

## **Annex 6 – Transforming the society of Poland and sociological aspects of crime prevention**

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### **1. The Postmodern perspective in the globalized world**

When we look at the social world of the early 21st century we can say that it is both a single system and a fragmented world. Globalization is one of the most distinctive features of the contemporary world and as such has been defined in many complementary ways, for example, “time-space compression” (Harvey, 1989), “action at distance” (Giddens, 1990), “accelerating interdependence” (Ohmae, 1990) or “networking” (Castells, 1998). Whatever definition we accept it will refer to the growth of networks of worldwide interdependence. And this is the essential novelty we should focus on, especially while analyzing the impact of globalization on the recently opened to it nation-states in the enlarged European Union.

So the critical analysis requires answers to such questions like: How much disrupted social integration and pathological processes leading to crime increase in the transforming societies can be relevantly explained by the traditional criminology? And what sort of instruments should be used to prevent further growth of crime if the social disintegration will still be deepening? To answer these questions it will be appropriate to have a deeper insight into the processes taking place in the transforming social tissue of ancient traditional nation-states opened now to the globalized world.

First of all, it should be emphasized that globalization today is rather a multi-facet process than a mostly economic one, so it can reshape patterns of inequality and opportunity, stimulates inclusion and exclusion across national borders, motivates intensive migratory movements and increases heterogeneity and hybridization of the societies. All these may influence the pathological phenomenon and have direct implications for decision-making processes. This is especially the case in the transforming society, where the new structural constraints, individual decisions and collective action may undermine the previous social integration and common value system, as well as disintegrate the family. As Peter van Ham has put it (2001, 2):

*“Globalization and fragmentation are undermining traditional notion of community and reduce the moral significance of nation-state and inter-state boundaries”.*

Like globalization, post modernity is not merely a word or concept, although it must be admitted that the postmodern condition is inherently ambiguous and many-sided. Nevertheless it is a model of reality, which distinguishes itself by some very important features that the individual has to cope with. It is also the self-conscious stage in the evolution of modernity, where technology and speed call for a more open and diverse approach to understanding and interpreting 'reality'. Postmodernism therefore rejects all totalizing world-views. Instead, we should accept and even emphasize this diversity and complexity of the multiple and plurality.

Calls for intensified discursive approach and consideration of a range of society's variables, postmodernism is offering new approaches to better understanding crime processes in all their variety and multiplicity. The moral uncertainty, all-dominant consumer ethic significantly impacts upon the social fabric of the society, and as such cannot be ignored. Neither can be the new generated fears in the ambiguous, not clearly defined system of social norms.

Methodologically, postmodernism also rejects monological interpretations of reality. It is because in postmodern society the level of interaction is growing continuously and society as a complex system consists of a large number of elements, which interact dynamically. Instead, it calls attention to the multiple perspectives, flexible approaches, contextuality and instant change an individual must adjust to. These main principles have important implications for relevant description of social determinants of crime and the undertaking of proper preventative instruments.

In the case of Poland, as an example of one of the CEE's transforming countries, what is important, is to take into account the complex reality approach, since its territory was under the progressive pressures of globalization of "widening the boundaries" and became part of the world network society.

The changing nature of inside and outside determinants led me to propose a new paradigm for explaining and understanding the crime processes, which I call *the two-stage transformation model*. This model must be connected with the uniqueness of the postmodern world, changing the patterns of collective behaviour and state-centric thinking. On the other hand, it must include the fact of widening the boundaries of policy-making and the new normative frame resulting from the European Union enlargement affecting human actions.

## 2. Two-stage model of transformation in Poland

Presented here is *the two-stage transformation model* to analyze the consequences of the process of change in Poland - based on the nature of political and socio-economic transition taking place in CEE during the last fifteen years. In my model I propose to divide that process into two stages: first – from 1989 until 2003, when Poland had been experiencing internal rapid social and economic transformation, and the second stage from 2004 onwards – when Poland became a European Union member and her further transformation is connected with continental transnationalism of legal incorporation.

These two, somehow different, paths of institutional reforms and rules also affected in different ways social adaptability and social bonds in the society. Generally, I would say, that the previous changes could be more attributed to the process of democratisation and re-composition of social structure, while after the accession the social bonds are more transformed by, now observed in the society, higher level of individualistic values and more intensive inward and outward mobility within the European Union.

Another argument for my model is that since there is no one theory of "*society in transformation*" it would be hard to find one normative pattern for transformation. The strategies and behaviour of individuals, groups and institutions can be more determined by the character of changes in a given moment. The postmodernists would call it: "*here and now*". So the approach to social questions in such societies must be more flexible and contextual.

