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SOCIETY DIVIDED: FEAR AS THE KEY FACTOR OF JOHN WAYNE STYLE LEADERS

Abstract

Fear is one of the strongest motivators. It induces and seals the borderlines between nations, society groups, races, religions, but also family members, students, kids in the neighborhood. We can differ in many things, even strongly conflicting yet with no violence, but when fear appears, especially enforced by lack of responsibility conviction, conflicts turn, step by step into spiral we call “Lucifer Effect”. Politicians who pursue more control in all spheres of life, claim they need this control to protect “us” from “them”. Such extraordinary controlling measures must be taken because all who disagree with “us” are the enemy – “them”, who threaten our safety. Such leaders “play” the role of symbolic John Wayne, inducing fear, which makes people insecure and looking for strong – uncompromising leader, who will defend “us” from “them”.

Keywords: Conflict, politics, society, authorities, leadership

Introduction

The greatest wars, most destructive conflicts, even great conquests, where all induced by fear¹. Hitler spread countrywide fear of Jews who were meant to cause all the German misfortunes, Rwanda slaughter started because of the allegedly Tutsi conspiracy, inspired by the rumors (not necessarily fully false) about the old genetics’ experiments in the previous Belgian colony. During Cold War USSR leaders secretly planned invasion of the Western world and in the same time build picture of rotten and aggressive West, using the state propaganda. Those well-

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¹ R.E. Wilson Jr., *The Most Powerful Motivator: How fear is etched into our brains*, Psychology Today, <https://www.psychologytoday.com>, September 23, 2009 (20.01.2022).

known examples illustrate the political mechanism of inducing fear to consolidate and control society and turn it against the given enemy. Such leaders who use conflicts and exaggerate them to become the only solution in approaching confrontation we can call John Wayne Style Leaders² (JWSL). For the people occupied by everyday activities it is very difficult to understand whether the fear is fully justified or it is a tool for politicians or other leaders to deepen the conflict. In the same time fear causes that people are more afraid of the enemies and preparing for confrontation, than expect the reforms, good ruling, equality, and justice, or even obeying the law and respecting the human rights from their leaders. Using the fear and propaganda built on it, can seem a much easier method of governing than searching the so called common good in politics, as described by Aristotle³. But it also has a strong and long-lasting negative impact on the societies.

Society divided

In 1968 Jane Elliot did an exercise with her third-grade classroom in order to present and make students aware of the problem of discrimination and racism⁴. In her exercise, afterwards named “Class divided”, Jane Elliot divided the group of school kids, by labeling them as “blue-eyed” and “brown-eyed”, thus in fact sharing them into superior and inferior. What she did was just information of the eyes’ color and applying to both groups specific sets of beliefs, superstitions in fact existing in our societies also nowadays. This induced fear in those kids – brown-eyed lost their respect and some privileges which caused grief and fear of their new situation. Blue-eyed suddenly earned a new status but had to defend it right away against the brown-eyed, who most probably could claim to get back their position. We need to put right measure to this situation – kids who suddenly became inferior, felt not just ashamed, but threatened of being deprived of their basic rights – which in case of kids can be just a privilege of playing, having some paper cup for drinking water. The fear was strengthened by the clear message from the teacher-authority that such division is natural, and those superiors have the right to live “above” those inferior.

The term Class Divided became famous not only in psychologists’ circles, but it is one of the most influential terms describing the human

² The character described in the book *Lucifer Effect: P. Zimbardo, The Lucifer Effect: How Good People Turn Evil*, London 2009, p. 81.

³ Aristotle, *Politics*, pp. 3, 6–7, 12.

⁴ W. Peters, *A Class Divided Then and Now*, New Haven 1985.

reactions motivated by the so-called authority. Three years later, another experiment produced decisive impact on our minds – made in basement of the Stanford University, called “Stanford Prison Experiment”⁵. Together with Stanley Milgram’s⁶, Salomon Ash’s⁷ and many more experiments they created an experimental model of human behavior, and proved that our “dark inside” can be unleashed in specific conditions. Such a model was confirmed in many conflicts in history and contemporarily. The problem is, those experiments were somehow unethical, usually not methodological, and always very controversial, thus very unlikely to repeat in the same form nowadays. All this makes leverage to undermine those results for many reasons. Sometimes such undermining is just for fame of “the one who debunked 50 years old psychological myth”, or for the even worse motivation - when the one is afraid of disclosure of his own methods and aims. So those fundamentally important experiments are treated often as a one side of the conflict opinion rather, than the scientific background for civilization progress. Involving scientists in the conflict as a part of establishment is one of the main points of undermining the world order. Yet even unethical or unmethodical experiment confirmed in thousands of years of human history should have basic meaning to disclose basic human reactions and for building better societies.

