

TIME AS AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT OF
SECURITY FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF
CULTURAL DIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

The article focuses on the idea of time as an inherent element of live. Authors display that space and time are two coexisting parameters which have parallel significance for culture and security as they affect everyone, regardless of age, nation, place of living etc. Nowadays, there are the societies in which “time is money”, where time became an utilitarian value, a limited commodity. Manipulation of time and different ways of so called “playing on time” are very dangerous as influence on and often distort cultural perception. Examples of varying cultural perceptions of time are numerous and usually connected with using technology. Authors explain that relations between time, people, culture and its diversity can be considered as factors which constitute the functions of the culture of national security which emerge from the extramaterial, ethical and organisational sphere of the culture of national security.

KEY WORDS

time, space, cultural diversity, national security

Two important terms facilitate the description of social space – *location* and *territory*. Location refers to the distance between elements. This distance can be measured in the simplest physical units, making it objective (e.g. 20 m, 100 km, etc.). However, distance can also have a social character – in such cases, the distance between groups or individuals existing in a given space becomes independent of the physical dimension. The poor and rich districts can be only several hundred metres apart, but the social distance between them will be so large as to be impossible to traverse for a person from the poor district, who will never leave it. “The sense of distance is closely related to the ability to traverse it, which in turn is contingent upon both the biological and the social characteristics of an individual. [...] For those who are high in the social hierarchy, traversing [...] several thousand kilometres is not an issue. Spatial mobility is not only the function of one’s position in society, but of other characteristics of a given individual as well – including gender, age and profession”¹.

Therefore, it becomes clear that the functional factor is essential when analysing socially-created space. Space is not created randomly, but in order to meet the needs of people. This is why houses were invented – to protect people from threats and inclement weather. The same applies to cities, the purpose of which is to concentrate non-agrarian communities in one place and organise them. The function of marketplaces is to facilitate the development of trade, and the purpose of roads is to facilitate travelling...

The social aspect of space also reflects the hierarchies which exist in communities. Space can be better and worse, rich or poor, comfortable or dangerous, central or peripheral, sacred or profane. Let us then scientifically analyse the meanings which people ascribe to space during the process of its creation and utilisation.

The semiotic approach, which emphasises meanings, complements the above deliberations about social space. According to this approach, a house or the interior of a building can be construed as a text.

One of the greatest books introducing the basic categories of spatial anthropology is *Space and Place, the Perspective of Experience* (1987), written by American geographer Yi Fu Tuan. All discussion about the topic must begin with the classical distinction made by Yi Fu Tuan: the opposition of space and place. Space is defined here as untamed, unknown, vast, devoid

¹ B. Jałowiecki, M. Szczepański, *Miasto i przestrzeń w perspektywie socjologicznej*, Warszawa 2001, p. 310.

of meanings and points of reference. Places, on the other hand, have been named and settled by humans. This opposition is used as a category when studying the phenomenon of local homelands, nostalgia for the identity of childhood places or the anthropology of the house.

Semiotically, one can study places, not space, as the former are limited and built by humans, and, as an obligatory element of their existence, become infused with meanings. Norbert Schulz's phenomenology of place also deserves a mention as a concept which uses this term. The author bases his deliberations on the idea of *genius loci*, the "spirit of the place". When describing and studying e.g. European landscapes, he emphasised the power of the naturalness of places and the destructive power of human activity, which often results in the loss of the primal *genius loci*. The place has five dimensions: items, order, character, light and time.

According to the PWN popular encyclopaedia, time is one of the basic forms of the existence of matter, and is the fourth coordinate of space-time in relativistic mechanics. Time can be understood in four ways: As 1) a moment, a point in time, 2) a period, a length of time, 3) a duration, 4) a set of all moments and periods². The principal scientific controversies related to time emerged in the history of science in the opposing approaches of absolute and relativistic time. When analysing the matter from a broad perspective, it is possible to distinguish between physical time, psychological time, historical time, everyday time, secular and religious time.

In western culture, time is a value since, according to G. Lakoff and M. Johnson, it is limited in quantity and is always measurable³. It has its equivalents, the most evident of which is the remuneration one receives for an activity performed in a unit of time – for an hour, a month or year. By far the most popular metaphor which became the universal label of our modern civilisation is the sentence "Time is money". Thus, according to the two authors, time is something one can spend, lose, invest well or badly, save or waste⁴. This approach to the phenomenon of time is, in a sense, a modern, metaphorical attempt at understanding its nature – not directly, but to understand time via its equivalent, i.e. money. According to Lakoff and Johnson, the metaphor "time is money" applies to the entire system of meaning: it refers to time directly as *money* (*spend, invest, budget, gain, cost*),

² *Encyklopedia popularna PWN*, 21st ed., Warszawa 1991, p. 157.

