

Joseph Kozielecki's Concept of Transgressive Man and the Problems of Sustainable Development

Człowiek transgresyjny w ujęciu Józefa Kozieleckiego a problematyka zrównoważonego rozwoju

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Abstract

In this article the author notes, that the development according to Joseph Kozielecki depends on the fact, that man transcends natural, symbolic, social borders, associated with his own inner world, in order to satisfy own needs. He aims to improve the quality of life, and also tries to preserve the natural environment in possibly best condition. This understanding of the concept of development approaches psychologist's attitude to the idea of sustainable development, which rests on three pillars: environmental, economic and social. One of the most important categories for understanding development and sustainability issues is the value of life, which is endangered by destructive transgressions as destructive actions contributing to the destruction of natural phenomena, and also causing psychopathic changes in the human personality. Sofronic transgressions are designed, *inter alia*, to control actions (prudence, moderation, inner discipline, the ability to find a compromise). To be equal to the value of life a transgressive man must be aware of his own dignity.

Key words: value of dignity, transgression, hubristic need, know thyself, sustainable development

Streszczenie

W artykule autor zauważa, że rozwój w ujęciu Józefa Kozieleckiego polega na tym, iż człowiek przekracza granice naturalne, symboliczne, społeczne, związane z własnym wewnętrznym światem, w celu zaspokojenia potrzeb. Zmierza przez to do poprawy jakości życia, co dokonuje się także przy zachowaniu jak najlepszego stanu środowiska naturalnego. Tak rozumiane pojęcie rozwoju zbliża ujęcie psychologa do idei zrównoważonego rozwoju, który wspiera się na trzech filarach: ekologicznym, ekonomicznym i społecznym. Jedną z ważniejszych kategorii dla zrozumienia rozwoju w ujęciu Kozieleckiego i problematyki zrównoważonego rozwoju, jest wartość życia, którego zagrożenie wywołują transgresje destruktywne jako działania przyczyniające się do zniszczenia zjawisk przyrodniczych, powodując także zmiany psychopatyczne ludzkiej osobowości. Kontroli działań mają służyć między innymi transgresje sofrozyniczne (roztropność, umiarkowanie, dyscyplina wewnętrzna, umiejętność trzymania się drogi pośredniej). Aby sprostać wartości życia człowiek transgresyjny musi mieć świadomość własnej godności.

Słowa kluczowe: wartość godności, transgresja, potrzeba hubrystyczna, poznanie siebie, rozwój zrównoważony

Introduction

While reading the reflections of Joseph Kozielecki, a psychologist, author of the transgressive concept, we come across the notion of transgressive hubristic needs as the main factor stimulating human development. The intensification of the need indicates the

expansion of the boundaries, finding new, unforeseen possibilities for human development (Kozielecki, 1987). This need is the foundation for cognitive acts leading to the border crossing and may also evolve itself. This trend manifests itself in the forms of emerging new hubristic needs, ie. moving from its competitive form to the individual one: from placing

itself on the scale of social comparisons to evaluate itself through the prism of its own standards and own level of aspiration. These changes may correspond to the specific way of satisfying them through the so-called individualization. Cognitive acts are, apart from the hubristic needs, the foundation of the transgressive man acts. *Homo transgressivus* is disinterestedly and insistently seeking for the truth about the world and the truth about himself. It is impossible to understand the process of self-development without opening up to the truth (Kozielecki, 1995, p. 96). This opening is revealed in the free dialogue between the structures of his mind, and the external world: his constant feature seems to be the ability to adopt the views contrary to his own and the will to respect the facts incompatible with his knowledge, to confront theory with reality. This creates a pretext for an evolutionary understanding of science without claiming that theory, which a *homo transgressivus* laboriously formulates, explains the world. The man neither rejects everything that interferes with scientific progress nor closes himself to the irrational, accidental, even though he knows that it is difficult for science to cover all the unexplained and mysterious phenomena (Tański, 2008).