After invasion of Iraq in 2003, Taji base⁸, 27 km north of Baghdad was divided into two parts, each as a "different world". In both there were about 10 thousand people, but while part of the Coalition Forces was the best equipped base in all of Iraq, including a swimming pool, a cinema, restaurants such as Taco Bell, the Walmart supermarket, and the largest PX; on the Iraqi side, soldiers were kept in primitive conditions, often rationing hunger portions. Between these two worlds there were advisory groups from the Coalition Forces whose soldiers spent most of their time on the Iraqi side, but at the same time were able to move to the American side. One of the commanders of such groups, Colonel Charles Payne, who worked closely with Iraqi forces and even became friends with the ISF brigade commander, drew the attention of his superiors to the bad consequences of this situation. Iraqi soldiers and their families became targets for extremists which made their situation even worse and it was really hard for them to just train, develop and become a new sole of the Iraqi security. A similar situation applied to all Iraqis cooperating with the Coalition Forces. It is also very

⁵ P. Zimbardo, *op.cit.*

⁶ S. Milgram, *Behavioral Study of Obedience*, “Journal of Abnormal Psychology”, 1963, No. 67, p. 371–378; *idem*, *Obedience to Authority*, New York 1974.

⁷ S. Asch, *Social psychology*, New York 1952, p. 396.

⁸ G. Jaffe, *A Camp Divided*, “Wall Street Journal”, June 18, 2006.

significant for this study that in response to the suggestions of Colonel Payne, the US brigade commander from Camp Taji, Col. James Pasquarrette stated that "Col. Payne and his team of advisers became natives." Which was pejorative in his mouth⁹.

Base divided

The division of the base into "two worlds" was a necessity from the perspective of the Coalition Forces command, due to the poor training of ISF, the enormous level of corruption in the state, as a result of which the Iraqi forces were poorly equipped and poorly supplied. In the same time, the high level of threat meant that not only the Iraqi soldiers themselves were targeted by insurgent forces, but they could also be used against the coalition forces. It happened when, for example, the families of people cooperating with the Coalition Forces were recognized by insurgent forces or terrorist groups and by blackmailed. Soldiers or civilians with access to the coalition forces bases were forced to carry out a suicide attack. Those circumstances created the fear which led to separating of the two forces which was meant to build the new and free Iraqi society. Thus, the concrete wall separating two entirely different worlds of Camp Taji symbolized the relations between the Coalition Forces and the ISF and civilians in Iraq. This generates the first step of the process leading to the syndrome called "The Lucifer Effect"¹⁰.

The step made by division into "us" and "them", naturally induced the next one - creating the sense of superiority in "our" group¹¹. In the country torn apart by the conflicts such division created mistrust and fear. The term Camp divided must evoke a direct association with an exercise that teacher Jane Elliot conducted over half a century earlier, which she called "Class divided". Colonel Payne, because of his experience and posture, was introduced to the team developing a new strategy implemented from the beginning of 2007 by General Petraeus. The strategy was to revert that process in the course of the Counterinsurgency strategy (COIN)¹².

⁹ Author had the opportunity to repeatedly talk to Iraqi translators cooperating with 1BCT / MNDCS as well as from the division level and with locals connected in various ways with the Coalition Forces and their relations were very similar to what Col. Payne spoke about for the purposes of the WSJ text. G. Jaffe, *op.cit.*

¹⁰ Mechanism named "Lucifer Effect" is widely described in the book: P. Zimbardo, *op.cit.*

¹¹ M. Milczanowski, *Sztuka budowania pokoju*, Rzeszów 2020, p. 33-47.

¹² *Counterinsurgency Field Manual 3-24*, U.S. Department of the Army, Dec. 2006, Appendix A-5.

