Analysis of Civic Activity as an Element Shaping Local Level Threat Resilience in Communities

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Abstract:

Purpose: *The main objective is to determine the essence of civic activity in shaping resilience to threats in communities at the local level using the example of a municipality.*

Approach/Methodology/Design: *A diagnostic poll method was used, carried out by means of a survey technique, with the use of a survey questionnaire tool. The Statistica v.13.1 software package was used to develop the survey results. The general population included the residents of Nowa Iwiczna, located in the Lesznowola municipality in the Mazovian Voivodeship in Polnad. The size of the research sample was 1351 people.*

Findings: *Self-governance has been developing for more than two decades and local communities still have a problem with a mediocre sense of civic responsibility. Therefore, cooperation of communities with their authorities (representatives) at the local level is justified and necessary. Moreover, it is very often an elementary point in addressing threats. Probably the problem stems from the lack of proper civic education (one can say that it starts at an early age), low level of civic competence of the community at the local level and disturbed communication at the level of residents-inhabitants and residents-local authorities.*

Practical Implications: *It is worthwhile for the local authority to consider the so-called local action plans in the general strategy of community development. In turn, the citizens should fully exercise the rights granted to them, but also remember the so-called civic duties, the conscientious fulfilment of which may lead to the improvement of their functioning in each area, elimination of problems or efficient problem solving, improvement of communication, and increase of the level of security.*

Originality/Value: *The argument proving the strength and essence of the indicated topic of the scientific article is not its niche character - on the contrary - it is the widespread interest of the scientific and administrative community and the society itself. Arguing that the functioning of local communities requires special attention from the scientific community, I assume that the research I have conducted, apart from cognitive value, is also characterized by pragmatism and utilitarianism. Research findings can be used by stakeholders to build a resilient local community.*

Keywords: *Public co-management, civic activity, social participation, resilience to threats, local authority, local management, community safety at the local level.*

Paper Type: *Research article.*

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1. Introduction

The issue that has emerged nowadays both in theoretical and empirical background about community safety management at the local level, and especially to the development of resilience to stress in these communities is involving them in political, economic and social decision-making process. Such decisions have a direct impact on their functioning in a given area. Adequate communication and social dialogue are the foundation for being a so-called "resilient community". Therefore, the municipality should pay special attention to acquiring and sharing information and ideas; joint search for practical consensus and making decisions acceptable to the community. Currently, it is worth considering what should be done so that local communities could express willingness and were capable of actively deciding on public matters, while the authorities could express willingness and could involve individuals in community affairs.

The subject of the research in this article is community civic activity at the local level, and the main objective of the research has been set by the author as determining the essence of civic activity in shaping resilience to threats in communities at the local level using the example of a municipality. Analysing the problem situation and referring to the research objective, the main research problem was presented in the form of the following question: How important is civic activity in shaping resilience to threats in communities at the local level on the example of a municipality? Solving the above-mentioned research problem requires addressing several specific problems:

1. What are the threats that condition lowering the level of community resilience on the example of a municipality?
2. What problems are diagnosed by a community based on the example of a municipality?
3. What are the sources most often chosen by the community in search of information on issues and problems concerning the community?
4. How did the community approach the obligation to choose the local government on the example of a municipality?
5. What is the community's activity in terms of submitting applications to the participatory budget based on the example of a municipality?

This text should accumulate knowledge about extremely important and, according to the author, overlooked, under-analysed and often overlooked issues in the Polish municipalities. Why does this happen in the matter of social participation? Self-governance has been developing for more than two decades and local communities still have a problem with a mediocre sense of civic responsibility. After all, the 21st century gives us all so many opportunities for development and at the same time makes our needs grow. Therefore, cooperation of communities with their authorities (representatives) at the local level is justified and necessary. Moreover, it is very often an elementary point in addressing threats.

Probably the problem stems from the lack of proper civic education (one can say that it starts at an early age), low level of civic competence of the community at the local level and disturbed communication at the level of residents-inhabitants and residents-local authorities.