Analyzing the transgressive man it is hard not to mention the concept of sustainable development as that which satisfies the needs of the present without depriving future generations of possibility to meet their basic needs (WCED, 1987). The concept of sustainable development assumes the high quality of life with the possibility of meeting a variety of needs, which in turn constitutes anthropocentric values. And the high quality of life becomes achievable by preserving the best condition of the natural environment associated with the biocentric values (Skowronski, 2003, p. 32). Sustainable development was formulated in the name of reconciling the ecological, economic and social arguments based on the cultivation of certain values. Ecological values arise from the need to stop degradation of the environment. Economic values, on the other hand, determine the model of meeting the basic material needs of humanity by using techniques that do not violate the condition of the environment. Social values, in contrast, assume the entire spectrum of goods: minimum social security (the liquidation of hunger and poverty), health care, the development of the spiritual realm (culture), security and education (Skowronski, 2003,

p. 28-29). The transgressive man becomes, in the context of that development, a creator of values through the needs realization and overcoming difficulties, but also guarding the fundamental values (rudimentary) such as peace and freedom¹. These values not only protect human society, but also the environment from destructive transgressions arising from the hypertrophy of human forces, which threaten the instrumental transformation of nature. They cause, among others, that man becomes an instrument of his own tools, that is, their thoughtless extension (Kozielecki, 2004, p. 63).

Transgressive man and search for the truth about the world

The mind of the transgressive man seeking for the truth about the world wishes to be disciplined, shaped by experience, by practice, and certain rules of the game that require verification of experiences and observations, and at the same time, reaching for arguments, without stopping at the dogmatic axioms. *Homo transgressivus* in his openness to the truth in exploring the world does not understand science as a sequence of rational, orderly visions. Images with which various sciences try to present reality, are so different and so radically various that it becomes increasingly difficult to get a coherent vision of the world. It is proved by various cognitive paradigms within psychology and other social sciences. For a transgressive man these divergences, however, do not necessarily have to do harm to the process of learning, on the contrary, they can cause certain profit in the form of new knowledge, perhaps deepened by some previously unknown cognitive aspects. The real challenge of science is to create, develop and reproduce a coherent concept of man in the face of the multitude of facts and discoveries provided by the *labeled* science of man.

Thanks to the development of various disciplines and branches of science learning becomes more and more complex, engaging a variety of phenomena and processes. This model of man, due to the opening to science, approaches to the global understanding of reality, however it does not explain it completely. The modern world reminds megasystem, whose components are mutually and repeatedly linked (Kozielecki, 1995, p. 96-97). Hence, the feature of

¹ Leszek Gawor (Gawor, 2006, p. 94-99) in the context of sustainable development distinguishes different types of values: teleological values important to the community, the instrumental and basic values, which are intended to protect against the dangers of human civilization. One could mention another systematization of the world of values. It is namely the division into the absolute and relative (instrumental) values (see. Lipiec, 2000, p. 43-44). The first irreducible to usability, which right there would be over and above the sphere of utility, they bind the rudimentary and intentional values distinguished by Gawor.

Within the different division consistent with the axiology of sustainable development one can distinguish the autotelic and instrumental values, as a means to reach goal (Skowronski, 2003, p. 29-30). A more extensive systematization introduces Papuziński, distinguishing the ideal (constitutive) and practical, connecting with each other. Their discussion, and other systematics a reader will find in his work *Axiology of sustainable development: an attempt typology* (Papuziński, 2013, p. 9-12).

mind open to search for the truth is the ability to recognize phenomena in the holistic perspective, to search for weighty and important content, to the multifaceted cognition, based on the exploration of problems and phenomena from different points of view and positions (Bartoszewski, 2012, 43). It approaches Koziński's view to the idea of sustainable development for which important is an integral thinking based on holistic and systemic understanding of the biosphere and society through their mutual interaction and interdependence. This makes necessary to think global, universal, outgoing from the division of the world into independent parts, which is reflected in the rejection of various forms of nationalism and particularism (Hull, 2003, 19).

