

## RESIDENT SAFETY AS AN ELEMENT OF TERRITORIAL UNIT'S IMAGE

### BEPIECZEŃSTWO MIESZKAŃCÓW JAKO ELEMENT WIZERUNKU JEDNOSTEK TERYTORIALNYCH

Wiesława Kuźniar<sup>1</sup>,  
Wiesław Szopiński<sup>2</sup>

UNIwersytet Rzeszowski

**Abstract:** The aim of the paper is to present selected aspects of territorial unit safety in the context of the created image and its impact on the residents and external stakeholders. Under conditions of growing competition between territorial units, image becomes an increasingly important factor in gaining competitive advantage. An element of importance for the image of cities and regions is their safety, which may be a decisive factor when choosing a place of living by potential residents, choosing a location for business, tourist destination, or a location for school or academic education. Due to a growing number of different types of threats, the safety of cities, regions, as well as the entire countries, becomes a condition for their development. Rankings of image-building potential of the cities of Poland allow to conclude that one of the safest cities is Rzeszów, which is confirmed not only by safety indices but also by highly positive assessments among residents of the analysed city.

**Streszczenie:** Celem pracy jest przedstawienie wybranych aspektów bezpieczeństwa jednostek terytorialnych w kontekście tworzonego wizerunku i jego wpływu na mieszkańców oraz interesariuszy zewnętrznych. W warunkach rosnącej konkurencji pomiędzy jednostkami terytorialnymi wizerunek

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<sup>1</sup> Prof. Wiesława Kuźniar, Ph.D., Department of Marketing and Entrepreneurship, Faculty of Economics, University of Rzeszów, ul. Ćwiklińskiej 2, 35-601 Rzeszów, e-mail:wkuzniar@ur.edu.pl, phone: 17/8721615.

Prof. dr Wiesława Kuźniar, Katedra Marketingu i Przedsiębiorczości, Wydział Ekonomii, Uniwersytet Rzeszowski, ul. Ćwiklińskiej 2, 35-601 Rzeszów, e-mail:wkuzniar@ur.edu.pl, telefon: 17/8721615.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Wiesław Szopiński, Department of Marketing and Entrepreneurship, Faculty of Economics, University of Rzeszów, ul. Ćwiklińskiej 2, 35-601 Rzeszów, e-mail:wszopinr@ur.edu.pl, phone: 17/8721618.

Dr Wiesław Szopiński, Katedra Marketingu i Przedsiębiorczości, Wydział Ekonomii, Uniwersytet Rzeszowski, ul. Ćwiklińskiej 2, 35-601 Rzeszów, e-mail:wkuzniar@ur.edu.pl, telefon: 17/8721618.

staje się coraz ważniejszym czynnikiem zdobywania przewagi konkurencyjnej. Ważnym elementem wizerunku miast i regionów jest ich bezpieczeństwo, które może być decydującym czynnikiem przy wyborze miejsca zamieszkania przez potencjalnych mieszkańców, miejsca do prowadzenia działalności gospodarczej, celu turystycznego, czy też miejsca do nauki szkolnej lub akademickiej. Ze względu na rosnącą liczbę różnego rodzaju zagrożeń, warunkiem ich rozwoju staje się bezpieczeństwo miast, regionów, a także całych krajów. Rankingi potencjału wizerunkowego miast Polski pozwalają stwierdzić, że jednym z najbezpieczniejszych miast jest Rzeszów, co potwierdzają nie tylko wskaźniki bezpieczeństwa, ale także bardzo pozytywne oceny wśród mieszkańców analizowanego miasta.

**Keywords:** territorial unit's image, resident safety, quality of life.

**Słowa kluczowe:** wizerunek jednostki terytorialnej, bezpieczeństwo rezydentów, jakość życia.

## Introduction

Attractiveness of a certain territory for its residents depends on a number of factors which determine the quality of life in a given unit. The safety of residents and other stakeholders of the territorial offer (inter alia, investors, tourists, students) is playing an increasingly important role among such factors.

The safety of a given territory has become especially important in recent years in the light of a growing number of terrorist attacks or criminal and motoring offences. There have appeared new areas of threat which need to be efficiently counteracted, such as Internet offences or the more and more widespread domestic violence.

