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Residents' Awareness of Challenges and Attitudes towards Local-Level Safety

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Natalia Moch[1,A-F]

ORCID 0000-0003-2177-0883

Ewelina Patrycja Zielińska[1, A-F]

ORCID 0009-0006-8590-0738

A - Research concept and design, B - Collection and/or assembly of data,
C - Data analysis and interpretation, D - Writing the article, E - Critical revision of the article, F - Final approval of the article

[1]The Security, Logistic and Management Faculty, Military University of Technology, Poland

Abstract

Objectives: The aim of this article is to conceptualise the relationships between residents' awareness of threats, safety perceptions, civic attitudes, social participation, and shared responsibility for local safety, as well as to identify the main factors shaping these relationships.

Methods: The article adopts a theoretical and conceptual approach based on a literature review and selected documents on local safety, social resilience, civic participation, and social capital. Particular attention is given to education, communication, trust, social ties, and local cooperation.

Results: The analysis indicates that residents' awareness involves not only knowledge of threats but also the ability to recognise and interpret them and take actions that support individual and community safety. The analysis also shows that objective safety conditions may differ from subjective perceptions of safety. Based on these relationships, the study proposes a conceptual model linking threat awareness, safety perception, civic attitudes, social participation, shared responsibility, and social resilience.

Conclusions: Local safety should be understood as a result of interaction between public institutions, security services, and local communities. Residents should therefore be regarded not only as recipients of protective measures but also as potential co-creators of local safety. The proposed model provides a framework for future empirical research and for strengthening social competencies, trust, participation, and community resilience

Corresponding author Natalia Moch The Security, Logistic and Management Faculty, Military University of Technology, Poland; email: natalia.moch@wat.edu.pl

1. Introduction

Local security is a cornerstone of a community's stable functioning and a key factor determining residents' quality of life. In an era of rapid socio-economic, urban, and technological change, the traditional approach to maintaining public order – relying solely on state institutions and uniformed services – is proving insufficient. The subjective dimension of security is gaining importance, with citizens becoming active participants rather than merely passive recipients of security policy. Research indicates that the objective state of security – measured by crime rates or incident frequency – does not always align with citizens' subjective sense of safety. Psychological and educational factors, the effectiveness of information policies, and trust in public institutions shape this perception. Consequently, fostering a mature security culture requires not only operational measures by state and local authorities but, above all, the strengthening of social capital, civic attitudes, and a shared sense of responsibility for the local environment.

This study aims to systematise and conceptualise the interrelationships among citizens' awareness, attitudes toward threats, social participation, and shared responsibility for safety within local communities. The analysis focuses on the relationship between the objective dimension of safety and its subjective perception, as well as the role of social and institutional factors in shaping residents' behaviours. It is posited that threat awareness can be a crucial prerequisite for shifting from a passive view of safety to active participation and shared responsibility. These elements – combined with institutional capacity – form the essential foundations of local community resilience. This article is theoretical and conceptual, drawing on a literature review and an analysis of selected aspects of social life. It pays particular attention to educational initiatives, prevention measures, institutional communication with the community, and local civic engagement. The conclusion presents the key findings of the analysis and offers recommendations to strengthen residents' social competencies and civic engagement.

2. The essence and dimensions of local community safety

Defining the concepts of "local community" and "local safety" is crucial to the subject matter at hand. In encyclopedic terms, a local community denotes a group of people linked to a specific territory who develop distinct institutions, a network of relationships, and a strong sense of belonging (Encyklopedia PWN, n.d.). Kazimierz Sowa adds that such a community occupies a distinct geographical space characterised by its own name and unique traditions (Polakowska-Kujawa, 2007, pp. 111-119). Taken together, these perspectives suggest that a local community is a group of people living in a small area (e.g., a housing estate, a district, a village, or a municipality), bound by shared interests and a sense of rootedness. The multidimensional nature of the local community is reflected in its internal structure, which is defined by five components (see Figure 1).

