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Pedagogical and educational activities of front-line police officers – district officers through the prism of results of nationwide research 2019–2020

Abstract: In this article, the authors search for an answer to the question as part of a nationwide project which is being implemented. The project was introduced in two editions (2017 and 2019 years). The research was carried out on the entire population of districts in Poland. The project was part of the campaign conducted under the patronage of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration, entitled “Dzielnicowy bliżej Nas”. It assumed the promotion of a new formula of performing district service. The authors promote the concept of a district street worker. In the article, they answer, among others, whether the role of the district head should be to carry out tasks in the field of social prevention and what factors make it difficult for district workers to work in the area of social prevention.

Key words: Keywords: police, safety of local communities, district policeman, social prevention.

Can and should the Police engage in social rehabilitation? Can district officers, as front-line police officers, act as street workers in their districts? Should they be carrying out supporting activities, such as those of a street educator, outside the area of social prevention as part of their tasks? Would this be going beyond the scope of their competence? Isn't the role of the Police “only and at the same time as much as to uphold law and order?”, to make sure that this order is not disturbed, and when it is, to restore it to its previous state?

The activities carried out by the Police are, on the one hand, systemic and continuous, yet limited to the maintenance of a desired state, and on the other hand, short-lived and in response to law violations. This, however, in no way refers to pedagogical or corrective activities in the sense of social rehabilitation activities.

The Police do not carry out social rehabilitation activities. Activities exceeding the scope of basic tasks consist in supporting the activities of other services and aid institutions, but mainly in the scope of policing (such as bringing a juvenile to the family court, cooperation with school in the area of preventive classes, school interventions in response to a report, or cooperation with e.g. the Social Welfare Center).

Therefore, the question arises whether, despite the seemingly limited scope of their activity in the pedagogical sphere, the above-mentioned district officers, being the “front-line policemen” working in the field, among the inhabitants, being up-to-date with their problems, economic, social, educational situation of their children, could not carry out such activities? Should they not broaden the scope of their tasks in the so-called “official area” to include pedagogical and social rehabilitation activities? Combine their passions and interests (e.g. sports, photography, literature, etc.) with the implementation of official tasks, e.g. by conducting classes or organizing a neighborhood school for difficult youth, where they will provide them with support, be their tutor, advisor, pedagogue. Would such service of a front-line policeman, who is expected to know the neighborhood, interact with the residents and counteract undesirable phenomena, exceed their duties? Or is it just a change of the already revised formula of fulfilling the duty of a district officer? What should it look like? Is this a good direction?

These were the questions the authors of the article were trying to answer as part of their nationwide project “Dzielnicowy bliżej nas” (Eng. *District officer closer to us*). The research project assumed longitudinal studies to be conducted in two editions: in 2017 and the second study in 201, on the entire population of district officers in Poland.

The research contained multifaceted analysis of the areas of functioning of district officers, their activities, difficulties, challenges, perception of their own job, professional preparation, expectations, possibilities. The project was an element of the campaign under the patronage of the Ministry of the Interior and Administration called “Dzielnicowy bliżej nas” and aimed to promote the new formula of performing duties by district officers. These ideas were a part of the concept of bringing district officers closer to the society.

The research was to examine the current state of affairs, but also, what is particularly important, to contribute to the development of the concept of a district street worker promoted by one of the authors.¹

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¹ I. Klonowska (2018) in her publication entitled *Uspołeczniające, profilaktyczne i resocjalizacyjne funkcje Policji w perspektywie współczesnej pedagogiki resocjalizacyjnej* (Eng. Socializing, prevention and

The program “Dzielnicowy bliżej Nas”, adopted by the Minister of Interior and Administration, was supposed to be a sort of an answer to the social demand in the sphere of supporting the functioning of local communities.

Despite the fact that we live in large social groups that make up nations, with a certain accepted legal system, under rules accepted by citizens, our most important daily environment is a small local community, our “little homeland”, where all interpersonal relations take place and where prominent people can exert influence on individuals. Such “small homelands” give special significance to the so-called persons of public trust, who can exert a considerable influence on the community. Such persons can be district officers, who carry out their service by actual presence in the environment under their supervision. The authors’ assumption that a district officer MAY be such a person, however, is conditioned by the officer’s actual presence in the supervised area. In order to be a person of public trust, a district officer must truly “exist – be” in the area they supervise. To “be” there not only in official capacity but also to “be” a part of community by creating it together with its residents and sharing with them their everyday life.

The implementation of the “Dzielnicowy bliżej nas” program seemed to be a real answer to the expectations mentioned above and gave a chance to analyze the environment of district officers, their readiness to perform social prevention tasks and, as a further consequence, to function as street workers, as well as, in the long run, it was supposed to allow the researchers to work out the directions allowing for such a model of functioning. Thanks to the adopted assumptions consisting in the change of the philosophy of performing duties by a district officer, it was possible to change their current image, which often used to be joked about in the local circles – “that they are like the yeti, everybody has heard of them, but nobody has seen them”. Apart from supervising their area, the district officer should set an example, give inspiration and be a kind of guide, a pedagogue for the youth.

Finally, it was possible to actually allow the district officer to work in the field and relieve them from the pile of paperwork so that they could truly participate in the life of the local community and exercise actual supervision, so that they knew the residents of the area, their problems, family situation and social expectations, and finally, so that they could cooperate with other aid, social and educational institutions functioning in the same area and carrying out their activities with respect to the same people.

The first step towards this functioning of the district officer was the analysis of the surveys conducted in 2017. The first edition of the research was described

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social rehabilitation functions of the Police in the perspective of contemporary social rehabilitation pedagogy), described the function of a streetworker that would be performed by a district officer.

and analyzed. The aim of the second survey in 2019–2020 was to verify the possible existing trends in the areas under study and any changes found that resulted from the legal regulations introduced by the Ordinance No. 5 of the Chief of Police regarding the new formula of a district officer.² The following findings are the outcome of the second edition of the nationwide survey and represent well-established opinion in the areas studied.

Performance of social prevention tasks by a district officer

The preparation for the nationwide survey of district officers involved formulation of a set of questions concerning the scope of performance of tasks imposed on district officers as part of social prevention. The focus was also on examining the possibilities of performing those tasks and identifying the factors that facilitate and hinder it.

