

# The Relevance of Striking a Balance between Sociocentric Social Milieu and Egocentric Individual Competence

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Received: 08 Jun 2026; Accepted: 18 Jun 2026; Published: 23 Jun 2026

**Citation:** Mercedes E Agudo. The Relevance of Striking a Balance between Sociocentric Social Milieu and Egocentric Individual Competence. Int J Forens Sci Res. 2026; 3(2): 1-6.

## ABSTRACT

*Sociocentric social milieu and egocentric individual competence seem to be a huge contrast and are highly polarized. We are aware of the shift of our landscape in our human ecosystem. There is the national mental health crisis, there is the erosion of public trust on security and police officers, and there is international warfare. This paper will provide systematic analysis on how striking a balance between sociocentric social milieu and egocentric individual competence can provide a healthy, secure, sustainable, harmonious, and flourishing humanity. This will raise awareness that it is advantageous to integrate both and be on guard from the disadvantages if skewed and impartial attention to priorities is employed. Important related themes are brought to light: 1) Security 2) Privacy 3) Autonomy 4) Boundaries 5) Migration 6) Law and Order. The sources of information and discussions are from various literature and textbooks that will be well presented. In conclusion, it is relevant to strike a balance between sociocentric social milieu and egocentric individual competence. It is hoped that this will spark a systemic social transformation and enhance individual's understanding and motivation to aim for highest potential for egocentric individual competence.*

## Keywords

Sociocentric Social Milieu, Social Cohesion, Individual Autonomy, Mental Health, Human Flourishing.

## Introduction

Sociocentric social milieu and egocentric individual competence are a huge contrast at opposite poles. However, both are equally important strengths to possess, and both need equal attention to strike a balance for humanity preservation in this perilous world that is constantly changing. Humans are partly authors of their lives with the Supreme Being endowing mankind with Reason and Will.

The non-industrialized, homogeneous, rural communities are sociocentric [1] wherein the citizens have many things in common and are cohesive helping each other in their meager resources. The industrialized countries/communities are multicultural and multiracial, especially attracting migrants who are high aspirers, with egocentric nature, individually competent and relatively

self-sufficient. With the passage of time, the fluid culture has evolved. These two concepts can be integrated and applied to our current challenges with the change of landscape. That is, to strike a balance between sociocentric social milieu and egocentric individual competence.

## Sociocentric Social Milieu

In the inpatient psychiatric unit, social milieu is utilized as instrumental to patient's healing [2]. The social milieu activities include patient interactions in group activities, therapeutic recreations, and quiet times. It is a social container that provides scaffolding of patients. Structure, safety, rules, culture, predictability, responsibility, reliability, regulation of the entry of new patients and diligent planning of patient's discharges are systematically established. This concept of inpatient psychiatric social milieu can extend beyond the larger society. This will provide support, protection, and care for the individual to flourish through ethical, moral, sustainable, and significantly healthy environment. To achieve the above goal, vigilance, agility,

forecasting, prioritizing, collaboration, and judicious decision making across all members at multiple levels of the social milieu are necessary. This intentional design of the social milieu will ensure protection of the individual to mitigate one's burdens, cognitively, emotionally, physically, socially, and spiritually, conducive to growth and recovery in due time. It is beautiful to see humanity flourish, each become effective, healthy, happy, secure, and confident. This is a marker that the social milieu, such as society, system, institution, department, organization, jurisdiction, and field, does its functions well.

### Egocentric Individual Competence

Egocentric individual competence is the individual's ability, attitude, motivation, self-regulation, self-preservation, resilience, adaptation, balance, harmony, and wellbeing even with the dynamic, internal and external environmental changes of the individual. Human beings have different life spans, states of life, strengths, perspectives, preferences, levels of development, cultural heritage, and creeds. Careful discernment in measuring individual competence must be utilized as everyone has multidimensional qualities. One may have a short life span of 24 years, but it is a life lived well as egocentric competent individual in her sociocentric social milieu. This is exemplified by the beautiful life of St. Therese of Lisieux (1873 – 1897), a Carmelite Nun, a Doctor of the Church [3].

Each human being is a masterpiece created by the Supreme Being, worthy of respect, awe, and love, a reflection of our Divine Creator. The development of a human being's individual competence entails the process of learning, formation, retrieval of memories, reconstruction and reframing of neural and cognitive processes,

to have behaviorally appropriate [4] and morally upright and meaningful life. From fetal life, infancy, early childhood, latency, adolescence, adulthood, and the elderly, we have the many theories that guided us in our understanding of human development [5]. Yet, critical thinking is required because of the many inconsistencies of the corpus of research. Early childhood development is within the social milieu of the family. Parents establish their household that will help the child to have structure and predictability. The consistency of enforcement of house rules and repeated compliance by the child cause habituation and strengthening of the learned virtues [6] from following the rules that are virtuous and not oppressive. This creates a stable interconnectedness between child and parents. Their communication is clear, and the child is sensitive to the signals of the parents. This enhances the child's acquisition of virtues, through mirroring from parents. The child's acquired skills to discern the veracity of incoming messages are useful strengths during times of challenging decision making. With adequate habituation and learning, these result in default thinking that comes easy for the trained child to execute.

