

SAFETY CULTURE IN FUNCTIONAL AND AXIOLOGICAL APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

It still remains an open problem as to which directions and methods are necessary to choose in the situations of risk, xenophobia, and intolerance, so as to settle disputes and resolve conflicts; it should be done in such a way as to have the desired social effects and to properly implement moral principles, including responsibility for the real future of one's own, of one's community, and of the whole human species. The author justifies the position that the processes of transformation of the social order should take a more remarkable account of the requirements of safety culture and praxeology recommendations.

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INTRODUCTION

[T]he cognitive power of a concept is a function of its place in a schema (structure, network, system) and depends directly on the amount of empirical data (perceived signals) that a subject receives, and indirectly on the meaning interpretation he/she can give them.

MAREK HETMAŃSKI

The starting point is the thesis that the *safety culture* – as a central conceptual tool of the humanities – is effectively used to explain the logic of collective actions and individual behaviors in an accurate way.

Safety culture forms the “framework” of human activity and includes:

- knowledge;
- norms, i.e. moral and legal orders and prohibitions;
- cognitive and humanistic values;
- social notions of the essence and conditions of community security;
- theories of structural and personnel security;
- policies and ideologies;
- rules of managing teams and human beings;
- obligations of states and international institutions towards citizens;
- attitudes and behaviors of governing teams;
- principles of the new cosmopolitanism.

It is an incomplete and inseparable exemplary set of safety culture components, which is strongly connected with strategic culture.¹ Changes in consciousness, organizational solutions, and cultural practices and threat prevention methods emerge from safety culture.

This text is inspired by considerations contained in Marek Bodziany’s book *Wewnętrzne uwarunkowania bezpieczeństwa wewnętrznego Polski* (Internal Conditions of Internal Security of Poland).² However, it is necessarily

¹ For more information see: J. Czaja, *Kulturowy wymiar bezpieczeństwa. Aspekty teoretyczne i praktyczne*, Kraków 2013, p. 77 and ff.

² Bodziany carried out a deep analysis of the relationship between culture and safety. Based on theoretical and empirical research, he developed the structure of “<IGNP/MDS>, where I stands for individual, G stands for group, N for national, and P for

limited to a preliminary consideration of safety culture in its axiological and functional dimensions. The choice of this research approach results from the fact that “transmitted and produced content and patterns of values, ideas, and other symbolically meaningful systems shaping human behaviors and artifacts that are the product of behavior”³ are at the center of each culture. These artifacts are components of cultural heritage and carriers of value given to recipients in the internalization process. Symbols, principles of communication, myths, stereotypes of actions, traditions, patterns of social practices, efficiency and moral values that function in the social space are both elements of the real-life process and components of safety culture that, acting as a cultural code, triggers social behavior and counteracts threats.

As a system of values and norms, culture has the power to make the human world more secure. This always requires the replacement of “predatory” cultural expansion with an enhancement and improvement of culture based on creative innovations. All forms of activity and initiatives draw on both the resources of new inventions and cultural experiences, which have already been given meaning and axiological significance by a historically shaped community.

The effectiveness of safety culture as a tool of social impact depends mainly on the knowledge, motivation, and involvement of leaders and so-called “ordinary people” in defending the cultural cohesion of the nation. The level of cultural safety determines – in the last instance – the behavior of a human as an individual, people as collective entity, and humankind as a species, as well as the condition of structural security of the state.

In a cognitive civilization, based on information, science and technological progress, the realistic realization of safety culture is done in many ways. The objective law of the “dynamic logic of creative development”⁴ leads to the change of attitudes as an inexhaustible source of progress. This should

super-national level (level of international, civilizational, and global entanglements), while M stands for material, D for spiritual, and S for social level. The first part of the system emphasizes the subjectivity of security, while the second part (MDS) includes the subjective and instrumental aspect”. M. Bodziany, *Wewnętrzne uwarunkowania bezpieczeństwa wewnętrznego Polski*, Wrocław 2019, p. 7. Thus, a new space has been created for multi-level and multi-directional reflections on the relationship between culture and security for security researchers in an interdisciplinary perspective.

