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ARTICLE

The sense of human security in the light of selected phenomena of sexual psychopathology

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Abstract

The article addresses the issue of human security in the context of selected phenomena of sexual psychopathology – rape, paedophilia and sex tourism. The research aim was to show how these phenomena affect the subjective sense of security of individuals and communities, as well as to indicate effective prevention and intervention strategies. The analysis draws on a review of the scholarly literature as well as legal acts relevant to the topic. The conclusion highlights the need for comprehensive solutions combining education, prevention, victim support and offender rehabilitation, as well as for international cooperation – especially with regard to transnational phenomena such as sex tourism and human trafficking.

Keywords

human security, sexual psychopathologies, rape, paedophilia, sex tourism

Introduction

Security is one of the fundamental factors determining the quality of human life and the functioning of societies. Despite social progress, the contemporary world continues to face problems related to the violation of human rights. Among them are phenomena within the scope of sexual psychopathology, such as rape, paedophilia and sex tourism, which constitute not only a threat at the individual level but also a challenge for social, legal and medical systems worldwide.

The choice of the article's subject matter has been driven by the growing scale and complexity of issues related to the aforementioned sexual psychopathologies. Understanding the mechanisms underlying these phenomena is of great importance for effectively counteracting them and minimising their negative consequences. In the era of globalisation and increased ease of mobility, phenomena such as sex tourism are taking on a new dimension and exerting an impact on local and international communities.

The aim of the article was to analyse the issue of the human sense of security in the context of aforementioned phenomena of sexual psychopathology. The author posed two research questions: 1. How the phenomena within the scope of sexual psychopathology, such as rape, paedophilia and sex tourism affect the human sense of security? 2. What strategies can effectively counteract these phenomena?

In the article, the author focused on the following issues:

- characteristics of the phenomena of rape, paedophilia and sex tourism and their impact on the individual and society,
- analysis of the phenomena of rape, paedophilia and sex tourism in terms of their causes and consequences,
- evaluation of current preventive and intervention strategies regarding rape, paedophilia and sex tourism, and recommendations for enhancing social and security policy.

The author formulated the research thesis that phenomena such as rape, paedophilia and sex tourism exert a negative, multidimensional impact on the sense of security of individuals and communities. He employed an analysis of the scholarly literature and legal acts related to the subject matter. This approach made it possible to examine the psychological and social mechanisms leading to the occurrence of the indicated sexual psychopathologies, as well as to identify both risk and protective factors associated with the phenomena under discussion. The analysis was aimed at drawing attention to the need for the continuous improvement of preventive strategies and for institutional cooperation in combating sex-related crimes.

Factors shaping the human sense of security

The human sense of security is a multidimensional concept that refers to the state of an individual's freedom from threats affecting their life, health, well-being and the ability to exercise fundamental rights and freedoms. It can be considered from several perspectives, including:

- economic security, which encompasses financial stability and consistent access to employment and basic goods such as food, housing and healthcare. This means the relative resilience of households and communities to economic shocks and their ability to maintain or improve their level of well-being¹;
- food security, meaning ensuring constant physical and economic access to an adequate quality and quantity of food that allows for an active and healthy lifestyle. It requires stable supply chains, affordability and the long-time maintenance of sustainable production and consumption. It forms the foundation of public health, social stability and economic development²;
- health security, meaning the state in which individuals and communities have guaranteed consistent access to high-quality medical care, effective prevention and reliable information on health risks. It helps reduce the risk of diseases and strengthens society's resilience to epidemics, pandemics and other health crises³;
- environmental security, meaning ensuring stable and healthy living conditions through the protection of ecosystems and the sustainable management of resources. It requires counteracting environmental degradation and climate changes, as well as protecting biodiversity, and promotes the long-term balance between humans and nature⁴;

¹ M. Leszczyńska, *Bezpieczeństwo ekonomiczne państwa a rozwój gospodarki i społeczeństwa* (Eng. The economic security of a state and the economy and society development), "Nierówności Społeczne a Wzrost Gospodarczy" 2018, no. 56, pp. 291–292. <https://doi.org/10.15584/nsawg.2018.4.23>.