It would also be hard to accept the paradigm "*transition to democracy*". Because, when we talk about transformation we usually have in mind the starting point without exact orientation where this transitional period will really lead us. That was the case in the first stage of the changes in Poland. It was known that the applied socialism was to be replaced by capitalist democracy, however it was not a new *megaproject* and the final shape of the change could not be precisely defined. Neither was it

known whether it would be social or liberal democracy. So the consequences and social costs were not predictable either.

This is why it would be more suitable to say that the transformation process has its own dynamic and logic according to the phases following each other. Besides, each stage had its dialectic linkage with the outside world. So to learn about forces influencing social disorganization and pathological processes, one should look for the dominating variables and groups of losers and winners in every phase of the transforming reality. Holistic, universal review for the transforming society can be applicable only to some extent.

In the case of Poland, **the first stage, started in 1989**, brought a longer process of change and modernization affecting different spheres of social life. It was a hypothetical starting point promoting civil society in the former socialist states of CEE.

From the early 1990s breaking down of applied socialism and economic transition into the free-market economy gave rise to a remarkable increase of social uncertainty and insecurity. It was followed by constant crime increase, especially from 1994 onwards. When we take 1990 as 100% then the crime index increase or decrease in comparison with the previous year / for the next ten years is as follows:

Year	Percent change on previous year	Year	Percent change on previous year
1991	98.0%	1997	112.3%
1992	99.7%	1998	121.5%
1993	96.5%	1999	127.0%
1994	102.6%	2000	143.4%
1995	110.4%	2001	157.4%
1996	101.6%		

Source: Siemaszko, A. et al, 2003, 16)

The established social bonds were deeply affected by this change both directly and indirectly. New forms of social life began to cause new tensions and called for rapid adjustment to the new social conditions.

Since the process of modernization had been strengthened by the pan-national co-operation, traditional ties and set of values had also been destroyed in many respects. In current public and academic discussion it is even called '*the Western-like imitating process of changes*' because of unreflective retransmission of the Western patterns. While in their opinion, it should rather be innovating the ancient state modernization.

Previous social collectivism had been systematically weakening while material inequalities continuously deepened. Increase in social pathology accompanying economic development is often recognized as 'a social cost of transformation'. However that justification could not be accepted for a longer period of time, and from the perspective of the first stage, it is more and more obvious that social pathology is also the consequence of ignoring the transformation process of contextual variables.

It must be admitted that all social changes led to new positive and negative qualities. However the latter put an individual between old and new "codes". The lack of convergence between social norms and the legal system caused that criminality to become some sort of way of adaptation of the individuals and sometimes whole groups to a transforming society. That mechanism, in turn caused not only the increase in crime but also the fear of crime. So the primary task was to undertake preventative and prophylactic activities to ensure public security in dwelling areas locally as well as generally in the country.

**The second stage**, marked by the date of the 1st of May 2004, is connected with Poland's participation in the European Union enlargement, and the necessity of adjustment of many aspects of the Polish national legal system to the wider frame of the Union's communities interests and standards. The EU in comparison to other regional co-operative entities can be recognized as the most cohesive, extensive and intensive form of regionalism. Nevertheless it is also post-modern international political form, where traditional concerns of sovereignty have to be revisited. It is worth quoting here Peter van Ham's (2001,7) opinion. He states:

*"I argue that Europe, like most of the western world, is in the midst of a shift from cultural modernity to post modernity, and from economic modernity to postindustrial society. This dual shift affects the status and nature of knowledge and the ways we can gain some understanding of how this swirling change acts upon and transform the role of the state, the development of a European identity and the nature and quality of democratic governance."*

This thesis has direct connection with the processes of the social adaptation to construction of the new *idea of Europe* based on an enlarged geo-political entity. *"The idea of Europe – as it is put by G. Delanty – in contrast to the idea of the nation, is not yet a monolithic notion... but is characterized by tension and contradictions."* (1995,59). And these tensions and contradictions seem to be very important in the context of preventing the potentiality of crime.

The first point here is a new dichotomy of *Self* and *Other*, dichotomy that can be the source of many unsocial actions across Europe. In other words, the question to be solved is the dilemma: whether the *idea of Europe* will be linked to multi-culturalism and post-national citizenship or will remain in connection with the ethno-culturalism, that it has been based upon until now. Western European identity can no longer be constructed along Cold War divisions, neither along the lines *"the enemy outside gates"*. There should be a focus on hostility towards *"threatening otherness"* and psychological mechanisms of xenophobic behavior.

Another question that requires some more general interpretation is the dependency between economic growth and social pathology. More homeless people appear in the streets, unemployed beggars, street gangs and foreigners.