2. Civic Activity in the Aspect of Social Participation

2.1 Trying to Correlate Civic Activity and Social Participation

The activity of everyone is closely related to the process of motivating and, consequently, the hierarchy of needs of Abraham Maslow. After all, the essence of motivating is to diagnose the needs of a given person and to adjust appropriate motivating factors to those needs, thanks to which he/she will perform a specific action (Muscalu and Muntean, 2013). Satisfying the needs is done by climbing the so-called ladder consisting of the needs of lower and higher order. It is important that we do not climb the top of this ladder if we do not step on one level (symbolising a specific group of needs) at a time. If we miss at least one rung, we will fall, and consequently, we will not satisfy any need. Despite the individual approach to meeting these needs, it seems reasonable to say that a person and his/her activity is not only self-centred (hence the need for respect/approval and even belonging). Therefore, a person creates two types of identity on this basis – individual and social identity. The latter is the foundation in stimulating social or community activity.

What is and how should we perceive social activity? Above all, it is very often seen through the prism of service to people in need. It refers to different forms of management (formal aspects) as well as leadership (informal aspects) in communities. Civic activity can be understood as social activity of citizens, being a result of individual motives or social initiatives, aimed at managing social interest (common good), undertaken with awareness of obligations resulting from functioning in a given social system.

Social activity also refers to the common (the feature that the author would like to especially emphasise) and fully conscious performance of activities for a specific social group. An example can be participation in foundations, associations, voluntary work, but also being a leader of a social group, expressing willingness to represent that group, its matters in contacts with e.g., local authorities. To characterise the term more fully, it is worth indicating and describing selected types of social activity, i.e. (Klamut, 2013):

- individual political;
- activity;
- activity in governance;
- being committed to a community;
- social participation.

Individual political activity consists in political involvement of individuals or groups of citizens. It concerns primarily the assessment of rulers and participation in elections. Citizens observe, monitor, analyse and evaluate the actions of those in power and because of these analyses they accept or criticise the government or local government. As part of their individual political activity, citizens also have the right to strike, protest, petition or participate in demonstrations where they claim their rights under fundamental and key legal acts.

The second type of civic activity is governmental activity. It consists primarily in participating in formal problem-solving and conducting citizen affairs. The essence of this form of activity is, first, striving to improve citizens' lives and satisfy their public needs. When talking about "healthy", correct activity in governance, one should think of democratic governments, where the voice and the need of the ordinary citizen is the foundation of this governance (Winter, 2004). Participation in governance is an activity characterised by a high degree of responsibility on the social ground. Unfortunately, it also often happens that the motivations of those in power are overshadowed by the desire to gain and maintain power, without paying attention to the needs of citizens and the promises made to them during the election campaign.

Another example of the above-mentioned types of civic activity is the so-called "commitment to a community". The number of people who can be referred to as committed to a community is correlated with the level of social capital in each social group. Each citizen can take up activity for the benefit of another person and do it of his/her own free will. The essence of commitment to community is the improvement of life, conditions and satisfaction derived from helping others (Lewicka, 2008).

The possibility of public participation in decision making relates to the democratic system of the state and thus the introduction of decentralisation in the apparatus of power. The emergence of local government should ensure the society's continuous development, provide much freedom and opportunities for co-determination in the inhabited area. Thus, in theory, the participation of individuals in the decision-making process concerning public matters is already common and comprehensible in Poland. After all, it results from the introduction of various restrictions, regulations, principles of European law, as well as from the application of a specific kind of benchmarking in the field of local management and comparison with Western European countries. When analysing selected items of Western literature on the subject one can get the impression that social participation in local management plays a priority role in the countries of Western Europe and is thus considered not only in the politics on the local government level but also on the national level (Smith, 2005).

Participation is nothing but taking part, involvement in events that affect our functioning. It is reasonable to claim that this is a range of methods and tools that allow residents to affect the so-called public co-management. The level of this co-management is conditioned by two variables, the first is the readiness of the authorities

to actively cooperate with the local community, and the second is the motivation of the community to act. The concept of participation can be categorised and described from the perspective of various scientific disciplines, such as political science, sociology, law, or management sciences. Because the author of the paper is involved in the latter one, she indicates that the described notion, in terms of the sciences of management, refers to building cooperation, creating, and maintaining relations between an external client (citizen; local community) and an organisation (municipality; local authority). The strategic goal of this cooperation (as in management) should be customer satisfaction, which can be achieved by verifying their needs, planning, organising, and controlling their provision.

