
PERCEPTION OF THE REALITY AND THE SENSE OF THE PERSONAL SECURITY OF THE DISPOSABLE GROUPS OF THE SOCIETY

Paweł Wasilewski*

*The General Tadeusz Kościuszko Military Academy of Land Forces
ul. Czajkowskiego 109, 51-150 Wrocław, Poland
Telephone (+48)71 7856 530
E-mail: pawelwas@onet.pl*

Annotation. In their perception of reality people can't avoid personal context. In this process, emotions are assigned to the reality that is perceived. This distorts the world that appear to our senses. This distortions are the result of the past experiences, current mood, use of the attributions and – although this element has been omitted in the previous studies – the perception of time. The way in which we see the world around us, and especially our interpretation of incoming stimuli, have a primary influence on the creation of a sense of fear. Moreover, the perceived level of fear determines the way we perceive the world around us. This leads to a vicious circle which affect the individual sense of security. The lack of fulfillment of the need for security affects human life and development and is now one of the most important problems facing whole society and individual human beings. This is particularly true for the members of social groups involved in providing safety for the public.

Keywords: safety, disposable groups, personal security, perception of time

INTRODUCTION

The reality, which we believe is perceived objectively, will always include the element of subjectivity. This is because of our senses which perceive our internal and the external world and which give an emotional tone to our impressions.

The specific and individual way of perceiving the world around us influences also our functioning. The perception of the external world is distorted by our previous experiences, gender, current mood, use of the attributions and our frame of mind. Reception of the outside world has also a direct influence on the sense of security. The desire to satisfy the need for security is essential for life and development. The human right to live safely is today one of the most important issues faced by people and communities on a global and local scale as well as in individual dimension. Sense of security has an individual dimension¹, which manifests itself in the subjective and pessimistic assessment shared by a majority of the residents of the

¹ S. Dworecki, Wybrane problemy kształtowania bezpieczeństwa narodowego, „Zeszyty Naukowe AON”, no. 1, Warszawa 1995; J. Stańczyk, Współczesne pojmowanie bezpieczeństwa, Warszawa 1996, p. 28; R. Zięba, Kategorie bezpieczeństwa w nauce o stosunkach międzynarodowych, [in:] Bezpieczeństwo narodowe i międzynarodowe u schyłku XX w., Warszawa 1997, p. 23; M. Cieślarczyk, Współczesne rozumienie bezpieczeństwa i obronności, „Zeszyt Problemy” 2001, no. 3, p. 5-19.

surveyed countries, who see the time of their lives as less safe in comparison to the other time periods in the history².

PERCEPTION AND REALITY CREATION

The contemporary development of the civilization (especially technological progress and increasing supply of information) complicates life in all its dimensions. This process has either positive aspects for the development of individuals and the societies, or negative as it extends the area of possible threats³. Perception of these threats, which can be classified as a classical, tends to narrow down and the area of safety disappears and is filled with new categories of threats. This raises some doubts regarding the difference between threat and safety, health and disease, good and evil. The pace of changes which occur in this area, often do not go hand in hand with human adaptation to the new requirements. This leads to the numerous disorders of physical and mental health. In many cases, they are rather a consequence of fear and anxiety⁴ caused by the threat⁵ than the result of direct impact of the hazards⁶.

Reception of the reality involves two basic dimensions. One of them is the sensory-emotional sensitivity, which is characterized by individual sensitivity to incoming stimuli of different types. This dimension includes the physical sensitivity of the sensors that receive the characteristic internal and external stimuli as well as the emotional tone that is assigned by individuals or social groups to different types of the stimuli. Emotional sensitization results in the subjective feeling that some pulses are experienced stronger and others weaker. This is due to the events that have been experienced by each individual human being in the course of its life and due to the specific interpretation of the particular event.

² Opinia społeczna. Świat mniej bezpieczny, [in:] „Rzeczpospolita” 9 stycznia 2004 r. The survey included more than 40 thousand people representing 1.2 billion inhabitants of the Earth.

