

Sustainable consumption on the crossroad between individual and collective needs - chances of the concept of identity

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Abstract: Sustainable consumption is one of current challenges of the global world in front of the climate change causing many economists and other social and political researchers to explain this phenomenon and find instruments to encourage it. Among them we can find heterodox economics which is based on anthropological assumptions that differ from those in neoclassical economics (homo oeconomicus). For instance institutional, ecological or humanistic economics embed their concept of human nature in social and to some extent in natural environment. The focus on the social dimension awakes out interest in the relation between individual and social (collective needs). The vision of sustainable consumption as a collective need presented here is an attempt to outline a map of the problem of sustainable consumption. By conceptualizing the consumption as a collective need, it indicates a limitation of standard economic theories that are focused on preferences or individual needs. At the same time, however, the lack of meeting collective needs is associated with their increasing restitution with individual needs, which ends disastrously for the environment. The article considers behavioral, institutional, ecological and humanistic approaches in economics. It shows how these approaches solve the dilemma between individual and collective needs in the context of sustainable consumption. Although some of them, such as institutionalism, ecological economics or the humanities, open to us other than market opportunities - pointing to the role of rules and norms shaping economic activity, they do not explain how collective needs may be perceived as a part of individual and not something external. The concept of social identity explains this problem. It explains the identification processes in individual groups - which can contribute positively or negatively to sustainable consumption. These multiple identities are created in interacting systems (economic, political, social, cultural). For this reason, when looking at sustainable consumption, we should look for an integrating approach, i.e. exceeding individual identities. The answer can be found in capability approach of Sen and his universal identity associated with his global concept of justice, as well as in identities that cross these divisions - e.g. religious ones.

Keywords: social identity, sustainable consumption, preferences, individual and collective needs

1 Introduction

Sustainable consumption is the challenge of current sustainability policy. How to achieve this? How does economics explain this phenomenon to us and how can we extend the perspective of economics to its new, non-mainstream directions to explain this phenomenon?

Sustainable consumption is seen by politicians as one of the important goals towards **sustainable development**, achieving the goals of the Europe 2020 strategy or implementing the provisions of the climate summits. These are legitimate motivations, but how do you achieve this with the tools provided by economics?

There is a big gap between sociological and economic literature studying the phenomenon of consumption. Can we, however, include some of the sociological reflections we have in the expansion of the economic perspective so that we can better understand the causes of unsustainable consumption, the factors explaining it, or the factors that would favor sustainable consumption.

Within psychology and sociology, as well as slowly and economics, there is a reflection that identity can be helpful in explaining many human decisions, including consumption. There is even talk of identity economics in this context (Akerlof et al. 2017; Akerlof and Kranton 2000; Davis 2019; Fine 2009; Horst et al. 2007).

The main challenge in **sustainable consumption** is not only to increase the emission efficiency in current production, but rather to limit the products consumed and to change their structure in such a way that it meets our needs in the best way, while not reducing these **needs for** future generations, and so, as Daly emphasizes, guaranteeing the sustainability of natural resources. Sustainable consumption is therefore not only to meet the economic criterion, i.e. production at the lowest cost, or even the production of this good at the lowest emissions. Rather, it should satisfy the same needs with the least negative impact on the environment, i.e. the minimum consumption of energy, raw materials, and product longevity. But what are their needs and what is their structure in what relation do they stand for preferences? We must answer these questions before we proceed with further considerations!

2 Sustainable consumption in the light of individual and collective needs

Let's start with the colloquial statement that preferences are not necessary, that they have their own structure (individual and collective), and we will show them in the context of sustainable consumption and the problem of identity. This topology of key concepts will allow you to look at the possibilities of embedding this problem in various economic theories.

Preferences are an economic concept, referring to whether we prefer one thing over another, or rather how much we are ready to buy at given prices. It is assumed that a person knows what he wants and knows his preferences. Therefore, it would be more reasonable to refer to individual needs, assuming that when buying man satisfies his **bad** or well-understood needs (and sometimes the needs of others), not necessarily realizing what exactly they are. Of course, you can ask whether what we prefer (preference) actually meets our real needs? And in what relation is it to collective needs?

