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Jadwiga Korszniak*

Community Security and Its Threats on the Example of a Selected Rural Municipality: A Pilot Study

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Abstract

The purpose of this article is to diagnose the security and threats faced by the local community in the municipality of Hyżne. The paper addresses three research questions: (1) What are the unique characteristics and threats specific to the Hyżne municipality? (2) What is the assessment of community security in the Hyżne municipality? (3) What threats to community security are perceived by the residents surveyed? The study utilized theoretical research methods such as analysis, synthesis, generalization, comparison, and inference. Empirical methods were also employed, including a diagnostic survey conducted through a questionnaire and document analysis. The analysis concluded that the vast majority of respondents rated the level of public safety as good or very good. Consequently, most respondents expressed little to no fear of becoming victims of crime in their place of residence.

Keywords

community safety, threats, local community, rural municipality

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Introduction

A local community can be defined as a group of people who live in a specific area and have developed interactions and psychological bonds, which are expressed in a sense of community with others in the area.¹ Thus, a local community is a group of people whose fundamental units can be considered primary groups, such as families and neighbors. The relationships formed among its members are typically personal in nature.² These relationships foster a sense of identity, belonging, security, and often pride among community members.³ The proximity of residence means that community members usually know each other well. According to Eugeniusz Moczuk, the interdependencies between residents encourage the development of social trust, contributing to a high sense of security within a local community.⁴ Therefore, even a small area within a municipality can serve as a foundation for the formation of strong local communities.⁵

An important factor affecting the functioning of a local community is the transmission of patterns from generation to generation.⁶ These patterns shape a social culture that is a blend of traditions.⁷ Often, the cultural tradition that emerges has a significant impact on the region and the local community, making cultural tradition a key factor in promoting standardization of the region's population.⁸ According to Leszek Gilejko, a shared cultural community encourages thinking in terms of "we" when referring to neighbors and "they" when referring to members of other local communities.⁹ Grzegorz Odoj suggests that experiences accumulated over time foster a sense of psychological unity and an awareness of distinctiveness from other communities.¹⁰

The bonds formed are also influenced by residents' attachment to a particular region, leading to a strong identification with the local collective. Geographical conditions shape the spatial distribution of community members, often resulting in mutual assistance as residents adapt to the area's prevailing conditions.¹¹ This shared effort in addressing local challenges fosters a sense of community.¹² Thus, a distinguishing feature of a local community is its regional dimension.¹³ Locality can be understood as the geographical area occupied by the community and the number of its members.¹⁴ This regional focus helps in better identifying local needs and ensuring the community's safety.

According to Antoni and Monika Piędel, community security involves the harmonious development, protection, and nurturing of social norms, traditions, customs, and mores.¹⁵ The conceptual link between community security and local security is evident. In this context, Stanisław Pieprzny

1. B. Szacka, *Wprowadzenie do socjologii*, Oficyna Naukowa 2003, p. 229.

2. Ibidem, p. 229.

3. M. Leszczyński, et al., *Bezpieczeństwo w wymiarze lokalnym. Wybrane obszary*, Centrum Doradztwa i Informacji Difin 2016, p. 13.

4. E. Moczuk, *Mieszkańcy powiatu mieleckiego wobec problemów bezpieczeństwa lokalnego*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Rzeszowskiego 2007, p. 16.

5. M.S. Szczepański, W. Ślęzak-Tazbir, *Region i społeczność lokalna w perspektywie socjologicznej*, "Górnośląskie Studia Socjologiczne. Seria Nowa", 2010, No. 1, p. 15; M.A. Klekotko, *Przestrzeń publiczna jako czynnik konstytuujący społeczność lokalną nowego typu. Przypadek Radzionkowa na Górnym Śląsku*, in: *Przemiany przestrzeni wiejskiej w Polsce i na Słowacji*, eds. M. Malikowski, J. Piegza, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Rzeszowskiego 2008, p. 100.

6. E. Jurczyńska-McCluskey, A. Bąk, *Glokalizacja w wybranych obszarach wiejskich Podbeskidzia*, in: *Przemiany przestrzeni wiejskiej w Polsce i na Słowacji*, eds. M. Malikowski, J. Piegza, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Rzeszowskiego 2008, pp. 110–111.

emphasizes that local security involves ensuring the safe functioning of community residents and protecting them from crime and other threats through legal means.¹⁶

The security of a local community depends on initiatives undertaken to improve the quality of life and maintain harmony. The author's motivation for writing this article stems from a belief that community security, in this dimension, is particularly significant for both individuals and the collective. Focusing on the municipality of Hyżne provided a unique opportunity to examine the documentation of security processes. The research initiated in 2022 is considered by the author as a pilot study. The researcher's unique perspective is also noteworthy, as her familiarity with the local security issues has enabled her to formulate insightful interpretations and conclusions.