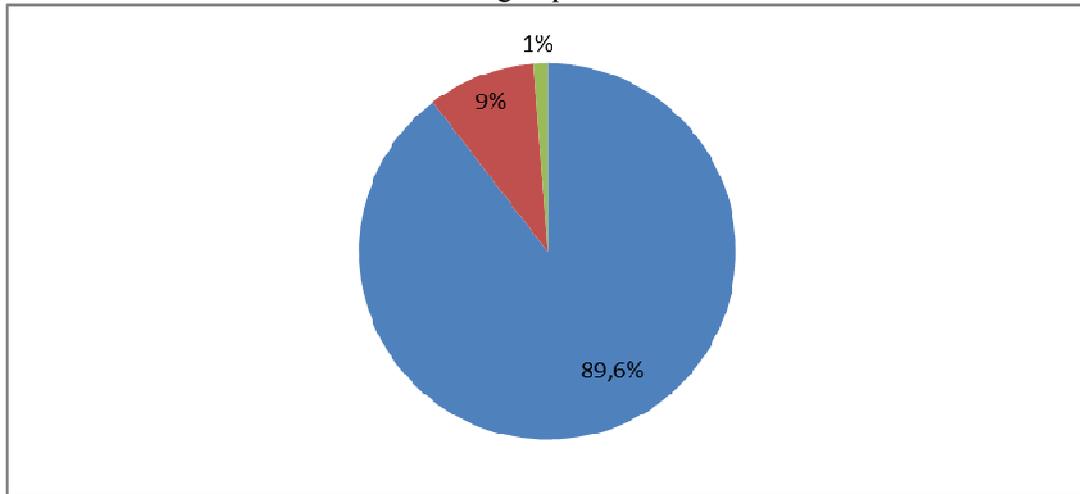
³ The risks refer directly to the human existence and his health (physical and mental), but also his social functioning by reducing the level of his social condition.

⁴ Kuć E., Zagrożenia nazwać po imieniu – świadomość zagrożeń sposobem przeciwdziałania wiktyimizacji, [in:] Kowalski D., Kwiatkowski M., Zduniak A. (ed.), Edukacja dla bezpieczeństwa, Lublin-Poznań 2004, p. 34. The use of the both concepts of fear and anxiety results from the need to distinguish between these two concepts (although they are often used interchangeably). The fear is an emotional state which refers to some object of fear (such as war, floods, etc.) that may actually arise or just be anticipated. It is accompanied by an internal and subjective sense of extreme movement and the desire to escape or attack. The anxiety has no clearly defined subject and is seen as a more general emotional state, "extreme anxiety" or "irrational fear". Reber A.S., Słownik psychologii, Warszawa 2000, p. 711; Sillamy N., Słownik psychologii, Katowice 1998, p. 138.

⁵ Czapska J., Społeczności lokalne w zapobieganiu przestępczości. Warszawa-Kraków 1997, p. 5; Błachut J., Gaberle A., Krajewski K., Kryminologia, Gdańsk 1999, p. 478.

⁶ Czapska J., Community policing w Polsce – możliwości i ograniczenia, [in:] Czapska J., Widacki J. (ed.), Bezpieczeństwo lokalne. Społeczny kontekst prewencji kryminalnej, Warszawa 2000, p. 145.

Chart no. 1: The subjective sense of the security among the members of the disposable groups.⁷