Very often social participation is also explained as a self-organisation of the local community and taking responsibility for actions. This responsibility is constructed by listing problems, planning and organising necessary tasks (Szaja, 2015). This type of participation enables the local community and everyone to have sustainable access to the common good (e.g., communication, security, community building, development, etc.).

2.2 The Ladder of Participation

In theory and practice two forms of participation can be specified: passive and active. The first concerns the right to generate complaints, the right to obtain information, and the right to receive counselling. Active participation, on the other hand, consists in physically influencing citizens on matters and resolving issues that concern them (Wójcicki, 2013).

In connection with the forms of participation there are three elementary levels of participation, i.e., information, consultation and co-deciding. Informing is causally related to passive participation and consists in the unilateral transmission of messages from local authorities to citizens. Its essence is to provide citizens with knowledge about planned and implemented actions to facilitate understanding of opportunities, threats, problems, or alternative solutions (www.iap2.org/International Association for Public Participation, 2020). Examples of methods and techniques of participation are the distribution of information leaflets, running websites or so-called "open doors". (e.g., the municipality headsets one day a week for meetings with citizens).

Another level in the ladder of participation is consultation. It corresponds to an active form of participation and consists of cooperation with citizens in the matter of submitting proposals and making decisions directly affecting them (Ibidem). The authority listens to citizens, considers their aspirations, and needs. Examples of participation methods and techniques are focus groups, discussions, surveys, public meetings, meetings with community leaders, public hearings.

At the top of the participation ladder there is a co-decision stage, and it is the most developed form of public participation in deciding one's own affairs. It should take

place according to the principle "people know better what they need". At this stage there is a kind of delegation of power by the authorities to the citizens, which results in ensuring full implementation of social suggestions in the public sphere (Ibidem). Examples of methods and techniques of participation are voting, civic courts, citizen counselling, task groups.

2.3 Selected Benefits of Public Participation

A properly prepared and initiated participatory process generates several benefits for many parties involved in the process. These include local authorities, their representatives, public officials, residents, local leaders, NGOs, companies supervising or supporting local projects, etc. The benefits depend on the role that a given person or group of people plays in the process. For many citizens, collaboration means noticing and likely solving both individual and group (local) problems. The most important benefit for the inhabitants of a given area is the recognition of them as the so-called "local specialists", because they provide the local authority with reliable, verified information concerning the functioning and the disadvantages that are connected with this functioning. They enable the authorities to better fulfil their duties and very often present ready-made ideas for solving problems that arise. Using such solutions leads to creative activities with lasting effects, which also minimises numerous costs.

It is very important for citizens to be able to influence the decisions made by local authorities. The decision-making process then considers the ideas, beliefs, and interests of citizens. Moreover, they can voice their plans, projects, and the shape of local politics in the municipality. The advantage is the possibility of co-shaping the decisions that will have an impact on the quality of life of the inhabitants and their safety.

Such activities teach the local community self-organisation, which is especially needed in the process of building resilience to threats. As a result, Internet platforms are created for education, expression of opinions or warning about the threat, containing key instructions on actions to be taken to avoid the threat or limit its negative effects in an individual or group way; information on sources of financing in case of losses incurred as a result of negative events, etc.

The benefit is an increase in residents' knowledge of local management mechanisms, as well as an increase in social competences, e.g., communication, which in effect leads involvement in a community on a group scale. Is it needed? When building resilience to threats in local communities, it certainly is, because the inhabitants start to communicate, exchange views, opinions, inform each other about issues important from the point of view of the local community, start to tolerate each other, respect each other, appreciate individual and group actions and start to trust each other – which results in an increase in social capital.

