

Challenges for Sustainable Development:

Migration, Consumption, Education and Gender Equality

edited by B. Kijewska, E. Czapka



Published by
Gdańsk University Press

The project entitled: “International Scientific Conference “Science and Education for Sustainable Development” was co-financed from the state budget under the Program of the Minister of Education and Science called “Excellent science - Support for scientific conferences Scientific”, project number: DNK/SP/513639/2021 amount of funding 56,200.00 PLN, total project value: PLN 63,100.00



The editors of the volume would like to thank Mr. Szymon Gronowski for the interview with Dr. Natasha Kosakowska and Dr. Małgorzata Karczmazyk

Review: Anita Adamczyk

ISBN 978-83-8206-612-8

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Introduction

Climate change and the progressing degradation of the Earth are a problem for humanity that requires political action. Droughts, land degradation, depletion of natural resources and limited access to fresh water particularly affect countries in the Global South, contributing to the destabilisation of their political and economic systems. The current immigration crisis related to the influx of people from areas affected by conflict and/or poverty should also be seen as a consequence of climate change and unequal control over the Earth's resources (fossil fuels, rare earth minerals, arable land). The prospect of massive waves of "climate refugees" is a real possibility, as are wars for resources and shrinking space for civilised life. Political scientist Welzer (2010) argues that ethnic cleansing, racial discrimination, and tribal clashes are the result of conflicts over space, land, water, and other natural resources. The stability of political systems depends, as never before, on collective action now taken at international, regional and national levels to protect the environment. Therefore, the development and adoption of climate policy is crucial to slowing down and limiting the consequences of climate change and the tragedy that will strike the most vulnerable. Environmental migration, like other forms of migration, is a process that affects people of different genders in different ways. While migrants of all genders face various threats and challenges while migrating, women in particular are disproportionately affected by climate change (Kijewska & Mitroczuk, 2020). This results from their limited access to information, resources and employment opportunities in the communities and countries to which they relocate. As climate change destroys existing livelihoods, women are more likely to be left behind and trapped in unsafe environments, while also being responsible for caring for their families and households. Furthermore, cultural and social gender norms can limit women's mobility by restraining their ability to leave without a man's consent (Oxfam, 2005). This may hinder their ability to adapt to disasters and make them more vulnerable to risks such as abuse, discrimination, exploitation and gender-based violence, including human trafficking. When women are forced to migrate to secure a safe and healthy life for themselves, they often face particular risks along migration routes, including having to return to their country of origin or imprisonment and lack of protection on

migration routes (Terry, 2009). They may also encounter difficulties in accessing sanitation facilities, reproductive health and mental health services.

While the opportunity to tackle and adapt to climate change is rapidly closing (Lenton, 2019), scientists from around the world are highlighting the enormous potential of the education sector to actively contribute to supporting the mitigation of and adaptation to climate change (Winter et al., 2022). Researchers see the education system as a “social tipping point” consistent with “climate tipping points” that could play a significant role in activating social dynamics that could stabilise the Earth’s climate by 2050. In this context, students and teachers are considered important “change agents” who can act as knowledge and action multipliers and thus play a key role in transformation processes. By influencing the energy-saving behaviour of their families and communities, students can act as “climate change awareness multipliers”. Moreover, young people have already demonstrated their potential as changemakers not only on an individual level but also on a global scale, as evidenced by the Fridays for Future movement, which has raised awareness of climate change and influenced policy decisions.

Cities are no less important for achieving the sustainable development goals. According to the World Bank, cities currently house more than half of the world’s population and it is projected that by 2050, two-thirds of humanity will live in cities (World Bank, 2022). Cities are also renowned for being centres of innovation and prosperity, generating 80% of global GDP. However, it is also estimated that they are responsible for 75% of global CO₂ emissions, with transport and buildings contributing significantly. Moreover, cities are responsible for 60-80% of global energy consumption, which means that without global urban policies, chances for stopping climate change will be scuppered (UN-Habitat, 2020).

Sustainable development is a term that has become the definition of human-environment interaction in the 21st century. The United Nations Commission on Environment and Development created the most popular definition of this term in 1987. The committee’s report “Our Common Future” indicated that sustainable development is the development that meets the needs of the present without limiting the ability of future generations to satisfy their own needs. This concept embodies the consequences that the constant growth of the human population and the uneven and inefficient use of natural resources have on the natural environment of our planet. Sustainable development has gained importance over the past three decades in light of growing scientific acceptance of

the fact that humanity's current development activities are having a detrimental impact on the global environment.

Sustainability is a multidisciplinary topic that includes knowledge and contributions from various fields such as social sciences, environmental sciences, physical sciences and fine arts. In order to better understand the concept of sustainable development and what it means for people, support for an inclusive approach is necessary. Higher education institutions have the potential to promote transformative learning of sustainability principles and practices by engaging students, lecturers, staff and communities, as well as the local and global partners with whom they collaborate in research and research networks. However, transforming a university campus into a model of sustainable development is a complex task that requires the concerted effort of all stakeholders.

The Conversations about Sustainable Development programme was initiated at the same time when the Centre for Sustainable Development was established. Since the very beginning of our activity, we have been asking distinguished representatives of the academic community about their understanding of sustainable development, the connection of their research with the goals of the 2030 Agenda and their vision of our green university. In our opinion, these conversations are an element of building the awareness and identity of the UG community as striving to transform the university into a green university and promoting the importance of education and research to achieve the goals set in the 2030 Agenda.

This book is the result of the Conversations about Sustainable Development project. This volume contains interviews with researchers who, in their scientific and teaching work, refer to various goals. Hence, Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all is illustrated by conversations with Aneta Lewińska and Małgorzata Kaczmarczyk. In her research and teaching activities, Natasza Kosakowska addresses issues related to Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. Aleksandra Wierucka and Przemysław Sieradzan address the issue of inequalities, which is the essence of goal number ten, which calls for a reduction in inequalities within and between countries. The eleventh goal of making cities and human settlements safe, stable, sustainable, and inclusive is reflected in conversations with Grażyna Chaberek, Hanna Prądyńska, and Jacek Zaucha. Goal 12: Ensure patterns of sustainable consumption and production corresponds to interviews with Anna Dziadkiewicz and Małgorzata Z. Wisniewska. The volume ends with an interview with Jakub Potulski, whose

research and teaching potential coincides with Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.



Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, the world was already off-track to achieve its education targets. If no additional measures are taken, only one in six countries will meet SDG4 and achieve universal access to quality education by 2030. An estimated 84 million children and young people will still be out of school and an estimated 300 million student will still not have the basic numeracy and literacy skills they need to succeed in life. To deliver SDG4, education systems must be re-imagined, and education financing must become a priority national investment.

Target 4.1: Between 2015 and 2021, the school completion rate increased from 85% to 87% in primary, from 74% to 77% in lower secondary and from 54% in 2015 to 58% in upper secondary education. Even before the onset of COVID19, these rates had slowed down relative to progress in 2010–15.

Looking closely at reading levels at the end of primary school, for which trend data cover 34% of the world's children, the analysis shows that global learning levels showed no progress between 2015-2019. Furthermore, learning losses due to COVID-related school closures have been documented in 4 out of 5 of the 104 countries that have carried out such studies.

Target 4.2: Participation rate in organized learning one year before the official primary entry age has stagnated at around 75% since 2015, still far from the target of ensuring that all girls and boys have access to quality pre-primary education by 2030.

Target 4.3: Among 131 countries with data from 2017 onwards, on average approximately one in six youth and adults aged 15-64 recently participated in formal or non-formal education and training. Participation is substantially higher among youth aged 15-24 (40%-50%), compared to those aged 25-55 (only 5% for most regions).

Challenge 1: Quality education

Conversation with prof. dr hab. Aneta Lewińska

Faculty of Languages, Institute of Polish
Language, Division of Applied Polish Studies

Professor Lewińska, how would you define the concept of sustainable development through the lens of your academic discipline?

Words are important in my research work as a philologist and linguist. I study their use in dictionaries and in various contexts, and analyze those used both today and in the past. Words evolve, change their meaning and stylistic value, and enter into new word combinations. What is more, general Polish words become specialized vocabulary (terms). One word may have different meanings assigned to it, depending on its use. It may be used differently in various disciplines or sub-disciplines as a specialized term. For example, the creators of new ideas or programs use the linguistic potential of the Polish language to assign new meanings and desired values to well-known words. Sometimes words are used as propaganda tools, sometimes their meanings get devalued. Even though certain values have initially been assigned to these words, their overuse or use in different contexts may divest them of their meaning, thereby producing hollow words. As a result, such empty words designate nothing, which only turns them into propaganda tools.

In my view, the Polish word *rozwój* (development) comes in many stylistic varieties of the Polish language, and has made its way into various scientific disciplines. My research profile makes me associate this word with both linguistics and language teaching. To illustrate this, I may say: My whole scientific and professional development involves analyzing the stages of language development, as well as language teaching. The concept of development can also be found

in psychology, pedagogy, economics, and the natural sciences. Its meaning has been tailored to suit their respective needs.

When writing a text, all scientists need to explain in the introduction their understanding of this key term or formulate their own definition. The first basic step taken by a linguist is to look up this word in dictionaries listing all the entries for a given word. Historical dictionaries provide information on how a given word was defined one hundred, two hundred, three hundred ago or even more. One can also use professional dictionaries, such as pedagogical or psychological ones.

At any time an average user of the Polish language can use *Wielki słownik języka polskiego* (<https://wsjp.pl>), an online dictionary edited by Professor Piotr Żmigrodzki, the science editor. The dictionary lists contemporary meanings of a given word. When we type in the word development, we can select the meaning we are searching for from appropriate tabs. I have selected the most general meaning of this word, however, one may also find three subentries: *rozwój człowieka* (human development), *rozwój firmy* (company development), and *rozwój wydarzeń* (developments). Out of these three entries it is the human development that is of paramount importance to me. Although the subentry has been labeled as specialized vocabulary used in biology, we do not treat this word exclusively as a term. In the context of our conversation it is crucial to embrace not only its biological but also economic dimensions, e.g. company development. In a sense, we are also referring to developments. Our actions and personal development as employees working for this company have an impact on both company development and other developments. Our goal should be to develop awareness of all the mutual relations we enter into.

Biological development is “a natural process of changes occurring in living organisms throughout their lives or in future generations, and leading to their growth, maturation or evolution”. It is important to note that such an understanding of development not only entails changes caused by cell growth but also has an in-built valuation. Growth is tantamount to better adaptation or a better form corresponding to the needs of a changing world.

It is also “a process of changes leading to better and more complex states of forms,” which is based on the same assumption that development should mean improvement. Taking new actions or developing new forms of activity to make improvements and to meet new needs may serve as an example.

The third subentry refers to developments, which instead of containing valuation conceptualizes development in terms of time lapse. It seems to me that we may sometimes think about biological development or company development in temporal terms. A company may change in time but will it always be a change for the better? If we accept the contemporary dictionary definition of development, the answer to the question should be in the affirmative.

The second word used both in our conversation and in the name of your Center for Sustainable Development (Centrum Zrównoważonego Rozwoju) is the Polish adjective 'zrównoważony'. In the online Polish language dictionary (WSJP) the entry *zrównoważony* also has several subentries. For example, 'człowiek zrównoważony' (a level-headed person) is an individual who acts in a calm, reasonable and restrained way. So the lexical definition clearly shows that if we want to think about a change with time and a change for the better, we need to eschew emotions and embrace calm and consideration. In other words, progress or a change for the better are contingent upon time and well-thought-out forms. The same holds true for 'człowiek zrównoważony'. Another subentry to be found in the dictionary is 'zrównoważony głos' (a calm voice) defined as a voice demonstrating composure and consideration.

Thank you for your introduction into how linguists discover the meanings of words used in various contexts and how they define them. Does development always mean striving for a better form?

Linguists define words on the basis of their contemporary use. *Słownik języka polskiego PWN* (a popular online dictionary available at <https://sjp.pwn.pl>) defines the word *rozwój* (development) by means of two adjectives: *złożony* (complex) i *doskonalszy* (superior) as a process of developing more complex or superior states or forms.

Have you often come across the concept of sustainable development throughout your scientific career?

Not directly. My scientific and didactic development under the supervision of Professor Regina Pawłowska, a long-standing head of the Department of Polish Literature and Language Didactics, subsequently renamed the Didactics Department, has made me reflect on the concept of sustainable development many times. Although Professor Pawłowska did not use the concept in her research work, one may find its traces in her reflection on the right of a student to otherness and diversity, as well as the right of the youth to develop at their

own pace. She also advocated comprehensive development of the youth in education to facilitate their participation in a rapidly changing world.

We are talking about a world which over the last century has undergone rapid transformation. Our life expectancy has increased and so has our professional activity. So it is crucial to remember that our knowledge paradigm developed at the beginning of our career needs to undergo change. Additionally, sustainable development entails a relatively frictionless adaptation to our changing reality without renouncing our values. It is a paraphrase of Professor Pawłowska's words, often shared by me with my students. The words were written in one of the articles published in the 1990s, i.e. over thirty years ago. Let me quote the relevant passage:

The modern school should educate students to cope with the challenges of our changing world: to engage in lifelong learning, to make a smooth transition into a new profession or a new role in life, to appreciate knowledge and acquire it independently, to master effective reading techniques with regard to various texts representing various disciplines and performing different functions; to develop their own modern intellect in order to perceive things and phenomena as interrelated and in terms of cause and effect; to embrace the volatility and diversity of the world while cherishing their unshakeable values; to act impartially, to strive for justice for all, including themselves, and to deepen their self-knowledge to the greatest extent possible. (R. Pawłowska, *Dziecko w szkole dziś i jutro. Warunki konieczne uzdrowienia polskiej szkoły*, w: *Dziecko we współczesnej Polsce*, J. Komorowska (ed.), vol. 1, Warsaw 1991, pp. 249–276 [The title: The child at school: Today and tomorrow. The conditions that produce the reform of the Polish school, [in:] The child in the Poland of today]).

When Professor Pawłowska wrote these words, they were not as relevant as they are today. However, they have acquired a different meaning over the last year – an extremely difficult time for many societies. The need to self-educate and to respond to rapid changes, e.g. technological ones involving remote teaching, has become a large part of our everyday lives.

Have I understood correctly that the widely disseminated concept of life-long learning is directly linked to sustainable development?

The ability to adapt to a changing world facilitates a constant development and makes us part of the most important changes. It is based on a conviction that we need to change while allowing ourselves to be different. We master particular

competences at our own individual pace, at a particular moment in our lives. To put it simply, we follow different developmental paths.

If we want to make the concept of sustainable development relevant to teaching or learning experiences, we need to assume that it entails the right of a human being to develop at one's own pace. We may illustrate this phenomenon with a historical example of apprentices who mastered their professional skills at their individual pace: for some it took 5 years to master the skills that others developed within just a year. However, there were also those who never mastered them in the first place. There is an *a priori* assumption made today that everyone – the whole population – will reach the same stage of development by learning under the same conditions and at the same pace. Educational ideas and solutions introduced to support exceptionally gifted students are unfortunately marginalized in practice. What is even worse is that they are perceived as part of the process of equalizing opportunities with its in-built negative valuation and the presupposition of a deficiency. It is incompatible with what we know about human potential, and detrimental to many of us. It seems hasty to claim that a different pace of development is far from being normal. If an individual develops differently from the rest of the population, it does not mean he or she should be referred for testing. Maybe it is better to support them by giving them ample space for self-development.

One thing that immediately comes to mind is sustainable scientific development.

Science used to be the last space based on the relation between the master and his or her team (students). Through dialog and personal encounters we were in a position to determine the potential of a person who wished to follow us. In the humanities the process of describing reality or creating a new world happened through dialog facilitated by reflective equilibrium and ample amount of time. There were neither top-down frameworks nor predictable schemas imposed on scientific development as such an approach would have impaired creativity. Unfortunately, one of today's paradoxes is the conflict of assessment. Describing reality is one thing, evaluating it is quite another. To illustrate such a paradox, let me give you an example of classifying the discovered data as being on a particular scale and then deciding whether such a discovery should merit academic promotion. An attempt made to objectively assess the progress made by students has also failed. As I set and grade secondary school-leaving examinations (matriculation examinations), it is clear to me that the suggestion to

use external exams and grade them objectively implies lack of objectivity so far. The negative evaluation of subjectivity has resulted in the loss of essence of the humanities: a personal relation facilitating development through dialog and in one's quest for solutions at one's own pace.

Do you perceive your development as a sustainable one?

Throughout my life I have met masters who did not expect me to make such choices or to do everything within a certain time or at a certain pace. My development had nothing to do with systematic development. I reject the notion of systematicity, and at the same time stress the fact that *zrównoważony* (sustainable) does not mean *systematyczny* (systematic). At this point I'd like to quote Jan Kochanowski, who wrote: „A ja z tym trzymam, kto co w czas uchwyci” (I keep with the man who seizes the day[1]). Our biological time puts us in a position where we have to choose or meet challenges. During my time at university I met Professor Edward Breza, my late mentor, who invited me to attend a seminar he used to run with passion and great personal engagement. At that time there were no doctoral schools or PhD programs in philological studies. Instead one could enter into a mentor-trainee relationship – Professor Breza's personal time dedicated to many people he invited into the world of science. We still have friends and acquaintances made during our first doctoral meetings. During the second year of our doctoral yet non-university collaboration, I quit my teaching position to become a teaching assistant of the first year (this is how the position was referred to at that time). Since that moment I have climbed the academic ladder: from a teaching assistant of the first year, through a teaching assistant, an assistant professor, and an assistant professor with habilitation, to an associate professor and finally a full professor.

The second person that helped make my sustainable development a reality was Professor Pałowska, whom I have already mentioned. My mentors respected my need to maintain work-life balance. I have a family, a husband, children and a grandson, and I have also dedicated my research career to language and the history of the language spoken here, in Pomerania. My PhD thesis and virtually all my books concern the history of language and analyze texts written in Pomerania in the 17th, 18th, 19th and 20th century. I have also strived to keep balance in my teaching duties at the university. When running my Polish language teaching courses I realized that verifying my research results at school would be a natural course of action. That's why for 15 years (half my professional life) I simultaneously worked as a Polish language teacher in all types of schools. Again, I need to stress the fact that my development has not been systematic:

I have worked at a different pace, had time for my passions, and managed to climb both the academic and didactic ladder. I am a chartered teacher, a matriculation examiner, and a certified academic tutor.