Source: own research

■ - I feel safe, ■ - I don't feel safe, ■ - I have no opinion

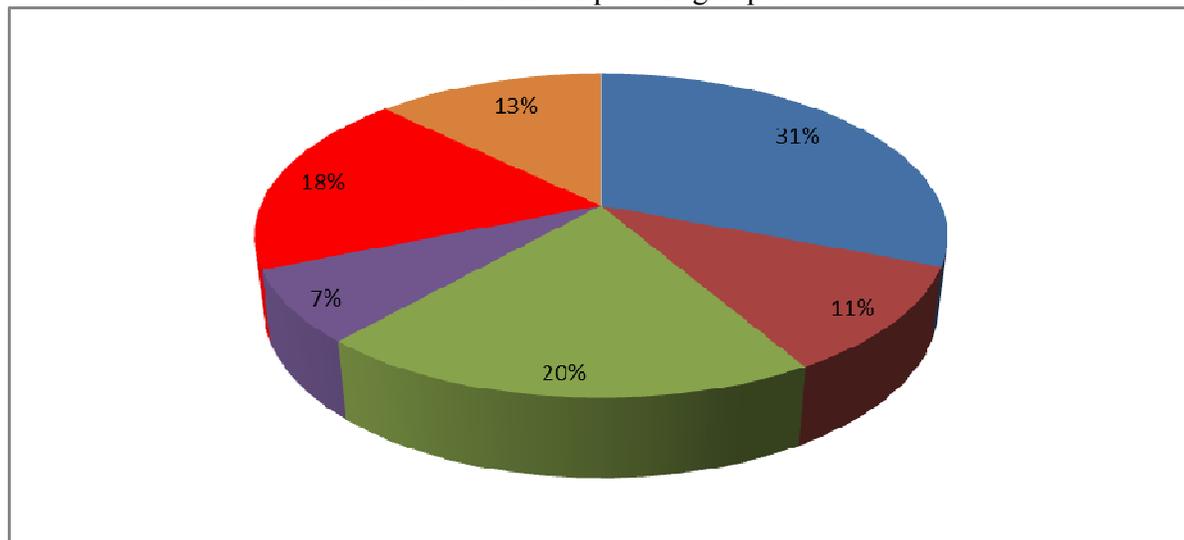
Reception of the reality involves two basic dimensions. One of them is the sensory-emotional sensitivity, which is characterized by individual sensitivity to incoming stimuli of different types. This dimension includes the physical sensitivity of the sensors that receive the characteristic internal and external stimuli as well as the emotional tone that is assigned by individuals or social groups to different types of the stimuli. Emotional sensitization results in the subjective feeling that some pulses are experienced stronger and others weaker. This is due to the events that have been experienced by each individual human being in the course of its life and due to the specific interpretation of the particular event. The basic attributes that participate in creating an individual reality involve intelligence and the symbolic meaning of particular groups of the stimuli. Individuals interpret new situations that reach their consciousness by giving them a rank of importance and assigning the right emotional coloring. The first event of some type triggers specific attribution, which would be permanently attached to it and the subsequent appearance of this event would cause this same attribution. This attributions have a fairly high stability. This means that they can be changed only when the specific factors of significant importance would occur. Analogously to the theory of A. Kępiński, attributions act as a metabolite of information, which is the main force that stimulates the behavior. Existing attributions become also a prism of perception for the new situations, so also for the creation of new attributions. Because of that, the development

⁷ Wasilewski P., Wawrzusiszyn A., Bezpieczeństwo personalne grup dyspozycyjnych społeczeństwa, [in.] Horyń W. Węlyczko L. Edukacja dla bezpieczeństwa w XXI wieku. Człowiek- Społeczeństwo- Państwo., Wrocław 2012

of attribution has a great significance in individual's perception of reality as well as in creating new patterns of behavior. According to K. Dąbrowski⁸, new patterns of behavior may arise when an individual experiences a situation that according to T. Tomaszewski⁹ would be classified as difficult or extreme. In these situations, human has to make a great energetic effort in the response to the emerging difficulties. Dąbrowski in his theory of disintegration concluded that enabling human development through changing personality and thus the perception of the external world, requires the breakdown (disintegration) of the previous attributions.

The attributions consist of the algorithms of behaviors, beliefs, emotional awareness, self-awareness and consciousness. These attributes are so cohesive, that only an event of high energy value which happen in the life of an individual is able to break their structure. Such an event, regardless of its positive or negative interpretive context, is always classified as traumatic. Only the events of this kind are able to release enough energy to create a motivation to change the individual patterns of perceiving reality.