Part of what we use allows us to meet **individual needs** (food, sleeping, clothing), while part of the needs we are not able to satisfy ourselves (on the market) - we need others, their existence outside the market - e.g. clean air, the presence of various species, water availability, a climate that does not threaten the lives of our children. These are collective needs.

Sustainable development (or reduction of consumption) is in the interest of society today. It provides a chance for future generations to exist, as well as improving the quality of life today (e.g. it will stop the climate crisis in our lifetime, improve air quality, diversity of species), which can be considered as an important **collective need**. Is it a **collective preference**? Sustainable consumption, i.e. one in which a person does not follow comfort or satisfy not only all the whims, but perhaps some needs, at first glance, it seems to limit the usefulness of man and his state of satisfaction. Perhaps that is why there may be no collective preference for imposing restrictions on consumption, especially since it may have negative effects on economic growth, the workplace etc. Some people may want to stave off the disaster, and some may be indifferent, because it is about

changes not affecting today, but maybe in 20-50 years. At the same time, sustainable consumption - enabling the continuation of society and its further development (for future generations), allowing to meet more basic needs - such as healthy air and constituting the basis for a more sustainable fulfillment of private needs, is considered a collective need.

Why is the **change of terminology** so important - from preference to needs? Because the needs can be discussed, generalized, presented for debate, and preferences are something so individual that it is difficult to talk about them and look for a common denominator. Why do we need such a denominator? In order to be able to make decisions outside the market whether certain preferences are needs or not. In addition, let it not be the majority who decide whether something is a collective need, but realities - e.g. clean air in cities. After all, if the majority of the population lives outside the city, the city's inhabitants would be voted out. Staying with the terminology of preferences gives voice to the market, because only he is able to harmonize the preferences not transferable to the common denominator. Only non-market institutions have the chance to touch the topic of needs.

The example of cigarette consumption can allow us to understand the complexity of the problem of sustainable consumption and look at this issue in the context of individual and collective needs. Man smoking not only pollutes the atmosphere (despite the filters used in cigarettes) but exposes other people's health to so-called passive smoking. Because the smoker is likely to get sick - and hence will require society to partially cover his treatment costs. At the same time, if actions were to be taken to reduce smoking, smokers may notice that smoking is their preference and even a need. Smokers, if there were more of them, could vote that freedom to smoke everywhere is a collective preference. And yet, in politics, solutions have been introduced that pose multiple restrictions on such consumption, limiting consumer freedom and not allowing him/her to decide everything. The question, of course, was how to implement this policy direction basing on economics? Is the price incentive alone sufficient - after all, an addict is able to pay more even at the expense of not buying other products important for his health and other important needs? The example shows how unbalanced is individual consumption in the sense that it does not meet the needs or impedes human development, at the same time limits common resources, depleting the possibility of satisfying collective needs. It consumes raw materials that could be used differently, contributes to pollution in the production process (emissions), and in the use phase (slowly decomposing waste) and causes health loss.

In the sense in these reflections, from "what is" to what is considered "desirable" - which sets the course of action for us. After all, a person who smokes often values health, and a person who flies can actually love nature. On the same time their consumption prevents society from achieving these goals. A person struggling with his/her addiction, although s/he still "prefers" cigarettes, is able to buy them, although they are not good for them, but anti-good, not needs but wants, which reduce his/her other needs. The smoker doesn't change his/her preferences easily, but he/she may seek a therapy or help, limiting the availability of cigarettes. In other words, the smoker shapes his/her surroundings to cope. An important step, however, is for her to become aware of this problem and yet to distinguish that preference is not needed. Simply put: preference is a real state (i.e. not necessarily what we want to consume, and we consume), need - a desirable state.

Similarly, for society to cope with this problem, it changes its environment without leaving the problem only to current political decisions, creates appropriate institutions, introduces legal norms and spends funds for emissions campaigns. Is able to commit itself to a certain strategy of action. He also seeks empowerment in certain values enabling communication of his actions - e.g. protection of the highest good - health.

It can be seen from the fact that the problem of sustainable consumption is very complex, often requiring normative judgments and state interference in the market, its creation of institutions and changes in value, having not only ecological, but also health consequences. For example, the treatment of diseases caused by excessive consumption and related pollution, depletes the stock of certain jointly used collective goods - access to medical service, fresh air. This is superimposed on the problem of a suspended identity between the present 'I' and the 'desired' I and the ideal '(Higgins 1987), which, if transferred to society, would look like this: actual state of society - perfect (vision of society) and desired (what expectations in relation to society has the world, other countries).