In retrospect one may notice rapid changes, including technological ones, accompanied by new teaching methods. What do you think about innovations in education?

Development needs to correspond to a changing reality, as well as the changing needs of young people, pupils, and students. I am ready to admit that I should change the methods I effectively applied ten, fifteen or twenty years ago. If they turn out to be ineffective today, they should be modified. Young people are said to have changed but – at the same time – it is said to be a change for the worse. I'd like to stress that this is not true. The conception of the world, teaching methods, and students have changed, which should not be perceived in a negative light by us, adult educators or mature teachers who find it hard to adjust to a new environment. Everyone of us who has been professionally active for a very long time needs to change their methods. We should teach today's pupils or students differently than we used to thirty years ago. We should also become part of the developmental change. What is more, we should search for new ways of re-entering into a dialog with pupils and students, seeing their potential, and suggesting a common quest for their development plans.

At the start of our conversation you have underscored that sustainable development is connected with the right to be different. And I'd like to follow up on that. What does it actually mean?

We are no longer a culturally homogenous society or a monolingual society, at least not in the Tri-City. And for the last several days this change has been so rapid that it is not possible to stop or reverse it. I encountered a cultural difference thanks to Rector Professor Józef Arno Włodarski. It was at the Institute of Polish Philology in 2010 that we found out that we would be teaching seventeen students from Harbin, China. The students neither spoke English nor knew the Latin alphabet. Even though both they and we spoke Russian, we found it hard to understand one another due to differences in our pronunciation. Our Asian guests were taught by Professor Małgorzata Milewska-Stawiany, Professor Lucyna Warda-Radys, and me. Together we designed teaching methods based on our scientific research. We knew that we should resort to concrete thinking, and we designed pedagogical grammar rules. We took our Chinese students out

of the classroom, and offered them such activities as excursions, joint filmmaking, theatrical shows, singing songs or shanties.

Later we held the first Polish language classes offered at the university to immigrants from Syria, and with the support of the Immigrant Support Center (CWII) we built a foundation for the teaching of Polish as a foreign language at the University of Gdańsk. These actions materialized in the form of postgraduate program for teaching Polish as a foreign language. Initially this program was dedicated to language instructors who ran Polish language courses for adult immigrants at private schools and the CWII. However, things changed rapidly when two years after the launching of the program it turned out that immigrants chose Poland as a country to live in, not only to work. Their approach to our language has changed: they need to master Polish not only to communicate but also to participate in Polish public life. By choosing Gdańsk as their a place of residence, migrants, and soon probably many refugees, enroll their children at Polish schools. The Immigrant Integration Model (IIM) Gdansk has been initiated in response to these diverse needs. I have been part of this process since its outset. As a university employee I have been involved together with the authorities of the Faculty of Polish Philology in a design and approval procedure regarding a specialization in teaching Polish as a foreign language in the field of Polish philology. What is more, we have designed our postgraduate program in such a way so as to meet the need to educate both language instructors and teachers running extracurricular English classes at schools for children from migrant backgrounds. The Postgraduate Program for Teaching Polish as a Foreign Language has been offered for nine years, and I have a pleasure of acting as its director. For several years children with migrant backgrounds have been attending nearly every school in Gdańsk. As two extra hours of Polish language learning for most of them, particularly in the context of digital education, turns out to be an inadequate support, for several years I have coordinated volunteering activities performed by students who help these children.

What actions should the University of Gdańsk take to support sustainable development?

I am dreaming of an international Polish studies program. I think that the mission of our university is also to foster a sense of community while at the same time showing respect to cultural diversity. Let's create a university that prepares its graduates for operating in a multicultural and multilingual society. I am also dreaming of establishing a large glottodidactics center at the University of Gdańsk. And I am glad that thanks to the efforts made by many

individuals and the institutional support of the University we were granted a permission by the Ministry of Science and Education in 2018 to administer Polish language certification exams at our university. And then, in 2020, Professor Ewa Badyda became a member of the State Commission for the Certification of Proficiency in Polish as a Foreign Language.

The University of Gdańsk has come a long way since 2010. Systematic efforts have been made to make Gdańsk not only a vibrant teaching and examination center – a mission embraced by the Academic Centre of the Polish Language and Culture for Foreigners, but also a dynamic Polish glottodidactics research center at the Faculty of Languages. I am sure that such a development vision is quite feasible. Each year we run classes for Chinese students who first learnt Polish in China for one year and then learnt Polish in our country for two years. Whereas nearly 100% of them pass the Polish language certification exam at level B1, 15–20% of them demonstrate Polish language skills at level B2. I think that this is an external evaluation of our teaching methods and a reason to be satisfied. Additionally, for several years the employees of the Institute of Polish Philology have been publishing their scientific research results in this area, thereby putting Gdańsk on the map of Polish glottodidactics research centers.

Conversation with dr Małgorzata Karczmarzyk

Faculty of Social Sciences, Institute of Education,
Laboratory of Media Education

How do you understand the concept of sustainable development, taking into account your scientific and artistic achievements?

Doctor Małgorzata Karczmarzyk: I understand this term as holistically as possible. In recent years, a significant change in the perception of culture has been visible all over the world, towards giving it a much greater role in development processes. Other, broader perspectives of sustainable development have emerged. It's no longer just about the ecological dimension, coexisting with the economic pillar, now the social aspect has become visible. Recently, the cultural dimension of sustainable development has also begun to be taken into account, and attention has been paid to the role of various stakeholders in the process of initiating and implementing changes and the relationships between them. My projects in the fields of culture, art and pedagogy combine these needs and fit into the sustainable development goals: they inspire, support the innovation and creativity of individuals, provoke relationships between people, promote their common interests and goals, and organise the community.

Sustainable development is not only about external activities in the field of culture, it's about searching for equilibrium within oneself, building oneself in order to be able to enter into dialogue with another (someone different in culture, identity, or experience). My projects in the field of art and pedagogy are about searching for this balance. These include exhibitions of my own work, but also of students' works, the "Painting Dialogues" project which I will be happy to tell you more about, promoting talents, paying attention to the creative development of an individual.

You carry out many scientific and artistic projects. What exactly do you do?

I create projects for interdisciplinary activities, but mainly I try to combine my two beloved disciplines, namely art and pedagogy. My scientific and artistic

projects are based on cooperation and communication between various environmental groups. Initiatives that I've implemented include projects related to the semiotic analysis of images, children's graphic language, visual communication, visual literacy, children's depiction of difficult topics, taboo topics such as death, illness and war. I also deal with tutoring, helping excluded individuals and people with disabilities, I look for opportunities to speak with a "different" voice through emancipation through art, art pedagogy, and pedagogical intervention.

The examples of my grants with co-researchers include: "Meanings and communication potential of a six-year-old child's drawing", in which the project manager was Prof. Maria Mendel, PhD, or a grant entitled "A child in a virtual gallery. Analysis of selected websites of large museums", carried out with co-researcher Doctor Natalia Pater-Ejgierd, or the last research project on the basis of which I published a book entitled "Polska sztuka współczesna w oczach dzieci i dorosłych. Potencjał pedagogiczny, komunikacyjny oraz kulturowy wybranych obrazów Jacka Yerki, Tomasza Sętowskiego, Rafała Olbińskiego i Zdzisława Beksińskiego". Paintings belonging to contemporary art can also be a space for building meanings between a child and an adult.

Sustainable development is not only about external activities in the field of culture, it's about searching for equilibrium within oneself, building oneself in order to be able to enter into dialogue with another (someone different in culture, identity, or experience).

Other projects that I'm currently carrying out include my latest pedagogical and artistic venture called "Dialogue of Art" or "Painting Dialogue", related to painting, pedagogical intervention, performance, in which I try to reach a diverse audience, and the project "Look at Me", which I am running in co-authorship. My projects are devoted to building a platform for dialogue, a different cultural space where art strengthens us and provides balance for difficult things that are happening around us. Everything can be expressed in art. It often helps us to release our emotions, fears and frustrations. In such difficult times as we are currently in, we simply need art.

This is also how I understand sustainable development – as a search for holistic action based on the fourth pillar of culture, finding a type of different space that would build the individual from his creative side, creating art, and at the same time focus on finding a way of communication between existing works, which would create an intergenerational dialogue.

Who are usually the recipients of your works? Are they students, or rather connoisseurs, or maybe ordinary people?

I try to make sure that my works reach a diverse audience – adults, teenagers and children. I show my paintings in commercial and non-commercial galleries, in Poland and abroad. I've already had about 60 individual and collective exhibitions, in Poland and abroad. I've had exhibitions in Turkey, Ireland, Portugal, Lithuania, Kiev, Kirovograd, Rome, Munich, India, Berlin, and of course also in Poland: in Warsaw, Gdańsk, Poznań, Kraków, Toruń. I've cooperated a lot with the Lisbon University of Technology. Now I've started interesting cooperation with the University of Verona. I also organise exhibitions of my students' works, which are created during my classes, in the art studio, at the Institute of Pedagogy. Young people really want their artistic activities to be appreciated and noticed. This is also important from the perspective of their future work as teachers. This is how school and kindergarten teachers learn how they should work with their future pupils' art.

I fondly remember the meeting to which I was invited by the then Director of the University Kindergarten – Dr Katarzyna Kmita Zaniewska, during which the children saw my works and were inspired by them to create their own artworks. This project concerned familiarising the child with artistic crafts and inviting various artists. Contact with the work of artists previously unknown to the wider public was an important event and a stimulus for recipients representing various groups in the local community. The selection of artists invited to cooperate became an opportunity for social change and consolidation of the positive perception of art as inclusive, engaged and heterogeneous. Art must be learned from an early age, if this creativity is not there, later, in adult life, we will exclude ourselves from it. Artists' children go to vernissages with their parents from an early age, so when they grow up, it's normal for them to participate in cultural life. Contact with art helps them, and the more difficult the message, the more developing it is. We focus only on easy, pleasant messages too often, but if we want to develop, it's just like with a text – the more difficult the work to read, the harder our mind works.

I've also participated in numerous competitions and scientific and artistic programmes. One of them was, for example, the "Locus" project, during which, together with co-author Marta Domańska, we showed the city of Gdańsk in collages, drawings and photos. The idea was to illustrate the space of our local culture and show places that were familiar in a different way, giving our own visual

interpretation. In turn, the capital of Portugal – Lisbon – referred to its city identity. So it was a kind of dialogue between both cities: Lisbon and Gdańsk.

Referring to the dialogue, I'd like to ask you to expand on this issue. What are "Painting Dialogues", that is, the creative method you use? What does it look like and what does it involve?

The method of visual-verbal dialogue was born out of the intention of joint creative activities with artists, but over time it expanded its potential to include the pedagogical, communicative and therapeutic scope. The method was created on the basis of a project implemented since 2016 called "Painting Dialogues". Initially, this project assumed the work with artists, but over time, it turned out that it had a developing, therapeutic and creative impact on groups such as tutors, academic teachers, early education teachers, kindergarten teachers, but also children of preschool and early school age and children with disabilities (e.g. autism).

My method enables one's own creative expression in simultaneous dialogue with others. It can be a spouse, daughter, son, neighbour, friend, or acquaintance, but also a stranger whom we get to know thanks to a common painting dialogue. Joint artistic activity brings people closer together and helps them survive difficult times. It's not only art therapy, communication and contact with another person but also getting to know oneself during a creative activity.

In short, it's an activity that involves painting a work together. You could say that it's "trivial", but what happens during such a painting dialogue is no longer a clichéd process. Visual language, without words, suddenly becomes a plane of different communication and people who have verbalisation switched off begin to enter into relationships and get to know themselves on a different plane. I invite people of various professions from all over Poland and the world to join us in a visual conversation. Painting dialogue workshops that I have already carried out include cooperation with the Foundation for the Development of the University of Gdańsk, workshops carried out as part of the Sustainable Development Day at the University of Gdańsk, artistic workshops for the winter school: YoPeNET Gdańsk Winter School, cooperation with the Baltic Sea Cultural Centre in Gdańsk as part of the "AMPLIFY. Make The Future of Europe Yours" project and workshops for the Academic Cultural Centre of the University of Gdańsk.

While painting with different groups and with people of different ages and professions, I've noticed that a certain space of meaning is created between us. We ourselves enter the self-therapeutic process of self-analysis and, on this basis, we rebuild our thinking, unblock ourselves, abandon stereotypes and patterns, but above all, we open up to our own creation.

Where did the idea for this form of artistic dialogue come from?

I admit that I had my first dialogue a long time ago when I was a child... it was a drawing dialogue with my mother. I remember sitting on a bed, covered with a white blanket, with my mother. There were pieces of paper and crayons spread out everywhere. I watched her draw and then I completed some of the symbols of her, of our shared drawing.

I remember that my mother drew me beautiful carriages, princesses, cars, animals, characters, and I changed them, added my own symbols and colours. This is how we got to know each other and communicated with each other through drawing, differently than in everyday life, which has completely different rules for coexistence between adults and children. We understood each other without words. We created cartoon worlds that were our alternative places, where the principles of partnership, equality, love, affection and reciprocity prevailed.

Much later, when I was an academic lecturer, I encountered tutoring at the university. Thanks to the tutor and lecturer – Doctor Beata Karpińska-Musiał, I completed a tutoring course and became involved in running a student group. During the time devoted to our meetings, in addition to the methods and tools that I learned during the course, I decided to use drawings and visualisations for tutoring conversations with students. While advising them, I automatically analysed my own development. I was looking for my own path of development, just like they were looking for theirs. At that time, I didn't realise that when analysing, discussing and conveying certain views, I was also implementing them in my own life. And so, at some point, I just started painting with other people. The first attempts were in a small size, and very spontaneous. I drew with friends, with children, with adults, and with artists I met during my pedagogical and artistic path. Later, there was a need for a larger format and watercolour painting. This is how the first "Painting Dialogues" were created, which I began to run periodically, inviting artists, educators, teachers, musicians, poets, etc. to work together.

It all started with one joint painting painted in watercolour, in the privacy of a private studio, and later the project was conceived that is currently evolving

further and deeper. As it turns out, a painting dialogue is a great method of communicating with another person, especially in the case of a difficult form of communication, e.g. when someone doesn't know the words and needs to communicate, they can do it through a symbol or drawing sign. We negotiate meanings in various ways.

Does it mean that this way you can also get to know the other person's character? When you form a group, can you immediately see and try to assign the social roles of specific dialogue participants?

Exactly. It was visible, for example, in the child-parent relationship, when the son or daughter became natural leaders in the painting dialogue. The perspective and situational context changed the form of mutual communication, the parental authority relationship gave way to partnership and negotiation. However, depending on the personality traits of a given child and parent, different styles, social roles, mutual mimetic behaviours, learning, and action patterns could be observed.

Adults are often very blocked and it requires a lot of effort to open them. When they engage in such a creative game with me and start painting intuitively, they unconsciously release a lot of bad emotions. They shed social masks and roles that block their instincts, and they change into people they are not and who they might like to be. Thanks to such spiritual, aesthetic and cognitive reconstruction and cleansing, their higher-order needs are met. And this, in turn, builds a community that can take care of the needs of other individuals in the future. What I mean here is sustainable development. After painting dialogues with me, people leave with positive energy and want to continue acting – not necessarily in art. We need creation everywhere, in every profession. Thanks to it, we have a spark, we are open to the world, we are creative and we want to change things in various areas and create a better world.

How do you perceive the potential of culture as the fourth pillar of Sustainable Development?

The fourth pillar, i.e. culture and cultural heritage, can inspire and support innovation and creativity in other sectors (it's believed, among others, that cultural diversity affects creativity), and also play an important role in formal and informal education. In some areas, the key dimension of the impact of the cultural sector and cultural heritage on development will be shaping the level and quality of life, ensuring and enabling the local community to meet higher-order needs (including spiritual, aesthetic, and cognitive ones). Activities related to

culture may significantly influence the spatial development and aesthetics of cities and municipalities. The role of culture in creating and strengthening social capital can also be very important. My project of painting dialogues strengthens such capital because it has communicative, art-therapeutic and pedagogical potential.

Building social capital means building people, enabling them to self-develop, expand cultural competences, which in Poland we have a problem with, because we exclude ourselves from culture and art, in the sense that we don't go to galleries, vernissages, we don't teach our children how to perceive contemporary art, we browse, not look at images because we no longer have time to contemplate them. Therefore, in classes with students, I analyse art as an "open work" (this is Umberto Eco's concept). We look for meanings in various details, we simply look at a given work and don't browse it, as we do when looking at Instagram, Facebook and other social media.

Also through my dialogues, I want to disseminate and acquaint people with contemporary art and I want to do it in various social environments. People I work with often say "No, I can't paint, I have no talent", but it turns out that great paintings are created and they are delighted with the effect and their own work. This happened, for example, during the "Amplify" project carried out with the students of the University of Gdańsk. An important conclusion resulting from the students' work was drawing attention to visual language, which offers more possibilities, a better form of communication at a higher level, and also establishes a participatory grassroots form of democracy. Art has emancipatory potential that offers individuals an opportunity to express themselves in a broader way without any imposed framework. While working together, the participants worked out solutions, rules of work and community.

It turns out that visual language provides us with a chance to establish a relationship with a partner, a sense of a slightly different communication plane, and gives us an opportunity to enter into the so-called "third space" in which understanding can be based on the principle of contrasting elements and feeling. Thanks to creative work, we feel differently and talk to each other differently.

Activities related to culture may have a significant impact on the spatial development and aesthetics of cities and municipalities. This is a consequence of the fact that these people start to think more aesthetically and look at the surrounding world in a different way. The role of culture in creating and strengthening social capital will be very important here, and my project "Dialogues of

Art” builds it. My activity has communication, therapeutic, pedagogical and emancipatory potential because I give people the freedom to create. It’s also related to the need to familiarise oneself with the artistic material through one’s own activity.

