

CHALLENGES, RISKS, AND THREATS TO INDIVIDUAL SECURITY IN THE AGE OF GLOBALISATION: A SECURITY CULTURE PERSPECTIVE. ACADEMIC REFLECTION

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Abstract: The paper the article addresses the issue of identity transformations, both individual and collective, in the context of contemporary challenges related to globalisation, Europeanisation, and postmodernity. The authors refer to the security-related problem, emphasising that these factors such as the market, profit, and consumption are beginning to dominate the assessment of individuals' value, which weakens the moral foundations of security culture (SC). According to the authors, the security culture based on values such as truth, goodness, beauty, wisdom, empathy, and nobility, which require deep internalisation. Security culture is defined here as a subfield of social culture, having three dimensions – personal, group, and material. Its functions include identifying threats, maintaining and enhancing security levels, and fostering development. The authors note that globalisation and Europeanisation may increase cosmopolitan identification with other nations, potentially reducing concerns and conflicts. However, there are fears that these same processes may also pose identity-related threats, as evidenced by the escalation of acts of aggression, terrorism, and the emergence of wars.

Keywords: aggression, harm reduction, security culture, security

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Threat to security in the form of aggression

The issue being studied here, confronted with the theoretical perspective of the culture of security, can be described as a psycho-securitological approach or, to express the same idea in slightly different words, as an *asfalia*-cultural approach to aggression. As is well known, the word *asfalia* used in the Greek language, which originates from Ancient Greece, means security. Similarly, in Ancient Rome, the concept of *security* was “born” for the modern world. Greek culture, along with science and the civilizational achievements of the Romans, through the Christian message that crowned them for all of Europe, has left indelible influences on the societies of the Old Continent.

In other words, the Greco-Roman-Christian civilization laid the foundations for the development of modern European civilization and subsequently for the entire modern civilization of the West. Hence, we find, for example, the presence in our social reality today of terms such as *asfalia*⁴ and *security*.

Marek Kuryłowicz believes that Europe “...rests on three hills: the Acropolis, symbolizing Greek art and philosophy; Golgotha, as a symbol of Christianity; and the Capitol, signifying the tradition of Roman law” (2003, p. 24). Witold Wołodkiewicz (2009) noted the well-known observation of Henryk Kupiszewski, which paraphrases the thoughts of the French researcher Ernest Renan (1823–1892), showing three environments of ancient culture that have particularly strongly marked our cultural, i.e., socio-cultural face of Europe.

Thus, they have influenced the shape of the socio-cultural identity of the West in the process of building – as the authors of this work interpret – from the perspective of security sciences and the perspective of the culture of security – the core of socio-cultural security, the identity security of Western nations.

The foundations of today’s Western cultural circle include the below-mentioned currents of culture that have been built by the peoples of Europe:

1. Broadly understood Greek philosophy, with its branches distant from the “dynamics” of aggression, such as Stoicism, and with research currents derived from it, constitutive for every discipline of science – axiology, ontology, and epistemology – and this is, in fact, an important part of the first dimension of the culture of security;
2. Roman law, which constitutes the cornerstone of building an institutionalized form of maintaining justice and today’s statutory law, which acts as a buffer of security between the conflicting parties, suppressing the growing aggression within them – this sphere constitutes, in fact, an essential part of the second dimension of the culture of security;

⁴ *Asfaliea* <https://www.wordhippo.com/what-is/the-meaning-of/greek-word-d002c-e1438c9992dc014c76ff2b94a75ff787517.html>

3. Christianity, along with all its achievements and potential, the highest chords of which, echoed by Golgotha, transform aggression into the strength of Olympic and empathetic calm, confirmed by Catholic Social Teaching – for two thousand years serving as a gyroscope and compass of the tradition that forms European identity – this sphere constitutes, in fact, a significant part related to identity security, at both the first and second dimensions of the culture of security, and also serves as a kind of bridge between these two dimensions.

Thus, approaching the issue from the perspective of the culture of security, as discussed in this statement, signifies a psycho-securitological and asphalia-cultural approach in the description and explanation that lead the researcher to interpret the functioning of contemporary reality – primarily regarding the regularities concerning the sphere of social reality of a human being, viewed here as a subject of security.

Both in everyday language and in the scientific language appearing in psycho-securitological works, various types of security threats in the form of aggression are recognized. Therefore, considering the subject and direction of aggression in the literature on the subject, individual and group aggression is spoken of, as well as aggression directed at people, oneself, animals, objects, and institutions.

Given the complexity of forms of aggression, it is accepted that security threats in the form of aggressive behaviors can be simple or complex. Forms of aggression include physical aggression (indirect and direct), verbal aggression (indirect and direct), overt aggression, covert aggression, passive aggression, active aggression, or displaced aggression. The literature on the subject also contains typologies and descriptions regarding the ways of realizing aggression, external conditions, as well as explanations of the mechanisms regulating aggression and hostility, which will certainly be the subject of our separate further research (Liberska, Farnicka, 2018).