³ G. Lakoff, M. Johnson, *Metafory w naszym życiu*, Warszawa 1988.

⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 30.

its another application refers to it as a *limited resource* (*use, run out of, have enough, lack*), and yet another refers to it as a *valuable commodity* (*have, give, lose, thank*). This is an example of how “metaphorical entailments can characterize a coherent system of metaphorical concepts and a corresponding coherent system of metaphorical expressions for those concepts”⁵. Thus, one cannot understand the culture of a society or how it functions without at least some understanding of what time is.

Time is a key component in all types of systems. As an example, in biology, the timing, or the correlation between how processes progress, determines the organism’s structure, the correlation of its parts and its relation to the environment, and vice versa – changes over time and their harmonisation are contingent upon structural aspects. In the world, everything is, in a way, “immersed” in various rhythms, from the rhythms of the cosmos, without which evolution would not be possible, as evidenced by analyses of development process models⁶, to other, controlled rhythms (e.g. via correlation with the cyclical phenomena of lighting) and hormonal processes in the human body. In these cases, the cyclical and repetitive nature is the most easily noticeable aspect of time. On the other hand, as regards all mechanical devices, the sequences in which their hardware operates co-determines how effectively they fulfil their purpose. Of course, these examples demonstrate only the more general rules and laws. It is quite paradoxical that the same laws appear to be timeless themselves. The more universal they are, the more evidently they exist in the empirical world, as it is with e.g. gravity. Hence, as indicated by Juliusz Piwowarski, there exist “facts which clearly indicate that both social phenomena, both *culture* and *security*, function in a very similar manner, in addition to intersecting:

- 1) *Space* and *time* are two coexisting parameters which are of parallel significance for *culture* and *security*.
- 2) Physical *space* is a place necessary for “areas of culture and security” and “areas of threat” to emerge and manifest. At the same time, this *space* allows the achievements of *culture* (including the *national culture of security*) to be disseminated and spread to new territories.
- 3) The parameter of *time* is the frame of reference in which the process of constructing a *culture of security* takes place on a given territory,

⁵ Ibidem, p. 31.

⁶ This is proven by experiments conducted by Professor K. Fijałkowski, who researched the processes of modulating evolutionary processes.

which is equivalent to the *process of development* of individuals, social groups and entire *nations*. This development also determines their multi-aspect potentiality, and therefore its level of resistance and how these subjects respond to *threats*, thus influencing their level of *security*.

- 4) In other terms, the *process of the development of culture and security* which occurs in a set timeframe and on a given territory comprises systems which render it possible to counteract various *threats*. Using the above definition, one could say that, within a certain scope (the scope of the *culture of national security*), the *process of the development of natural culture* can even be considered analogous to *security*.
- 5) *Culture and security* are not only a kind of “added value” in every *society*. They constitute its autonomous *self-defence* potential, which exists in the *subjects* (including the *state*) belonging to a given *nation*. This *self-defence* potential functions in the military, political, socio-cultural (identity), economic and ecological sector, and in aspects (sectors) of activity of a given *nation* and its *state* such as the legal and organisational sphere, healthcare, social services, generating new technologies and the cybernetic sphere. This is enabled by creating, collecting and recording knowledge, skills and social competencies by members of *society* using all types of physical devices – the *artefacts* which a given *nation* possesses.
- 6) *Culture and security* in relation to *subjects* functioning on the territory of a *state*, down to the personal scale, constitute a mechanism which significantly impacts the way of thinking, methods of acting and attitudes manifested by *security subjects*. This in turn is enabled by the patterns and codes of the *culture* which match a given *situation*, *processes* drawn out in time or *events*, which take place at points in time. All of these bring with them various challenges, opportunities, risks and threats.
- 7) Both *culture* and *security* are dichotomies which manifest in both the extramaterial and material spheres of the *social world*.
- 8) Both *culture* and *security* can serve as a theoretical model with the explanatory power and applications sufficient to be applied in *security studies*⁷.

⁷ J. Piwowarski, *Transdyscyplinarna istota kultury bezpieczeństwa narodowego*, Słupsk 2016, p. 141.

The *culture of national security* is characterised by the existence of a strong base element, which serves as the foundation for the locally dominant way of thinking about one's own place in the *environment of security* and the relations with its remaining participants.

In a social system, the correlation between the actions of individual and groups is also of fundamental value. Originally, such actions were dependent on natural cycles such as the seasons, night and day, reproductive cycles of game animals, as well as vegetation cycles of plants originally used to sate hunger.