³ A.L. Kroeber, T. Parsons, *The Concepts of Culture and of Social Systems*, “American Sociological Review”, 1958, no. 3, p. 583, [qtd. in:] A. Kłoskowska, *Socjologia kultury*, Warszawa 2007, p. 24.

⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 81.

lead to the emergence of a new civilization as a union of nations, constituted above antagonisms and preserving the values of national cultures. It is the only way in the human world, where there is a high level of risk and an urgent need to resolve long-lasting conflicts, and where the perceptual barriers, which are mainly the effects of cultural differences, must be overcome.

In considering the nature of the three worlds – material, social and ideal/cultural – examined as objects and events and analyzed in the context of theory, the perspective of the overriding principle of principles, that is, the Parmenidean Ontological Law of the Preservation of Being, must be taken more fully into account.

REPRESENTATIVE SYMBOLS AS ELEMENTS OF SAFETY CULTURE

happiness is *space*
for the spontaneous activity of rational thought
warm feelings
and winged, incalculable
flying into the stars of the imagination
...
happiness is *meeting*
which the hidden strings of our beings
reproduce and co-create

ANDRZEJ NOWICKI

In the philosophical and scientific reflection on the nature of the human world, there is a current of thinking that analyzes it from the perspective of the principle of relative self-control of culture. This self-controllability can be understood in such a sense that, in the end, human actions are determined by cultural patterns and values. The power of culture's influence stems from the fact that culture is a "gift", a legacy handed down by ancestors, and its lasting preservation is a moral obligation to which every generation must unconditionally live up.

Cultural signs and symbols are types of resources, or *stocks* in praxeological terms.⁵ Their accumulation of these goods positively influences the

⁵ "Stocks ... are all objects available for use as one or other element of the active process and accumulated in quantity exceeding immediate needs". T. Kotarbiński, *Traktat o dobrej robocie*, 7th edition, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków–Gdańsk–Łódź 1982, p. 187.

sense of subjective certainty of their recipients, which is essential for maintaining the entire system of culture and its efficient functioning. Therefore, cultural order means both internal and external/situational states of affairs that are socially desirable. It is worth noting that materialized objects and artifacts as substitutes for creativity are the sources of objective certainty resulting from the compatibility of individual and collective thinking about security with objective reality. The objectivity of the cultural world consists in intersubjective communication and intersubjective control of the subjective experience of all values. However, it is worth emphasizing that “[a] trivial difficulty arises; is this an universalistic and dialectic message that a human being can bear, or does the burden of reflecting traits and laws of being spread to many people, communities, historical phases and the species as such?”⁶ Ultimately, it is probably the case that a human discovers and co-creates the world in such a way that “humans and only humans – in the likeness of the divine ideal – can make new states of being (within and outside themselves) emerge from their conscious intentions, from themselves, independently defined by »selves«. The second, co-central existential axis runs through the sphere of values, making a human a *value being* (receiving, seeking, and creating values)”.⁷ It must be emphasized that the meanings and symbols, and the relationships between values and meanings, define the specificity of the human species.

Symbols, as cultural resources, improve operations because they:

- are deeply rooted in innovative thinking and innovative activity. Thinking is conditioned by the semiotic structure of the cultural message and depends on human’s ability to give and read meaning/sense efficiently – within a symbolic system;
- are guarantors of continuity and determinants of the logic of purposeful and efficient behavior;
- are used to define/identify the identity of individuals and human communities;
- “program” people’s collective behavior where “a group is never, strictly speaking, a subject but only a functional union of subjects, incapable of replacing the subject either in acts of cognition or in acts of decision”⁸;

⁶ J. Lipiec, *Koło etyczne*, Kraków, 2005, p. 61.

⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 60.

⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 267.

