

Classic sociological paradigms have focused predominantly on norms, values or institutions as sources of morality and factors bonding people together, and they did not draw major attention to accidental, non-routine and short-term interactions in which taken-for-granted, tacit elements as well as tangible, spatial and visual aspects play an important role. Traditionally, morality is defined as “a set of values, norms and patterns of behaviour that functions externally and an internal component of individual consciousness” (Margański 2006:8). Scholars from various fields of study recognised other sources of human moral actions than values, norms and institutions (e.g. philosophers, ethnologists, biologists, psychologists and anthropologists). In this context, the changing relationship of humans and animals was analysed as well as intuitions (e.g. Social Intuition Model developed by Jonathan Haidt) and the question of how “morality is grounded in the brain”.

Researchers – sociologists, psychologists and representatives of neuroscience – usually investigate first-order morality. First of all, they analyse the behavioral level, e.g. the distribution and predictors of helping a stranger or engaging in unethical practice. They also investigate the normative level, i.e.. “the distinction and predictors of what people find morally right and wrong, admirable and despicable, the moral goods they pursue; and a society’s moral institutions and norms” (Abend 2014: 66). Gabriel Abend has argued that scientists of morality have failed to recognize a third level: **the moral background**.

Elements of moral background may be: (1) discursive and overt, (2) unspoken understandings, (3) taken-for-granted, implicit and tacit – they can be embodied in or inscribed into human bodies. Abend emphasizes, that the most challenging to social scientists is to study taken-for-granted, implicit and tacit elements of moral background. **Tacit elements of moral background** are relatively unexplored, and I argue that it merits more attention.

The project aims to:

- 1) **identify the role of tacit elements of moral background in non-routine situations;**
- 2) **identify how individuals retrospectively explain their behaviour in non-routine situations.**

The proposed project is based on the premise that the dispositions which are deeply embedded in the experience of the everyday routine manifest themselves in non-routine. It would be difficult to argue that in non-routine situations individuals are reflexive in the Weberian sense (i.e. they have deep reflexivity and long decision-making processes), but it is equally difficult to claim that they directly respond to other people’s actions, or social context embedded in physical objects (i.e. as a result of stimulus-response). Contemporary research on morality demonstrates that humans often find a *post factum* explanation of their actions. We say, for example: “I felt I had to do something” whereas in reality our behaviour was intuitive and passion and emotions preceded reflection. On the other hand, unlike other animals, people are guided by self-reflexivity, internal conversation or inner dialogue. We are the only species that ponders on what it thinks and tries to justify its behaviour.

Considering the above, the analysis will concern:

- a) **non-routine situation** that enables to reveal tacit and deeply embedded in the experience of the everyday routine elements of moral background.
- b) **situations in which we can quietly reflect on our actions, justify them rationally and judge our behaviour from a distance.**

In order to study tacit elements of moral background I will use *arts-based research* methodology, which has not yet been employed to study morality. The utility of this methodology is based on the capacity to “peering beneath the surface of the familiar, the obvious” as well as “the arts based researcher may persuade readers or percipients of the work (including the artist herself) to revisit the world from a different direction, seeing it through fresh eyes”.

A team of American scientists in *Habits of the Heart* found that respondents could not cope with the justification of values that they considered fundamental. Their most frequent reaction was irritation. One of the respondents justified integrity with a statement: “it just is”. As the authors of the diagnosis summarize, the respondents were not lacking certainty as regards the values themselves, but they did not have any shared convictions that go without saying (e.g. from the Jewish-Christian tradition) – the values did not have a declarative character for them. People often know what can and cannot be morally evaluated even when they cannot make it explicit. In other words, they have a moral attitude toward an object, event or behavior. Social processes provide **a background understanding** of what counts as a moral object, what counts as a human being, or what make sense of particular event.