The safety of cities, regions and countries has become a condition of their development, hence safety references are reflected in nearly all development strategies of individual units, specifying the most important objectives and measures to ensure safety of the local community.

The aim of the paper is to present selected aspects of territorial unit safety in the context of the created image and its impact on the residents and external stakeholders.

This imposes an obligation to answer the question about the role of safety in creating the image of certain territories and which Polish and world cities are considered the safest.

## 1. Research Methodology

In addition to the method of critical analysis of literature on the subject, the article uses results of reports along with the rankings on city safety and presents results of a questionnaire. The empirical part includes references to the following reports: The "Safe and Open Cities" survey of 2017<sup>3</sup> and the ranking of "The Safest Polish Cities to Live". The former presents the safe and open cities index calculated

<sup>3</sup> A report of the Polish Robert Schuman Foundation and the Konrad-Adenauer Foundation (KAS) in Poland prepared by Polityka Insight.

on the basis of secondary information provided, among others, by the Central Statistical Office (GUS), the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy, the National Police Headquarters as well as by local governments and institutions.

The ranking of "The Safest Polish Cities to Live", on the other hand, presents a subjective attitude of over 140 thousand Polish subjects towards the statement "I live in a safe neighbourhood and I am not afraid of coming back home after dark". The 7 point Likert scale was used, where 1 means "I completely disagree" and 7 – "I fully agree". The questionnaire was conducted in 2016 by Otodom and OLX service with the use of an online interview method. Localities with a population of over 45 thousand were selected for the Top100 ranking.

In addition, the article presents results of own questionnaire conducted in January 2017 among the residents of Rzeszów, which has been ranked one of the safest Polish cities. The questionnaire was carried out on a sample  $n = 300$ . The methods used included the non-random quota sampling which takes into account the age and sex of the respondents. The sample consisted of 51% of women and 49% of men, and in terms of the age structure, it was composed as follows: aged 19-24 – 13.7%, aged 25-44 – 38.3%, aged 45-64 – 32%, 65 years of age and older – 16%.

## 2. The Safety Of Cities And Regions In The Context Of Their Created Image

Under conditions of growing competition between territorial units, image becomes an increasingly important factor in gaining competitive advantage. Research into the issues of territorial unit's image has been conducted since the 1970s. It is based on the understanding of a general concept of image defined by Ph. Kotler as a sum of beliefs, attitudes and impressions associated by a person or group with a given object, such as an enterprise, product, brand, place or a person<sup>4</sup>. After A. Szromnik, the image of a territorial unit may be defined as a complex interpretation of subjective feelings and opinions relating to a given unit formed on the basis of information from different sources<sup>5</sup>.

A marketing image of a settlement unit consists of real and non-real elements. Real elements of an image include all the perceived facts which can be interpreted in a rational manner, easily organised and specified. It is a collection of geographical, communication, material and utility features of an image. Non-real elements are emotional in nature. Thus, they express personal attitude held by a person or group

<sup>4</sup> H. Barich, P. Kotler, *A Framework for Marketing Image Management*, "Sloan Marketing Review", vol. 32(2), Winter 1991, p. 95.

<sup>5</sup> A. Szromnik, *Marketing terytorialny. Nowe obszary i narzędzia*, The edu-Libri Publishing House (Wydawnictwo edu-Libri), Kraków–Legionowo 2015, pp. 39-40.

towards the analysed locality (a city perceived as friendly – unfriendly, interesting – boring, beautiful – ugly)<sup>6</sup>.

It is emphasised in the literature on the subject that an image is primarily a carrier of the character of a given place and implies decisions on where to go on holiday, invest, settle or study. A positive image mainly impacts the residents, as the key stakeholders, through higher level of satisfaction with residing e.g. in a city, or their increased involvement in such issues as unit development or participation in the local activity of social groups. As emphasised, i.a. by E. Glińska, a positive image of a territorial unit is conducive to the building of permanent ties with one's place of residence and makes residents more active and willing to participate in the process of creating their local living space<sup>7</sup>.

The whole image forming process is possible through the use of certain instruments, which include, according to C. Riel and J. Balmer: human resources, promotion-mix, visual presentation of a unit and megaproduct<sup>8</sup>.