3. Shaping Resilience to Threats

3.1 Trying to Define the Concept of Immunity

The interest in the concept of immunity is the result of increasing uncertainty and changes in threats. In building resilience, it is necessary to consider the situation in which individuals, but also social groups find themselves; the cultural system adopted by society in a given area; economic development; political situation; the natural environment in which a given community operates, as well as the available infrastructure; the technologies used; and the possibility of development. The local authority, and in particular the competencies of the officials are of great importance in building the resilience of the community in municipalities. Seeing this concept in its social aspect, it is worth noting that it combines three elements (Górska-Rożej, 2018):

- creating community with other members of society;
- improving functioning social practices;
- using the knowledge from the experience gained.

A resilient society is aware of the risks to which it may be exposed, prepared for their appearance and the changes that will occur along with negative events. Therefore, resilience involves the ability to cope with unexpected changes and to return to normal functioning efficiently. The basis for shaping and increasing the level of resilience in local communities is their ability to adapt, which includes, among others, the following (Norris, Pfefferbaum, and Wyche, 2008):

- economic development (thanks to which it becomes possible to reduce the negative impact of various types of undesirable events on the functioning of the local community, resulting in the selection of appropriate ways to counteract the threats);
- information and communication (selection of appropriate ways of conveying information and media responsibility);
- social capital (social support, sense of belonging to a group, trust, local patriotism, social sustainability);
- interpersonal competencies (ability to cooperate, listen, solve problems together, flexibility, creativity in interpersonal contacts, empathy).

In connection with the above, the author of the article drew attention to the problem of social participation in building resilience to threats in local communities.

3.2 Contemporary Perception of Threats

Has the nature of threats changed, so that we could talk about contemporary threats? In simple terms, a threat is a result of a lack of sense of security. For a human being it

is an unfavourable situation that disorganises the established pattern of action, these are detrimental factors that contribute to the disruption of the socially recognised order (Ziarko and Walas-Trębacz, 2010).

In the source literature you can find numerous definitions of the discussed term. Therefore, the author of the article did not attempt to define it but considered it appropriate to quote several definitions that have been adopted in science. The following definition of threat can be found in the dictionary of national security terms: *A situation in which a dangerous state is likely to arise in the environment, taking as its basis the areas in which the threat may occur* (Słownik terminów z zakresu bezpieczeństwa narodowego, 2002, p. 162). For example, military and non-military threats are listed later in this definition. The non-military threats include political, economic, ecological, internal, etc. threats (Ibidem).

An interesting definition of threat, from the point of view of the author of the article, was presented by K. Ficoń, *who believes that a threat is an event caused by random (natural) or non-random (intentional) causes, which has a negative impact on the functioning of a given system or causes adverse (dangerous) changes in its internal or external environment* (Ficoń, 2007, p. 76). *He also claims that cumulative and unresolved threats may lead to the occurrence of crisis situations both in the system in question and in a specific system environment* (Ibidem).

The term threat can be considered comprehensive and ambiguous, as it is often considered from the perspective of many scientific disciplines (Mroczko, 2012). It sometimes refers to a person, organisation, society or complex social processes or natural phenomena (Ibidem).

The above mentioned definition by K. Ficoń reflects the essence of threats very well. The most important aspect in defining them is to give the reasons for their creation, i.e., random causes (in such case we talk about threats caused by natural forces, natural threats) and intentional (in such case we talk about threats caused by human activity, technical threats). The author of the discussed definition also suggests the basic division of threats into natural and technical ones. In the latest literature on crisis management, there are many more divisions of hazards that differ from each other. Some of them are more elaborate and contain detailed divisions, others less. For the purposes of this article, the author considered it reasonable to adopt a division of risks that considers (Ziarko and Walas-Trębacz, pp. 23-29):

- threats caused by forces of nature;
- technical threats;
- social risks.

One can certainly claim that contemporary threats are complex, dynamict, and multifactorial. Their changeable character results primarily from the development of

civilisation, that is why it is so important to constantly monitor the threats, predict the area and scale of occurrence. Such actions are the basis for launching specific preventive and preventive behaviours, which allows to shape the resilience to threats of the community at the local level.