Hate Groups in the chaos natural for democracies

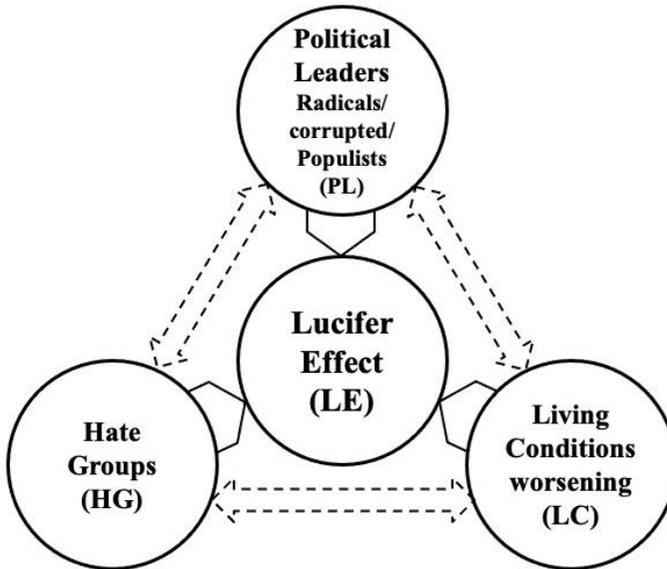
Enumerated experiments and the situations show how mechanisms described as “Lucifer Effect”, step by step bust the societies. The conclusions from those experiments point out to the headmen who are willing to use conflicts to take and stay in power, without any reflection on the future of the whole nation and society. Warren Christopher called such people – Hate Groups: “Hate group means any group of two or more people who associate for the primary purpose of promoting animosity, hostility or malice that is likely to lead to violence against or destruction of property belonging to persons, public agencies or private institutions, because of the actual or perceived race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, disability, gender, or sexual orientation of the person or because the person, agency or institution is identified or associated with or perceived to be associated with the person or group of an identifiable race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, disability, gender, or sexual orientation”¹³.

The impact they have depends on society consciousness, awareness and knowledge. Without any intellectual tools, basic for disclosure of the manipulation methods, even “voting majority” of the given society can follow such headmen. Following Hate Groups the society approaches the so called “Event horizon”¹⁴ of the social conflict¹⁵. Chaos is natural environment for democratic societies which essence lies in accepting of the contradicting opinions, different perceptions and even ideologies. The same chaos can lead to two different situations - “Lucifer Effect” if the three main conditions from the illustration no 1 collide or can be the source of best ideas and solutions induced by diversity of thinking. In the first case the three conditions leading to Lucifer Effect are: 1. Political leaders/Radicals/Corrupted populists; 2. Living conditions worsening; 3. Hate Groups.

¹³ W. Christopher, Hoover Institute Collection, box no 35: *Governors Advisory Panel on Hate Groups. Final Report*, January 2000.

¹⁴ Chaos theory has been implemented to numerous sciences and especially for the social sciences there are also benefits with it in terms of describing and understanding the most complicated conditions and conflicts: *Chaos theory in Psychology and the Life Sciences*, ed. R. Robertson, A. Combs, New York 2014.

¹⁵ The implementation of the Chaos theory to the social conflict and peace building was the core of the book: M. Milczanowski, *op.cit.*



Fear is the activator pushing in two directions: “fear is likely to come with a motivation, such as an urge to run away or to strike back”¹⁶. Running away decrease fear only in a limited way, and striking back is another spin of the spiral of violence. Both are very useful for Hate Groups and in both John Wayne style leader (JWSL) would be desired by those who are afraid. He would protect the fugitives or to lead the counterattack.

In the diagram, we can develop a few scenarios presenting described interactions. We can project those scenarios using Drama Triangle of Stephen Karpman¹⁷. Karpman presented the triangle which has three different roles in its angles: Prosecutor, Savior and Victim, and they interact with each-other making all three concentrating on conflict and in the same time loosing from their perspective all other aspects of their life. Conflict can dominate out life consuming us from inside.

In one case JWSL can be in fact part of the Hate Groups and project government as the prosecutor, and the society as the victim. He would play savior. JWSL can be the government and turn society’s (victim) attention toward internal or outside groups of “prosecutors” - enemies. In the third case JWSL can project himself as a constant vic-

¹⁶ C. Tappolet, *Emotion, Motivation and Action: The Case of Fear*, [in:] *Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Emotions*, ed. P. Goldie, Oxford 2009, p. 326.

