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## The Concept of Sustainable Development – the Factor of a Local Security Culturee

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# THE CONCEPT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT – THE FACTOR OF A LOCAL SECURITY CULTURE

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## ABSTRACT

The article is concerned with the concept of sustainable development treated as an essential mechanism of security culture. The author emphasises how important it is for the implementation of the concept to be inspired from the bottom up in the social aspect of local communities. Today, the sense of community seems to stand in opposition to the institutionalised civil society. A developmental project, in order to result in some degree of balance, should take into consideration such components of security culture as support for the poor, security of existence for future generations or a transparent delineation of the human-nature relation. The author believes that this requires a continuous promotion of lifestyles and policies leading to societies attaining self-sufficiency, a combination of theory with practice and the introduction of good, proven theory. The article features pragmatism which is meant to be consistent with the local social activism. It presents the concept of sustainable development, at the same time indicating that its requirements should be treated as practical instructions which come in useful in the transformation of ethical rules into instructions which may prove helpful in particular activities conducted on the local scale and which are aimed at solving social issues due to the efforts to increase security culture.

## ARTICLE INFO

At present, one might observe a surge in scientific research on human security with reference to the natural environment which does not only stand beside the *social world* of humans but also intertwines with it[1]. The concept of *sustainable development* plays a vital role in this aspect. The natural environment is an essential part of the *security environment* background as far as human existence, survival and further unhampered development are concerned. The term *sustainability* has a number of interpretations[2] and, consequently, as many definitions, similarly as the term *sustainable development*. The literature suggests that few scholars have so far analysed the above mentioned definitions to propose a universal version. However, Cesar Cuello Nieto took the challenge and conducted appropriate research[3]. The author of this work will try to illustrate the need for *security culture* built on the foundation of the concept of *sustainable development*. This refers to societies which should join this megatrend in the age of globalisation as *collective subjects of security*. All this should nevertheless be conducted in such a way as to allow local communities to retain their causative force which depends on their ability to maintain their identity and sovereignty, the qualities which enable them to become more important than a mere *biomass*, a term employed by Michel Foucault (1926–1984)[4]. According to Foucault, Cesar Cuello created the optimal formula for the importance of an examined category.

**Sustainable development is a fully integrated, holistic concept of sustainability, combining all social relations, human-nature relations and the entire axiological and ideological framework on which such a concept could stand**[5].

Cesar Cuello presents a set of basic rules which, according to him, are the foundation of the implementation function of this holistic concept. This Dominican scholar asserts that the initiation and conduct of *sustainable development*, which may in fact be considered synonymous to proces-

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[1] *Social World* – cf. A. Schütz, Świat społeczny i teoria działania społecznego, [in:] *Socjologia. Lektury*, P. Sztompka, M. Kucia (ed.), Społeczny Instytut Wydawniczy „Znak", Kraków 2005.

[2] C. Cuello Nieto, P. T. Durbin, *Sustainable Development and Philosophies of Technology*, "Techne" (SPT Quarterly Electronic Journal) 1995, no. 1, p. 1–2, http://scholar.lib.rt.edu/ejournals/SPT/spt.html, accessed 11–12.04.2017.

[3] Ibidem.

[4] M. Foucault, *Narodziny biopolityki*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2011.

[5] C. Cuello Nieto, P.T. Durbin, *Sustainable…*

sually interpreted security, requires societies to focus on adopting an active approach in the following aspects:

1. Interaction and coordination of all factors which are de facto the components of *security culture* of a given society on a local, regional or national scale.
2. Sustainable redistribution of wealth.
3. Establishment and redefinition of the human-nature relation.
4. Intergenerational balance.
5. Redistribution of natural resources and possibilities for development.
6. Respect for nature and support for its ability to regenerate.
7. Aiming for self-sufficiency of societies.
8. Dialectic unity of the co-existence of theory and practice in the actions of individuals and whole societies.

