

MISSING PERSONS AS A CONTEMPORARY SECURITY THREAT

PhD, **Irena Malinowska**,
University of Vocational Training,
Plac Powstańców Śląskich 1/201, 53-329 Wrocław, Poland,
<wsb.malinowska@gmail.com>

Summary

The publication very much widely is documenting title issues, trying to grasp reports which are occurring between people in the legal-criminological aspect in their most different forms and with going missing nowadays in taking pathological events back in the family, of work whether at the school. There are also references to the cultural sphere in the contemporary civilization tied with going missing of people. Also, a chronological scope of the work associated with crime-related threats and the implementation.

The problem of disappearances is the subject of lively public debate, both due to the scale and sensitivity of the phenomenon. The disappearance of a loved one is one of the most dramatic events that can happen to a person. People die regardless of sex, age, social status, and education. A certain percentage of disappearances is the result of a well-considered - more or less - and conscious decision of such a person.

Others are the result of various types of random accidents or typical loss. Since disappearances have been a definitely growing social problem for several years, it is very important to undertake scientific considerations on this problem. For what reasons do people leave their homes and not come back? Why do young people run away from home? These questions should be asked at every stage of this publication, and they are also asked by parents whenever a child runs away from home. Complications at work, problems in the family, marriage breakdown, work abroad trips and financial difficulties are common grounds for the disappearance of adults. Older people die many times due to memory problems and other age-related ailments, while violations of the law, such as abduction, pedophilia or homicide, are a very unusual cause of disappearances.

Keywords: missing person, crime, victim, victim, search.

Introduction

Disappearances happen everywhere, even in safe countries where there is no warfare or armed conflict. In Poland, every year thousands of people leave their homes and go missing without news.

Missing persons are not a typical community-wide problem. Compared to other social issues they are not a mass phenomenon, but they have their own distinct social resonance. The development of modern civilization is generated by scientific and technological progress and legal solutions¹.

The police undertake the search for a missing person after receiving information about their disappearance. Great importance is attached to searching for people who, because of their health or age (young children, the elderly and infirm), may become victims of crime. In such cases, police actions are carried out immediately and to the extent necessary to quickly locate the person².

The scale of the problem of disappearances is made easier to understand by the numbers. Every year, tens of thousands of people go missing in Poland (19,000 people, of whom 5,000 are under the age of 17 - according to police data for 2020). Despite the leap in civilization and technology that we have seen in our country in recent decades, there are

more and more people who go missing without a trace. Their number has doubled over the last 20 years³.

Depending on the circumstances under which a person has disappeared and the category to which he/she has been classified, a police officer proceeds in accordance with the service regulations in force in this respect.

There is a dehumanization of interpersonal relations, as well as intellectual degradation, which causes social exclusion, followed by the plunge of wide circles of society into pathology of cultural life and pejorative criminogenic factors⁴.

Tackling and preventing the many social problems that arise from the use of psychoactive substances by adults, adolescents and children or by which they can to become their users, the process of upbringing needs to be enriched with preventive measures. Apart from the family, the immediate environment, religious institutions or peer groups, the school and the professional environment are important places to work⁵.

In every family there may appear various dysfunctions, conflicts, illnesses or addictions which, if not eliminated on an ongoing basis, may become a source of human drama in the future. These problems also concern the so-called good

1 Wojnicz, P. (2021). *Zaginienia osób. Studium prawne, kryminalistyczne i kryminologiczne*.

2 Komenda Główna Policji: <<https://www.policja.pl/pol/kgp/biuro-kryminalne/dokumenty/poszukiwani/4649,Poszukiwanie-osob-zaginionych.html>>.

3 Publicystyka, zaginieni bez śladu: <<https://publicystyka.ngo.pl/zaginieni-bez-sladu>>.

4 Podgórecki, A. (1996). *Patologia życia społecznego*. S. 7.

5 Pospiszył, I. (1994). *Przemoc w rodzinie*. S. 6.

homes, although they are often mistakenly identified with the social margin.