Hostile aggression – emotogenic, impulsive, reactive – refers to behaviors that are based on the generation of arousal in the aggressor, manifesting as strong emotions such as irritation, anger, rage, and distress, followed by interpersonal violence, which serves to satisfy various needs (incentives, tasks), referred to as instrumental or task-related aggression. These divisions are thus based either on formal characteristics of the act of aggression or on the indication of function or identification of the intrapsychic process regulating actions related to committing violence. In security sciences and social psychology, acts of aggression and their regulation are examined in the context of individual interdependencies and relationships and interactions between action subjects at a specific point in time and space.

Aggression and violence are closely related to the concepts of “aggressive behavior” and “violent behavior”, where generated aggression constitutes a reaction to various stimuli or difficult situations, with the aim of releasing certain tension or anger, whose forms contradict socially acceptable rules of coexistence among human groups.

Violence, on the other hand, is associated with more conscious and intentional actions directed at individual human beings or social groups using physical and psychological force to manipulate, exert pressure, or control others. Unlike aggression, which can be a spontaneous reaction to difficult situations, violence is characterized by intentionality and prolonged effects on victims. Not every act of aggression is violence. Aggression can also take a constructive form that serves development, motivating action, or helping to overcome adversity, including security threats. In this way, aggression, under appropriate conditions, can have a positive significance, unlike violence, which is inherently destructive.

In the context of the actions of a human social group and the interdependencies and intergroup relationships, one can consider various acts of aggression from the perspective of the culture of security, such as mobbing/bullying occurring in child environments, fights among fans of sports clubs, the activities of aggressive groups – youth gangs, and conflicts between organized criminal groups. Studying a human being as a subject of security and his or her interpersonal relationships, psycho-securitological inquiries lead us to the description of interactions, including behaviors, the identification of catalysts of aggression (e.g., alcohol, fatigue, life circumstances), the recognition of the essence and regularities of the emergence and course of intrapsychic aggression regulation – e.g., emotional turmoil or other life orientation motives, beliefs. We know that negative stimulation (simple sensory stimuli, psychological discomfort) as well as interruptions in goal-oriented activities (frustrations) cause readiness for aggression (Bandura, Walters, 1986). However, the intensity of this arousal and the intensity of the external manifestation of aggression will depend, among other things, on the reactivity of the human being (temperament) and hormonal regulation. The activation of aggression is also associated with the cognitive actions of the subject, and here, attributions (e.g., recognizing whether the source of discomfort is the intentional action of someone or a coincidence) play an important role.

In the context of the emergence of security threats in the form of aggressive actions, or security risks in the form of tendencies to provoke aggression within a given group or even social circle, an essential question arises – one that demands an answer from the perspective of asfaliao-cultural issues: what are the psycho-social conditions for the emergence of security threats in the form of aggression, and how are they shaped?

Socio-cultural factors of security – reduction of aggression

Culture, particularly security culture, should primarily enhance the resilience, protection, and defense of the security subject in the context of its ability to cope with acts of aggression. It should also play a regulatory role for the security subject concerning human aggressiveness. Security culture creates, accumulates, and provides

its human bearer with tools, both non-material and material artifacts, and instructions on when and how to use them, as well as containing regulators of aggression.

Causes and Sources of Security Threats in the Form of Acts of Aggression

The causes and sources of security threats in the form of acts of aggression can be found in personality traits and tendencies embedded in the psyche of the individual security subject. Among these, we can identify factors that lower the potential and dimension of security culture, including:

1. A tendency to be impulsive, particularly excessively impulsive (Barrat, 1959).
2. Low tolerance for stress and frustration (Aldwin, 2007).
3. An excessive inclination towards negative cooperation – competition or conflict (Doliński, 1998).
4. A simultaneous deficit in the ability for positive cooperation, meaning collaboration (Guy, 2021).
5. Low competencies in the area of autonomy in effectively dealing with emotions (Damasio, 1999).

Excessive sensitivity to external stimuli and a low level of anxiety can also play a significant role, as these factors facilitate the undertaking of aggressive actions when there is a deficit in anticipatory measures for potential and active security threats. Additionally, a lack of empathy reduces the chances for security that should arise from the ability to understand the emotions and needs of others.

Furthermore, the presence of a low level of security culture – particularly regarding its component of self-control – results in an insufficient ability to reflect on one's behavior in relation to security needs, thereby increasing the risk associated with the ease of generating acts of aggression (Zibmardo, 2004).