3 Sustainable consumption as a collective need? Possibilities of conceptualization under various economic approaches.

However, if we want to relate the problem to reflection in economics, it must be located in **theories or economic problems**. It will be important to note that a person guided by his own interests, regardless of whether he optimizes his usefulness or, as behavioral economics shows, makes suboptimal choices, has difficulty considering **collective needs**. They relate to the common good or common resources, i.e. all that is in the possession or use of society as a whole, and thus relate to the problem of sustainable consumption.

The existence of these different needs is signaled in various economic theories. However, they are variously understood within them. In every context of an evolving and changing economic theory or economic approach, it can have different connotations, different meanings and lead to different political and economic reflections. We will ask ourselves which theories are able to explain how this **collective need** could be taken into account in individual choices, which most often amount to the fulfillment of individual needs over which man has more control? Let's also look at what insights economic reflection shares with us, how to make collective resources not be reduced.

3.1 Neoclassical and behavioral economics

Neoclassical economists focus on individual needs realized by the market. Collective needs are covered by so-called public goods, which due to the fact that their distribution is inefficient, should be reduced to a minimum. The best way to distribute rare resources is to privatize them, which allows them to be used effectively. The manner in which public goods are consumed is individual in nature, but often leads to their over consumption or insufficient consumption. However, neoclassical theory is not aware of some market inefficiencies - i.e. situations where e.g. external effects occur - i.e. when a situation occurs that an individual or a company does not bear the costs of its activity (e.g. in the event of pollution) and on the contrary this cost for the whole society, i.e. it reduces them in the possibility of meeting the collective need. The theory of externalities within

mainstream economics shows us that negative externalities should be neutralized by the market, e.g. in the form of Pigou taxes. However, this may not solve the problem. Well, in a situation where the consumer is so rich that he can afford to incur such a cost - e.g. he buys a private jet, consumes all available water (paying for market consumption), he will still buy new telephones, consuming valuable minerals. In addition, there are goods that, although they are moderately emissive, may not be needed, and are high-emission - such as heating, which, however, are necessary for survival. Already after presenting such a simple example, it turns out that limiting oneself to price mechanisms can harm prosperity as well as the basic principle of social justice.

3.2 Behavioral Economics

Behavioral economics proposes other solutions that could make people choosing between different products choose those that will meet the collective needs. However, not because they are assumed to be more rational, but on the contrary - that they use limited rationality, which means that they do not always choose according to their preferences. For example (Venkatachalam 2008) in his work, he analyzes the implications of using limited models of rationality in environmental research in general, and in particular in policy making. Here, he uses numerous psychological studies that have made it possible to formulate some heuristics governing human choices. They are extensively described by (Kahneman 2003, 2011; R. Thaler 1980; R. H. Thaler and Sunstein 2009). The mechanisms that are used are e.g. the famous 'nudge', framing etc. Already widely used in promoting sustainable consumption, reducing food waste (Visschers et al. 2016), and learning new strategies for behavior.

She can be blamed of the problem already stressed by Skinner in *Walden Two* (Skinner 1976) or in a literary way by Huxley in *Brave New World* and thus enslaving man, manipulating him even for his good. Although, when accompanied by extensive education, information campaigns, this allegation of manipulation is weakened. Sustainable consumption in **behavioral economics** is a technical problem, it focuses more on how to achieve a given set of behaviors, or for people to choose certain products. But who will choose them and how - behavioral economics does not give an answer.

Unorthodox approaches take a broader perspective on human needs, are far more interdisciplinary in this, taking as a basis the considerations of philosophers, theologians as well as psychologists - who rather clearly recognize that man is a social nature and is unable to develop without society. They restore an important role to collective needs - also called social or **relational** (e.g. feminist economics, humanities). Some even refer to spiritual needs (humanistic and ecological economics).

3.3 Institutional Economics and the approach of Elinor Ostrom

Institutional economics has a broader approach to the problem of integrating collective needs into human choices. It shifts the focus from the individual to society and reflects on how society regulates through informal and formal institutions (North 1991) to the choices of companies and individuals operating on and off the market. In addition, it introduces a distinction between forms of property rights that allows you to protect shared resources - and thus concern for collective needs. This allows relativization of property rights, which is the basis for thinking in neoclassical economics - in which the problem of destroying expired food owned by supermarkets remained unsolvable.