The question was also raised about the opportunities for a district officer to have an impact on the local society in terms of prevention. The analysis of these areas is presented below :

Area 1. Possibilities of performing social prevention tasks by a district officer.

Should the role of a district officer be to perform social prevention tasks?

Does the scope of tasks allow performance of prevention tasks?

Area 2. Factors hindering the work in the area of social prevention.

What factors hinder your work in the area of social prevention?

Area 3. Factors facilitating the work in the area of social prevention.

What factors facilitate your work in the area of social prevention?

Brief characteristics of the study group

The respondents were the entire population of district officers, whose number, like in the first edition, oscillated around 8 thousand positions. Only those surveys in which unanswered questions did not exceed 10% of the total number of questions were qualified for the final analysis. In both editions this number exceeded 5000 thousand. (first edition – 5383, second edition – 5013).

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² Ordinance No. 5 of the Chief of Police of 20 June 2016 on methods and forms of performing tasks by the district police officer and the head of district police officers (Official Journal of the General Police Headquarters item 26); Ordinance No. 6 of the Chief of Police of 21 February 2017 amending the ordinance on methods and forms of performing tasks by a district police officer and the head of district police officers (Official Journal of the General Police Headquarters item 12).

As far as socio-demographic characteristics are concerned, the second survey included questions about the respondent's gender (question 36), age (question 37), education (question 38), place of service (question 39), length of service in the Police (question 40) and how long has the respondent been a district police officer (question 41).

The image of the surveyed areas is as follows: Men constituted about 90% of all the surveyed district officers, while women – about 10%, which clearly shows that it is mainly male police officers who perform the tasks of district officers. Most of the district officers are between 31 and 40 years old. The majority of district officers have secondary education, although the number of those with higher education is increasing. The most numerous group among the respondents, as far as the place of service is concerned, are district officers in cities with the population from 5,000 to 50,000 inhabitants.

The most numerous group of district officers in terms of the length of their service were policemen with 11–15 years of service (in total in the Police), while the second place belonged to policemen with 6–10 years of service. Both of these ranges clearly indicate that the district officers are experienced police officers, who are in permanent service and have already worked in the Police in other positions. The respondents most often indicated that they have served for 5 to 10 years only as district officers alone. It can be assumed that the experience gained in the position of a district officer allows to formulate well-established opinions about this service, its advantages and disadvantages and, what is particularly important, about the possibilities of performing the tasks in the existing and new areas.

Considering the subject matter of the article, special attention should be paid to the questions concerning the activity of district officers in the field of social prevention, on the basis of which a district officer could perform the function of a street worker suggested by one of the authors of the research (Klonowska 2018), assuming that the research would confirm the effectiveness and validity of their activity in the field of social prevention. The answer lies in the analysis of selected questions from the survey.

Analysis of answers to the question: **Should the role of a district officer be to perform social prevention tasks?**

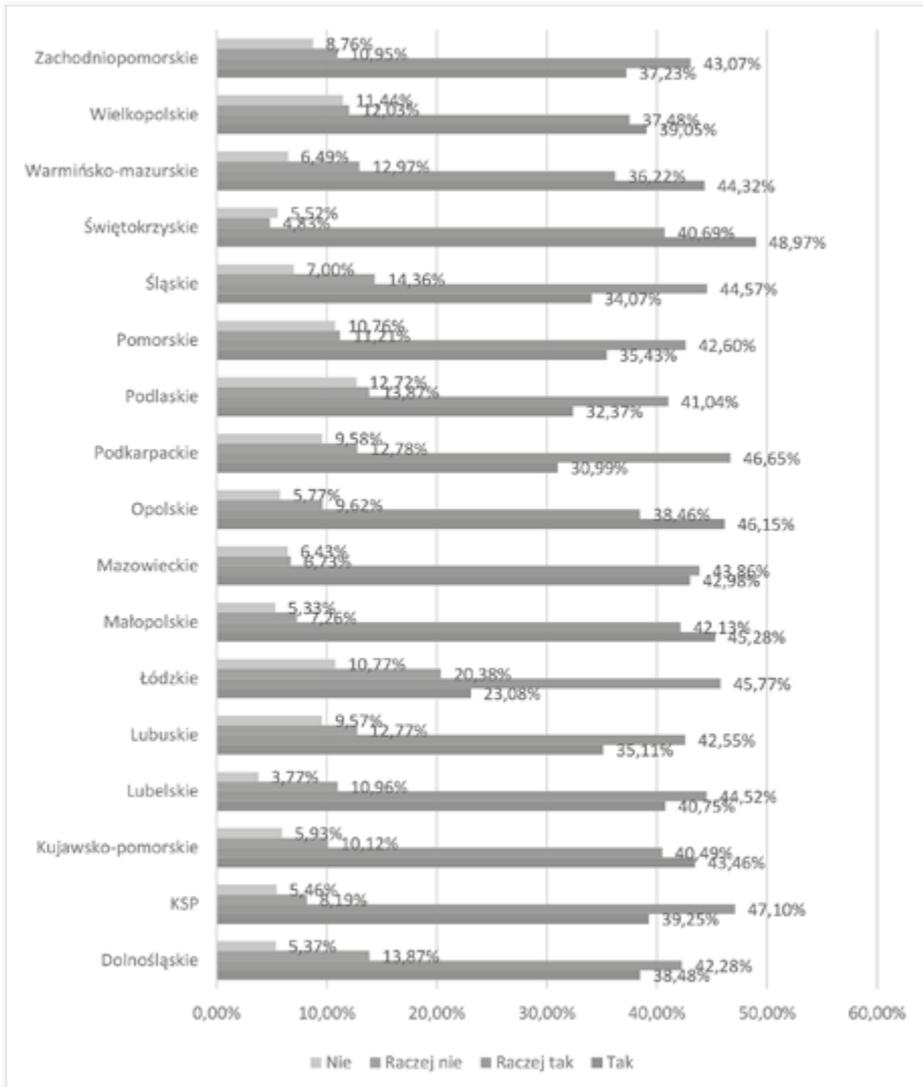
The question if the role of a district officer, in the opinion of the respondents, should be the performance of social prevention tasks, was answered in the affirmative by 38.44% of the surveyed, i.e. almost 2 thousand respondents (1927). Almost half of the surveyed district officers nationwide (42.53%, i.e. 2132 respondents) answered “Rather yes”, which gives the total of 80.97%. On the other hand, only 11.49% of the respondents (576) stated that the role of a district officer rather should not be to perform social prevention tasks, and 7.54% of the surveyed (378) think that the role of a district officer should not be to perform social prevention tasks. The above indicates that the percentage share of “Yes” and “Rather yes” answers is 80.97%, while the percentage share of “No” and “Rather