All the aforementioned circumstances arise in a turbulent, postmodern security environment, which is today full of oppositions, often even hidden among numerous comforts and opportunities, thus leading to challenges, risks, and security threats that are increasingly unnoticeable. This is surprising yet typical of the advanced erosion of the manifestations of personal continuity and community-structural security culture occurring in the era of liquid modernity.

This results from a deficit in competencies to control the emergence of endogenous impulses that can lead to the potential generation of security threats in the form of aggression. This increases the likelihood of events in which normal discourse is transformed into a difficult situation through the occurrence of aggressive reactions that generate open conflict and social harm.

Other significant factors that can trigger security threats marked by aggression – often accompanied by direct violence – are events and processes/phenomena anchored

in the family security environment. This environment plays a crucial role in shaping the behaviors of individuals as members of school, local, and national communities – as a security subject, ideally as an active security subject (Tomaszewski, 1982).

Primarily, the parenting style employed by parents, as significant individuals, significantly influences the emotional development of the child – excessive harshness, lack of consistency, or violence-based upbringing can foster the development of aggressive attitudes. The structure and level of stability within the family, such as the absence of one parent, periodic or even chronic conflicts among family members, or a lack of active and emotional support, can also lead to behavioral disturbances in individuals that may result in socially negative consequences.

Additionally, difficult social and living conditions, such as poverty, unemployment, or social marginalization, can exacerbate stress and frustration, promoting the generation of security threats in the form of aggression. Important factors here include familial dysfunctions resulting from issues like parental alcoholism, mental illnesses, or involvement in crime, which destabilize safety and consequently affect the quality of life. The well-being of an individual, considered as a security subject, is a function of the justified sense of security of the child and can lead to the formation of aggressive or violent behavioral patterns. Peer groups can also play a significant role as a “background” for aggressive behaviors, especially when certain social and emotional mechanisms support this. Poor emotional control among group members, lack of skills to deal with aggression, and a sense of impunity stemming from belonging to a larger community can lead to an escalation of aggressive behaviors.

An important element can also be the phenomenon known as the diffusion of responsibility – individuals within their group often do not feel fully responsible for their choices, decisions, and subsequent actions, which makes them more likely to engage in omissions or even aggressive actions, as the responsibility for consequences is spread across the entire group. Addictive substances including drugs are also an important factor.

Aggression and Selected Components of Security Culture

One of the primary components of security culture for any human social group are norms and values, which, as socially agreed upon, create resilience, protection, and defense at both the individual and collective dimensions of the group. However, the dominant norms and values within a social group sometimes allow for the acceptance or even promotion of aggression in both physical and psychological forms. This can occur among children, youth, and adults, where security threats manifesting as aggression appear in various forms, including verbal abuse, social exclusion, or emotional manipulation. Peer groups can thus create an environment that reinforces and normalises violence, leading to its further escalation and difficulties in counteracting it.

Other factors that promote the emergence of sources of security threats in the form of aggression may exist or emerge in social environments that have a strong influence on individuals' safety, such as schools, workplaces, families, and other social groups. In school environments, threats to security in the form of aggression are often caused by peer pressure, competition for social status, or a lack of adequate support from teachers and adults. Children and youth experiencing difficulties in learning, social exclusion, or a lack of acceptance among peers may generate aggression as a way to relieve frustration or to gain dominance over their surroundings.

In workplaces, threats to security in the form of aggression may result from stress caused by excessive demands, performance pressure, conflicts with superiors or colleagues, or bullying. Environments lacking a culture of cooperation and support foster tensions and explosions of aggression.

In addition to pathological issues, family environments can also be sources of aggression due to intergenerational conflict, deficits in interpersonal communication, and highly oppressive control. Families characterised by excessive discipline or, conversely, excessive freedom can foster frustration, tension, and aggression within their internal relationships.

In other social groups, such as clubs, organizations, or neighbourhoods, aggression may arise from competition, exclusion, ideological differences, and social inequalities. When there is a lack of socialization in the culture of security through the internalisation of norms counteracting aggression, these behaviors can quickly escalate, leading to conflicts and increased security threats due to manifestations of aggression.

The local social environment highlights the significance of factors related to the social and general „climate“ conducive to aggressive acts. In this context, attention is drawn to several elements that may contribute to the rise of such behaviors – high population density often leads to increased stress and tensions among residents, which promotes the emergence of security threats in the form of conflicts and acts of aggression. High unemployment, as a source of frustration, uncertainty, and social marginalisation, may increase the propensity for aggressive reactions.

Population diversity, especially in areas with significant migration, leads to cultural, ethnic, and economic tensions, contributing to the escalation of aggression. The strength of social ties within a community also plays a crucial role – where ties are weak and contacts between residents are limited, anonymity is more accessible, which fosters aggression without fear of social consequences. In areas lacking strong social bonds and neighbourly cooperation, aggression may be more frequently tolerated or ignored.

