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THE ROLE OF CREATED ANTHROPOLOGICAL SITUATIONS IN FORMING THE AXIOSPHERE OF AUDIOVISUAL SOCIAL ADVERTISING

Social Advertising in Anthropological and Axiological Thought – Methodological Assumptions

The specific nature of social advertising raises a need for separate research into such media communication phenomenon.[1] There is a necessity in science to work out a methodological approach to social advertising that would be based on anthropological assumptions. Janina Filek has thus concluded:

> (…) if you want to say to people (the audience) something important about man – and social advertising wants and should do so – it is impossible to achieve that knowing nothing about his nature, having no anthropological issues solved that are important for the image of man.[2]

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[1] Cf. M. Filipiak, *Homo communicans. Wprowadzenie do teorii masowego komunikowania*, Lublin 2004, pp. 169-171; A. Pomieciński, *Reklama w kulturze współczesnej. Studium antropologiczne*, Poznań 2005, pp. 18, 20; M. Nóżka and K. Keler, *Reklama społeczna – implikacje dla praktyki pracy socjalnej*, in: K. Keler and M. Nóżka (eds.), *Granice i zastosowania reklamy społecznej*, Kraków 2007, p. 18.

[2] J. Filek, *Czy reklamie społecznej wszystko wolno?* in: K. Keler and M. Nóżka (eds.), *Granice i zastosowania reklamy społecznej*, op.cit., p. 31.

Furthermore, in terms of methodology this paper fits into the tradition of considering relations between a philosophical aspect of social campaigns (i.e. connected with axiological and anthropological assumptions) and a praxeological aspect (i.e. conditioned by the utility of actions and efficiency of influence)[3]. Axiological issues are strongly related to the thought on man. Józef Tischner recognised axiology as a field having close affinity with humanity and examined the issue of values in an anthropological perspective.[4] Human actions (e.g. desires, orientations, seeking sense, setting goals) are connected with values.[5] Man's existence consists in giving sense to reality. This sense-giving, in turn, has an axiological nature, as it is linked with valuing. Both man and the world in which he exists are recognised as factual and axiological beings.[6] It is assumed that social communication is governed by axiological assumptions, while achieving values in human interactions is a feature of specifically anthropological nature.[7] The anthropological and axiological perspective applied in an approach to social advertising is derived from a belief about a strict dependence between valuing and the manner in which the issue of a human being is considered. As perceived by Katarzyna Parzych an axiological dimension of human action is manifested in the ways of thinking and life styles that stem from a certain hierarchy of values, which, in turn, constitutes culture[8]. Therefore, the anthropological and axiological approach adopted in this article is derived from the fact that social advertising reflects social and cultural values. The anthropological and axiological perspective in the thought on social advertising comes from acceptance of a premise that has been formulated by Marcjanna Nóżka and Karolina Keler:

> If we agree (…) that social advertising is a means of a directional social change, we cannot but reflect upon axiological issues. This comes from the fact that determining what is to be good for society or individuals is a problem that cannot be considered without referring to values. It is values that tell us whether a change has produced a positive or negative effect. What is more, by creating social advertising we always make philosophical choices, making some assumptions about man and society. (…) In case of social advertising interference comes into the psychic sphere, the system of values, into issues that (…) decide about man's identity and internal coherence".[9]

Axiosphere of Audiovisual Social Advertising

Audiovisual social advertising co-creates a modern cultural discourse that may be termed as a "common to all mankind axiosphere"[10], i.e. a system of universal values conditioning the es-

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[3] Ibidem, p. 17.

[4] J. Tischner, *Myślenie według wartości*, Kraków 2000, p. 483.

[5] L. Ostasz, *Rozumienie człowieka. Antropologia filozoficzna*, Olsztyn 2003, pp. 205-206.

[6] J. Szczeniowski, *Metaantropologia filozoficzna. Zarys antropologii krytycznej*, Warszawa 1997, p. 51.

[7] Cf. S. Pietraszko, *Studia o kulturze*, Wrocław 1992, pp. 27-29; K. Stasiuk, *Krytyka kultury jako krytyka komunikacji. Pomiędzy działaniem komunikacyjnym, dyskursem a kulturą masową*, Wrocław 2003, p. 15.

