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Współczesne standardy badań poligraficznych
[*Contemporary standards of polygraph examination*]
edited by Michał Gołaszewski,
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Wydawnictwo Agencji Bezpieczeństwa Wewnętrznego,
132 pp.

Współczesne standardy badań poligraficznych (“Contemporary standards of polygraph examinations”), a monographic work edited by Marcin Gołaszewski, was published recently. It should be considered a seminal work in this field in the Polish literature. It presents the current state of knowledge on polygraph examination standards. Two of the authors are professional polygraphers; they have both been trained in the United States, are certified as examiners by the American Polygraph Association, and hold memberships of this organisation.

Already in the foreword, the editor and main contributor, Marcin Gołaszewski, warns the reader that this is not a book addressed to the layman but to the specialist in polygraph examinations.

Undoubtedly, the book is orientated towards people who deal professionally with polygraph examinations and have at least a basic knowledge of the subject. As can also be read in the foreword, the book is aimed at partly filling

the gap in the range publications available on the current state of knowledge on polygraph examinations.

I daresay that in recent years Poland has lost touch with world science as far as polygraph examinations are concerned. There is a lack of basic research and a lack of thorough case study analyses – the latter leave a lot to be desired. Even information on polygraph examinations presented in forensic science course books is dated or simply not true. The unfamiliarity with foreign literature is noticeable.

Determined attempts by some authors to convince readers about the alleged superiority of the GKT (CIT) technique over the control questions (CQT) technique, coupled with the conviction that the favoured techniques are the work of a Polish author and were developed in the latter half of the 1970s, are pitiful. This belief is evidence of the absolute ignorance of Lykken's works, and even of those Polish works that have referred to and commented on Lykken.

The book is divided into three parts. The first, more theoretical, part is devoted to a discussion of *Podstawy badań poligraficznych* ("the foundations of polygraphs examinations"). The author begins by defining what a lie is, quoting various views and attempts at a definition in the literature. This is followed by a discussion of the theoretical concepts of the process of deception and detection of deception with the use of the polygraph.

An important chapter in this section concerns the validation of tests used in polygraph examinations. As is generally known, in order to be used as evidence in a trial, every research method must have a diagnostic and probative value that can be defined during the trial. The process of validation serves in defining whether a given method of measurement actually measures what it should. Serious concerns about the quality of such examinations have arisen in polygraphy practice. A response to negative opinions was a meta-analysis carried out by the American Polygraph Association (APA). Through the analysis of polygraph examinations conducted as part of this meta-analysis, standards and lists of evidentiary techniques admitted in polygraph examinations were defined – which the author describes.

The third chapter of the first part very insightfully presents scientifically validated systems for analysing test data, which are corroborated by case studies. The author has enriched the chapter with visualisations of polygrams, although I believe it could have been expanded to encompass a description of individual diagnostic features.

Additionally, the chapter includes tables containing, among other things, diagnostic criteria used in scientifically validated systems for polygram analyses, and error levels when evaluating in accordance with the ESS (Empirical Scoring System).

The second part of the reviewed book discusses standards and procedures of polygraph examinations. The first chapter describes clearly and distinctly the types of tests used in examinations. A further part contains the APA standards that are currently in force (binding from 1st January 2012), developed on the basis of numerous researches and case studies.

The APA has established standards for polygraph examination practice, indicating the criteria and requirements that centres conducting such examinations should observe. The standards define procedures and universal norms for polygraph examinations, which are also recognised and applied in Poland.

Obviously, for formal reasons, the standards are not binding in Poland, even though they should be for substantive (scientific) reasons. They are a reflection of the current state of knowledge concerning polygraph examinations. Disregarding them would in fact mean ignoring the latest achievements of world science.

The last part of the publication covers issues and guidelines selected by Marcin Gołaszewski, Anna Ibek, and Michał Widacki.

This more practical part focuses on the way of drawing up polygraph (expert) opinions and presents models of various possible expert opinions for various tests. It also discusses practical recommendations for polygraphers, taking into account the errors made by judicial bodies when interpreting examinations, and also the mistakes made by examiners themselves. The discussion of errors is based on an analysis of Polish practice.

Moreover, the authors also mention an extremely rare, yet significant problem, namely the need to use an interpreter, should it be necessary to conduct an examination on a foreigner.

The last chapter is of interest to those who are wondering whether and how to fool polygraphs, and whether this can really be done. Like any method, polygraph examination methods, despite appropriate equipment and expert training, do not ensure 100% certainty, especially when the examinee makes efforts to deceive the polygrapher. Besides listing factors that interfere with results of polygraph examination, the chapter contains guidelines for examiners on how to recognise and counteract attempts at influencing the results of examinations.

On the whole, it is a well thought out book, with the questions discussed being treated in a practical, succinct, and understandable manner. The point of reference is American standards, efficiently transposed into Polish practice. Furthermore, the authors make the valuable point of drawing attention to the problem of a lack of a Polish institution controlling polygraph examinations, which results in consistently repeated errors.

The authors don't try to hide the fact that polygraph examinations in Poland are of low quality in general, and point to the mistakes made.

The book is interesting and worth recommending both to all persons who conduct polygraph examinations and to all those who commission such procedures and want to use their results in court procedures.

Agnieszka Domin-Kuźma*

* a.domin-kuzma@wp.pl