- allow to effectively go beyond human's personal experience and determine human's entering in a new, uninterrupted sequence of activities and actions;
- are essential reference points for social interactions aimed at an adequate recognition of risks and opportunities;
- form a multi-level system and are outlined in social communication processes;
- have meanings⁹ and, therefore, establish relationships between the links of human experiences and, as a result of updating these meanings, they leave permanent traces in the world;
- can take the form of representative¹⁰ symbols in works of art, religions, and community life, and “contain a certain symbolic material” that refers the recipient to something “that cannot be directly expressed” so that “the symbol participates in the reality it represents and whose sense and power of being it radiates”¹¹;
- express the dimensions of reality obscured by everyday life. Then, they release the metaphysical feelings;
- exist intentionally, like other cultural creations, and thus their continuance depends on the recipients as bearers of their being and meaning. They perish if they do not take root in the aesthetic experience;
- can be constructive and connecting, but also destructive; none of them is neutral;
- may be undefined and open. However, their core of meaning is unchangeable, and hence symbols and meanings determine and define the quality and identity of cultures;
- are asemantic objects in one of their aspects, while in the other aspect each of them is “equipped with a semiotic function that makes it become,

⁹ The Polish word *znaczenie* ('meaning'), in terms of the significance of something, is: authority, weight of species, significance, format, measure, quotation, severity, prestige, breakthrough, rank, value, importance, impact, dimension, range. *Synonimy do słowa „znaczenie”*, “Synonim.net”, n.d., <https://synonim.net/synonim/znaczenie> (accessed: 28.11.2019). Logic and philosophy define the concept of meaning in many ways. Cf. J. Lipiec, *O sensie świata*, “Studia Filozoficzne”, 1986, no. 9, pp. 3–17.

¹⁰ P. Tillich, *Racja bytu i znaczenie symboli religijnych*, [in:] P. Tillich, *Pytanie o Niewyarunkowane*, translated by J. Zychowicz, Kraków 1994, pp. 148–157.

¹¹ *Ibidem*.

- thanks to its affinity, an expressive sign, denouncing another object qualified by axiology”¹²;
- demand the effort of their realization. They contain an element of a claim and announce a change for the better in case their duty is fulfilled;
 - reveal reality as such and express it “through naming, categorizing, scientific theories, technological achievements, and works of art”¹³;
 - come closer to what is unclear, undefined, but never achieve unambiguity;
 - are universal, they are a conceptual category; they do not have an independent existence, that is, one that characterizes real things;
 - have an ontological status that “lies in what they are themselves, in the full content of their structure, and what they are for others in the whole order of relations of the past, present, and future towards it”¹⁴;
 - are abstract concepts, as are the categories: responsibility, humanity, freedom, the good, justice, or honor. It is worth remembering that the attribution of reality to abstract concepts is a mistake, called hypostasis.

SAFETY CULTURE

Safety culture has been a separate subject of scientific research since the 1990s.¹⁵ Previously it belonged to the field of economic sciences and was considered one of the primary principles in management. It was usually treated as a set of personal traits and studied as a system of individuals’ and communities’ attitudes towards broadly understood personal safety and structural security. Nonetheless, this research approach is too one-sided and too much focused on one factor, as the human world is, after all, the world of material and symbolic culture, and symbolic culture is a cognitive and aesthetic value that enters into relations with ethical, functional, and vital values. While beliefs, attitudes, and preferences derive from cultural values.

Moreover, values constitute points of reference and measures that determine the place of individual goods in the cultural order.¹⁶ Values, norms, and evaluations are taken over in internalization processes, which makes that:

¹² I. Dąbwska, *Symbol*, “Studia Semiotyczne”, 1982, no. 12, p. 131.

¹³ W. Stróżewski, *Istnienie i sens*, Kraków 1994, p. 433.

¹⁴ J. Lipiec, *Etiudy ontologiczne*, Kraków 2013, p. 90.

¹⁵ Cf. J. Świniarski, *Koncepcje i barwy bezpieczeństwa kulturowego*, [in:] *Bezpieczeństwo kulturowe. Poszukiwanie nowego paradygmatu*, K. Skurjat, J. Świniarski, M. Marcinkowski (eds), Wrocław 2018, pp. 78–79.

¹⁶ For more information see: K. Skurjat, *Znaczenie i wartość. Studia z polskiej filozofii kultury XX wieku*, Wrocław 2003.

