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DYSFUNCTIONAL AND SOCIO-PATHOLOGICAL PHENOMENA IN POLICE FORCES: A HEURISTIC APPROACH

Police forces, as a social institution, are not free of various types of socially disadvantageous behavior and phenomena. Such occurrences entail dysfunctional and socio-pathological phenomena; that is, phenomena that violate universally accepted norms, values, principles, and rules. Such instances must be intentional; that is, conscious and purposeful, not accidental or non-culpable. They must also be repetitive; that is, occurring more than once. The subject of this study is selected dysfunctional behaviors and occurrences of social pathology among individuals in the police environment; their essence involves individual "suffering" that exhibits specific phases and leads directly to the destruction of personality. The study discusses such issues as suicide, alcohol problems, drug addiction, and domestic violence.

Keywords: Police, dysfunctional behavior, socio-pathological phenomena, suicide, alcohol problem, drug addiction problem, domestic violence.

1. INTRODUCTION

The police forces have for years constituted the subject of interest for representatives of various sciences, while their research achievements have contributed to the knowledge about this formation (Czebotar, Gądzik, Łyżwa, Michałek, Świerczewska-Gąsiorowska, Tokarski, 2015; Hołyst, 2013; Letkiewicz, Majer, 2010; Misiuk, 2008; Misiuk, 2008a; *Od Straży...,* 2007; Opaliński, Rogalski, Szustakiewicz, 2015; Pieprzny, 2007; Prawo policyjne, 2014; Sprengel, 2008). Sociology has also joined the scientific analysis in this field. On the grounds of sociology, two research trends have emerged, i.e. the sociology of uniformed public services (Maciejewski, 2014) as well as the sociology of police (Moczuk, 2006; Moczuk, 2013) whose subject of research is the police. The first trend involves an institutionalized sociological subdiscipline, while the second falls within its framework. (Moczuk, 2013a) It should be mentioned that the process of sociological subdiscipline institutionalization is connected with the broadly-understood changes taking place in contemporary sociology, where scientific interests result from undertaken sociological

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analyzes of the contemporary postmodern (Moczuk, Jedynak, 2018), which is associated with existence of a 'third sociology'. Piotr Sztompka, the creator of this approach to sociology, believes that the third sociology entails the sociology of everyday life, which is oriented at every-day reality and addressed to 'ordinary' people (Sztompka, 2008).

It should be added that the police, and especially its positioning within the social structure, outright requires such analytical and research interaction to be undertaken, which can be adapted to the present day, without ignoring even the most unpleasant issues. In addition to the police tasks resulting from legal provisions (The Police Act, 2020), it should be noted that police officers not only represent state authority, but as people who live in specific local communities, are also part of the society, having institutional and personal relationships, and are members of primary groups, including families, peer groups, etc. As such, not only they are 'social actors' working in law enforcement bodies, but also spouses, parents, and members of communities. They therefore behave in accordance with the normative systems developed, including the moral, customary, religious and legal ones (Kojder, 2016; Pieniążek, Stefaniuk, 2014), which means that they behave like other members of the society, not only by complying with specific norms, but also by breaking some of those standards, inter alia by abusing alcohol, using illegal psychoactive substances, committing crime or suicidal acts, accepting the dysfunctions in the institutional system, abusing power, or other behaviors.

Assuming that the third sociology provides such research and analytical possibilities, a need has emerged to reflect on the issues of dysfunctional and pathological phenomena that may occur in the environment of the persons associated with the police. This not only results from the fact that a need exists to analyze this phenomenon from the practical perspective, but also because these issues have been increasingly raised in science (Dudek, 2020; Działoszyński, Szymborski, Wójcik, 2007; Maj, 2013; Moczuk, 2015; Węgliński, Dziugieł, 2015).

The subject of the study is to present selected sociological aspects of dysfunctional and pathological phenomena in the police environment, where selected behaviors in this respect have been discussed (Kwaśniewski, 1970). The aim of the study is to present the basic literature on dysfunctional behavior in the political environment, which can be used in the preparation of individual studies on this subject. To achieve this goal, the Scoping Reviews research method. This method, otherwise known as scope review, is a qualitative research method that is included in the Systematic Literature Review, characterized by a high degree of formalism and a qualitative method of analysis. It is a kind of "mapping technique" of selected literature on a given subject, a special specific query of the literature of the subject (Chylak, Głowik, 2019; Ćwiklicki, 2020; Mazur, Orłowska, 2018; Orłowska, Mazur, Raguna, 2017).