A territorial megaproduct is a multi-faceted and complex category. T. Markowski defines it as a "collection of utilities offered against payment or on a gratuitous basis to the client groups concerned"<sup>9</sup>. At the same time, the author emphasises that it is hard to refer to a single universal territorial product. A. Szromnik claims that a territorial product constitutes a cumulative socio-economic utility of a place (area), offered to external and internal customers in order to satisfy their material and spiritual, current and developmental needs of consumption or investment character, including also their material and spiritual needs<sup>10</sup>.

The literature on the subject differentiates several basic internal products, referred to as subproducts, offered to a relatively homogeneous group of entities. The differentiated subproducts usually include residential, investment, tourist, social, trade and service, educational and cultural, fair and exhibition, recreational and sports as well as public subproducts. A synthetic territorial megaproduct is a result of overlaying of the selected subproducts. Changes in individual subproducts can generate changes in other products, both in terms of their spatial and functional aspects.

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<sup>6</sup> A. Szromnik, *Marketing terytorialny. Miasto i region na rynku*, Wolters Kluwer Polska, Warszawa 2016, p. 145.

<sup>7</sup> E. Glińska, M. Florek, A. Kowalewska, *Wizerunek miasta od koncepcji do wdrożenia*, Wolters Kluwer Polska, Warszawa 2009, p. 34.

<sup>8</sup> C. Riel, J. Balmer, *Corporate identity: the concept, its measurement and management*, "European Journal of Marketing" Vol. 31, Issue: 5/6, 1997, p. 340.

<sup>9</sup> T. Markowski, *Zarządzanie rozwojem miast*, Polish Scientific Publishers (PWN), Warszawa 1999, p. 224.

<sup>10</sup> A. Szromnik, *Marketing terytorialny. Miasto i region na rynku*, Wolters Kluwer Polska, Warszawa 2016, p. 118.

Subproducts that co-create an offer of a specific territory should be internally consistent, mutually complementary and should constitute a comprehensive offer of a unit that best meets the needs of its residents and other stakeholders. The underlying factors associated with the subproducts offered include not only high quality of the services provided, but also safety of all direct and indirect beneficiaries of the territorial offer.

Each of the subproducts provides specific benefits which can be presented, after B. Baker, by means of a pyramid (the so called pyramid of benefits). The bottom of the pyramid is formed by basic features and attributes of a given place (e.g. natural qualities, climate conditions, cultural events, architecture). Rational (functional) benefits constitute the second level of the pyramid and comprise culture, access to services, safety as well as costs. The upper level of the pyramid is constituted by emotional benefits that have an impact on the emotions and feelings of people who come in contact with a given place. The top of the pyramid comprises the auto expressive values and benefits reflecting deep emotional needs and values satisfied by a given place that have an impact on the person's self-image<sup>11</sup>. The easiest to offer by a given territory, and thus, easy to copy, are the features that appear at the bottom of the pyramid. Elements that constitute the upper part of the pyramid are the most difficult to copy or deliver by the brand.

Safety is classified among functional benefits that comprise a wide range of solutions in this respect and satisfy both the rational and emotional needs. A relatively low position in the pyramid structure means that elements which jointly contribute to the safety of a given place are of a standardised character and can be relatively easily copied. One of the methods that can be used in this respect is benchmarking, which is based on the comparison between key structural and functional features of a territorial unit (associated e.g. with ensuring safety in the city) as well as similar features and solutions used by rival units regarded as the best, leading, or the most attractive in Poland or abroad.

The image of a safe territory becomes a guarantor of positive associations, inspiring confidence among the stakeholders and facilitating decisions on entering a given territory or allocation of the resources. Unfortunately, it is possible to indicate many cities that are still struggling to reverse an unfavourable image formed as a result of negative stereotypes. An example can be Pruszków perceived as the seat of mafia or Katowice associated with dirt and post mining slums. Image-related studies show that attitudes towards a given city, once formed, are permanent, affect the human psyche for a long time, even if prejudiced<sup>12</sup>. As a result, cities are frequently regarded

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<sup>11</sup> B. Baker, *Destination branding for small cities: The essentials for successful place branding*, OH: Creative Leap Books, Portland 2007, p. 111.

<sup>12</sup> A. Szromnik, *Marketing terytorialny. Miasto i region na rynku*, Wolters Kluwer Polska, Warszawa 2016, p. 145.

as safe or dangerous on the basis of hearsay, solidified associations or negative experiences, which does not fully reflect their current level of safety.