4. Description of the Research

4.1 Research Methodology

The aim of the article is to determine the importance of civic activity in shaping resilience at the local level. The research problem was presented in the form of the following question: *How important is civic participation in shaping resilience to threats in communities at the local level?* To solve the presented research problem, a diagnostic poll method was used, carried out by means of a survey technique, with the use of a survey questionnaire tool.

After the survey was completed, the author of the article received material which she then described statistically, thanks to which she obtained related information about the characteristics of the examined phenomenon. The Statistica v.13.1 software package was used to develop the survey results.

In connection with the research, the general population included the residents of Nowa Iwiczna, located in the Lesznowola municipality in the Mazovian Voivodeship in Poland. In connection with the application of the formula for the size of the research sample, the author of the article calculated the size of a representative sample, which in the case of conducted research was 1351 people. 52.7% of women and 47.3% of men participated in the study. Most of the respondents (66.9% of them) have higher education, the rest have secondary education. The most numerous groups among the respondents were people aged 31-40 (38.7% of the respondents) and 25-30 (36% of the respondents). The third largest group, in terms of number, was the group of people aged 41-50 (20.5%). The least numerous groups were people of age: 18-24 (2%), 61-70 (1.7%) and 51-60 (1.1%).

Another criterion that was considered in characterising the research sample was the workplace. Over half of the respondents indicated that they work in the public sector and 37% in the private sector. More than 6% are already retired and 2% are studying at school or at the university. It is positive that nobody indicated that they are unemployed.

4.2 Analysis of Research

The author of the article considered it reasonable to verify the knowledge of residents about potential threats for which they should be prepared because civic activity is considered in the context of resilience to threats.

Table 1. *The most probable threats in the opinion of the inhabitants of the municipality*
Legend: 1 - unlikely threat, and 5 - highly probable threat

Item	Type of threat	Percentages				
		1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
1.	floods	70.37	9.97	7.98	0.0	11.68
2.	chemical, ecological	42.17	0	39.89	17.95	0
3.	epidemics	25.93	44.44	17.95	11.68	0
4.	constructional disasters	29.34	30.77	39.89	0	0
5.	violent atmospheric phenomena (hailstorms, strong winds, heavy rains, droughts)	0	0	0	76.92	23.08
6.	road accidents	0	0	21.37	19.09	59.54
7.	railroad accidents	39.89	14.81	31.34	0	13.96
8.	air accidents	3.42	14.81	57.83	11.11	12.82
9.	failures of municipal installations (power, heat, water, gas and telecommunication interruptions)	0	11.40	9.97	49.0	29.63
10.	firefighting	3.42	1.14	24.79	58.97	11.68
11.	terrorism	80.91	19.09	0	0	0
12.	demonstrations, riots	88.31	11.68	0	0	0
13.	social pathologies (e.g., drug addiction, alcoholism)	14.81	63.53	21.65	0	0
14.	unemployment	17.95	42.17	39.89	0	0
15.	thefts, robberies by economic immigrants	4.56	83.76	0	0	11.68
16.	overpopulation	0	43.30	15.95	29.06	11.68
17.	smog	6.87	0	0	39.87	53.28

Source: *Own study.*

In one of the questions in the questionnaire, the risk questionnaires were divided into natural, technical, and social. Interestingly, residents are most concerned about natural hazards, i.e. violent atmospheric phenomena, e.g. hail, strong winds, heavy rains, droughts (100% of the respondents) and technical, i.e., smog (93.15% of the respondents), failures of municipal installations, e.g. interruptions in electricity and heat supply, interruptions in water and gas supply, telecommunication disturbances (more than 78% of the respondents), road accidents (more than 78% of the respondents) and fire (70.65% of the respondents). The respondents are not at all afraid of social risks (i.e.: demonstrations, riots, thefts, population migration, social pathologies), which may arise due to the proximity of the municipality to Warsaw (Table 1). However, over 40% of the respondents indicated that they were afraid of overpopulation in the municipality due to the fast pace of development of housing infrastructure.