The purpose of this article is to diagnose the security of the local community and its threats, using the Hyżne municipality (Rzeszów County, Poland) as a case study, based on empirical research conducted. The paper addresses three research questions: (1) What are the unique characteristics and threats specific to the Hyżne municipality? (2) What is the assessment of community security in the Hyżne municipality? (3) What threats to community security are perceived by the residents surveyed?

The study employed theoretical research methods such as analysis, synthesis, generalization, comparison, and inference.¹⁷ Additionally, an empirical method was utilized in the form of a diagnostic survey, which involved the use of questionnaires and document analysis.¹⁸ The survey was conducted electronically, with 249 residents of the municipality of Hyżne participating.¹⁹ The questionnaire focused on various aspects of local security, including respondents' personal experiences, views, and potential ways to enhance the level of security.

The article is structured to include a brief overview of the Hyżne municipality and a description of the specific threats present in the area. It also presents the results of empirical research on the diagnosis of community security in the Hyżne municipality. The article concludes with a summary of the findings.

7. I. Urych, *Tożsamość narodowa we współczesnym świecie jako istotny element bezpieczeństwa narodowego na podstawie analizy treści podręczników dla szkoły podstawowej w Polsce*, "Colloquium", 2023, Vol. 15, No. 2, pp. 51–66.

8. J. Wódz, *Poczucie przynależności lokalnej – niektóre czynniki konstytutywne*, in: *Społeczności lokalne. Teraźniejszość i przyszłość*, eds. B. Jałowicki, K.Z. Sowa, P. Dudkiewicz, Wydział Geografii i Studiów Regionalnych Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego. Instytut Gospodarki Przestrzennej 1989, p. 58.

9. L. Gilejko, *Funkcje społeczności lokalnych i szanse ich realizacji*, "Rocznik Żyrardowski", 2002, No. 1, p. 65.

10. G. Odoj, *Tożsamość kulturowa społeczności małomiasteczkowej*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego 2007, p. 28.

11. W. Broszkiewicz, *Kapitał kulturowy młodego pokolenia Polski współczesnej. Studium na przykładzie wybranych społeczności Podkarpacia*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Rzeszowskiego 2010, p. 27.

12. M.S. Szczepański, W. Ślęzak-Tazbir, *Region i społeczność lokalna...*, op. cit., p. 18.

13. See: D. Domalewska, I. Urych, *Aksjologiczne i antropologiczne uwarunkowania tożsamości narodowej młodych Polaków w świetle badań własnych. Implikacje dla bezpieczeństwa narodowego*, "De Securitate et Defensione. O Bezpieczeństwie i Obronności", 2020, No. 1 (6), pp. 196–221.

Characteristics and Risks of the Hyżne Municipality

The Hyżne municipality is located in Rzeszów County, in the southeastern part of Podkarpackie Voivodeship, approximately 20 km southeast of the provincial city of Rzeszów. The Hyżne municipality is bordered to the southeast by Dynów municipality, to the north by Chmielnik municipality, to the northwest by Tyczyn municipality, to the southwest by Błażowa municipality, and to the east by Jawornik Polski municipality.²⁰ It is a rural municipality comprising seven village districts (*sołectwo*): Brzezówka, Dylągówka, Grzegorzówka, Hyżne, Nieborów, Szklary oraz Wólka Hyżneńska. It is noteworthy that the municipality is advocating for the creation of the village of Nieborów, but currently, it remains a village district, including Nieborów Wielki and Nieborów Mały.

As of 31 December 2020, the municipality has a population of 7,098 residents across an area of 5,098 hectares.²¹ It is undoubtedly one of the most picturesque regions in Podkarpacie, with its entire area part of the Dynów Upland and included in the Hyżne-Gwoźnica Protected Landscape Area.²² The region features a varied, upland-hilly landscape, characterized by numerous low hills interspersed with river and stream valleys. The area exhibits a foothill character with frequent landslides on steep slopes. The rivers, which have a mountainous nature, can pose a real flood threat during periods of heavy rainfall and snowmelt.²³

The proximity of the San River, an efficient transportation system, and the tourist trails running through the municipality make it an attractive region for tourism and active recreation. The Hyżne municipality boasts large forested areas, and its low level of industrialization ensures clean air, making it ideal for relaxation and agrotourism.²⁴ The area has a well-developed network of roads and transportation links, including three provincial roads, seven district roads, and various municipal and internal public roads. Additionally, a narrow-gauge railroad, dating back to 1904 and featuring the longest and oldest tunnel in Europe, crosses the municipality and is available for tourist use.²⁵ Economically, the largest share of the municipality's active residents (38.8%) work in industry and construction. About one in five (21.4%) are employed in the service sector, while 18.0% work in agriculture. The financial sector employs the fewest residents.²⁶

The Hyżne municipality features a diverse forest landscape with hills and numerous river and stream valleys. This terrain gives rise to several natural threats, including floods, fires, landslides, storms, and heavy precipitation. These hazards are seasonal and depend on natural and meteorological factors, posing risks to the life and health of residents. Additionally, the commune faces chal-

14. R. Czachor, *Teoria systemowo-funkcjonalna a badania i zarządzanie społecznościami lokalnymi. Społeczności lokalne*, "Studia Interdyscyplinarne", 2017, No. 1, p. 17.