Do you know people who discovered their passion after painting dialogues, or after encountering art in general? For example, did they start painting and make a living from it?

Of course. I painted with artists who were blocked in their work. One example was a woman who didn’t paint at all because she was raising children. When we started painting together, I told her that I would open her and that I hoped that somehow I would be able to remove this blockage. Now she creates on her own, exhibits her works, shows them to the world, has her own gallery, sells her art and exhibits other artists’ paintings. The project of “painting dialogues” was the beginning of her activity and career.

“Painting Dialogues” are for everyone – I paint with various people, not only with artists. My point is to make people used to abstract painting. Personally, I also encourage participants of my workshops to look at good but difficult images that may seem strange and shocking. This is what builds us and creates the potential we talk about in sustainable development, to develop in a holistic way, at every level. In life we use images. When we create them, we draw from resources. When we watch them, we recharge. You can’t create something out of nothing. Therefore, when painting a given work of art, we even unconsciously recall images known, for example, from television, cinema, book illustrations, cartoons.

Our brain is like a warehouse with hundreds of thousands of images on thousands of shelves. However, it doesn’t always function properly. Sometimes we litter it, sometimes we forget to dust it, and then our artistic potential runs dry. We lack images or they are too damaged and are not suitable for creative use. Julia Cameron compares this warehouse to a pond of creativity that dries up if we don’t take care of it properly. We must take care of optical hygiene and look at outstanding works of art.

What challenges will the Culture and Creative sector face in the coming years?

This sector is based on cultural values or on various types of artistic, individual and collective creative expression. It contributes to the continuous development of society and is of key importance for the creation of a shared sense of

European identity, culture and values. These are sectors based on knowledge, creativity and talent of people, constituting a source of significant economic wealth. They are crucial to creating a common sense of European identity, culture and values. It is about creative, intercultural, and intergenerational dialogue, and this is what I have developed in the "Painting Dialogue".

The search for community and a sense of European identity is important, for example in the context of the immigrants' situation. We are constantly looking for ideas on how to build a common community with Ukrainians. What we want is a plane of understanding, contact, closeness and help. My "Painting Dialogues" can help in such integration. My idea is that Polish women should paint with Ukrainian women and I'll definitely do everything to carry out this project. I believe that this can give strength and solace to women who went through the horrors of war by venting their frustration, what they experienced in Ukraine and what they are now struggling with in Poland as refugees. It's a way to overcome blockages, tensions, fears and frustrations.

Perhaps we should refer to these ideological conflicts of recent years and the increased influx of immigrants. What activities in the area of culture can help strengthen social awareness in Poland?

First of all, building cohesion, solidarity, tolerance, communication with others, including excluded individuals. If I paint with someone in the "Painting Dialogue", I give them space and freedom to create and I'm open to the other person and cooperation with them, no matter whether it's a child, a refugee, a person with a disability or a great artist. My dialogues are about equality. The space for joint creative work has no rules, limitations, principles or techniques that would block a given movement or creation of a dialogue participant. It's a creative activity based on the positive energy that I give to people in the creative process. Art and art workshops can catalyse development at the local level, thanks to the diverse social, cultural, and material resources that communities can use.

The role of sustainable development in the field of culture is also to strengthen social capital – in particular by providing a basis for the activities of poor, marginalised groups, thanks to which their self-respect and productivity can increase, as well as raising respect for diversity and social inclusion so that these groups can participate in the benefits of economic development.

Thanks to culture and art, we can build a community of beautiful, great people and holistically cooperate with them to build the future.



Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

The world is not on track to achieve gender equality by 2030. At the global level, none of the 18 indicators “met or almost met” the targets and only one is “close to target”. At the current rate of progress, it is estimated that it will take up to 286 years to close gaps in legal protection and remove discriminatory laws, 140 years for women to be represented equally in positions of power and leadership in the workplace, and 47 years to achieve equal representation in national parliaments. Cascading global crises have highlighted and exacerbated existing gender inequalities, such as unequal access to healthcare, education, and economic opportunities. Political leadership and a comprehensive set of policy reforms are needed to dismantle systemic barriers to the achievement of SDG4.

Challenge 2: Gender equality

Conversation with dr hab. Natasza Kosakowska-Berezecka, prof. UG

Faculty of Social Sciences, Institute of Psychology,
Division of Intercultural Psychology and Gender
Psychology

How do you understand the idea of sustainable development from the perspective of your scientific experience?

From a development perspective, the privilege of, for example, being born in a prosperous country is pure chance. Not everyone is so lucky. The sustainable development goals show what to do to ensure that people born in circumstances that don't provide them with constant security and comfort have an opportunity to achieve such conditions. The place of birth is one of the potential limits to our chances of development. Others include belonging to specific social groups that we perceive through the prism of stereotypes – their content may also limit access to power, influence or simply information. Belonging to ethnic, national or sexual minorities, being a woman, or a person with a disability – these are some examples of social groups belonging to which is associated with certain challenges that an individual must face in order to achieve e.g. professional success. For example, people who speak with an accent indicating that they come from a national or ethnic minority are perceived as less educated, less intelligent and less trustworthy. Women, in turn, earn 20% less than men in the European Union, despite having similar competences and levels of education. Sustainable development talks about what to do to ensure that various factors and circumstances counteract the negative impact of the existence of such stereotypes on the quality of life of individuals.

The starting point for our conversation are the sustainable development goals, including the fifth goal, i.e. gender equality. What do you think gender equality is? What socio-cultural aspects does it pertain to?

Maybe I'll start with what gender equality is not. Gender equality is not about women becoming men and men becoming women. It's not a change of roles – it's the creation of a space in which people, regardless of their gender, can fully use their potential, develop talents, and have equal opportunities to achieve goals in all areas of life. Gender equality is the moment when we have similar representation of women and men in various bodies: whether in decision-making bodies of power, full of economic gratifications, in the education system, in the health service, or in a group of people benefiting from various social privileges. We also talk about the domestic sphere here. Gender equality is achieving a similarly committed presence of women and men in various aspects of social, political, but also local, domestic and family life. We talk about gender equality when we want women to have a chance to hold the highest political positions, but also when we make sure that both men and women have the opportunity to care for children. Finally, we talk about a situation in which our various life needs can be fully met, regardless of whether you are a woman, a man, or you identify with neither gender. This is the moment when a certain label does not bother you – on the contrary – it gives you the opportunity to be a happy, healthy and safe person.

The sustainable development goals show what to do to ensure that people born in circumstances that don't provide them with constant security and comfort have an opportunity to achieve such conditions.

Let's try to embed the topic of gender equality in the reality of our country and society. What problems require special attention?

It depends on how we measure gender equality. We can start with a legal measure, from the most general category, e.g. analysing whether men and women are legally protected in situations in which they are discriminated against because they have this gender rather than the other – e.g. they earn less or don't have access to education or health services, or are excluded from certain professions.

The law can be considered a kind of litmus test – an indicator monitoring whether women and men have equal rights, opportunities and privileges. In our country, if it were not for the very restrictive anti-abortion law that controls women's procreation, or the earlier retirement age for women, we could

even talk about certain equality of women and men before the law. But this is debatable.

In turn, another indicator that can help us understand what determines gender equality is the measurement of social attitudes towards women and men and the expectations we set up for them and the values we assign to the roles they fulfil. And here it's worth mentioning stereotypes, from which inequality often begins. Stereotype – prejudice – discrimination is a very important equation in social psychology. It means that if we have certain stereotypes, i.e. simplified and general knowledge about a group (e.g. men manage people better than women), we will most likely be biased towards a woman leader, and when we have to choose either a woman or a man for a given managerial position (with the same qualifications), we will choose a man – because we have such a stereotype of women and men. Discrimination starts with a stereotype that we have in our heads without even being aware of it. Take, for example, another statement: “A man’s role is to earn money to maintain his household, and a woman’s role is to take care of children”. This statement measures the extent to which we support the traditional division of responsibilities in the family. We know from other research that as such beliefs become more prevalent in society, the overall level of gender equality decreases, as measured by, for example, the Global Gender Gap Report (an indicator measured and announced annually by the World Economic Forum). Interestingly, Poland is among the countries in Europe with the most traditional beliefs about women’s and men’s roles. Assigning roles related to household duties mainly to women makes it difficult for them to pursue a professional career. Similarly, assigning roles and responsibilities related to the financial maintenance of the family to men prevents them from greater involvement in family life and responsibilities. Moreover, every year the European Union publishes data showing that the more children women have, the less visible they are on the labour market, and the more children men have, the more bound they are to the labour market. Therefore, sticking to traditional roles entails restrictions in access to the labour market for women and to the family sphere for men. Poland still has a lot to do in this respect, i.e. in building openness to overcoming stereotypes and supporting women in building a professional career, and men in going on parental leave more often.

Gender equality is not about women becoming men and men becoming women. It's not a change of roles – it's the creation of a space in which people, regardless of their gender, can fully use their potential, develop talents, and have equal opportunities to achieve goals in all areas of life.

Are both women and men aware of their rights and ready to fight for them?

In some groups, especially among people from larger cities and with higher education, this awareness is quite high. Gender equality, managing diversity in the organisation, counteracting exclusions have been discussed for many years. I have been dealing with these issues scientifically for twenty years and I see an increasing awareness that equality is an important foundation for building a healthy work environment. I lecture at MBA (Master of Business Administration) studies, I give lectures and teach courses on effective management of diversity in organisations – more and more institutions and organisations in the sphere of business or education uphold the principle of equality and they do it not only because it's politically correct or fashionable, but because it simply pays off – teams or organisations in which we have equal representation of women and men are more innovative, generate more income and an organisational culture based on equality strengthens the sense of security, belonging, responsibility and proactivity of employees of both sexes.

Do events such as protests after the tightening of abortion law and after the judgment of the Constitutional Court, have a strong impact on public awareness? Or are they just media hype, and ultimately, after a few months, few of the demands raised there survive in the public debate?

What drives the development of society is social change. Social change happens when we see that our reality isn't as it should be – something bothers us, something frustrates us, threatens us and we take action to change this reality. Social change has many names and can use various tools – my tool is science: diagnosis of what it's like, showing various data informing about the sense of discrimination of women and men or social inequalities. Next, there are educational activities that serve to show how important it is to counteract gender stereotypes, i.e. training sessions, of which there are more and more in Polish institutions, including Polish universities. Social protests are also an important tool for social change – taking action when we clearly say “no” to certain attitudes or phenomena. The black protest was about women's rights, but let's note that men also took part in it. It was a very important moment of social change because it turned out to be our common cause. Regardless of age and gender, people took to the streets and fought for something important – the right to make decisions about their own bodies.

This doesn't go unnoticed. I don't know if you remember the photos from the protest, which made an impression, especially on people from abroad. There were hundreds of thousands of people who took to the streets in Poland: women

and men. Protest as a tool for social change is the foundation of freedom, showing the voice of society and building commitment around the change we need and want to achieve together. We know from various studies that participating in events such as protests strengthens our sense of self-efficacy. There is nothing more inflammatory for social change than the sense of empowerment that comes from working together for a good cause. Such energy and strength stay with us for a long time. But it must be strengthened by continuing to act together.

What is the situation like at universities in terms of equality and anti-discrimination policy?

From the perspective of many years of my research and educational work, I can say that such activities appeared at universities a long time ago, but most often they took the form of grass-roots initiatives of certain groups, most often coming from the social sciences. At that time, they took the form of scientific research, raising issues of the sense of equality, justice, and quality of life in the scientific community. When we joined the European Union, various grants appeared that were supposed to support activities, e.g. equalising wages. Anyway, there were no coherent pro-equality, inclusive, anti-mobbing, anti-violence and anti-discrimination activities at the university that could improve the situation. Currently, thanks to many grants and systemic solutions, equality activities at universities have become more strategic. The result of this process is, among other things, the establishment of the University of Gdańsk Committee for Social Responsibility, chaired by Professor Ewa Łojkowska. One of the tasks of this committee is to promote equality at our University. The appointment of the Plenipotentiary for Equal Treatment, Professor Joanna Krucalak-Jankowska, is another important signal showing that our University focuses on equality. The fact that we have the Centre for Sustainable Development at the University of Gdańsk, from which you come, is also the result of many years of activities aimed at promoting good university management practices. The European Union has also become an ally in various activities. It has announced that if universities want to apply for EU funding for various scientific activities, and these are large funds, they have no choice: they have to implement various equality plans, anti-mobbing and anti-discrimination standards.

And we have. As the University of Gdańsk, we have prepared such a document. A Commission for the Implementation of the Gender Equality Plan, appointed by the Rector, was also established, in which I had the pleasure to participate. A document was created that outlined a framework for action for the next two

years, the aim of which was to guarantee inclusiveness and gender equality in our work environment, and we also act and support other universities in Poland and around the world in implementing the best equality standards.

If we say that someone is masculine or feminine, it's often accompanied by specific evaluative features. Where do gender roles and specific behaviours assigned to a specific gender come from? Why does a man, in the traditional sense, have features such as courage, strength, dominance, and desire for power; in turn, a woman – sensitivity, protectiveness, and gentleness? At what stage of life do we acquire specific behaviours, learn gender roles and what are the determinants?

Why we “reach for gender” at all is an important question. Firstly, people, as social beings, have the need to categorise and divide the world according to certain patterns that enable them to tame and predict (and to some extent control) the behaviour of others. Gender is quite a graceful category because it's quite easy to use – commonly dichotomised – and therefore it seemingly has only two categories and is most often easy to detect. In addition, there is the power of socialisation, i.e. the environment in which we grow up, which teaches us what women and men are like, what they should do and what they should avoid. We have many theories explaining where gender differences in personality and the social roles they assume come from. Here we have two main strands of research offering quite competing explanations. According to evolutionary theories, the way in which the social life of our ancestors was organised prepared women and men to achieve different adaptive goals – women took care of children, and stronger men protected them and went hunting to provide food – therefore, resourcefulness and agency evolved more strongly in men, while sensitivity and gentleness and caring for relationships developed more strongly in women.

Of course, analyses carried out within the framework of more feminist anthropological theories also tell a different version of events. Namely, most of the food provided to the tribe came from gathering, and this was what women did, therefore women were often the ones who provided most of the food and both women and men took care of the children. Times have changed, but the division remains.

However, according to the social role theory, the fact that we observe women and men in specific tasks and roles makes us attribute to them such characteristics that make their success in performing these tasks plausible. Therefore, if we see men in positions of power more often and women taking care of children,

we conclude that a given gender must have characteristics that make them more likely and willing to take on such roles and fulfil them better. We therefore assume a kind of illusory correlation between what women and men do and what they can and want to do. Interestingly, many studies show that there are no differences in the social functioning of men and women – in fact, as a woman, I may be more similar to you than to my female colleague – temperament and personality may be completely genderless. Therefore, in the light of psychological research, women and men may have a very similar management style, raise children similarly effectively, or communicate with others and express emotions in like manner – but due to our social expectations, we don't realise this.

Here, of course, we are talking about the power of our own stereotypes about binary femininity and masculinity. They potentially bring benefits to both sexes, but they are also a source of various consequences that may affect their happiness and health. Take, for example, the stereotype of masculinity: a man must be fit, tough, resourceful, competent and ambitious – so this assumption paves an easier path for them to achieve success in their professional career. As a result of the belief that “since I am tough and resourceful, I can't show that I'm weak or need help” means that mental or physical weakness is something that men are stereotypically not supposed to exhibit – this is what our cross-cultural research in 62 countries shows.

You've already referred to my next question. We've devoted a large part of our conversation to the issue of women. Some of them actively fight for their rights, using various forms: promoting knowledge, participating in demonstrations, and joining organisations supporting women. Where is the man in all this? You are the main researcher of an international project devoted to the study of contemporary men – Towards Gender Harmony. Please say a few words about this project. How do men understand gender equality?

We are running two international projects focused on this topic. The first one is Towards Gender Harmony, in which we examine various factors that may be related to how masculinity and femininity are understood today.

More than 160 researchers from 62 countries participated in the research carried out in the Towards Gender Harmony project. This international team, which I had the pleasure of leading, analysed, using quantitative and qualitative research the contemporary understanding of masculinity and femininity, conducting research in 62 countries on all continents – it's the first such extensive and broad study in the history of social research on this topic.

The main team running the Towards Gender Harmony project – project opening meeting at the European Solidarity Centre.

How are masculinity and femininity defined in different cultures? Most often, features considered masculine are associated with agency and domination, while features such as community are considered feminine. However, in most cultures, masculinity is something different than being a man – that is, masculinity and being a masculine man must be earned... and therefore... can also be lost. People vary in how much they believe that masculinity requires constant validation. These differences are influenced by how a person is brought up and in what social environment (family, school, peers) they grow up, and then in what environment they function as an adult man or woman (work, family, friends). The research of the Towards Gender Harmony project carried out in 62 countries around the world, has shown that beliefs about threats to masculinity are deeply rooted in the culture in which the person lives. In countries such as Kosovo, Albania or Nigeria, the beliefs that masculinity must be constantly proved through strictly defined patterns of behaviour are very strongly anchored in the minds of citizens. On the other hand, in countries such as Finland, Germany or Spain, masculinity is not so easy to undermine through individual behaviours, statements or interests. The research also shows that the higher the country's development index and gender equality, the less strong the beliefs among women and men that masculinity is at risk and needs to be proved. It's also important that the feeling that masculinity needs to be confirmed may encourage men to engage in not necessarily healthy behaviours that are intended to maintain their masculine status – we know that the feeling that masculinity is jeopardised goes hand in hand in men with increased risk-taking and a tendency to aggressive behaviour or supporting military actions. Therefore, examining what masculinity is and why it is threatened is important for men's health and quality of life – the feeling of endangered masculinity has many negative social consequences. Our research also indicates that the feeling that masculinity is menaced, as a cultural belief, is associated with a number of negative consequences for men's health – men in countries with high rates of threatened masculinity die 6 years earlier than men in countries with low rates of threatened masculinity. Similarly, endangered masculinity is conducive to risky, health-damaging behaviours.

