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THE ASSESSMENT OF POLICE EFFICIENCY IN MAINTAINING PUBLIC SAFETY IN RELATION TO THE DISCLOSURE OF HOMICIDE PERPETRATORS BETWEEN 2000 AND 2020 IN POLAND

Abstract

The Police are an institution that should operate efficiently. The efficiency level is reflected in the functioning of the entire state security system and public safety. The primary and direct threat to public safety is a crime, which affects the sense of security of the general public. The Police strive to detect and apprehend the perpetrators to reduce the negative phenomenon of crime. Therefore, effectiveness in detecting perpetrators of crimes, including the most dangerous ones, can be considered one of the measures of Police efficiency. The present study aims at carrying out a praxeological assessment of the Police performance in detecting perpetrators of crimes in the category “homicide” in the years 2000-2020 in Poland. Conducted research activities allow concluding that in the analysed period not only the Police show high efficiency in revealing perpetrators of the crime in question, but also constantly improve their functioning in this field.

Keywords

security, Police, homicide, detectability, praxeology

Introduction

Every democratic state must ensure the security of its citizens. Fulfilling the fundamental obligation requires rational designing of security policy, within the framework of which the state security system consisting of institutions possessing the competences specified in the law is streamlined¹. In Poland, particular competences are held by the Council of Ministers, a collegiate body ensuring external and internal security of the state within the framework of public administration². The term “internal security” refers in equal measure to the state achieved as the result of the fulfilment of the state’s internal function carried out within the framework of the strategic state security policy³ and the collective organised action whose aim is to maintain a state of non-threat within the state organisation⁴. Within the framework of internal security, the following are distinguished: systemic security (connected with the protection of the constitutional system of the state), general security (connected with the protection of life, health and property of citizens, and national property against natural disasters and catastrophes) and public security

(connected with the protection of life, health and property of citizens⁵, and national property against unlawful attacks)⁶. It is worth emphasising that the entities responsible for the protection of public and general security mutually support each other within the system of internal security⁷.

The member of the Council of Ministers is the minister in charge of internal affairs, heading the department of government administration called “Department of Home Affairs”, which includes, among others, the protection of public security and order. The minister, as the chief organ of government administration, supervises the activities of the police, which are headed by a central organ of state administration in the person of the Chief Commander of the Police⁸.

The Police in Poland are a uniformed and armed formation serving the public and intended to protect human security and maintain public safety and order⁹. Its basic tasks include the detection of crimes and the detection and prosecution of their perpetrators. The totality of crimes committed in a given area over a certain period is called “crime”, which

¹ P. Lubiewski, *Bezpieczeństwo państwa – reminiscencje*, „Zeszyty Naukowe Państwowej Wyższej Szkoły Zawodowej im. Witelona w Legnicy”, No. 34(1)/2020, p. 58.

² Constitution of the Republic of Poland of 2 April 1997 passed by the National Assembly on 2 April 1997, approved by the Nation in the constitutional referendum on 25 May 1997, signed by the President of the Republic of Poland on 16 July 1997 (Journal of Laws 1997, No. 78, item 483, with amendments).

³ B. Wiśniewski, *Przygotowania obronne resortu spraw wewnętrznych*, WSPol, Szczytno 2014, p. 136.

⁴ R. Gwardyński, *Możliwości doskonalenia działań prewencyjnych Policji w sferze utrzymywania bezpieczeństwa publicznego*, Akademia WSB, Dąbrowa Górnicza 2021, p. 17.

⁵ More: B. Kaczmarczyk, B. Wiśniewski, R. Gwardyński, *Security of an individual*, Zeszyty Naukowe Państwowej Wyższej Szkoły Zawodowej im. Witelona w Legnicy, No. 3 (28) 2018, Legnica 2018, p. 67-78.

⁶ More: *Współczesne uwarunkowania zarządzania bezpieczeństwem wewnętrznym państwa*, J. Falecki, R. Kochańczyk, P. Sowizdraniuk (eds.), Uniwersytet Pedagogiczny w Krakowie, Kraków 2018.