Cesar Cuello found a source of inspiration in the works by Hans Jonas (1903–1993), who claimed that the man's monopoly over ethical respect infringes on his semi-monopolistic rule over the rest of the world[6]. This led Jonas to state that responsibility has become the basic imperative of the modern civilisation and should be an indispensable criterion allowing the assessment of human activity, including these actions which result in development[7]. One might say that there is an interpretation of the concept of sustainable development which provides a general formula for an optimal strategy for sustainable functioning of human communities and their development in a local environment. The natural environment conditions human development as well as our present and future life. It is important to strive for homoeostasis, balance between every aspect of human life and the surrounding environment. When the balance between man and his environment is disturbed, it gives rise to risk factors exerting negative influence on particular aspects of human life. These risk factors may be the source of socially unacceptable behaviours, which in turn leads to disorders hampering the sustainable development of an individuals. Such disorders impact the quality of life of the individual and have a detrimental effect on the state of their closest relationships.

Harmful influence encountered in school or family environments, where the social groups serve as a springboard in the early years of life

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[6]  H. Jonas, *The Imperative of Responsibility: In Search of an Ethics for the Technological Age*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1984.

[7]  Ibidem.

of an individual, enabling personal and social development as an *individual subject of security* may contribute to the development of pathology. Already in the early years of life, different social factors provide an individual with experiences which will soon enough impact the development of key features of personality of an *individual subject of security*. This means that they may exert positive influence or cause abnormalities in the development of an individual and their further functioning in the *social world*. Negative changes in the local environment lead to deteriorating physical and psychological condition of man. The present knowledge about developmental disorders advances, surprisingly, owing to the findings of ecology and sustainable development of local communities.

Considering the subject of this paper, a researcher examining security problems must take into consideration the perspective of *social ecology*, as this field of science puts emphasis on research into human-nature relations and on the achievements of pedagogical sciences and ecological psychology, which illustrates the specific character of the relations between man and nature. All these fields of science stress that research on man in his natural setting should encompass the environment and man functioning within it. The micro-social approach adopts three main types of social environment influencing the psychological development of a child – family, local and school/peer environments. The social and environmental factors causing developmental disorders include economic change leading to poverty and, therefore, raised stress levels, family conflicts, malaise exhibited by family members, proneness to depression, transferring aggression to children, restricted access to health care, dysfunctional family environment. Wealth should also be mentioned here, since children from affluent families are often exposed to boredom and insufficient guidance of adults, especially their parents, who should actively participate in the process of upbringing.

In times of extremely rapid technological development, a status of imbalance is observed more and more frequently, as the relations between children and parents are reduced to minimum, while the computer or other multimedia devices are gaining importance. As a result, the as yet unshaped *individual subject of security* becomes apathetic, withdrawn and hyperactive and lacks the ability to establish relationships in the real life, all this already as a child. The school environment may play a role in this but even in this respect functional illiteracy appears quite often, pushing

young people to visual culture, characteristic of illiterate peoples, called primitive peoples until recently.

The widely understood ecological perspective, referring not only to the necessity to take care of the natural resources but also to security culture and to the entire scope of *social sciences*, draws from the achievements of research conducted so far, inspired by psychological, psycho-social, sociological and pragmatic theories, which include, for example, the psychodynamic or behaviourist theories. By drawing from many natural, social and other scientific disciplines, the ecological perspective has produced an outstanding concept which has every chance of further achievements as regards preventing conduct disorders and social pathology. It traces the source of behaviour disorders of a *subject* to the influence exerted by the nature of interaction between an individual and their setting. Improper behaviour is not a "hereditarily disrupted" element. It is vital to realise that this *social fact* is a result of faulty connection between an *individual subject of security* and the external context of their functioning. This means that disorders may be eliminated due change in the psycho-physical and psycho-social condition of an *individual subject of security* or in the context of their existence, or in the two aspects at the same time[8].

The ecological school of thought uses the basic term *ecosystem* which denotes a relatively restricted ecological unit[9]. School, which is an elementary social ecosystem, features physical elements participating in the process of education and time units of contact between students and teachers. As an ecosystem, a school class has its particular, inter-relater dynamic aspects (series of activities). School class ecosystems function within a broader ecosystem – the entire school, while schools are a part of a *local environment ecosystem*. Children, being incredibly sensitive *individual subjects of security*, exist within their social ecosystems and are their active elements before they reach adulthood.

