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## **ETHICAL COUNSELING AND NEW HORIZONS OF THE SOCIAL DIMENSIONS OF SUSTAINABILITY AND CULTURAL HERITAGE**

**Abstract.** Today, the pursuit of sustainability has new horizons and new Approaches as an expedient heuristic that understands sustainability as the importance of balancing the competing priorities: the environmental protection, the economic growth, and the social equity. That is more a practical effort, rather than as a purely scientific concept. Recent vision of Human Development was equated only by economic growth gradually compensating also in the direction to fulfil social objectives; namely to reduce poverty, improve quality of life, improving opportunities for better quality of education and health. Such a re-orientation requires a comprehensive approach to the management sustainability of ties interaction between natural and human, sectoral and structural aspects of development at all levels. As part of this knowledge and realisation, ethical counselling has important place, in terms of practise. In this paper we think about social awareness, acceptance and practical applicability of ethical experts in Slovakia. Our goal is understanding of ethical consulting in decision-making framework of sustainability. Assessing of social sustainability and supporting these processes entrusted to a professional – ethical adviser can make context of starting point for good life and for social practise. Based on needs analysis of ethical guidance we offer suggestion and recommendations for Ethical counselling, especially at the level of professional training in educational models applied ethics in Slovakia.

**Keywords:** ethical counseling, applied ethics, sustainable development, cultural heritage

## **DORADZTWO ETYCZNE A NOWE HORYZONTY TRWAŁOŚCI SPOŁECZNEJ DZIEDZICTWA KULTUROWEGO**

**Streszczenie.** Wysiłki zmierzające do zapewnienia zrównoważonego rozwoju zyskały obecnie nowe horyzonty, zaś nowe podejścia są użyteczną i celowościową heurystyką, która traktuje zrównoważony rozwój jako równowagę konkurencyjnych priorytetów: ochrony środowiska, dobrobytu ekonomicznego i sprawiedliwości społecznej. Niedawna wizja rozwoju ludzkości utożsamiana jedynie

z dobrobytem ekonomicznym została skorygowana z uwzględnieniem celów społecznych, sprowadzających się w szczególności do ograniczenia ubóstwa, poprawy jakości życia, zapewnienia szans na lepszą edukację i zdrowie. Tego typu zmiana orientacji wymaga kompleksowego podejścia do zarządzania relacjami między naturalnymi i ludzkimi, sektorowymi i strukturalnymi aspektami zrównoważonego rozwoju na wszystkich szczeblach. To raczej praktyczny wysiłek niż czysta wiedza i naukowe podejście. Zważywszy na tę konkluzję i jej realizację, doradztwo etyczne, jeśli mowa o praktyce, zajmuje bardzo ważne miejsce. W artykule podejmuję kwestie świadomości społecznej, akceptacji i praktycznego wykorzystania ekspertów w zakresie etyki na Słowacji. Moim celem jest promowanie zrozumienia doradztwa etycznego w procesach decyzyjnych i ocenie zrównoważonego rozwoju społecznego. Powierzenie profesjonalistom – doradcom etycznym – oceny zrównoważonego rozwoju społecznego i wspierania jego procesów może budować kontekst i być punktem wyjścia dla dobrego życia oraz praktyki społecznej. Na podstawie analizy potrzeb postępowania etycznego wskazuję wnioski i zalecenia dotyczące doradztwa etycznego, w szczególności w obszarze przygotowania zawodowego na kierunku etyki stosowanej w modelach edukacji wyższej.

**Słowa kluczowe:** doradztwo etyczne, etyka stosowana, zrównoważony rozwój

## 1. Introduction

The academic discourse in the area of sustainable development is characteristic for the complicated structure of the research subject, which can be perceived as a matrix with vertical and horizontal planes providing a multidisciplinary and multiplicative space. Sustainability, widely promoted in different areas, requires thinking in terms of natural resource conservation and society within three objectives: economic prosperity, social welfare/social justice and the quality of the environment. Despite the fact, sustainability or sustainable development can be understood rather as a practical effort or policy than a scientific concept; theoretical reflections as well as its contemporary strategies are based on the triple-bottom line recognition, which is an effective heuristics of economic growth, social justice and environmental protection as a common goal effort instead of competing areas.