15. A. Piędel, M. Piędel, *Zadania jednostek samorządu terytorialnego w zakresie bezpieczeństwa i porządku publicznego*, in: *Elementy bezpieczeństwa narodowego Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej*, eds. P. Swoboda, A. Żebrowski, Wydawnictwo Avalon Sp. z o.o. 2020, p. 212.

16. S. Pieprzny, *Wybrane problemy prawnosocjologiczne kształtowania bezpieczeństwa społeczności lokalnych*, in: *Administracja publiczna pod rządami prawa. Księga pamiątkowa z okazji 70-lecia urodzin prof. zw. dra hab. Adama Błasia*, ed. J. Korczak, E-Wydawnictwo. Prawnicza i Ekonomiczna Biblioteka Cyfrowa. Wydział Prawa, Administracji i Ekonomii Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego 2016, p. 386.

17. See: T. Plich, T. Bauman, A. Radzko, *Zasady badań pedagogicznych: strategie ilościowe i jakościowe*, Wydawnictwo Żak 2001.

18. In the course of this work, the author obtained written statements from the Office of the Hyżne municipality and the Municipal Police Station in Rzeszów through public information requests. These materials are in the author's possession.

19. The survey included 149 women (60% of the respondents) and 100 men

allenges related to technical failures, such as interruptions in electricity, water, and heating supply. The primary mode of transportation for residents is by car.

In June 2020, heavy rainfall caused flooding that resulted in significant property damage (including damage to 9.7 km of municipal roads). The villages most affected by the flooding were Dylągówka, Grzegorzówka, Hyżne, Szklary, and Wólka Hyżneńska. The cleanup and recovery efforts involved all the municipality's Volunteer Fire Service units, units from neighboring municipalities, and Territorial Defense Forces from Rzeszów. The municipality's Commission for Estimating the Losses assessed the total damage at PLN 2,618,900.00.²⁷ Additionally, other hazards in the area include social issues (such as alcoholism), reckless drivers, inadequate traffic management, and insufficient road lighting.

In diagnosing community safety in the Hyżne municipality, data from the Municipal Police Station in Rzeszów proved valuable. The statistics on police interventions in the municipality from 2016 to 2020 remained relatively stable, ranging from 345 to 376 interventions per year. This indicates that, on average, police officers responded to one incident per day throughout each calendar year.²⁸ The most frequently committed crimes in the Hyżne municipality between 2018 and 2021 included the following: driving while intoxicated (Article 178a §1 Penal Code) with 37 incidents, theft (Article 278 §1 Penal Code) with 29 incidents, fraud (Article 286 §1 Penal Code) with 25 incidents, burglary (Article 279 §1 Penal Code) with 14 incidents, and physical and mental abuse of family members (Article 207 §1 Penal Code) with 22 incidents. Overall, the crime data reveals that 68 crimes were committed in Hyżne, nearly matching the total number of crimes (69) in the other five villages combined.²⁹ The most significant increase in crimes during this period was noted in cases of physical and mental abuse within families.

To assess how residents perceive community safety in the Hyżne municipality, the author posed questions focusing on the overall level of public safety and concerns about the potential for becoming a victim of crime. Additionally, residents were asked for their opinions on police performance and the potential need for establishing a municipal police force.

In response to question 1, "How do you assess the level of security in the Hyżne municipality?" the vast majority of respondents rated it as good (71%), while 35 people (14%) rated it as very good. A smaller number of respondents, 19 people (8%), rated the security level as bad, and only 3 people

(40%). Among the respondents, almost a third were aged 18-26 (31%). Other age groups included 27-35 (23%), 36-50 (22%), and 51-65 (16%). The smallest groups were those under 18 (4%) and those over 65 (4%). Respondents with a high school education comprised nearly half of the respondents (47%), while nearly one-third had higher education (31%). Additionally, 17% had vocational education, and the smallest percentages were those with primary education (3%) and junior high school education (1%). The majority of respondents were employed (65%), with nearly one in five being pupils or students (18%), and 22 being pensioners (9%). There were also unemployed respondents, comprising 8% of the total.