The same rules may be applied to another ecosystem – family, which is a subsystem of more generic structures, such as neighbourhood or local community. The two fundamental social ecosystems are inter-related and are subject to the laws of more generic ecosystems. The result of this

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[8] B. Urban, *Zaburzenia w zachowaniu i przestępczość młodzieży*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, Kraków 2000.

[9] S. A. Reber, S. E. Reber, *Słownik Psychologii*, Wydawnictwo SCHOLAR, Warszawa 2008.

is that they fall within the field of influence of complex but quantifiable physical factors but also, more importantly, are influenced by significant persons, interactions with whom are only imaginary and may not be fully comprehensible in a quantitative assessment.

Moreover, the assumptions of ecology direct the attention of researchers investigating security problems to shaping of attitudes in a local environment. The benefits of adopting the assumptions of *sustainable development* are clearly visible once we notice that such research encompasses the entire context of local influences, not only the impact of the material base but primarily interpersonal relationships. Unfortunately, such research is conducted rarely indeed, as, apart from genuine obstacles, it requires members of local communities to overcome the inherent reluctance to share details of the so called family secrecy[10].

Cesar Cuello claims that the key to success in the process of achieving sustainability is the engagement of all prominent interest groups showing interest in a given developmental project. This is why local leaders, often serving as informal but highly respected institutions, should encourage these groups to initiate cooperation, at least in the form of constructive criticism. Matters regarding differences of opinions should be resolved first. Then, depending on the character and social context of a given case, the proposed direction of further development should be backed, modified or blocked.

Yet another condition arises from the fact that a consensus is often unachievable in such cases. It states that one should only be satisfied when they have attracted the support of the highest possible number of interest groups which comprise *local collective subjects of security* and when a plan of how to deal with those groups whose final view will differ from that of the majority has been devised[11].

Moreover, the formula has to include a factor which should reach the status of a primary rule and for Cesar Cuello it is the rule of responsibility. It is worth noting that the assumption that all sides of an argument will work responsibly, at least when it comes to adopting one viewpoint within one interest group, may have a positive overtone, yet these utopian expectations should probably be realistically verified.

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[10]  B. Urban, *Zaburzenia w zachowaniu i przestępczość młodzieży…*

[11]  This is the general interpretation of what was proposed by William James in his work: *The Moral Philosopher and the Moral Life*, [in:] W. James, The Will To Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy, Holt, New York 1897.

Such conduct is also an element of security culture and refers to the implementation of the idea of sustainable development. The reality is often that at least some participants in this process, which consists in having a real argument about a particular project of regional or local development, tend to resort to actions which are subjective, particular in nature. This issue should also be taken into consideration in a debate about democratic control over developmental projects. Except for the two rules opposed by Cuello – to include the highest possible number of interest groups in democratic discussions and proceed in an honest way both with those groups who lose in the negotiations and those who will not play fair – all the remaining ones may be used as useful instructions.

To lead to sustainability, each developmental project should:

1) involve poorer people, who are treated as equals in the democratic process, also considering the equalisation of their opportunities to take ambitious challenges[12],

2) take into consideration interests, chances, challenges, risks and threats to security of future generations[13],

3) define relations between human and nature to include the concurrence of natural phenomena and the human needs for development,

4) provide scientific data on the level of the ability to regenerate of the natural environment in the project area[14],

5) take into consideration the relations which may occur between projects implemented in different environments and new effects thereof[15],

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[12] J. Gierszewski, *Bezpieczeństwo społeczne. Studium z zakresu bezpieczeństwa narodowego*, Wydawnictwo Difin, Warszawa 2013.

[13] The public authorities have the constitutional obligation to carry out activities for environmental protection and to conduct policies to ensure ecological safety for the society of today and for future generations, pursuant to Article 74 section 1 and 2 of the Constitution of the Republic of Poland.

[14] Cf.: T. Kalicki, L. Starkel, *The evolution of the Vistula river valley downstream of Cracow during the last 15 000 years*, [in:] *Evolution of the Vistula river valley during the last 15 000 years, part II*, "Geographical Studies Special Issue" 1987, No. 4, p. 51–70.