[8] K. Parzych, *Człowiek jako miejsce dialogu Kościoła z kulturą według Jana Pawła II*, in: J. Baniak (ed.), *Człowiek z przełomu wieków w refleksji filozofii dialogu*, Poznań 2002, p. 153.

[9] Ibidem, s. 18.

[10] About a concept of global axiology accepting complementarity of human goodness in all dimensions, i.e. three axiospheres: abstractive individual man, community, humankind – cf. J. Lipiec, *U podstaw systemu wartości*, in: J. Lipiec (ed.), *Ontologia wartości*, Lublin 1990, pp. 24-26.

sence and sense of man's existence. Pursuant to an axiological concept of Józef Lipiec the following values appear and make sense at such anthropological level: rationality and power of knowledge, development dynamism and life-giving work, creativism and culture-making aspects, and also highest ethical, political, aesthetical etc. values.[11] Values that are created and disseminated in audiovisual messages via created images of the world and human situations constitute an axiosphere of social advertising. They establish an environment of intentional forming of social awareness, i.e. views, emotions, attitudes and practices[12], within the dimensions of:

- influencing interpersonal relations by realising social values;
- socialising and educating;
- forming, transforming or strengthening positive attitudes;
- promoting ideas and values;
- indicating the essence of specific social problems;
- supporting settlement of a certain social problem or just articulating it;
- eliminating evil from public life;
- making society aware of threats;
- inducing positive behaviour.[13]

Other aspects of the axiosphere of audiovisual social advertising are made up of ways of valuing and assessing such social problems, like: education; active efforts towards development of civic society; development of ecological awareness and caring about natural environment; road traffic safety; communication in family; defence and security; development assistance; social support; human rights; addiction prevention; health promotion; transparency of institutions and corruption problems; equal rights and tolerance; fighting violence; fighting social exclusion; image campaigns of organisations and institutions; forming consumer awareness; preventing excessive consumerism; corporate social responsibility.[14]

The axiosphere of audiovisual social advertising implies a system of values the benchmark of which includes:

- social responsibility;
- social justice;
- caring about social welfare, i.e. the essence of human life (so-called "good life" – specific situations of individuals, families and communities);
- idea of equality;
- human dignity;
- respect for man;
- equal opportunities for all people;

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[11] Ibidem, p. 26.

[12] A. Sowała, *Filozoficzno-metodologiczne zorientowanie świata reklam społecznych i wynikające z tego konsekwencje*, in: K. Keler and M. Nóżka (eds.), *Granice i zastosowania reklamy społecznej*, op.cit., p. 45.

[13] Cf. M. Nóżka and K. Keler, *Reklama społeczna – implikacje*..., op.cit., pp. 19-20; J. Filek, op.cit., pp. 27, 29, 31.

[14] *Kampanie*, in: Reklama Społeczna, Kampanie Społeczne – CSR/CRM [online],<http://www.kampaniespoleczne.pl/kampanie>, access: 15 April 2009.

- environmental factors that have influence on man;
- man's right to self-determination;
- idea of the individual's responsibility for undertaken actions;
- knowledge required for fulfilling values.[15]

Advertising in social campaigns undertakes efforts at motivating through values, creating prospects for implementing an idea of giving sense to human existence in actions of valuing.[16] As in an axiosphere, audiovisual social advertising has a potential to perform a cultural function of communicating values, so that achieving good for an individual implicated both goodness in interpersonal relations and giving sense to social life.

Anthropological Situations and Valuing in Social Advertising

Anthropological thought has proven to be an inspiring approach in research done into audiovisual advertising.[17] While emphasising culture-related importance of advertising messages Adam Pomieciński has at the same time pointed out to a good reason for an anthropological trend in thinking about advertising. He has concluded:

> (…) advertising is seen as one of the major elements that constitute and characterise an image
> of the modern culture, it uncovers (…) a new and extremely intriguing area of social connections.
> (…) when writing about advertising we again start touching upon »major« anthropological issues.[18]

Social campaigns in the media become an anthropological environment of man's existence in social relations and influencing development of the advertising audience in terms of shaping a system of values. Messages of social advertising hide an anthropological and axiological potential relating to initiation of cultural changes, creation of a social reality. Advertising having such nature is thus used to:

- enhance awareness and develop general social knowledge;
- arouse sensitivity to injustice;
- initiate problems co-feeling;
- induce tolerance;
- mobilise to commitment;
- initiate solving of problems;
- warn against pathologies;
- argue with superstitions and stereotypes;

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[15] Cf. M. Nóżka and K. Keler, op.cit., p. 24; J. Filek, op.cit., pp. 32-33.