² M.Z. Wiśniewska, J. Wyrwa, *Bezpieczeństwo żywności i żywnościowe w okresie pandemii: ujęcie interdyscyplinarne* (Eng. Food safety and security during the pandemic. An interdisciplinary approach), Zielona Góra 2022, pp. 13–14. <https://doi.org/10.26366/PTE.ZG.2022.210>.

³ M. Paplicki, *Bezpieczeństwo zdrowotne obywatela w polskim systemie ratownictwa medycznego* (Eng. Health safety in the Polish emergency medical system), Wrocław 2020, pp. 117–121. <https://doi.org/10.34616/23.21.004>.

⁴ M. Ciszek, *Bezpieczeństwo ekologiczne (środowiskowe) i kultura bezpieczeństwa ekologicznego (środowiskowego)* (Eng. Ecological (environmental) security and ecological (environmental) security culture), "Kultura Bezpieczeństwa" 2016, no. 5, pp. 17–18.

- personal security, which can be understood as a state in which an individual feels free from physical, psychological and emotional threats. It includes protection against violence, abuse and other direct forms of harm, enabling the individual to function freely and with dignity in the society⁵;
- community security, meaning a state in which local groups and entire societies operate in an atmosphere of mutual trust, support and stability. It also includes protection against social conflicts, violence and discrimination. It strengthens the sense of belonging and shared responsibility for well-being of all community members⁶;
- political security, understood as a state in which political system is protected from abuse of power (rule of law, independent courts, free media) and citizens genuinely participate in public decisions through elections, referendums, consultations, civic initiatives and participatory budgets. Equally important is the functioning of institutions in accordance with the law and procedures, without violence or intimidation, and with disputes resolved through legal means. This creates conditions of security and strengthens the sense of safety⁷.

In summary, the sense of security is a key component of sustainable social development. It facilitates the realisation of individual potential, which translates into social well-being as well as political and economic stability. A deficit of security leads to the marginalisation of individuals and social groups (including victims of violence and particularly vulnerable communities), an increase in social conflicts and destabilisation of state institutions.

Personal sense of security and sexual psychopathologies

In the article, the term ‘sexual psychopathologies’ is used in a narrow sense – it refers to violent or coercive behaviours that violate law and the autonomy of the individual. It does not include sexual dysfunctions, difficulties or deviations

⁵ M. Nowak, *Bezpieczeństwo osobiste policjantów w czasie przeprowadzanych interwencji a posiadane środki przymusu bezpośredniego* (Eng. The personal safety of police officers during interventions in relation to the use of direct coercive measures), “Przegląd Policyjny” 2018, vol. 4, no. 132, pp. 206–207. <https://doi.org/10.5604/01.3001.0013.6693>.

⁶ M. Rozwadowski, *Bezpieczeństwo społeczności lokalnych oraz działania zmierzające do jego poprawy* (Eng. Safety of local communities and actions aimed at its improvement), “Kultura Bezpieczeństwa. Nauka – Praktyka – Refleksje” 2014, no. 15, pp. 248–251.

⁷ S. Zalewski, *Bezpieczeństwo polityczne. Zarys problematyki* (Eng. Political security. Outline of issues), Siedlce 2013, pp. 42–45.

in the area of consensual sexuality. The author focuses on three phenomena within the scope of sexual psychopathology: rape, paedophilia and sex tourism. He uses the concept of sex tourism in reference to criminal phenomena, associated, among other things, with sexual exploitation of minors, human trafficking and coercion. He therefore does not pertain to voluntary sexual contacts between adults that are in accordance with the law of the state. Unlike consensual, non-harmful sexual practices, psychopathologies in this sense – including, among others: rape and attempted rape, molestation and abuse, sexual exploitation of minors (including grooming), human trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation and forced prostitution, as well as organised criminal practices (e.g. networked forms of recruitment and control of victims) – all lead to violations of the victim's physical and psychological integrity as well as their autonomy⁸. The essence of these actions is physical, mental or symbolic violence, and the absence of consent: coercion, abuse of dependency or power, deceit or inability to give consent (e.g. due to age or condition). Victims of such actions often experience long-term negative physical, psychological and social consequences⁹.