Relativizing such rights by distinguishing between property rights and the right to use as intended may be mandatory, forced supermarkets to ensure that, before the expiration date, they need to leave the food free for social needs. In **institutional economics**, consumption is not only an effect of preferences, but formal and informal institutions that state that individuals adapting to these rules consume or more or less, and their consumption style and lifestyle is modified. An example would be, for example, the development of public space - some of the solutions are dictated by the Act itself, i.e. designing new spaces so that they can be reached by public transport.

Let's look at the problem of unsustainable consumption from the perspective offered by Elinor Ostrom. Her thought allows us to include land, water, air, natural **resources as commons**, to which the right cannot be private, unlimited. It should be applied with the help of rules set by all users, imposing certain self-restrictions. Ostrom focuses in his analysis on seeking other rules that could solve the problem of the common pasture tragedy described by (Hardin 1968) resembling in many aspects the problem of sustainable consumption. It requires users of shared resources (commons) self-limitation in using the common good to meet their individual needs (using this commons to achieve their own goals) and collective (related to the existence of this common resource). In the case of sustainable consumption, we have a similar problem - we realize our own needs while consuming, but at the same time the possibility of future consumption depends on whether the resources that are used for this consumption will be available in the future. It is therefore a collective need / preference. Sustainable consumption is a matter of rules deliberately set by those concerned and tailored to specific conditions. However, unlike the behavioral approach, it does not assume that the decision maker knows the goal and manipulates the person he wants to influence, but that the sources of the rules are in the interaction between the interested parties themselves.

3.4 Ecological economics

Ecological economy even more clearly places sustainable consumption as a collective need, creating the general foundations for the functioning of the social and economic system itself and enabling it to meet its final goal - prosperity. Sustainable consumption rules are no longer just a one-sided issue at company, regional or even state level, but they apply to the entire planet, all people. In this sense, although ecological, social and economic systems influence each other, their relationship is hierarchical. The ecological system creates the last limitation here, and economics is only an instrument to satisfy well-being understood as quality of life. So clearly covering collective needs and individual needs. This arrangement of the relationship between systems and its relation to needs (see Figure 1) allows for the formulation of specific goals for sustainable development and its measures. Such a **Sustainable Development Index** (SWI) could be helpful in social transformation towards a new economy based on resource renewable energy (Robert Costanza et al. 2016). Achieving this goal is a matter not only of changing the policy, but also of the institution, as well as norms and values.

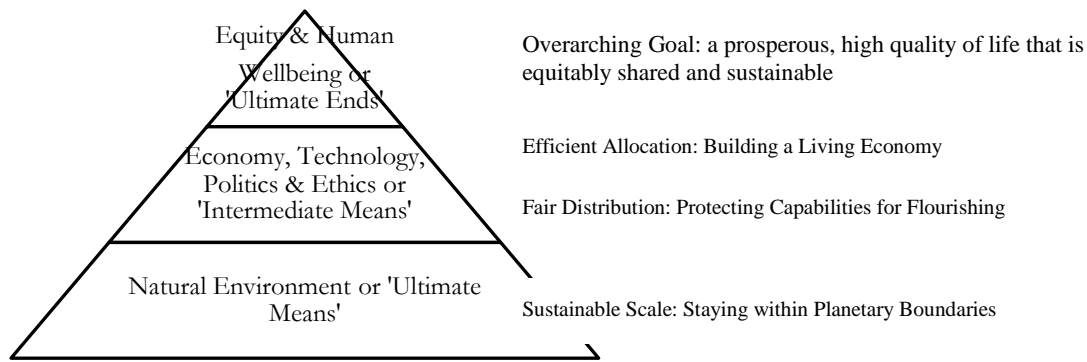


FIGURE 1 THE 'MEANS-ENDS' SPECTRUM – THREE ELEMENTS OF SUSTAINABLE WELLBEING

Source: (R. Costanza et al. 2014) (Robert Costanza et al. 2016)

3.5 Humanistic economics

An alternative approach to the above-mentioned brings with it the **humanistic economics** grew around the thoughts of humanistic psychologists as well as the so-called Buddhist economics (Schumacher 1973). It also includes similar approaches to reflection on economics conducted from a religious perspective - such as Catholic social teaching, Christian economy or Islamic economics (Horodecka 2014, 2015, 2018). Christie et al. (2019 notes: "*Although major religions have begun to reflect environmental concerns and goals related to sustainable development in their theology and practice, with great potential and actual impact on value and behavior, little research has concerned the impact and consequences of this development*". Although there were already ideas in the 1960s that religion loses its meaning, it turned out differently at the end (Ives and Kidwell 2019, p. 1358).