In its very nature, time is paradoxical. On the one hand, it is the most continuous phenomenon we have ever encountered, and, on the other hand, it can be easily divided and is both continuous and discrete. The division of days, months and years is the best example of this. This state of affairs has long been depicted by calendars. The calendar was invented very early, during the Solutrean times, and its earliest example is a lunar calendar engraved into a mammoth's shoulder blade. Nowadays, it allows us to precisely determine many astronomical values. Sky observations for calendar purposes took place in the oldest of known cultures. As an example, by observing the sky, Columbian Tukano Indians were able to incorporate into their tribal myths the knowledge about the precession of the Milky Way, which is a very remarkable observation to make. Suffice it to say that, without a powerful mathematical theory and proper equipment, modern archaeo-astronomers would not be able to draw this conclusion without constantly observing the sky for approximately two thousand years.

If we look at many other traditional and primitive cultures, virtually all of them incorporate observing the sky in relation to the calendar, which marks the so-called holidays, which usually happen based on an annual cycle. Our ancient ancestors had the knowledge of the great cycles of stars and planets, and used it to organise their social lives. For example, the entire production cycle and the related social actions in ancient Egypt were contingent upon the flooding of the Nile. This in turn was predicted by priests who specialised in observing the sky. The dawn of Sirius in the right fragment of the firmament would be recorded by a priest, who then signalled for certain actions to begin, in particular those related to working the fields irrigated by the life-giving river. This minimal signal triggered enormous activity.

In modern times, such observations are obsolete, and it is often enough to know the calendar and the vegetation cycle. Nevertheless, traditional sky watching has indubitably its mark on the traditions of societies which live

off agriculture. Liturgical calendar cycles are also largely based on macro-scale time flows. The moveable lunar year in the Jewish calendar, for example, when determining the date of the Passover, takes into account the date of the spring equinox and the first full moon which follows it. Christianity's Easter takes place after the spring equinox, after the first full moon, but the first Sunday after the full moon is also important. In Islam, Ramadan is also based on the lunar calendar, which results in the time of the fast being moveable. In Hinduism, Diwali festivities are also dependent on astronomical findings. The above list is by no means exhaustive, and such situations are based in the most basic premise of traditional cultures, according to which humans, via their structure, dynamics and life goals, are closely tied to the entire universe – in other words, humans constitute a holistic reflection of the cosmos. This relation is best exemplified by humanity's participation in cosmic and astronomical cycles, by mimicking in one's individual and social experience this most spectacular symptom of the "life" of the world – movement, as well as time, which is organically bound with the former.

As an aside, the above ideas have manifested primarily in an idea which has been known since time immemorial – that of the macro-anthropos, the "primordial man", the first and the basic emanation or manifestation of the Highest Being, God or the Absolute. This theme can be found in the Kabbalah in the form of Adam Kadmon – the "Primordial Man" (or the "dawn man"), and in Hinduism, it finds its expression in the fundamental concept of Purusha, the original Man-Spirit, who, via his self-sacrifice, creates the entire universe (including the gods). It can also be found in ancient Iran (Gajomarth), in Scandinavian mythology (Ymir), in Chinese mythology (Pan-Gu), etc.

The problem consists in (or, rather, consisted in, as the situation is of largely historical character) the fact that tampering with social time (and individual time as well) by regulating it required religious justification, as it required taking into account the organic character of the relations between humanity and the world. That is not to say that we do not encounter similar phenomena in modern times. In orthodox Judaism, for example, it is not possible to imagine a situation where the state of Israel would act with no regard to the Sabbath – the day on which "God rested", seeing as one of the fundamental commandments of Judaism is to observe the Sabbath – after all, as it is explained in the commentaries, it is the source of blessing for the remaining days of the week. Observing the Sabbath applies to the ortho-

dox diaspora as well, as the coming of the messiah depends on whether it is observed or not, among other factors. Therefore, celebrating time is of fundamental importance from the soteriological point of view. Working on Sundays and holidays is a point of contention not only in Judaism, but in Christianity as well. Political disputes regarding prohibiting all commerce on Sundays and introducing new holidays or abolishing old ones can be seen as very distant, but very important, reflection of these concepts. Some psychological concepts indicate that these rules are most frequently something we become aware of, but this makes them even more important, seeing as they influence our decisions via the collective unconscious⁸.