It is also crucial to define the dysfunctional behaviors and pathological phenomena, even though such analysis will not be undertaken in this study, due to editing restrictions. Nevertheless, a brief interpretation of these issues has been made, in accordance with the division proposed by Anna Nowak and Ewa Wysocka, in which three groups of such phenomena have been distinguished: a) various phenomena of individual nature, including suicide, alcohol problems, drug addiction, domestic violence; b) 'group' phenomena, including extreme behavior in professional situations, lack of readiness to oppose illegal influence and mobbing; c) institutional phenomena, including corruption and the use of the professional position for one's private needs (Nowak, Wysocka, 2001). This division, however, is so conventional, that each of these phenomena can be assigned to more than

one group. Other behaviors, such as offenses against property, health and life, behavioral addiction, the use of suspected person's difficult position to gain personal and property benefits, the use of operational knowledge for personal gain, as well as pocketing special purpose (operational) funds, have not been discussed.

As mentioned above, due to editing restrictions, this study constitutes the first of three parts, divided into smaller, separate, but substantively and intentionally integrated articles. Admittedly, each part is autonomous, although they should be read as one piece. The first part presents selected dysfunctional and socio-pathological phenomena of individual nature observed in the police environment, the second part presents 'group' dysfunctional and pathological phenomena occurring in this environment, while the third part discusses institutional phenomena.

2. SELECTED DYSFUNCTIONAL AND SOCIO-PATHOLOGICAL PHENOMENA OF INDIVIDUAL NATURE IN THE POLICE ENVIRONMENT. OUTLINE OF THE ISSUES

Anna Nowak and Ewa Wysocka indicate existence of at least three groups of phenomena, including: a) various phenomena of individual nature, the essence of which entails individual 'suffering', having specific phases and leading directly to destruction of personality; b) 'group' phenomena, the essence of which entails a breakup of group ties and supra-individual harmfulness; c) institutional phenomena, the essence of which entails poor functioning of social structures (Nowak, Wysocka, 2001).

It should be noted, however, that police work is closely related to performance of tasks that are characterized by the risk of losing health and even life. The occupational risk factors affecting police officers fall within the specific properties and characteristics of this professional group as well as within the properties and tasks associated with a formal organization or an institution. Among the most characteristic psychological features characterizing police officers, the following can be distinguished: a) risk is a sort of challenge and constitutes an important work-motivating factor; b) competitive attitudes as well as pursuit of success and achievement; c) existence of various forms of aggression that are acceptable by police officers when solving problems, while the broad limits of its use in interpersonal contacts are tolerated (Sokoluk, 2007).

As Ian Hesketh and Noreen Tehrani indicate, changes in the perception of threat have in recent years obliged the police forces to act counteractively towards crime, not only in the traditional sense. Due to the fact that electronic methods of reporting crime have dominated the citizens' contacts with the police, the use of the Internet and social media to analyze various phenomena has been intensified. Therefore, police officers, focusing on Internet exploration, on the one hand, have less interpersonal contacts with citizens, but on the other, they come across, frequently virtually, such phenomena and situations, which previously comprised the domain of specialized police forces only, including criminal or investigation forces. Police officers are additionally obliged to actively contact the people who break social norms, respond to cases of alcohol violence or domestic violence, as well as participate in disaster-related actions and respond to accidents or collisions in which people's lives and health have been lost. As such, police officers may experience stress and trauma, and thus health and well-being disturbance (Hesketh, Tehrani, 2018).