no” is 19.03%, and thus 4/5 of the respondents believe that the role of a district officer “should be” and “rather should be” the performance of social prevention tasks, and only 1/5 thinks that the role of a district officer “should not be” and “rather should not be” the performance of social prevention tasks.

The percentage and number distribution of the “Rather yes” answer is as follows: the highest percentage – almost half of the respondents (47.10%, i.e. 138 respondents) is of the opinion that the role of a district officer “rather should be” to perform social prevention tasks (capital city garrison), the second place was taken by the Podkarpackie voivodeship (46.54%, i.e. 146 respondents) and the third place by the Łódzkie voivodeship (45.77%, i.e. 119 respondents). The percentage results show unequivocally that the district officers are willing to perform social prevention activities as part of the scope of their tasks. They understand the need and see the sense of such tasks. It is undoubtedly a result of their experience and observations. It seems to be the right foundation for building the role of district officers in local communities.

Table 1. Answers to the question: *In your opinion, can a district officer effectively influence the local society in the field of prevention?* (on a nationwide scale N = 5013). Authors’ own research

Voivodeship	Yes	%	Rather yes	%	Rather no	%	No	%	Total
Dolnośląskie	172	38.48	189	42.28	62	13.87	24	5.37	447
Capital City Police Headquarters	115	39.25	138	47.10	24	8.19	16	5.46	293
Kujawsko-Pomorskie	176	43.46	164	40.49	41	10.12	24	5.93	405
Lubelskie	119	40.75	130	44.52	32	10.96	11	3.77	292
Lubuskie	33	35.11	40	42.55	12	12.77	9	9.57	94
Łódzkie	60	23.08	119	45.77	53	20.38	28	10.77	260
Małopolskie	187	45.28	174	42.13	30	7.26	22	5.33	413
Mazowieckie	147	42.98	150	43.86	23	6.73	22	6.43	342
Opolskie	48	46.15	40	38.46	10	9.62	6	5.77	104
Podkarpackie	97	30.99	146	46.65	40	12.78	30	9.58	313
Podlaskie	56	32.37	71	41.04	24	13.87	22	12.72	173
Pomorskie	79	35.43	95	42.60	25	11.21	24	10.76	223
Śląskie	185	34.07	242	44.57	78	14.36	38	7.00	543
Świętokrzyskie	71	48.97	59	40.69	7	4.83	8	5.52	145
Warmińsko-Mazurskie	82	44.32	67	36.22	24	12.97	12	6.49	185
Wielkopolskie	198	39.05	190	37.48	61	12.03	58	11.44	507
Zachodniopomorskie	102	37.23	118	43.07	30	10.95	24	8.76	274
TOTAL	1,927	38.44	2,132	42.53	576	11.49	378	7.54	5,013



KSP – Capital City Police Headquarters; Nie – No; Raczej nie – Rather no; Raczej tak – Rather yes; Tak – Yes

Graph 1. Answers to the question: *In your opinion, can a district officer effectively influence the local society in the field of prevention?* (on a nationwide scale N = 5013).
Authors' own research

Another question regarding the scope of social prevention activities is the issue of factors facilitating the implementation of such activities.

Responses to the question: Does the scope of tasks of a district officer allow performance of prevention tasks?

The district officers answered the question whether the scope of their tasks allows the performance of prevention tasks. The affirmative answer was given by 15.36% of the surveyed (770 respondents), while almost half of the participants (45.10%, i.e. 2261 respondents) are of the opinion that the scope of tasks of a district officer “rather allows” the performance of prevention tasks. In contrast, a quarter of the respondents (25.95%, i.e. 1301 respondents) believe that the scope of tasks of district officers “rather does not allow” the performance of prevention tasks. On the other hand, 13.59% of the surveyed (681 respondents) stated that the scope of tasks of a district officer “does not allow” the performance of prevention tasks.

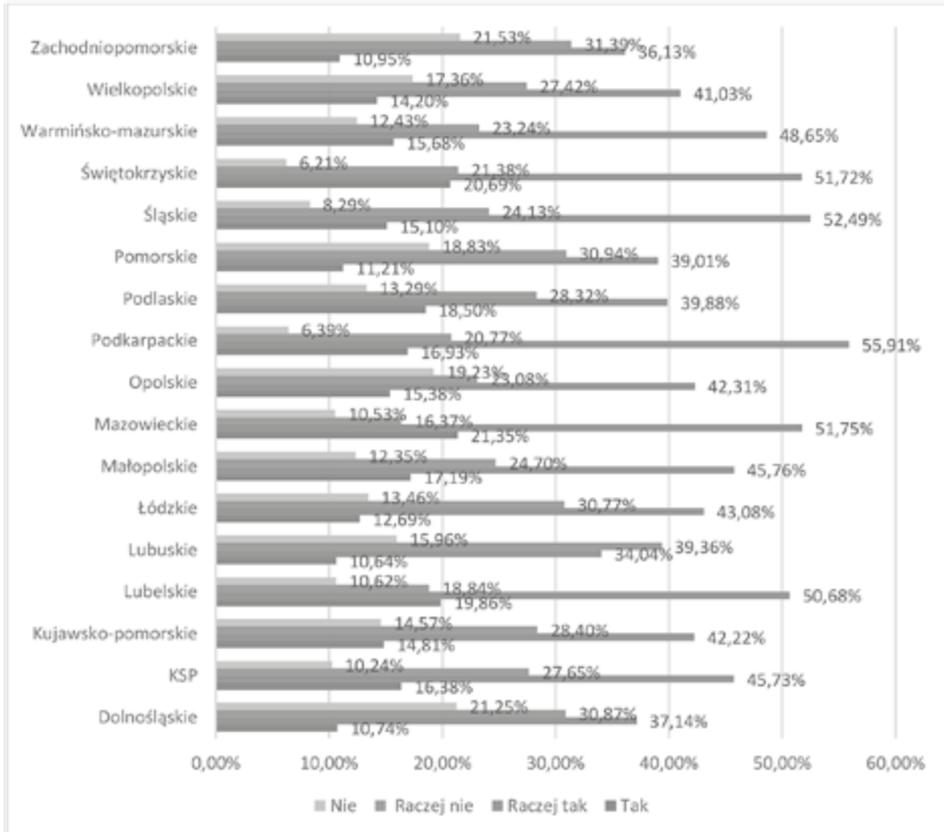
In conclusion, 60.46% of the participants (3031 respondents) stated that the scope of tasks performed by district officers “allows the performance of tasks” in the field of prevention and “rather allows the performance of tasks” in the field of prevention. Meanwhile 39.54% of the surveyed (1982 respondents) claimed that the scope of tasks performed by district officers “rather does not allow the performance of tasks” in the field of prevention and “does not allow the performance of tasks” in the field of prevention.