When analysing the above issues, the problem of the dichotomy of time as secular and religious time emerges in the background – an issue which appears to have been best presented by Mircea Eliade and other phenomenologists of religion⁹. Sacred time is the time of mythical origins, events *in illo tempore*, and it possesses creative power tied to the very essence of the creative process. This power is invoked during holidays, when they (one could say that this happens via an “ontological gap”) disrupt the flow of secular time and the archetypal beginning emerges, along with its powers of creation. The above is enabled by rituals, which are also related to time: they are the first historically documented attempts to tie together individual and social time. It is important to add that, in societies where religion plays an important role, administrative or quasi-administrative forms of regulating rituals are of extreme importance.

So far, we have focused on the cosmic aspects of time, but humans themselves also possess their own time. This time is primarily physiological, and it differs depending on the gender, among others. For women, the cyclical time, tied to cosmic and biological rhythms, appears to be more important, while acyclicity appears to be more important to men, as it is related to the ability to react to random events. In societies which emerged from primitive hunter-gatherer societies, harmonising these two aspects of experiencing time appears to be of utmost importance. Human life is also bound with psychological time. Time sometimes “flies”, and sometimes “drags on”. Stud-

⁸ This does not necessarily have to mean the collective unconscious as described by C. Jung. The issue can be approached from a more trivial or sociological point of view (in the Durkheimian sense).

⁹ M. Eliade, *Czas święty i miły*, [in:] *Wiedza o kulturze*, part 1: *Antropologia kultury*, adapted by A. Mencwel, Warszawa 1997; see: G. van der Leeuw, *Fenomenologia religii*, transl. by J. Prokopiuk, Warszawa 1978, p. 341 and other.

ies on individual perception of time introduce a distinction between valuing the past, present or future. So far, the not-too-rigorous deliberations on the topic have pointed to several issues related to time, its nature and concepts supposed to describe its nature. At this point, one should analyse how time is perceived in different cultures.

Anthropological research has shown how differently time can be construed. Now-classic texts by anthropological linguists approach the topic from the point of view of languages used in various communities¹⁰. Their research focuses on the behavioural and sociological aspects of this issue. For example, John Useem describes a very interesting case related to the so-called “time speech”. On an island on the Pacific Ocean, American employers who hired the locals failed to take into account clan proportions, i.e. how many members of particular groups constituting the island’s population were hired. Clan leaders gathered at night to determine these proportions and decided to immediately communicate their decision to the employer – this took place between two and three o’ clock A.M. The timing caused the American to treat it as an “invasion” and a rebellion, and he called the marines for help¹¹. In western culture, if one’s telephone rings in the middle of the night, one expects that the matter is of particular importance. As shown above, however, how parts of day are divided does not have to be the same as in the west. This is of particular importance with regard to creating schedules for culturally-diverse communities.

Scheduling meeting times is similarly culturally-conditioned. As an example, in Latin America, where schedules are not paid much attention to, the fact that someone who has an appointment with a high official is forced to wait for them despite the meeting time being agreed upon is a perfectly normal occurrence. In the United States, however, being several hours late may result in relations breaking down. Another example how differently time can be treated: the United States government spent tens of thousands of dollars on roads and homes for Native Americans from the Hopi tribe¹², who could not comprehend that their roads and homes had to be complete by a certain date. Instead, all deadlines were treated as attempts at intimidation. Examples of varying cultural perceptions of time are numerous. In our progressively-globalising world society, a new, learned perception of time

¹⁰ Cf. B.L. Whorf, *Język, myśl, rzeczywistość*, Warszawa 1982.

¹¹ E.T. Hall, *Bezgłośny język*, Warszawa 1987.

¹² Cf. R. Benedict, *Wzory kultury*, transl. by J. Prokopiuk, Warszawa 1966.

which has been forced by technology emerges along this technology. This perception is primarily of the same nature as the perception which emerged in European societies, especially those which were first to progress through the stages of capitalist development. These are the societies in which “time is money”, where it became an utilitarian value, a limited commodity. Recently, a wholly new dimension has emerged of the issue at hand – the issue of time in virtual worlds and how it relates to time in the so-called real life. It appears that the currently-emerging information society poses a challenge in this area as well. The issue here is what the relation between these two types of time will look like, and whether it will be necessary for state institutions to intervene using administrative measures.

One could ask about the role of the administration in the context presented. As regards determining the right time for numerous social and individual actions, it assumes the role which was previously the domain of religious officials. The modern secularisation of regulating time did not extinguish all traces of religion from our social lives, however. Seeing as, in corporate capitalism present in states which accept this form of economy, everything can be converted into money, time, too, can be treated as a commodity. It can be very valuable, it can be of little value, and the above-mentioned issue of the relation between real-life time and virtual times will indubitably also become a “money” issue. Ultimately, it appears that the solution to this issue is primarily contingent upon the value which democracy and organisation have in a given nation.