[16] Cf. L. Hostyński, *O wartościach. Aksjologia formalna, estetyka i etyka Henryka Elzenberga*, Lublin 1991, pp. 53-54.

[17] Cf. A. Dudziak, *O mitologizowaniu obrazu świata w reklamie telewizyjnej*, in: G. Pełczyński and R. Vorbrich (eds.), *Obrazy kultur*, Poznań 2007, pp. 185-193; idem, *Antropologiczne konteksty internetowej reklamy społecznej*, in: M. Sokołowski (ed.), *(Kon)teksty kultury medialnej. Analizy i interpretacje*, T. 1, Olsztyn 2007, pp. 305-317; id., *Kod konotacyjny w reklamie. Aspekty antropologiczne*, in: M. Sokołowski (ed.), *Kulturowe kody mediów. Stan obecny i perspektywy rozwoju*, Toruń 2008, pp. 113-123.

[18] A. Pomieciński, op.cit., p. 121.

- liquidate social and cultural barriers and tensions.[19]

A fact is pointed out in social advertising research that as a persuasive message that is socially useful advertising creates values.[20] Broadcasters of advertising messages that are used in social campaigns very often employ emotional persuasion, undertaking specific problems of civilisation. Created anthropological situations become carriers of values in audiovisual social advertising. They establish an axiological platform used to form a modern system of norms, patterns and assessments by a generation that has been raised in the media culture.

Marcjanna Nóżka and Karolina Keler have proposed the following strategy of managing the influence exerted by an axiosphere of social advertising:

> Assuming that no one has to be persuaded to desired values, it is enough to include these values in the way the presented world is created and link them with an advertised attitude, thus making them the carrier of such values.[21]

The presented view might be confirmed by one of the concepts of contemporary social psychology according to which man socialises in a specific social group that belongs to a certain culture where specific values, norms and patterns of behaviour exist. As Bogdan Wojciszke has said:

> While becoming a full member of some culture in the socialisation process, an individual identifies with such norms, and their fulfilment in person's own behaviour emerges as a condition for respect from the environment and positive self-assessment.[22]

Whereas "agatological" anthropological situations, i.e. those that stigmatise what should not exist in the modern world, arise numerous controversies among the audience of a modern media discourse.[23] Their intent is to overcome social indifference to phenomena that social campaigns inform about, uncovering negative aspects of reality. One of the practitioners of social campaigns, Bartłomiej Bartoszek, who has created, among others, the "Support Justified Nudity in Advertising" campaign, has expressed the following opinion:

> Social advertising may use strong means of expression, employ the motives of sex, violence and fear. And that's what often happens. It may go beyond the limits of good taste. As it was the case in a number of Western campaigns about road safety showing brutal consequences of accidents. There must, however, be some idea behind it, that makes the message credible.[24]

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[19] M. Bogunia-Borowska, *Reklama jako tworzenie rzeczywistości społecznej*, Kraków 2004, pp. 129-130.

[20] M. Wierzchoń and J. Orzechowski, *Zastosowanie technik wpływu społecznego w reklamie społecznej*, in: K. Keler and M. Nóżka (eds.), *Granice i zastosowania reklamy społecznej*, op.cit., p. 89.

[21] M. Nóżka and K. Keler, *Reklama społeczna – implikacje*..., op.cit., pp. 23-24.

[22] B. Wojciszke, *Człowiek wśród ludzi. Zarys psychologii społecznej*, Warszawa 2006, p. 24.

[23] J. Tischner, op.cit., p. 486.

[24] *Z miłości do warzyw*, in: Reklama Społeczna, Kampanie Społeczne – CSR/CRM [online], 2 February 2009, <http://www.kampaniespoleczne.pl/artykuly.php?artykul_id=803&action=szczegoly>, access: 15 April 2009.