- they influence the mechanisms of reasoning and the planning of directions and ways of behavior as vital cultural content;
- action strategies, analyzed and reworked in new conditions since their implementation, become permanent elements of the human world.

It is worth noting that cultural and political conditions create a climate for state organizations and institutions and foster innovative behaviors aimed at developing better strategies and more effective action tactics.

Safety culture:

- is rooted in the traditions of applying legal and moral norms, regulating work and creation;
- promotes labor productivity;
- improves and enhances communication;
- is a set of well-established principles and methods for effective achievement of goals;
- contains alternative options and techniques for action and for the ways to overcome difficulties;
- opens recipients to a planned, methodical combination of their own ways of acting with those of other entities, i.e. patterns of behavior;
- contributes to rational and beneficial cooperation.

Safety culture “cries out in a thunderous voice” for a purposeful, feasible, operative, brave, and “cognitively established plan” enabling “shifting cross-overs set provisionally if signals in the future make such a shift necessary” and maintained “to the right degree”.¹⁷ Openness and flexibility of human behavioral planning is an adequate response to the discontinuity of social processes and the associated threats and risks.

FUNCTIONALITY OF SAFETY CULTURE

[Threats] can be hidden or rejected but also made up. Although the causes of safety concerns can be kept secret or underestimated, they can also be created, exaggerated, or blown to tremendous sizes.

ZYGMUNT BAUMAN

Functionality is a feature of what is useful, and *functional* means convenient, beneficial, helpful, practical, useful, reliable, successful, efficient, and

¹⁷ T. Kotarbiński, *Traktat o dobrej robocie, op. cit.*, pp. 304–305.

capable.¹⁸ All material products and effective human activity methods are defined and characterized by a broad concept of functionality.

Proper thinking is always a necessary condition for the effective planning and rationalization of activities. As a practical reflection, i.e. reason, it is realized in people's operational behavior always when they consider many competing possibilities.

Thereby, science and social practice are categorically required to replace reductionist thinking with holistic and comprehensive thinking, in which a complete view is no longer just the sum of all the components of reflection, but, instead, an understanding that is richer in added value. This goes beyond the set of elements of cognition accumulated from the mental effort. The absence of holistic thinking about the human world proves "a theoretical vacuum ... that needs to be filled with new ... scientific theses".¹⁹ Therefore, in researching safety culture issues, it is necessary to focus not only on describing and explaining it as a relatively constant factual situation, but also on perceiving safety culture in its dynamics and interpreting it on the basis of the pluralistic methodological principles. It will then turn out that safety culture is a specific cultural code and a policy tool, and that it contains unlimited possibilities to create multiple changes in the anthroposphere. The changes include transformations that bring the liberation of processes that consistently and systematically lead to the irenization of the world and to the improvement of human's moral dispositions, which should effectively lead people out of the circle of the "civilization of killing".²⁰

The future revolution in ethics and morality must not be based on choosing the lesser evil but on the principle that "[t]he evil deed is always and everywhere the one that results from the *choice of »the lesser good«*, like the one that is to free a human from the guilt of abandoning the duty, which should be fulfilled in a given moral situation. The solution to the dilemma of the lesser and greater good is the basis for a thorough revision of many evaluations of past and present human actions ... Many terrible deeds,

¹⁸ *Synonimy do słowa „funkcjonalny”*, "Synonim.net", n.d., <https://synonim.net/synonim/funkcjonalny> (accessed: 13.03.2020).

¹⁹ M. Bodziany, *Wewnętrzne uwarunkowania...*, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

Cf. also: M. Cieślarczyk, *Kategoria „zagrożeń” w wąskim i szerokim rozumieniu „bezpieczeństwa”*, [in:] *Zagrożenia bezpieczeństwa w XXI wieku II*, K. Tomaszycy, Z. Kuźniar, A. Łapińska (eds), Wrocław 2018, p. 18.