[15] *Earth Charter* – a declaration of fundamental values and principles considered useful by its supporters for building a just, sustainable, and peaceful global society. The *Earth Charter* was created by a global consultation process about common objectives and values connected with the idea of sustainable development. The *Earth Charter* project began with the initiative on the United Nations. One of the resolutions of the United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development (an Earth Summit

6) promote self-sufficiency of societies[16],

7) combine theory with practice and support, that is improve and organise, everyday practice using appropriate theory[17].

The above mentioned guidelines should not be treated as imperatives but rather as instructions which may have practical qualities for the improvement of local security culture on the basis of the concept of sustainable development. Such a transformation of the general moral rules into guidelines, which may come in useful in particular endeavours undertaken even on the local level, aimed at solving local social problems, is consistent with the assumptions of ethical teachings spread by the school of American Pragmatism.

*Pragmatism* is a system which may be associated with social philosophy. The constitutive element of this system is the *pragmatic theory of truth*, determining the truthfulness of proposed theses and hypotheses upon the practical effects of the implementation thereof, assuming the efficiency of conducted actions as a criterion for accepting the truth. In *pragmatism*, the effects resulting from adopting particular hypotheses and the utility thereof for a *subject of security* are treated as a criterion of confirmation or negation of these hypotheses in action[18]. In everyday language, *pragmatism* is an attitude involving a realistic assessment of reality, the proper assessment of real capability of a *subject of security* and taking action only when high efficiency is ensured.

The very message of this school of thought and action is not reduced to abstract theorising but is realised in successfully implemented local projects.

One might notice a threat to the three pillars of security culture: mental (personal), community and material. These threats may be already

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in Rio de Janeiro) in 1992, was the need for a declaration on the relation between human and nature – the project turned into a major social initiative.

[16] "The end of the state is the good life, and these are the means towards it. And the state is the union of families and villages in a perfect and self-sufficing life, by which we mean a happy an honourable life. Our conclusion is, then, that political society exists for the sake of noble actions, and not of mere companionship". Aristotle, *Polityka*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2006, p. 89.

[17] C. Argyris, D. Schön, *Theory in Practice: Increasing Professional Effectiveness,* Jossey Bass, San Francisco 1974.

[18] J. Dewey, *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, Beacon Press, Boston 1948; J. Dewey, *The Quest for Certainty*, Minton Balch And Company, New York 1929; J. Dewey, *Liberalism and Social Action*, G.P. Putnam Publischer, New York 1935; G. H. Mead, *Scientific Method and Moral Sciences*, University Of Chicago Press, Chicago 1964.

in the core of Cesar Cuello Nieto's concept, considering that far-reaching tolerance of different opinions plays the key role here. Nonetheless, this may be a source of risks. For example, tolerance for the realisation of economic objectives at any cost disturbs algorithms which should lead to the state of sustainability and destroys the processes of sustainable development belonging to security culture, facilitating only the needs associated with the third dimension of security culture at the expense of the remaining two, which diminish in this case and have limited influence on the *social reality*.

This is an issue we encounter every day, while scholars who investigate the sense of human existence and, consequently, the sense of human development and security, still consider moral relativism to be a perennial problem[19]. The author asserts that the criticism of tolerance, which leaves out the basic aspect, namely determining the boundaries of tolerance, is vital for the discussion[20].

Today, the major risks for humanity, such as war, terrorism, running out of resources and disturbing the ecology of the natural environment, spark dialogue on the concept of *sustainable development*. The need to implement this idea unmistakeably requires international cooperation. Presenting the problem by means of diplomatic tools and tolerating differences is insufficient to achieve a local and national *security culture* on a high level.

The social tradition of hospitality recalled by Jacques Derrida or the ability to look at a problem from the perspective of another person, even if the other person is our enemy, could be the positive alternatives for the attitude of tolerance. Still, all this should be accompanied by a firm position in a discussion or in a constructive argument.

The power of corporations may lead to local and regional dominance of their particular interests over the need to maintain balance. The issue has been addressed e.g. by Michael Redcliff[21], who wrote about his Neo-Marxist version of the criticism of sustainability. What is more, cer-

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[19] *Relativism: Interpretation and Confrontation*, M. Krausz (ed.), University of Notre Dame Press, South Bend 1989.