Credibility of the contents disseminated in social advertising is now considered to be one of the factors deciding about efficiency of influence on the audience.[25] Thus, credibility of communication determined by creations (of the world's images and anthropological situations) present in advertising spots shall affect acceptance of social campaigns.

While seeking a high level of credibility of the message and suggestiveness of the presented contents broadcasters of audiovisual social advertising sometimes do so in too radical way. Consequently, anthropological situations shown in an excessively drastic way evoke objection among their recipients. Dominika Maison has characterised such type of creation in social advertising saying:

> Supporters of a view that stirring up strong, negative emotions is an effective tool of persuasion in social advertising base it on an assumption that such advertising arouses excitement (fear, anger etc.) that is unpleasant for recipients. To reduce it, a person undertakes action by changing his hitherto attitudes or behaviour. There are, however, theories saying that rejection of such message is another way of reducing tension caused by negative emotions in advertising. A very strong danger forces the recipient not to accept the advertising message, for example by way of explaining to himself that «this problem applies to the dregs of society only». Too strong message instead of «moving» may also be a subject of jokes.[26]

Marcjanna Nóżka and Karolina Keler have concluded that a trend to shock in social advertising may prove to be an ineffective way of communicating. The researchers have stated:

> (…) showing aversive images (…) too often may lead to the recipient becoming inured to such images. One should rather be shown how to act, and not how people act wrongly. It does not suffice to shock in order to evoke a desired social response. A fear-stirring message usually causes a decline in its efficiency in arousing intended changes in attitudes, influencing behaviours. A strong danger may stir up a desire to escape, avoiding the message and inclination to defensive negation, undermining its credibility. This state is reinforced when the recipient lacks faith in the possibility of coping with the danger. (…) it would thus be advisable to avoid directive messages in social advertising, and to show reality, as objectively as possible, present benefits stemming from promoted attitudes and ideas, as well as to transfer knowledge necessary for their implementation. Therefore, inclining towards a cognitive concept of man that is an independent entity who assumes an investigative approach to reality, observes, draws conclusions, and, pursuant to the acquired knowledge, adjusts to the world and shapes it.[27]

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[25] Cf. D. Maison and R. Bruin, *Wpływ badań na skuteczność społecznej kampanii reklamowej*, in: D. Maison and P. Wasilewski (eds.), *Propaganda dobrych serc, czyli rzecz o reklamie społecznej*, Kraków 2002, pp. 160-169; D. Doliński, *Psychologiczne mechanizmy reklamy*, Gdańsk 2003; M. Wierzchoń and J. Orzechowski, op.cit., p. 89.

[26] *Szok w reklamie. Czy skuteczny?*, in: Reklama Społeczna, Kampanie Społeczne – CSR/CRM [online], 30 January 2008, <http://www.kampaniespoleczne.pl/artykuly,57?PHPSESSID=80087569eaf2f3adb27595 b4b10f693d>, access: 15 April 2009.

[27] M. Nóżka and K. Keler, *Reklama społeczna – implikacje*..., op.cit., p. 25.

Janina Filek has presented a similar view on efficiency of influencing contained in social advertising:

> Having considered anthropological, ethical and psychological aspects, in terms of their essence, social advertising campaigns should rather induce positive behaviour, or promote positive behaviour, than discourage the wrong ones, and moreover they should rather refer to rational arguments, strengthened by a positive feeling than arouse only emotions that are mainly negative (such as: fear or fury).[28]

As Dominika Maison, Paweł Prochenko and Agata Stafiej have observed, social campaigns in the media often remain ineffective:

> Despite a very positive message and best intentions possible on their authors, many of them do not fulfil their intended role: [they are – A.D.] ineffective or actually harm the given cause. (…) A number of Polish social campaigns lack a long-term perspective and a clear strategy of solving the problem that is the subject matter of a campaign. Therefore, those are often actions that last very short and consequently, standing small chances of making a long-lasting change in the assumed social attitudes.[29]