Violent actions may result both from individual mental predispositions of the perpetrator and from the influence of environmental, cultural or social factors¹⁰. They are often linked to a lack of empathy, the instrumental treatment of another person and manipulation. Perpetrators are driven by the need for domination, a sense of power, the satisfaction of their own urges and gaining control over the victim.

Combating sexual psychopathologies requires coordinated preventive and intervention measures. International organisations develop strategies and recommendations aimed at protecting human security, while international conventions, such as the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*¹¹ or the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*¹², provide a legal

⁸ W. Bołoz, *Zaburzenia rozwoju seksualnego* (Eng. Disorders of sexual development), "Studia nad Rodziną" 1998, no. 2/1, pp. 125–129.

⁹ D. Juszcak, K. Korzeniewski, *Analiza wybranych czynników psychospołecznych i psychopatologicznych u sprawców przestępstw seksualnych działających pod i bez wpływu alkoholu* (Eng. The comparative analysis of selected psychosocial and psychopathological factors among sexual offenders acting under or without the influence of alcohol), "Seksuologia Polska" 2016, vol. 14, no.1, pp. 1–3.

¹⁰ J.K. Gierowski, J. Heitzman, A. Szymusik, *Sprawcy zabójstw na tle seksualnym: psychopatologia, osobowość i motywacja* (Eng. Perpetrators of sexually motivated homicides: psychopathology, personality and motivation), "Palestra" 1994, no. 1–2, pp. 65–73.

¹¹ *Convention on the Rights of the Child adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 20 November 1989.*

¹² *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 18 December 1979.*

basis for actions to eliminate sexual violence and protect victims. In Poland, crimes against sexual freedom and morality are described in Chapter XXV of the Criminal Code¹³. They are similar to crimes against freedom, as they involve acts based on coercion that break the victim's resistance or completely deprive them of the ability to make autonomous decisions in the sexual sphere.

Despite legislative changes and growing social awareness, ensuring full human security still encounters numerous barriers. One of the key obstacles is the ineffective enforcement of regulations. The effectiveness of provisions protecting individuals may be undermined by improper application of the law, shortages of institutional resources, unclear procedures or insufficient training of law enforcement and judicial representatives. These factors hinder the implementation of security policies, weaken their effectiveness and limit institutions' ability to respond to the complex challenges of the modern world¹⁴. Additional barriers include stigmatisation and secondary victimisations of victims, to which survivors of sexual crimes are particularly vulnerable. Social stigma often discourages reporting such crimes. As Nikola Tkacz points out, two factors contribute to this: the specific nature of the protected good (sexual freedom) and influence of rape culture, which shapes a negative perception of victims in society¹⁵. Cultural and social norms play a significant role in shaping attitudes toward sexual violence. The taboo surrounding issues related to sexuality hinders open discussion and education, fostering pathological behaviours. Societies that promote gender equality and comprehensive sexual education are more effective in counteracting negative phenomena related to the sexual sphere¹⁶.

The following sections of the work discuss the mechanisms underlying rape, paedophilia and sex tourism, along with their causes, consequences as well as the preventive and intervention measures undertaken. This has made it possible to show how sexual psychopathologies affect human security.

¹³ *Act of 6 June 1997 – Criminal Code.*

¹⁴ *Przestępstwo zgwałcenia w polskim prawie karnym* (Eng. The crime of rape in Polish criminal law), Niebieska Linia, 31 XII 2009, <https://www.niebieskalinia.pl/aktualnosci/aktualnosci/przestepstwo-zgwalcenia-w-polskim-prawie-karnym> [accessed: 8 XII 2024].

¹⁵ N. Tkacz, *Zjawisko wiktyimizacji wtórnej w kontekście ofiar przestępstw seksualnych ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem przestępstwa zgwałcenia* (Eng. The phenomenon of secondary victimisation in the context of victims of sexual offenses with particular reference to the crime of rape), "Probacja" 2020, vol. 2, p. 123. <https://doi.org/10.5604/01.3001.0014.4888>.