The highest percentage of affirmative answers was given in Mazowieckie – 21,35% (73) and in Świętokrzyskie voivodeship – 20,69% (30). The percentage of respondents lower than 16% was recorded for the following voivodeships: Kujawsko-Pomorskie (14.81% (60), Wielkopolskie (14.20% (72), Łódzkie (12.69% (33)), Pomorskie (11.21% (25), Zachodniopomorskie (10.95% (30)). The lowest percentage of answers explicitly confirming that the scope of tasks performed by a district officer allows the performance of prevention tasks was observed in the Dolnośląskie (10.74% (48)) and Lubuskie (10.64% (10) voivodeships.

The highest percentage of answers indicating that the scope of tasks of a district officer rather allows the performance of social prevention tasks was recorded for the Podkarpackie voivodeship 55.91% (175), the second place in terms of percentage of respondents is held by the Śląskie voivodeship (52.49% (285), and the third place by Mazowieckie voivodeship (51.75% (177). The answer “rather no” was given by 39.36% (37) of respondents in the Lubuskie voivodeship, eight percentage points less – in the Zachodniopomorskie voivodeship (31.39% (86)), Dolnośląskie (30.87% (138)), Łódzkie (30.77% (80)), and Pomorskie voivodeship (30.94% (69).

Part of the participants were of the opinion that the scope of tasks of a district officer “does not allow the performance of tasks” in the field of social

prevention. This was expressed by 21.53% (59) of the respondents from the Zachodniopomorskie voivodeship – 21.25% (95) of the surveyed, from the Opolskie voivodeship (19.23% (20), Pomorskie (18.83% (42), Wielkopolskie (17.36% (88) and Lubuskie voivodeship (15.96% (15).



KSP – Capital City Police Headquarters; Nie – No; Raczej nie – Rather no; Raczej tak – Rather yes; Tak – Yes

Graph 2. Answers to the question: Does the scope of tasks of a district officer allow performance of prevention tasks? (on a nationwide scale N = 5383). Authors' own research

Table 2. Answers to the question: Does the scope of tasks of a district officer allow performance of prevention tasks? (on a nationwide scale N = 5383). Authors' own research

Voivodeship	Yes	%	Rather yes	%	Rather no	%	No	%	Total
Dolnośląskie	48	10.74	166	37.14	138	30.87	95	21.25	447
Capital City Police Headquarters	48	16.38	134	45.73	81	27.65	30	10.24	293
Kujawsko-Pomorskie	60	14.81	171	42.22	115	28.40	59	14.57	405
Lubelskie	58	19.86	148	50.68	55	18.84	31	10.62	292
Lubuskie	10	10.64	32	34.04	37	39.36	15	15.96	94
Łódzkie	33	12.69	112	43.08	80	30.77	35	13.46	260
Małopolskie	71	17.19	189	45.76	102	24.70	51	12.35	413
Mazowieckie	73	21.35	177	51.75	56	16.37	36	10.53	342
Opolskie	16	15.38	44	42.31	24	23.08	20	19.23	104
Podkarpackie	53	16.93	175	55.91	65	20.77	20	6.39	313
Podlaskie	32	18.50	69	39.88	49	28.32	23	13.29	173
Pomorskie	25	11.21	87	39.01	69	30.94	42	18.83	223
Śląskie	82	15.10	285	52.49	131	24.13	45	8.29	543
Świętokrzyskie	30	20.69	75	51.72	31	21.38	9	6.21	145
Warmińsko-Mazurskie	29	15.68	90	48.65	43	23.24	23	12.43	185
Wielkopolskie	72	14.20	208	41.03	139	27.42	88	17.36	507
Zachodniopomorskie	30	10.95	99	36.13	86	31.39	59	21.53	274
TOTAL	770	15.36	2,261	45.10	1,301	25.95	681	13.59	5,013

In relation to the possibility of performing the tasks of social prevention in their positions, the district officers most often indicated “rather yes”, which may result on one hand from their readiness to perform such activities, and on the other hand from the awareness of the existing limitations that hinder the performance of their duties. Despite the introduction of the new formula of the work of a district officer there is still a lot to be done. Nowadays, a district officer can actively fulfill most of their duties in the area they supervise, but this is still of a formal character and does not include activities that could systemically and permanently change the attitudes of young people. The respondents referred to the currently performed activities, which include visits to schools, lectures, talks and meetings with the local community, as well as cooperation with aid institutions, rather than performance of tasks in the field that involve permanent participation in the local community. However, it can be assumed that with the proper establishment of working/service conditions this would be possible, especially that the district officers are aware of their own role.

Another area studied was the identification of factors that hinder social prevention work.

Question 10. What factors hinder your work in the area of social prevention?

Among the factors that hinder the work of a district officer in the field of social prevention, the respondents named: 1 – Excessive duties; 2 – Reluctance of citizens to cooperate with the district officer; 3 – Insufficient financial resources; 4 – Lack of time; 5 – Insufficient number of district officers; 6 – Lack of training.