Meanwhile broadcasters of audiovisual social advertising sometimes knowingly use provocation as a factor in effective influencing. The "Stop Violence at Home" campaign of 1997 created by the advertising agency Ammirati Puris Lintas may be given here as an example that has become rooted in the Polish social awareness. The campaign's goal was to draw attention to the situation of victims of home violence. Creative assumption, among others, included intentions to have the campaign as moving as possible, and that a message should be realistic and arousing strong emotions, whereas the form of the message should be explicitly expressed. There were two types of carriers used: outdoor billboards with the slogan "Because the soup was too salty" and a commercial called "The Wedding". The authors have adopted the following goals:

- become deeply rooted in the social awareness with a help of a profound message;
- break a certain taboo;
- induce the recipient to thinking;
- provoke a social discussion;
- help victims of violence to believe they are not left alone;
- "shock to show the truth in its full dimension".[30]

In the practice of social campaigns while preparing creative assumptions relating to intentions of undertaking sensitive issues in commercial spots there is a danger of discouraging recipients because of too controversial assessments underlying the interpretation of messages.

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[28] J. Filek, op.cit., pp. 31-32.

[29] D. Maison and P. Wasilewski, *Propaganda dobrych serc, czyli rzecz o reklamie społecznej*, Kraków 2002, p. 5.

[30] M. Lipski and E. Mazurczak, *Prowokacja pomogła kampanii*, in: D. Maison and P. Wasilewski, op.cit., pp. 104-106.

A way to avoid a negative reception of social advertising or potential protests of target groups seems to comply with the principles of personalism treated as the basis for both anthropological and axiological thought, and actions relating to social responsibility.[31] Given such dimension it is proposed to adopt the ethics of personalism as a code of communication in social advertising, recognising a human being, i.e. the other man in need of help, as a subject for whose goodness universal values are respected:

- dignity of each man is recognised;
- a principle is observed saying that in advertising influence a person should be perceived as a goal, not as means;
- integrity of a human being is recognised, i.e. the bio-psycho-socio-spiritual indivisibility;
- person's freedom of self-determination is respected, and simultaneously the importance of responsibility is stressed;
- the necessity of being guided by a socially accepted hierarchy of values is accepted;
- attitudes of trust and hope are presented, even in tragic situations;
- the role of meeting and dialoguing with the other person is emphasised;
- the notion of "common good" is accepted as an alternative to the antinomy of "individual's goodness – community goodness".[32]

The paper's author is convinced that there is a possibility of reducing the risk of rejecting by recipients the commercial contents that have been disseminated in social advertising by employing a diagnostic tool in the form of a questionnaire presented below:

- Are the goals of social advertising not inconsistent with proposals of social responsibility?
- Is the message of a specific advertisement identifiable with intents of those who have commissioned a social campaign?
- Do the contents presented in advertising correspond to the assumed goals of social influencing?
- Does specific social advertising not create or reinforce harmful stereotypes?

Axiosphere of Social Advertising as Perceived by Students

In April 2009 the author of this article carried a survey among 3rd year students of Journalism and Social Communication at the Humanities Department of the University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn. The purpose of qualitative questionnaire-based survey with a purposeful selection of the sample was to examine opinions of the circles of would-be media employees and prospective co-ordinators of social campaigns about their preferences with regard to the selected factors of persuasion, aesthetics and ethics of advertising. Results of the conducted survey have allowed formulating the following conclusions:

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[31] W. Kaczyńska, *Wyjątkowa wartość – godność osoby ludzkiej (o personalizmie jako antropologiczno--aksjologicznej podstawie myślenia i postępowania pomocowego)*, in: K. Frysztacki (ed.), *Wartości i normy społeczne – wokół uwarunkowań i czynników pracy socjalnej*, Kraków 2002, p. 31.
[32] Ibid., pp. 34-35.