One important element of a police officer's professional work is stress, which is often relieved by a variety of behaviors, such as alcohol drinking, drug taking, and even suicide

(Murtagh, 2010). According to Wiesław Sokoluk, the stressors in police work include: a) the rigid, hierarchical organizational structure that requires discipline and subordination, but also creativity, flexibility or originality in approaching given social problems; b) the ever-present conflict associated with the perception of the real and the imagined gratification and promotion criteria; c) the constant availability, along with the unpredictability of professional involvement time, which hinders the relations in the sphere of personal--professional life; d) the constant threat to health and life, which mobilizes one to act, but raises a 'demand for adaptive aggression', and also exhausts the human defense capabilities, often due to short interval between two traumatic events; e) permanent or temporary contact 'with the dark side of life' (e.g. crime, drug addiction, prostitution and other phenomena), which in the absence of supervision causes some to take advantage of illegal behavior or services etc.; f)compensating for the low social recognition of the police work, through specific dysfunctional behaviors (Sokoluk, 2007).

Quite importantly, intensely manifested stress and trauma may occur in at least three police groups, including: a) officers who first respond to incidents and events, especially those who arrive at murder and suicide sites, accident and road collision sites, as well as at places where corpses are found, b) specialized officers dealing with domestic violence, violence against children, but also those counteracting terrorism, hunting dangerous criminals and arms or drug dealers, as well as those who work undercover and undertake secret activity; c) officers involved in activities related to the securing of catastrophe sites and events of a significant scale (Hesketh, Tehrani, 2018, p. 6). Each of these activities is 'charged' with a significant level of stress and trauma, which not always can be discharged in a 'normatively neutral' manner.

Accordingly, while undertaking analysis of dysfunctional behavior and socio-pathological phenomena of an individual nature, the issue of suicide can be addressed first. Suicide is a very socially-complex phenomenon, because suicide not only is targeted at the person committing this tragic act, but also at the fundamentals of social existence. Emile Durkheim believed that suicide means all deaths that directly or indirectly result from the victim's act, who knows what result it entails (Durkheim, 2011). Brunon Hołyst, describing suicide, introduced the term 'suicidal behavior', and called the science of suicidal behavior suicidology. Addressing suicidal behavior, the author indicates existence of a sequence of reactions triggered in a person when suicide appears in his/her consciousness as a desired state of affairs and constitutes the objective of action (Hołyst, 2002). According to this author, suicide is a type of voluntary death that results from a conscious decision of a given person (Hołyst, 1999). Robert Merton, in turn, refers to suicide as the most drastic form of an individual's adaptation to society, i.e. withdrawal. Withdrawal consists in rejecting both the goals set by the culture and the allowable means to achieve them. According to Robert Merton, withdrawal is the rarest and the most condemned type of reaction to the state of anomy, which means a breakdown in the cultural structure, occurring particularly when there is an acute disjunction discrepancy between cultural norms and goals and socially structured capacities for group members to act in accord with them (Merton, 1968).

Brunon Hołyst is convinced that the police are a professional group most threatened with the risk of suicide (Florkowski, Flinik-Jankowska, Gmitrowicz, Gądek, Krajewska, Zboralski, 2015; Florkowski, Gądek, Łacisz, Zboralski, 2015). It should be noted that before 2005, the suicide rate among police officers was almost twice as high as in the population of Poles. Only after 2005 the indicator 'leveled out' to the national level and amounted to 12 suicides per 100000 persons (Hołyst, 2011), whereas today it is even lower.

Characteristically, earlier Polish suicide rates were similar to those recorded in the US police, which amounted to 22 suicides per 100000 police officers (Stock, Kelly, 1994). It ought to be pointed out that the most common form of suicidal death among police officers is shooting oneself. According to Mark H. Chae and Douglas J. Boyle, in the US, about 80–90% of law enforcement officers commit suicide using service weapons. In the years 2003–2007, more than 80% of all suicides in the New Jersey police force was committed using firearms, while out of 80 suicides committed by New York police officers, as many as 94% were associated with shooting oneself (Chae, Boyle, 2013). It is also significant that American studies confirm the relationship between the police officers' possession of firearms, regardless of the cause of suicidal behavior (Violanti, Owens, McCanlies, Fekedulegn, Andrew, 2019). Typically, almost all police officers who committed suicide were under the influence of alcohol and at the same time had ongoing problems with alcohol (Jablonski, 2012). Statistical analyzes show that in Poland suicide in the police force is most often committed by non-commissioned male officers aged 20–40, with 4–15 years seniority, whereas the place of suicide is their own home, while the most common way of committing suicide is shooting oneself using a service weapon (Piotrowicz, 2006), as confirmed by American observations.