The factor of “excessive duties”

More than half of the respondents nationwide (58.07%, i.e., 2911 respondents) stated that the factor that hinders their work in the field of social prevention is “excessive duties”. Less than 10% of participants (9,44%, i.e. 473 respondents) declared that such factor is “reluctance of citizens to cooperate with the district officer”. 10.97% of the surveyed (550 respondents), on the other hand, claimed that the factor that hinders the work of district officers in the field of social prevention is “insufficient financial resources”. The factor of “lack of time” was selected by less than 10% of the respondents (9.99%, 501). Even smaller percentage of the surveyed (6.68% i.e. 335 respondents) stated that the factor which hinders the work of district officers in the field of social prevention is “insufficient number of district officers”. Only 4.85% i.e. 243 respondents indicated that the factor which hinders the work of district officers in the field of social prevention is “lack of training”.

None of the voivodeships recorded answers within the percentage area of less than 46% for the statements that excessive duties are a factor that hinders the work of a district officer in the field of community prevention.

The factor of „reluctance of citizens to cooperate with the district officer”

The percentage share of answers pointing to the factor of „reluctance of citizens to cooperate with the district officer” is much lower than the percentage share of answers pointing to the „excessive duties” factor. The highest percentage share of such answers was observed in the Śląskie voivodeship and it constituted only (16,57% (90), followed by the Warmińsko-Mazurskie (15,68% (29), and Łódzkie voivodeship (15,00% (39).

The factor of „insufficient financial resources”

The factor of „insufficient financial resources” was indicated by respondents of Podkarpackie (15.65% (49), Śląskie (14.92% (81), Lubelskie (14.73% (43), Wielkopolskie (14.40% (73), Warmińsko-Mazurskie (14.05% (26), Mazowieckie (12.57% (43), Podlaskie (10.98% (19), Kujawsko-Pomorskie (10.86% (44), Łódzkie (10.77% (28), Opolskie (10.58% (11), and Świętokrzyskie voivodeship

(10.34% (15)). In the remaining voivodeships, the percentage of answers indicating the factor of „insufficient financial resources” as the factor that hinders the work in the field of social prevention was less than 10%, in particular: in the Lubuskie voivodeship (9.57%(9), the capital city garrison (7.85%(23), the Pomorskie (7.62%(17), Małopolskie (7.02% (29) and Zachodniopomorskie voivodeships (6.20% (17) and – the lowest percentage – in the Dolnośląskie voivodeship – 5.15% (23).

The factor of „lack of time”

The factor of “lack of time” was not indicated by more than 19% of respondents in any voivodeship. Most of such answers were observed in the Lubuskie voivodeship – 18.09% (17), the Kujawsko-Pomorskie voivodeship (14.07% (57), and the third result was recorded in the Świętokrzyskie voivodeship (13.79% (20).

The factor of „insufficient number of district officers”

The factor of „insufficient number of district officers” was mentioned in the statements of district officers, but the percentage of opinions of this type was not greater than 17%, in particular: in the capital city garrison – 16.04% (47), in the Dolnośląskie voivodeship – 8.72% (39), in the Łódzkie voivodeship – 8,85% (23).

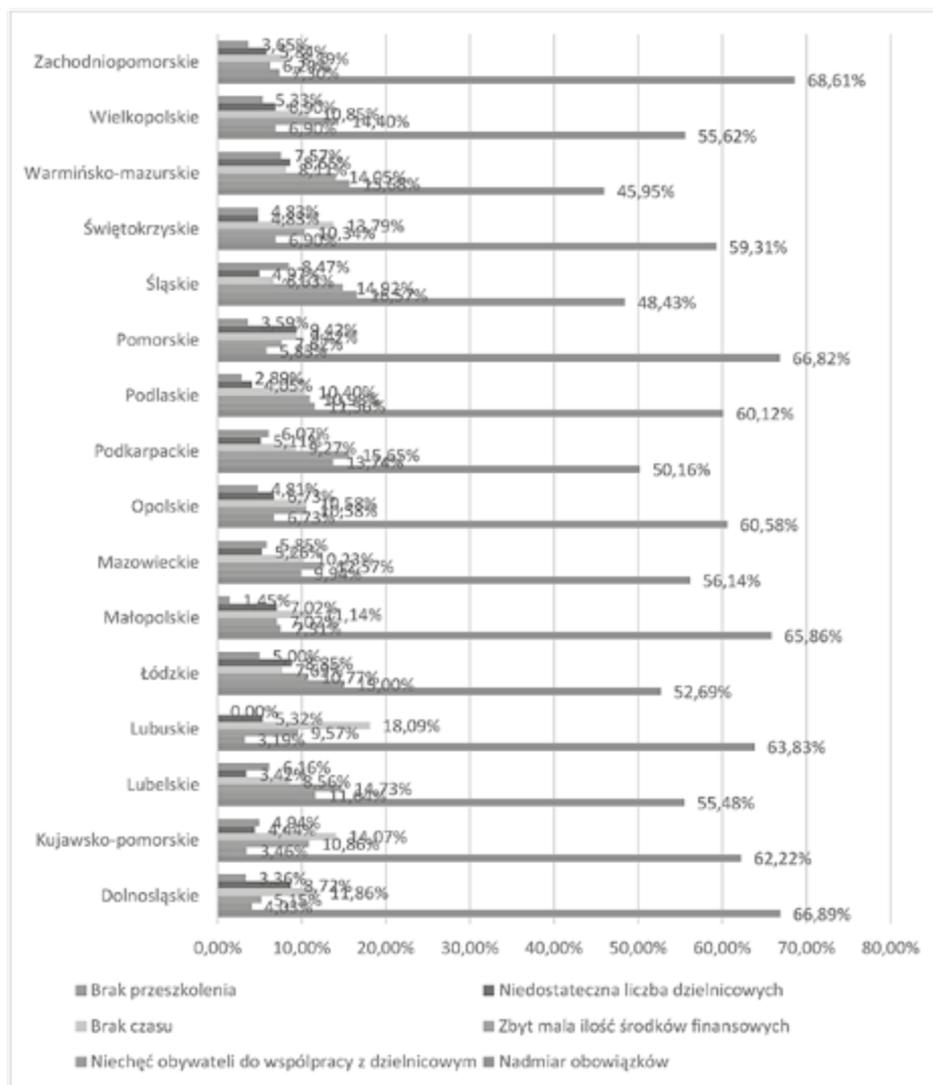
The factor of “lack of training”