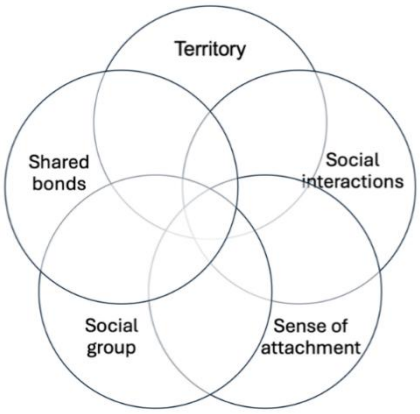


Fig. 1. Five components of the local community structure
Source: (Modrzejewski, 2022, p. 38)

The structure in question encompasses a spatial dimension (territory), the presence of a distinct social group, social interactions within that group, the formation of shared bonds, and the residents' sense of attachment (or rootedness) to the place. Only the complementary presence of all these elements allows one to speak of a fully formed community. The stable functioning of such a community requires meeting a multidimensional set of security-related needs (Wojakowska, 2021, p. 460). Alongside the fundamental pillars of order and individual protection—such as personal safety in public spaces and the maintenance of public order in the broad sense—this also includes protecting the natural environment from local degradation and pollution, as well as supporting the local labour market. Regarding the existential dimension of residents' security, it further requires the efficient functioning of social, living, and infrastructural systems. These comprise universal access to educational facilities, healthcare, retail and service networks, and legal aid; a well-developed transport and communication network; efficient utility and connectivity infrastructure; and access to recreational spaces. However, it must be clearly emphasised that fully achieving such an extensive range of tasks exceeds the independent capabilities of local government. The local community constitutes an integral part of the broader socio-state structure; consequently, its stability and security remain directly dependent on systemic, financial, and legal support from state authorities (Drozdowski, 2016, pp. 203-204).

The state remains the primary entity responsible for ensuring security and meeting fundamental human needs for safety. Modern state structures carry out multi-level tasks that, in classical terms, boil down to two functions: internal and external. The internal function relies on consolidating power to ensure order and protect citizens within the country's borders, while the external function focuses on safeguarding state interests on the international stage.

In the context of local communities, the internal dimension plays a more significant role. The state's effectiveness in maintaining order at the local level directly shapes residents' daily attitudes, builds trust in institutions, and moulds public awareness of existing threats and challenges. However, this awareness should not be equated solely with knowledge of existing threats. It can be understood as a multidimensional capacity among residents to recognise threats, interpret information about them, assess their own response capabilities, and adopt behaviours that foster personal and community safety. Viewed in this light, awareness encompasses

cognitive, perceptual-emotional, and behavioural dimensions, serving as a potential link between individual knowledge and social action.

An institutionalised system of rescue, law enforcement, and protective services plays a pivotal role in keeping local communities safe. The core of this structure consists of entities with diverse functions and competencies, led by the Police, which serves as the primary pillar for protecting life, health, and property, while also maintaining public order and combating crime. The State Fire Service and Volunteer Fire Departments hold an equally significant place in this structure. They form the foundation of the National Firefighting and Rescue System, protecting local communities from fires, natural disasters, and environmental hazards. Volunteer Fire Departments are of particular social value. As organisations deeply rooted in local communities, they foster neighbourly integration, shape civic attitudes, and raise residents' awareness of safety issues. This system is complemented by local government services (municipal and commune guards) that ensure order and compliance with local regulations, the State Emergency Medical Service—which responds to acute health crises—as well as the Border Guard and the Territorial Defence Force, whose support is crucial during emergencies and in border areas.

Furthermore, technical services (emergency repair teams for electricity, gas, and water/sewage systems) play a vital role in maintaining the stability of critical infrastructure, alongside specialised inspectorates such as the State Sanitary Inspectorate, the Veterinary Inspectorate, and the Construction Supervision Authority. A protection system organised this way not only ensures institutional stability but also strongly influences public awareness of challenges and threats. The efficiency, transparency, and accessibility of the entities involved shape citizens' subjective sense of security and can foster proactive attitudes among residents, as well as a shared sense of responsibility for maintaining order in their local communities.