The moral obligation is to provide the child with basic physiological needs, safety, and moral instructions. The father puts layers of physical protection from house intruders, fire, and disasters. The mother provides adequate nurturance, emotional support, and consistent meaningful presence with her child. These are required in a developing child to be a good citizen with individual competence as well as appropriate sociability in one's social milieu.

### The Adult Life

Two scenarios are constructed here that are not inclusive of all

**Table 1:** Comparison between a Physician and Security/Police Officer.

QUALITIES	PHYSICIAN	SECURITY/POLICE OFFICER
1. Training and Education	Prerequisite sciences, Bachelor undergrad school, School of medicine, Residency, Fellowship	Bachelor undergrad school, Forensic science, Law, Criminal Justice, Police Academy Physical fitness
2. Certifications Licenses Credentialing	Required. Recertifications.	Required. Recertifications [7].
3. Job descriptions	To diagnose diseases. To treat patients. To prevent diseases. To rehabilitate patients. To do medical research. To educate next oncoming doctors.	To provide protection and security to people and properties. To investigate cases at hand. To apprehend violators. To expose and testify on criminal activities.
4. Liabilities	Legal: civil and criminal Psychological: Moral injury Burnout. Compassion fatigue. Cognitive fatigue. Physical: poor health, diseases, deaths, suicide. [8]	Legal: civil and criminal Psychological: Moral injury, Posttraumatic stress disorder. Physical: disability, deaths from assaults, attacks, suicide.
5. Work settings	Hospitals, clinics, laboratories, universities, research.	Law offices, courthouse, Patrolled Communities, corporate C-Suites, police departments.
6. Motivation [9]	Enjoyment, Financial, Altruism, Structure.	Enjoyment, Financial, Altruism, Structure.
7. Professional Code of Practice [10]	Moral Agent	Moral Agent

walks of life but would lead the reader to deduce from the concepts presented. The examples are a Physician and a Security Officer.

The above tabulation depicts more similarities than differences between a physician and a security officer. A physician or a security/police officer has achieved individual competence with their skill sets from rigorous training.

However, with the contemporary change of our social landscape, the resilience of a service provider can only do as much favor and not enough to resist the overwhelming danger, risks, and hazards inherent in their work, if what is relied upon is their sole egocentric individual competence. We are aware of the national mental health crisis, the erosion of trust by the public on security and police officers, and the international conflicts and warfare [11]. These call for evaluation to find a systemic solution, to strike a balance between a healthy sociocentric social milieu and egocentric individual competence. The resilient, individually competent service provider is then afforded the necessary scaffolding through the healthy sociocentric social milieu.

### Security

Abraham Maslow (1908 to 1970), a humanistic theorist, famous for his universal hierarchy of needs [13] is worth reviewing. The lowest level is physiological needs of food, water, sex and sleep. The second level is safety needs for protection and security. The third level is the need for love and belonging, and the fourth level is self-respect and esteem from others. Above these are higher needs for beauty, truth, justice, and self-actualization.

Safety needs, second only to basic physiological needs are vital priority that must be met before the higher levels of need are achieved. An ethical issue to the security industry is that security should be afforded equally to each person because it is a basic need of every human being. Employing a judgmental human measure that others are inferior and not favored to receive standard security is unjust, immoral, and illegal [14]. Everyone is equal in the eyes of the Divine Creator and should be looked at without preference

[15]. Is it not that this is perfectly symbolized by the blindfolded Lady Justice holding a weight scale balance, symbolizing fairness, impartiality, and objective truth? Reliance on outward looks alone and neglecting to see the heart is inclined to cognitive bias.



**Figure 1:** Abraham Maslow’s universal hierarchy of needs.

Property offenses rank so seriously in St. Thomas Aquinas (1225 to 1274), the Thomistic Criminal Code [16]. It is not just the ownership at stake. It is what the person is worth, the victimized person experiences material and personal disequilibrium with feelings of emptiness and personal invasion in one’s sphere of influence. Property offenses are in opposition to justice, and there are corresponding rights and obligations. Even the descendants of the individual suffer when there is property violation. These concepts are summed up in second greatest commandment, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” [17] and the seventh commandment of the ten Commandments, “You shall not steal.” [5]. The world today is more interconnected [18] with significant economic progress, technological advancement, healthcare sophistication, scientific research, social media, and information