20. J. Fil, *Gmina Hyżne: tradycja i współczesność*, Gmina Hyżne 2014, p. 5.

21. *Dzieje się – Biuletyn Mieszkańców Gminy Hyżne*, 2021, No. 3, <https://hyzne.pl/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Dzieje%20sie%20nr%203.pdf>, (access 17.12.2023), p. 9.

22. *Gmina Hyżne. Historia, kultura, tradycja rozwój*, Gmina Hyżne, pp. 1-2.

23. S. Mendelowski (ed.), *W gminie Hyżne*, P.U.W. „Roksana” Sp. z o.o. 2003, pp. 5-7.

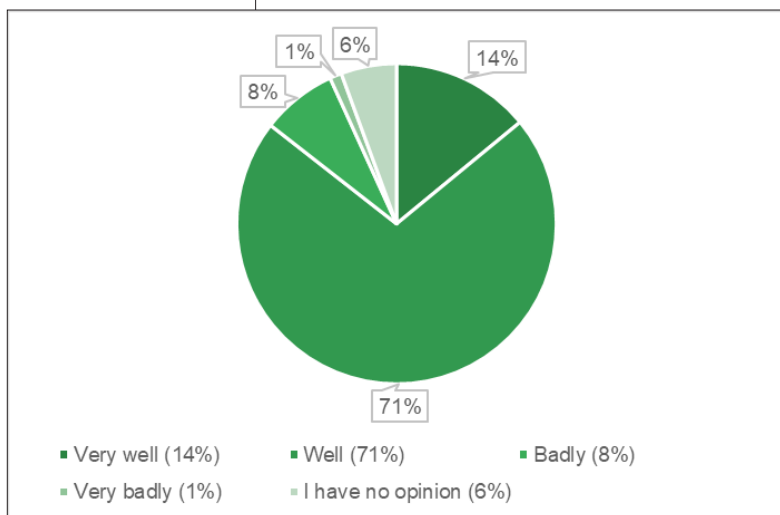
24. J. Fil, *Gmina Hyżne: tradycja...*, op. cit., p. 5.

25. *Gmina Hyżne. Historia...*, op. cit., p. 18.

Diagnosis of community safety on the territory of the municipality of Hyżne

(1%) described it as very bad. Fourteen respondents (6%) had no opinion on the matter. The distribution of responses is illustrated in Figure 1.

Among the respondents, the vast majority rated the level of public safety as good or very good. This assessment indicates that the residents of the Hyżne municipality generally feel safe. Only a small percentage of respondents rated the level of security as bad or very bad.



Source: Own elaboration based on the conducted survey.

Figure 1. Assessment of the level of security in the Hyżne municipality by surveyed residents

For question 2, “Are you worried that you might become a victim of crime in the area where you live?” the majority of respondents indicated they were not concerned at all (66%). Nearly one in five respondents expressed such concerns (18%), while 34 respondents stated they were unlikely to have such fears (14%). Among the respondents, 5 people were very concerned about becoming a victim of crime (2%). The distribution of these responses is illustrated in Figure 2.

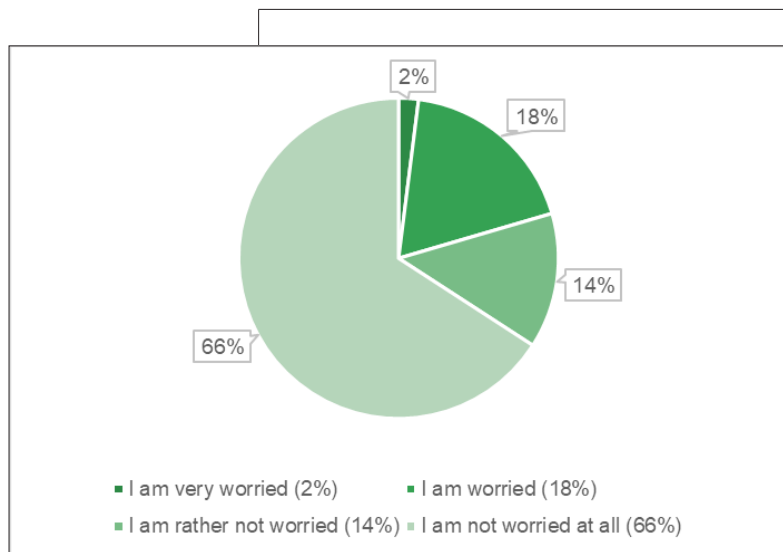
Analyzing the responses to questions 1 and 2, it can be concluded that the majority of residents rated the level of public safety as good or very good, and therefore most were not at all or only slightly concerned about becoming a victim of crime in their place of residence. This perception may be attributed to the relatively low number of crimes reported in recent years. However, it is important to note that nearly one in five respondents did express concerns about the potential for becoming a victim of crime in their locality.

26. *Gmina Hyżne w liczbach*, https://www.polskawliczbach.pl/gmina_Hyżne, (access 17.12.2023).