¹⁶ P. Białczak, R. Rodasik, *O relacji pomiędzy tabu a kulturą bezpieczeństwa – wpływ języka na poczucie bezpieczeństwa jednostki* (Eng. About a relation between taboo and a safety culture – the influence on the feeling of safety of an individual), "Kultura Bezpieczeństwa. Nauka – Praktyka – Refleksje" 2015, no. 20, pp. 84–85.

Rape

Rape is one of the most extreme forms of sexual violence, striking at the fundamental values of a society based on respect for human rights, personal freedom and equality. It is both a criminal act and profoundly unethical. Effective prevention requires understanding the scale of this phenomenon, its consequences for victims and the risk factors, as well as developing methods of prevention and support¹⁷.

Rape victims experience deep trauma, the effects of which may persist for many years. The psychological consequences include, among others: post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety disorders, depression, sleep disturbances, difficulties in forming intimate relationships and lower self-esteem. This affects not only the individual's mental health but also their social and professional life. Victims may isolate themselves from others, avoid certain situations or places. The lack of social support further deepens their sense of helplessness. Rape undermines social bonds – family, friends and public institutions face the challenge of helping in the process of trauma recovery and reintegrating the victim into normal functioning¹⁸.

The causes and contributing factors of rape are complex in nature. Psychodynamic theories suggest that sexual aggression is the result of repressed impulses or disturbances in psychological development, such as sadism or masochism. The behavioural approach emphasises the role of conditioning, where violence becomes associated with sexual activity and rewards, such as orgasm, reinforce deviant behaviours. Cognitive theories highlight incorrect cognitive interpretations and stereotypes regarding gender roles, which may serve to justify violence. Tendencies towards sexual violence can be intensified by cultural influences, such as entrenched gender inequalities¹⁹. These influences include, among others: functioning of gender stereotypes that reinforce male dominance and female submissiveness as well as normalise violence as a tool of control; the existence of rape culture (e.g. victim blaming, questioning the absence of consent), which reduces the likelihood of reporting crimes and contributes the secondary victimisation of victims; socialisation into violence and patterns of 'hegemonic

¹⁷ A. Szpak, *Ewolucja definicji gwałtu w orzecznictwie międzynarodowych trybunałów karnych ad hoc* (Eng. Evolution of the definition of rape in the jurisprudence *ad hoc* international criminal tribunals), "Polityka i Społeczeństwo" 2018, no. 4(16), pp. 125–127.

¹⁸ M. Bienkowski, *Gwałt jako narzędzie wojny* (Eng. Rape as a weapon of war), *Codziennik Feministyczny*, 11 XII 2016, <http://codziennikfeministyczny.pl/bienkowski-gwalt-jako-narzedzie-wojny/> [accessed: 8 XII 2024].

¹⁹ R. Kowalczyk et al., *Gwałt – tło psychospołeczne zjawiska oraz ujęcie prawne przestępstwa* (Eng. Rape – a psychosocial background and the legal definition of the offence), "Ginekologia i Położnictwo" 2014, no. 31, pp. 87–88.

masculinity' that reward aggression, competition and dehumanisation of a partner; a culture of permissiveness associated with alcohol and psychoactive substance use (justifying violence through loss of control); the taboo surrounding sexuality and the shortcomings of comprehensive sexual education, which limit understanding of consent, boundaries and communication; media messages and online content that objectify sexuality and normalise sexual violence; structural and institutional factors – such as weak law enforcement, lengthy proceedings, low detection rates and lenient sanctions, which foster a sense of impunity; conflict and crises situations (wars, disasters, migrations), in which the risk of sexual violence increases. These conditions, acting together, reduce the sense of security and may increase both vulnerability to violence and the propensity for it.

Paedophilia

This is a disorder of sexual preference in which an adult experiences a persistent and strong sexual attraction to children – that is, individuals who are physically and emotionally immature, usually before puberty. Paedophilia poses a direct threat to a child's safety and has a negative impact on their mental and physical health as well as socio-emotional development²⁰. Any sexual contact with children is profoundly unethical and violates social and legal norms.