⁷ More: *Bezpieczeństwo uczestników zgromadzeń religijnych*, Wydanie drugie uzupełnione, B. Wiśniewski, A. Prędecka, J. Bryk, A. Szela (eds.), SGSP, Obserwatorium Społeczne, Wrocław 2017.

⁸ Act of 4 September 1997 on departments of government administration (Journal of Laws of 2021, item 1893).

⁹ Act of April 6, 1990 on the Police (Journal of Laws of 2021, item 1882).

is the main and direct threat to public safety. Although in many legal acts there are references to “public security” the name is not unambiguous¹⁰. However, it can be assumed that the name “public security” means:

- as a kinetic event – an organised action of a protective nature, the purpose of which is to prevent crime that violates goods protected by law;
- as a static event – the effect of an organised protective action, which is a state of freedom from crime violating goods protected by law.

Bearing the above in mind, it may be assumed that public security in one case may be treated as the content of the Police’s activity organised within the framework of a process (security process), in the other case as the aim and effect of this activity.

When referring to the functioning of the Police one can distinguish among its activities those of:

- permutational (constructive that aim, e.g., to improve safety of inhabitants; destructive aiming, e.g., to reduce safety threats of inhabitants);
- perseverative (conservative the goal of which is, e.g., to maintain a high level of safety; preventive with the goal of, e.g., maintaining the lack of danger to residents).

Preventive actions are also called “prevention”. Crime prevention is implemented using preventive measures (referring to the words by Tadeusz Kotarbinski, who wrote: “Let us try to educate society by law in such a way

that law becomes unnecessary, that it does not need to interfere. Let people become such that they can be counted on to behave following the law on their own, without external pressure”¹¹.), directly anticipating (including intervention), preventing the escalation of threats threatening public security (such actions are characteristic of the police¹² preventive service). Prevention also takes the form of:

- general prevention, which consists in preventing members of society from committing crimes by applying penalties to perpetrators and by the very threat of punishment;
- special prevention, which consists in preventing the same offender from committing a criminal offence by executing a penalty for a specific criminal offence¹³.

Therefore, general and special prevention is closely linked with the identification of perpetrators of criminal offences and their punishment, which builds social conviction about the inevitability of punishment for the crime committed (the basis for general prevention), and deprives the physical possibility of continuing unlawful conduct.

The Police should be efficient, as each institution being an element of the state security system has an impact on the efficiency of the whole system. Moreover, the Chief Commander of the

¹⁰ A. Babiński, *W poszukiwaniu definicji bezpieczeństwa publicznego*, „Zeszyty Naukowe Państwowej Wyższej Szkoły Zawodowej im. Witelona w Legnicy”, No. 35(2)/2020, p. 91.

¹¹ T. Kotarbiński, *Traktat o dobrej robocie*, Uniwersytet Łódzki, Łódź 2019, p. 161.

¹² A. Babiński, Lubiewski P., *Podstawowe obszary aktywności Policji w zakresie przeciwdziałania zagrożeniom terrorystycznym i cyberzagrożeniu*, Centrum Badań nad Bezpieczeństwem Transgranicznym Akademii WSB, Dąbrowa Górnicza 2018, p. 11.

¹³ <https://encyklopedia.pwn.pl/haslo/prewencja;3962159.html> (12.11.2021 r.).

Police should be efficient in his activities since – as Jan Boć points out – “bodies which do not satisfy public needs [in this case the need is security – author’s note] are maintained from public funds and are unnecessary”¹⁴.

The most serious crime is homicide, the perpetrator of which strikes at the protected good in the form of another person’s life. The prevention of crime against life has always been taken very seriously by the Police. With this in mind, it is reasonable to ask whether the Police act efficiently about uncovering perpetrators of homicide.

Methodological assumptions of the study

The study aims to assess the efficiency of the Police in relation to the disclosure of perpetrators of homicide in 2000-2020 in Poland. Efficiency is a concept universally referred to the value of action, which is effectiveness (positively assessed conformity of the effect of an action with its aim).