**Table 2:** Comparison between Sociocentric Social Milieu and Egocentric Individual Competence.

SOCIOCENTRIC SOCIAL MILIEU	EGOCENTRIC INDIVIDUAL COMPETENCE	STRIKING A BALANCE
Compensating for the functions of the impaired individual	Reliance on oneself, help from others is not expected	Integrated solutions prevent being overburdened and overdependence.
Protection, kindness, respect, honor, warmth, understanding, love.	Self-determination, fighting spirit, avoidance from feeling infantilized	Combined characteristics sums up to a stronger positive outcome
Physical needs, structure safety, nurturance, shelter, Maslow’s hierarchy of needs (12) easily accessible.	The individual provides his/her self-needs with himself/herself as the main source.	Balance [12] with just compensation, relief from burdensome human limitations, decrease work hazards, encourage interdependence and autonomy
Moral, ethical, legal, professional upliftment, sense of belonging, camaraderie, collegiality, filial brotherhood and sisterhood	More opportunities for self-introspection, self-evaluation, combat moral injury, gain insight for self-improvement, relieve compassion fatigue	Unity, alignment, solidarity, and cohesion, will achieve internal and external equilibrium, homeostasis, harmony, and peace.
The effects of contagion, enmeshment, blurring of boundaries, crossing of boundaries, expressed emotionality.	The effects of segregation, isolation, loneliness, depression, alienated psychosis.	Being on guard for both have disadvantages that result to ill effects and psychopathology.
Virtue: Communion, solidarity, social cohesiveness	Virtue: individual accountability, integrity, self-esteem	Realization that both are equally important and need equal attention

explosion. However, many challenges threaten the social milieu, families, communities, countries, and the world. There are crimes such as human trafficking, labor exploitation, child exploitation, foreign terrorism, illicit trade, socioeconomic and political instability. Civil wrongs to a person are rampant including assault and battery, and civil legal liabilities result from these [10]. Alliance between nations is important especially that there is no single interpretation of International Laws. Global peace is much needed, by exhausting diplomatic dialogue before engaging in war, a point of no return. A competent, highly professional security industry is in demand that is unimaginable.

**Privacy**

Privacy is important. The physician is obligated to protect the confidentiality of patient’s health and identifiable information. The patient has the right to privacy [15]. Organized crime, cybercrime, white collar crimes have become so dangerous. Without adequate policing, these cost lives and cripples the healthcare systems’ resources. Vulnerable patients whose information are breached are endangered from being harassed, kidnapped, killed or driven to suicide. In the security industry, breach of confidentiality and privacy hinders the efficacy of their investigative process when information is leaked and “contaminated”. Accuracy, facts, reason, and logic are necessary to make reliable decisions. Anger, fear, emotional distress, deception, and lack of transparency lead to illogical cognitive processes and bad decisions. To combat crimes and civil wrongs, true collaboration between the private security industry and the public law enforcements are necessary. Every able citizen also has the responsibility of reporting and cooperating in compliance with the laws of the land.

**Autonomy**

Autonomy is essential characteristic of a human being. The Supreme Being endowed the human being with Will to say, “Yes, no, or defer”, who is accountable for consequences of one’s decisions. Patients’ autonomy must be ethically respected by physicians by providing patients with full health information to appreciate the consequences of various treatment alternatives and understand the treatment interventions. Patients should not be coerced but allowed to give voluntary informed consent. Physicians employed by large healthcare systems also ought to exercise their physician autonomy, not to be dictated by unethical treatment decisions imposed by non-physicians. This requires continued educational advancement for the physicians and the patients to aim for self-preservation of humanity. Likewise, the security officer’s autonomy exists. He needs to know the Law of the land and meditate on it. If he finds the human law is unjust, the security officer is not bound in conscience to comply with the unjust law.

**Boundaries**

Keeping appropriate boundaries is essential for protection of both parties like physician-patient boundaries. It promotes clarity of signals and objectivity of perception, leading to accurate decision making. Abstinence and self-control are necessary for the success of their shared goal of healing. Similarly, the security officer must

exercise appropriate boundaries with their employers and clients. Healthy boundaries are the normative thing. Even between husband and wife, there are some elements of boundaries to be respected to function properly as a couple. In pathological dysfunctional families, they fail to function appropriately when there is too much enmeshed relationships.