Individuals who commit the acts of paedophilia often use manipulation, intimidation or emotional grooming to gain the victim's trust. They exploit the victim's dependence, naivety and limited ability to recognise threats. Frequently, perpetrators come from the child's immediate environment – family, school or sports and care-related environments – which makes detecting and preventive abuse more difficult. Factors that may increase the risk of committing such crimes include experiences of violence in childhood, personality disorders, low impulse control and lack of empathy, as well as certain social and cultural conditions: entrenched gender inequalities and stereotypes; hierarchical power relationships in adult-child interactions; sexual taboos and lack of comprehensive sexual education; stigmatisation of victims and so called rape culture; insufficient institutional protection mechanisms (gaps in procedures, personnel screening and reporting channels); low level of trust in institutions and barriers to accessing help; structural factors (poverty, migration, crisis situations); digital environment that facilitate online grooming²¹.

²⁰ M. Dąbkowska, *Pedofilia – trudności diagnostyczne i terapeutyczne* (Eng. Paedophilia – the diagnostic and therapeutic difficulties), "Niepełnosprawność" 2017, no. 28, pp. 109–111. <https://doi.org/10.4467/25439561.NP.17.058.8133>.

²¹ D. Baran, W. Czernikiewicz, *Psychoterapia grupowa preferencyjnych sprawców czynów pedofilnych w nurcie poznawczo-behavioralnym* (Eng. Cognitive-behavioural group therapy for paraphilic child molesters), "Seksuologia Polska" 2017, vol. 15, no. 1, pp. 18–19.

The consequences for sexually abused children are severe and long-lasting. They experience trauma that can lead to anxiety and depressive disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder, behavioural problems, difficulties in forming relationships and psychosocial challenges in adulthood. Common issues include low self-esteem, diminished sense of self-worth, identity and sexual development disturbances, all of which affect functioning later in life. The families of the victims also face difficult experiences – shock, shame, guilt and sometimes even difficulty in accepting the facts. Such reactions from their environment do not facilitate the victim's recovery or the provision of appropriate support by the family²².

Effective prevention of paedophilia and mitigation of its consequences require a comprehensive approach combining legal, educational, therapeutic measures, along with support for the victims and their families.

Sex tourism

This type of tourism involves travelling to obtain sexual services, often to countries with weaker legal regulations, economic conditions and social protection systems. Sex tourism takes various forms, including organised trips to countries where sexual services are easily accessible and cheap. Regardless of the form, its essence lies in the commercialisation of sexuality and the exploitation of individuals in vulnerable life situations. It thrives in places with high levels of poverty, limited employment opportunities and weak protection of labour and consumer rights. It is therefore associated with the exploitation of socio-economic inequalities, cultural differences and the lack of effective legal and regulatory mechanisms²³. Cultural factors, such as gender inequality, lack of sexual education, the taboo surrounding sexual violence and social tolerance of prostitution also play important role. As a result, individuals from particularly vulnerable groups, such as women, children or members of ethnic minorities, become victims who can be easily exploited²⁴. Sex tourism has a destructive impact on local communities – their members experience violence, manipulation and human rights violations. Over time, this leads to the degradation of social norms and the marginalisation of particularly vulnerable groups.

²² G. Jarzabek, A. Grętkiewicz-Tomczyk, *Problem przemocy seksualnej wobec dzieci* (Eng. The problem of sexual violence against children), "Ginekologia Praktyczna" 2007, no. 2, pp. 30–33.

²³ D. Chylińska, G. Kosmala, *Turystyka seksualna – rekapitulacja* (Eng. Sex tourism – recapitulation), "Folia Turistica" 2012, no. 26, p. 67.

²⁴ A. Stasiak, *Turystyka kontrowersyjna jako emanacja gospodarki doświadczeń* (Eng. Controversial tourism as an emanation of experience economy), in: *Turystyka kontrowersyjna na współczesnym rynku podróży – formy, uwarunkowania, skutki*, G. Godlewski, M. Zalech (eds.), Biała Podlaska 2015, pp. 53–57.