The research problem was formulated in the form of a question: Did the Police act efficiently about disclosing perpetrators of homicides in Poland in 2000-2020? The following research hypothesis of the content was set to give direction to the scientific inquiry: During the period 2000-2020 in Poland, the Police acted efficiently concerning the disclosure of perpetrators of homicide.

Bearing in mind that every deliberate human activity involves a way, scientific investigation is not free from this

either. A structured way of doing things is called a method. A research method is “a set of theoretically justified conceptual and instrumental procedures, covering the entirety of the research procedure, which, as a consequence, is supposed to lead to solving a specified scientific problem”¹⁵. The present study was conducted by means of document analysis (quantitatively and qualitatively). The documents include the subject literature and statistical data made public by the Police at (<https://statystyka.policja.pl/>).

Research results

In Poland, 16008 homicides¹⁶ were recorded between 2002 and 2020, which gives:

- an average number of acts in each year of 762,
- the crime rate (number of crimes confirmed/100 thousand inhabitants) at the level of 1, 98.

The analysis of the number of recorded crimes in the individual years 2000-2020 proves that a downward trend took place in 2002-2006 and 2010-2016 and since 2017 an increase in the number of homicides has rather been recorded (Table 1).

¹⁴ A. Błaś, J. Boć, J. Jeżewski, *Administracja publiczna*, Kolonia Limited, Wrocław 2002, p. 157.

¹⁵ B. Wiśniewski, *Praktyczne aspekty badań bezpieczeństwa*, Difin, Warsaw 2020, pp. 110-111.

¹⁶ <https://statystyka.policja.pl/st/przestepstwa-ogolem/przestepstwa-kryminalne/zabojstwo/64003,Zabojstwo.html> (12.11.2021).

Table 1. Values of the dynamics index of the number of offences stated in the category “homicide” in 2000-2020 in Poland

No.	Periods compared [year-to-year]	Value of the dynamics index [%]
1	2020 do 2019	122, 3
2	2019 do 2018	98, 7
3	2018 do 2017	103, 5
4	2017 do 2016	112, 5
5	2016 do 2015	92, 1
6	2015 do 2014	94, 1
7	2014 do 2013	9, 16
8	2013 do 2012	98, 6
9	2012 do 2011	87, 9
10	2011 do 2010	97, 3
11	2010 do 2009	89, 1
12	2009 do 2008	100, 5
13	2008 do 2007	89, 5
14	2007 do 2006	103, 9
15	2006 do 2005	97, 4
16	2005 do 2004	85, 4
17	2004 do 2003	94, 3
18	2003 do 2002	87, 4
19	2002 do 2001	89, 6
20	2001 do 2000	104, 4
21	2000 do 1999	121

Source: own study.

Given variable level of the threat of crimes from the category “homicide” in Poland in the years 2000-2020, an analysis out of statistical data related to the detectability of homicides (revealing perpetrators of individual identified criminal acts) was carried.

The study shows that since 2000 the detection rate of homicides has not been lower than 87% (in 2000), and the average detection rate was 93.14% (Table 2.).

Table 2. The values of the dynamics index of the number of crimes stated in the category "homicide" in 2000-2020 in Poland

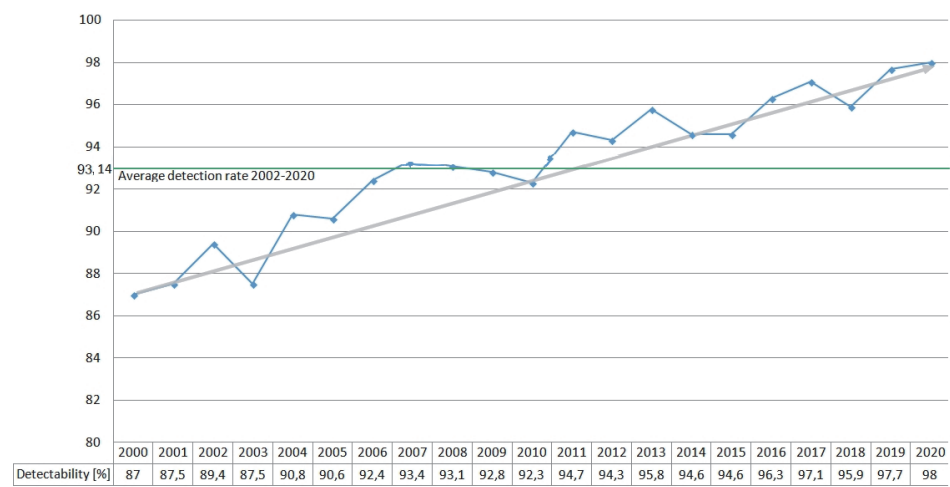
No.	Year	Detection of the perpetrator [%]
1	2020	98
2	2019	97,7
3	2018	95,9
4	2017	97,1
5	2016	96,3
6	2015	94,6
7	2014	95,8
8	2013	95
9	2012	94,2
10	2011	94,7
11	2010	89,1
12	2009	92,3
13	2008	92,8
14	2007	93,1
15	2006	93,4
16	2005	90,6
17	2004	90,8
18	2003	87,5
19	2002	89,4
20	2001	87,5
21	2000	87