Increasing opportunities for representatives of non-governmental organisations to participate in major public undertakings yields mutual benefits. On the one hand, it improves access to and transparency of information about planned development directions and the legal and organisational solutions devised by public authorities. On the other hand, it significantly expands the scope for genuine public consultation, enabling citizens to exert real influence on administrative decisions. More broadly, this approach strengthens civil society organisations as empowered and effective partners to public institutions in a multifaceted civic dialogue (Dzimińska-Mosio, p. 2018, 129). The need to develop such partnerships becomes particularly evident in the context of contemporary challenges. Modern challenges – ranging from threats to life and property, environmental degradation, and terrorism to the consequences of excessive consumption – necessitate a reorientation of the prevailing approach to civil protection. Although security studies often analyse issues through the lens of state macro-structures, contemporary crises compel a return to the local dimension and the individual. At the local government level, fundamental dimensions of security – subjective, objective, procedural, and structural-organisational – intersect. From a sociological perspective, the local community is a space where direct relationships, a sense of belonging, and shared values take shape, thereby shaping the community's sense of stability. A civil protection system reduced to passive crisis response and top-down procedures loses its fundamental purpose: creating a safe environment for daily life and fostering mature awareness and responsible civic attitudes (Zuziak, 2014, p. 21).

3. Social and psychosocial dimension of local security: perception, resilience, and participation

A key element of local safety is its impact on residents' psychology and its role in fostering social bonds. A safe environment naturally encourages dialogue and cooperation (Ścibich-Kopiec et al., 2026). This, in turn, generates social capital – a network of mutual trust that enables neighbours to take collective action and transform their surroundings. It is also important to note that a sense of safety holds tangible economic value (Łabędź, 2018, pp. 45-63). Stable, safe neighbourhoods attract investment, stimulate local entrepreneurship, and drive-up property values. However, analysing this phenomenon requires a crucial distinction between objective and subjective safety (Malinowski, 2018, pp. 7-13). Assessing safety from a subjective perspective requires moving beyond the traditional paradigm – based solely on measurable criminological indicators (objective safety) – toward a systemic approach that accounts for the psychosocial structure of the community (Modrzejewski, 2022, 38). After all, perceptions of threat and feelings of insecurity are phenomena generated within the multidimensional structure of the local community (*Koszty wandalizmu*, 2025).

In existing approaches, researchers often treat threat perception, sense of security, social capital, participation, and resilience as separate categories. From the perspective of the research problem at hand, however, it is crucial to link them into a single chain of interdependencies. This approach makes it possible to shift the focus from asking whether residents feel safe to asking whether they possess the competence and readiness to co-create local security.

The scope of contemporary threats is evolving and expanding, necessitating a shift in how citizens think about security. The traditional view of security – focused mainly on crime-related threats – no longer suffices in the face of new challenges such as climate change and online threats. Research indicates that people often fail to recognise the real risks of extreme weather events or online disinformation, leaving them ill-prepared to cope with these issues (*Społeczeństwo odporne na zagrożenia*, 2026). Under these circumstances, an approach relying mainly on expecting assistance – such as financial or material aid – from local authorities is becoming obsolete. Building local community resilience today requires fostering cooperation, ensuring continuous education, and maintaining digital hygiene (*Odporność społeczna*, 2026). In an interconnected digital world, every citizen's ability to critically evaluate information is no longer merely a private matter but a cornerstone of the local community's security. Official documents – ranging from the National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland (*Strategia bezpieczeństwa…*, 2020) and analyses by the Government Security Centre to NATO and EU doctrines – explicitly identify a resilient society (societal resilience) as a pillar of defense, alongside government administration and the business sector (Biuro Bezpieczeństwa Narodowego, 2024). At the local level, non-governmental organisations, local associations, rural housewives' circles, and volunteer fire departments play a crucial role. Thanks to the support of programs such as "The Power of Small Communities" (*Moc Małych Społeczności*), they help build trust among residents and strengthen neighborhood ties – bonds that are particularly important during crises (Narodowy Instytut Wolności, 2026). These organisations can also help residents develop practical skills, including first aid, crisis preparedness, organising local resources, and countering cyber threats and disinformation.