Sex tourism is often a semi-legal or fully illegal industry, linked to prostitution, human trafficking and other forms of abuse. The income derived from it does not contribute to sustainable economic development and most often goes to intermediaries, human traffickers or organised criminal groups. It is a transnational problem. It affects the international image of the country concerned and relations between states, causing political and social tensions. The growing scale of the phenomenon poses a challenge due to globalisation and the ease of travel. This makes it increasingly difficult to control the movement of people and to combat criminal networks operating across multiple countries²⁵.

Prevention and combating of sexually motivated crimes

Effective action against sexual pathologies such as rape, paedophilia or sex tourism requires a comprehensive approach that takes into account the complexity of these phenomena, their causes, mechanisms and social consequences.

Interdisciplinarity and cooperation

Work with both victims and perpetrators of sexual crimes requires the involvement of specialists from various fields – psychologists, psychiatrists, criminologists, sociologists, lawyers, educators, as well as social workers, police officers, policymakers and the broader public. Combining knowledge and practice makes it possible to develop more effective preventive and intervention strategies²⁶.

An important role in prevention and combating is played by multisectoral cooperation, i.e. between non-governmental organisations and state institutions, the healthcare system, the education system and the justice system, as well as collaboration at different levels – from local to international. International organisations develop guidelines, standards of conduct and provide technical and financial support in addressing negative phenomena related to sexual psychopathology. An essential element of this cooperation is the joint databases and offender registries, which enable faster responses to emerging threats, better monitoring of criminals and prevention of further crimes. Such coordinated actions strengthen global victim protection and counteract the development of sexual crime.

²⁵ G. Godlewski, *Turystyka seksualna w opiniach młodych Polaków* (Eng. Sex tourism according to young Poles), “Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Szczecińskiego. Ekonomiczne Problemy Turystyki” 2015, no. 2(30), pp. 71–73.

²⁶ A. Kobyliński, *Pedofilia we Włoszech: skala problemu, aspekty etyczne i ochrona nieletnich* (Eng. Paedophilia in Italy: the scale of the problem, ethical aspects and protection of minors), “Studia Ecologiae et Bioethicae” 2018, vol. 16, no. 1, pp. 53–56. <https://doi.org/10.21697/seb.2018.16.1.04>.

International cooperation is particularly important in addressing cross-border phenomena such as human trafficking and sex tourism. It enables more effective exchange of intelligence, experiences and best practices, coordination of police operations and the implementation of joint legal initiatives that limit offenders' mobility and hinder their activities²⁷. A comprehensive approach also involves combining educational, preventive and therapeutic tools (support for victims as well as rehabilitation of sexual offenders) with legal measures (strengthening the legal system). Only such integrated actions can lead to a real reduction of sexual violence and an increased sense of security in a society²⁸.

Education

The foundation of preventive measures in the case of the phenomena discussed in the field of sexual psychopathology is reliable sexual education, aimed at building social awareness of risks and developing skills to deal with dangerous situations, as well as promoting attitudes of respect, empathy and the idea of gender equality. It should be based on scientific knowledge and adapted to the level of development of its recipients²⁹. Knowledge about what boundaries are and respect for other people, as well as the ability to recognise sexual violence and respond to it, increase the chances of early detection of problems and limiting their scale³⁰. Children should be taught what constitutes inappropriate behaviours by adults, to develop their assertiveness and the ability to seek help. These actions should also be directed at adults in order to increase their ability to respond early to troubling signs. It is also important to organise training for professionals working with children, young people and groups vulnerable to sexual violence. Teachers, caregivers, social workers, doctors and police officers should have the appropriate competencies to identify the first signs of danger and respond adequately, which will increase

²⁷ M. Sajkowska, *Wykorzystywanie seksualne dzieci* (Eng. Sexual abuse of children), "Dziecko Krzywdzone. Teoria, badania, praktyka", 2017, vol. 16, no. 1, p. 233.

²⁸ G. Miłkowska, K. Silna, *Działania wspierające i pomoc osobom doświadczającym przemocy* (Eng. Supportive activities and help for violence victims), "Dyskursy Młodych Andragogów" 2018, no. 19, pp. 196–202.