**Migration**

It is common practice to identify an individual by their territorial origin, and all sorts of prejudices occur exemplified by biblical saying of the discrimination of Jesus, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” [17]. Strangers can be Angels in our path and need to be treated appropriately. Cognitive biases must be minimized, and cultural humility and authentic alliances must be exercised. No human being is completely self-sufficient. A transcultural tabulation is worth noting here:

**Table 3:** Questions addressed to immigrants. [1]

Addressed to host communities		Is the new culture valued and to be adopted?	
		Yes	No
Is the old culture valued and to be retained?	Yes	INTEGRATION	SEPARATISM
	No	ASSIMILATION	MARGINALITY

**Table 4:** Questions addressed to host communities.

Addressed to host communities		Are newcomers helped and encouraged to adopt the host culture and rewarded for doing so?	
		Yes	No
Are racial differences and alternative lifestyles respected?	Yes	INTEGRATION	SEPARATION
	No	ASSIMILATION	REJECTION

Physical, mental, financial, and legal stressors are greatest in the marginal and rejection category. Integration category is the most stable one. Separation and assimilation categories are the intermediate categories as far as distress and instability are concerned [1].

**Law and Order**

Laws govern the conduct of its citizens in the community. Law is an educator not a threat through constant habituation by law abiding citizens, they learn through repetition, practice, resulting to mastery. Proper compliance with laws promotes peace and order in the community. Laws should not be neutral [15], teaching should not be neutral, and the government should not be neutral as these are aimed for the common good. Civil law deals with governing civil wrongs and harms against a particular person. Criminal law pertains to that of the state, local, territorial tribal, and federal governments which provide protection for their citizens and their common good. International law governs warfare and conflicts between nations.

The greatest legal liability facing physicians and security officers

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is the civil liability. Negligence involves negligent conduct and errant conduct characterized by carelessness and mistakes without intentionality. To prove a case of negligence there must be duty, a breach of duty, a proximation or direct causation of negligent acts and damage resulting from injury and suffering [11].

With the increasing complexities of our modern society, the public police officers and private security officers need to collaborate and learn from each other's strengths for effective protection of people and their assets. Safety is afforded through adequate preparation, immediate response to emergencies, and recovery through mitigation of damages. The goal is to increase resiliency of individuals that extend to the common good in the social milieu such as corporate workplace, institutions, rural and urban communities, or globally. The security officers and police officers have endowed characteristics of professionalism, moral authority, adeptness in legal matters, objectivity, clarity, accuracy, diligence, attention to principles of security, privacy, autonomy, appropriate boundaries, migration, integration, collaboration, and the law itself.

### Discussion

Depicted here are the individual competence of a physician and security officer from their rigorous training in their social milieu of family, educational institution, and workplace. Mentioned here are St. Therese De Lisieux and St. Thomas Aquinas who are concrete examples highest individual competence in their respective social milieu. Individual competence alone is not enough even how resilient one might be. With the current change of landscape, the increased challenges of advancement in technology, interconnectedness in the world, information explosion, international warfare and conflicts, climate change, natural disasters, pandemics, increasing seriousness of various diseases, legal entanglement of citizens, and crippling economic situations have emerged. Safety of humans require attention as well as good healthcare which is impacted also by unmet physiologic needs of food, water, sex, and sleep. Systemic collaboration, shared interests, cultural humility, and integrated social transformation starting from the family and outwardly to larger social milieu are worth striving for. Lifetime treasures of knowledge, practical ways, humane attributes, tangible and intangible assets to preserve humanity are to be passed to the intergenerational early career providers and trainees, a moral obligation to leave a legacy. The goal is to reach the highest potential individually and collectively. Citizens comprise the passion-driven "many" and the generous-minded "few" [15]. The passion-driven "many" are motivated by practical, "Love", maybe out of necessity and the means available to them. They have simple fears of punishment, and they pursue simple pleasures. The generous minded few are moral agents, the morally upright leaders. They must place importance in providing for the needs of the passion-driven many, because if this is achieved, true social cohesiveness will materialize. Collectively, they can withstand disasters, crisis, and emergencies. It is bidirectional, "The perfect for the sake of the imperfect. The imperfect is for the sake of the perfect". Statecraft is soul-craft [15]. Love begets love. Excellence begets excellence. Those who fire

together wire together [4]. The execution of law and enforcement needs to be authoritative, which is an educator, virtuous, tolerant, patient, realistic, fair, and trustworthy. Authoritarian way, which is inhumane, oppressive, coercive, unjust, hostile, and tyrants, must be avoided as it naturally triggers rebellion, violence, uprising, and demoralization of the citizens.

### Conclusion

Placing attention to egocentric individual competence alone cannot sustain the service provider as this exploits their altruism and ignores the limits of their human endurance. Their sustained engagement in a healthy sociocentric social milieu will promote continued supply of workforce, fulfilling and beneficial for society. Providing support to the family should be afforded to raise moral children as future moral agents. Each member of the social milieu at all levels to its leaders, work with strong social cohesiveness. Indeed, it is relevant to strike a balance between sociocentric social milieu and egocentric individual competence. It is hoped that these concepts lead to follow up studies employing qualitative or quantitative measures.

### Acknowledgements

My special thanks go to my professors at Franciscan University Steubenville, Master of Science in Criminal Justice for sharing their time and expertise in their fields for my education.

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