Several areas influence residents' sense of security. Key among these are safety in public spaces and residential areas, preventing domestic violence, safety in schools and on public transport, road safety, the security of business operations, and the protection of national heritage, as well as initiatives that support the analysis, implementation, and funding of security-related measures (Urban, 2009, pp. 77-95). However, effectively responding to modern threats cannot be achieved through top-down measures alone. It requires active engagement from citizens (*Jak zwiększyć zaangażowanie…*, 2023). Social participation can be defined as the involvement of individual citizens or entire communities in efforts to improve safety and in cooperation with the entities responsible for maintaining it.

In practice, the use of such an assessment should lead to the implementation of a local prevention program that is not merely a copy of nationwide strategies, but rather a response to the prioritised problems of a specific community (Gil-Andrzejewska & Szlązak, 2026, pp. 3–4). Such a program should define target groups (e.g., seniors vulnerable to fraud) and be based on continuous evaluation. Combining objective statistical data with the views of residents – expressed during debates and public consultations – can foster a shift from civic passivity to active engagement and strengthen shared responsibility for safety in the immediate local environment.

Analysing residents' attitudes should not be viewed merely as a formal obligation or a matter of statistics. It is a vital tool for modern local safety management because it reveals how the community perceives threats, institutions, and its own capacity for action. In practice, these insights can help shift management away from intuition-based approaches toward decisions informed by data, experience, and residents' needs (Malewska, 2013, pp. 130-145).

4. Objectives and functions of social diagnosis in local security management

First and foremost, a social assessment aligns investment priorities with residents' actual needs and expectations. Often, the development vision that local authorities formulate diverges from the daily concerns of the local community (*Krajowa Strategia Rozwoju Regionalnego*, 2019). While officials might focus on high-profile projects – such as building a modern sports hall – public opinion research may reveal that residents place far greater importance on fundamental issues like improved street lighting, modernised neighbourhood infrastructure, or better water quality. Understanding these needs allows local governments to manage limited budgets more rationally and effectively by directing funds where they will yield the greatest and most tangible improvements in quality of life (Antkowiak, 2021, pp. 100-103).

Another key objective of the assessment is to alleviate social anxieties and strengthen residents' sense of security. According to the concept of subjective security, objective indicators – such as police statistics – do not always reflect citizens' actual perceptions of safety in their immediate surroundings (Malendowicz and Pazderska, 2023, p. 183). Assessing residents' sense of security enables local authorities to identify areas residents perceive as unsafe, regardless of actual crime levels. The discrepancy between the objective security situation and public perception poses a significant challenge for local policy, as subjective feelings influence how people use public spaces, the level of resident engagement, and overall quality of life (Czapska, 2012, pp. 15-20). Consequently, such an assessment not only helps identify locations requiring intervention but also fosters a better understanding of the sources of public concern (Kadenaci, 2021, pp. 4-7). This knowledge informs decision-making regarding infrastructure development,

the organisation of public services, and the improvement of public spaces (*Narzędzia na rzecz innowacji…*, 2026). Furthermore, a robust local assessment facilitates the rational use of available resources and enhances the effectiveness and appropriateness of the measures taken.

Surveying residents' opinions also plays an important role in local management because it gives authorities information about social expectations and allows them to factor these into public policy design (Marks-Krzyszkowska, 2017, pp. 31-41). Involving residents in diagnosing problems and consulting on planned activities is an important element of modern local management, consistent with the assumptions of participation-based, evidence-based development policy. This approach is reflected, among other things, in strategic documents such as the "Lublin 2030" program, which emphasise the importance of diagnosing social needs and using local data, including maps of threats and social resources, in planning public interventions (*Strategia Rozwoju Województwa Lubelskiego…*, 2021, pp. 5-20). Resident participation in social consultations and environmental diagnoses improves the accuracy of problem identification and allows activities to be better adjusted to local specificity. At the same time, it helps strengthen the legitimacy of decisions and build trust between the local community and the local government administration (Janczuk, 2021, pp. 67-86).