With the margins of society. It is noted that the use of addictive substances, i.e. alcohol, cigarettes, drugs, is only one of the ways of threatening the health and proper development of children and young people. There is a large group of problem behaviors among the younger generation that often occur in conjunction with the use of these substances; these include acts of violence, suicide, breaking the law and then running away from home and going missing⁶.

The phenomenon of disappearances is highly topical and widespread in the media as well as in public opinion. The rules for the search for missing persons, established in 2018 by Order No. 48 of the Chief of Police. The search for missing persons requires the active participation and involvement not only of the closest family members, but above all of many services and institutions. These include the State Fire Service, voluntary fire services, the Polish Red Cross, Caritas or the Territorial Defence Forces.

Moreover, the importance and contribution of non-governmental organizations, such as Itaka, Na Tropic or Nadzieja Foundations, cannot be overlooked. During search actions, the assistance provided by the local community is also very important. The criminogenic environment is repeatedly affected by unemployment, homelessness, deviant families, blockheads and juvenile gangs, social pathologies: drug addiction, prostitution, alcoholism, social maladjustment phenomena. Problems at home, at school, which lead to leaving the family home and, as a consequence, often to missing persons and other social behavior, including deviant behavior, such as suicide or criminal offences⁷.

For what reasons do people leave their homes and do not return? Why do young people run away from home? These questions need to be asked at every stage of this publication, and they are also asked by parents whenever a child runs away from home⁸.

Work complications, problems within the family, marriage breakdown, travelling abroad in search of work and financial difficulties are common causes of adult disappearances. Older people disappear many times because of memory problems and other age-related ailments, while violations of the law, such as abduction, pedophilia or murder, are highly unusual causes of disappearance. According to data from the ITAKA Missing Persons Search Centre, disappearances are also occasionally linked to entry into a sect⁹. However, statistics from the Polish Police Headquarters show that every year, several thousand young people run away from home in Poland. Younger and younger children are running away, even as young as ten years old. Almost adults, just before their

eighteenth birthday, also run away. Children are fleeing from danger, misery, humiliation, from problems that would break down many adults. They are fleeing poverty, mental abuse, sexual harassment, violence, their parents' incessant arguing. Children leave home without support in their own environment, often unable or not knowing who to ask for help.

It is very important that adults pay attention to the child. In this way they can see that the child is giving signals that indicate trouble. Children may not like talking about school, but they may also not like it because they are being hurt at school and cannot talk about it. The background may also be the opposite; it is desirable for a teacher to take an interest in why a pupil is sleeping in lessons, rather than reprimanding them. There is probably something going on at home that is preventing the child from resting¹⁰.

Police data show that the largest proportion of missing persons are middle-aged. In the group of minors, statistically the largest number of disappearances is in the age group of 14-17 years. 20% of all missing persons are senior citizens¹¹.

One of the reasons why people go missing is unemployment. It has very negative consequences both for the people affected and their families, and for the economy as a whole. High unemployment rates contribute significantly to the impoverishment of a section of society and the lowering of the standard of living of many households. Other consequences of unemployment include an increase in criminality, deterioration of health and professional deactivation, and the resulting frustration, aggression, feelings of resignation and withdrawal, inhibition of personal development and lower educational aspirations, and fear for the future¹². It is difficult to estimate the number of Poles who have emigrated to EU countries in search of work. There are also no data concerning how many people emigrated permanently, and how many only for a certain period of time. Various institutions quote different figures, ranging from 500,000 to 2 million¹³.

As estimated by the European Citizen Action Service (ECAS)¹⁴, Since the enlargement of the European Union, approximately 1 120 000 Poles have travelled there to work. According to data from the ITAKA Foundation, almost 300 people from Poland have gone missing within the European Union, 73 of them in Great Britain. When reading such statistics, the question arises as to how it is possible to 'go missing', especially nowadays, when we travel to the West on the basis of an identity card, we have access to the Internet and mobile phones, and it is possible to return even on low-cost airlines for a few dozen zlotys.