²⁹ E. Kasperek-Golimowska, *Edukacja seksualna jako forma ochrony i promocji zdrowia seksualnego* (Eng. Sex education as a form of protection and promotion of sexual health), in: *Przemiany seksualności w społeczeństwie współczesnym. Teoria i rzeczywistość*, Z. Lew-Starowicz, K.M. Waszyńska (eds.), Poznań 2012, pp. 87–90.

³⁰ M. Gorajska et al., *Edukacja seksualna w Polsce w kontekście promocji zdrowia seksualnego vs tabu seksualne* (Eng. Sex education in Poland in the context of sexual health promotion v. sexual taboo), "Psychoseksuologia" 2018, no. 4, pp. 112–113.

the level of protection for individuals and communities³¹. It is also necessary to organise trainings for police officers, prosecutors and judges on professional and empathetic approaches to victims of sexual crimes.

Social campaigns conducted through social media, radio and television are important element of prevention. They help combat stereotypes and myths related to sexual crimes, reduce the stigmatisation of victims of these crimes, raise awareness of the scale of the problem and promote attitudes based on understanding, respect and responsibility³². Campaigns about the consequences of sex tourism, carried out both in destination countries and in tourists' countries of origin, can reduce the demand for such services.

Education about available forms of support for victims of sexual crimes plays an important role. This not only increases the ability to intervene in crisis situations but also strengthens the sense of collective responsibility.

Support for victims and perpetrators of sexual crimes

Victims of sexual crimes should be provided with access to medical care, free psychological therapy, support groups, rehabilitation and legal counselling, which helps to reduce the effects of trauma and supports the process of returning to normal life. In cases of paedophilia, institutions such as schools, psychological counselling centres, family support centres and law enforcement agencies should work together to effectively identify cases of abuse, support victims and eliminate potential threats. Comprehensive assistance provided to victims and their families helps in working through trauma and rebuilding the ability to function in society³³. Non-governmental organisations play an important role, as they not only provide emotional support but also help victims find employment or housing, which increases their chances of full social reintegration³⁴.

³¹ M. Czechowska-Bieluga, *Możliwości kształtowania kompetencji zawodowych asystentów rodzin w procesie szkolenia* (Eng. The possibility of raising professional competence of family support workers in the training process), "Annales Universitatis Mariae Curie-Skłodowska. Sectio J. Paedagogia-Psychologia" 2016, vol. 29, no. 1, pp. 54–56. <http://dx.doi.org/10.17951/j.2016.29.1.53>.

³² K. Białdyga, *Kobieta – ofiara gwałtu* (Eng. Woman – a victim of rape), "Eunomia – Rozwój Zrównoważony – Sustainable Development" 2023, vol. 104, no. 1, p. 55.

³³ A. Piskorowska, *Pedofilia jako dewiacja społeczna: leczenie i zapobieganie* (Eng. Paedophilia as a social deviance: treatment and prevention), in: *Pedagogia prewencji. Dzieci, młodzież, rodzina*, J. Zimny (ed.), Stalowa Wola 2013, pp. 357–367.

³⁴ A. Dziergawka, *Wtórna wiktyimizacja ofiar przestępstw seksualnych – aspekty normatywne i praktyczne* (Eng. Secondary victimisation of victims of sexual offences – regulatory and practical aspects), "Prawo w Działaniu" 2024, vol. 57, pp. 168–171. <https://doi.org/10.32041/pwd.5708>; D. Chylińska, G. Kosmala, *Turystyka seksualna – rekapitulacja...*, pp. 67–90.

Effective prevention also requires the implementation of rehabilitation for perpetrators of crimes. Cognitive-behavioural therapy, learning impulse control, pharmacological treatment and activities that develop empathy and responsibility can reduce the risk of recidivism and increase the chances of reintegration into society. An approach that takes into account the needs of both victims and perpetrators minimises the long-term negative effects of sexual crimes and supports the building of a safer society³⁵.

Strengthening the legal system and the supervisory system

An important element of the strategy for preventing sexual crimes is strengthening the legal system. It is necessary to systematically create and update regulations that clearly define and penalise these crimes, as well as to effectively enforce the existing ones³⁶. Such actions serve a deterrent function and increase the sense of social security.