In a given social community or *society* which constitutes a *nation*, its established value hierarchy renders it possible to develop and cultivate a particular form of the *ethical and organisational* sphere, something which e.g. Tadeusz Kotarbiński often alluded to¹³. One can expect that, via the resulting *security climate* which emerges among *professional groups* in a given *society*, it will become significantly easier to achieve a state in which the below elements of the *national bond* function properly, which correlates with diligence, optimal division of labour and good *social relations*. We demonstrate this relation below, based on e.g. more than forty years of my participant observation in communities of martial arts students. These *relations* can be considered to be the factors which constitute the *functions of the culture of*

¹³ T. Kotarbiński, *Traktat o dobrej robocie*, Łódź 1955; idem, *Mysli o dobrej robocie*, Warszawa 1962.

national security which emerge from the extramaterial, *ethical and organisational* sphere of the *culture of national security*¹⁴:

- 1) The identity of the organised *social community* (e.g. professional or local community) reinforces its sense of *security* and the satisfaction it feels from its effectiveness and goals it attains via collaboration. Therefore, the *culture of national security* has an internally and externally stabilising effect – this is how its **perceptive-stabilising function** operates.
- 2) The self-developing message of a positive *wave*, which renders it possible to raise new members of a *social group* in the spirit of the *ethical and organisational culture* accepted in a given collective *cultural subject* by way of example, interactions and interdependencies coherent with a given *ethical and organisational culture* and the associated bond in a given *security environment*, develops habits which are a source of pride for members of a particular social group – this is the **socialisation function**, the rearing aspect of the *culture of national security*.
- 3) The sphere of the *ethical and organisational culture*, which manifests in beliefs and attitudes of *subjects* who manage and benefit from its resources, protects its values from intruders – i.e. *subjects* who not only do not respect it, but also intend to harm and destroy it. In this aspect, the *culture of national security* has a **protective function**.
- 4) *The fundamental ideas*¹⁵ from the sphere of the *ethical and organisational culture* allow *subjects of action* to, at a particular time, safely progress to a necessary phase of changes, preventing any possible errors from being made during these actions and rendering the innovation process more dynamic, while retaining the *fundamental values* and the *identity* of the organisation, all of which constitutes the **adaptive and dynamic function** of the *culture of national security*.
- 5) Intruders who attempt to ignore or destroy the *ethical and organisational culture* of a given *security subject* – a collective, institution, company or *state*, are at risk of experiencing social repressions, which are justified considering the danger they pose. These repressions assume the form of moral sanctions, referred to e.g. as loss of face

¹⁴ J. Piwowarski, *Etyka funkcjonariusza policji. Źródła, motywacje, realizacja*, Kraków 2012, p. 103–107.

¹⁵ Cf. J. Collins, J.I. Porras, *Wizjonerskie organizacje*, transl. by T. Rzychoń, Warszawa 2008.

or social ostracism and the resulting set of behaviours and attitudes from the members of the defending *community*. In this aspect, the *culture of national security* has a **repressive function**.

- 6) The *ethical and organisational* sphere of the *culture of national security* integrates a given social community (e.g. a team of professionals, a family or *nation*), providing it with such significant elements as shared identity, beliefs, vocabulary, value hierarchies and the associated social rites¹⁶, a certain work style, etc., which constitutes the **integrating and culture-developing function**.
- 7) The *ethical and organisational* sphere determines which *individual* and *group* behaviours match what is customary when working for the sake of the *common good*, and, at the same time, determines what actions are deemed not acceptable in this context. This constitutes the **control function** of the *culture of national security*.
- 8) The *ethical and organisational* sphere of the *culture of national security* constitutes the *natural hierarchy* of a given society, *nation* or organisation. This *natural hierarchy* represents the specific set of informal and formal *competences*, which are coherent within this set and which reinforce the position of the subject, which is directly related to the *subject's* duties. One can assume that the *natural hierarchy* is a “competence hierarchy”. It acts as a conveyor belt for the development of the *subject of action*, based on seeking contact with authorities and the associated transfer of knowledge, experience and skills.

We believe that a lack of a hierarchy indicates either a lack of the need to develop, or a lack of the opportunities to do so – and the latter indicates the existence of a threat. However, one can expect equality of opportunity when actions are carried out in a way which is aimed at increasing the *common good* with involvement in the *ethical and organisational* sphere, which results in leaders considering it to be dishonourable to display conceitedness, and in subjects losing face should they fail to show at least the amount of respect shown to them by their superior. The mechanisms described above constitute the **organisational function** of the *culture of national security*.

¹⁶ Cf. P. Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*, Oxford 1993, p. 162.

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