

We are living in a new geological era – the Anthropocene – in which human activities are affecting climate, ecosystems and the environment like never before. Increased extraction of natural resources, high CO<sub>2</sub> and fossil gas emissions, overheating of the planet, disturbed ecosystems and biodiversity loss are associated with large-scale economic and industrial development, attesting to the overwhelming impact of late capitalism and post-industrialism on the current well-being of people and the planet. The worsening climate crisis and the associated diagnosis of a lost future have brought about specific changes in the thinking and practices of people around the world, profiling current policies of green governance, sustainable development, carbon and energy transition, shaping demands for deep ecology and environmental justice.

However, the vision of a green future is not only ill-defined, but demonstrates ambivalences and contradictions in the perception and evaluation of natural resources in Poland within the context of the climate crisis, economic growth and specific political goals. The project emphasises the experiential and relational dimensions of the coal transition, while problematising the category of environmental justice as non-obvious, dependent on the perspectives adopted and the position taken in the networked conceptualised relationships, contexts and conditions of the European Green Deal policy and energy transition. What does the justice advocated in the context of the coal transition mean?

The aim of the project is an anthropological analysis, supported by a historical and archaeological perspective, of the ways and strategies of experiencing the climate crisis and the so called just coal (energy) transformation by the local community living on the Polish-Czech-German border, in the vicinity of the mining and energy complex in Turów, Lower Silesia. The choice of topic and research area is not accidental. Firstly, it stems from the conviction that the climate crisis is an urgent research challenge not only for representatives of the natural and earth sciences, but also for socio-cultural anthropology and the humanities and social sciences, which bring valuable perspectives to the understanding of related processes and phenomena. Secondly, the Turów Basin area, whose centre is an opencast lignite mine and a lignite-fired power plant, is an extremely important element of the cultural landscape, creating an anthropogenic landscape – altered by man, a disturbed landscape – as a consequence of high CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, air pollution, soil contamination, and water problems. According to the EU Green Deal policy, the mine and the power plant are to be extinguished and closed down, and the whole area is to be revitalised through afforestation, restoration of natural green areas, creation of alternatives to the lignite-based power plant in the form of wind, green, water and biomass energy. In this context, the project aims to explore and describe socio-ecological and economic adaptation tactics and social attitudes towards the inevitable cultural change associated with the impending energy revolution. As the preliminary survey shows, it is also a contested landscape in which different perspectives, views, attitudes, arguments, emotions and affects of the local community of the Polish-Czech-German borderland, municipal officials, decision makers, local, national authorities, as well as regional, national and global policies have been clashing for years. What is top-down politically established in the discourse of green deal and just transition clashes with local realities. To understand the meaning of the buzzwords ‘decarbonization’, ‘green deal’, ‘just transition’ one has to ask critical questions and function among the local community to understand the complexity of the process and the consequences involved. This whole multifaceted, currently occurring process is worth examining and describing in an anthropological perspective that emphasises the memory, knowledge, experiences, affects and attitudes of the local community living in the area, complemented by the knowledge of the history of the Turów mining and power complex, the history of the region and its gradual industrialisation that led to the current energyscape. In this project, we explore the cultural politics surrounding efforts to phase out coal, considering the challenges of the process from a critical climate justice perspective and pointing in particular to the dangers of abstraction in political language. Approaching coal through the lens of cultural politics can help illuminate the challenges of building consensus around coal phase-out and identify key social issues to consider in the transition.