According to the Missing Persons Search Centre ITAKA¹⁵ the problems start with a badly prepared trip. We believe that without knowledge of a foreign language we will earn a

6 Ibidem.

7 Ibidem.

8 Ibidem.

9 Fundacja Itaka: <<http://www.zaginieni.pl/jak-pomagamy>>.

10 Ibidem.

11 Komenda Główna Policji, statystyka policyjna: <www.policja.gov.pl/statystyka>.

12 Komenda Główna Policji; <<http://www.policja.pl/pol/aktualnosci/115830,Zaginiecicia-osob-w-Polsce-Fakty-i-mity.html>>.

13 Ibidem.

14 European Citizen Action Service (ECAS): <<https://ecas.org/about-us-2/>>.

15 Centrum Poszukiwań Ludzi Zaginionych ITAKA: <<http://www.zaginieni.pl/>>.

lot of money, and we put ourselves in the hands of dishonest intermediaries or go „blind”, hoping for a stroke of luck. On the spot, we are left with no money and no prospects, which causes further problems. According to the Barka Mutual Assistance Foundation, which tries to help homeless Poles, there are between 2,000 and 4,000 Poles living on the streets in the UK without any source of income, and already every tenth homeless person has come from Poland. For this reason, the mayor's advisor¹⁶.

According to police data, every year the police record about 17 thousand disappearances of Polish citizens in the country and abroad. People go missing regardless of their age, gender and social status. They go missing due to illnesses (physical, mental), accidents, everyday problems and when they become victims of crime. Out of all the reports, the Police annually note about 320 disappearances of children under 6, about 800 disappearances of children aged 7-13 and about 5340 disappearances of children aged 14-17.

Irrespective of the situation of disappearance, in the event of a justified suspicion that a criminal offence has been committed, the actions set out in the provisions of criminal procedure shall be taken, including the initiation of pre-trial proceedings¹⁷.

Persons who, at the time of being reported missing, are not in real danger of losing their lives or health, are searched for in accordance with the appropriate procedures developed taking into account the circumstances of their disappearance. Information about the disappearance, photographs and sketches are registered in a national police information system. As a rule, the whereabouts of such persons is established by means of a check of the identity card or documents of the

vehicle driver¹⁸.

People go missing regardless of gender, age, social status, education. Some disappearances are the result of a deliberate - more or less, but conscious - decision by such a person. Others are the result of random accidents of various kinds, or a typical loss of¹⁹.

In the light of the above, it can be concluded that it is primarily the officers of the police field units who bear the burden of direct actions aimed at assisting when a person is reported missing and the search activities involved in finding the person quickly.

Around the world, accounts from families of missing persons tend to be similar. „We don't know what happened, we don't know the answers, we are afraid to ask”. - this is what the families say about their experiences. They are the ones who live in trauma for years, unable to understand what happened. For years they are tormented by the question „why us?”. Both abroad and in Poland, the families of the disappeared cannot find peace. Many of them do not rearrange things in the missing person's room, do not throw away his belongings. He will need them when he returns²⁰.

The willingness to help the disappeared and solidarity with their families - these are values that we should remember in a special way on the day, 30 August, during the International Day for the Remembrance of Missing Persons established by the United Nations. On this day, we think of all the people who have disappeared without trace and who have been tormented and abducted during conflicts and wars, as well as those who have disappeared in times of peace. Let us be in solidarity on this day with all those in need of our help!²¹.

Conclusions:

1. the creation by institutions and organizations of an efficient mechanism for the search for missing persons.
2. to develop a coherent and effective system of support for missing persons and their families.