In our next project, also financed under the OPUS grant by the National Science Centre, we are examining the relationship between teenage and adult men's perception of their own masculinity, their mental well-being and attitudes towards gender equality.

You've mentioned that men, especially in certain social groups, are often afraid of establishing gender equality. How can we remedy this? Can we point to examples of societies where gender equality works as we would like it to, and both groups benefit from it?

Gender equality, whether in family, social or professional life, benefits both men and women. It's associated with greater respect for human rights in a given country, higher levels of happiness and well-being, and better physical and mental health, as well as greater satisfaction with family relationships and economic benefits, including a higher average level of GDP. The study involved over 33,000 participants from 62 countries – both from Norway, which ranks second out of 153 countries in terms of gender equality in the World Economic Forum Global Gender Gap Index (GGGI) from 2020, and Pakistan, which is the 151st in this ranking. In our research, we have found out many important relationships – for example, we have shown that regardless of nationality, the more men believe in “zero-sum” thinking, i.e. they think that the benefits for women at home, business or politics equal the losses for men – the less willing they are to support gender equality and the more likely they are to express attitudes towards women that reflect sexism.

Moreover, the higher the level of gender egalitarianism in a given country, the less likely men are to engage in activities such as signing petitions for gender equality in the workplace or supporting the promotion of women in politics or business. This “zero-sum” thinking, in which gains for women equal losses for men, remains a key barrier to further progress on gender equality. Ironically, the assumption that “her gain = his gain” is more true and should be promoted because gender equality benefits both women and men.

We also conducted another very interesting study where we asked men to check their testosterone levels. They had to measure the length of the second finger – index finger and the fourth finger – ring finger (2D:4D). If you divide the length of the second and fourth fingers, you get a certain proportion which, according to various (though not always confirmed) biological tests can potentially be an indicator of testosterone levels. After the measurement, one group of men learned that their result meant low testosterone levels (very feminine type), and the other – that they had very high testosterone levels. We then examined the men's willingness to support gender equality using a scale that measures, for example, willingness to take part in pro-equality activities, share responsibilities with their partner, etc. In our study, we showed that the men

who had “low testosterone levels” belonged to the group declaring less willingness to support equality activities and share childcare with their partners.

This is an interesting result because it allows us to answer your question directly. First of all, we see that the pressure to prove, to “be macho”, is a form of masculinity that doesn’t guarantee joint action for equal society and sustainable development. Therefore, it’s very important to show various examples of the fact that masculinity has many faces – just like femininity. That’s why it’s so important to show different models of masculinity.

Gender equality, whether in family, social or professional life, benefits both men and women. It’s associated with greater respect for human rights in a given country, higher levels of happiness and well-being, and better physical and mental health, as well as greater satisfaction with family relationships and economic benefits, including a higher average level of GDP.

Partners of the Towards Gender Harmony project are also scientists from Norway. At the end of our conversation, I would like to ask you for a comparative analysis. What are the differences in understanding gender equality and perceiving one’s role in the family and society between Norway and Poland?

One of the equality activities in which we are involved in the University of Gdańsk Committee for Social Responsibility – a group implementing the gender equality plan – is to make it easier for men to combine family and professional roles and take advantage of parental leave. We know that this is an important indicator of gender equality – not only women’s participation in political life or their access to senior positions in companies indicate progress in achieving gender equality, but also men’s involvement in family life, their balanced share of household chores and care of children testify to sustainable development.

In Poland, less than 1% of men go on parental leave. In Norway, it is almost 80%. What is the reason? This is probably partly due to unawareness that such solutions exist, but also to the fact that Norway, following Sweden’s example, has introduced a quota system – if a man doesn’t use the part of parental leave assigned to him, it is gone. Such solutions are now recommended by the European Union.

Norwegian men share housework and childcare responsibilities in a more balanced way more often than Polish men.

Norway is also a country where the sense of threat to masculinity is lower than in Poland. This is also related to the higher health level of Norwegian men than Polish men. Traditional patterns of masculinity are much less present in contemporary Scandinavian cultures. And cleaning, cooking or taking care of children are not considered as feminine as in Poland.

Goal 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries



Before the pandemic, the incomes of the bottom 40% of the population grew faster than the national average in a majority of countries. The impacts of the pandemic and uneven recoveries in different regions of the world threaten to reverse that trend and further worsen global inequality. Record numbers are being forced to flee conflicts and economic hardship.

By mid-2022, one in 251 people worldwide was a refugee, the highest proportion ever documented. Achieving SDG 10 requires concerted efforts to address the root causes of wage disparities and access to resources both within- and between-country inequality.

Challenge 3: Reduced Inequalities

Conversation with dr Aleksandra Wierucka

Faculty of Languages, Institute of Cultural Studies, Department of Cultural Studies

Sustainable development has become firmly rooted in the public debate, and has also become a permanent part of the everyday language of economists, environmental researchers and political scientists. The concept has gained popularity just as quickly as it has lost its reputation as it's considered a term meaning both everything and nothing at the same time. It has recently been replaced with the concept of climate change, which at the same time diverts our attention from the way of solving problems in favour of the causes of the situation in which our ecosystem is.

During our conversation, I'd like us to talk about your opinion on sustainable development. I want to define what "our Gdańsk academic understanding of sustainable development" is. Hence, my first question for you, as a cultural expert, concerns what associations come to your mind when you think of sustainable development and how is sustainable development present in your daily research and teaching work? Do you think that a radical global change of way of life and consumption is possible? Is it likely that diverse societies, at different stages of development, will take up the challenge of taking the same direction of development?

It seems to me that we have no choice now, because sustainable development is a condition for our further functioning, but for this to succeed, the absolute basis is to change the way of thinking, to raise the awareness of society. Such a process, however, always takes a long time, so you have to start with small

steps and wait patiently for the first effects. In turn, the very concept sustainable, in my opinion – although I don't have such inclinations – refers to the philosophy of the East, the balance of power, the Taoist concept of wu wei. It means activities that lead to human existence in conformity with nature. However, I'm afraid that just leaving things alone isn't enough at the moment. We must first reflect on the state of the world, which is largely the result of our human actions, and try to direct it in a better – and more sustainable – way.

The very topic of sustainable living and sustainable development is present in my daily academic practice in several areas. The first is related to the understanding of sustainable development, corresponding to my research in the Amazon. I work with two groups (Quichua and Huaorani), one of which still lives partially keeping balance, living in its settlement, where they have everything they need to live. People there live off the forest, taking care to meet their own needs: they hunt, gather, but they also have gardens where they grow vegetables. Interestingly, most of them prefer to live in the forest, like their ancestors used to, rather than in the city. Their lives, like of other indigenous groups, are balanced and always have been because they're aware of their dependence on nature. Of course, many changes have taken place in this area today, but despite this, many traditions are maintained.

The second such area is the activities around sustainable development undertaken in the world. Activities related to the Anthropocene, to climate change in a very broad context.

The third one is sustainable development implemented on a microscale. Such a plane is e.g. our university. We can start the process of change from above, which our graduates will continue after completing their education. We can play the role of change leaders thanks to our institutional capabilities. This requires changes in the education process that include both theoretical and practical content on sustainable development.

In my opinion, we should also build this microscale of changes in everyday practice, show students that it's possible to function more environmentally friendly, not to use plastic cutlery and plates at the university, introduce electronic document circulation to save paper, etc. A lot of these things can be done. I've recently read that AGH UST in Kraków prepared winter huts for hedgehogs at the campus. I believe that this is an excellent idea not only from a natural, but also didactic point of view. Let's show in practice that the fate of nature is important to us, because it is one of the ways to promote sustainable life and

development. Hedgehog houses are a small step, but in my opinion very important, and if it contributes to someone's reflection on our place in nature, it's priceless.

Looking for common solutions to take actions towards sustainable development means the necessity to collide and juxtapose different perspectives. In the field of science, interdisciplinarity and multidisciplinary are useful. Interdisciplinary research consists in using the theoretical resources of various scientific disciplines to solve problems arising at their contact point. It requires theories from several scientific disciplines to be coupled and is less frequently conducted than multidisciplinary studies. The latter, however, are of great value in terms of understanding the complexity of problems such as sustainable development.

Do you have experience in conducting research that exceeds the scientific discipline you represent?

A cultural expert must be very versatile. I often tell my students that a cultural expert must be multidisciplinary, because we need to be knowledgeable about geography, mathematics and, for example, needlework. Therefore, from my perspective, interdisciplinarity and interdisciplinary cooperation are not only possible, but even necessary to understand cultural phenomena. The very selection of a common research subject by representatives of various scientific fields and disciplines, and learning about its complexity, allows researchers in this smallest dimension to sensitise us to the complexity of the human and non-human world. Four years ago, I conducted research with my students in Thailand, on the coast of the Andaman Sea in the Bay of Bengal, as part of a Polish-Latvian-Thai project. It was an interdisciplinary project, we worked with biologists. There were four students among us – two of biology and two of cultural studies. We investigated how fishermen from a local village in the mangrove forest area use the marine environment. Biologists determined which species of fish breed in the mangrove forest. Our role was to find, among others, answers to the question of how local fishermen use the marine environment and how they use local species of fish. The research itself was an interesting experience as we exchanged methodologies and theories, which resulted in a more complete picture of the reality under study. In this project we also did an experiment that consisted in that the biologists took the culture experts fishing for two days and I, in turn, took the biology students to a village where they learned – in a sense – about the fate of the same fish they had previously studied as biologists. We are planning to continue our research in India and Ecuador. However, in the case

of the project carried out in Thailand, we can't talk about sustainable development, because the waters there are overfished by large industrial vessels and this creates problems for local fishermen. Probably, if they were left alone on these waters, the biological balance would return in a short time, and sustainable development could also follow, but this isn't possible in this part of the world. I doubt whether it would be possible anywhere nowadays.

Your research shows a variety of approaches to sustainable development, but also different motivations and relationships between culture and nature, which also influence specific behaviours. What is characteristic for indigenous peoples' approach?

In the case of indigenous groups, this difference is connected with something much broader. Unfortunately, I'd associate this with the effects of colonialism, because in the economy we constantly think about balancing our actions so that we don't use up natural resources as they are scarce, because they are limited. Of course, it's different in indigenous cultures. In Western cultures, in the Christian tradition, of course, culture is separate from nature. And here we have the imperative to control nature. Nature is for us and we're supposed to use it. In indigenous cultures, culture is part of nature. It's an element of it, so it's obvious that the use of nature must be sustainable. In many places people still live in such a way as not to overexploit resources because they are aware that they might soon run out. For example, in Australia, the Aborigines who lived on the water's edge used resources in a very sustainable way. If a group came to the coast at some time and caught fish, and ate it for a few days or a few weeks, or a crab or a mollusc, they would leave their shells on the beach. When another group came there later, they concluded from the remnants on the beach that they could no longer eat certain foods because that would be excessive exploitation. And they also left more shells as a message for the next group. This is the simplest example of acting sustainably: we use resources in a way that will also allow us to use them in the future. We use resources enabling their reproduction. European colonisation brought a new way of exploitation that was neither sustainable nor friendly. It was predatory. Examples include the obtaining of rubber in Africa and the Amazon, and timber harvesting in the Amazon. A whole new type of economy was imposed on indigenous groups everywhere. In the first period, the most important thing was profit. The second phase of imperialism, which came a little later, was related to politics. During colonisation, deforestation took place, and the natural environment was destroyed. New excessive exploitation devastated the environment in which the natives lived. They could no longer live as they used to. Much later, post-colonialism appeared, according

to which we should decolonise our thinking about the world. It appreciated different ways of perceiving the world, which is also characteristic of anthropology, which tries to look at, or at least get closer to, understanding the fact that not everyone perceives the world or uses the world and interprets it as we do. Currently, a lot of research is being conducted on indigenous knowledge, not only on what they know, but also knowledge understood as a way of perceiving the world. From the perspective of the theory of culture, our language and our culture are the filters through which we perceive the world. If we're brought up in a culture, it seems to us that the whole world is organised just like in our culture, which of course is not true, but everyone thinks so. The dominant European culture took away from indigenous groups not only their livelihoods, not only the environment, but also their culture, their way of thinking, customs and language. Now we are trying to give voice to them, saying that their ways of perceiving the world are not only not inferior or less valuable, but are those from which we can learn how to function better in the world.

What is young people's, for example your students' attitude to what you've just said?

I run workshops on indigenous shamanism, often for secondary school students. For example, when I explain to them what shamanism is about, that there is a belief in a parallel world inhabited by spiritual beings who have access to us and who can harm us, doubts appear. At one of the workshops, a secondary school student said to me: "Okay, but how can they believe that some beings are walking around somewhere in some world. It makes no sense." I answered that I understood his remark and that I wouldn't like to go into religious matters but I understand that the point is that it isn't possible to prove that spirit beings exist. The student admitted that this was what he meant when he asked the question. I asked if he could prove that Catholic God exists, because in both cases it's about faith. We believe in this, they believe in something else. We are brought up in the culture of the West, so for us the faith that functions in the culture of the West is so obvious and natural that it seems to be the norm everywhere. Other concepts, other ways of leading a life are alien to us. When it comes to students, especially of cultural studies, they are often sensitive to difference in all aspects, which is very encouraging from my point of view.

Does technological development in the field of communication help or hinder the promotion of indigenous cultures?

On the one hand, technologies are strongly Westernised, on the other hand – they can be an excellent tool for promoting indigenous cultures. Everyone who

has access to the Internet, for example, can post information about their culture. However, the free market economy, technology and science in which we operate have a huge impact on us – all elements of our life come from Western culture. We're so saturated with it that it is sometimes difficult for us to go beyond such thinking.

Can you enumerate some examples of negative understandings of cultural differences?

In anthropology, examples are even given of aid projects that have failed for this reason. In Africa, an aid project was being carried out for a local group and it was decided that men working on the plantations would only work a certain number of hours to keep everything in order. However, when the finished project was taken to the place, it turned out that in this culture women pick up tea leaves, not men. But, the project assumed cooperation with men – no one had taken into account the fact that there was a different labour division in this group based on gender. The project, of course, was not implemented.

Negative understanding of cultural differences is present in our everyday lives – it can be seen in stereotypes, in jokes and in comments. All people are prone to recognising their culture as better because they are brought up in it and find it difficult to go beyond such thinking. For me, a very important role of the humanities and social sciences is to change such an attitude in society.

What is your position on climate change and attempts to counteract its negative effects?

Referring to nine planetary resilience boundaries, it should be remembered that four of the nine were already exceeded in 2009. Currently, we're dealing with the disappearance of species, with deforestation, many processes can't be reversed. We should persuade everyone that we have to act differently. The lack of social awareness is the greatest obstacle to overcoming the crisis. Changes should be introduced on the basis of this awareness. Research shows that there was once no depression in indigenous groups and few mental illnesses were diagnosed. This situation was a positive effect of community life: sharing food, skills, and lending support to each other. Life was different. Of course, I'm not saying that we should go back to this way of life, because it wouldn't be possible. However, there's no doubt that it was more balanced. Our actions also influence the lives of those people who'd like to lead a balanced life, but can't.

Do you encounter specific effects of climate change while conducting your research?

I conduct my research in the Amazon in Ecuador, where the Yasuní National Park is located – it's a park recognised as a UNESCO biosphere reserve, which is one of the places with the greatest biodiversity in the world. Part of the community that I study lives in this park. They have lived there for centuries, some of their land that has been allocated to them is either on the border of the park or partly in the park. And that's where the trouble starts. The first is that the economy of Ecuador is based on the extraction of crude oil, which is obtained through concessions granted by the government to foreign oil companies. They extract oil and export it from Ecuador. For many years, the companies did not observe any regulations in the process of oil extraction. What is the effect of this? Indigenous groups who want to live there by taking advantage of the forest can't because the soil is saturated with petroleum waste. It is similar in Brazil, Venezuela and Peru. The global economy is encroaching there very intensively, making it impossible for people to live the way they'd like.

Second, in 2007, Ecuador announced a plan to extract oil from under the Yasuní National Park. Then various countries, organisations and foundations began to alarm that the UNESCO biosphere couldn't be destroyed in order to obtain oil. The Ecuadorian government emphasised that it was one of few sources enabling the development of the state. Oil and tourism are the two main sectors from which Ecuador earns revenues. The government of Ecuador, however, set up a project according to which crude oil in Yasuní wouldn't be extracted, but as compensation various global organisations, governments and foundations would pay back to the government of Ecuador 1/3 of the profits that the country would have obtained from oil extraction. 2011 was set as a deadline. In 2013, the project was terminated because the sufficient amount of money had not been obtained.

Currently, crude oil is extracted in the Yasuní National Park. For example, in the area where I conduct my research, drilling began 15 km from the village, in the park area. The impact of oil extraction on indigenous culture is direct, as it functions in every dimension in connection with the forest. All cultural elements have been related to the natural environment and are still used today. Today, hammocks and baskets are still woven, although the local population also uses plastic and metal containers. There are gas cookers in homes, but also traditional furnaces. The problem is losing the possibility of living off the forest in the future because there is too much traffic and noise, polluted land and water,

etc. It may sound funny, but as a personal protest, I never, in any country, refuel at the Chevron station, which is responsible for contaminating vast expanses of the Ecuadorian Amazon with petroleum waste. Even when refuelling here, I feel guilty, because in the Amazon I found out what the real cost of fuel is. Of course, I don't think the gasoline at the village petrol station comes from the Amazon, but it doesn't matter. It comes from somewhere else where oil companies start anti-sustainable processes through their activities. It's not just that we can go to the park and see it, it's that the park must be there. I've read that the preservation of a biological species is possible when we let ten specimens out of a million die out a year, and we exceed that number a hundred times. It's important to live in accordance with the idea of sustainable development everywhere, and not only in places where it's supported by law.

What is the process of informing the world about this situation?

There isn't much information, although it's slowly changing. But, for example, in 2015, during the Paris climate summit, indigenous groups protested a lot. Little was said about it in the media. There were protests because the fragment about respecting the rights of indigenous people was removed from the main text of the appendix. Indigenous groups' mentality, life, or philosophy wasn't as important as that of the West. This year's Glasgow climate summit is more publicised, so maybe such information will reach a wider audience.