Chart no. 2: The types of situations that causes loss of the sense of security among the members of the disposable groups.



Source: own research

- - aggression, ■ - accidents and family problems, ■ - haven't lost a sense of security,
- - disease, helplessness, ■ - bereavements, disasters, ■ - others

Alfred Adler observed that the earliest memories of human being are the window on the world for the rest of his life. He developed the method of therapy that utilized the patient's

⁸ Dąbrowski K. *Dezintegracja pozytywna*, PIW, Warszawa, 1979

⁹ Tomaszewski T. *Psychologia*, PWN, Warszawa 1978

memories to interpret his reality, but he wasn't interested in the accuracy of those memories because what person believed to be truth was more important than the objective truth. This psychologist emphasized the importance of the past to reinterpret events - the reconstruction based on the thoughts and feelings. According to this approach, the past can shape our present thoughts, feelings and actions, while those thoughts, feelings and actions may also affect the shape of the past memories.

REALITY AND PERCEPTION OF THE TIME.

The reality can be also perceived through another perspective, which has been overlooked so far, but has a great importance in the development of the sense of the security. This is the prism of time. Human beings are probably the only creatures on the Earth which are aware of the passage of time and its finiteness. This is why time has such a great value - value which is determined by the availability of the thing. Gold or diamonds have also some value but it is not an intrinsic value. Its value is determined by incidence and demand. Most of goods that are generally considered to be valuable, regardless of whether we are referring to gold, platinum, or thousand dollar bills, can be replaced. The time is completely different - when it passes, it passes forever. Therefore, it is our most valuable asset. Each of us sees the passage of time in his own way. There are people who refuse to accept its passage, while others try to “stop it” in every possible way and some people accept the passage of time with appropriate humility and respect. Our basic algorithms of perceiving time influence also our attitudes towards reality that reaches our senses. This dependence has been noticed by Philip Zimbardo in Prison Experiment as well as in his long-time studies on people's behavior in the context of shyness. He singled out six time perspectives:

- the past-negative type;
- the past-positive type;
- the present-fatalistic type;
- the present-hedonistic type;
- the future-focused type;
- the transcendental-future type¹⁰.

According to Zimbardo, perceiving reality through the prism of past-positive time perspective allows people to use their experience (even these painful) to build a new reality in which there is a place for creativity and an energy for acting. People characterized by this

¹⁰ Zimbardo Ph., Boyd J. Paradoks czasu, PWN, Warszawa, 2011.

scheme, despite their painful experiences, are able to use past events to reinforce themselves. Even their negative or painful memories provide them with the energy to live, so they can be resilient and optimistic. Nietzsche saying “What does not kill me makes me stronger”¹¹ is the best reflection of the way of life of this social group.

Past-negative time perspective is completely different. People in this group also perceive reality through the prism of their past, but because of their memories (especially those painful ones) they feel sorry for what happened to them. These experiences do not give them an energy to create own future but rather stop them. Recalling and analyzing old failures is an energy eater, which thus cannot be used for creative activities.

As Zimbardo says¹², remembering the past can give us the sense of the stability and consistency of individual personality. In his opinion, the lack of the past in our lives results in the lack of predictability of future events, which may be hypothetically compared to the continuously changing laws of physics that cause chaos. Regardless of the emotional color of our memories, our past remains the best predictor of our future. However, concentration on the past events provides us with the reverse orientation. As it has been described, the past can give us a sense of the security (especially when our memories are good) but life still goes forward. If we will stuck in the past, we reduce our chances to make better use of the opportunities offered by the future. Maintaining the status quo through recalling and preserving in the present the good moments from the past, makes it difficult to perceive new and better ways of acting.