16 Malinowska, I. *Problematyka zaginięć ludzi w aspekcie prawnokryminologicznym*: <<https://journals.indexcopernicus.com/api/file/viewByFileId/554549.pdf>>.

17 Komenda Główna Policji: <<https://www.pohcja.pl/pol/kgp/biuro-kryminalne/dokumenty/poszukiwani/4649,Poszukiwanie-osob-zaginionych.html>>.

18 Ibidem.

19 Ibidem.

20 Publicystyka, zaginieni bez śladu: <<https://publicystyka.ngo.pl/zaginieni-bez-sladu>>.

21 Ibidem.

ŽMONIŲ DINGIMAS KAIP ŠIUOLAIKINĖ GRĖSMĖ SAUGUMUI

Irena Malinowska

Santrauka

Artimo žmogaus dingimas – vienas dramatiškiausių įvykių, kurie gali nutikti žmogui. Žmonių dingimo problema yra reikšmingas visuomenės diskusijų objektas tiek dėl reiškinių masto, tiek dėl įvykių jaudrumo.

Straipsnyje pateikiami interpretaciniai samprotavimai apie žmonių dingimo fenomeną šiuolaikinių grėsmių saugumui aspektu. Autorė parodė tarp žmonių besiklostančius santykius, jų įvairias formas teisiniu ir kriminologiniu aspektu. Nurodė žmonių dingimo termino prasmių apimtį, šio reiškinio priežastis, jo apraiškas ir socialines pasekmes bei galimas teises ir prevencines priemones. Taip pat yra nuorodų į šiuolaikinės civilizacijos kultūros sferą, susijusią su žmonių dingimu. Taip pat pateikiama chronologinė, susijusių su nusikalstamumo grėsmėmis ir jų įgyvendinimu, darbų apžvalga. Žmonės dingsta nepriklausomai nuo lyties, amžiaus, socialinės padėties ir išsilavinimo. Tam tikras dingimų procentas yra tokio asmens, daugiau ar mažiau, savarankiško ir sąmoningo sprendimo rezultatas. Kiti yra įvairių atsitiktinių nelaimingų įvykių ar tipiško pasiklydimo pasekmė. Žmonių dingimai jau eilę metų yra neabejotinai didėjanti socialinė problema, todėl labai svarbu imtis mokslinės šios problemos nagrinėjimo. Dėl kokių priežasčių žmonės palieka namus ir negrįžta? Ko-

dėl jaunimas bėga iš namų? Šiuos klausimus reikėtų užduoti kiekviename šio straipsnio skaitymo etape, kaip ir tėvai, kurie klausia savęs, kai vaikas pabėga iš namų. Komplikacijos darbe, problemos šeimoje, santuokos iširimas, išvykimas dirbti į užsienį, finansiniai sunkumai – dažnos suaugusiųjų dingimo priežastys. Senyvo amžiaus žmonės ne kartą dingsta be žinios dėl sveikatos problemų, atminties ir kitų su amžiumi susijusių negalavimų, bet nusikalstamos veikos, tokios kaip pagrobimas ar žmogžudystė, yra labai netipiška dingimo priežastis.

Atsižvelgiant į tai, kas išdėstyta, darytina išvada, kad pirmiausia vietos policijos padalinių pareigūnams tenka padėti pranešusiems apie įvykį asmenims ir atlikti pirminius paieškos veiksmus, susijusius su greitu ir saugiu dingusio asmens suradimu. Svarbu institucijoms ir nevyriausybinėms organizacijoms apibrėžti užduotis, kurios leistų joms efektyviai ir kryptingai veikti bei bendradarbiauti ieškant dingusio asmens. Būtinybę taikyti tokius sprendimus pagrindžia ne tik esama probleminė situacija, duomenys apie dingimų fenomeną, policijos veiklos analizė, bet ir autorės empiriniai tyrimai bei stebėjimai.

Raktiniai žodžiai: dingęs be žinios asmuo, nusikaltimas, auka, paieška.