Further factors contributing to aggression may arise from broadly defined cultural norms that, to some extent, accept or support violence. These include a loose approach to rules of etiquette, customary, moral-ethical, religious, and legal norms, which weakens the brakes embedded in the culture of security that restrain

aggression. In such conditions, it is easier for situations to arise where violence becomes a tool for problem-solving.

The use of violence by public institutions – though often for maintaining order (not always with the authorities acting solely for the people's good) – is a factor that induces aggression in society. The lack of a swift and decisive response to counteract aggression, both institutional and arising within local communities, leads to the belief in prevailing impunity and reinforces patterns of violence.

Moreover, political and social actions intentionally stoking tensions between various social, ethnic, or immigrant groups lead to the escalation of conflicts. Social polarisation, fuelled by political tensions on the scale of a country, continent, or globally, can serve as a catalytic function for generating security threats in the form of aggression. Conflicts among the political class, ideological disputes, and the incitement of hostility towards certain social groups can create a climate of uncertainty and threat, often leading to outbreaks of aggression and violence within society.

Social conflict theories reveal various aspects and mechanisms of the security threat discussed in this work. However, according to the authors of this paper, the psycho-social-cultural circumstances and the accompanying identity sphere are not always sufficiently considered here. This consistently indicates deficits regarding the level of culture, particularly its subfield – the culture of security. It is important to recognise that trends of postmodernity foster effectiveness at all costs, a lack of „anchoring“ in the culture of security, and the convenience and ease of nearly everything. It is crucial, while it is still possible, to counter situations where opportunities, challenges, risks, and threats to security culture are increasingly pushed to the background.

Conclusions

The aim of the presented paper was to identify specific cultural risk factors that affect public safety. The text ends with a short discussion of the findings and a summary and conclusions. Below, the factors supporting the development of a culture of safety are presented in a synthetic way:

- Socialization processes oriented toward fostering „social resistance to violence“, grounded in the internalization of values and norms that reject aggression and violent approaches to conflict resolution.
- Ensuring citizens' sense of physical and economic security.
- Strong, positive interpersonal connections across all levels of social organization (including family, early childhood education, schools, workplaces, and communities).
- Promotion of acculturation and societal disapproval of exclusion based on „otherness“.
- Legal frameworks that facilitate rapid institutional responses to violent acts by agencies responsible for safeguarding public safety.

The issues presented here, though briefly addressed regarding the factors that foster the emergence of security threats in the form of acts of aggression manifested at the level of individual humans, social groups, and state institutions considered here as security subjects, require further scientific research. Such research should meet specific methodological conditions to provide reliable and comprehensive results. It is essential to apply inter-, trans-, and multidisciplinary scientific approaches, which will allow for research reflections on a fairly broad topic of security threats resulting from acts of aggression, made from the perspective of auxiliary sciences for security studies. These include, among others, psychological, sociological, political, socio-cultural, and comparative perspectives.

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WYZWANIA, RYZYKA I ZAGROŻENIA
DLA BEZPIECZEŃSTWA JEDNOSTKI W DOBIE GLOBALIZACJI:
PERSPEKTYWA KULTURY BEZPIECZEŃSTWA.
REFLEKSJA AKADEMICKA

Streszczenie. Artykuł podejmuje zagadnienie przemian tożsamości, zarówno indywidualnej, jak i zbiorowej, w kontekście współczesnych wyzwań związanych z globalizacją, europeizacją i ponowoczesnością. Autorzy odnoszą się do problematyki bezpieczeństwa, podkreślając, że czynniki takie jak rynek, zysk i konsumpcja zaczynają dominować w ocenie wartości jednostek, co osłabia moralne fundamenty kultury bezpieczeństwa (KB). Zdaniem autorów, kultura bezpieczeństwa, oparta na wartościach takich jak prawda, dobro, piękno, mądrość, empatia i szlachetność, wymaga głębokiej internalizacji. Kultura bezpieczeństwa jest tu definiowana jako subdyscyplina kultury społecznej, posiadająca trzy wymiary – osobisty, grupowy i materialny. Jej funkcje obejmują identyfikację zagrożeń, utrzymywanie i wzmacnianie poziomu bezpieczeństwa oraz wspieranie jego rozwoju. Autorzy zauważają, że globalizacja i europeizacja mogą zwiększyć kosmopolityczną identyfikację z innymi narodami, co potencjalnie zmniejsza wzajemne konflikty. Istnieją jednak obawy, że te same procesy mogą również stanowić zagrożenie tożsamościowe, czego dowodem jest eskalacja aktów agresji, terroryzmu oraz pojawienie się wojen.

Słowa kluczowe: agresja, redukcja szkód, kultura bezpieczeństwa, bezpieczeństwo

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