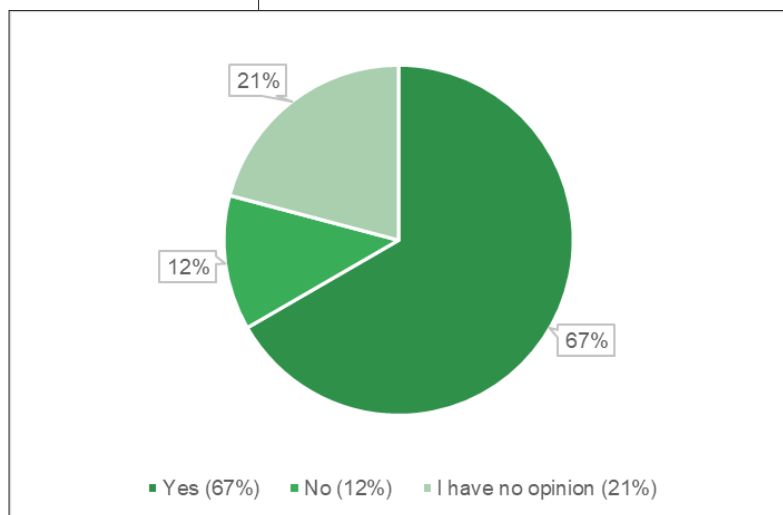
27. *Raport o stanie Gminy Hyżne za rok 2020*, <https://hyzne.pl/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Raport-o-stanie-gminy-Hyżne-za-rok-2020.pdf>, (access 17.12.2023), pp. 56, 102.

28. The number of police interventions in the Hyżne municipality from 2016 to 2020 is presented based on data obtained from the Municipal Police Station in Rzeszów. These figures are derived from the Police Information Systems.

29. Number of crimes in the Hyżne municipality in 2018-2020, Own study based on the Report on the State of the Hyżne Municipality for 2021, see: *Raport o stanie Gminy Hyżne za rok 2021*, https://hyzne.pl/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Raport_2021.pdf, (access 17.12.2023), pp. 55-59.



Source: Own elaboration based on the conducted survey.



Source: Own elaboration based on the conducted survey.

Figure 2. Concerns of surveyed residents about becoming a victim of crime in the area of residence

For question 3, “In your opinion, should residents help the Police wherever possible?,” nearly 70% of respondents agreed that residents should assist the Police whenever possible (67%). One in five respondents had no opinion on this matter (21%), while 31 people (12%) were opposed to the idea.

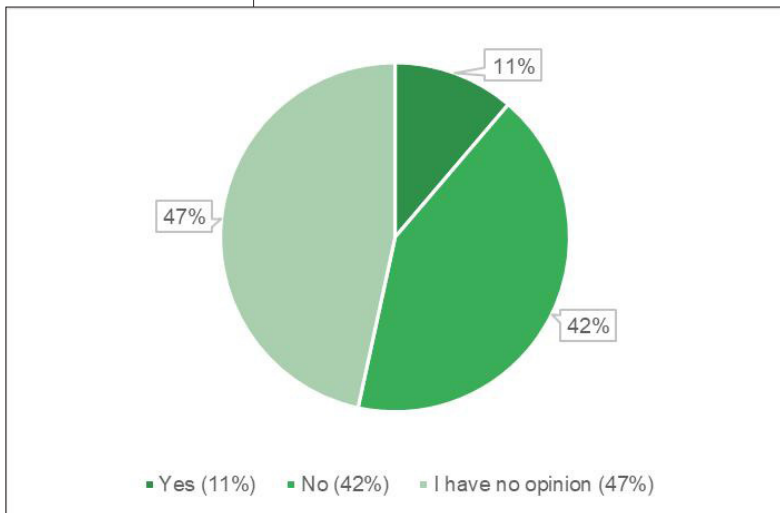
Analysis of these results suggests that the majority of Residents are willing to assist Police officers as needed. Notably, the proposal to help the Police was more favorably received by women (103) than men (64).

This willingness to cooperate with law enforcement should not go unnoticed. Police officers, particularly district officers, should strive to maintain strong connections with residents. Such cooperation could facilitate the mutual exchange of information about dangerous incidents, thereby alerting Police to local threats concerning security and public order. The distribution of responses is illustrated in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Respondents’ opinions on the fact that residents should help the Police wherever possible

For question 4, “In your opinion, should a municipal guard be established in the Hyżne municipality?,” almost half of the respondents had no opinion (47%). More than 40% of respondents believed that a municipal guard should not be established in Hyżne (42%), while 28 people (11%) were in favor of its establishment.