The economic consequences may even deepen the uncertainty and decline of social collectivities. Besides, in the opinion of many citizens, it may affect the idea of nation state and resignation of some attributes of sovereignty. In the case of Poland the feeling of powerlessness to change may also be found sometimes in connection with Poland's increasing involvement in international actions. From the perspective of the transforming society we can indicate some areas that were particularly painful throughout whole society and can be analyzed as important contextual variables of social pathology. These are economy, culture and social consciousness.

In the new socio-cultural context we can see the following main consequences having impact on social bond and pathology:

- The growing awareness in some groups that lack of equality of chances is resulting not from individual inequalities but changes of the new system, that leads sometimes to desperate acts like suicides;
- High disproportion in income and the increase of poverty and deprivation of material conditions of life undermined traditional family bonds resulting in an increase in the number of young offenders;
- Regionalization of poverty causes the differentiation of the degree of impact on social bonds and intensity of crime as well as different patterns of committed crimes;
- Social atomization of local communities weakened their social cohesion and makes it more difficult to organize common actions for preventing crime in the local communities;
- Poverty has become an element of social structure, an especially new phenomenon of underclass appeared; its social exclusion shows the signs of intergeneration transfer of poverty, resulting in creation of enclaves of heavy criminality in some districts of the city or small towns etc.

Taking the negative transformation effects into consideration one general conclusion should be taken into account: to prevent crime or to limit its size, at least to some extent, a proper system of goods redistribution in the society should be found to regain a relative balance in the society. The new hyperclasses-underclasses model of social structure is one of the main determinants of the crime increase in the transforming societies. Too many people are excluded and searching desperately for the means of living.

In the first stage of transformation it showed that family became some sort of amortization of changes because it appeared to be the most stable social element of the transforming reality. While in the second stage the individual became the most active social player and when, despite economic and social progress the degradation of a great segment of the society happened, and high disproportion in income marginalized economically around 60% of the society.

Transformation also caused the changes in the social consciousness. Poland is still perceived by its citizens as a welfare state so the state was expected to fulfill its social functions and be more active in solving social problems such as poverty of low income groups, unemployment, lack of apartments for homeless people, medical care, with the same expectations toward the state concerning protection against crime and robbery. Nevertheless one of the consequences of the new crime situation in Poland is the growing number of gated-communities. First they were perceived as a sign of the higher standard of living, while now as a means to protect against crime.

### 3. Short overview of contemporary types of crime in Poland

Contemporary crime in Poland has become different in kind and degree since it occurs in an immensely more complicated social reality, chaotic life styles and pluralistic individualistic attitudes towards life. People's fear of crime also became a social problem.

A crucial question is the ability to analyze crime in circumstances of social change, not only to concentrate on description of contemporary crime – as is a typical practice. More attention should be paid to investigation of its causes, the issue of norms and values, social bonds. This is why, in the transforming societies, the utility of traditional criminological theories and the possibilities of explanation might be limited.

Public fear of crime was also increased because of internationalization of crime in the age of communication and globalization; that is another additional factor to analyse.

Young offenders became the significant part of crime offenders. Many families have been affected by the problem of drug abuse after the radical change of situation after 1989. Drug use phenomenon is a social problem now, partly because of the influence of a different style of life, partly because of greater availability of drugs to school-teenagers as well as to non-school teenagers, not so accessible before 1989. Because of the opening of borders Poland has been included in the international zones of drugs trafficking, as well as drug production and distribution started on Polish territory itself.

Another main problem that appeared in Poland as a result of the opening of borders after 1989 was a new type of border crime. It is defined here as illegal border crossing, customs and currency offences, forgery of documents and crime against institutions. (Laskowska, K., 2004, 273). It is connected with the change of CEE into a new migratory space. Freedom of movement and mass replacement, which is partly connected with the international division of labour, partly with desire to bring a better life to migrants' families, creates a new category of border crossers, so called '*transnationals*'. Their transit character, in their intention, was very often the result of illegal actions.

Simultaneously intensive migration movement because of the openness of the East, liberalizations of crossing the borders changed the state status of Poland from the previously most emigration country to the immigration one. Newcomers from Asia and Africa, refugees as a new migratory category, immigrant black market, cheap labour force from the ancient Soviet Union – all that meant that natives must accept in the society new transnational communities and accommodate differences. To recognize the tensions that continuous differences bring must be the subject of constant multidisciplinary interest.

The area of operation of criminals of this kind may be the whole country. People smuggled across borders, especially across Poland's Eastern border, before the Enlargement were located somewhere and waiting until Poland became a member of the EU in order to move towards the chosen western countries in Europe, or even another continent.