A safety assessment also serves as an early warning system, helping identify adverse changes in the social landscape before they escalate into more serious problems. Systematic monitoring of social phenomena, analysis of local safety indicators, and ongoing threat assessment enable early detection of processes that weaken social ties, foster deviant behaviour, or fuel conflict escalation (Mickiewicz, 2022, pp. 1-16). Early recognition of these adverse trends creates an opportunity to implement preventive and corrective measures at the stage when they are most effective. This approach aligns with modern safety management concepts based on systematic threat identification, continuous monitoring of their dynamics, and risk analysis (Kwieciński, 2012, pp. 60-62). Consequently, the safety assessment moves beyond a purely descriptive role to become a vital component of the risk management process, supporting the planning of preventive actions and strengthening the local community's resilience against emerging threats.

The concept of local security encompasses objective factors related to the functioning of institutions responsible for ensuring security, the subjective sense of safety among residents, and the quality of social relations within the local community. Daniel Drozdowski notes that key elements in building local security include developing civil society, strengthening social ties, and actively engaging residents in addressing problems in their immediate environment (Drozdowski, 2016, p. 200). The author grounds his analysis of local security in the concepts of public security and public order. According to Fleszer and Małysa, public security signifies a state that enables the proper functioning of the state and the effective protection of life, health, property, and individual rights against various threats. The authors note that public security is a broader concept than public order; the latter relates primarily to adherence to legal norms and principles of social coexistence that ensure stability and the undisturbed course of collective life (Fleszer and Małysa, 2024, pp. 38-40). Jan Widacki's perspective is crucial for distinguishing between these concepts: he indicates that public security refers primarily to preventing and responding to crime, whereas public order relates to maintaining social stability and eliminating behaviours classified as minor offences. This approach allows for a more precise definition of the scope of authority for bodies responsible for safeguarding public security

and public order (Ustawa o Policji, 2025, art. 6). These perspectives demonstrate that local security is not limited solely to the effectiveness of the institutions responsible for maintaining public security and order. Its level is largely determined by the potential of the local community – understood as the level of social capital, whose durability depends on the quality of social relations and the effectiveness of cooperation between residents and public institutions (Leszczyński & Szydlik-Leszczyńska, 2022, pp. 102–103).

5. Factors determining residents' attitudes towards threats and security institutions

When examining the factors shaping residents' attitudes, social passivity and a limited response to situations requiring intervention – often analysed in the context of the bystander effect – play a significant role. Researchers have examined social apathy and individual withdrawal, including the bystander effect, in which individuals are less likely to intervene when other people are present. This leads to the gradual erosion of neighbourhood ties, which directly reduces actual safety. This happens because natural mechanisms of informal social control and a sense of mutual responsibility for one's surroundings begin to disappear. In this context, local safety should be grounded in close, personal relationships. However, in the Polish context, such relationships develop slowly, hindered by significant barriers such as low trust in public institutions and general civic passivity (Czapiński, 2015, pp. 285–291).

This passivity and lack of trust create a crucial context for the evolution of public participation in Poland. This process is shifting from traditional representative democracy toward a model of participatory governance, though it relies more on incremental adjustments than on a radical breakthrough (Szulc-Wałecka, 2021, pp. 90-91). This transformation can be divided into several stages. Its foundations date back to the 1980s, when grassroots social energy laid the groundwork for civic agency. The following decade saw the re-establishment of local self-government, the formalisation of civic rights, and the introduction of direct elections for heads of communes, town mayors, and city mayors – measures that strengthened their legitimacy and accountability to the electorate. The post- accession period brought about the professionalisation of cross-sector cooperation and the implementation of new mechanisms, such as the local initiative, which enables residents to co- implement public tasks alongside local authorities. Today, despite the progressive formalisation of participatory tools – such as participatory budgeting – challenges remain in ensuring genuine resident co-decision-making and fully realising the potential of civic participation (Michalska-Żyła & Brzeziński, 2017, pp. 210–220). However, the development of formal instruments for social dialogue does not always translate into resident co-decision-making, and some consultation processes may have limited impact on the final shape of decisions.