Concerning the present-hedonistic types, Zimbardo emphasizes that the most important elements regulating their activities are: present and the pleasure principle. Actions of people who represent this perspective of time perception are marked by the high impulsivity and the aversion to planning the long-term efforts. However, we cannot say that those people lack of the energy for acting. Their large spontaneity combined with creativity make them life and soul of the parties. The present hedonism represents a desire to experience pleasure. This is not limited only to the passive reception of pleasure, but means also its active seeking. Instant gratification, active search for pleasure and self-stimulation are the main directions of activity of people characterized by such perception. Hedonic individual maintains the selected course of activity until he reaches the sufficient level of boredom and then goes to another activity.

In the present-fatalistic perspective, the great importance is attached to the force majeure outside the person, which creates the reality regardless of the direction and the form

¹¹ Nietzsche F. Zmierzch bożyszcz, wyd. Vis- a -vis etiuda, Kraków, 2011.

¹² Zimbardo Ph., Boyd J., Paradoks czasu, PWN, Warszawa, 2011

of actions taken by the individual. The lack of personal influence that accompany this orientation may be the cause of anxiety, fear and depression. These individuals are engulfed by the high level of fatalism, which results in frequent risk-taking activities¹³. Such people believe that their actions do not bring them closer to the results that they would like to achieve. Resignation and cynicism outweigh hope and optimism. A large part of the human population takes the fatalistic time perspective due to the religious beliefs, which are based on the axis of destiny. Belief that life proceeds according to the God's plan, where everything is pre-decided regardless of the actions taken by the individual, leads to the specific implications for everyday life.

The human life begins in a state of natural focus on the present. It is caused by the process of ontogenetic development of the nervous system, in which baby needs to be oriented on the present hedonism. Nevertheless, the part of the population remains in this state despite of reaching adulthood. These people react only to these events that take place in their immediate physical and social environment. Deterministic focus on the present has its good aspects but submission to this extreme approach involves costs that often outweigh the potential benefits. Zimbardo emphasizes this specific paradox: On the one hand, orientation on the present is essential to enjoy life, on the other hand, strong attachment to the present can rob us of happiness¹⁴. Perception oriented on the present can also be caused by the external factors. Globally speaking, the lack of economic and political stability causes instability in family life and narrows down the public trust to those things which can be actually touched with own hands. Being in such an environment is conducive to the present orientation in the perception of time. To develop the future orientation, stability and consistency should be provided in the present. This is a necessary condition, without which people won't be able to make reasonable estimates of the future consequences of their actions. When the lack of such stability, to increase their sense of security people switch on the defense mechanisms and "flee" into the black-and-white world of the dichotomous divisions into "yes" and "no", "is" and "isn't", "good" and "bad". This world is not filled with possibilities, eventualities and probabilities. People detained in the present do not use the basic cause-and-effect reasoning and it also affects their less education. Education by learning the history develops the sense of the past and by forcing the targeted behaviors (like e.g. preparations for the examination session) develops the ability to defer gratification and perception of the future.

¹³ Op. cit.

¹⁴ Op. cit., 90-97

The future and the past are not experienced directly. It has been defined by Zimbardo by using the term of "the constructed state of mind"¹⁵. The future is here considered as a compilation of our hopes, fears, expectations and aspirations. Future-oriented people use in their life mantra: "meet tomorrow's deadline, complete all the necessary work before tonight's play"¹⁶. For them, the replacement of the present "bird in the hand" for forward-looking "two birds in the bush" is a very appealing option. In the present, the future-oriented person lives in his mind, imagining a different, better version of oneself, future successes and achievements. The positive attitude for the future strengthen the motivation to work more and harder. Except of the inner attitude, similarly to the other perspectives of perceiving reality, this orientation is also influenced by external factors in which the psyche of the individual is being shaped. For the future-oriented person these factors include:

- living in a temperate zone;
- living in a stable family, society, nation;
- being a Protestant (or Jewish);
- becoming educated;
- being young or middle-aged adult;
- having a job;
- using technology regularly;
- being successful;
- having future-oriented role models;
- recovering from childhood illness¹⁷.