From a scientific viewpoint, analysis of police officers' suicidal behavior entails two perspectives. The first one is associated with the science of suicide – suicidology, and the second with the sociological concept of uniformed public-service groups. The first indicates what suicide is, what are its types and kinds, as well as what consequences it entails. Consideration of suicide 'rationality' involves assessment of the positive and the negative consequences of suicide decisions as well as drawing conclusions regarding whether this act is be beneficial (or not) and for whom. The key element in this assessment is the impact suicide has on others (Kelly, Dale, 2011). The second involves consideration of how a paramilitary uniformed public-service officer's social patterns translate into suicidal behavior (Ostasz, Moczuk, 2018). It should be underlined that a suicide committed by police officer's is a problem not only for the immediate family, but also for the Police as an institution. This is due to the fact that in the event of a suicidal death, the immediate family is convinced that the reason for it entailed improper service conditions and, above all, improper professional relations. Investigators, in turn, look for the causes of death in the victims' personal or family life. What is more, the loved ones are convinced that stressful work is the reason, where stress is relieved by alcohol, and when this does not help, by auto-aggression. There is also the 'myth of a police officer being a tough person', which leads to psychological internal conflicts when officers behave differently than everyone else and when they are misunderstood by their environment. They then close in on themselves and block their emotions, which can cause loneliness, and consequently neuroses or depression, potentially leading to suicide. Police service also requires 'legally sanctioned' aggressive behavior, which must be always monitored. There are persons, however, who are unable to release emotional tension in extremely stressful situations, often associated with direct threat to their lives and health. There is also the issue of 'occupational burnout', which occurs after a long period of working under stressful conditions, which leads to closing oneself to others and to 'developed cynicism' as well as to physical and mental fatigue (Baranowska, Wiciak, 2007).

The etiology of suicidal behavior among police officers mentions the following variables: a) the fact that the profession is dominated by men (men commit suicide more often than women); b) the fact that police officers have easy access to weapons and are able

to handle guns; c) the fact that police officers are under constant stress, due to the risk of losing their lives or health; d) too great involvement in work, which causes family conflicts; e) the social hostility towards the Police as an institution, as well as exposure to social criticism; f) existence of bad social workplace relations, irregularities, objections, as well as irrational decisions of superiors, prosecutors, judges, which negates the work ethos (Baranowska, Wiciak, 2007).

Another phenomenon that can be encountered in the police environment is alcohol abuse among police officers, including alcohol addiction. It is difficult, however, to clearly indicate the scale of alcohol consumption by police officers, especially since they are adults and alcohol is a product available commercially (Kohan, O'Connor, 2002; Lindsay, Shelley, 2009; Pendergrass, Ostrove, 1986; Violanti, Marshall, Howe, 1985). Estimation of the alcohol addiction rate, against the background of the general population, poses a bigger problem, which not only poses a scientific challenge, but also a challenge for the people dealing with addiction treatment and therapy. The problem is even greater though, because the alcohol problems occurring in the general population cannot be addressed automatically, whereas existence of theoretically unconfirmed reasons for officers' excessive alcohol drinking and even alcohol addiction does not allow a clear advance of a thesis that alcohol abuse is a social or a psychological problem among police officers. What is more, scientific literature on the subject is not available, which indicates that no detailed research in this area has been carried out (Ballenger, Best, Metzler, Wasserman, Mohr, Liberman, Delucchi, Weiss, Fagan, Waldrop, Marmar, 2010). Nevertheless, John M. Violanti, James E. Slaven, Luenda E. Charles, Cecil M. Burchfield, Michael E. Andrew, Gregory G. Homish are of the opposite view, indicating that alcohol abuse among the police is not only an important legal problem, but also a social one, because police officers' alcohol drinking associated with occupational stress, as well as with the peculiar subculture existing in the police (Violanti, Slaven, Charles, Burchfield, Andrew, Homish, 2011). This has also confirmed been by research on alcohol drinking among police officers who hold significant social positions (Benton, 2009). The former Milwaukee Police Chief Edward A. Flynn, believes that alcohol abuse among police officers has been a long-standing problem, whereas alcohol accompanies officers during both stress-generating and leisure-time situations. He also specifies, alcohol consumption by police officers is socially accepted that in the state of Wisconsin, owing to the cultural conditions resulting from the specificity of the state of Wisconsin, but also due to the stressful work. Nevertheless, the very abuse of alcohol affects police officers' social behavior, which not only leads to their arrests, but also to suicides (Flynn, 2012). The Tucson Police Chief Roberto Villasenor, also indicates that police officers who served under the influence of alcohol not only were not allowed to work, but their behavior has been condemned (Villasenor, 2012). The former Austin Police Chief Art Acevedo, in turn, denotes that when police officers are convicted of alcohol-related crimes, they lose their Peace Officer license for 10 years and are relegated, which prevents them from taking action among citizens (Acevedo, 2012). Unfortunately, no such analyzes have been carried out in Poland.