[20] R. P. Wolff, B. Moore, H. Marcuse, *A Critique of Pure Tolerance*, Beacon Press, Boston 1965.

[21] M. Redclift, *Sustainable Development: Exploring the Contradictions*, Routledge, New York 1987.

tain structural matters appear[22] and it may be observed that a large capital can pacify the local opposition against the imposed directions of development in a very subtle way.

However, local communities can oppose the pressure of big business. They can do this with the help of *significant persons*[23]. The author believes that the creation of the *culture of safety* based on the concept of *sustainable development* should in such case engage people exhibiting high local patriotism. This would allow to achieve success when faced with a profit-oriented force, which discards the humanistic and social aspects of our lives. The process of development comes from certain ideas, the genetic factor of a project, and determines the nature of the project. Thus, not all developmental projects should be opposed by a traditional, local *subject of security*. There are at least two reasons for that, listed below:

– firstly, a *local community* may join the process of democratic decision-making. When a community becomes complementary with the whole society, an ability for compromise appears for the sake of the broadly understood *common good*.
– secondly, *local communities* learn to draw from other cultures without worrying that this may pose a threat to their own traditions. The broadening of the potential of a local culture to include experiences of another culture may lead to a peaceful assimilation and mutual penetration of cultures, which may be beneficial for all *subjects of security* participating in the change towards a *security culture* balanced anew.

Moving to the summary, we may propose the following conclusions:

– a compromise between different interest groups comprising collective *subjects of security* on a project regarding *sustainable development* is an attainable social fact,
– the threat posed by aggressive, corporate imperialism which is aimed solely at gaining profit without any consideration for the incurred social cost or the extent of potential damage to the natural environment may be identified and isolated or even successfully countered if need be,

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[22] P. T. Durbin, *Social Responsibility in Science, Technology and Medicine*, Lehigh University Press, Bethlehem 1992.

[23] *Significant person* – a person who plays a vital role for the development of one's personality in the process of socialisation; during primary socialisation, these persons are parents, during secondary socialisation – other people exerting strong influence on the value system and behaviour patterns of an individual – teachers, priests, superiors, spouses; an individual learns from a *significant person* e.g. by imitating, playing important social roles.

– local collective *subjects of security* have certain potential, which, however, does not guarantee success against threats to local *environment of security*, both as regards the social environment and nature, without a catalyst function in the form of *collective social awareness*.

To sum up, it should be mentioned that factors which have a negative impact on creating states close to *sustainability* in the course of individual development occur due to improperly conducted socialisation.

The process of individual development begins in the early years of the existence of an individual *subject of security* and any disorders in this matter hamper personal development, identified as the key component of the *first stream of security culture*.

This also to the detriment of the social environment, which participates in the impact force of the *second stream of security culture*.

Cesar Cuello Nieto proposed a strategy of fighting against the challenges for the constructors of the *local security culture* who strive to achieve their objective on the basis of sustainability, which was lauded already by Aristotle, the father of the European thinking. Cesar Cuello employs his theory of *sustainable development* and focuses on real activities which should be taken care of to create balance between the influence of individual stream of energy of security culture.

The holistic features of *sustainable development* used for this purpose and promoted by Cuello Nieto among others has a very practical aspect. Pragmatism, which we may observe upon the perception of this need, rooted in the issue of the ecology of local environments, and in the attempt of implementation thereof, is a factor based on solutions proposed by Cesar Cuello Nieto. The potential of the local *security culture* should oppose threats posed by globalisation. It is important to ensure that the process is locally agreed upon and consistent with the local form of activism of social groups.

Social activism is associated by the scholars investigating personal and structural scale of security culture with the influence of a system known as *pragmatic progressivism*, included by John Dewey in the description of the rules governing his theory.

We should stress that the guidelines described in this work and the associated methods become practical only when it is ensured that the implementation of a project in the spirit of *sustainable development* is well-adjusted to the circumstances and place of implementation. One might bring

up the ethical aspects of this matter but for the social reality they simply denote a practical realisation of the functions of the *culture of national security* whose operation was manifested on a local scale. People often emphasise it when they call such an *environment of security* their local homeland.

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