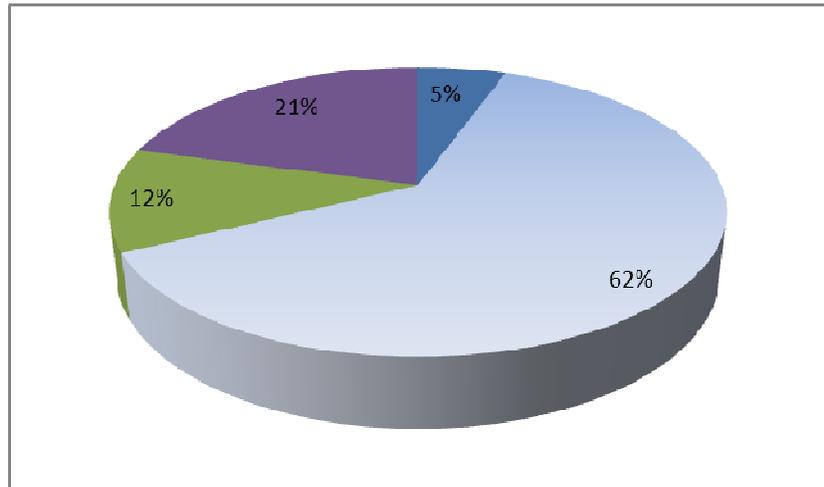
Time perspectives listed here on the basis of the Zimbardo studies, show us the different ways of contacting and receiving the reality. According to the author, the way of how people imagine the past, influences what they think, feel and how do they behave in the present. The studies proved that people who have a positive attitude towards the past, regardless of the objective fidelity of their memories, tend to be happier, healthier and more successful than people with a negative attitude towards the past events. In fact, the perception of oneself has a basic influence on the interpretation of emergencies. Events and objects that might be subjectively safe for some people, in others will create a sense of fear. This has a primary role in the perceived sense of the security.

¹⁵ Op. cit., 121-124

¹⁶ Op. cit.

¹⁷ Op. cit.

Chart no. 3: The safety awareness of the Polish society in the opinion of the representatives of dispositional groups.



Source: own research

-  - public safety awareness is at an average level
-  - I have no opinion
-  - public safety awareness is at low level
-  - public safety awareness is at a high level

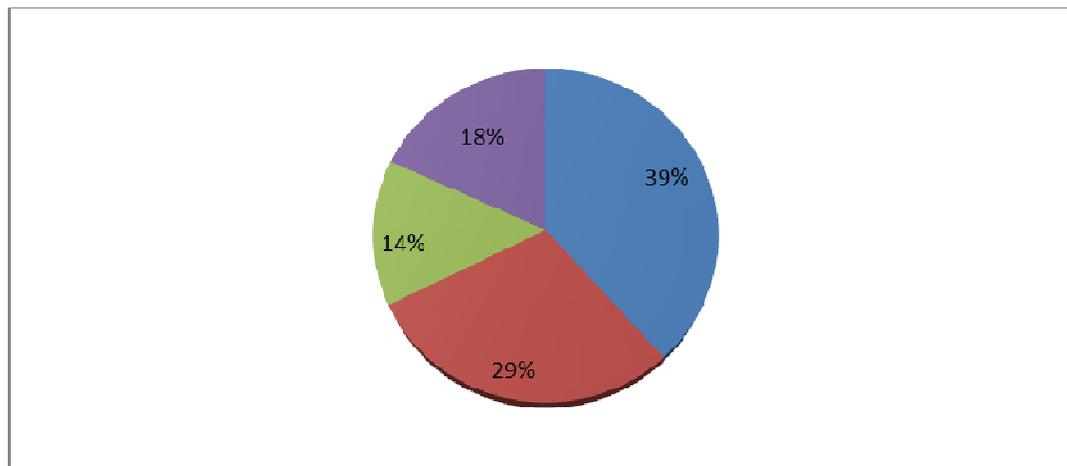
It is a truism to say that the modern world is full of risks. This is despite of the continuous efforts of the mankind to increase the perceived level of safety. Increasing safety in some areas reduces it in others, or we discovered the new areas that create new threats. This state of affairs can be called a "short blanket effect".