The data indicates a divided opinion among residents on this issue. The majority either had no opinion or were against the establishment of a municipal guard. Some residents commented that “an increase in the number of police patrols would be sufficient,” and that “the establishment of a municipal guard is an additional cost for the municipality.” However, there were supporters of establishing a municipal guard, who argued that “it would help minimize the number of stray dogs” and that its establishment “could contribute to increasing the level of security in the municipality.”



Source: Own elaboration based on the conducted survey.

The municipality’s decision not to establish a municipal guard may suggest that the authorities did not perceive a significant need for it. It can be inferred that the municipality may be too small, and the costs associated with maintaining a municipal guard might exceed its financial capacity. Previously, there was a proposal to establish a joint municipal guard with the neighboring Błazowa municipality, but this idea was never implemented. The distribution of responses to question 4 is illustrated in Figure 4.

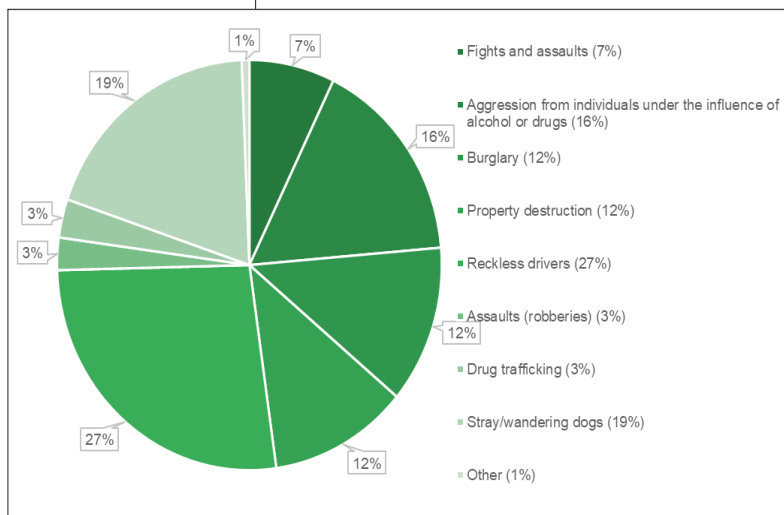
Figure 4. Respondents’ opinions on whether a municipal guard should be established in the Hyżne municipality

To analyze community security threats in the Hyżne municipality, residents were asked questions about the threats that they were most concerned about and the measures that could be taken to enhance security in the municipality. The author also inquired about residents’ views on implementing monitoring systems as a way to increase security in specific areas of the municipality. The survey concluded with a question about residents’ participation in reporting dangerous situations to the National Safety Hazard Map.

For question 5, “What dangers in the municipality are you most concerned about?” respondents were allowed to select up to three answers. The most common concerns among residents were reckless drivers (27%), stray or roaming dogs (19%), and aggression from individuals under the influence of alcohol or drugs (16%). Other concerns included burglary (12%), property destruction (12%),

Threats to community safety in the Hyżne municipality in the opinion of surveyed residents

and physical assaults (7%). The least concerning issues for respondents were drug trafficking (3%) and assault/robbery (3%). Additionally, 1% of respondents mentioned other dangers, including rape and cars loitering near schools, which they associated with potential child abduction attempts. The distribution of responses is illustrated in Figure 5.



Source: Own elaboration based on the conducted survey.

Figure 5. Respondents' opinions on threats in the municipality that they are most concerned about*

An analysis of respondents' answers revealed that residents are most concerned about reckless drivers, stray or aggressive dogs, and aggression from individuals under the influence of alcohol or drugs. The concern about reckless drivers is justified, given that driving under the influence is one of the most frequently committed crimes in the Hyżne municipality. Additionally, residents expressed concerns about burglary, property destruction, and physical assaults, while concerns about drug trafficking and assault/robbery were less common. These factors can directly influence residents' perceptions of safety in their community, which often depend on personal experiences

and the prevalence of local threats. In addition to identifying security threats, it is essential to take steps to minimize dangerous situations and their potential consequences. The police and local government should respond appropriately to the most common threats to enhance community safety.

For question 6, "What do you think should be done to increase the level of safety in the Hyżne municipality?," respondents were allowed to choose up to three answers. The most commonly suggested measures included installing street lighting in missing areas (28%), building sidewalks or widening road shoulders (26%), and more frequent trimming of shrubs and trees encroaching on road verges (13%). Other suggested solutions were the use of radar speed displays (6%), receiving information (newsletters) about dangers in the municipality (6%), creating opportunities for anonymous reporting of criminal acts (6%), and increasing the number of pedestrian crossings (6%). Additionally, respondents mentioned the need for more police patrols (5%). The least frequently suggested solution was marking all properties without house numbers (3%). Some respondents also proposed other