Objective security and the subjective sense of security are two separate, though interrelated, dimensions of security, and their relationship is not always proportional (Kitler, 2020, pp. 20-21). Objective safety refers to the actual level of threats. It is based on measurable indicators and verifiable data, such as crime statistics, the level of terrorist threat or road safety indicators. However, subjective security is an individual assessment of one's own security, shaped by life experiences, personality traits, emotional state, and how one perceives the surrounding reality (Zieliński, 2022, pp. 34-37). The key difference is that objective security can be empirically assessed and verified.

In contrast, subjective security reflects an individual's feelings, which influence daily functioning, behaviour, and quality of life. As a consequence, discrepancies may arise between the actual level of safety and its social assessment, meaning an individual may feel threatened despite low objective threats or, conversely, feel safe despite their actual occurrence (Płonka, 2019, pp. 102-103). However, both dimensions remain interdependent because the objective level of security may influence its subjective assessment. Individual experiences, trust in public institutions, and the method of transmitting information, including media coverage, modify this relationship.

Understanding the psychosocial determinants of attitudes toward safety requires a clear distinction between fear and anxiety, as these concepts describe different responses to threats. Fear is typically a short-lived response to an identifiable and immediate threat, whereas anxiety is generally associated with more diffuse, uncertain, or anticipated threats. Fear of crime may involve both responses and can persist even when the objective risk of victimisation is low. (*Lęk i strach…*, n.d.). This phenomenon should be viewed as a multidimensional construct that includes a behavioural component, manifesting as protective or avoidance actions. From a psychosocial perspective, the fear of crime is not merely a consequence of actual crime rates or personal victimisation experiences; rather, it often reflects broader social and economic conditions (Ostaszewski, 2011, pp. 23-24). It can indicate broader social well-being, revealing underlying tensions, uncertainty, or a sense of losing control over one's environment. The media and cultural transmission of threats also play a significant role in shaping these attitudes, potentially heightening the public sense of danger regardless of actual crime levels. Consequently, despite highly developed safety and security systems, modern societies may experience an intensified sense of threat (Gdula.2017, pp. 20-23).

The analysis of the psychosocial determinants of safety is complemented by social capital, which effectively determines the level of community resilience. In the event of a large-scale crisis – ranging from natural disasters and infrastructure failures to hybrid threats or armed conflicts – neighbourhood ties often provide the primary and most immediate form of assistance. However, building resilience in this sense requires a shift from attitudes focused on individual safety toward those based on cooperation and organised mutual aid. Close relationships within a community enable the rapid identification of the needs of the most vulnerable – such as older people or people with disabilities – and facilitate the efficient use of residents' own resources, from first-aid skills to private vehicles (*Jak podnoszenie społecznej świadomości*, 2025). Local organisations and volunteers also play a significant role here; they can act as intermediaries between residents and local authorities, supporting the distribution of aid and the verification of information. Yet, to realise this potential under high stress, prior preparation is essential: preventive education, effective communication, and practical evacuation drills that minimise information chaos and counter the spread of unverified information (*Jak przygotować się*, 2025). Ultimately, an organised community built on mutual trust becomes a genuine foundation for civil safety, demonstrating that responsibility for public safety should not be viewed solely as the domain of state institutions.

Community resilience and intra-community trust directly influence how residents perceive their safety and how much they fear crime (*Odporność społeczna*, 2026). However, reliably analysing these phenomena requires an integrated approach that combines hard data with an examination of the population's subjective feelings. Police crime statistics remain

a fundamental tool in this process, providing objective information on the number and type of recorded offences, crime trends, and the effectiveness of detection in a given region. These indicators are complemented by social research methods – most notably opinion polls – which allow for the quantitative assessment of attitudes and the scaling of fear levels across large groups. To fully understand the psychological roots of these concerns and the dynamics of social relationships, qualitative approaches – such as in-depth interviews and focus groups – are employed. These methods reveal underlying motivations, social narratives, and specific fears that simple numerical data cannot capture (*Neuropsychologia motywacji społecznej*, 2025). Mapping social "hotspots" using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and interactive threat maps can also be a crucial element of modern analysis. These tools allow visual comparison of actual crime locations with areas the public perceives as dangerous, enabling law enforcement agencies and local authorities to plan preventive and intervention measures more effectively.