The mind of a transgressive man becomes a tool used by society in order to solve the current problems, bringing the vision of the future, much freed from fears and worries. It gives the same opportunity for the implementation of sustainable development favoring communication between people from different cultural backgrounds in terms of improving the current state of their natural environment (Papuziński, 2007, 30). The transgressive man desires to deal with content serving absolute purposes, associated with the truth as a value in itself, as an autotelic good.

Axiology of life, its threat and the idea of sustainable development

Getting to know thyself for this model of man, according to Koziński, is reduced to guide the action, which allows to become who you are (if it is knowledge not only about individual experiences, but also about a shaped form of your own life, expressed in the motifs of your actions), and the central element of these motifs is creating needs and humanistic values. Such a value is the phenomenon of life, about which says, *inter alia*, the *Rio Declaration*² and it is part of the development of a transgressive man, which is done in the name of harmony with oneself and with nature. The value of life supports the trend of development of such a man developing his character, dynamic behaviour, expanding his natural features. This happens not only because of the desire to maintain life, but also to give life sense what is the reason for daily effort, a sense of pride, integrity of the human spirit and body, communion with nature and transcendence, and interpersonal communication (see. Skowronski, 2003, p. 32). The extension of the axio-moral sphere to nature and its non-instrumental relation to man and society, as well as intergroup relations in terms of moral good and evil, is imposing on people responsibility for it, results from the cultivation of the value of life. Good

for sustainable development, but also for the transgressive man, appears as that which promotes life, as each form of life, not only human, is unique (see. Hull, 2003, p. 21). However, the phenomenon of life is endangered by these destructive transgressions, which are actions that are contributing to the destruction of a number of natural phenomena, but are also causing indelible psychopathic changes in human personality. They depend, *inter alia*, on *the destruction of the environment, the use of sophisticated means of violence, even in schools, implementation of anti-humanistic ideologies, such as: <Mein Kampf> or <the principles of Leninism>, <brainwashing> or inhuman methods of social engineering* (Koziński, 2004, p. 62). These are just a few examples of actions directed against man, against society, against environment. The basis of these acts, as Koziński notices, following Erich Fromm's reflection, is destructive aggression (malicious, striking at the very core of life). On the other hand, euthanasia, use of drugs or mutilation of one's body are called by the Polish psychologist self-destructive transgressions. Anxiety may be also raised by technical transgressions, disseminated at an unprecedented scale. The conflict between *hard* efficiency and *soft* ethics can be reduced to the fact that the instrumental transgressions, providing tools for more productive work, become the cause of violation of ethical principles and moral norms determining the source of humanity. Another danger is the nascent *technoelite and technopol, a technocracy, which tries to subordinate all forms of cultural life and spiritual rules to the rules of technique. Its symbol and metaphor has become a computer that brings all natural phenomena to the data files* (Koziński, 2004, p. 224). Technique, depending on usage, can be both ally and enemy, because in itself it is axiologically neutral. In this new, specific thicket of situations created by technique new creative forces certainly appeared and at the same time new dangers appeared which are sometimes difficult to realize.

Knowing thyself and sustainable development

If from axiological point of view, knowledge of the world that surrounds us turns out to be relevant, and the action taken in excess of the limits of the achievements appropriate, it opens up before a transgressive man possibility of becoming himself. This is an important moment in the modern man development according to Koziński's psychological concept. One could say that self-knowledge is ahead of any mature transgressive action directed towards the material social or symbolic world. In turn, the reverse way is possible: if the action is appropriate and proper it leads the man to being himself. More adequate way to being yourself, knowing your own

² The first rule of the preamble of the *Rio Declaration on Environment and Development* states: *Human beings are*

at the center of interest in the process of sustainable development. They have right to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature (UN, 1992).