In none of the voivodeships the percentage of answers indicating the lack of training as a factor hampering the district officer’s work in the field of social prevention was higher than 8.5% and amounted to: in the Śląskie voivodeship – 8.47% (46), in the Warmińsko-Mazurskie voivodeship – 7.57% (14), in the Lubelskie voivodeship – 6.16% (18). In the remaining voivodeships the percentage of answers indicating the factor of “lack of training” as a factor hampering the district officer’s work in the field of social prevention was less than 5%, in particular: the Kujawsko-Pomorskie voivodeship – 4.94% (20), Świętokrzyskie voivodeship – 4.83% (7), Opolskie voivodeship – 4.81% (5), Zachodniopomorskie voivodeship – 3.65% (10), Pomorskie voivodeship – 3.59% (8), capital city garrison – 3.41% (10), Dolnośląskie voivodeship – 3.36% (15), Podlaskie voivodeship – 2.89% (5), Małopolskie voivodeship – 1.45% (6). None of the respondents in the Lubuskie voivodeship identified the factor of “lack of training” as a factor that hinders the social prevention work of a district officer.

Table 3. Responses to the question: *What factors hinder your work in the field of social prevention?* (on a nationwide scale N = 5013). Authors' own research

Voivodeship		1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
Dolnośląskie	Number	299	18	23	53	39	15	447
	%	66.89	4.03	5.15	11.86	8.72	3.36	
Capital City Police Headquarters	Number	160	33	23	20	47	10	293
	%	54.61	11.26	7.85	6.83	16.04	3.41	
Kujawsko-Pomorskie	Number	252	14	44	57	18	20	405
	%	62.22	3.46	10.86	14.07	4.44	4.94	
Lubelskie	Number	162	34	43	25	10	18	292
	%	55.48	11.64	14.73	8.56	3.42	6.16	
Lubuskie	Number	60	3	9	17	5	0	94
	%	63.83	3.19	9.57	18.09	5.32	0.00	
Łódzkie	Number	137	39	28	20	23	13	260
	%	52.69	15.00	10.77	7.69	8.85	5.00	
Małopolskie	Number	272	31	29	46	29	6	413
	%	65.86	7.51	7.02	11.14	7.02	1.45	
Mazowieckie	Number	192	34	43	35	18	20	342
	%	56.14	9.94	12.57	10.23	5.26	5.85	
Opolskie	Number	63	7	11	11	7	5	104
	%	60.58	6.73	10.58	10.58	6.73	4.81	
Podkarpackie	Number	157	43	49	29	16	19	313
	%	50.16	13.74	15.65	9.27	5.11	6.07	
Podlaskie	Number	104	20	19	18	7	5	173
	%	60.12	11.56	10.98	10.40	4.05	2.89	
Pomorskie	Number	149	13	17	21	15	8	223
	%	66.82	5.83	7.62	9.42	6.73	3.59	
Śląskie	Number	263	90	81	36	27	46	543
	%	48.43	16.57	14.92	6.63	4.97	8.47	
Świętokrzyskie	Number	86	10	15	20	7	7	145
	%	59.31	6.90	10.34	13.79	4.83	4.83	
Warmińsko-Mazurskie	Number	85	29	26	15	16	14	185
	%	45.95	15.68	14.05	8.11	8.65	7.57	
Wielkopolskie	Number	282	35	73	55	35	27	507
	%	55.62	6.90	14.40	10.85	6.90	5.33	

Zachodniopomorskie	Number	188	20	17	23	16	10	274
	%	68.61	7.30	6.20	8.39	5.84	3.65	
TOTAL		2,911	473	550	501	335	243	5,013
		58.07	9.44	10.97	9.99	6.68	4.85	100%



Brak przeszkolenia – Lack of training; Brak czasu – Lack of time; Niechęć obywateli do współpracy z dzielnicowym – Reluctance of citizens to cooperate with the district officer; Niedostateczna liczba dzielnicowych – Insufficient number of district officers; Zbyt mała ilość środków finansowych – Insufficient financial resources

Graph 3. Answers to the question: *What factors hinder your work in the field of social prevention?* (on a nationwide scale N = 5013). Authors' own research.

Responses to the question: **What factors facilitate your work in the area of social prevention?**

In the first place among the factors facilitating the work of district officers in the field of social prevention nationwide the district officers mentioned “reduction in the scope of duties” – 66.31% (3324 respondents). The second place – 23.50% (1178 respondents). The factor of public interest in communication with the district officer was indicated in the third place by 10.19% (511 respondents).

The factor of “reduction in the scope of duties”

None of the voivodeships recorded the percentage of answers indicating the factor of “reduction in the scope of duties” as a factor that would facilitate the work of a district officer in the field of social prevention lower than 50%. Therefore, in each of the provinces, more than half of the district officers indicated this factor as the one that could facilitate their work in the field of social prevention. The highest percentage of answers indicating this factor was in the Dolnośląskie voivodship, where it was identified by almost 4/5 of the respondents – 79.87% (357). Slightly more than ¾ of respondents pointed to this factor in the Lubuskie, – 77.66% (73), and in the Małopolskie voivodeship – 76.27% (315).

The factor of “public interest in communication with the district officer”

In none of the voivodeships the percentage share of answers identifying the factor of “public interest in communication with the district officer” as facilitating the district officer’s work in the field of social prevention was more than 20%, and in particular: in the Warmińsko-Mazurskie voivodeship – 14.59% (27), Lubelskie voivodeship – 14.04% (41), Łódzkie voivodeship – 14.62% (38), the capital city garrison – 13.99% (41), Śląskie voivodeship – 13.81% (75), Podlaskie voivodeship – 11.56% (20), Podkarpackie voivodeship – 10.54% (33), Mazowieckie voivodeship – 10.53% (36). In the remaining voivodeships the percentage of answers indicating this factor was less than 10%, in particular: the Małopolskie – 9.20% (38), Wielkopolskie – 9.07% (46), Świętokrzyskie – 8.97% (13), Zachodniopomorskie – 8.39% (23), Kujawsko-Pomorskie – 6.67% (27), Lubuskie – 6.38% (6), Dolnośląskie – 6.26% (28), Pomorskie – 5.83% (13) and Opolskie voivodeship – 5.77% (6).

