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## **Social Conflict as the Current Security Challenge with regard the Police of the Czech Republic**

### **Anotace**

Příspěvek se zabývá otázkami, týkajícími se sociálních konfliktů, které představují zásadní problém pro současnou společnost. Autor se dlouhodobě zabývá tématem “sociogenních mimořádných událostí”. Na základě empiricky stanovených poznatků byly vymezeny nejčastější sociální konflikty, se kterými se mohou setkat orgány výkonné moci a které jsou výsledkem výzkumu prováděného v rámci Policejní akademie České republiky v Praze.

### **Klíčová slova**

Sociální konflikt, sociální jev, hrozba, policie.

### **Summary**

The paper deals with issues related to social conflicts which present a fundamental social problem in the modern world. The author has been engaged in over a long period in studying the “sociogenic extraordinary situation”. On the basis of the empirical evidence were identified the most frequent social conflicts, with the executive bodies may face. Results are based on the research conducted within the Police Academy of the Czech Republic in Prague.

### **Keywords**

Social conflict, social phenomenon, threat, police.

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## Introduction

Individual people and entire social groups meet or trying to meet their interests and needs within a particular society. In meeting these needs, they enter into mutual relations that are in some way regulated and governed by different normative standards (legal, ethical, customary, etc.). In a large set of social norms, a special place belong to those, the author of which and at the same time the one which enforces compliance with these standards, is the state. The contacts of the individuals and groups, which take place in order to satisfy their interests and needs, are manifested in the dynamics of social phenomena.

## The role of the Negative Social Phenomena

Each social reality (reality), event, process or activity are externally demonstrated in some way and a subject, who is trying to understand these issues, perceives these manifestations a certain way. However, the very definition of social phenomenon may be controversial mainly because:

- The social phenomenon can be hardly subject of some kind of sensorial perception. For example, unemployment as a social phenomenon cannot be perceived by human senses, it can be viewed only by specified people or groups of people who do not work. We can unveil unemployment as a social phenomenon during the analysis of causes that give rise to this phenomenon. Each monitored social phenomenon is a certain unit that is influenced by multiple reasons. Since the description of a particular social phenomenon cannot contain infinite or very large amount of information, it is necessary to define this unit and restrict amount of required information.
- The social phenomena are of a procedural nature, i. e., they evolve in time and place. The procedural nature of social phenomena is based on the variability of its bearers. Transformation of human intents, changes in relationships and changing of carriers, have also resulted in the transformation of the very social phenomena. During the analysis of a particular social phenomenon, we can describe the past development and current state. Prognosis of its further development shows stochastic character, because we can never find out all social causes that could lead to the emergence of the social phenomenon.
- Social events include virtually "unlimited" number of social units – individuals and groups. This "mass" is given by the fact that social phenomena are produced in the behavior of a large number of individuals. For this reason, it is difficult to determine who is the beneficial holder of a particular social phenomenon. For example, with respect to the already mentioned phenomenon of unemployment, not all people who are unemployed and receive unemployment support are carriers of this social phenomenon (some do not work because they cannot, some may not be interested in finding a job, but the benefit is received by both groups).
- Social events show random and probabilistic character. The probability of a particular social phenomenon is governed by the random nature of the behavior of its bearers. It is not easy to find out why all bearers of social phenomena, such as unemployment, fall into this category. Among the phenomena that lead to

unemployment, one can observe some associations (eg, low wages, lack of job opportunities in a particular location, etc.), but not causal relationships (which can be detected only in the process of getting to know with some degree of probability). If the input value (the cause of existence of social phenomenon) random nature, will have an output value, ie a specific social phenomenon, random character. The emergence of unemployment in an area with a lack of job opportunities may or may not take place, because people can work when they move to another place where there are more job opportunities (or may commute to the location of their work).

Phenomena and events with a negative impact on life, health and property pose threats and they exist independently of the will of man, even though they may be caused by human activities. Therefore, they represent the threat to the status of objective reality, which, in the event that there is a manifestation of the threats may endanger the health and lives of people and property. Awareness and defined threat become subject to certain risk parameters. Risk can then be characterized as the possibility that a certain probability of an event that we consider from a security point of view as undesirable, ie the possibility that with a certain probability there will be the danger of the threat of damage or more generally harm to the interests of society. The risk is therefore characterized as a secondary phenomenon derivable from a particular threat, which can be quantified on the basis of risk analysis and it also indicates our readiness to face the threat, on which we have to spend some resources. The risk is always based on specific threat, and it is measured by our willingness to face the threat and our vulnerability. In addition to the phenomenon of threats and therefore it contains a statement about its potential to manifest as an extraordinary event and jeopardize or interfere with the values and interests protected by the state.