What can we do on a microscale at the University of Gdańsk?

First of all, show sustainable development in practice, which should come "from the top". We should teach students who go out into the world after studying with us, what you can do, starting from yourself: reduce plastic consumption, add vegan dishes to the menu in campus bars or promote the trend of sustainable development in your own environment.

Conversation with dr Przemysław Sieradzan

Faculty of Languages, Institute of Eastern-Slavic
Philology, East Asian Culture and Languages
Division

Doctor, it's a fact that sustainable development has permanently entered the academic dictionary, but different scientific disciplines focus on slightly different aspects and emphasise its different dimensions. Looking through the press and social media, it can be concluded that the economic understanding of sustainable development predominates. What is sustainable development for you?

Indeed, I can agree that the term “sustainable development” itself comes from economic sciences and that it is primarily economists who speak about it. I, however, understand this concept much more broadly. For me, sustainable development is multidimensional development that takes into account not only economic factors, not only pays attention to the material or financial aspect, but also takes heed of the cultural factor in all its aspects. The concept of culture must be understood very broadly here. It's necessary to take into account the social and ecological aspects, various dimensions of the civilisation aspect, cultural diversity, ecosystem diversity, species diversity, the multiplicity of connections between various creatures that inhabit our earth and participate in the life of the biosphere. In addition, we do not know whether, from the perspective of our civilisation development, sustainable development won't also apply to outer space. Already today, various types of space debris or artificial satellites that have stopped working and function in outer space are a problem. They pose a problem for humanity, so I suspect that over the years, the extra-terrestrial perspective will also attract the interest of those dealing with sustainable development. But at the moment I think that sustainable development should focus on the Earth's biosphere. Thinking in the categories of not only the present generation but also future generations, is crucial to my understanding of sustainable development.

New sustainable development goals, which were adopted by 193 member states, were negotiated for almost three years. An Open Working Group was established for this task, which defined 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 related tasks that reflect its three, economic, social and environmental, dimensions. Actions for the attainment of the goals require activity and progress on these three levels simultaneously and in an integrated manner. These are extremely ambitious goals. How do you think these goals can be achieved? Is it possible at all?

It necessitates fundamental changes in awareness and re-evaluation of priorities. First of all, departing from the consumption model, departing from the model linking personal, individual success with the number of consumed goods. In my opinion, changes on many levels are necessary here, global changes going beyond the policy of each individual country. Here it's necessary to abandon state and national particularisms and to reject the fetishisation of economic growth. At the moment, the economic success of a country is measured by gross domestic product. Even those who aren't professional economists know that gross domestic product is the value of ordered goods and services. In this paradigm, the more citizens consume, the greater their economic success, and the more the path they have chosen is considered to be an example to follow, worthy of being followed. This is where the question arises. Is it really true that the more goods and services people order, the better? And better for whom? There's also a phenomenon of overconsumption of certain social groups and a lack of access to basic consumer goods for other social groups. Consumption becomes the factor that differentiates and divides to some extent. These differences are huge in each individual country. Shocking data are published about the differences between the richest entrepreneurs or top managers and regular employees. Various studies indicate that this gap has been systematically and dramatically growing over the past decades. The gaps are getting bigger. At the moment, we are dealing with an absolutely dramatic situation in sub-Saharan Africa. If we look at the list of countries ranked by social wealth, we see that among the 20 poorest countries, most are located in sub-Saharan Africa. This is an absolutely dramatic situation. The question arises: has the direction of civilisation development been chosen correctly? Isn't it so that only a small group known as the golden billion benefits from the technological and civilisation achievements of mankind? Enjoying the disproportionately higher share of these gains of civilisation, they are the beneficiaries of this unfair division of labour, which for some is very beneficial, for others – destructive. Therefore, many other problems arise, for example social mobility related to the fact that the place of birth, family and birth conditions are directly related to access to

both education and basic material goods. That's why, to sum up my statement, I think that some kind of disproportions in consumption results in two twin phenomena occurring simultaneously: overconsumption by certain groups and lack of access to basic consumption goods by other groups. This situation is a contradiction of sustainable development and, unfortunately, there is now awareness that these are negative phenomena, that they are very disturbing phenomena, but this awareness appears among intellectuals and conscious people, those who are interested in this subject, and the average consumer, like the decision-makers of this world, they either ignore this problem or limit themselves to uttering various slogans.

One of the goals of sustainable development is to take action to counteract climate change and its effects. Do you see any actions around you that would indicate that this problem is taken seriously?

I'm just afraid that a lot is said about it, but not much done. Let me give you one example that has shocked and upset me recently. At the beginning of last year, I wanted to go to Great Britain. I considered various ways of getting there. I figured I would seriously consider going by train. I calculated the cost of traveling by rail across Europe, the Channel Tunnel and then the UK. It would be the expenditure of about PLN 3000. At that time travelling with cheap airlines cost about PLN 30 on special offer. I admit that in the end, I decided to take the plane, although I was aware that I was doing wrong. On the other hand, the disproportion of expenses was so great that a person with a small budget had no choice but to travel by air. My reflection is that this is a shocking situation. Travelling by train isn't two or three times as expensive, but almost 100 times!!! This is a fact. Travelling by rail in Europe is the most ecological and, at the same time, the most expensive means of passenger transport. This shows that we are dealing with a truly dramatic situation that requires immediate action. If London and cheap flights were taxed at the beginning, each passenger on the plane would have to bear the cost of various activities that would, for example, compensate for the carbon footprint that is generated by the flight. The fact that politicians give all kinds of speeches about how important sustainable development is to them and that they are very eager to have a photo taken with Greta Thunberg, doesn't change the fact that little is being done in this respect.

What is your opinion about the activities undertaken by the European Union to support SDGs?

Tax policy, in my opinion, both at the national level and in the European Union, unfortunately still promotes an anti-ecological, unhealthy way of life. It pertains

not only to Poland but also to Western European countries. I am a supporter of the vegan idea. I believe that meat production is the most destructive for the climate. Meanwhile, the European Union subsidises meat producers. In that case, we can't speak of the European Union supporting the idea of sustainable development. On the other hand, vegan food is much more expensive. I bear these costs because I've made such a decision, but there are people who, for economic reasons, can't afford it. It leads to a situation in which people who are primarily driven by economic interests choose an anti-ecological way of life.

What is your opinion about the role of behavioural changes?

As for my life, I've done quite a lot. I don't buy clothes in brand shops, but in second-hand-clothing shops, I don't follow various types of fashions, I use a minimum of electronics, I use second-hand electronic equipment. However, I still feel that I could definitely do more, such as cut back on plastic that I still use quite a lot. I'd like conscious consumers to be in the majority. Unfortunately, the average buyer is exposed to all sorts of incentives, all sorts of quality-of-life marketing arguments. On the other hand, we hear the postulates of limiting consumption or taking pro-ecological actions much less frequently. The power of advertising is destructive: it creates behaviours, artificial needs and triggers the belief in the consumer that in order to participate in modern society, one must often ostentatiously buy and consume what is currently fashionable. You have to constantly buy new attire and electronic equipment. I'm an opponent of individual materialisation promoted on a large scale. I believe that a person who doesn't need a car shouldn't have one. Instead, they should use public, mass transport. I've been doing this for years and, to be honest, I'm not going to change it. On the other hand, advertising creates a reality in which not having your own car is a great shame, and public transport is for losers. People who don't follow all kinds of fashions, don't have the most modern electronic equipment, don't have their own car and don't consume on a large scale, face enormous social pressure from kindergarten or early childhood. In this situation, it seems to me that the only possibility of global change is to create an environment in which pro-ecological choices conducive to sustainable development will also be economically rational and will be favoured by an appropriate tax policy.

Do you discuss the issue of sustainable development during your didactic work at the University of Gdańsk?

I try to stay in touch with students and sometimes discuss ecological topics with them, including the effects of various activities and their impact on the biosphere, ecosystem and climate. Unfortunately, I don't see much interest in

this subject among my students. In my opinion, students dream of consuming on a large scale, succumb to various types of fashions, it is important for them to have modern electronic devices, the desire to own a car is popular, and they fall into unhealthy eating habits. In the immediate vicinity of the university, there is a McDonald's, which is a symbol of junk, worthless food. It's extremely popular among students who eat there during breaks between classes. In addition, there are vending machines at the university where you can buy crisps, breadsticks, Coca-Cola. If someone wanted to eat a healthy meal or a vegan dish, they'd have a huge problem. It isn't easy to get a wholesome vegan meal not only at the university but also around the university. You can do it, but you need to know the culinary topography of the area quite well. On the other hand, the advantage of the University of Gdańsk is that bicycle racks are quite easily accessible and they are located in many places. However, I haven't noticed any great interest in these racks. I have been cycling to university for many years and my impression is that most students look at it with some kind of amazement, that they find it eccentric. When it comes to academics, unfortunately, there are few keen cyclists.

What you've said can't be considered optimistic.

Exactly, what I've said might have sounded too malcontent, and I've just realised it now. Perhaps this is because I consider the alarmist tone justified in the current situation. However, I'm glad that there are also non-conformists, that there are academics who aren't afraid to talk about the fact that perhaps modern civilisation is going in the wrong direction, that there are authorities among intellectuals and people aware of the threat.

If you were to indicate any effective solutions in terms of achieving the goals of sustainable development or counteracting climate change, which would you enumerate first?

When it comes to positive models, often societies much richer than Polish society – here I can give the example of Norwegians or, more broadly, Scandinavians – have lower consumption needs and incomparably lower need for ostentatious consumption. I just think that this kind of linking social status and prestige with large-scale consumption is a huge problem that Polish society is blighted by. If I were to compare the Polish situation to the Norwegian situation, then a Norwegian who is four or five times as wealthy as an average Pole, at the same time has no problem with renting a flat, living, for example, in a relatively modest wooden house, using public transport, even if he or she is a senior official or has a high position in the local community. In the Scandinavian countries, social

prestige isn't connected with ostentatious consumption. And it seems to me that this is a social pattern when it comes to the previously mentioned behavioural aspect. It seems to me that a modest life, a bit more asceticism, reduction, limiting consumption would be a very good direction of development. I think the promotion of these kinds of models is the most important. I must admit that I am using our conversation to promote issues that I personally care about. As for other examples and solutions, I believe that private cars and plane flights should be taxed. Receipts and additional revenues from these taxes should be allocated to supporting environmentally friendly means of transport. I believe that Poland is a country for drivers. If we take into account the Highway Code, in no other country in Europe, in the European Union, is there such a provision as an arbitrary pedestrian inrush onto the street? Poland is a country where in the case of a collision of a pedestrian with a car, the pedestrian can be found guilty. In general, pedestrians and cyclists have fewer rights than drivers. Cyclists are treated as intruders on the roads, car drivers consider themselves the rulers of these roads, and they believe that roads are for cars only. In conclusion, if I were to choose the three most important areas in which changes should occur for society to develop sustainably, I would mention: trying to stop consumerism, increasing the rights of vegetarians and vegans, and the rights of pedestrians and cyclists, i.e. less consumption, healthier food and a healthier lifestyle.



Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

The pandemic has caused major shifts in migration patterns, including huge movements of people in and out of urban areas. Furthermore, climate change and conflicts tend to have disproportionate impacts on cities. These factors mean that the world is far from achieving the goal of sustainable cities. In many developing countries, slum populations have been growing, putting at risk the target of adequate housing for all by 2030. Since 2015, the number of countries with national disaster risk reduction strategies has more than doubled. To achieve SDG 11, efforts must focus on strengthening capacities for planning for urban development, improving access to public transportation and enhancing waste management

Challenge 4: Sustainable cities

Conversation with dr Grażyna Chaberek

Faculty of Social Sciences, Institute of Social and Economic Geography and Spatial Management, Department of Spatial Management

How can sustainable development be defined through the lens of your discipline?

My research, experience, and observations show that striving for the satisfaction of one's needs that grow and change over time is the very foundation of human existence. Satisfying one's needs in a sustainable way should not modify or deteriorate one's environment. According to the sustainable development triad, there are three pillars: social, economic, and environmental. So we should satisfy our needs without experiencing shortages, but on the other hand this goal should be pursued without deteriorating our environment. And today such an approach requires systems thinking and determines my way of thinking about our situation. The way I understand it is that everything that surrounds us, including us, constitutes a set of interrelated components. We need to be aware that every action, process or movement affecting one component has a direct or indirect impact on the remaining ones. The direct impact can be experienced in our everyday life, immediately or after some time. Or it may be the case that, unlike future generations, we will not experience them at all. That's why we should be aware of the consequences of our actions.

Do you think it is possible to reject short-term thinking in favor of long-term thinking in a spirit of intergenerational justice? Can we do anything in this regard?

I am sure that grassroots work is of primary importance. We can already notice positive outcomes of the actions taken here and now. Changing people's way of thinking is possible at an individual level, which is not necessarily the case with collective consciousness of society. That's why the work done in this area needs to have two coherent dimensions: theory and practice. Lack of supportive actions or practices in our everyday life impedes the process of raising awareness. As far as adults or seniors are concerned, the process may be facilitated through the use of social campaigns. However, the actions taken by companies employing them should follow the principles of sustainable development. The consistency between the message and practice is a path toward a change in thinking. As part of my student teaching experience, I run a course on systems theory which covers the nature and examples of interdependencies as well as discussions about sustainable development.

Do students proactively explore the idea of sustainable development in their diploma theses?

The number of students who think it is an important subject is increasing. Sustainable development in the area of spatial management is firmly rooted in our study program. Right from the start our students learn about complexity and multidimensionality, and have a chance to cooperate with environmental, social and urban experts. The issue of sustainable development is covered by many courses, which is reflected in our students' diploma theses. In my view the most important challenge in this regard is to ensure content integration and to create a student space for multidisciplinary endeavors and research to be carried out in mixed, i.e. cross-curricular groups.

That brings me to my next question. Have the issues related to sustainable development been included in the syllabi of courses run at the Institute?

The major in spatial management includes a course on the determinants of sustainable development in spatial management. What is more, the issues related to sustainable development are covered by most of our courses. We have more and more lecturers whose research work and teaching practice are linked to sustainable development.

What actions, in your opinion, should we take to promote sustainable development at our university?

One way of changing our thinking is focusing on the value of relation and integration. Future cities should be for people, not cars. My research results demonstrate that one of the major problems of contemporary cities is an excessive number of cars, which affects safety, environmental quality, and life quality in the sense that we spend a lot of time getting from one place to another. This, in turn, has a detrimental impact on mental health and household budgets. To solve the problem of excessive individual motorism, diverse ideas have emerged, for example a traffic ban. In my opinion it would be much better to create infrastructure facilitating behavior change. What is becoming increasingly popular is the idea of a 15-minute city designed in such a way that daily necessities are within a 15-minute walking distance from residents' homes. And that involves the rejection of single-purpose zones in favor of multifunctional housing estates. By way of analogy, we may ask: Is our university integrated with the urban tissue? In my opinion, we are nowhere near there yet. However, we should go in this direction. Even focusing on our university's functions, we could use our campus space to show how we work at our laboratories, how we do our research work and engage in scientific activities as well as what we have accomplished so far in this regard. Such public science events are held at many universities around the world. What is more, the university campus space should be open and used for integration purposes through organizing sports activities as well as providing art and culture promotion venues or meeting spaces. The same holds true for the Library of the University of Gdańsk, to be open for students until late night hours. An open and multifunctional space for diverse groups of people is, contrary to all appearances, safe. Our university has a huge potential in this respect.

Conversation with dr Hanna Obracht-Prondzyńska

Faculty of Social Sciences, Institute of Social and
Economic Geography and Spatial Management,
Department of Spatial Management

You work at the University of Gdańsk in the Department of Spatial Management as an academic teacher; you teach urban design and data analysis. Could you explain to a layman what spatial planning is? What is the meaning and goals of spatial planning?

I'm an architect and urban planner. Already as a student, I was particularly interested in urban planning. My friends sometimes tease me that my concentration begins above two thousand square meters. Indeed, a larger scale is closer to me and that's why I took up urban planning. It covers a much broader spectrum than traditional design. What fascinates me about urbanism and city planning is the number of variables that need to be considered to create a good liveable space. City design is not only related to the composition of buildings and shaping public spaces. A city is a complex organism, the design of which must take into account social, environmental, infrastructural and many other conditions.

One of the reasons why I work at the Faculty of Social Sciences is that city space is for people (though not only!), and my research and work focus on our perception of the built-in environment, how it affects us, and how we engage in shaping healthier cities.

Why is spatial design so important? What would happen if we omitted this instrument of spatial policy?

Unfortunately, we often skip it. In our cities, the degree of coverage with local plans is low, and the documents are often of low quality. Urban design or preparation of masterplans basically does not exist. This approach results in high economic, social and environmental costs.

Economic – the more dispersed buildings, the higher the costs of providing infrastructure, ensuring access to services and organising transport.

Social – the worse the space, the more frustration (because I'm stuck in traffic jams, because it's far everywhere), the weaker social bonds, the worse our well-being. Psychologists' research clearly shows that our stress level increases dramatically when we stay in a chaotic, congested space devoid of human scale and urban life. This is also what my research on social media data showed. We become haters when our neighbourhoods are roads and concreteosis.

And finally, environmental – shaping space without taking into account the issues of ventilation, elimination of heat islands, water management, and preservation of green corridors worsens the living conditions of all city inhabitants.

When did urban planning become an important element in shaping spatial policy?

The wording used in this question is alarming to me. Today we are talking about spatial policy, not urban design. The cities and housing estates – both historical and contemporary – that we admire have been designed. Today, we reduce the role of urban planners to that of planners. And there is a fundamental difference, especially with the current planning system.

I think that in recent years we've experienced an urban planning crisis. My lecturer once said: "freedom has actually worked out very well for us and it's clearly visible in space." This means that freedom has given us enormous liberty, which in many places has unfortunately led to the disruption of spatial order. The space has become less legible, the buildings have become more chaotic, and pedestrians have been pushed into the background. We have a lot to do here. I think that the coming years will be very intense for spatial planning. The planned reform of the spatial planning system proposes many key changes, but it still lacks urban design. I don't want to discredit the tools proposed or taken from previous eras, but the art of city design is changing because the realities are changing. And the legal tools we have or will soon receive don't respond to the biggest challenges cities face – such as climate change, nor do they use the potentials of the modern world – such as digital tools and access to data.