In case of units struggling with negative references, it is first of all necessary to take specific actions in order to improve the level of safety, which, when coupled with marketing support, will neutralise the negative image.

### **3. Resident Safety as a Determinant of The Quality of Life in Local Government Units**

As the feeling of peace is one of basic human needs, safety must be legally guaranteed by competent state authorities which safeguard public order in local government units. Each and every citizen, whether a resident of a given city, a tourist, student or an investor, wants to feel safe. Apart from direct actions which are mainly associated with criminal policy and intervention tasks, an important challenge is to reduce the underlying causes of crime and social pathology related, among other things, to actions within education, upbringing, health care, economic development or spatial planning<sup>13</sup>. Responding to visible signals is not enough in order to ensure safety. Such signals need to be counteracted and no effort must be spared to engage the local community in the process. Marketing tools and activities useful in the process of strengthening public safety at the territorial level may be helpful in this respect as well. Based on the classification proposed in the literature on the subject, actions aimed at improving safety of a given territorial unit may be classified as belonging to three basic areas:

1. Responding (response marketing) – involves identifying the existing needs through market research, and then developing solutions to improve public safety (e.g. improving the work of public agencies, in particular the police, healthcare centres).
2. Prediction (predictive marketing) – focuses on analysing changes taking place in the external environment and implementing programs aimed at counteracting threats, e.g. preventing pathology that accompanies the process of socio-economic transformations through the broadcast of social advertising, which sensitizes to particular problems such as increasing crime rate among youth, access to drugs at school, etc. An important role in counteracting threats can be also played by the introduction of (social, educational, health) preventive programmes, which are promoted by using public relations tools.

<sup>13</sup> K. Sienkiewicz-Małyjurek, *Rola samorządów lokalnych w kształtowaniu bezpieczeństwa publicznego*, "Samorząd Terytorialny" ("Local Government") 7-8, 2010, p. 123.

3. Creating values (value creating marketing) – it is the most advanced form which may be used, inter alia, to promote public safety, e.g. popularising in promotional activities such values as healthy eating habits, sensitizing to the issues of environmental pollution or preventing aggression among young people. Marketing activities will, thus, create positive attitudes and behaviours of the local community, discouraging from bad habits and dangerous behaviours<sup>14</sup>.

Safety issues are an element of almost all strategic documents (e.g. in the form of a strategic objective: “Ensuring High-Quality Public Services”), obliging local governments to focus on activities associated with the development of infrastructure that improves safety of all the persons present in the unit, monitoring of all natural and civilisation hazards. This also applies to providing notification to residents of the impending risks, improving road safety, safety in public spaces and safety in the context of natural disasters. Effectiveness of such activities is based on the cooperation of local governments and specialised institutions.

#### 4. Safety of Polish Cities in the Light of Research Results

The image of cities or regions is a subjective category that is difficult to objectively measure, assess or compare. A useful tool in this respect can be regularly calculated city indices which reflect their attractiveness in selected areas of activity. Highly popular among the measures used is, inter alia, the Anholt Index, which measures the image potential of the world's biggest cities with respect, among other things, to safety in its broad sense. Some of these measures are quantitative and some are qualitative, which is reflected, among other things, in the Ranking on the Safety of 50 Cities Around the World developed by a British analytical centre the Economist Intelligence Unit. The ranking takes into account four safety dimensions: digital safety, public health safety, infrastructure safety and personal safety. Taking into account 19 quantitative and 25 qualitative measures, the 2016 Ranking identifies the following cities around the world as the safest: Tokyo, Singapore, Osaka, Stockholm, Amsterdam and Sydney<sup>15</sup>. With respect to European cities, cities of Norway (Bergen, Trondheim), Germany (Munich) and Switzerland (Brno, Zurich) are among

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<sup>14</sup> M. Kamiński, W. Kuźniar, M. Leszczyński, M. Lisiecki, K. Machowicz, I. Oleksiewicz, P. Perz, *Wymiar bezpieczeństwa państwa w dzisiejszym świecie*, Rambler Publishing House, Warszawa 2016, p. XX.