CONCLUSION

A sense of the personal security becomes a higher value in the post-modern society, especially if we consider some disturbing and often horrific events from the beginning of the XXI century. This events include such phenomena as the increase of crime and its new dimensions, aggressiveness and expansiveness of some social groups and various spheres of social life, global terrorism and the increasing dominance of political interest groups over the general human needs. Regardless of the subjective element in our perception of the world, more and more of people experiences problems in understanding the reality that surrounds them. They lose their sense of identity and can no longer cope with the requirements of the modern, mass education. The amount of information released in the unit of time is often impossible to process. It often leads to the feeling of powerlessness. Therefore, the weaker individuals resign from participating in the process of creating the modern world. They

passively submit to the situation, lose their individuality and the need for self-realization. They reinforce their present-fatalistic perspective of perceiving time. However, it doesn't increase their sense of security, but rather decreases it through reducing their ability to process information and implement activities. This introduces an additional stress to the consciousness and multiplies negative emotions. This conditions are also experienced by the members of groups involved in ensuring the public safety.

Chart no. 4: Factors that increase a sense of security among the members of the dispositional groups



Source: own research

- - adequate application of forces and means by the State
- - simple legislation and its enforcement
- - real family policy
- - improve of the public awareness

These also includes the dispositional groups of the society. Members of these groups resign from some of their constitutional rights and serve to the public. Service of these groups is a service of public trust and remains under the constant control. It does not stay without the influence on their psychophysical condition which has a direct impact on motivation to work. It is characteristic that job of these people is associated with a high risk of loss of health or even life, requires dedication and have to be performed in different environments, difficult and often dangerous conditions. Paraphrasing a sentence uttered by Eleanor Doan „You cannot kindle a fire in any heart, until it is burning in your own”, it is impossible to ensure the safety to others if you do not feel safe by yourself. This is why the issue of ensuring the fullest

possible sense of security to the members of disposable groups, should be a priority in a society that aims to feel safer.

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TIKROVĖS SUVOKIMAS IR TAM TIKRŲ VISUOMENĖS SOCIALINIŲ GRUPIŲ SAUGUMO JAUSMAS

Pawel Wasilewski*

Generolo Tadeusz Kościuszko Sausumos pajėgų Karo akademija

Santrauka

Tikrovės suvokimas yra susijęs su asmeninio gyvenimo kontekstu. Suvokimo proceso metu emocijos yra perduodamos suvokiamai tikrovei ir tokiu būdu iškreipiamas jausmų pasaulis. Ši distorsija yra praeities išgyvenimų, nuotaikos, charakterio savybių pasireiškimo ir laiko suvokimo rezultatas. Visa, ką matome ir jaučiame aplink, turi tiesioginę įtaką baimės jausmo atsiradimui. Be to, baimės jausmas sąlygoja aplinkinio pasaulio suvokimą ir paveikia asmens saugumo jausmą. Saugumo jausmo trūkumas kenkia asmenybės vystymui(si) ir šiuo metu yra viena iš svarbiausių problemų, su kuria susiduria visuomenė ir atskiri individai. Ypač tai būdinga tiems socialinių grupių atstovams, kurie susiję su saugumo visuomenei užtikrinimu.

Pagrindinės sąvokos: saugumas, asmeninis saugumas, laiko suvokimas

Pawel Wasilewski* The General Tadeusz Kościuszko Military Academy of Land Forces, Faculty of Security Science, Division of Sociology, PhD. Research interests: personal safety, threats psychology, military psychology, social pathology.

Pawel Wasilewski* Generolo Tadeusz Kosciuszko Sausumos pajėgų Karo akademija, Saugumo mokslų fakultetas, Sociologijos katedra. Moksliniai interesai: asmeninis saugumas, grėsmių psichologija, karybos psichologija, socialinė patologija.