¹⁷ S.B. Karpman, *Fairy Tales And Script Drama Analysis*, “Transactional Analysis Bulletin”, 1968, No. 7, p. 39-43.

tim, the part of the society who lose/lost everything because of “them” in the same way as the rest of the people, thus playing the role of people’s tribune he claims he’s the only one who understands people and can bring the justice if only elected. What is paradoxical he can stick to this system even if he gets the power, claiming that all others are against him because of the internal/regional/global conspiracy. What’s crucial – all those scenarios present only the roles played by JWSL – not the real situation.

The real situation is usually complex and almost always there are some areas of conflict and others of common interest. We can influence the situation by creating attractors of conflict (with propaganda, provocations, fake news, and so on), or of cooperation. That is so because those issues which are causing the fear most, are connected to the basic – in most cases existential – human rights. In such a situation, according to Carpmann, we need to leave the prescript roles and get back to the reality, because the roles can push us to the situation where advantage of the trajectories will lead to conflict, even if it wasn’t that way earlier. The circumstances are changing but our actions are also influencing those circumstances. Some resultant is hard to determine which is the essence of chaos theory¹⁸.

Our societies are divided by Hate Groups Politicians in the very much same way as Elliot’s Class and Taji Camp. They convince people, that building the walls, fences is natural, to prevent others from contacting us, because they are inferior, thus causing threat to our system of values, our wealth, stabilization and security. In this set of arguments, the security is the basic value which marginalize all others. We can argue if the values can be shared, mixed or whether our wealth is increasing because of the variety of cultures, but when we say – something is a threat to our lives, if we add the callsign “terrorists”, everything else doesn’t matter. That is why opposition, and especially opposition leaders can be treated and persecuted as terrorists in Russia which prevent them from starting in elections¹⁹. Such political divisions are taking place, not only in Russia, which was never any kind of democracy. In democracies after phase of liberal democracy situation changes dramatically. Previ-

¹⁸ N. Lorenz, *A Study of the Predictability of a 28-Variable Atmospheric Model*, “Tellus”, 1965, No. 17.

¹⁹ *Russia: Parliamentarians must reject new bills threatening rights to freedom of association and expression*, Amnesty International, <https://www.amnesty.org>, May 18, 2021 (15.12.2021); Z. Ullah, D. Tarasova, I. Kottasova, *Putin signs law banning 'extremists' from running in elections, on Navalny's birthday*, CNN, <https://edition.cnn.com> (16.12.2021).

ously, in the period just after elections, winning party leaders usually tried to show, and prove they will treat all society equal, not just its own supporters, but that changed significantly for the last decade. Now deepening and escalating the conflicts, to claim or legally takeover and maintain power for following terms dominates the political agendas. This is possible by inducing fear in the conditions of democratic mechanisms, where majority of entitled to vote doesn't vote.

Following the Thierry de Montbrial's classification of conflicts causes - fundamental and immediate²⁰, we can see that inducing fear is a tool for shaping the fundamental causes of conflicts as they influence the basic instincts. Any action resulting from that fear is causing reaction from the other side, initiating the new cycle of interactions: "To prevent crises is to interfere in the affairs of others, and whatever its rhetoric, each actor intervenes only through the lens of its own interest, as it perceives and formulates them"²¹. In this perspective the fundamental conflict cause, from being partially or fully manipulation, billow into the real fundamental cause of conflict.

Usually, propaganda concealed behind such manipulation, is partially based on reasonable premises – i.e.: there are terrorists, killers, agents acting for money on behalf of foreign powers and global corporations, but implying this picture to the whole given societies, and attribute them to the religious, cultural, tribal or national profiles enforces generalization and creates stereotypes which lead to permanent divisions. Such generalization is followed by dehumanization with use of "terrorists" label. When we connect Muslims as a whole, almost 2 billion people, as terrorists, we have a global conflict at once, despite the obvious fact, that Muslims are afraid of terrorists the same way as Christians, Jews, Buddhists, atheists and all others, and the other fact that terrorists are also non-Muslims. Famous Clash of the Civilizations²² understood as war between civilization-monolith armies is being visualized in the propaganda of the Hate Groups. But in fact Huntington in his book tried to warn from such conflict rather, and gave seemingly contradictory conclusion, that "Avoidance of the global war on civilizations depends on world leaders accepting and cooperating to maintain the multicivilizational character of global politics"²³.