<sup>15</sup> Oto 10 najbardziej bezpiecznych miast świata, „Business Insider Polska”, <https://businessinsider.com.pl/lifestyle/podroze/najbezpieczniejsze-miasta-na-swiecie/b81khnt>.

the top-ranked ones. It is worthwhile to emphasise that Warsaw and Gdańsk have been also ranked among the 30 big European cities regarded as the safest<sup>16</sup>.

On a nationwide scale, safety as the main element of the final assessment has been mainly separated in “The Safe and Open Polish Cities Ranking” and in the ranking of “The Safest Polish Cities to Live”. The safe and open cities index is calculated on the basis of objective values provided, among others, by the Central Statistical Office (GUS), the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy, the National Police Headquarters as well as by local governments and institutions. As many as 44 indices have been used for research purposes, grouped in five dimensions:

- public safety associated with the overall level of crime (and its particular dimensions),
- openness and hiring foreign employees;
- the sense of individual safety (also at home, taking into account the number of victims of domestic violence);
- road traffic safety (e.g. driving under the influence, number of accidents and their consequences);
- socio-economic safety (e.g. the amount of average remuneration, the ease of finding a job)<sup>17</sup>.

According to a recent report, the three safest cities in Poland include: Warsaw, Kraków and Rzeszów (over the last few years the number of crimes in Rzeszów has decreased by over 30%)<sup>18</sup>. Further positions in the ranking are occupied by Poznań, Gdynia and Gdańsk. Although the overall results noted among the biggest cities in Poland are good, while carrying out an internal analysis, the authors emphasised that in terms of public safety it is better to live in a small rather than a big city. The safest cities in this respect are Zamość, Biała Podlaska and Przemyśl, which stand out, among other things, thanks to a high efficiency of prosecution authorities, low level of crime or the occurrence of emergency situations, such as e.g. fires. It should be noted that the character of crime has changed in recent years, as crimes are increasingly committed electronically<sup>19</sup>.

The other ranking of “The Safest Polish Cities to Live” presents a subjective attitude of over 140 thousand Polish subjects towards the statement “I live in a safe neighbourhood and I am not afraid of coming back home after dark”. The 7 point Likert scale was used, where 1 means “I completely disagree” and 7 – “I fully agree” (Table 1).

<sup>16</sup> *Bezpieczne i otwarte miasta*, The Polish Robert Schuman Foundation (Polska Fundacja im. Roberta Schumana), Warszawa 2017, p. 7.

<sup>17</sup> *Bezpieczne i otwarte miasta*, The Polish Robert Schuman Foundation, Warszawa 2017, p. 9.

<sup>18</sup> *Rzeszów najbezpieczniejszym miastem w Polsce (2017)*, „Rzeszowski Serwis Informacyjno-Rozrywkowy”, <http://www.blekitna.tv/rzeszow-najbezpieczniejszym-miastem-w-polsce/>.

<sup>19</sup> *Bezpieczne i otwarte miasta*, The Polish Robert Schuman Foundation, Warszawa 2017, p. 14.



Table 1. Verification of the statement "I live in a safe neighbourhood and I am not afraid of coming back home from work" (score using a 1-7 scale)

No.	The highest scores		The lowest scores	
	City	Score	City	Score
1	Rzeszów	5.77	Będzin	4.52
2	Tarnobrzeg	5.69	Świętochłowice	4.63
3	Krosno	5.59	Bytom	4.69
4	Elk	5.56	Chorzów	4.69
5	Warsaw	5.52	Mysłowice	4.74

Source: [http://siezyje.otodom.pl/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Raport\\_siezyje\\_bezpiecznie.pdf](http://siezyje.otodom.pl/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Raport_siezyje_bezpiecznie.pdf)

A leader of the ranking is Rzeszów, whose trump card may be, among other things, a state-of-the-art monitoring integrated with public transport. It is also worthwhile to emphasise that municipal police are regularly provided with modern equipment and that there has been an increase in the number of police and municipal police patrols. Another thing that should be pointed out are regular meetings with the residents, taxi drivers, etc. aimed at diagnosing the level of safety and looking together for possible solutions. As a result of substantial involvement of the city authorities and services in ensuring safety of the local community, most residents feel safe in Rzeszów (Table 2).