We will return to Polish realities, but first I would like to ask about your trip to South America. What was the purpose of this trip?

I went to Colombia because of the summer school that is organised every year by the Universidad Externado de Colombia in Bogota. Each year, a different meeting topic is selected and the recruitment for lecturers is open to everybody. This information reached our university, and I thought it might be an interesting challenge. The theme was relevant to me and concerned facing the future with hope. The main pillar of urban planning is shaping the cities we will live in in the future. I proposed a topic related to city design in the context of the challenges related to climate change we'll have to face in the near future. I was selected and that's how I went to Colombia, where I spent three weeks teaching students how we can, even without being urban planners, act for climate and help our cities become more resilient to climate change. We must remember that cities and their development contribute to the aggravation of the climate crisis. And every resident can and should contribute to changing this situation.

I must admit that the university made my task easier. The university campus itself is amazing – beautifully integrated into the natural landscape, bathed in greenery, offering the academic community many nooks and crannies for work and rest, and you can get around on foot only.

If we were to enumerate some of the most important principles that planners should follow when designing sustainable cities, what would they be?

The topic is very extensive. It seems to me that the priority is to change the approach.

Pedestrians should play a key role. Research shows that cities with a high level of pedestrian-friendliness rank high in the rankings. Reducing car traffic and replacing it with public transport, alternative forms of mobility and, above all, pedestrian spaces, not only help to shape healthy living conditions and fight climate change but also stimulate the local economy. We often hear that when we cut traffic, local businesses will go bankrupt. Meanwhile, we can cite a lot of research showing that businesses revive because it turns out that ground floor services are used primarily by pedestrians, not car drivers.

Shaping inclusive, compact and integrated spaces – it's time to move away from separating urban functions. We can't design a city where in one place there is a business and service centre, in another there are residential blocks, and somewhere else there is a recreational area. We should try to create synergy by

mixing these functions. The city should be compact and connected by a dense network of public spaces, guaranteeing residents quick access to basic services. The second thing is inclusiveness, friendliness and inclusion. The point is that all places in the city should be equally accessible to residents. Our university campus denies this idea. From the city's point of view, it creates an obstacle by being an excluded enclave separated by a fence.

We should also remember about integration with housing policy. Today we see a trend of pushing residents to suburbia, giving city centres to short leases. The inhabitants of our cities can't afford to live there. The longer we ignore this problem, the more our cities will spread out and the more difficult it will be to guarantee a good quality of life for their residents. A vicious circle. Support for housing is therefore crucial. Even for our future students who will face the challenge of whether they can afford to study in the largest academic centres.

Cities and their development contribute to the aggravation of the climate crisis.

Urban self-sufficiency is particularly important in the face of the energy crisis. Today we need an energy policy that will allow cities to save money, improve air quality and shape electromobility.

The next topic is the climate issue. A number of elements appear here. The most pressing issue is the tendency to concrete cities. We indurate unprecedented amounts of space, forgetting about the role of verdure in the city. Instead of building more roads, instead of building more parking lots, we should change our way of thinking and focus primarily on vegetation, the so-called biologically active surfaces.

Where do you think the tendency to concrete cities comes from?

In my work, I've encountered numerous arguments. From the belief that greenery is expensive, that trees take up space that could be used as a parking lot, and the fear that trees will be damaged during renovation. I often participate in conversations where I explain that renovation does not necessarily mean damage to the root system. A tree can and is worth saving. Unfortunately, conservators also stand in the way and use the argument that historically there was little greenery in cities, forgetting that when it was realised that the conditions in cities had become harmful, we began to invest in this greenery.

Another problem is the constant low awareness of the role of plants, but also the pursuit of savings: "if we put concrete, it will be easier – we won't have to mow

the grass or rake leaves” – this is a false belief. Greenery has many advantages. It eliminates the risk of harmful heat islands and the threat of flooding the city, which we regularly experience during the holiday season in Gdańsk because the water has nowhere to be absorbed. Greenery also shapes the microclimate, affects our well-being and even allows us to save money!

We should strive to restore the trend of using less concrete in cities.

**What do you think about the campuses of Polish and foreign universities?
Would you say they are sustainable?**

A lot depends on the place. When I travel, whether in Europe or beyond, I always try to visit campuses, even if I’m not in a given city for academic purposes. My latest experiences are related to a visit to the Sorbonne in Paris which I perceived very negatively. The campus was terribly inaccessible. I felt like an intruder there, although I am an academic, so the university is a natural environment for me. There was no space for students. While there, I didn’t feel like I was in a city, but simply at a university – there was no zone of flow and mixing of functions. I had high expectations for this place, but I was very disappointed.

On the other hand, I admire universities in the Netherlands, which give the impression of being very open and inclusive. An example is the Science Park in Utrecht. There are an academic centre, a school centre and a hospital centre. All functions of these centres interact with each other. And between them, there is a rainbow bike path, which shows real openness and efforts to integrate different environments. Interestingly, there are no roads there at all. Only tram, bus, bicycle and pedestrian traffic is allowed. Cars are not allowed. In the spaces between the buildings, despite the fact that there are various universities, hospitals and secondary schools, it’s very crowded and you can see the flow of people, the flow of information – there is this interaction. I really wish it worked this way in our country. My favourite architecture faculty in Europe is the one at the Delft University of Technology. The university campus is, interestingly, modernist, and when you enter the building of the Faculty of Architecture no one is interested in you. Simply put: you can be there. At architecture faculties, we often have model shops with expensive equipment for cutting models, wood, creating, building, and so on. At the Delft University of Technology, they are simply available. You can enter them and watch students work. Students leave their things there and no one worries that anything will get missing. The community treats this department like their home – it’s where they spend their time, where they work, and everyone feels safe there. There are also discussion

places in the corridors. Academic work doesn't have to and shouldn't be confined to offices or lecture halls. There it takes place in all these places. It works perfectly there.

I'm very intrigued by the idea of a tram that runs right through the middle of campus.

This is an interesting example because there was such an idea in Gdańsk. At the Gdańsk University of Technology, it was considered whether the tram from Nowa Politechnicza should run through the campus. Of course, there were "no" votes. However, many people gave the example of Delft, where a tram runs through the centre of the campus, or Utrecht, where a similar solution also exists. This is what it should look like. We should get to the university mainly by public transport, not by private car. We should have the stop as close as possible to make using it as convenient as possible. Even at the University of Gdańsk, we would sometimes like to move the public transport stops a little closer and open the university to pedestrians and cyclists.

However, when discussing the tram, people often point out that it can be a nuisance due to the noise it makes.

Today, we have such design solutions that we are able to muffle it. I can mention the example of the campus in Lisbon, a beautiful university, but located in the approach zone of planes. Due to the fact that Lisbon is a tourist destination, planes land there every now and then and you can hear them during classes. It's certainly much more inconvenient than a tram running under the windows. People live near tram stops and they appreciate it because they are close. Trams don't disturb our functioning at all.

Let's go back to Polish campuses. During your academic career, you have visited the campuses of the Gdańsk University of Technology, the Warsaw University of Technology, and of course, of the University of Gdańsk. What do you think about their design? In particular, I'm curious about your opinion about our university.

The campus of the University of Gdańsk is changing: the EcoPark has appeared in the middle; there are more plants than a few years ago. The perception of the campus has been evolving quite a bit in recent years. However, there are certainly a lot of things that are in my dream zone. I will refer to the example of the Universidad Externado de Colombia in Bogota, which I visited. The campus is very green. The university employs its own gardeners who take care of the

greenery. Walking around that campus, I had a dream of making the premises of our colleges greener as well; making them bathed in vegetation, because it makes us want to be closer to such a university and use the space between the buildings. Interestingly, in Colombia, which is perceived as a dangerous country, the university campus was open. Even before I started teaching there, I arrived a few days early and visited the campus. I could enter it without any problem; I could watch it and no one paid any attention to me. There was no fence. I wonder why in that place, which we consider dangerous, it is possible to make an open campus, and in our country, we protect it so much by building a fence around it.

I've touched on this topic several times. The answers varied. The main issue is the parking lot: "cars will enter from neighbouring office buildings." In my opinion, it could be organised in such a way that pedestrians can cross but cars can't pass. There is also the issue of safety. It seems to me that this is absolutely deceptive because if someone wanted to get to the campus, they would do it anyway, even if it is fenced.

I believe that a fence is not the best solution, especially if we want to emphasise that this is the university space. You can use various solutions (in the field of design, small architecture, greenery) to show that "this is OUR campus." Clearly establish its boundaries without creating a spatial barrier. In this respect, there are definitely some things that can be improved.

Pedestrian accessibility would certainly also need to be improved as we can access our campus primarily by car. There is also the issue of access to public transport. Not so far away we have the Pomeranian Metropolitan Railway station, which is basically not taken into account as the direction from which we come to the campus. In turn, when coming from it direction, we enter the university from the Faculty of Social Sciences – through the car gate.

An interesting issue that could be worked on are spaces that give us a sense of homeliness and eliminate the feeling that we only come to classes and quickly run away. This applies to both students and lecturers. At the university in Colombia or at the university in Gothenburg in Sweden, there are student kitchens: there are microwaves, you can leave cups and so on. This shows that we can create this domestic atmosphere.

There is definitely a lack of space to work. Indeed, there is a space where we can sit and wait for classes, but to sit in a group when we have a project to do, there

are few places designated for this purpose; they are just beginning to emerge slowly.

My personal dream is also to reduce the number of parking spaces a bit. In return, we could make a bicycle path and bicycle stations on campus in convenient places, right at the entrances to the buildings.

The University of Gdańsk has great potential to become an even more friendly place. This is a space that we could be proud of soon. But first, we would have to put some work into it. One of the positive things that have appeared recently is the Academic Citizens' Budget, which provides an opportunity to carry out various interesting projects. This academic year, we joined forces, submitting projects together with employees, PhD students and students.

And what were these projects?

We proposed the project "Teamwork Zone at the Faculty of Social Sciences", i.e. a project to create a joint workspace where we could sit and work with a larger group. It would be a useful space for both students and employees. Additionally, we proposed arranging the rotunda inside the building of the Faculty of Social Sciences. We wanted it to be lined by greenery and have places to work in the brightest part. We'll definitely want to come back to these topics.

Our team is happy that one of the projects won – the second place in the student classification went to the "Chillout Zone at the Faculty of Social Sciences" which will be carried out in 2023. It will be a lounge with armchairs, a swing and pouffes.

What does the Pomeranian Landscape Protection Institute do?

The association was established in June last year. The president is habilitated doctor Miłostawa Borzyszkowska-Szewczyk, prof. UG. She initiated the whole action and gathered a lot of people around this idea who wanted to get involved. The association was established at our university and associates people for whom landscape, spatial order and the space in which we live are not indifferent. A lot of people from various departments of our university are involved, but also from outside: activists and people dealing with landscape issues professionally. I strongly support this initiative. The association intends to actively participate in discussions, give opinions on investment projects that are carried out in our region, conduct educational activities that involve people in schemes for the benefit of the landscape of our region, but also contribute to a more

caring and responsible approach to what we construct in our cities and towns. The landscape is not indifferent to the inhabitants of Pomerania – many want to take care of it. We don't leave this task only in the hands of people who deal with it professionally, but we start to act together. After all, we all live in this space and we all have to take responsibility for it. I hope that we'll be able to organise a lot of interesting events and certainly protect some valuable places in our region.

Conversation with prof. dr hab. Jacek Zaucha

Faculty of Economics, Department of
Macroeconomics

Taking into account both your scientific achievements and your personal experience and views, how do you understand sustainable development?

Basically, sustainable development is a concept that has existed for many years and is widely discussed in the literature. The essence of the concept of sustainable development is to pay attention to three dimensions of development: the social dimension, the ecological dimension and the economic dimension, some also talk about the cultural or political dimensions, but in general, this is not the subject or axis of the dispute. The axis of the dispute is how to combine these dimensions and which of them should be given priority. And here the discussion really concerns whether we have so-called hard or soft sustainability. But in general, in my opinion, the problem is that this concept seems to have arisen from the appreciation of natural values, the value of natural capital. Hence, we often associate it with the ecological approach, but if we take it literally, i.e. talking about these three dimensions, each of them is important, especially the social dimension, which, in my opinion, is not fully appreciated. Narrowing the discussion to this economics-environment dichotomy impoverishes the entire discussion a bit. There is such a thing as eco-development. I think that this concept adequately describes the issue of ecology, but for me, sustainable development is an attempt to harmoniously combine the three dimensions of development in accordance with the adopted hierarchy of values in a given society. It will look slightly different in each of them, because in societies where basic needs aren't met, it may turn out that strictly economic development is necessary for the society to mature to pro-ecological thinking or thinking about social inclusion. Please note that in many societies, even in those where thoughts about the need for an ecological approach are common, it's most difficult to understand the meaning and importance of the social dimension of sustainable

development, which is very important. If we imagine the trajectory of the entire system heading towards social catastrophe, then both environmental protection and the best economic development will lead us nowhere at this point. The result will be such stratifications and conflicts that won't allow us to continue our development.

Thank you very much for this definition, which is particularly relevant to me because it points to the problem of inequality. How does the concept of sustainable development manifest itself in your activities – teaching and working with students?

At the very beginning, when I started working at the University of Gdańsk as a student, I started working with Professor Toczyski. Then, in our [economics] faculty, in the 1980s and 1990s, we built the Sopot School of Social Economy, or in fact social policy. It was our main area of research, although we didn't define them as sustainable development, but, for example, the issues of growth limits were very relevant to us. Later, our discipline of economics evolved. At the moment, in my opinion, social considerations or threads are missing. Of course, there are people dealing with sustainable development, but in the economic context, e.g. transport. Transport is an area in which ecological, rather than social, issues play an important role. However, my research went towards so-called spatial and public economics. While completing a two-year fellowship at Princeton University in the early 1990s, I encountered these issues. When I returned to Poland, I offered a lecture on the functioning of public choice in economics, which is used in the analysis of public decision-making, i.e. how the state influences the economy, how the state provides public goods, and what the tax system looks like. When talking about the goals that the state or public authority or public administration pursues, I take into account economic, ecological and social issues. The models used in economics are not able to fully take this into account, so I show that if we adopt mainstream economics, we will have elements of economic growth, but the Pareto optimum is different from the social optimum. The latter is defined differently and is based on a certain system of values.

I used the concept of sustainable development to its fullest extent in maritime spatial planning. The issues of sustainable development are crucial because when making spatial allocation we make very specific decisions that affect all three dimensions of sustainable development. The Polish legislation and legal acts clearly define what obligations we have towards the natural environment, e.g. Natura 2000 areas and reserves. We know that reefs are valuable, for

example, because they contain biodiversity, but almost no research is carried out on the social part. Please note that when it comes to the social aspect, in the EU dimension we most often talk about bringing down unemployment or reducing income differences between people, i.e. the Gini coefficient, employment rate, unemployment rate – these are typical indicators of the social dimension. However, in the context of the sea, it isn't applicable at all, because there are no people at sea, so if there are no people, these indicators can't be used. I must say that I'm very happy because this year "Ocean and Coastal Management" published a study in which I participated together with the planning team of the Maritime Institute, trying to define the social dimension of sustainable development in the context of spatial planning at sea, i.e. spatial allocation at sea. We tried to answer the question of what the social aspect means and what it is, what it looks like in the literature, what the research gaps are, and I think this is my best contribution to the discussion on sustainable development from the scientific side.

As I understand it, the social aspect of marine spatial planning concerns the community that lives in the coastal region and uses the goods of this place, but also the intangible values that human contact with the sea brings.

Yes. In our research, in addition to regulatory activities, we take into account social aspects. A very interesting conclusion that can be drawn from the research is, e.g. the fact those entities that are listed in legal acts and have specific tasks in the planning process, e.g. local governments and ports, have a better bargaining position. However, the problem is to capture ordinary people who have a relationship with the sea and how to encourage them when they don't think that they are able to influence government decisions... This is also happening. My colleague Doctor Joanna Piwowarczyk from the Polish Academy of Sciences deals with this.

Citizen does not know that it can have an impact.

Even if they come to consultations, they see an enormous plan and enormous interests and have an impression that their presence won't matter much. We are aware that it is burdensome, people engage their own time in it and don't have a full sense of agency, hence the great difficulty in taking into account ordinary people's social interests towards the sea when planning maritime space. Mrs. Magdalena Matczak from the Maritime Institute of the Maritime University of Gdynia, the guru of maritime planning in Poland, has many interesting thoughts on this subject.

Thank you very much. Professor, in what direction should the university develop, and what actions could it take to develop in line with the spirit of sustainable development?

First of all, abandoning the point-based system of assessing scientists would be the basis for sustainable development. Currently, the system works against the integration of disciplines and the creation of intergenerational teams within the University... At least in the social sciences. For example, if I publish an article on sustainable development with someone from my department (e.g. a specialist in the ecological dimension of sustainable development), the points will be divided by the number of authors. If I do it with someone from outside, I will get all the points. This is not conducive to working with young people. It's often the case that instead of considering who to carry out the study with and what kind of research, the final decisions are made on the basis of points.



Goal 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

The world is seriously off track in its effort to halve per-capita food waste and losses by 2030. The COVID-19 pandemic has had significant impacts on consumption and production patterns, with disruptions to global supply chains and changes in consumer behaviour. Responsible consumption and production must be an integral part of the recovery from the pandemic. But the global economy also needs to speed up the decoupling of economic growth from resource use by maximizing the socio-economic benefits of resources while minimizing their negative impacts. Reporting on corporate sustainability has tripled since the beginning of the SDG period, but the private sector will need to significantly improve reporting on activities that contribute to the SDGs. To deliver SDG 12, it is crucial to implement policies that support the shift to sustainable practices and decouple economic growth from resource use.

Challenges 5: Responsible consumption and production

Conversation with dr hab. Anna Dziadkiewicz

Faculty of Management, Department of Marketing

Given your experience and research, how do you understand sustainable development?