qualities and capabilities leads rather through the action appropriate to the situation and place (Węgrzecki, 2007, p. 15-16). This can happen but not by fluke or blind luck, which admittedly can happen, but it would mean that the transgressive man seems to be not the decision-maker, but a passive automaton in the hands of external forces. He would thus rely on blind fate, on what happens to him, sacrificing at the same time an active participation in what is happening within his life. Fate according, for example, a German philosopher Max Scheler, among other things, is *a series, swarm of <events> which, when made, we feel in a pretty special way as <belonging to our qualitative features> even though we were not <looking for> them, < not expecting>, < not choosing> which, taken as a whole show the uniqueness of the life course, as a holistic system, the mark of individuality of a person to whom this process belongs* (Scheler, 1986, p. 299). The category of fate does not determine it the proper form of existence. The awareness of human dependence on fate becomes fundamental for the development. This fate shaping and co-shaping becomes essential for the sustainable development education, for which important is the overall balance of happiness in both the individual and social dimension, in order to radically change the situation of man in the world (Papuziński, 2006, p. 30). Man determines his fate not just alone, but also in collaboration with others, producing new goods, transforming and changing environment. Human communities are bonded by the principle of general human solidarity, which seems to follow the basic postulate of sustainable development³. In turn, the universal human solidarity would include a range of activities to the phenomena which neglected in one section may be not to catch up in another.

In the context of action based on the values associated with the cultivation of life and the ensuing knowledge, but also self-knowledge, you would say, therefore, about the ethics of sustainable development. Such an ethics must pave the way to the world of the universal values that are supported on three pillars: environmental, economic and social. Solidarity, exceeding particularistic comfort promotes, among other things: denuclearization, preventing famines, building a demographic balance, and removing threats of epidemic (Kozielecki, 1995, p. 97). Ethics of sustainable development would prepare the transgressive man to resolve fundamental conflicts characteristic of the *global village* in terms of Marshall McLuhan's concept. It would constitute a duty imperative, which would involve putting the blame on man for an existing, comprehensive global moral order. Development arising from such ethical imperatives is not possible to achieve using the ethical jump, which would repeal the importance of fundamental-humanistic values, defining the boundary

of knowledge and exploitation of the environment and society. This development – cultivating the transgressive model of man – could effectively bring humanity on a global scale to participate in broader communities, on the scale of a country or continent, which purpose is to implement the ideas and practices of sustainable development. This type of development provokes the search for positive values of solidarity and mobilizes to go beyond the ethics of small groups (Kozielecki, 2008, p. 47).

Being yourself results sometimes from the accordance of this action with the shaped form of life in which man becomes a transgressive sculptor of himself. It is therefore about the updating of the trends, which have been shaped as socially valuable. Overwhelmingly, however, for the transgressive man being himself means something you strive toward, as previous form of existence is unsatisfactory and treated as inauthentic (cf. Galdowa, 2000). There is need for change, transgression, which would remove the recognized lack or previously unrecognized negative value for the personal, but human development. Self-knowledge turns out to be something irreplaceable: being himself defines some important point of reference to the content of his life, which in his assessment becomes more self or foreign. Being yourself, recognized and accepted, however constantly shaping, provides psychological continuity determined by the biography of the individual.

Self-knowledge for a man according to Kozielecki is made in action, founded on the values and norms rooted in the time of Enlightenment (rationalism, disinterested truth, skepticism, freedom, brotherhood, respect, integrity, autonomy of the individual, individualism), emphasizing not only the rights of an adult, but also, as J. Locke claimed, children's rights, which at that time was a revolutionary concept (Kozielecki, 2008, p. 36). This understanding of cognition participates in something that is to emerge. The design phase of this activity is sometimes accompanied by reflection about the effects of the activity of a man trying to exceed the material, symbolic and social structures and about the direction in which the development will continue. If it was strengthened with the value experience, allowing to capture axiological nature of specific activities, trends that have appeared in man's life, maybe it would be possible to abandon some transgressive activities. Self-cognition present in the reflection concerning the future seems to anticipate what can happen when human action ends – Kozielecki emphasizes. The fact that this kind of knowledge appears in the life of a transgressive man is confirmed by some cases when the action is abandoned or its course, shape or form significantly modified. Modification of the course of action takes place due to this reflection, which can anticipate what would happen