A relevant element in combating sexual crime is also the creation of specialised units which handle evidence collection, prosecution of perpetrators and support for victims. Complementing these actions is the availability of crisis intervention centres, offering immediate medical, psychological and legal assistance, which not only mitigate the negative effects of the crime but also increase the likelihood of quickly bringing the perpetrator to criminal liability. Such integrated legal and institutional actions form the foundation for the effective protection of individuals and society against sexual violence³⁷.

Effective prevention also involves mechanisms to monitor perpetrators of sexual crimes after they have served their sentences, which minimises the risk of recidivism and allows for better control of potential threats.

³⁵ A. Morawska, *Strategie postępowania ze sprawcami przestępstw seksualnych wobec dzieci na przykładzie wybranych krajów* (Eng. Strategies for dealing with perpetrators of sexual crimes against children: examples from selected countries), "Dziecko Krzywdzone. Teoria, badania, praktyka" 2004, vol. 3, no. 2, pp. 7–20.

³⁶ See: *Convention of the Council of Europe on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings of 16 May 2005 done at Warsaw*; *Convention of the Council of Europe on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse signed in Lanzarote on 25 October 2007*; *Directive 2011/93/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on combating the sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and child pornography, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2004/68/JHA*.

³⁷ M. Łabęcka, G. Jarząbek-Bielecka, D. Lorkiewicz-Muszyńska, *Przestępstwa seksualne – wybrane przypadki* (Eng. Sexual offences – selected cases), "Ginekologia Polska" 2013, no. 84, pp. 309–313.

Summary and conclusions

Analysing the issue of human security in the context of selected phenomena of sexual psychopathology – rapes, paedophilia and sex tourism – reveals the scale of challenges facing the modern society. These forms of sexual violence destabilise the lives of victims and their loved ones, as well as communities, undermining the foundations of social order, such as mutual respect, trust and respect of human rights. The consequences of sexual violence are long-term and have a profound impact on mental and physical health, as well as social and economic functioning, of victims.

The causes of phenomena such as rape, paedophilia or sex tourism are complex. They include psychological, social, economic, cultural and institutional factors. Gender inequalities, lack of sex education, poverty, weak law enforcement and taboo create conditions that foster the development of pathologies.

Actions aimed at preventing and combating sexual psychopathologies are complex and multidimensional. Optimal prevention requires an interdisciplinary approach, involving the cooperation of the education system, the justice system, the healthcare system, non-governmental organisations as well as state and international institutions. It is important to provide victims with immediate assistance as well as to carry out appropriate rehabilitation of perpetrators. The effectiveness of these actions largely depends on their coordination. Reliable sex education, social campaigns and professional training are also necessary, as they help increase awareness and effectiveness of prevention. At the same time, it is necessary to strengthen the legal and institutional system, including tougher penalties for perpetrators, law enforcement and the creation of specialised units for prosecution. In the fight against cross-border crimes, a key element is international cooperation, including the exchange of information and operational actions. Thanks to such a comprehensive approach, it is possible to build a safer and more informed society, where violations of another person's physical and mental integrity as well as dignity are met with immediate response and firm opposition. Further actions should focus on improving methods for detecting and monitoring phenomena of sexual psychopathology, creating therapeutic and preventive programmes that yield positive results, studying the impact of new technologies on the dynamics of sexual violence and developing international cooperation in combating cross-border crime.

It should be emphasised that the limited availability of statistical data as well as a varied cultural and geopolitical context narrow the scope of interpretation of the presented conclusions. Many cases of sexual violence go unreported, which results in an underestimation of the indicators regarding the scale of the phenomena.

Furthermore, different social, religious and political norms in individual countries mean that universal models of prevention and intervention may not yield the expected results. Therefore, it seems reasonable to undertake in-depth, interdisciplinary research that will take into account local conditions and enable comparison of the effectiveness of legal, institutional and educational solutions in different regions of the world. Research projects should focus on issues related to unreported crimes, the analysis of cultural and social mechanisms determining the perception of sexual violence, as well as the role of international institutions in coordinating of preventive and intervention actions. This will allow to better understand the dynamics of the phenomena discussed and develop more effective strategies for prevention and support for victims.

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