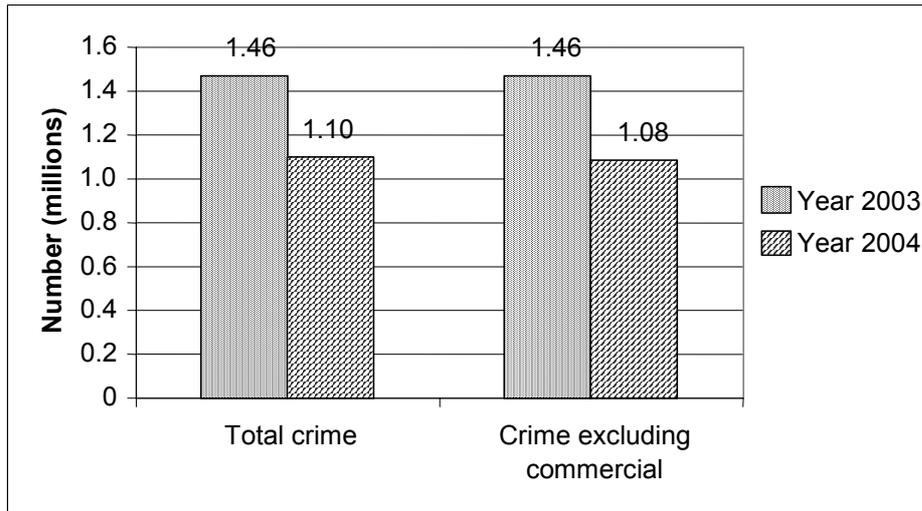
The type of crime very closely connected with the smuggling of people is that of women trafficking in, which in the case of Poland is very much the result of the transformation in the world as well as with the family poverty in CEE. The new stream of women influxing from Far Asia is mostly the result of the international migrant network. It was estimated that in the last decade around 20,000 women were trafficking in to Poland yearly, and then around 10,000 from Poland to the West.

Summing up the criminality in transforming countries requires multi-facet analyses that more clarify the phenomenon. Despite the differences there are some internationally unified preventative actions like profiling the streets. Co-operation of the Polish Police with the dwellers in this respect is based on

different types of surveys where dwellers indicate the most dangerous areas in the neighbourhood. After checking of these areas by the police the proper instruments for preventing crimes there are undertaken. One of these is informing the owners of the property about the necessity of installing additional lighting, gates etc., improving the security in the street, parking places or alleyways.

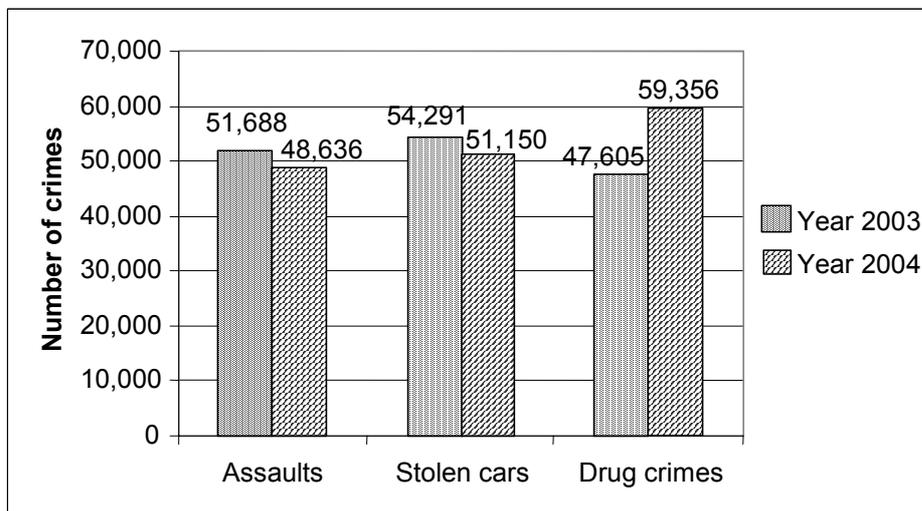
The National Centre of Criminal Information (Krajowe Centrum Informacji Kryminalne) was founded on 5 January 2003 at the Polish Police Headquarters. Its aim is to gather and analyse crime data to prevent the increase of crimes being committed in the state.

### Crimes committed in 2004 in comparison to 2003 according to Polish Police Headquarters



Source: Komenda Główna Policji, Warszawa, 2005; translation by Elzbieta Budakowska

### Number of assaults, stolen cars, drug crimes in Poland during 2004 in comparison with 2003



Source: Komenda Główna Policji, Warszawa, 2005; translation by Elzbieta Budakowska

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