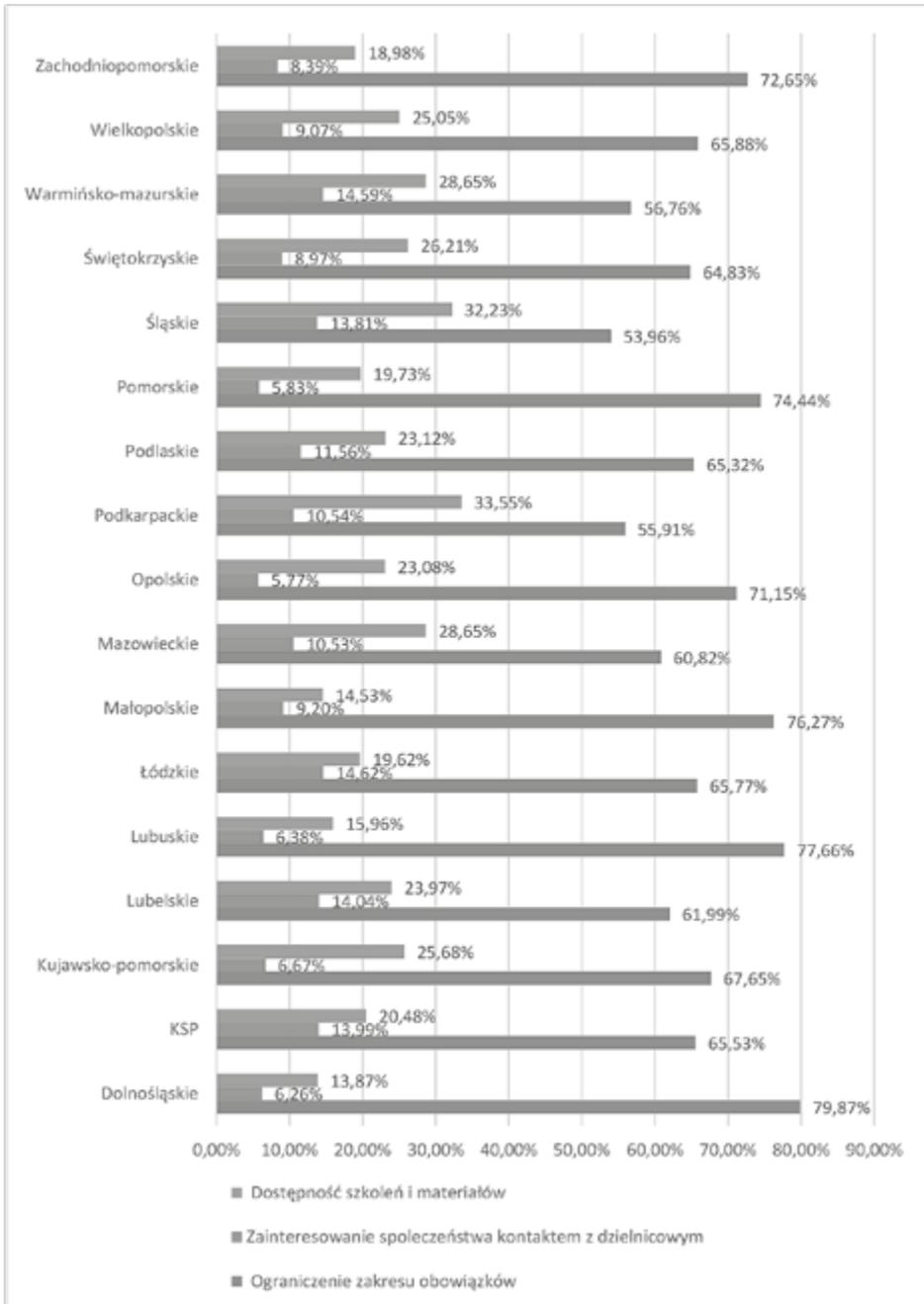
The factor of “availability of training and resources”

The factor “Availability of training and materials” appeared in the statements of the district officers, but the percentage of answers in none of the provinces exceeded 34%, and in particular: the Podkarpackie – 33.55% (105), Śląskie – 32.23% (175), Mazowieckie – 28.65% (98), Warmińsko-Mazurskie – 28.65% (53), Zachodniopomorskie – 18.98% (52), Lubuskie – 15.96% (15), Małopolskie – 14.53% (60) and Dolnośląskie voivodeship – 13.87% (62).

Table 4. Answers to the question: *What factors facilitate your work in the field of social prevention?* (on a nationwide scale N = 5013). Authors' own research

Voivodeship	1*	%	2	%	3	%	Total
Dolnośląskie	357	79.87	28	6.26	62	13.87	447
Capital City Police Headquarters	192	65.53	41	13.99	60	20.48	293
Kujawsko-Pomorskie	274	67.65	27	6.67	104	25.68	405
Lubelskie	181	61.99	41	14.04	70	23.97	292
Lubuskie	73	77.66	6	6.38	15	15.96	94
Łódzkie	171	65.77	38	14.62	51	19.62	260
Małopolskie	315	76.27	38	9.20	60	14.53	413
Mazowieckie	208	60.82	36	10.53	98	28.65	342
Opolskie	74	71.15	6	5.77	24	23.08	104
Podkarpackie	175	55.91	33	10.54	105	33.55	313
Podlaskie	113	65.32	20	11.56	40	23.12	173
Pomorskie	166	74.44	13	5.83	44	19.73	223
Śląskie	293	53.96	75	13.81	175	32.23	543
Świętokrzyskie	94	64.83	13	8.97	38	26.21	145
Warmińsko-Mazurskie	105	56.76	27	14.59	53	28.65	185
Wielkopolskie	334	65.88	46	9.07	127	25.05	507
Zachodniopomorskie	199	72.63	23	8.39	52	18.98	274
TOTAL	3,324	66.31	511	10.19	1,178	23.50	5,013

* 1 – Reduction in the scope of duties; 2 – Public interest in communication with the district officer;
3 – Availability of training and resources



KSP – Capital City Police Headquarters; Dostępność szkoleń i materiałów – Availability of training and materials; Zainteresowanie społeczeństwa kontaktem z dzielnicowym – Public interest in communication with the district officer; Ograniczenie zakresu obowiązków – Reduction in the scope of duties

Graph 4. Responses to the question: *What factors facilitate your work in the field of social prevention?* (on a nationwide scale N = 5013). Authors' own research.