Existing general emergency division is mostly derived from the source of their origin (reference [1]). According to this perspective, we divide the naturogenníc emergencies (of natural character) and anthropogenic, each group includes some other subgroups. Anthropogenic incident are caused by human activities, such as various technological accidents, where some authors also include social emergency caused by different social and economic crises. [2].

Social conflict may in some cases turn into a sociogenic event which "... is usually predictable (in the early detection and identification of its indicators), partly or wholly uncontrolled (but those responsible will try to get it under control), time and space bounded event in the social reality that resulted from the disruption of social relationships, which is manifested as a social conflict (a particular social group seeks to promote and achieve its own needs at the expense of other social entities) "[3]

### **Social conflicts as a source of threats**

There is a number of causes that lead to social conflicts, where in most cases it is almost impossible to define one clear reason which would clarify everything. Most conflicts are subject to multifactorial and they emerge due to many causes and conditions that allow the development of conflict or their facilitation.

Collier (Collier, P., Hoeffler, A. Greed and Grievance in Civil War. World Bank, 1999) [4] defined four basic causes of conflict:

- 1) old grievances among groups;
- 2) economic inequality and subsequent frustration;
- 3) weak legal protection or insufficient compliance with the rule of law;
- 4) inadequate economic policy of the government.

Based on the analysis of the agency STEM [5], it is possible which examined public attitudes in the Czech Republic towards right-wing extremist, racist and xenophobic ideas and to those who promote and spread the ideas

The criterion for the designation of a particular social phenomenon as a negative one can be associated with the social norms. The social norms represent standards which regulate behaviour of people in the group as well as the behaviour of the groups and reflect behaviour which is characteristic for individuals of concrete society. If the conduct and behaviour of individuals or groups of people is the risk of danger to society protected interest, this social phenomenon can be described as negative.

Threat is a term most commonly used to indicate the source (natural or man-conditional process) of some negative events. Sometimes one can also use the concept of danger, but this expresses rather the potential occurrence of an adverse events.

In order to detect potential sources of social threats, the Police Academy of the Czech Republic conducted a survey through questionnaires sent to representatives of all local police departments. The policemen interviewed were supposed to disclose how often they encounter while on duty the negative phenomena and what threat they pose for a give region (the survey was carried out among 83 regional departments of the Police of the Czech Republic). The results of the analysis of their responses are illustrated in the following table (the higher figure represents higher threat).

**Table 1: Illustration of the perception of social negative phenomena as threats**  
(as a function of the average value)

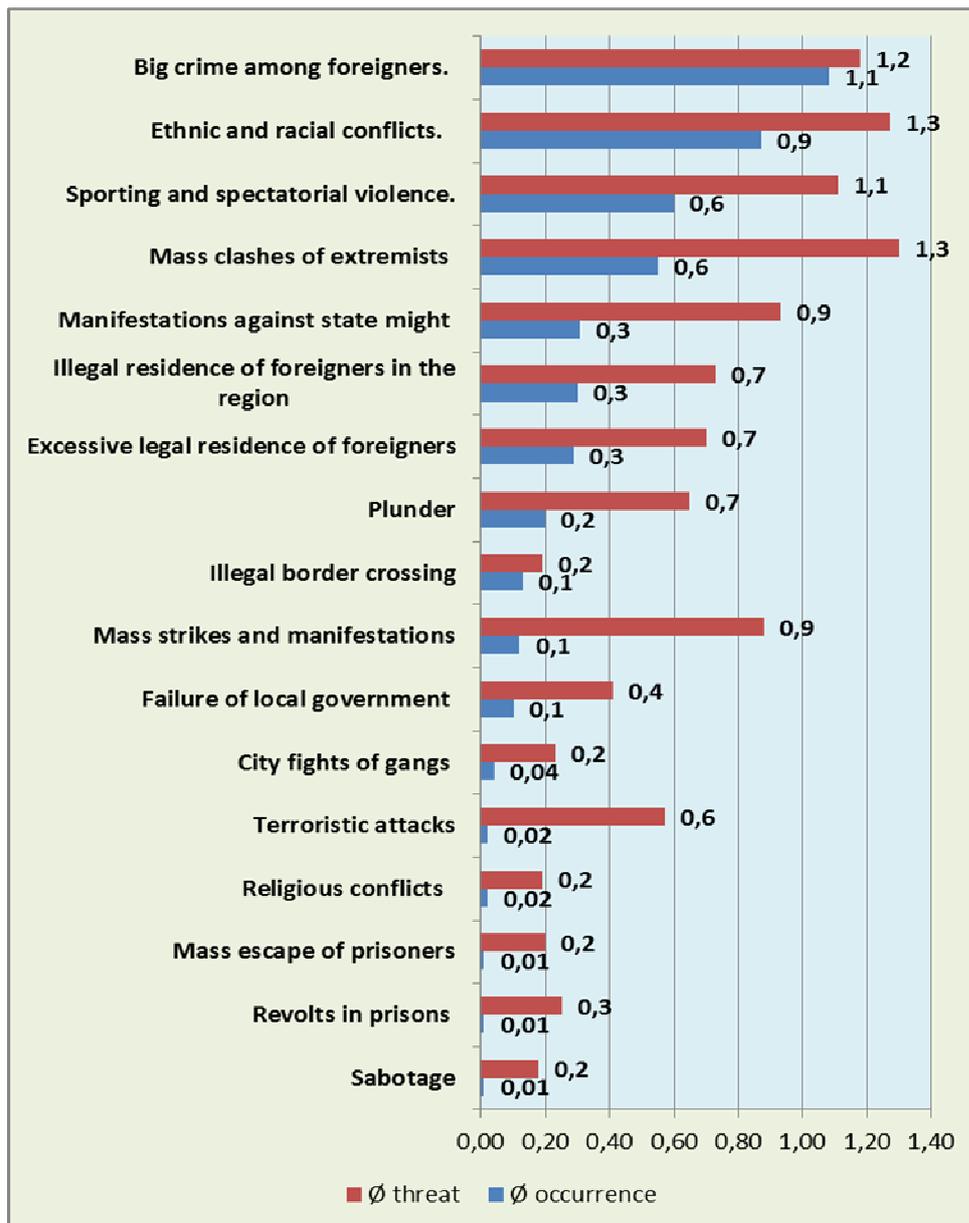
The average has been calculated using the scale 0 – 4, where 0 – does not present any threat, 1 – presents minimal threat, 2 – presents greater threat, 3 – presents great threat, 4 – presents maximal threat, N is number of sections,  $\bar{x}$  is the arithmetic average, and St. dev. Means standard deviation.

