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## Inclusion in Recreation and Green Tourism as a Condition for Internal Human Balance on the Way to Environmental Sustainability and Legal-Administrative Regulations - Part 2

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*Submitted 23/05/25, 1st revision 05/06/25, 2nd revision 20/06/25, accepted 30/07/25*

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### **Abstract:**

**Purpose:** This article is the second part of the discussion; it is continuation of the first article. The concept of sustainable development refers to the interrelationship of humans with the surrounding natural environment. Due to the development of technology, increased productivity and changes in the organization of work, modern people have more opportunities to implement the concept of sustainable development in the gradually increasing time allocated to recreation and tourism. The purpose of this review was to characterize the historical and contemporary thought linking the issue of globally understood sustainable development with its inalienable condition of an intrinsically sustainable human being.

**Design/Methodology/Approach:** The research method used was a search based on finding scientific sources of information linking the concepts of personal and environmental balance.

**Findings:** A review of popular concepts linking equilibrium at the level of the human interior to the equilibrium of the environment in a cause-and-effect mechanism proves more similarities than differences defining various theories.

**Practical implications:** All the aforementioned concepts can be part of the philosophy of human life on the grounds of outdoor recreation and so-called green tourism, considered as currently popular proposals to return to nature and seek in its balance a chance for personal balance.

**Keywords:** Outdoor recreation, green tourism, environmental sustainability, personal development.

**JEL codes:** Q56, L83, I31, K32, H83.

**Paper type:** Research article.

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**Acknowledgment:** The article is the result of international cooperation on ongoing research tasks in the field of sustainable development economics. The international cooperation of research and teaching staff is based on a project agreement. Project title: "Research on legal and economic changes in the European Union's sustainable tourism economy". Institute of Technology and Business in Prešov, Slovakia. Project number: IG-KSV-EU-01/2024-12/ST. Project duration: 01.01.2024-31.12.2028.

## 1. Introduction

The second part of the discussion, which served as a prelude to the relevant area of work, aims to identify further theories. We will also devote considerable attention to legal regulations that will complement the relevant area of analysis (Borek, 2024). It is also worth emphasizing that the sources of the ecological crisis – according to John Paul II – can be found, among other things, in the current unfair exchange of goods (Babiński, 2012). This includes access to modern technologies, science, and even work.

### 1.1 Sociopsychological Aspects of Sustainable Development

Among the numerous opportunities for the formation of a pro-ecological and pro-health image of man resulting from his interaction with the natural environment, it is impossible to ignore the extremely important issue of limiting not only the functionality of man but also narrowing the sphere of his positive attitudes in a situation of environmental danger. This issue is the field of inquiry of the so-called "sociopsychology", which is a branch of psychology that analyzes the relationship of people with their transformed environment.

The impact of industrial-ecological transformations on human somatopsychological health is well known. The strength of these relationships is reflected, among other things, in the diseases of civilization caused by the pace and extent of environmental change. Mental health, indirectly somatic health, and the functioning of the psychophysical whole also depend on direct mental relationships with the environment.

Awareness of the importance of the environment is directly proportional to the degree of environmental danger (Pietrulewicz and Zaleski, 1984). The environment, considered as a field of human external activities, is consciously or subconsciously perceived as a kind of mirror of man.

Closely related to this issue is the concept of deprivation, defined as a continuous failure to satisfy some biological or, more often, psychological need. There is a feedback loop in the two-way human-environment relationship. Loss of control over changes in the environment, its degradation leads to a sense of alienation, lowered

self-image, inhibition of the tendency to self-actualization and shaken sense of life (Biela, 1984; 1993).

The goal of sociopsychological research is to learn about these connections by analyzing the needs satisfied in the natural environment and deprived under the influence of industrial-ecological transformations (Frąckiewicz, 1989). Studies showing different types of natural environment in photographs, or contrasting views with and without greenery in them, have been carried out in the US (Kaplan, 2001; Van den Berg, Koole, and Van der Wulp, 2003).

A transformed environment, without considering the harmonious totality of human needs, results in deprivation of, among other things, the need to experience beauty and order. Phylogenetically determined adaptability to the pace and scope of change may be too weak for industrial change. The lack of a sense of constancy of the environment, predictability and purposefulness of its changes deprives the need for security and reduction of anxiety tensions.