Religious approaches to economics show an integral vision of human development that transcends various systems - not limiting one's reflection to the economic system, but expanding it to social, cultural and, more recently, the ecological and spiritual system. Society is necessary for human growth and the common good as a result of human relations and a condition for human development. The reference to sustainable development and consumption to the common good that should be sought can be found in (Christie et al. 2019). The authors examine the kinship between the secular framework for sustainable development in ethics and politics and the concepts of Catholic social teaching (KNS) on the common good, recently updated by Pope Francis, to take care of the environment and call for universal 'ecological conversion' and cooperation.

The novelty of this approach is to place the issue of sustainable consumption as a relational good - a common good, for which care is the moral duty of every human being, regardless of religious affiliation. The common good is clearly a collective need and it is a condition to meet individual needs.

Individual needs are combined here with collective (relational) needs into a pyramid of needs - (Maslow 1943, 1962). The subsequent stages of pyramid allow us to go beyond the subsequent levels of reference of the individual from objects allowing to meet material needs, to people surrounding the individual (need to recognize), and to act on them thing (self-realization) towards self-crossing.

In Buddhist (Daniels 2003; Leonard 2019) and humanistic economics (Lutz and Lux 1979, 1988), a distinction has been made between needs and whims, suggesting that there are some needs that

serve our development and whims whose fulfillment hinders this development. What is a need and what is a whim is not fully defined. In the humanistic economy, whims are rather goods that we do not necessarily need to meet basic needs. Rather, they serve the implementation of selfish, egocentric motives that do not allow us to go higher in the ladder of development. Such an explanation seems insufficient. It does not allow us to understand why some people stop in development and do not want to grow and consume more than it needs. Is this the intended choice? There are explanations that the inability to meet higher needs - that is, relationships with others, self-realization or the need for love, leads man to replace these needs with others. Such an explanation at the individual level is not sufficient for an economist who searches for causes in phenomena that can be shaped, changed, and studied not only at the individual level.

However, here we can get another puzzle for our puzzle, problem maps. Well, it shows us such an observation - namely, that an isolated society in which a significant part of it suffers and loneliness is one of the most important diseases, creates space for replacing higher needs by lower ones and creates a place for so-called induced needs, i.e. the needs are created artificially. Companies wanting to sell their products convince people that they need these products. Buying them allows people to acquire certain values and needs not only by possessing them alone, but also by the value that they "buy" thanks to them - youth, being attractive.

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It seems that the last three approaches, i.e. institutional, ecological and humanistic economics, offer the most important points to explain sustainable consumption as a collective good. They show that man as a social being is limited by the ecological system, and that the rules arising within the social system are immanent and not external to it, they cannot be reduced to market laws or psychological processes. They require conscious shaping of rules of operation through the creation of institutions, as well as cultural change in terms of norms and values, and a certain conversion of society (as it (Foxon et al. 2013) expresses social transformation) towards greater respect for common and collective goods, i.e. sustainable consumption. However, how can these collective needs become the basis of our choices, or how do these existing institutions, norms, and values shaped in relationships create the structure of our "I" and translate into our choices? Individual and social identity gives us the answer to this question.

4 Social identity and sustainable consumption - research status, limitations and opportunities

Is there no other approach that would allow us to explain the problem of linking individual and collective needs using the **social identity** mechanism described by Tajfel et al. (1971); Tajfel and Turner (1986). The theory of identity explains to us that a man in search of recognition or gaining additional resources builds his identity by belonging to groups, identifying with them (Akerlof and Kranton 2010, 2000). Individuals, trying to transform their current individual features into the features of their own image, join social groups and adopt the typical features of these groups. Sometimes belonging to these groups is regulated by himself, but sometimes it is determined by his belonging. Therefore, social identity can be understood in terms of individual needs. These groups

are subject to change processes, through the people who join them, who can lead people to revise their previous choices and ultimately choose different groups.