* possibility to choose up to 3 answers

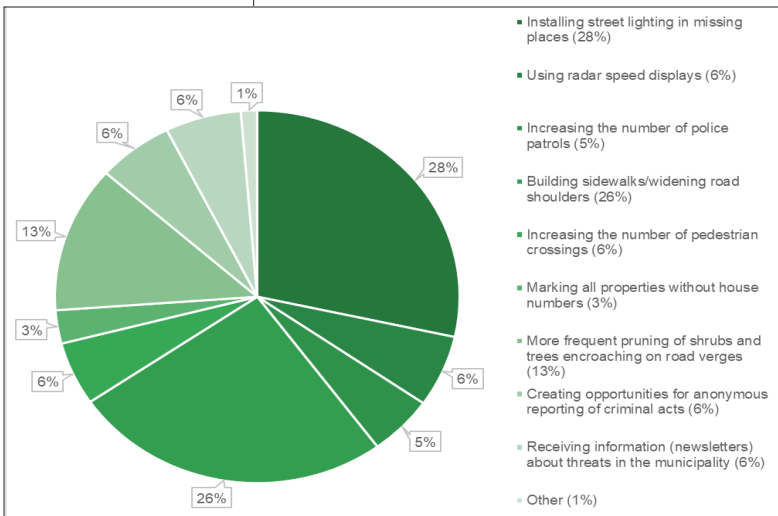
measures (1%), such as installing sectional speed measurements and speed bumps, adjusting street lighting according to weather conditions, and penalizing owners of wandering dogs.

Residents highlighted three main solutions to enhance safety in the Hyżne municipality: installing street lighting in areas where it is missing, building sidewalks or widening roadsides, and conducting more frequent pruning of shrubs and trees encroaching on roadways. The responses indicated the problems that residents face in their daily lives. Certainly, the scope of the challenges highlighted could be included in the priority action plan for the district officers. It should be noted that residents expressed a desire to receive information (newsletters) about threats in the municipality. This expectation could be met through the municipality’s website, the Hyżne Municipality Residents’ Bulletin “Dzieje się” (“What’s Happening”) or traditional leaflets and posters. Among the proposed solutions, the least popular was the idea of marking all properties without house numbers.

This response is understandable. In the Priority Action Plan for Service Areas 6 and 7 for the first six months of 2022, district officers emphasized the importance of ensuring all properties in the villages of Grzegorzówka and Wólka Hyżneńska are marked with house numbers. This plan was justified by the fact that the absence of such number plates can affect the response time of emergency services, including ambulances, the fire department, and the police. District officers also indicated that residents should be made aware of the regulations governing this issue. The distribution of responses is illustrated in Figure 6.

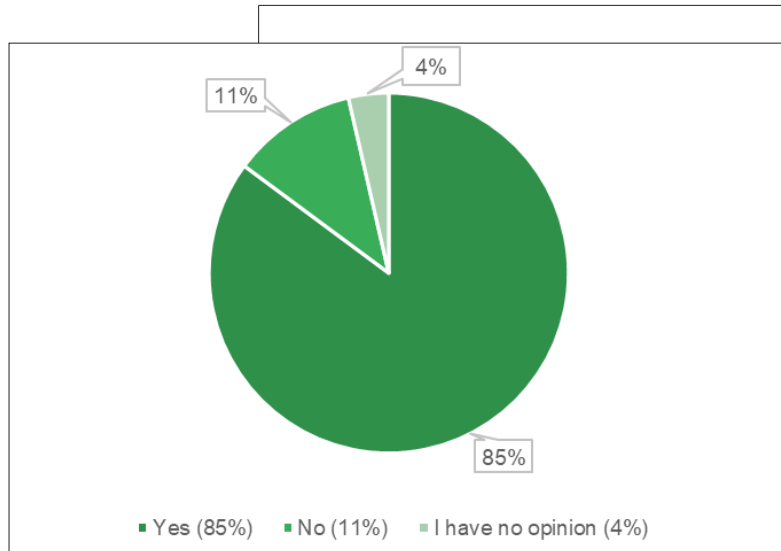
Figure 6. Respondents’ opinions on the measures to be taken to increase the level of security in the Hyżne municipality*

For question 7, “In your opinion, is monitoring an appropriate way to improve security in selected areas of the municipality?” an overwhelming majority of respondents believed that this proposal is a good solution (85%). Only 11% did not support this solution, while 28 respondents (4%) had no opinion.