Source: own study.

Data analysis allows us to conclude that since 2000 there has been a clear trend of increasing detection rates of ho-

micide perpetrators with slight fluctuations, which, however, did not affect the overall progression (Diagram 1).

Diagram 1. Variation in the rate of the Police’s detection of homicide perpetrators between 2000 and 2011 in Poland

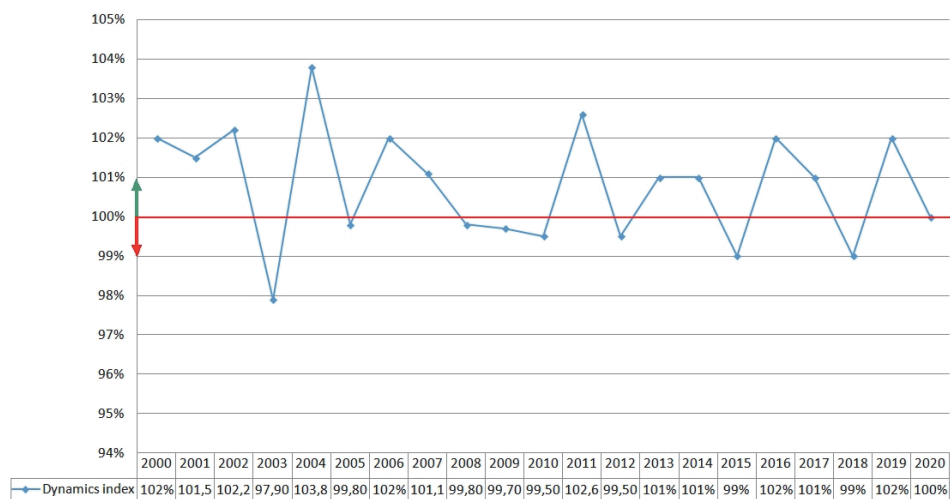


Source: own study.

When examining the values of the dynamics index it was found that in the period in question the values exceeded

100% in a larger number of cases and to a greater extent (Diagram 2).

Diagram 2. Dynamics of detection rates of homicide perpetrators in 2000-2011 in Poland



Considering the above, it is right to state that the efficiency of the Polish Police in connection with the detection of perpetrators of homicides in 2000-2020 is not only satisfactorily high, but also the functioning of the institution in question is subject to continuous improvement.

Conclusion

Referring to the objective of the research, the research problem, and the hypothesis, it can be stated that:

- the aim of the study has been achieved, as the efficiency assessment of the Police was made in relation to the disclosure of homicide perpetrators by this formation in 2000-2020 in Poland;
- the research problem has been solved as it has been assessed that in 2000-2020 in Poland the Police operated in a satisfactorily efficient manner regarding revealing perpetrators of homicides;
- as the above statement is identical with the content of the assumed hypothesis, this hypothesis should be considered true.

When assessing police efficiency, it was observed that it is subject to an effective process of improvement, which results in the fact that the number of offences in the “homicide” category, although fluctuating, is the lowest in relation to the number of other criminal offences, including those which are particularly dangerous or socially troublesome.

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