What is characteristic of this subject matter, is the fact that the literature on the subject shows that one of the main factors determining alcohol use among law enforcement employees, including police officers, is the work-related stress (Coombs, 1997). American studies indicate that as many as 25% of police officers drink alcohol in the workplace to better integrate with the employee group, while about 25% cannot say no to alcohol drinking with their superiors, colleagues or workplace acquaintances (Davey, Obst, Sheehan, 2001).

The studies carried out in Chicago by James F. Ballenger, Suzanne R. Best, Thomas J. Metzler, David A. Wasserman, David C. Mohr, Akiva Liberman, Kevin Delucchi, Daniel S. Weiss, Jeffrey A. Fagan, Angela E. Waldrop and Charles R. Marmara, indicate that 18.1% of policemen and 15.9% of policewomen report negative effects of alcohol consumption, and as many as 7.8% meet the criteria of alcohol addiction, as per the rules set out by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA). It is worth noting that 3.4% of policemen and 3.7% of policewomen consumed over 28 drinks in the week prior to the study. In addition, 18% of male officers and 16% of female officers mention individual adverse social and interpersonal consequences, in relation to alcohol abuse (Ballenger, Best, Metzler, Wasserman, Mohr, Liberman, Delucchi, Weiss, Fagan, Waldrop, Marmar, 2010). The study carried out by this team also shows that police officers' alcohol drinking/abuse is linked to gender. One interesting conclusion from the research is that policewomen exhibit similar drinking patterns to those of policemen, yet definitely higher than the alcohol drinking patterns of women in the general population. Research findings indicate that, in general, police officers are more likely to get drunk than people in the general population, but the likelihood of drunk policewomen is up to three times higher than that of policemen, which is not an optimistic information (Ballenger, Best, Metzler, Wasserman, Mohr, Liberman, Delucchi, Weiss, Fagan, Waldrop, Marmar, 2010). It is extremely characteristic, or perhaps rather shocking, that in the case of 'catching' a police officer drunk in the workplace, his/her colleagues and superiors protect him/her and also mitigate the possible effects of his/her drunkenness (Lumb, Breazeale, 2002).

Drug addiction among police officers is another issue. Nevertheless, as in the case of alcohol problems, it is difficult to determine the scale of illegal psychoactive substance use in the police environment in Poland. Difficulties exist in determining the scale of drug addiction in the police in other countries as well. As indicated by Angela Gorta, the analysis of the state of 'drug' use among police officers in New South Wales, Australia, carried out by an independent supervisory agency – the Police Integrity Commission (PIC), is significant, thus it was postulated not only to diagnose the scale of the phenomenon, but also to gain understanding of the nature of this problem and to develop a system allowing prevention and reduction of its harmful effects among officers in the New South Wales Police Force (Gorta, 2009). In Brazil, where, against the background of the above-average use of 'drugs' in the general population, the fact that police officers use drugs themselves is not surprising (Costa, Yonamine, Ramos, Oliveira, Rodrigues, da Cunha, 2015). According to Ray Schultz, former Albuquerque Police Chief of the State of New Mexico, increased use of a medication called Oxycontin, which is a strong painkiller opioid that has analgesic and sedative effects, has been observed among police officers. This medication, used excessively, makes people addicted, which causes problems in the sphere of professional and organizational work, but also in family life. Due to addiction and unpromising treatment success, these officers must leave work, which is very frustrating for them (Schultz, 2012). The problem of steroid use, in turn, has been highlighted by Charles Ramsey of the police in Philadelphia, who pointed out that the use of steroids has been a growing problem in the Police, because officers want to maintain physical fitness that would give them advantage over other people during street patrols, by using illegal steroids, which makes them more aggressive when interacting with citizens and causes domestic violence against their immediate family members. A personality change occurs as well, which is called 'crazy anger' (Ramsey, 2012). This fact has been confirmed by Jack Donohue, former Deputy Chief of New York Police, who claims that the use of over-the-