Horst et al. (2007) explain our behavior and choices as a result of the group we belong to. The group wanting to stand out from others proposes, e.g. a way of consumption that distinguishes it from other groups. This means that people who want to identify with this group and gain the status that it offers compared to other groups adapt to the way of consumption, e.g. within this group, ensuring its homogeneity. This approach in explaining sustainable consumption is described, among others in (Horodecka 2019), however, it faces a number of restrictions. It is a useful modifier of individual behavior only if the identity of the person was ecological or if the group to which he belongs and with which he identifies actually favors ecological consumption.

However, we usually have many different identities not specifically related to the groups to which we belong consciously but resulting rather from the social role we have and the place. We can identify, for example, with a given social group, for which signaling belonging by ownership is of particular importance. The so-called the affluent identity may be stronger than the pro-ecological one. Although there are authors who believe that identity may be of increasing importance not arising from a given role, place, but associated with an individual choice - highlighting their own uniqueness. This process uses personalized advertising in social networks - directed directly at the person, under the influence of the choices they have already made. There are various problems associated with this approach, for example the so-called sustainable consumption for show (Tiefenbeck i in. 2013), or the replacement of the original internal ecological motivation by external motivation (e.g. financial incentives for ecological consumption), described in social psychology (Deci i in. 1985), and economics (Frey 1994).

However, the approach of social identity understood from the perspective of group dynamics requires extension, going beyond only the social system. The identities we are talking about arise at the interface of various systems that intersect: economic, political, social and cultural. And this gives us the right to look at the phenomenon from the perspective of the complexity of systems - using the approach perhaps of a new economic paradigm - the economy of complexity, sensitizing us to this problem. However, let's try to use this approach to show the "complexity" of identity.

5 Identity and sustainable consumption in the light of the economy of complexity. The role of individual systems in shaping identity

The systemic approach allows us to see that meeting the needs of a high quality of life depends not only on the functionality of the economic system, but also on its ecological foundations!

The ecological and economic system and their social and cultural environment (Horodecka 2008); (Foxon et al. 2013) interpenetrate each other. An attempt to understand the problem of sustainable consumption is misguided when we leave only one system - e.g. economic, as the externalities or behavioral approach does - referring to a certain tendency of man making quick choices in order to reach a sub-optimal solution. The same is true when referring to social processes themselves - differentiation in terms of wealth, social role etc. Also, the cultural system together with all the

variety of possible values in the name of which a person may want to be ecological considered without being associated with others may not be enough.

It is not surprising that Foxon et al. 2013 emphasizes the need to analyze the phenomenon of sustainable consumption from the perspective of not only individual choices, but the dynamics of systems - economic, social and ecological. The first one is usually limited to market processes, but wrongly, because these individual needs are shaped within the social system. An economic system can explain why these needs are created (business interests, the interest of the state sector living on taxes), while ecological shows us our common interests and limitations.

All three systems interpenetrate and propel each other and influence identity shaping.

Sustainable consumption looks different, because of other motives is carried out and needs other tools in the societies of developed countries and others in developing countries. In the former, it may involve the need for an additional cost, be it in the form of time or money, which is why rich people can often afford to be ecological. On the other hand, for the poor (at least in terms of nutrition or dressing), choices remain that have a greater negative impact on the environment (e.g. processed food or cheap, unstable clothing). At the same time, however, as some emphasize, the rich live in larger apartments, consuming more electricity, gas, etc., and fly planes. On the other hand, in developing countries - both in terms of emissions and consumption, it is much lower than average income, even when energy efficiency is much lower. Rather, it is possible that getting rich slowly can lead to significant changes in the level of consumption. Sustainable consumption often results from economic motives - I consume less - I spend less.

