



**Magdalena Kasprzak: Badania wariograficzne w polskim systemie prawnym (literally: “Polygraph examination in the Polish legal system”), Instytut Wydawniczy EuroPrawo, Warszawa 2020**

Each book on polygraph examinations in the market should be welcomed, just for the fact that it promotes knowledge about such examinations. However, the value of such a book depends on satisfying two necessary conditions. The minimum condition is to report honestly on the current state of knowledge, while extending that knowledge or at least pointing to the areas that call for studies and discussion is the desired one.

Satisfaction of the minimum condition requires at least collecting literature on the subject and assessing it. Distinguishing the more important problems from the less

material ones, distinguishing the statements postulated on the grounds of the results of properly conducted empirical studies from the ones that only express individual convictions. In other words, distinguishing scientific claims from statements that could possibly, and in most cases only after certain editing, pass for mere hypotheses.

The task frequently proves too difficult for lawyers, who do not know, or even feel, the rules of the methodology of empirical sciences. Alas! It also proved too difficult for the author of the work in question. This, however, could perhaps still be forgiven. It is, however, harder to forgive evident technical shortcomings. These start with the selection of literature. Trying to account on the state-of-the-art, the author resorts to works published several decades ago, interspersed with some more contemporary ones, however, selected all but haphazardly. She fails to note of at least three Polish monographic works whose subjects overlap with hers that have been published in the last few years. Moreover, she quotes editions from the 1990s, and even the 1980s, in case of literature that was published in amended and supplemented versions in recent years.

All the comments above concern primarily the two first chapters: Chapter 1 General characteristic of polygraph examinations (which uses the word *wariograficzny* for “polygraphic”) and Chapter 2, The use of polygraph examinations in criminal trials.

However critical remarks also need to be addressed to the other parts of the book. For example, Chapter 3, in which the author counts the Internal Security Agency (ABW) and the Intelligence into the “uniformed services”.

What could have been the most valuable and innovative part of the work is section 5 of Chapter 4 entitled “Polygraph examinations in the opinion of employers and employees”. It could have been but, unfortunately, it is not. The work makes elementary mistakes in methodology. There is no exact description of the examined sample or the way it was put together. The results presented in colourful charts and diagrams available in computer applications use percentages, shunning from absolute numbers, etc.

As a consequence, another book of minimal practical value and devoid of academic ones has been published. A reason to be embarrassed, the more so as the author is a member of academic faculty.