²⁰ M. Hempoliński, *Czy zdolamy wyjść z cywilizacji zabijania?*, [in:] *Ekologia ducha*, J.L. Krakowiak, J.M. Dołęga (eds), Warszawa 1999.

difficult to conceive and forgive, have been shared by people who were, in their own and in the general opinion, »good«. They usually chose and served some unquestionable good, but these good values were, unfortunately, a hundred times worse than the goods to be realized”.²¹

Changes in consciousness occurring among people reaching for knowledge strengthen and increase their creative competence and deepen their cognitive culture. Besides, they should deepen axiological sensitivity and change the scope and nature of the requirements for every human being to move from the exaggerated focus on the question of “what I am” to a more critical “what I am to others and what I am doing”, above all, for those deprived of human rights. However, for such a revolutionary change in the understanding of good to happen, it is necessary to think responsibly, in collaboration with others, about such issues as xenophobia, national chauvinism, and intolerance. The processes of freeing oneself from negative feelings, as well as the process of stopping the violence of oppressive states against groups of their citizens and immigrant populations, can only be conducted successively in a multinational and multicultural world if the human being and humanity become the highest values for those in power and those governed.

Nevertheless, the recognition of human rights has been a challenge. Sexual limitation (“a human is a man”); generational limitation (“a human is an adult”); tribal limitation (“a human is me and people like me”); and psychological limitation (arbitrarily established, subjectively justified sets of limitations that determine the low social position of certain individuals and human communities) are still valid. There are also “*social* limitations: class-wise, layer-wise, state-related, caste-related, group-related ... The *subhuman*, half-human, rabble, mob ... and waste of the human world crowd at the bottom of the pyramid”.²² From such a poorly organized social reality, a very distant and perilous way leads to a human who is intelligent and axiologically sensitive. Therefore, it must be assumed that the concretization of the praxeological role and meaning of safety culture consists in the empowerment of a human as an individual and community. It also involves the implementation of the principles of intercultural education, which unites people and develops a tolerance for otherness and the diversity of axio-normative systems.

²¹ J. Lipiec, *Koło etyczne*, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

²² *Ibidem*, pp. 56–58.

CONCLUSIONS

If we give up our fundamental freedoms for temporary security, we will have neither of them.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

In its functional meaning, safety culture is “1) awareness (of the importance of safety); 2) knowledge and competence; 3) commitment; 4) motivation; 5) supervision and control; 6) responsibility”.²³ As a theoretical concept and as a set of practical principles, safety culture is an essential reference point for the contemporary understanding of national security.

What is more, safety culture is an efficient instrument for creating a cultural order or, conversely, a tool for the deliberate introduction of social and cultural disorder. Politicians and economists use it to force changes in modes of evaluation and patterns of social actions. This is done, among other things, so as to strengthen the divisions between different professional, national, and ethnic groups, and to eliminate or push into the background those cultural resources, including informational ones, that could hinder exercising effective control over society. When used by autocratic political power, safety culture can force submissiveness and deprive citizens of their sense of security. Such practices result in a community losing its sense of causality and subjectivity; consequently, conformist, fearful, and defensive attitudes dominate instead of prospective and creative ones. Such communities make a negligible contribution to the cultural heritage of humanity. They are closed to diversity and otherness; they defend themselves against the intensification of intercultural rapprochement and against becoming anchored in a more universal cultural, European and, over time, cosmopolitan, identity. The significant and challenging task of humanities is to spread and consolidate the “universalism of many loyalties”²⁴ as a basis for dialogue between cultures and civilizations and a necessary condition for the effective promotion of a culture of peace.

²³ M. Bernatowicz, *Kultura bezpieczeństwa*, <http://www.paa.gov.pl/sites/default/files/archiwalne/arch7.pdf> (accessed: 20.01.2020); J. Świniarski, *Koncepcje...*, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

²⁴ P. Donati, *Wyzwanie uniwersalizmu w wielokulturowym społeczeństwie ponowoczesnym: podejście relacyjne*, [in:] *Teoria socjologiczna Floriana Znanieckiego a wyzwania XXI wieku*, E. Hałas (ed.), Lublin 1999, pp. 39–64.

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