Similarly, the political system and existing **political marketing** create different identities. For a long time in developed countries, consuming as much as the budget restriction allowed, the consumer wound up the so-called economic situation, contributed to GDP growth and thus created new jobs and prosperity. Such thinking particularly gained momentum with the development of Keynesian thought, in which demand fueled supply and economic growth provided grounds for increasing employment. Though Keynes regretted the "imbalance" of this political concept, the goal somehow sanctified the means. Although this situation was to change already during the lives of his grandchildren, when society would be able to produce enough products globally to meet his needs (Keynes 1930). Also his student Schumacher (1973) was initially convinced of this concept. However, he came to the conclusion that there is little justification for life at the expense of nature, and he did not finalize this thought in *'Small is Beautiful'* which gave the foundation for a completely different vision of economics based on small scale, reduction of needs and respect for the natural environment. Similarly, neoliberalism created another challenge, when the global pressure to make profits led to an explosion of consumption on an unprecedented scale, and the widespread availability of cheap products, led to the formation of the said affluent identity. Within the political system, national and supranational identities, such as the EU, should also be mentioned.

In order to identify identities that could potentially support or harm sustainable consumption, one should look at the social system and its structure going beyond the general characteristics, i.e. mass society, consumer society (strongly related to the previously discussed political system), traditional - is the division due to wealth or education or gender, age etc. What is the dynamics of groups

representing new ideas? The issue of the impact of these groups on joint activities and political actions (Klandermans 2014), e.g. through lifestyles (Fernandez-Jesus et al. 2018) is not to be overlooked.

In the **cultural** system, identity should be considered differently - it is not only that the given social group wants to stand out, that is, by belonging we get better identity, but identity with certain values, existing inside or outside this group, is also an identity! People want to radiate something more than status and wealth through their consumption behaviors, - to show something of their personality (Chen and Funke 2008). So there is a change of attention from status to personality. Bronner and de Hoog 2019, researching on consumer trends, discovers that although traditionally durable material goods play a role in consumer behavior, they are also increasingly intangible, which mainly relate to experience. Therefore, interest in intangible preferences in relation to material products is growing (Trentmann 2017); (Van Boven and Gilovich 2003); (Yang and Mattila 2017). Not to be overlooked is the previously emphasized religious identity exceeding the geographical and national framework.

In relation to values, vegetarianism and veganism connecting people who have no other common features apart from e.g. empathy for animals, , which is becoming increasingly popular. Identities are also created based on such cultural trends - as a healthy lifestyle, sport, around youth. Not to be missed are such values as being close to nature, survival, which are a reaction to the dualism that prevailed between nature and comfort, separating man from nature in cities. Certain values become the basis for creating specific groups discussed in the previous section.

Identity analyzed in the context of these three (four) interpenetrating systems can give us the opportunity to deepen the problem and discover in the phenomenon of sustainable consumption the penetration of identities formed within individual systems.

The identities created here relate to smaller or larger groups, and the more they penetrate the physical and geographical framework of the group, they give the opportunity to group the groups together in the face of those values that are able to support sustainable consumption regardless of other conditions and contribute to initiating change. However, this does not erode those partial identities that can sometimes hinder this process. For example, the identity of rich and developing countries is an identity that leads to disputes and tensions, because rich countries want the same collective consumption rights as the poor (e.g. when it comes to reducing emissions). At the same time, the poor have more needs in this area, because their standard of living is much lower. Therefore, in order to limit the contradictory identities that inhibit this process, one should obviously act in the direction of reducing social inequalities, reducing social barriers, prejudices, stereotypes and access to education. However, this process seems to be very long, but crucial in parallel. Therefore, one should look for identities that exceed the boundaries between identities, such as wealth, skin color, and gender. It's about trying to create an identity based on 'being human', which is what Amartya Sen points out. The last section summarizing the study will be devoted to this issue. We will look at the Sen concept and try to build it on the example of the idea of the common good within Catholic social teaching.

6 Identity and consumption in the light of humanizing approaches in economics - Amartya Sen, KNS (Laudato Si)

Amartya Sen presents such a universal approach (A. Sen 1999) outlining the vision of justice as the right to freedom understood as the possibility of realizing one's own needs and the ability to satisfy them. In this situation, it becomes clear that the ability to meet the needs of future generations can be reduced through unsustainable consumption today. Sustainable consumption is becoming a condition for meeting the future basic needs of the whole globe. Therefore, it is a global vision of justice exceeding nationality, nation and gender. He writes "Global justice cannot but embrace identities that go well beyond citizenship" (Amartya Sen 2014, p. 8). In his vision of justice, the need for balance occupies an important place when it enables people to perform those functions that can bring them well-being. In the capacity approach (Amartya Sen 1985), the ultimate goal is to achieve those functions that allow us to meet our basic needs (Nussbaum 2003). The need for security is one of them, which is why sustainable consumption can be considered as such a basic good, not a luxury. Sustainable consumption can be related to it and to the public good (Setti i in. 2018).