Conclusions

This paper presents the analysis of the answers to the questions concerning the scope of performance of social prevention tasks by district officers (possibilities of performance of social prevention tasks by district officers, factors hindering and facilitating their work in the field of social prevention). The percentage results of the answers clearly show that the district officers are convinced that their role should be to carry out tasks in the field of social prevention and they see the relevance of such tasks. This constitutes a proper foundation for building the role of a district officer in local communities.

As many as 4/5 of the respondents believe that it “should be” and “rather should be” the role of a district officer to perform social prevention tasks, and only 1/5 believe that it “should not be” and “rather should not be” the role of a district officer to perform social prevention tasks. Thus, the percentage of the “Yes” and “Rather yes” answers is 80.97%, while the percentage of the “No” and “Rather no” answers amount to 19.03%.

When asked if the scope of their tasks allows the performance of prevention tasks, 60.46% of the participants (3031 respondents) stated that the scope of tasks performed by district officers “allows the performance of tasks” in the field of prevention and “rather allows the performance of tasks” in the field of prevention. Meanwhile 39.54% of the surveyed (1982 respondents) claimed that the scope of tasks performed by district officers “rather does not allow the performance of tasks” in the field of prevention and “does not allow the performance of tasks” in the field of prevention. The highest percentage of affirmative answers was given in Mazowieckie – 21,35% (73) and in Świętokrzyskie voivodeship – 20,69% (30). The percentage of respondents lower than 16% was recorded for the following voivodeships: Kujawsko-Pomorskie, Wielkopolskie, Łódzkie, Pomorskie and Zachodniopomorskie.

The highest percentage of answers indicating that the scope of tasks of a district officer rather allows the performance of social prevention tasks was recorded for the Podkarpackie voivodeship, the second place in terms of percentage of respondents is held by the Śląskie voivodeship, and the third place by the Mazowieckie voivodeship.

Part of the participants were of the opinion that the scope of tasks of a district officer “does not allow the performance of tasks” in the field of social prevention (in the Zachodniopomorskie, Opolskie, Pomorskie, Wielkopolskie and Lubuskie voivodeships).

Among the factors that hinder the work of a district officer in the field of social prevention, the respondents named: 1 – Excessive duties; 2 – Reluctance of citizens to cooperate with the district officer; 3 – Insufficient financial resources; 4 – Lack of time; 5 – Insufficient number of district officers; 6 – Lack of training.

More than half of the respondents nationwide (58.07%, i.e., 2911 respondents) stated that the factor that hinders their work in the field of social prevention is “excessive duties”. Less than 10% of participants (9,44%, i.e. 473 respondents) declared that such factor is “reluctance of citizens to cooperate with the district officer”. 10.97% of the surveyed (550 respondents), on the other hand, claimed that the factor that hinders the work of district officers in the field of social prevention is “insufficient financial resources”. The factor of “lack of time” was selected by less than 10% of the respondents (9.99%, 501). Even smaller percentage of the surveyed (6.68% i.e. 335 respondents) stated that the factor which hinders the work of district officers in the field of social prevention is “insufficient number of district officers”. Only 4.85% i.e. 243 respondents indicated that the factor which hinders the work of district officers in the field of social prevention is “lack of training”. In none of the voivodeships the percentage of answers indicating the lack of training as a factor hampering the district officer’s work in the field of social prevention was higher than 8.5%.

In the first place among the factors facilitating the work of district officers in the field of social prevention nationwide the district officers mentioned “reduction in the scope of duties” – 66.31% (3324 respondents). The second place – 23.50% (1178 respondents). The factor of public interest in communication with the district officer was indicated in the third place by 10.19% (511 respondents). None of the voivodeships recorded the percentage of answers indicating the factor of “reduction in the scope of duties” as a factor that would facilitate the work of a district officer in the field of social prevention lower than 50%. None of the voivodeships recorded the percentage of answers indicating the factor of “public interest in communication with the district officer” as a factor that would facilitate the work of a district officer in the field of social prevention of more than 20%. The factor of “availability of training and resources” appeared in the statements of the district officers, however, the percentage of the answer in none of the provinces was more than 34%, with the highest score of 33.55% (105) in the Podkarpackie voivodeship and the lowest in the Dolnośląskie voivodeship with 13.87% (62).

A district officer, while performing social prevention tasks, diagnoses and identifies local threats, as well as indicates the directions of social prevention activities. They initiate projects in the field of social prevention and cooperate with local government units, as well as other non-police entities, taking part in many joint initiatives.

The task of a district officer is also to carry out prevention events and programs. The scope of social prevention includes also counteracting domestic violence. Moreover, they undertake activities aimed at helping victims of crime and provide them with counselling.

The district officer who is properly prepared for work/service, equipped with knowledge and relieved from paperwork in favor of building actual bonds

and relations with supervised area, and who has the possibility of providing real support to young people by launching interesting initiatives, can become a person of public trust in their area, as well as a mentor, advisor, teacher and to some extent carry out tasks typical for a street educator. This, of course, requires many further efforts and regulations, including adaptation of the philosophy of service and the provisions of law to the even greater participation of a district officer in the life of the community in which they work. The studies undertaken within the framework of a several-year research project are described in the paper only as far as the sphere of activities in the field of prevention is concerned, but the overall material will allow to formulate recommendations and changes leading to the real possibility of increasing the impact the district officer has in their area of duty.

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