Maintaining a relationship with an environment that undergoes surprising changes can affect a disturbed sense of identity. Interference with the environment, over which one has no control, causes a sense of danger, anxiety, a sense of powerlessness and lack of freedom. Identification with a degraded environment results in low self-esteem and malaise. In addition to the most commonly deprived needs of mental regeneration and experiencing beauty and order, the need to feel powerful and the related need for freedom are quite often deprived.

The formed quotients close to unity testify to the similar degree of need satisfaction in the natural environment to deprivation in the industrial environment. They indicate the high motivational power of needs revealed regardless of the state and type of environment. While it is difficult to determine the influence of the type and state of the environment on the manifestation of the needs for a sense of strength, related to mental regeneration, belongingness, experiencing beauty and order, freedom, the type and state of the environment clearly influence their satisfaction or deprivation (deprivation in a denaturalized environment).

A quotient less than unity indicates a low sense of deprivation of a need in an industrial environment and a relatively high degree of satisfaction in a natural environment. Quotients less than unity indicate a high stimulating influence of the natural environment on the manifestation of cognitive needs, self-reflection, related to the development of interests and transcendence.

The strength and quality of stimuli from the industrial environment can force people to focus on them, distracting attention from the self, from transcendence, self-reflection, while nullifying the sense of deprivation of the needs of self-reflection, transcendence, related to the development of interests, and consequently negatively affect the development of personality.

In turn, the sense of deprivation of the need for space can be related to the non-acceptance of the environment in which one is, and the need to escape from it. The desire to escape was dictated not only by the non-acceptance of the environment, but also by the lack of a sense of power and ability to influence the improvement of the environment.

Running away, aggression, and possibly self-aggression are reactions to frustration, and they are revealed in the respondents' statements in the form of bad mood and lowered self-esteem, indicating serious reservations about engaging in physical activity in a degraded environment, in which most of the physical activity goals assumed are impossible to achieve.

## **1.2 Sustainable Development Focused on Minimalism and Slow Life**

Living in a modern world dominated by the paradigm of an economy that thrives on increasing labor productivity and profits, forces people to manage natural resources, social capital and their own efforts as economically as possible. While ecological rationality dictates that people should be frugal, in fact they often do the opposite.

On the one hand, thanks to ecology, they know that all the world's resources are limited and that they are depleting faster and faster as civilization progresses. For this reason, they invented the idea of sustainability and promote it. On the other hand, however, they behave carelessly, as if these resources could be fully restored by future generations thanks to the assumed progress of human thought.

Meanwhile, the process of resource decline, like all natural processes, is irreversible, despite the possibility of partial restoration and increasing recycling. And economic growth, carried out through overproduction and overconsumption, resists the increasing destruction of natural and human resources. Another contradiction of the modern world arises from this, between the constantly aroused need for an ever more prosperous life and the desire to protect environmental resources. This contradiction is one that sustainable development is currently unable to resolve.

Extravagance and wastefulness go hand in hand with the progress of civilization and rising living standards. This manifests itself in various forms and involves various commodities. Thus, devoid of a sense of responsibility in everyday life, people waste everything they can in order to increasingly fulfill their exorbitant desires and, according to the ethic of consumerism, feel fully valued (Sztumski, 2019).

In Poland, one can find signs of activities that contest excessive consumption. The idea of freeganism and the concept of voluntary simplicity, which assumes a life that is modest in material terms, but rich in the inner sphere - intellectual and emotional - is becoming increasingly popular. The minimalist philosophy, which is part of the current of conscious redundancy and rejection of falsely created needs, is also a response to the consumerist lifestyle (Mularczyk-Meyer, 2014).

At the core of minimalism is the assumption of the need to set aside space in life for what is truly important, by removing everything unnecessary from life. Unlike voluntary simplicity, it does not focus solely on reducing material possessions but also points to the selection of objects and activities in such a way as to achieve the most satisfactory effect with the least effort and resources.

Importantly, minimalism stigmatizes the consumerist rush, driven by artificial needs and forcing the individual to devote more time to work, take out multiple loans or credit, and neglect relationships with loved ones and himself. From an economic point of view, minimalism is a dangerous attitude, because the system demands that people consume as much as possible (Mularczyk-Meyer, 2014).

However, it seems to be useful in the context of an individual's coping strategy, allowing one to balance consumer behavior by getting rid of excess objects and slowing down the pace of life (Loreau, 2012).

