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Summary of the doctoral dissertation “Safety in Public Spaces of Cities of the Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship”, prepared under the scientific supervision of Prof. Marek Leszczyński, PhD (hab.) of UJK.

The dissertation investigates factors influencing residents’ perceptions of safety in public spaces across cities in the Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship, Poland. Motivated by a lack of comprehensive studies combining social, spatial, infrastructural, and institutional perspectives, this research contributes a detailed theoretical, methodological, and empirical diagnosis, accompanied by practical recommendations for local authorities and public order services. The core distinction is made between “objective” safety and subjective perceptions, analyzing how these relate to urban policies and planning practices.

The main research aim is to identify social-demographic and spatial-infrastructural determinants of perceived safety, as well as critically assess the effectiveness of public authorities and law enforcement. Research questions and hypotheses address how gender, age, frequency of public space use, infrastructural conditions (e.g., lighting, presence of intoxicated individuals), evaluation of authorities’ activities, recent experiences of danger, and readiness to cooperate in safety initiatives affect residents’ feelings of security. Methodologically, a mixed-methods approach was used: quantitative surveys (N=1010) in Kielce, Sandomierz, Starachowice with quota-based sampling, complemented by qualitative interviews with officials and planners.

The dissertation comprises five chapters: concepts of safety and its role in social order; development and challenges of urban spaces; safety in cities from urban research and practice perspectives; methodological foundations; and an empirical analysis verified with both qualitative and quantitative data.

The dissertation delivers actionable recommendations for planning, implementing, and evaluating urban safety policies in medium-size Polish cities.