The *world heritage (cultural heritage)* is a new element in this agenda which has not been present in the discourse on sustainability before – it's potential to contribute to the triad of goals as an important part of the global, national and regional policies in the area. Only in the so called *post-2015 agenda*, the world heritage appears among the sustainability goals and strategies in terms of its value in a specific territory, country or region. It is based in various contexts of cultural heritage, different demands and services such as the tradition and historical value of the region, panorama of knowledge and the value base as the space for interaction of the man and the nature (cultural heritage is closely related to the natural one). Cultural heritage is important in terms of society and ethics and it also has a specific purpose. It is anchored in

interlocked cultural, political and economic relations. The highly valued places in our world, referred to as the cultural heritage, overlap and intertwine in complicated relationships; they are connected with traditions, specific culture, public and collective memories, as well as the policies of identity and recognition. Cultural heritage is often perceived as an industry. Therefore it is a subject of not only social but also ethical inquiries emerging from the variety of involved parties into topics such as whether it is just if the cultural heritage generates income for private companies or the state treasury. The initial discourse on the ethic of cultural heritage appeared in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century addressing the need to create ethical standards for related professions and protect the cultural values. According to Paul Ricoeur, our collective future is based on the *duty to remember and this duty involves fighting against the erosion of traces*<sup>1</sup>.

## 2. Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda

The Hangzhou Declaration entitled “Placing Culture at the Heart of Sustainable Development Policies” is the outcome document of the UNESCO International Congress, “Culture: Key to Sustainable Development”. The Congress was held in the city of Hangzhou (China) from 15 to 17 May 2013, with the generous support of the Government of the People’s Republic of China.

It was to first congress to address the specific connections between the culture and sustainability which served as a global forum for scientists, politicians, UN and UNESCO leaders, universities, private sector and the civil society. The discourse subject was the key role of culture and cultural heritage not only for the stability of the society and its value frameworks, but also for the enhancement of security and peace<sup>2</sup>. New approaches should fully recognize the culture as a system of values and a framework for sustainable development, initiate related normative acts and accept them on the global, national, and regional levels.

According to UNESCO, theorists and expert communities, experience has shown how the degradation of natural resources, neglected rural areas, urban sprawl and poorly engineered new constructions increase the vulnerability of communities to disaster risks, especially in poorer countries. On the other hand, a well-conserved natural and historic environment, based on traditional knowledge and skills, considerably reduces underlying disaster risks’ factors, strengthens the resilience of communities and saves lives. At times of crisis, moreover, access to and care for the heritage may help vulnerable people recover a sense of continuity, dignity and empowerment. In conflict and post-conflict situations, in particular, the acknowledgement

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<sup>1</sup> Ricoeur P.: Memory and Forgetting, [in:] Keaney R., Dooley M. (eds.): Questioning ethics: Contemporary debates in philosophy. Routledge, Oxford 1999, p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> UNESCO, 2015. Culture in the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda, <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/culture-and-development/hangzhou-congress/culture-in-the-post-2015-sustainable-development-agenda/>, 15.02.2017.

and conservation of heritage, based on shared values and interests, may foster mutual recognition, tolerance and respect among different communities, which is a precondition for a society's peaceful development. All of the above concerned potential positive contributions that an appropriate WH conservation and management could make to sustainable development.