It is easy to understand that the same needs may require different inputs in developed and developing countries, which cannot mean that developing countries will be limited in their right to development in the name of collective goals, but that their needs will be taken into account by developed countries. It is also easy to draw a conclusion from his considerations that it is not enough to focus only on particular solutions proposed by communitarianism, which, like Ostrom, emphasizes the role of community arrangements, the role of identity, which strengthens commitment in a given community, i.e. respecting, attachment to the rules of the community. Sen critically referring to communal thought, writes "thinkers of communitarianism often perceived their community as clearly their main - sometimes even the only important - identity. The claims of other belonging - even our common humanity - may be overlooked or ignored in such a community-based analysis of justice" (Amartya Sen 2014). The author draws attention to the trap of limiting nationality and citizenship when determining the requirements of justice, especially under a social contract, as well as the danger of exclusive concentration on some other identities, such as religion and race. He comes to the conclusion that it is extremely important to pay attention to the numerous identities of each person associated with the various groups to which he belongs; priorities must be chosen on the basis of reason, not imposing any identity on the basis of some external advantage. Justice is closely related to the pursuit of impartiality, but this pursuit must be open and not closed, resisting closure by nationality or ethnicity or any other allegedly victorious single identity. He writes: Whether we consider the challenges posed by terrorism, or by global warming, or by the world economic crisis that we are currently experiencing, confining the attention to the interests and assessment of citizens of any given state cannot be the basis of understanding the demands of justice (Amartya Sen 2014, p. 5).

Religious identities are those that transcend the above-mentioned divisions of identity. They provide interpretations within a given culture of the basic principles of sustainability (social and ecological), i.e. respecting the principle of consumption that does not involve or use of materials, but also does not lead to huge inequalities. One of the approaches helpful in its creation is the idea of the

common good extended in the encyclical *Laudato Si*, by ecological issues and deepening the issues of social responsibility developed so far in the KNS. In the Encyclical, the Pope addresses "to all people of good will", not just 1.2 billion members of the Roman Catholic Church. The cosmopolitan charm of the encyclical is strengthened, as he argues (Iheka 2018), by Francis' emphasis on concern for the poor, his call for dialogue and cooperation in the field of permanence over denominations and secular-denominational borders. Christie et al. 2019 draw attention to the geographical and historical dominance of faith-based values and beliefs. They are increasingly present in societies around the world and are increasingly full of ideas of sustainable development and consumption. Religious identity, especially in the era of increasing Christianity's openness to other denominations for dialogue with them, may contribute to exceeding existing local and social identities. This is evident at the great international religious meetings of religions, especially world religions, where many people from different countries, different continents with different levels of wealth meet. Religion not focusing only on material and social but also spiritual needs. It also shows man ways to meet his spiritual needs, which also makes him more resistant to the temptations of materialism (induced consumption discussed earlier).

7 Summary

The vision of sustainable consumption as a collective need presented here is an attempt to outline a map of the problem of sustainable consumption. By showing consumption as a collective need, it indicates a limitation of standard economic theories that are focused on preferences or individual needs. At the same time, however, the lack of meeting collective needs is associated with their increasing restitution with individual needs, which ends disastrously for the environment. The article considers behavioral, institutional, ecological and humanistic approaches in economics. It shows how these approaches solve the dilemma between individual and collective needs in the context of sustainable consumption. Although some of them, such as institutionalism, ecological economics or the humanities, open other possibilities than market ones - pointing to the role of rules and norms shaping economic activity, they do not explain how collective needs may be perceived as a part of individual and not something external. The concept of social identity explains this problem. It explains the identification processes in individual groups - which can contribute positively or negatively to sustainable consumption. These multiple identities are created in interacting systems (economic, political, social, cultural). For this reason, when looking at sustainable consumption, we should look for an integrating approach, i.e. exceeding individual identities. The answer can be found in capability approach of Sen and his universal identity associated with his global concept of justice, as well as in identities that cross these divisions - e.g. religious ones.

8 References

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