²⁰ T. de Montbrial, *Action and Reaction in the World System, the Dynamics of Economic and Political Power*, Toronto 2013, p. 66-69.

²¹ *Ibidem*, p. 69.

²² S. Huntington, *Clash of the Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order*, New York 2011.

²³ *Ibidem*, p. 250.

Fear as the strongest attractor

Simplification of the relations to the level of “good vs bad” or “us against them” induced by fear, is the way of creating the attractors²⁴ in the chaos by the JWSL. Such attractor, like a magnet is attracting the lines of chaos implementing more order which is easier to orientate for the most of the people. That builds the sense of safety in such formed group. Strange attractor always has some entropy and never ends chaos completely. So strange attractor is the chaotic and organized at the same time, having the limits to the chaotic trajectories. The factor which limits the scale of trajectories is the given point or line making the attractor or set of attractors: “The strange attractor acts like a magnet constraining systemic variables to lie within (these) given ranges”²⁵.

More radical are the politicians less variables desired. Yet in the group of people there always have to be some kind of differences, thus creating some level of entropy, that is why we would always have strange attractors in the conflicting group. The point or line attractor (termination of chaos) could be the end state only in case described by Kant: “It follows that a war of extermination, in which the destruction of both parties and of all justice can result, would permit perpetual peace only in the vast burial ground of humans”²⁶.

Such an attractor which doesn't lead to the one point or line but keep entropy on some level, is called the strange attractor which is in fact the essence of the political leaders' actions. Political leaders want to attract people with their political concept for the country, region, or world. They are attractors themselves if they are popular enough, but sooner or later they need to prepare some proposition for those who don't follow just because of their popularity. It doesn't mean their group has to be fully unified. Only the main ideas must be shared. In the totalitarian regimes or radical groups those points of unity are much more numerous than in the democratic societies, but on the other hand, in the situation when there are no common rules it would be anarchy.

The fear as the attractor make society easier to control. If fear is used as the attractor, than even larger differences can be of less significance and people will give up their freedoms to feel more secure. If the fear is caused by real threat - it can be motivating, but if it's only a tool

²⁴ R. DiBello, *Personality as a strange attractor*, “The Social Dynamics”, 1990.

²⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 1, also: G. Boeing, *Visual Analysis of Nonlinear Dynamical Systems: Chaos, Fractals, Self-Similarity and the Limits of Prediction*, “Systems”, 2016, No. 4, p. 37.

²⁶ I. Kant, *Perpetual Peace*, San Francisco 2009, p. 6.

to mobilize the group constantly and endlessly, fear pushes to the strongest radicalism. Attractors are causing next attractors creation in a recurrent syndrome. In the second option it makes more aggression and more cruelty when the confrontations start.

In the war there is a concept of “collateral damage”, which can be defined as: “Unintentional or incidental injury or damage to persons or objects that would not be lawful military targets in the circumstances ruling at the time”²⁷. But when the confrontation starts and conflicting sides (or just one side) are radicalized by the fear of existential threats, the collateral damage concept is easy to extend to all kinds of behavior, because it is always explained as some kind of self-protection. That is very accurately and suggestively described by director of Global Security project John Pike: “Combat is about stress, and criminal behavior toward civilians is a classic combat stress symptom. (...) If you get enough soldiers into enough combat, some of them are going to murder civilians”²⁸. The meaning of Collateral Damage can be extended very widely when the Combat Stress Disorder deepens as a result of fear. It means that processes started by JWSL inciting fear, at some point becomes recurrent and can’t be fully (or even completely) controlled even by JWSL himself. Such spiral of violence leads to Lucifer Effect and is harder to stop and reverted with every step.

Conclusions

The most important for the society is to recognize if the warning signals sent by the JWSL base on the true threats or they are exaggerated or even falsely created by the leaders. In the age of mediatization, called sometimes post-truth era, and fake news when we deal with even deep-fakes, lack of true authorities or disbelief in science in general, it is very hard to determine if the information causing fear is true, is exaggerated to prevent unforeseen situation development, are overwhelmingly or constantly exaggerated or even completely false to make given group afraid and unify under the leader. The only receipt for that can be education, observing, comparing the information from different sources. True leader who searches common good²⁹ is also in some situations JWSL, but only when true crisis is approaching or ongoing. Such leader is more

²⁷ *Joint Publication 1-02*, Department of Defense, 2016, p. 35.