The community of experts in applied ethics notice these initiatives and address the related ethical questions in their research. Their effort is visible in the recent conferences on applied ethics (e.g. *Universite Hokaido*, Japan, 2014 and 2016), initiatives of Centres for Applied Ethics, reviving of the discourse on intergenerational justice by H. Jonas or Amartya Sen's concept of the multidisciplinary strategy for the evaluation of the social dimension of sustainability<sup>3</sup>. It is a complicated and multilevel discourse which involves scientists, politicians, economists, managers and engineers – all of them are moral entities who have to decide in different contexts and *informational situations*. This decision-making can be performed in different spheres of the social reality, for example in economy, environmental policy<sup>4</sup>, or applied ethics and its practical mission – ethical consultancy<sup>5</sup>. Ethical consultancy takes a different position in relation to cultural heritage as the new element in social sustainability in terms of theory, methodology and application.

Through the optics of applied ethics, cultural heritage can be understood as a shift from seemingly linear aesthetic values and administration of cultural heritage towards structural elements and tools of human management of cultural heritage through developing of ethical policies, programmes, standards and codes focusing on making the cultural values accessible. The context for such transformation of ethics in an inter/transdisciplinary connection to history and culturology, ruptures of geopolitics and intellectual thinking as well as the global movement in the area of human rights are of key importance. The transformation of ethics in relation to cultural heritage and the mission of applied ethics will affect more than just the interpretation of cultural values, it will also change what qualifies as heritage and in the strategies changing the perception of heritage as a service, goods or a tourist place owned by someone. Cultural heritage will be perceived as an exclusive concept facilitating the creation of identity, solidarity, tradition, good life, prosperity, social justice and also the means to reduce poverty and regional disparities.

The New International Development Paradigm of Culture in the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda starts point and basis to new understanding cultural heritage. Agenda offers new horizons:

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<sup>3</sup> Wolsko Ch., Marino E. et al.: System access: A multidisciplinary strategy for assessing the social dimensions of sustainability. „Sustainability: Science, Practice & Policy”, Vol. 12, Iss. 1, 2016.

<sup>4</sup> Vig N.J, Kraft M.E.: Environmental policy. New directions for the 21st century. Sage Publications, London 2013.

<sup>5</sup> Fobelová M.: Business ethics in the context of a post-foundational paradigm. „Organization and Management”, no. 94, 2016, p. 65-72; Fobel P.: Innovative potential of applied ethics in the context of new social expectations. „Organization and Management”, no. 94, 2016, p. 49-56.

*The «one size does not fit all» motto places culture at the centre of context-based approaches to sustainable development and improved governance. In what ways does culture act as an enabler and a driver throughout the sustainable development agenda? How does culture contribute to building capabilities and agency and achieving transformative change? How can culture strengthen the Post-2015 agenda and answer the most pressing challenges of the global community? What are the consequences of a Post-2015 agenda without culture?»<sup>6</sup>*

New horizons in sustainability and a new approach which perceives cultural heritage as part of the sustainable development agenda are integrated: environmental goals and economic prosperity are inseparable from the social goals, and vice versa. This integrated approach is based on actual experience and already existing sustainable projects involving real places and real people in actual regions. As Wolsko and Marino contend, *actual existing sustainabilities*<sup>7</sup>. The place-based perspective is understood not only as a local aspect of a specific practice and a way to assimilate social elements into environmental and economic goals, and engineering tools, but also as a strategy and a new prospect in applied ethics. This also follows the creation of case studies which is a new trend in applied ethics<sup>8</sup>. According to the Slovak theoretician in applied ethics Fobel<sup>9</sup>, in accordance with the post-foundational paradigm, case studies are one of the main tasks of the individual types of applied ethics.

The topics addressed by the contemporary ethicists and theoreticians in the area of environmental ethic as a subdiscipline of applied ethics cover sustainability and the sophisticated agenda of sustainable development. New horizons mainly in the discussions on ethical practice, purposeful heuristics, practical application and the mission of ethical consultants have already been revealed. New horizons of social sustainability reflect in the fact that in every region, country and on every continent, there are places which serve as sources of worldly experience representing our culture and values. These places are parts of complicated local political frameworks (for instance, in the Dobšiná Region of Slovakia there is a devastated mining road which has been neglected for decades), some have been affected by the global geopolitics (e.g. the cultural heritage in Aleppo, Syria ruined by bombing). The evaluation and application of sustainability used to be formalized and simplified within the economic (economic indicators such as GDP, urbanism and construction, transport, social and economic situation of a city, etc.) and environmental (protection and creation of the environment, ecological footprint, air quality) approaches. Today's strategies are developed in order to accomplish the contemporary social objectives, mainly reducing poverty, creating opportunities for quality education, improving the health and quality of life of citizens, participation of people