This definition has evolved a lot in my life. In fact, I've decided to create my own definition based on the experience I've gained. I came across this term for the first time, although I didn't know exactly what it meant, during my internship at the University of Oxford, which I did 12 years ago. Then I came across the concept of design management. We aren't able to translate it well into Polish. In 2021, I published a book on this topic and when translators tried to translate this concept, they said: "zarządzanie designem", but such a literal translation would direct us more towards fine arts. I work at the Faculty of Management, so I decided to call design management "zarządzanie projektowe". What does design management concern? It concerns conscious, and therefore prudent, ordering – designing systems of services, activities, and also our lives. We must, even though it is a business, add an element of sensitivity, i.e. awareness of how our actions will affect rational design in the future. Designing everything that concerns us is the essence of my book "Design Management: uwarunkowania i efekty wdrożenia w przedsiębiorstwie". The basis of sustainable development is conscious design, rational thinking and sensitivity as I mentioned. So when we create any activities, market offers, meet as part of various initiatives and undertakings, and we don't take into account conscious design and reflection on certain cause-and-effect relationships of these activities – we are selfish. That's why it's so important to notice these relationships that are the foundation of sustainable development. Not I as an individual and my needs, but I as part of the ecosystem; as a person who is aware and sensitive to how my actions may affect future generations. We are slowly getting closer to the

definition of sustainable development, which means we strive to think about what we create, how we act, how we live. So that our actions, if they don't have a positive impact, at least make a neutral contribution to future generations, i.e. the environment in which we live, the local economy and local society. I use the word "localness" here on purpose because, before the pandemic, people talked primarily about global aspects. Now we pay more attention to localness in our activities because these local, small steps can lead to great undertakings. If we talked all the time from a global, macro perspective, then for many people such actions wouldn't matter. Because someone would say, "Global? I have no control over it" instead of: "Local? I am part of the local." Some researchers even say that nowadays the focus is no longer on localness, but on hyperlocalness. So I don't buy national or regional products, but I buy products from my city, my village, and even from my neighbourhood. I support this environment which is the most local. When we talk about sustainable development, we must also be aware of the date of announcing of the Ecological Debt Day. In 1987 it fell on 19 December. Until this day, our planet was able to fully renew itself, regenerate after what we had used up that year. So we could say then that our actions left a neutral trace. This year, Ecological Debt Day fell on 28 July. From that day until the end of the year, we live on credit. And what does this mean? It means that we take away almost half of the annual resources from future generations. These are amazing values and – unfortunately we have to say it – it's an incredible pity. When talking about sustainable development, I always think about awareness and sensitivity in three spheres: economic growth, social inclusion and, of course, environmental protection. I think these are the most important points. Be sensitive, be vigilant, observe, but above all, leave a trace. Even if not positive, then neutral.

Here I would like to ask what economic growth is possible if not the one based on global consumption?

Here my thoughts lead me to my CIRTOINNO project regarding the circular economy, which I carried out some time ago. Why? Because at the time when it was being prepared, concepts related to sustainable development in Poland weren't very popular and were poorly known. The project was addressed to micro, small and medium-sized enterprises in the tourism industry. It's known that entrepreneurs want to earn money, but the direction they choose to earn money depends on their awareness of running a business. In the 20th century, economic growth was largely associated with the introduction of innovations. In American companies, they were understood as an annual increase in profit, reflected in increasingly higher revenues. What did this lead to? First,

people became more and more tired and therefore less and less effective. Let us remember that generations X, and partly Y, is an extremely tired generation, full of addictions. If man is constantly in overdrive, if there is pressure at work, pressure from the environment, at some point he/she falls apart and stops working well. Therefore, in the 21st century, the concept of innovation was redefined. It's no longer about searching for new sources of earning and striving for greater and greater profits. Innovation in business in the 21st century is understood as introducing conscious changes. It is these changes that make economic growth visible. What does it mean? What is economic growth not driven solely by financial means? It's the success of introducing small changes – including changes in ourselves and changes in our attitudes – because we can talk about sustainable development not only when we want to earn money, build more houses or buy a new car. Sustainable development is, above all, about redefining our values. Us as people. We live in very interesting times. These times clearly demonstrate polarisation: us versus me; egalitarianism and elitism, emotions and rational thinking; global – local; a dilemma: to buy new ones or repair the old ones; online – offline, abundance – scarcity. Peter Frase, an American sociologist, said that we will build future scenarios on the axes between these extremes. It follows that economic growth is a conscious action – acting for the good of the planet, animals, our friends, business partners and local businesses. All these entities should interpenetrate and support each other. How can we do this? For example: through conscious design. Some people say that we live in so-called “VUCA times”, that is the times of volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity. Others say that VUCA is over and now the “BANI times” have begun which are brittle, anxious, nonlinear and thus incomprehensible.

The basis of sustainable development is conscious design, rational thinking and sensitivity.

The year 2021 was incredibly interesting. When I was teaching at that time, I often asked students one basic question that we tried to answer: “After the pandemic, do we want to go back to what got us here, or will we take advantage of this one in a million chance, one in a million situation to change everything?” Students most often answered that life in the past was like a comfort zone, everything was predictable. It's hard to predict anything now and maybe this is the perfect time to stop and think. The question arises what we can do to ensure economic growth and make things better for us. We should consider what the word “better” means in this context. Maybe it's not about yet another car, a bigger house, another exotic holiday, but about stopping. Let's stop rushing. It will be better for everyone: for us, for the planet, and for our relationships, and

after all, business is based on relationships. On the one hand, we see enormous fatigue because the world is slowly returning to “normality” after the pandemic and some people want to regain what they lost during this difficult time, but on the other hand, there are a lot of people who say: “Thank you for this time, because it was a moment to reflect, to gain sensitivity and, above all, to realise that this is not the right way.” We should all consider whether we want to go back to the way things were or take advantage of the opportunity and start living according to certain values.

Is this already visible in consumer behaviour statistics? Is this still per mille behaviour?

Is the per mille changing? Definitely yes. I’m currently participating in the SB WELL project, which concerns well-being tourism. The leader of this project is Linnaeus University in Sweden. When we started the project in 2016, the Polish tourism industry reacted with disbelief. We have a fixed image of a stereotypical tourist who wants to come to us and receive a package of disposable artificial slippers, cosmetics in plastic bottles that can be taken home, and new towels replaced every day. The majority of the Polish tourism industry wasn’t ready for the well-being tourists. When the pandemic started, everything changed. People started looking for completely new values. We noticed a considerable change in the tourism industry, new groups of tourists appeared: one of them are so-called “Sustainable Idealists” – a very strong group that is already visible also in Poland. Its members come and ask about the ingredients used in the dishes, their country of origin and whether they come from fair trade crops, as well as how to get somewhere other than by car, and what happens later with the waste. Apart from “sustainable idealists”, there are also people looking for “Peace of Mind” and so-called “Curious Explorers” who want to relax but don’t want to go to five- and four-star hotels. They want to go somewhere close, but many times. The research in which I participated together with “Linnaeus” from Sweden showed us how we, Poles, are unable to rest. And all this is related to the lack of understanding of sustainable development. On average, we go on holiday twice a year for about 2 weeks, in summer and winter. When we come back, we open the mailbox where we have accumulated emails from these two weeks. And what is happening to us? We have to work overtime, we work very intensively again to get back to a level of balance. The Scandinavians say that this doesn’t lead to anything good and we should rest at least once a month, and sometimes even twice a month, but for a short time. If we have such short holidays, we won’t go to exotic countries. We have to rest where we live or somewhere near. There is often a not entirely true belief that Scandinavian tourists

come to Poland only to shop, improve their beauty or just have fun. However, this is not entirely true. They say they come because the flight to us takes less than an hour, the weather is the same as theirs, the food is fantastic, we have wonderful infrastructure, and these two days of a well-spent weekend give them so much energy that they can then easily go back to work. Sustainable development is, above all, a satisfied employee: rested and respected. When I come back after two days of good rest, when I recharge my batteries, I'm a completely different type of employee, friend, partner, family member.

The times we live in clearly demonstrate polarisation: us versus me; egalitarianism and elitism, emotions and rational thinking; global – local; dilemma: buy new ones or repair the old ones; online – offline, abundance – scarcity. Peter Frase, an American sociologist, said that we will build future scenarios on the axes between these extremes.

Isn't it true that a citizen of a rich country can be a sustainable employee?

Most often, in rich countries, citizens have not only ecological awareness, but also awareness of sustainable development, and it starts already at the kindergarten level. I have relatives in Denmark and I was very surprised that my niece, who was attending kindergarten at the time, was already able to sort waste. It was 15 years ago, and now, when I meet my nephews, I see the same thing: they learn how to segregate waste in Polish kindergarten. At the Faculty of Management where I work, special diffusers appeared, thanks to which it was possible to give up disposable plastic bottles. This is a fantastic initiative. When Scandinavians come to us, they always ask: "Can we drink tap water?" This is something natural for them and this is what rich countries give us: they show certain behaviours, a certain philosophy that they've had for many years and which works well. I really like the fact that in Scandinavia there are so-called peace and relaxation rooms (wellbeing rooms). In this place, every employee and every student can rest for a while, instead of standing in the corridor, which is usually noisy. Some people need to calm down. An example is the growing interest in silence zones on trains.

You mentioned two projects. Please tell us about your teaching and research activities and outline the concept of sustainable development in them.

I am lucky that I can include an element of sustainable development in all the subjects I teach, because I teach design in marketing, new trends in tourism, building experiences, and service design. Our students don't want to listen to theory only, they want to see real examples, so now the lecturer must, of course,

give them a theoretical field, but also immediately show them what these activities look like in reality. Our goal is a necessary, radical change in the way we think about sustainable development and good, positive interaction with other people and the entire ecosystem. And this is what the university gives us as a brilliant platform for building these relationships. I believe that most subjects, especially business subjects, taught at my faculty are based on sustainable development. It's like the implementation of the CIRTOINNO project, which I mentioned earlier, regarding the circular economy: when entrepreneurs first heard about the need for a circular economy, they weren't interested in participating in the project, but under the influence of education enriched with good foreign practices, it turned out that they had been applying these practices for a long time, without defining them with this professional term. Several years have passed since then, and not only are the concepts of circular economy and sustainable development widespread, but companies put them to use for moral and business reasons.

What companies are we talking about, and from what industry?

I work mainly with the tourism industry. Interesting information is that when we were introducing circular economy practices in Pomeranian tourism enterprises, we encountered a number of barriers. As an example I can give the situation of one of the owners of a four-star hotel, who changed the toilet paper in the hotel rooms to recycled one and withdrew disposable plastic cosmetic bottles. And what happened? She received negative opinions saying that tourists came to a four-star hotel where they wanted to feel luxury, but they didn't receive it. Fortunately, this is a thing of the past and now luxury is understood differently – as an opportunity to use sustainable services and products. The change occurred primarily during and thanks to the pandemic. I try to think positively because students themselves ask how business solutions can be translated into sustainable ones. They crave this knowledge and acquiring these skills. I always say that the example comes from above and when young people observe us, our lives, how we act and what we do, it becomes an indicator for them: “Aha, so it's not just theory, it's practice, that is happening here and now.”

Could you outline the ideas that guide a sustainable university? Are there any visible limitations or elements that can be introduced?

The only limitation is what we have in our heads. It's very good when we are aware and sensitive to the things that are happening around us. I believe that it is worth introducing items that have an element related to eco-development. We have 17 Sustainable Development Goals, so the spectrum is huge and it seems

to me that we are only limited by our heads and whether we want to do something or not. We just need to observe the world around us and students and be open to their needs and questions. Environmental initiatives, such as “stop bottled water”, also stop other processes, e.g. throwing away large amounts of plastic waste, because both are interconnected. I also like the fact that there are more and more parking spaces for bicycles. I think that in the near future if the infrastructure allows, student relaxation rooms will become the norm. It would be a perfect place for a moment of silence, to gather your thoughts in this over-stimulated world. What I really like is promoting the initiatives of the academic community, for example on the main websites of the University of Gdańsk. Students are often afraid of being ridiculed, but when we promote their ideas and show them in various variants, they'll understand that there's nothing to be ashamed of. The university is an independent platform, an open entity where this thought must evolve. I believe this is something that can be a role model for future generations. We don't have to be members of global initiatives, we can be participants in local projects, and in addition, the involvement of students in promoting sustainable activities seems to be crucial to maintaining the idea of a sustainable university.

Conversation with prof. dr hab. Małgorzata Wiśniewska

Faculty of Management, Department of
Business Economics, Division of Quality and
Environmental Management

Taking into account your scientific and teaching achievements, but also life experience, how do you understand sustainable development?

Thank you very much for inviting me to this interview and to the meeting, because the topic is very important. So thank you also for enabling me to share my reflections. From the point of view of science, many different definitions of sustainable development have been formulated. Its understanding is very broad, therefore it's interpreted a little differently by different researchers and experts. When I think about what sustainable development means for me, the most important thing, in my opinion, is to pay attention to the necessity to think about others, about future generations, so that meeting our needs won't reduce the chances of meeting the needs of other people in the future. However, the point is also that meeting our needs here and now can't limit the satisfaction of the needs of others here and now. Both on a local and global scale. As we know, the world is an area of contrasts in access to various goods, and the most striking examples of this are access to food and water, where some have a surfeit of them, others have and will have limited access. Sustainable development for me is justice in the distribution of food and water resources, it's about sharing food with those who need this food and, above all, not allowing food to be wasted. The main sin of modern man is that, having food and water on a daily basis, he doesn't respect them and wastes food on a large scale. Although the fight against hunger has been a priority among conscious societies for years, we're still not on the right track to deal with this negative phenomenon. Currently, 700 million people suffer from hunger, and this problem doesn't only concern the regions of Asia and Africa. It's escalated also due to the pandemic, as hunger has occurred all over the world. It's also a serious issue in Poland. It's a terrible pity that such serious agendas as WHO, i.e. the World Health Organisation,

FAO, i.e. the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, as well as other greats of this world, are still unable to effectively associate and connect with each other those people and entities that have an excess of food and those people and entities that need it so much. It's not about any luxury, but about human dignity, health and food security, that is a situation in which no mother in the world is worried that her child has nothing to eat. In summary, for me, sustainable development is a situation where people care about the fair use of the right amounts of food and water.

It is also worth emphasising that the problem of hunger also results from the fact that many species of plants and animals disappear irretrievably as a result of human activity, because their living areas are appropriated on a massive scale. Man, by satisfying his often excessive needs, contributes to the destruction of these resources also because economic activity causes serious climate changes. According to UN experts, a million species of flora and fauna may soon disappear from the earth, and it can be said that the sixth mass irreversible extinction of organisms is taking place on the earth. This is a catastrophe equal to the extinction of dinosaurs. At the same time, insects and bees, without which there are no plants and life, die. Of course, there are various pro-ecological organisations, especially non-governmental ones, that do everything to publicise these problems, but we, individually, should also take care of this common good on a daily basis. I'm very happy that beehives were put at our campus. I was outraged that they were destroyed. The fact that it happened results not only from aggression, but also from many years of educational neglect of the whole society. It can be said that it was an act of specific eco-murder. Therefore, I'd like to raise another issue that is similar to this fact. I mean, among others, eco-terrorism, that is, wilful, deliberate destruction of the environment in order to undercut competitors. An example is the poisoning of entire apiaries, fields with honey plants, but also, among others, fish ponds, so that one competitor can oust another from the market. The effects of such actions are felt not only by the market, but also by the entire society and individuals.

That's why it's necessary to publicise the need not to waste, respect food. Unfortunately, both Europe and Poland are doing poorly in this respect, and we take the infamous fifth place among other European countries in terms of throwing food away. I'd like to emphasise that wasting food, in light of prevailing hunger, is a serious ethical problem. Therefore, we should learn, firstly, not to waste it, and secondly, to start sharing it.

These are activities in line with sharing economy, which, of course, is not only about food, but also about sharing various goods – cars, clothes, financial resources, means of transport. It's also connected with broadly understood philanthropy and it's good counterbalance to overconsumption, which focuses on meeting often short-term needs. Sharing food can be an answer to excessive consumption.

I'd like to say that in my scientific work I've been dealing with such issues for years. As a specialist in food quality and safety management in terms of systems and consumers, I work on issues related to such organisation management that the final consumer receives food that fulfils his requirements and meets his needs. As this is a very broad issue, I also conduct research on sustainable food consumption as part of my interests. At present, in cooperation with colleagues from other research centres in Poland, I'm carrying out research on freeganism and food sharing. The first phenomenon consists in obtaining, preparing and consuming thrown away food, considered as waste. I'd like to add that in Poland, households are responsible for 60% of wasted food. Freegans are people who describe themselves as dumpster divers, dive in garbage, but also call themselves cleaners of food, because they prevent food wasting through respect for food, a specific lifestyle and philosophy of life. They obtain food from rubbish containers placed next to hypermarkets, restaurants or other similar points. This phenomenon is becoming more and more widely accepted in Poland, as evidenced by the fact that some restaurants conclude unwritten agreements with these groups, providing them with information when and where such food will be available.

During our conversation, I'd like to put the greatest emphasis on the other phenomenon, i.e. sharing food. It functions under two names, as food sharing, which means the act of sharing food products, and as foodsharing, which is a social, grassroots movement in this field. The latter term is also associated with a refrigerator, shelves, where you can safely leave food you don't need, e.g. after holidays, after family gatherings, to pass it on to those people who need it more. These places are created with the consent of the sanitary and epidemiological station. It's very easy to set them up, all you need is the consent of the mentioned office, and then a group of volunteers who will clean, organise and maintain the place in a proper condition. It's also about selecting and removing food that is past the sell-by date. This movement has come to us from Germany and is developing relatively dynamically. We already have about 80 such community fridges in Poland. One of such points is located at the Faculty of Social Sciences of our University.

The ideas you mentioned are noble, necessary and sensible, but they stand in opposition to the adopted economic model based on consumption. What do you think is the possibility of reconciling, balancing, or even pushing the economy towards sharing, despite lower profits?