Negative social phenomena	N	$\bar{x}$	St. dev
1. Mass clashes with extremists background	83	1,30	1,045
2. Ethnic and racial conflicts and struggles	83	1,27	0,898
3. Large scale criminality of foreigners	83	1,18	0,965
4. Sports and spectator violence	83	1,11	1,048
5. Demonstrations against state power	83	0,93	0,894
6. Mass strikes and demonstrations	83	0,88	1,005
7. Illegal residence of foreigners	83	0,73	0,828
8. Excessive legal residence of foreigners	83	0,70	0,866
9. Looting	83	0,65	0,706
10. Terrorist attacks	83	0,57	1,095
11. Failure of local government functioning	83	0,41	0,645
12. Riots in prisons	83	0,25	0,537
13. Street fight of gangs	83	0,23	0,687
14. Mass escapes of prisoners	83	0,20	0,579
15. Religious conflicts	83	0,19	0,480
16. Illegal crossing of borders	83	0,19	0,454
17. Sabotage	83	0,18	0,608

From this overview it is obvious that the negative social phenomena which are perceived as a threat, the policemen interviewed ranked among mass clashes of terrorists, ethnic and racial conflicts and big crime of foreigners as well as sporting and spectator violence. On the other hand, as a minimal threat they perceive especially sabotage, illegal border crossings and religious conflicts.

In the following figure there is presented a mutual link between the occurrence of a concrete social phenomenon and the perception of the threat.

From this intercomparison one may deduce a certain trend which can be expressed as „the more often concrete negative phenomena occur, the more they are perceived as potential threat“.

**Fig. 1: Comparison of social phenomena and their perceptions as threats.**

From the correlation analysis of social phenomena and their perception of the threat it can be concluded that the more frequent occurrence of some negative social phenomena is also often perceived as a greater threat, but at the same time shows a direct link with some other phenomena. More often appeared a direct significant association of negative social phenomena and other phenomena such as the perception of threats such as the phenomenon of local government failure (it is related to the perception of the other phenomena), where illegal residence of foreigners is directly linked to 6 other phenomena.

## Conclusion

The results of analysis of the survey can be summarized in terms of the following general findings:

- a) The occurrence of negative social phenomena studied in various places territorial departments does not happen very often, the period is rather long, usually a year or in the range of 5 to 10 years.
- b) In the incidence of negative social phenomena occurred some inequality in the individual regions. Most often, these phenomena occur in the Zlín Region, Prague and Ústí nad Labem region and in the region South Moravia. Least often they take place in Pardubice, South Bohemia, Liberec Region and the Vysočina Region.
- c) More frequent occurrence of some negative phenomena leads to the fact that these phenomena are also frequently seen as a higher threat.
- d) More frequent occurrence of certain phenomena has also a significant direct relationship with the perception of other phenomena presenting threats.
- e) As the most common causes of social conflicts, the respondents ranked inadequate social and economic policy of the government, impaired social relationships between groups of people, economic and social inequality and unemployment.

## References

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