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<sup>6</sup> Culture in the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda. Available at: <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/culture-and-development/hangzhou-congress/culture-in-the-post-2015-sustainable-development-agenda/>.

<sup>7</sup> Wolsko Ch., Marino E. et al.: op.cit.

<sup>8</sup> Rorty R.: Is Philosophy Relevant to Applied Ethics? "Business Ethics Quaterly", Vol. 16, No. 3, July 2006, p. 391-399; Fobel P.: Spoločenský význam a profesionálne poslanie etického poradenstva, [in:] Fobel P. et al. (eds): "ETIKA & PORADENSTVO & PRAX", Banská Bystrica 2012.

<sup>9</sup> Fobel P.: Innovative..., op.cit.

in decision making, equal access to resources, conservation of the cultural heritage and traditions. Social sustainability is its inherent part; protecting cultural heritage is a practical effort and abroad, it has been implemented in specific policies and in practice, and it became a part of the power flows and decision making. Due to these reasons, the research in applied ethics needs to address it, formulate its missions and tasks for different social areas on various levels (macro and microenvironment or the systemic, organizational and institutional levels of social practice).

In the Slovak environment, the aforementioned trend in ethics (mainly applied ethics) is related to the methodological and theoretical initiatives of the *Banská Bystrica School of Applied Ethics*. According to P. Fobel<sup>10</sup>, the current discourse of the expert community emphasizes new approaches and activities in applied ethics.

*On one hand, there is the process on professional and career specialisation, but on the other hand, social and theoretical platforms as well as a unified methodological framework have been developing, which enable enriching them mutually, and to support the development of ethics. Its unified framework proves an almost 50-years tradition, which results in the current situation where applied ethics more and more claims a specific professional status and a higher autonomy in relation to philosophy. At the same time, the current discourse of professional community emphasizes the topic of the new mission for applied ethics, which creates its new position in the system of knowledge and new forms of action<sup>11</sup>.*

We are already aware of the new tasks for applied ethics as well as the need for permanent maintaining of ethical culture. In this context, new questions related to cultural heritage in the sustainability agenda, professional preparation of ethical consultants and applied ethics study programmes. It is true that sustainability and education for sustainable development in Slovakia are addressed in a rather blurred way; it is linear and addressed exclusively by approaches and study programmes in natural sciences, technology and economics without any relation to applied ethics despite the fact that these issues include major ethical problems.

Therefore, in our study we formulated the following questions and research objectives:

- What is the role of *world heritage* in the agenda of sustainability and what this means for applied ethics?
- What does mean *cultural heritage* in process from foundational reflections to post-foundational perspective in applied ethics?
- Why would we want to support a transformative professional learning agenda, and what might the consequences be of such a move?

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<sup>10</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>11</sup> Ibidem, p. 50.

### 3. Methodological caveats: from foundational reflection to post-foundational perspective

Dickerson and Ceeney, Ireland and Patanazos all drill down to explore heritage's codified ethics of stewardship in very different contexts. They provide an example of how public institutions might conduct a morally reasoned argument in search of an acceptable ethics of repatriation, noting that such arguments are constrained by what may be found to be acceptable by different groups in different circumstances rather than what might be right or true according to any external codes or standards<sup>12</sup>.