Table 2. The sense of safety among Rzeszów residents in the light of questionnaire results\*

Assessment	Total	Broken down by sex		Broken down by age			
		Men	Women	19-24	25-44	45-64	65 years of age and older
<b>Average</b>	<b>4.46</b>	<b>4.56</b>	<b>4.36</b>	<b>4.34</b>	<b>4.45</b>	<b>4.57</b>	<b>4.33</b>
1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	1.3	1.4	1.3	4.9	0.9	-	2.1
3	7.7	7.5	7.8	17.1	6.1	5.2	8.3
4	35.0	25.2	44.4	17.1	40.0	32.3	43.8
5	56.0	66.0	46.4	61.0	53.0	62.5	45.8

\*Score using a 1-5 scale, where 1 means very low level of safety, 5 – very high level

Source: Own calculations based on the questionnaire, n = 300

The results of the questionnaire show that more than half of Rzeszów residents feel very safe in the city, which is reflected in the highest scores assigned. A firmer attitude was demonstrated in this respect by men, while women equally frequently assigned the scores of 5 and 4, which means that nearly half of female respondents,

despite seeing Rzeszów as generally safe, feel a bit unsatisfied. Analysis of the results when respondent age is taken into account shows that the highest level of satisfaction with safety in the city is demonstrated by young residents, up to 24 years of age.

Resident safety is linked to the quality of life in a given locality, in a broad sense, and determines its attractiveness for other groups of stakeholders as well. Assessment of safety in Rzeszów against the background of other features of the analysed city is presented in Tables 3 and 4.

Table 3. Rzeszów as a safe city against the background of other selected features according to the respondents, taking into account their sex\*

No.	Specification	Total	Broken down by sex	
			Men	Women
1	Well cared for	4.63	4.63	4.63
2	Clean	4.63	4.68	4.58
3	Friendly	4.49	4.43	4.56
4	Safe	4.46	4.56	<b>4.36</b>
5	Ideal for investors	4.43	4.41	4.48
6	Innovative	4.22	4.19	4.25

\*Score using a 1-5 scale, where 1 means very low level of safety, 5 – very high level

Source: own calculations based on the questionnaire, n = 300

Table 4. Rzeszów as a safe city against the background of other selected features according to the respondents, taking into account their age\*

No.	Specification	Broken down by age			
		19-24	25-44	45-64	65 years of age and older
1	Well cared for	4.69	4.67	4.59	4.54
2	Clean	4.44	4.63	4.70	4.65
3	Friendly	4.39	4.43	4.59	4.54
4	<b>Safe</b>	<b>4.34</b>	<b>4.45</b>	<b>4.57</b>	<b>4.33</b>
5	Ideal for investors	4.34	4.52	4.45	4.54
6	Innovative	4.20	4.10	4.26	4.44

\*Score using a 1-5 scale, where 1 means very low level of safety, 5 – very high level

Source: own calculations based on the questionnaire, n = 300

The residents of Rzeszów have assessed their city very highly, and emphasised, regardless of their age and sex, that it is well cared for and clean. Rzeszów scored slightly lower, though still high, in terms of attractiveness for investors and innovativeness.

Summing up, it should be stated that residents' assessments fully confirm high positions occupied by the city in the rankings, also as regards the perception of Rzeszów as a safe and friendly place to all groups of stakeholders.

## **Summary**

The safe city image is an extremely important asset which both the authorities and the local community need to strive for and which should be strengthened on a regular basis. This factor is essential to all groups of stakeholders, as it facilitates the decision-making process, not only in the context of choosing a place of residence, but also choosing a location for business, tourist destination or a location for school or academic education.

In order to satisfy the safety-related community expectations, local self-government authorities are not only obliged to efficiently respond to signals from the environment, but also to anticipate threats and promote values that, in cooperation with the local community, will contribute to improving the level of safety.

Apart from the group of decision-makers, an important role in improving the level of safety in a given territorial unit is played by the local community. The development of prosocial attitudes plays a particularly important role, which results in co-participation in the process of developing values of a given unit. It strengthens bonds between the residents and the unit, and thus, their sense of satisfaction with, or even pride in, being a member thereof.

A good example of positive relations between the local community and the authorities is Rzeszów, which occupies a leading position in many prestigious rankings that verify the level of life in cities, their innovativeness or safety. This is not only a result of efforts on the part of city authorities or appropriate public services, but also a consequence of substantial involvement of the local community in developing the city. Thanks to numerous citizen initiatives, residents also participate in creating the value of Rzeszów, in a number of areas, including safety.

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