-counter growth hormones and anabolic steroids has been a problem among police officers. After the introduction of obligatory steroid tests and general screening tests, however, where in the event of irregularities legal liability for the use of such substances arose, the scale of the phenomenon has decreased (Donohue, 2012).

Peter Gwynne believes that there are professions where the use of 'drugs' is a common everyday practice. He writes that even the opponents of tests admit that for certain professions, which involve human safety, drug testing is justified. Unfortunately, studies have shown that only a small number of the persons tested are 'clean'. Some doctors, air traffic controllers, pilots, police officers, drivers and representatives of other professions that are important for public safety use drugs before and during their work (Gwynne, 1988). David L. Carter, in turn, states that the use of 'drugs' by police officers is treated as a social problem, especially in large cities, pointing to the experiences of Detroit, Washington, New York, Philadelphia, Miami, as well as a small city of Flint in the state of Michigan are pointed out. The author writes that "the problem [of drug addiction] clearly exists in many police organizations, at levels never envisioned before" (Carter, 1990). This has also been confirmed by Peter Gwynne, who believes that the alarming results of Boston police officers' tests for illegal psychoactive substances showed that 2% of drug-tested police officers carrying weapons had 'drugs' in their system (Gwynne, 1988).

Earlier studies, carried out by David L. Carter, showed that a fairly consistent, evolutionary drug use pattern exists among police officers. Initially, police officers used drugs at home, after finishing their service, but later on, after 'settling down' in their workplace, they also used drugs during work time (Carter, 1990). Peter Gwynne points out that for years, some officers in large cities agreed to take money from drug dealers for protection, others extorted money from these people or confiscated drugs and then sold them. Some officers went further and got addicted. Typical addiction begins when a person notoriously takes drugs in high school and college. After a noticeable period of abstinence at the police academy, where random drug tests are used, a given officer goes to work with the state police in a large city, where he/she meets colleagues who use marijuana, cocaine and other drugs outside service hours. With his/her new colleagues or alone, the young police officer returns to his/her addiction. He/she learns to trust the collusion of silence, which functions even when the superiors suspect that an officer is taking drugs. Since the officer becomes more and more addicted to drugs, he/she begins to be late for work, while his/her job performance worsens (Gwynne, 1988).

Domestic violence in police families is another phenomenon analyzed. The concept of domestic violence covers all types of ill-treatment of those family members, who are unable to defend themselves effectively (Lipowska-Teutsch, 1993). The situation of a woman entangled in violence is very difficult, due to of the specificity of this phenomenon, since the existence of several factors influencing violence, including the perpetrator's advantage, the purpose, the duration and intensity is quite significant. Violence is always intentional, contributes to the violation of the rights and the property of another person, prevents self-defense, causes physical and mental damage. Violence is a process that tends to recur, gaining strength over time, giving satisfaction to the person using it. The person responsible for violence is always the perpetrator, who can use physical, psychological, economic and sexual violence. The perpetrator manipulates the victim, cuts him/her off from the current environment, makes him/her emotionally dependent and manipulates him/her (Chojnacka, 2013). Many cases of domestic violence, however, are not exposed, because of a belief that: a) the 'dark side' of one's live should not be revealed; b) no one should interfere with the