Traditional theories and concepts are based on principles essential for problem-solving. For instance, the *concept of access* is an important part of the contemporary models of social sustainability; it already served as the starting point for the critical analysis of social systems and complex issues in the past. The lack of access can be the cause of poverty, regional disparities and social injustice. According to certain theoreticians, the concept of access can be used as a theoretical starting point and an analytical tool to evaluate social sustainability<sup>13</sup>. This is closely related to the Theory of Capabilities by Amartya Sen which focuses on the multilevel interconnection of social processes from which certain communities or individuals are excluded. Based on this concept, social justice is supported by culturally appropriate and equal types of access to decision-making, information, renewable resources and certain actions. In this context, the access can be understood as the ability to affect processes and claim one's right to participate in the cultural heritage and the related decision-making processes. We can definitely agree with Sen's argument as well as ideas of other authors<sup>14</sup> according to which restricting of the access ultimately prevents social sustainability.

The concept of *intergenerational justice* is typical and universal: its future dimension represents the criterion for a fair decision. The concept of ethic of responsibility of H. Jonas is also often referred to. It is based on the statement that we are obliged to do our best to ensure that humanity will continue to live in the future. H. Jonas (1997) believes that conditions upon which the humanity can live on the Earth must not be restricted. This categorical imperative of unreciprocated responsibility may be quite broad and unclear and *we are not sure what exactly should be protected, but it is clear that this object is mortal – it can be destroyed*<sup>15</sup>. Our aim is not to challenge the theoretical ethical potential of traditional concepts and the legacy of H. Jonas, J. Rawls, H. Rolston and other fellow theoreticians who provided referential points for environmental ethics in the form of principles or universal, formalist theory. However, their

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<sup>12</sup> Dickerson A.B., Ceeney E.R.: Repatriating Human Remains: Searching for an Acceptable Ethics, [in:] Ireland T., Schofield J.: *The Ethics of Cultural Heritage*. Springer, New York 2015.

<sup>13</sup> Wolsko Ch., Marino E. et al.: op.cit.

<sup>14</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>15</sup> Machalová T.: Hans Jonas, [in:] Remišová A: *Dejiny etického myslenia v Európe a USA*. Kaligram, Bratislava 2008, p. 687.

practical use and applicational dimensions in the multi-subject area or in a specific region are questionable. The variety of values of cultural heritage competes with the biological diversity and proves that *there is a plurality of moral truths that cannot be merged into a single principle*<sup>16</sup>, and this moral pluralism as well as the resulting *diversity of values are not as bad as it seems at first sight*, (ibid). According to P. Fobel<sup>17</sup>, our goal is to reach the epistemic unity and provide persuasive ethical solutions applicable in the key areas of the practice. It is indeed true, that *a good doctor knows when, how and where the therapy should be applied*<sup>18</sup>.

Now we will submerge in an empirical thought experiment. We will try to determine the social sustainability and cultural heritage value in a selected case – the Dobšiná town and region located in the Slovak Ore Mountains. This location is a part of the Gemer cultural and historical region and a part of the Slovak Paradise National Park. It is subject to the third degree protection due to its superregional importance along with Dedinky, Mlynky and Stratená villages. Besides plenty of natural resources and extraordinary forests (karst caves, plateaus, deep gorges and beautiful waterfalls), there are also valuable historical and cultural monuments in the urban area. However, the socioeconomically characteristics of the town and region is unfavourable: there is 22-23% rate of unemployment, large Roma population with very low education, illegal housing, insufficient social infrastructure, relatively high crime rates and stagnating tourism. The cultural monuments and objects listed as cultural heritage are damaged (...). Different sources even claim that important objects pertaining to the cultural heritage such as parts of the gothic iron mining road are in a desolate condition, often even in the critical state. Despite the unique environment and efforts of the town, opportunities for the development and protection of cultural heritage have not been provided. No significant investment came and the whole region continues to be perceived as poor and stagnating.