The process of participation should begin by diagnosing the problems faced by the residents to jointly find ways to solve them. Therefore, the respondents were asked to identify the biggest drawbacks / problems of the Lesznowola community. Among others, the following were indicated:

- increased number of foreigners (economic migrants, mainly from Ukraine, 87.46% of the respondents);
- difficult communication in the direction of Piaseczno and Warsaw (80.63% of the respondents);
- lack of places to relax and meet with friends (e.g., cafés, pubs, 80.63% of the respondents);
- thefts, burglaries (60% of the respondents);
- inefficiency of communication systems in relation to growing traffic (58.12% of the respondents);
- difficult communication within the municipality (54% of the respondents).

The above data indicate that the biggest problem for the inhabitants is communication. Overcrowding in the municipality causes inhabitants problems with using public transportation both within and outside the municipality. The increase in the number of economic migrants also intensified and re-ignited the problem with minor thefts and burglaries.

Table 2. The disadvantages of the Lesznowola community

Item	Type of threat	Percentages	
		No	Yes
1.	Difficult communication in the municipality	46.0	54.0
2.	Difficult communication in the direction of Piaseczno and Warsaw	19.37	80.63
3.	Failure of communication systems in relation to growing traffic	41.88	58.12
4.	Maintenance of Nowa Iwiczna railroad station in the second ticketing zone	77.21	22.79
5.	Deterioration of roads due to increased car traffic	75.21	24.78
6.	Uneven development of the municipality	100	0
7.	Social, cultural and sports infrastructure inadequate for the projected growing population	90.88	9.12
8.	No administrative, service and commercial centre	100	0
9.	Poor tourist and recreation base	100	0
10.	Insufficient water supply infrastructure in relation to demographic forecasts	100	0
11.	Lack of resources necessary to carry out tasks resulting from the Crisis Management Act	100	0
12.	Limited access to the Internet in some parts of the municipality	100	0
13.	Increased number of foreigners	12.54	87.46
14.	Significantly exceeding the standards for smog concentrations	58.97	41.03

15.	Thefts, burglaries	40.0	60.00
16.	No places to relax and meet with friends (e.g. cafés, pubs)	19.37	80.63
17.	Lack of social initiatives to improve the safety of the municipality residents	100	0
18.	Insufficient health care offer	100	0

Source: Own research results.

Subsequently, the respondents were asked where they most often look for information about the municipality, its problems, solutions to be implemented and programmes conducted in its area. More than a half of the respondents indicated that they use the municipality website to the greatest extent (61.54% of them) and talk to their neighbours (59.54% of the respondents). The survey shows that roadside notice boards have already lost their former splendour and usefulness, as only 10% of the respondents use them. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Source of information about the municipality for the inhabitants of Lesznowola municipality

Item	Source of information about the municipality	Percentages	
		No	Yes
1.	Local newspapers	62.39	37.61
2.	Roadside notice boards	90.03	9.97
3.	The municipality website	38.46	61.54
4.	Local web portals	81.77	18.23
5.	Facebook (groups founded by the local community)	53.27	46.72
6.	Talking to neighbours	40.46	59.54
7.	Municipal office	100	0
8.	I am not looking anywhere for information about the municipality	82.05	17.95

Source: Own research results.

When asked "whose opinion, do you think, counts the most in matters concerning the town and its inhabitants?", the respondents indicated that the municipality head (90% of the respondents) and municipality councillors (78% of the respondents) have the greatest influence on the decisions made in the municipality. Such results of the research are a complete negation of the knowledge contained in the theoretical part of the paper and allow concluding that in a municipality one cannot speak about the process of social participation. The data is presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Entity whose opinion counts most when making decisions in the municipality

Item	Entity	Percentages	
		No	Yes
1.	Residents	66.95	33.05
2.	Village administrator	100	0
3.	Municipal councillors	21.65	78.35
4.	Head of the municipality	9.97	90.03
5.	Local entrepreneurs	98.86	1.14

| 6. | Reverend | 100 | 0 |
| 7. | I cannot point out | 78.63 | 21.37 |

Source: *Own study.*

When answering the question "do you think that the neighbours who work / participate in the community are trying to do something for all residents?" more than half of the respondents (52% of them) replied "hard to say", which may indicate that the local community does not know who such a leader is or does not follow their activities. The inhabitants of the municipality (56% of them) are also not interested in participating in various associations initiating municipality events, only 1% of the respondents expressed such desire.