lives of others; c) there is no violence when it is not physical; d) the woman is blameworthy of the violence; e) nothing in life can be changed; f) violence is a social-margin problem (Chojnacka, 2013). Exposure of domestic violence in the police environment to the public is a shock, both for the citizens and for the police themselves. This results from the fact that while police officers, when dealing with this phenomenon, themselves may not be aware of or notice the existence of this problem in their own ranks, dissonance in the perception of the issue emerges when the police officers who are obliged to respond to a situation of domestic violence become aware of the fact that they commit these types of crimes themselves (Naja-Pasek, 2013). Studies conducted in the US have shown that domestic violence has been documented in 40% of police families, which means that there are four times more cases, compared to the 10% in the general population of American families (Neidig, Russell, Seng, 1992). The research presented to the US Congress showed that the violence used against immediate family members is not only physical or mental, but involves the use of service firearms (Johnson, Todd, Subramanian, 2005). One spectacular example is the case of the Chief of Police in Tacoma, Washington, who on April 26, 2003 shot his wife and then himself in the parking lot of a local mall. Their two small children witnessed this tragedy. During the investigation, it turned out that the perpetrator had been using violence against his family members for a long time, and soon before the tragedy, he repeatedly threatened his wife. The public was outraged by this act and demanded a public investigation, all the more so, because, as indicated at the time, the Chief of Police carried this act out demonstratively and publicly, using his service weapon (Stinson, Liederbach, 2013). Another example is the case of the wife of a high-level officer working in the Philadelphia police. For almost two decades of marriage, she was beaten, kicked and strangled by her husband, where the husband was sure that her reporting of domestic violence to the Police would do nothing. The Police ignored the reports, while her husband was continuously promoted. He was never accused of violence and worked in the Police until retirement. As it turns out, however, this woman's story was not an isolated incident (Cheema, 2016).

The risk of domestic violence in police families is related to the following factors: a) the police work schedule; b) partner's way of being dominant at home; c) partner's withholding of emotions, a behavior learned at work; d) inability to separate professional and family life, while copying the behavior towards criminals and transferring it to the home environment; e) the lack of colleagues' and/or superiors' social support for victims (Pietruszka-Pandey, 2013). Characteristically, the American experience shows that a certain 'collusion of silence' exists regarding the domestic violence used by police officers. Leanor B. Johnson, Michael Todd and Ganga Subramanian have recognized the fact that such violence is subject to a secrecy clause (collusion of silence), because police officers are connected by bonds of camaraderie and professional solidarity, and are not inclined to leak out any information, even about irregularities (Johnson, Todd, Subramanian, 2005). When violence occurs in the police environment, the victims are afraid to report it to the prosecutor's office or the Police, because they are convinced that the perpetrators will use their contacts in the prosecutor's office or in the Police to avoid liability, which has been confirmed by studies indicating that perpetrators may have access to procedural information, manipulate the facts and intimidate the victims. What is more, being familiar with the law and the criminal procedures, they and can drag the cases until they expire (Pietruszka-Pandey, 2013). Even if violence is documented, women do not report the violence used by their partners who are police officers, because: a) they are ashamed that

the person who deals with crime prevention uses violence himself; b) they are afraid that the truth will be revealed and it will 'break' her partner's career, which will entail a loss of life at a proper level; c) they fear being perceived as weak and helpless; d) they fear that their domestic relations will transfer to their professional relations; e) if they hold supervisory positions, they are afraid of losing their 'boss' authority; f) they are afraid to harm the children, who consequently will lose their 'father'; g) they fear that, as a result of professional solidarity, the partner's colleagues will support him (Chojnacka, 2013).

In Poland, no research has been conducted on the scale of the domestic violence phenomenon, while the statistical data is estimated based on information from other countries, although in American literature, the domestic violence used by police officers is referred to as the "Fox in the Henhouse" as well as the "Black and Blue Bloods" (Cheema, 2016).

3. CONCLUSION

Summing up these considerations, it should be noted that the cases of suicide, alcohol problems and drug addiction, or domestic violence, occurring in the police environment, have been treated as exemplary dysfunctional and socio-pathological phenomena of an individual nature, while the analysis of the literature on the subject, in this regard, does not allow any illusions that the situation in the Polish Police Force is different. As such, it is not reasonable to question whether these phenomena exist in the police environment, but rather what the scale of such phenomena is. The extensiveness of the analytical area that the persons scientifically exploring this subject must face is not without significance either.

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LEGAL ACT

The Police Act of 6 April 1990 (Journal of Laws 2020 item 360, as amended).