6. Conceptual model of the social dimension of security

The analysis allows us to systematise the relationships among the categories under discussion in the form of a conceptual model. The starting point is threat awareness, understood as the knowledge and ability to recognise and interpret threat-related information. This factor influences perceptions of security but does not determine them, as those perceptions also depend on experiences, emotions, trust, and the quality of institutional communication.

The next level of the model includes residents' attitudes. These attitudes can be passive – where the resident expects institutions to act alone – or active, where the resident recognises their role in preventing and responding to threats. An active attitude fosters social participation, understood as residents' involvement in safety-related activities and their cooperation with public and civic entities. Such participation can, in turn, lead to shared responsibility, an acknowledgement that local safety results from collaboration among multiple actors, rather than being the exclusive domain of public administration bodies and relevant services. Shared responsibility underpinned by trust, social ties, and access to reliable information enhances the community's capacity to prepare for, respond to, and adapt to disruptions. In this sense, it strengthens social resilience.

The diagram in Fig. 2 illustrates the proposed sequence of relationships. This relationship is neither linear nor deterministic. The individual elements interact with one another, and institutional, spatial, social, and informational factors modify their significance. Consequently, this model serves as an interpretive framework rather than an empirically verified result.



Fig. 2. Model of the social dimension of security
Source: Authors' own elaboration.

The presented model also points to potential directions for future empirical research. Each of its components can be operationalised using appropriate indicators and subsequently analysed through surveys, interviews, or existing data. This would make it possible to verify, in the future, whether and to what extent risk awareness is linked to active attitudes, participation, and local community resilience.

7. Conclusions

The analysis indicates that local safety should be viewed as the outcome of collaboration among multiple stakeholders, including not only public administration bodies and uniformed services but also the local community. Residents' awareness goes beyond knowing about threats; it includes the ability to recognise them, interpret information, and take appropriate action – while considering a broad spectrum of risks, from common crime and vandalism to traffic hazards and environmental or infrastructural challenges. Perceptions of these issues rarely stem solely from official police statistics. Instead, media coverage, personal experiences, and informal information sharing among neighbours largely shape them, which can heighten a subjective sense of insecurity. In this context, a key challenge is overcoming passivity and social apathy in favour of proactive engagement. Residents' attitudes toward agencies responsible for maintaining order, such as the Police or Municipal Guard, depend mainly on patrol visibility, the quality of direct dialogue, and citizens' confidence that reported incidents will receive an appropriate response.

Furthermore, participatory mechanisms such as participatory budgeting and public consultations enable resources to be allocated to residents' actual needs, fostering a sense of agency and shared responsibility for their local environment. Consequently, fostering civic awareness and building social capital can help shift communities from passively awaiting institutional assistance to becoming more actively engaged in local affairs. This underscores the importance of social capital, trust, and civic participation as vital components of a modern local security system.

The significance of residents' awareness becomes particularly evident when it is linked to an active stance, participatory engagement, and shared responsibility. The proposed conceptual model systematises the relationships between social awareness and social resilience. However, this does not imply an automatic transition from knowledge to action. Factors such as trust, residents' experiences, communication quality, institutional accessibility, and local conditions shape each component of the model. This approach adds value by combining concepts that often appear separately in the literature and highlighting their collective importance for local safety and security.

A limitation of this study is its theoretical and conceptual nature. The proposed model has not been empirically verified. Therefore, the relationships presented should be regarded as an interpretive framework and a direction for future research. The next stage of work should involve developing a tool to measure the model's components and testing them across different types of local communities.

From a practical standpoint, this requires developing not only the capabilities of security institutions but also residents' competencies, communication quality, mutual trust, and cooperation mechanisms. The local community should be viewed not merely as a recipient of protection but also as a potential co-creator of security. This approach shifts the focus from simply responding to threats to building the community's capacity to prepare, collaborate, respond, and adapt.

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