³ *We commit ourselves to act together, united by a common determination to save our planet, promote human develop-*

ment and achieve universal prosperity and peace (Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development, 2002, paragraph. 35).

if an action was continued unchanged. It fundamentally participates in what could be called guidance, persuading the man to continue of what has already occurred, or abandon a transgressive action, when its value interferes with typically human values.

The control of man's own actions should be supported by sofronic transgressions. They represent a collection of internal attributes (*Sophrosyne*), which were sought by educated Ancient Greeks. The author of the transgressive concept follows, therefore, the Ancients in his search for ethical reflection. These attributes include: prudence, moderation, internal discipline, the ability to find a middle path (Kozielecki 2001, p. 59). The struggle to maintain balance, and human concern for a certain order of things related to compliance with the proper measure, refer to the idea of sustainable development. Exceeding the measure proper to each individual contributes to the danger of life of an individual or community, it can also be dangerous to the tendency of self-preservation of the species. From the maxim *nothing beyond measure*, expressing the nature of the sofronic transgression, some scholars derive the Delphic maxim *Know thyself* (Dembińska-Siury, 1991, p. 41). Moderation as a value falling within the concept of sustainable development is essential in the socio-economic area. Failure to keep the maxim *nothing beyond measure* leads to the attitude of excessive consumerism, well visible in directing the process of production to satisfy the marketing generated needs. The value of moderation, however, should not be reduced to raw asceticism, but to the rationalization of consumer needs, which alien become a waste and extravagance (Gawor, 2006, p. 100).

Conclusion

Homo transgressivus, making acts of expanding the boundaries of his knowledge, becomes independent of the whims of public opinion, the requirements posed by his immediate environment, the instructions of the intellectual and administrative elite (Kozielecki 2001, p. 156). The question which therefore arises is whether a transgressive man is guided only by individualism, the desire to meet his own needs (especially related to the strengthening of self-esteem, that is *strengthening own ego*), where he becomes himself *his own rudder and the ship* or the spiritual values, such as dignity, responsibility, autonomy (freedom) help him to expand to the world? Are, therefore, the higher order values the foundation? Do the transgressive acts derive primarily from permanent efforts to confirm and increase self-esteem, or from such values as solidarity and dedication, friendship and brotherhood, help and emotional ties, the struggle with suffering and exploitation? The rich literature on transgressive man is not entirely clear, and does not always give a clear answer. Kozielecki's monograph *On Dignity* paints a picture of man, whose activity is by no means a tool for

achieving selfish ends related, *inter alia*, with the confirmation of self-esteem, but it comes from a sense of solidarity and willingness to help others. To be able to evolve, the man must be guided by the belief in his own dignity. Without this faith a transgressive man could not face adversity, would not be prepared for failure and existential shocks. Hence, in order to fight (to be resistant to stress that life brings), he must be aware of his own dignity, in defense of which the struggle inscribed into active participation in the vortex of everyday life goes on. One could define this *human dignity* as a value dominant above all goals. This value is important for the purpose of sustainable development, as Leszek Gawor states (Gawor, 2006, p. 95). Moreover, as an ideal it would have separate position and would be common, even fundamental, to the whole axiology of sustainability development (Papuziński, 2013, p. 10). At this point Kozielecki's approach would coincide with the axiology of sustainable development. When there is a lack of dignity, the processes of depersonalization appear; a man according to the psychologist becomes a sad puppet, controlled by the external forces which is no longer able to understand, and his life becomes colorless, which leads to a loss of the sense of existence. Depersonalization becomes visible also in the phenomenon of loss of self-esteem and a loss of self-will (May, 1978).

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