1. Students of journalism and social communication have stated that as recipients of social campaigns they are more affected by being induced to discontinue undesired behaviour in advertising rather than being prevail to desired attitudes and behaviours.
2. Respondents have recognised a realistic message (i.e. literal communication of the problem) as being more effective than a metaphoric message (parable, allusive, indirect or euphemistic communication).
3. The surveyed persons have both remembered social advertising with friendly contents ("Drink Milk, You'll Be Big!", "I'm Driving, I'm not Drinking", "Fish Good For Everything", "Tangerines and Oranges", "McDonald's Escort Kids") and the contents of social advertising arousing negative emotions ("Bad touch hurts all life", "Speed kills", "Beat it, redneck", "Eat, teddy-bear, eat", "Because the soup was too salty").
4. The surveyed have expressed their approval for using drastic elements in social advertising to show the truth and influence a change in attitudes of recipients. Below there are quotations from the most characteristic statements presented:

    •   "(…) sometimes it's the only way to get through to the recipient's sensitivity";
    •   "(…) they are needed, since they have a strong influence on emotions that thus it's easier to induce an attitude change. (…) in such [advertising – A.D.] that talks into being cautious on roads and warns against accidents caused by speeding";
    •   "(…) using drastic elements is advisable; they stir up our imagination; at times of danger we recollect the advertising, we become more cautious in what we do";
    •   "If the use of such elements in advertising translates into its effectiveness, this is a good solution, since it may have an impact on society";
    •   "(…) drastic elements are very effective, as they are remembered quicker";
    •   "(…) they affect the attitude change most, however, some moderation is advisable. They impact the recipient to the greatest possible extent".

5. Respondents have accepted breaking taboos in social advertising. They have put down in the questionnaires, among others, the following statements: "that's the key goal of social campaigns", "should be broken in a skilful way to make recipients think, but not indignant enough to knowingly reject the message".
6. Students of journalism have accepted balancing on the edge of a good taste in case of socially important goals of non-commercial campaigns. Below there is a selection of opinions by the surveyed persons: "I allow balancing on the border of good taste, provided it doesn't hurt anyone", "it's critical that the recipient remembers the message", "in some campaigns [it's – A.D.] actually advisable to shock the recipient".
7. Those participating in the survey have not approved balancing on the edge of systems of value (ethical norms) in social advertising. The most characteristic opinions are expressed in the following quotes: "there's a danger of distorting values", "I don't approve of that", "explicit statement of what's good and bad, without infringing on generally accepted values".

Conducted among the students of journalism at the University of Warmia and Mazury (UWM) the survey has undermined the hypothesis about ineffectiveness (in case of the exam-

ined group) of aversive messages saying that the recipients are inclined to avoid such types of messages. Results of the survey have confirmed a hypothesis that anthropological situations created in social advertising may play a critical role in forming the system of values of media culture participants. They constitute a potential to enrich the axiosphere of social campaigns in the following dimensions:

- opposing cultural axiological relativism of absolute values that give sense to man's life;
- expressing faith in man's possibilities to raise above himself and realise ethical values and ideals;
- committing recipients to realise values, performing valuable acts;
- creating opportunities for realising a deep desire that accompanies man to participate in what is valuable;
- convincing that realisation of values is one of the fundamental culture making assignments of man;
- enhancing the level of relations between man and other persons, i.e. creating social ties having the nature of a higher community;
- promoting a personalistic model of culture.

Summary

Advertising communication in audiovisual social campaigns is a phenomenon in exploration of which it is worth to adopt a methodological anthropological and axiological perspective. By promoting a specific axiological set, messages of social advertising shape the sphere of values in the modern media culture. They also make it possible to motivate recipients by using values. It is an intent of advertising broadcasters to present the most credible images of a social reality. In order such advertising creations are not faced with negative reception, it is proposed that personalistic principles as the basis of communication ethics are respected in social campaigns.

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The Role of Created Anthropological Situations in Forming the Axiosphere of Audiovisual Social Advertising

ABSTRACT. The article presents a methodological position representative for an anthropological and axiological trend in the thought on advertising communication in social campaigns. The paper focuses on an issue of the axiosphere of audiovisual social advertising formed as a result of creating anthropological situations. An anthropological perspective provides knowledge about man as an element of the contents of an advertising message, i.e. his entire identity – a bio-psycho-socio-spiritual being. An axiological approach, in turn, allows showing culture creative potential of values that are present in social advertising, as well as disclosing their impact on the efficiency of influence of such messages. The study also brings forward conclusions stemming from a survey carried among students of journalism and social communication about their expectations and preferences of certain categories of persuasion, aesthetics and ethics in social advertising.

Keywords

anthropology of advertising, axiology of advertising, social advertising, social campaigns, audiovisual advertising, axiosphere.