staroste as the head of the combined administration in the powiat (and at the same time the chairman of the powiat board) has legal means of influencing the state of security in the powiat, and in the commune self-government organizational units - commune guards can be created to perform preventive and order functions. The area of security and public order protection is governed by two opposite phenomena: decentralization and centralization. Decentralization of competences and organization refers to preventive activities, while combating crime should be based on the principle of centralization. Therefore, the functional division of the Police into state and local is justified. State police operating at two levels: provincial (district) and powiat would focus on combating criminal and economic crime (organized crime can also be considered). Furthermore, the field of police tasks would include vocational training, logistic protection and personnel services.

These premises justify the accepting of a more practical and effective formula for preventive activity at local level. In order to that, a local police should be established, consisting of police stations and police stations as well as municipal guard units. Identification of problems, formation of local preventive strategies, management of local police activities and its financing would belong to the commune and powiat self-government, while the powiat police governor would be responsible for supervising the proper implementation of official tasks. Such a model of order management at the lowest level is standard in Anglo-Saxon (United

Kingdom, United States of America) and Scandinavian countries. Therefore, it would be appropriate to establish a local police at the municipal level in the form of police stations and posts consisting of connection the police preventive service and local police formations (municipal and city guards). The main task of the local police should be cooperation with local communities, activities in the field of criminal prevention and protection of public order in the local dimension.

4. Conclusions

To sum up, it should be pointed out that the level of involvement of the public self-government in matters of citizen security depends on the conditions of democracy and the scale of decentralization of public duties. The efficiency of state operations aimed at providing the highest personal security of its citizens lies in the proper recognition of the needs in this regard.

At the local level, this can be delivered by the units of the commune self-government, its auxiliary entities and non-government organizations. In Poland, the process of activating social communities in these areas started during the challenging period of the political and administrative transformations of 1989-1990. Afterwards, it continued over the course of local administration reform in 1998. However, one cannot avoid the powerful impression that the most important and crucial decisions regarding the model of internal security in Poland have yet to be made. This primarily includes guaranteeing the security of citizens on the local level.

Taking into account the experience of countries with established democracy and tendencies in creating an effective system ensuring the security of citizens, it can be stated that:

- most of the local community's needs in ensuring public security should be met by local government;
- government administration should support local government administration in a situation when tasks are not possible for independent implementation by self-governments (the principle of state subsidiarity);
- government administration should be limited to the supervisory function in respect of compliance with law by local governments - without, however, penetrating into the content of substantive decisions taken in the area of public security, in accordance with statutory powers.

Local government administration is characterized by a faster response to changes in the area of public security and better understands the real needs of citizens.

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