One of the basic rights guaranteed to citizens in the Constitution is the right of access to public information. Based on Article 61, every citizen should have access to information on the activities of public authorities, i.e., government and local government bodies (ssdip.bip.gov.pl/ Konstytucja RP). Citizens' rights in this area include:

- Admission to the meetings of collegial bodies from general elections (e.g., municipal councils) (Municipal Local Government, 1990);
- Access to various types of documents, reports, and minutes from the collegial bodies;
- filming and recording of meetings.

The citizen does not have to justify and describe the purpose of obtaining public information because it is non-confidential and public authorities are obliged to make it available. One can even say that they should try to get as many citizens interested in such information as possible. The survey shows that for the respondents the term civic activity is not something commonly recognised and practised, as 98.86% of them have never participated in a session of the municipal council. The inhabitants do not know (73.83% of the respondents) whether, in case of any problems, questions or doubts, they have the opportunity to meet directly with the municipality head, even though such information is available on the municipality website.

An important element of overall civic activity is participation in general elections. In connection with the subject matter of the survey, it seems justified to indicate data concerning the voter turnout in the Lesznowola community. The author of the article decided to describe the voter turnout in the examined municipality in the last presidential, local and European Parliament elections. In the presidential elections of 2020 Lesznowola municipality received the highest voter turnout (82.17%) in the district (Piaseczno), where 86.34% of those eligible to vote voted in Nowa Iwiczna (www.lesznowola.pl/ Wybory prezydenckie 2020). Analysing the percentage share in the elections to the European Parliament, which took place in 2019, the Lesznowola municipality once again proved to be a record-breaker in this respect (compared to other municipalities in the Piaseczno district), because the turnout was 61.19% (in

Nowa Iwiczna the turnout was calculated at 70.87%) (wirtualnepiaseczno.pl/ Największa frekwencja wyborcza w Lesznowoli, 2020). Referring to the turnout in the local government elections that took place in 2018, the turnout in Nowa Iwiczna was 65.53% (wybory 2018.pkw.gov.pl/2018).

One of the tools for activating citizens to cooperate with the local government, to collaborate and take part in making decisions concerning civic matters is the so-called participatory budget. It allows to submit and promote ideas for the benefit of all residents, contributing to the improvement of the functioning of their own area and more. Analysing the activity of the residents of the Lesznowola community in the field of the participatory budget, it is worth pointing out that, unfortunately, it is insignificant. The inhabitants report several problems and shortcomings of the municipality (which was described at the beginning of the analysis of the research), but they do not use their rights and possibilities they have in terms of cooperation with the local authorities. Less than 10% of those eligible to vote (9.83%) took part in the vote on the selection of projects financed from the participatory budget for 2020 in the municipality of Lesznowola, which is not a satisfactory result from the perspective of civic activity, especially regarding the development of resilience to threats.

5. Conclusions

The review of the source literature and the presented results of own research allow reach conclusions which, when drawing attention of the relevant subjects, may lead to improvement of the authority-society relations, help in building resilience to threats and diagnose and eliminate errors in the discussed scope. It seems reasonable to argue that authorities elected by unconscious, socially lazy and showing little activity citizens will only act in each area according to their own perception and respond to imaginary, not real, needs. This situation is therefore a complete denial of building a community resilient to threats. Local authorities should look for the best and most effective ways to contact, understand and involve communities in civic life.

It is worthwhile for the local authority to consider the so-called local action plans in the general strategy of community development. Looking at them from the participatory perspective will allow for the diagnosis of the needs and problems of the local community, as well as cooperation between local authorities and residents.

In turn, the citizens should fully exercise the rights granted to them, but also remember the so-called civic duties, the conscientious fulfilment of which may lead to the improvement of their functioning in each area, elimination of problems or efficient problem solving, improvement of communication, and increase of the level of security.

To sum up, it should be stated that public participation helps to stimulate local democracy and make the community more willing to maintain local cooperation and collaboration. The latter is the basis for building resilience to threats.

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