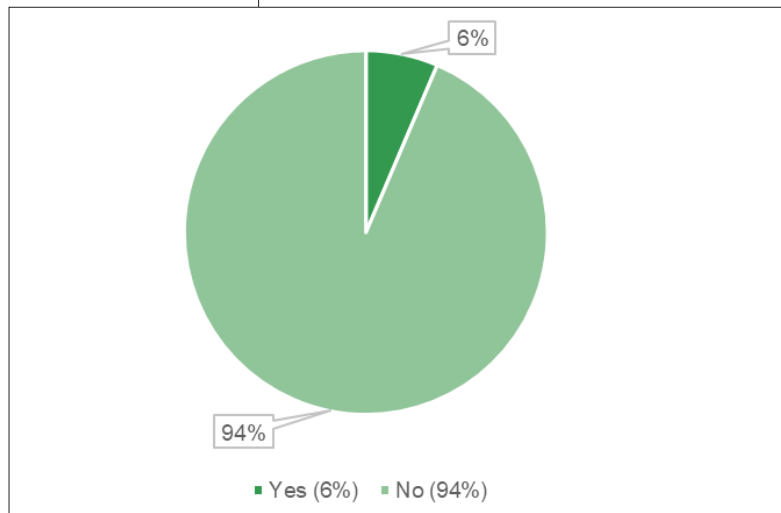


Source: Own elaboration based on the conducted survey.

* possibility to choose up to 3 answers



Source: Own elaboration based on the conducted survey.



Source: Own elaboration based on the conducted survey.

The respondents' feedback suggests that installing video surveillance in selected areas of the municipality would be an effective way to enhance security. Given the strong approval for this proposal, it would be advisable for local authorities to consider expanding the current monitoring system in the Hyżne municipality. This initiative could also involve a civic component, allowing residents to suggest specific locations where cameras should be installed. Implementing round-the-clock monitoring in key or sensitive areas could significantly improve security and, consequently, the quality of life for residents. The distribution of responses is illustrated in Figure 7.

Figure 7. Respondents' opinions on the introduction of monitoring as a way to improve security in selected areas of the municipality

For question 8, "Have you ever reported dangerous situations to the National Safety Hazard Map?," the vast majority of respondents indicated that they had never reported dangerous threats to the map (94%). Only 16 respondents (6%) answered in the affirmative. The distribution of responses is illustrated in Figure 8.

Figure 8. Respondents' opinions on whether they reported dangerous situations to the National Safety Hazard Map

The first conclusion that comes to mind is that the Hyżne municipality is perceived as safe, which might explain why residents do not report dangerous situations to the map. The second conclusion is that residents may lack awareness of the existence and function of the National Safety Hazard Map. This lack of awareness likely contributes to the limited participation in using this tool. A recom-

mentation would be to raise awareness and promote its use among the local community to encourage active participation in enhancing community safety.

Conclusion

A local community can be described as a group of people defined by territory, social interaction, and psychological bonding. Its core components are primary groups, such as families and neighbors. In this article, the author focuses on the local family community of the Hyżne municipality, providing a unique perspective on security processes within the area. The research cited in the article is treated as a pilot study, highlighting preliminary trends in the studied area.

Based on the empirical research conducted, the diagnosis and identification of community security threats in the municipality of Hyżne reveal that the vast majority of respondents rated the level of public security as good or very good. Consequently, most people were not particularly concerned about becoming victims of crime in their place of residence. However, respondents suggested that measures such as installing street lighting in areas where it is missing, building sidewalks or widening road shoulders, and more frequent trimming of shrubs and trees near road verges would be appropriate to improve security. Additionally, installing video surveillance in selected areas was also recommended. The analysis of respondents' answers indicates that the primary concerns among residents include reckless drivers, stray or roaming dogs, and aggression from individuals under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Despite their declarations, the vast majority of residents have never used a tool for cooperation with the police, such as the National Safety Hazard Map. A recommendation would be to popularize this tool among the local community.

It appears that the municipality under study lacks initiatives aimed at fostering unity within the local community. This gap could be addressed by local leaders,³⁰ including priests,³¹ as the leisure activities organized by parishes have a positive impact on forming interpersonal relationships among community members. These activities also contribute positively to the overall functioning of society by cultivating qualities such as responsibility, dedication to others, selflessness, kindness, and goodness in interpersonal relations among the faithful.³² Effectively managed leisure time can play a preventative role, potentially enhancing community security.

For future research, it would be beneficial to gather opinions from a larger number of residents to gain a more comprehensive understanding of public security perceptions in the municipality

30. I. Urych, *The Need for Leadership in Team Work. Prolegomenon*, in: *Person, Nation, State. Interdisciplinary Research in Security Studies*, eds. C. Smuniewski, A. Massa, A. Zanini, Wydawnictwo Akademii Sztuki Wojennej 2021, pp. 101–114.

31. C. Smuniewski, et al., *What to Do with Free Time? The Prospect of Strengthening Societal Security in the Opinion of Polish Theologians*, "Rocznik Teologii Katolickiej", 2023, Vol. 22, pp. 229–259.

32. *Ibidem*, p. 258.

and the role of the services responsible for maintaining it. Comparative studies involving various municipalities in Poland could also provide valuable insights and serve as a useful reference for the research conducted.

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