In this case, the traditional ethical approach does not provide answers, because the question is not *what* or *why* it should be protected. The answer clear, reasonable and acceptable. The question is of a more pragmatic nature: “how to” set the prospect of the region along with the relevant ethical policy and human management in the public administration and regional companies. What ethical instruments should be implemented in the social infrastructure in order to improve the unfavourable situation of the region which deserves our protection and support? In the 15<sup>th</sup> Century, the iron mining industry was blooming and in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century the region was famous for its ironmongery and iron mills, smithery and other crafts. What is the role of cultural heritage here?

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<sup>16</sup> Fobelová D., et al: Aplikované etiky v kontextoch súčasnosti. Fakulta humanitných vied University Mateja Bela, Banská Bystrica 2005, p. 26.

<sup>17</sup> Fobel P.: Innovative..., op.cit.

<sup>18</sup> Fobelová D., et al: Aplikované..., op.cit., p. 27.



Ethical risks and dangers can be identified in the following areas:

- if the cultural and natural heritage which embodies the local traditional values is not sustained, resources are not used in a sustainable way balancing production and consumption, we will not be able to conserve and further build the social cohesion of the community;
- we will lose the traditional skills and abilities which may result in alienation, loss of solidarity, increasing poverty and injustice in the region;
- in times of crisis we will not be able to help the people experience continuity, protect their dignity, support reciprocity, common values and mutual respect between different groups which represent the preconditions for harmonic development of the society and elimination of unwanted pathological phenomena (hostility, violence, xenophobia, discrimination, addiction, etc.);
- a number of researches has shown that companies as well as regions are at risk if their leaders do not understand that ethical leadership is an important part of the effective and responsible management. If there is no ethical leadership, there is no space or ability to solve the basic problems of ethical responsibility, social responsibility, ecological responsibility or environmental (in)justice;
- if there is no ethical leadership in the region, experience has shown that it results in the lack of access to resources and participative decision-making. The evaluation of ethical policies and strategies is an important precondition for trustworthiness and good reputation which further creates investment opportunities for supporting of projects that will help the region to develop.

Two kinds of questions emerge in this context: (1) what strategies and procedures should be conceptualised and verified by the ethic of cultural heritage? (2) how to build ethical culture in companies and institutions in relation to social sustainability and cultural heritage. The new approach and practice require much more than the creation of new epistemologies and technologies or formulation of new principles. It also includes the transformation of ethics, new ways of thinking and creation of new tools to solve the problems – these aspects are also a part of the performative expertise of experts in applied ethics. On one hand, performative expertise is understood as a base of cognitive and competency-related knowledge and skills which allow the students to carry out particular activities and procedures in different institutions, organizations and other areas of practice. On the other hand, it is specific professional performance including presentation of a case study about the good or bad practice. As our starting point, we will use the theoretical-methodological concept of P. Fobel<sup>19</sup>, according to

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<sup>19</sup> Fobel P.: Spoločenský význam a profesionálne poslanie etického poradenstva, [in:] Fobel P. et al. (eds): "ETIKA & PORADENSTVO & PRAX", Banská Bystrica 2012; Fobel P., et. al.: Etická expertíza a profesionalita v etike, [in:] Organizačná etika a profesionálne etické poradenstvo. Banská Bystrica 2013, p. 15-22; Fobel P.: Innovative potential of applied ethics in the context of new social expectations. „Organization and Management”, no. 94, 2016, p. 49-56.

which there are two levels of ethical expertise: knowledge (epistemic expertise) and actions (performative expertise), the latter representing actual activities focused on changing the individual and society<sup>20</sup>. We agree with the author that applied ethics and specific ethical sub-disciplines, environmental ethics and organizational ethics too *are still the subject of internal changes and new experience which lead them to correct their theoretical bases... The current discourse of professional community emphasizes the topic of the new mission for applied ethics, which creates its new position in the system of knowledge and new forms of action*<sup>21</sup>.

One of the starting points to address this situation is to introduce inspiring post-foundational paradigm and its theoretical, methodological and practical themes.

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<sup>20</sup> Fobel P.: Spoločenský..., op.cit., p. 14.

<sup>21</sup> Fobel P.: Innovative..., op.cit., p. 50.

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