²⁸ A. Badkhen, *Atrocities are a fact of all wars, even ours / It's not just evil empires whose soldiers go amok*, “San Francisco Chronicle”, Aug. 13, 2006.

²⁹ As defined by Kevin Murray: K. Murray, *The Language of Leaders*, London 2013, p. 58.

complex person assembled from the four basic styles of leadership: force leadership style, strategic leadership style, operational leadership style and encouraging leadership style³⁰. Those four general styles are used in different situation and are almost never used clearly alone. Moreover, use of those four styles indicate the competences of unformal leader. True leader is not seeking for control over every sphere of our life, because his general rule is to trust people to some extent. In fact, pursuing more and more control disclose shallowness of leader and prevents him from the true leading³¹.

In general, the JWSL brave and savior posture is very much desired when the confrontation in its worst form (like total, or proxy war) is ongoing and we need to mobilize our group to defend against aggressor who's aim is just to eliminate enemies. The problem lies in his tendency to be the heroic even if there is no necessity to be like, or if there are other than warlike methods of conflict (or even confrontation) resolution. Tendency for inciting fear to provoke the conflicts and confrontation to prove his bravery and necessity of saving his kinsman change the conditions and interactions. The conflicts really exist, just they do not always have to provoke use of violence.

There is (usually hard to define) distinction between the leader who is reacting to threats and the one who exaggerates them, inciting the fear and putting himself in the role of savior. This distinction determines the area where we are still in the democracy and we are able to effectively change our future by voting and controlling our representatives, or we are relying on the "savior" resigning from our rights and even freedoms for the basic need – security. In fact, blindless following JWSL lead society to the assured path approaching the "chaos" of confrontation. The deeper in the conflict and closer to the confrontation, the more difficult to disclose the JWSL manipulation it is. In the following stage of this process the conflict gets real and the confrontation is only a matter of the immediate causes, thus the former manipulation gets meaningless. That "game" between the Society and Politicians is very dangerous because it changes both. Society influenced by the headsmen who win because of and by the conflict, is getting more divided, and part of the politicians learning that conflict can give them power easier then reforms or cooperation, are eager to use that opportunity. But Social Psychology gives us tools to disclose conflicting headsmen called Hate groups and disobey false authorities.

³⁰ R.E. Kaplan, R.B. Kaiser, *The Versatile Leader: Make the Most of Your Strengths Without Overdoing It*, San Francisco 2006.

³¹ The contradistinction follows the article: D. Richards, *You Can Control, And You Can Lead, But You Can't Do Both*, "Forbes", Jul. 25, 2018.

If we can put all basic human rights into the common interest “basket”, leaving even all other issues as conflicting we could have a good ground for negotiations without turning into the Lucifer Effect always. But we need to know that the “class divided” stuck deep in our minds and to prevent it from controlling us we have to be aware of it and search other choices.

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Podzielone społeczeństwo: strach jako czynnik kluczowy liderów stylu Johna Wayne'a

Streszczenie

Strach jest jednym z najsilniejszych motywatorów. Tworzy i zamyka granice pomiędzy narodami, grupami społecznymi, rasami, religiami, ale nawet członkami rodziny, studentami, dziećmi z sąsiedztwa. Możemy różnić się w wielu kwestiach, nawet prowadząc do ostrych konfliktów, ale bez przemocy. Natomiast gdy pojawia się strach, szczególnie spotęgowany brakiem poczucia odpowiedzialności, konflikt zmienia się, krok po kroku w spiralę, którą nazywamy „Efektem Lucyfera”. Politycy, którzy dążą do kontrolowania wszystkich sfer życia społecznego, twierdzą, że ta kontrola jest im potrzebna, aby chronić „nas” przed „nimi”. Tak szczególne sprawowanie kontroli jest konieczne z uwagi na tych którzy z „nami” się nie zgadzają są wrogami – „nimi”, zagrażającymi naszemu bezpieczeństwu. Tacy liderzy „odgrywają” rolę symbolicznego Johna Wayne, wzmacniając poczucie strachu, co powoduje, że ludzie czują się zagrożeni, a przez to szukają silnego – bezkompromisowego lidera, który obroni „nas” przed „nimi”.

Słowa kluczowe: konflikt, społeczeństwo, władza, przywództwo