In my opinion, balance and cooperation on many levels are necessary. Every new initiative, initially considered extreme, brings problems and stirs up controversy. Therefore basic education is necessary in primary and secondary schools, at universities, especially at economic departments, to show that there's counterbalance to the predatory economy and consumption. Especially that no one needs to be explained that excessive production, consumption and exploitation of goods contribute to the destruction of the environment, that is the world in which man and animals live. Of course, the economy has its own rules. Thanks to it we have prosperity and we develop. The profit generated by the economy is often transferred to science, to meeting various social needs. But we also know that the economy will not always develop as intensively as today, because we already clearly feel that there's a shortage of raw materials for production and their sources are depleting. It is necessary to find a balance, to keep a simple cost-benefit calculation in mind, listen to the voices of experts, scientists, a young generation which isn't indifferent to what is happening, develop an internal self-limiting mechanism. We are obliged to pass on to the next generations as many values as possible that we now use and appreciate.

So, is it time to change the development indicators, not based on the annual growing wealth of the society, but also on the development costs, taking into account the long term environmental impact?

Yes it's true. Research that I conduct independently and with the help of my team covers also lean management. This management consists in avoiding waste in the process, it's the identification of activities that generate losses for the organisation, the environment, for the surroundings, for the employee and for the quality of the product. Lean management in the green lean version consists in low-emission, waste-free management. It means focusing on respecting the materials, resources used by a given organisation. If we pay attention to these areas in the organisation, and then to those points in the economy where such losses can be avoided, we can also take actions in advance to prevent these losses. Then it will be possible to spend these savings on, for example, subsequent pro-ecological investments allowing the organisation and the country's economy to achieve the adopted indicators of sustainable development in the long perspective, or in the perspective of 2030, or other goal set for distant future.

Do you raise the topic of wastefulness in your didactic work?

At our Faculty, I manage the Quality and Environmental Management Department. These two aspects – quality and the environment complement each other, also in terms of teaching. We tell our students, future managers, that the concept of quality is very broad and is associated with good, with something noble or even with operational excellence. Losses occur when this quality is not adequate. We are then dealing with deficiencies, defects, product withdrawals from the market, which often cause problems related to waste, wasting energy, raw materials, supplies, human effort and labour. From the very beginning, the concepts of quality management and the management models developed in this area, among their basic pillars, include not only customer satisfaction, but also the good of all, social good. Contemporary quality management in an organisation also means ensuring good working conditions, respect for the natural environment, work ergonomics, and ensuring that the employee feels good in his or her position, because this well-being of people in their place of work has been noted as the source of success. For this reason, in the so-called models of excellence that I've already mentioned, criteria for the need for sustainable development began to gradually appear, obliging the organisation to care not only for profits, but also for the employee, the society and the environment in which the organisation operates. The same can be said about the well-known ISO 9001 standard that deals with quality management. Our students are prepared to obtain the qualifications of an internal auditor in this field. When assessing an organisation that wants to have a certificate of compliance with this standard, they should know how to check whether it's defined the context within which it operates. This context is the company's physical environment, its stakeholders, its impact on the environment and the development of local communities. During our classes, students, not only from the Faculty of Management, but also from the Faculty of Chemistry, Biotechnology, for example, learn about the role of another important standard – ISO 14001, strictly related to environmental management. As I've mentioned, we also teach many classes on food quality and safety. The topics discussed there are strictly in line with the issues of sustainable development. As an example, I can mention the issues of sustainable agriculture and the GlobalGAP standard, aimed at ensuring good agricultural practice, guaranteeing food safety at the stage of plant and livestock production, as well as other important groups of standards applied by large retail chains (e.g. the BRCS standard), which include the need to care for food, its quality and safety throughout the entire life cycle. In fact, each of these standards fits in with the idea of food safety and food security. Food safety is the assurance that food is free from physical, chemical and microbiological hazards that threaten

the consumer's life and health. Whereas food security means that in a given place and time, mankind has access to food with appropriate nutritional values. Personally, I've devoted 85% of all my scientific works to these topics, including a doctorate, habilitation thesis or the so-called professor's book. As far as teaching is concerned, I and my colleagues from the Division have done everything to make these and related aspects more and more visible in our Faculty and outside it, also in the process of popularising knowledge. I also led to the creation of a specialty that functioned for 10 years and educated many professionals, including environmental management system auditors, food safety auditors, who are greatly appreciated in practice. In our Division at the Department of Business Economics we teach various subjects, such as, for example, environmental protection, ecology, green business, environmental impact assessment, auditor of the quality and environmental management system, economic aspects of environmental management. In my work I'm inspired by the thought of our famous Polish praxeologist Tadeusz Kotarbiński that the homo sapiens species deserves only good quality. This maxim unites everything that we offer in teaching and research on the broadly understood quality of products, taking into account aspects of environmental protection, decent work, wages, and the lack of modern slavery. The latter issue concerns, for example, food processing, in which children in Third World countries work from an early age.

As long as the price determines the interest in the product, producers will look for cheap products. This part of the conversation was extremely interesting, especially the holistic understanding of sustainable development. Please tell me what activities you would like to propose that could be introduced at our university.

I will come back to the topic of sharing food. If we humbly look at what is happening in our pantries, in our refrigerators, many of us will admit that we could better plan our purchases and then manage the food stocks that we have. Many of us could share food that is sometimes thrown into the garbage bin without reflection. I'd be very pleased if not one, but several community fridges were established at our university campus. I think this initiative should expand for the good of our academic community, but also the environment in which we live, the inhabitants of the Tri-City who may also be in need. It would certainly motivate both students and employees to consider whether and how we can help in this matter. As I've mentioned, the costs of such an initiative aren't big, and it can bring benefits – from the basic one, consisting in sharing with the needy, to educational – because in this way we will promote pro-social and pro-environmental attitudes, so that in the spirit of sustainable development contribute to

the reduction of food waste. You can start from small steps, as was the case with waste segregation years ago. Today, colourful litter containers are present in every department. I also think that there would be students, employees and volunteers who would join the food sharing initiative locally. Students should only be encouraged to develop an application that allows them to provide relevant, updated information on where and what food is available for those in need.



Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

Ongoing and new violent conflicts around the world are derailing a global path to peace and achievement of SDG 16. Onequarter of humanity lives in conflict-affected areas and as of May 2022, a record 100 million people had been forcibly displaced worldwide--more than double the number a decade ago. Citizens also face challenges accessing justice, basic services/legal guarantees and are generally underrepresented due to ineffective institutions. Moreover, structural injustices, inequalities and emerging human rights challenges are putting peaceful and inclusive societies further out of reach. To meet SDG16 by 2030, action is needed to restore trust and to strengthen the capacity of institutions to secure justice for all and facilitate transitions to drive sustainable development.

Challenge 6: Peace, justice, and strong institutions

Conversation with dr hab. Jakub Potulski, prof. UG

Faculty of Social Sciences, Institute of Political Sciences, Division of Contemporary History and Political Thought

Let's start with the very concept of zrównoważony rozwój, because it is widely used, but we have completely different approaches to what zrównoważony rozwój is. Taking into account your scientific activity and achievements, how do you understand zrównoważony rozwój?

As a person dealing with the development of socio-political thought, I don't like the term zrównoważony rozwój very much, because the term zrównoważony rozwój is not a completely correct translation from the English language. The English etymology of sustainable development referred mainly to the research conducted by the Club of Rome in the early 1970s and the fuel crisis. At that time a warning appeared that, after a period of rapid growth in the 1950s and 1960s in Europe, the situation could change and economic growth also has its limits. And the question arose: how can this growth be preserved, what actions should be taken? The original idea was for growth to be sustainable and for economic growth, and hence prosperity, to be sustained.

So the goal was to manage growth?

Probably so, to manage growth, because the famous report of the Club of Rome *The Limits of Growth* indicated what may at some point stop the economic rebellion, on which Western Europe built prosperous societies, a welfare state and ensured social stability, especially after the interwar experience related to the development of extreme fascist or communist movements. Post-war economic growth made it possible to introduce the idea of a prosperity state,

a welfare state. And warnings appeared that it should be remembered that this policy isn't permanent and that at some point it may reach its limits, and what next? Therefore some measures should be taken to make this growth permanent. When it comes to introducing the concept of sustainable growth, it seems to me that it is, in fact, related to the growing environmental awareness in the 1980s and the political successes of green movements, mainly in the Scandinavian countries and in Germany, when attention began to be paid to the issue of ecology. It seems to me that in this case, the Chernobyl disaster gave ecological movements, green movements a stimulus to indicate the negative effects of industrialisation, and then the category of more sustainable growth appeared, i.e. to maintain economic growth and increase social welfare taking into account environmental needs. These categories are combined. However, as for the development of the idea, so many different concepts have been attached to the concept of sustainable growth, especially in recent years...

Exactly.

...that this term has started losing its sense. It's become so capacious that it is practically undefinable. Because everything that is possible: social and economic issues, whatever you want, are thrown into the category of sustainable development. This category is no longer legible and is probably detached from its original sources. It has become such a very flexible frame that anyone can cram things into and justify whatever they really like.

That's what I wanted to ask about. Because this concept is very fuzzy, such an umbrella term that has many different meanings and doesn't really reflect these ideas of the Club of Rome anymore, does it? I think so too. And you said that this concept was imperfect. What term would you use instead of sustainable development?

It depends on what we are talking about, because when it comes to public discussions about state policy, it is the same concept as any other and can be used as a journalistic and propaganda slogan, no problem. However, when it comes to the academic sphere and the research sphere, here it's necessary to reflect on definitions. On how we use them, how we apply them, because if we use such a broad, flexible concept during analyses, the meaning of these analyses is lost. In the academic environment, or in analyses, not only in academic ones, but in professional analyses, it is necessary to clarify this term and pay attention to what aspect in this case we want to concentrate on and how it is related to what can be defined as sustainable or permanent development. It's no problem when this term is used in political discussions. Better or worse slogans keep

appearing, e.g. a welfare state. Sustainable development is among the political slogans. On the other hand, in professional analyses these terms should be made more precise.

I agree with that too. Researchers should know what they are talking about, they must define the subject of discussion or the subject of their research. It is very difficult for me to define what sustainable development is. What do you think about the goals of sustainable development? Don't they help to clarify the concept of sustainable development a little?

They don't help, because the term sustainable development has become so flexible that everyone tries to squeeze their goals, whatever they may be, into this sustainable development. So what used to be strictly economic goals (how to maintain economic growth), then has been extended to environmental goals (how to maintain economic growth taking into account environmental problems) including various types of problems: loss of biodiversity, depletion of natural resources, struggle for the right to live in the unpolluted natural environment. Then, various issues of equality and poverty have been added. The concept of sustainable development has been extended in such a way that the formulation of goals blurs it even more, because we formulate goals, for example, regarding the maintenance of economic growth, ensuring the clean environment, eradication of poverty, socio-political organisation, or also the state, and the functioning of society. And all people easily add their goals, which for some reason they consider essential, important for the further sustainable development of human society, to the concept of sustainable development.

Is it such a bag, right? Into which items can be dropped?

The danger is that then this concept has become a very broad concept, often also a political one. Due to the politicisation and extension of the concept of sustainable development to issues unrelated to the economy or the environment, political resistance to this concept appears, which is a natural and understandable process.

And please tell me, does the concept of sustainable development goals appear in your teaching activities? If yes, how?

If the issue of sustainable development appears in my teaching activity, it's rather not in the context of SDGs, but rather as a form. When it comes to goals, it is in the sense that SDGs set the directions of the state's policy, in the sense that sustainable development is a concept that directs the presentation of problems and their definition, and directs the activities of the state and public

institutions. In this sense, it appears. When it comes to sustainable development itself, no. On the other hand, in the context of the development of society and the emergence of a certain normative concept, which sustainable development is, setting goals that, in consequence, direct the activities of socio-political institutions – yes.

And what about your research activities? Are elements of the concept of sustainable development goals contained in your research activity?

Sustainable development in my research activity is related to the changes of the modern state, i.e. changes in the way public institutions and the state operate, with the emergence of the concept of sustainable development, which redefines the functioning of the state and the organisation of the state and society. It's part of my research work. How the state changes under the influence of these new ideas that have emerged and are altering, affecting the way the state functions today.

What is the role of the European Union in supporting the SDGs?

First and foremost, the European Union has financial resources. And this is the essence of systems, of any political system, that resources can never be spent on everything within it. Because there's never enough of these resources in human society. Within the political system, decisions are made on the allocation of resources to certain activities and goals. In fact, the European Union decides what the financial resources at its disposal will be spent on, and the financial resources are followed by everything: research, strengthening of certain areas, institutional action. Institutions change the organisation of the state and society in accordance with the goals that have been set. That is, the European Union defines to a large extent goals within the political system of the European Union that we want to achieve and the funds are allocated to that. And indeed, it is an institution that has quite large resources and there is quite a lot of institutional pressure here. The EU is able to force countries to adopt certain policies in line with SDGs. Moreover, the European Union causes the political unification of the entire continent, which is also not without significance, because Europe as a continent is very diverse, there are many countries. There's probably no other continent that would be so diverse ...

There isn't.

Europe and the European Union allow us to maintain a coherent economic, social and environmental policy on a terribly diverse territory: socially, economically, ethnically, culturally, however we call it.

How do you evaluate Poland, Poland's activities for sustainable development and our role in the European Union in the context of unification? How do we compare with other countries?

How does Poland compare with other countries in the implementation of the sustainable development policy? Poland is quite a conservative country in thinking about politics and social changes. Throughout its history, Poland has always been situated on the European periphery and has never been at the centre of this European policy. A large part of political ideas, not even a large part, all political ideas and concepts of the state, society have reached Poland from outside, most often, of course, depending on the periods of history, but these modern ideas have reached Poland mainly from Western Europe. They arrive late to the peripheries and countries with a rather conservative approach to reality. On the one hand, of course, this is a problem related to the fact that these changes are introduced later in Poland than in Western Europe, but on the other hand, it's also a positive consequence, because in such careful and conservative introduction of changes we can learn from mistakes and correct the current approach. Here, too, this conservatism and caution in the implementation of the idea of sustainable development have two sides and it's difficult to assess it unambiguously. A very conservative approach to some concepts of sustainable development can be a plus and a minus, because conservatism allows you to observe and possibly correct, introduce changes to what has possibly failed. There is a difference, however, between completely rejecting ideas and saying no, and reasonable, moderate conservatism that helps us to correct the pursued policy.

And as far as Poland is concerned, what areas of sustainable development should Poland devote more attention to? What should be the most important in our country?

Is this question in fact a question about which goals I consider the most important in sustainable development?

Yes.

In fact, there may be many answers. From my perspective, however, Poland should definitely improve its activities in the area of caring for the environment. And here, first of all, it's probably about educating citizens in simplest matters. In things that have been virtually eliminated in Western Europe, because I can't imagine that anyone in Western Europe would dump rubbish in the forest, which is common in Poland. And perhaps we should start from the simplest things. Pay attention to biodiversity, the simplest things that keep coming back.

It used to be obvious, and now we are being suddenly informed that there should be flowers in the meadows that grow wild, because it is natural, that the use of fertilisers in the fields should be limited, because then everything flows into rivers, nitrogen affects the development of water management which is outrageous in cities. Everything has been covered with concrete, devoid of trees and water reservoirs that hold the groundwater level. The simplest, ordinary things should be realised first, and only then all the other elements will somehow come. Unfortunately, this process of social transformation, which began in the 1990s, hasn't been completed yet. Changes in awareness about the importance of taking care of the surroundings and the environment. Consciousness that has been in Western Europe for a long time is sometimes absent here.

So, the groundwork.

The groundwork, yes.

It concerns people's consciousness.

People's consciousness, yes.

I agree here. Garbage in the forest, it is something unimaginable.

Yes, this is the nightmare that shows that sustainable development must be implemented from the bottom up. If we set ourselves abstract, elusive goals, then everyone will dump rubble or rubbish in the forest anyway, nothing will come of it. Sustainable development also means ensuring that wealth in Poland is more evenly distributed, so that there is no such situation that there is wealth in large cities and areas of exclusion and poverty somewhere in medium or smaller towns. These are also issues of more even development and distribution of profits resulting from economic growth. But this is also a question about what disturbs you, e.g. litter in the street that I see on the way to work...

It disturbs you, it disturbs me, so we can assume that this is a problem.

Yes, it is a problem. One of many.

We've talked about the EU, and about Poland. Now I would also like to ask about our university. What activities in the field of sustainable development goals do you think the University of Gdańsk should undertake?

The university as an academic unit. It's a problem that universities, in my understanding of the mission of universities and their public service, should be research units, sort of Think Tanks that conduct research, point out problems and have an advisory voice also in the formulation of state policy goals.

Probably the problem in the Polish state is that universities are treated as teaching institutions. They aren't treated as research units, i.e. they do not receive money for research. Very often, the money that should go to research conducted by universities is directed to various types of foundations or private Think Tanks, which means that public money is spent twice: on the maintenance of universities and on various types of research institutes conducting research more or less professionally. On the other hand, universities that associate, remunerate scientists should, in this case, make sure that they excel in various types of research. It must be remembered that universities have also taken on a corporate form in their operation. They are divided, especially large universities, into many units and there is no coordination between research devoted to such broad concepts as sustainable development. So, it's as if each unit carries out their own research without coordination. This is a completely different problem. In my opinion, universities as such should be research institutions and function like Think Tanks.

Are there any areas of sustainable development that would be important for the University of Gdańsk? Something connected to the region?

What the University of Gdańsk deals with and at what it is successful are mainly problems of the development of coastal areas, research on the marine ecosystem, and the word ecosystem is very broad, because it applies not only to the biological system, but also to the social one. How people live in this region, the issues of resource use, fisheries, forest management – that is, the development of coastal regions, and also due to the location of Gdańsk – the development of transport. The Gdańsk region is connected by means of various ties with the Scandinavian countries, which are anyway leaders in the development of the concept of sustainable development. So we can use these good Scandinavian practices and use the location to build a cooperation network, partnership with the Scandinavian countries and utilise the location of Gdańsk on the Baltic Sea for research and scientific cooperation.

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