Of concern, however, are the individual effects of living in a culture of consumption manifested in personality changes. These include: the prevalence of the "to have" over "to be" orientation providing an obvious counterweight to the hard-to-tame art of minimalism these days. The implementation of conscious consumption in the form of life slowing down and daily minimalism is not entitled to occur immediately but is a long-term and multi-stage process (Kramarczyk, 2015).

Slow living can be seen as an antidote to today's stress-ridden lifestyles and globalization, emphasizing the advantages of family and small communities and locality as inalienable determinants of sustainability (Matchar, 2013).

### **1.3 Theology of the Land**

According to the systems model of being, social systems are part of their biotic and abiotic environment, also forming this system. In the Lorenz-Tinbergen school of ethology, these systems are built, encompassing the entire Earth, a living super-system (Sut, 2015).

Lorenz, one of the founders of this school, argues that Western civilization has broken the feedback loops that integrate it into the whole of the supersystem and is hurtling faster and faster to nowhere. Its cure is to slow down the civilizational momentum and reintegrate with the Earth's supersystem. Natural externality here performs a function similar to the Greek logos - the rationality to which individuals should submit themselves in order to become like it and become a rational microcosm as well.

The world is, in the light of this concept, an educational reality, and biological-social evolution has the character of a cognitive process. In recent works, Lorenz enriches this cognitive aspect of life with the so-called autotelic beauty. Life is a cognitive

subject and also an artist, and people treat its creations in terms of beauty (Sut, 2015).

Rene Dubos, on the other hand, very strongly emphasizes the uniqueness of the Earth in the universe. Its unique properties are, in his opinion, the exclusive work of living beings. These properties are identical with beauty. Life here is primarily the creator of beauty.

For Dubos, as for Aristotle, cosmos means not only "being ordered," but also "being adorned." The terrestrial world of life is also stunning to him. At the same time, the living super-system emerging on Earth is, in relation to the universe, a microcosm, and the universe surrounding Earth is a macrocosm.

Human nature, which is the culmination of the evolutionary process, is thus a reflection of the cosmic macrocosm in living matters, becoming, as it were, a mirror of the universe. Accordingly, we feel reverence for our planet, and the oldest and cultural expression of this reverence is religion. This is why Dubos speaks of "Earth theology," since the Earth, constituting one great living super-system, evokes the reverence due to the sphere of the sacred. Respect and reverence, however, do not exclude human activity directed toward the Earth.

According to Dubos, at the dawn of human history such activity was sanctioned by magic, always linked to primordial religions, whose purpose, according to him, was to subordinate the environment to man. Progressive technological development strips nature of the sacred and unilaterally places a premium on activity that turns into enslavement of the Earth, in other words - it becomes scientific magic without religion (Szewczyk, 2006).

#### **1.4 A Holistic View of the World**

The holistic view of the world present in Næss's work, showing its biological diversity and the unquestionable value of all living entities, became the basis of a strand of environmental philosophy known as "deep ecology."

The Norwegian philosopher, who fought all his life against the omnipresent anthropocentrism, gave the human being the role of only one of many life forms, functioning in the environment on an equal footing with other species. In his numerous treatises, he emphasized that each life form is at one and the same time a unique and relational being, hence all things are interdependent (Næss, 2002). This conviction was not a moral principle, but a clearly defined attitude toward nature.

Indeed, from the perspective of deep ecology, the power of reasoning attributed to humans is not a distinguishing feature. Everything that lives has intrinsic value understood as its own place in the great web of life, independent of any possible use value for humans. Næss condemned man's reduction of the richness and diversity of

life, except for the satisfaction of vital needs. He recognized that manifesting concern for non-human beings deepens concern for human beings.

The misconception that the Earth brings together humans on the one hand, and the resources for them represented by other life forms on the other, in effect gives instrumental value to the latter (Næss, 2008). This pluralistic worldview has, over time, acquired an ecosophical character, assigning great value to feeling as an interdependent and cooperative power, implying a sense of empathy and community with the infinite wealth of biological forms. Co-feeling with other entities leads to the notion of a "great self," encompassing everything with which an individual identifies (Cisek, 2013).

### **1.5 Biophilia Hypothesis**

The biophilia hypothesis assumes that humans have an innate tendency to seek connections with nature and other life forms. Wilson introduced and popularized this assumption in his book entitled: "Biophilia". He defines biophilia as the need to connect with other life forms (Wilson, 1984). In other words, biophilia is an innate affinity for living life or living systems. The term was first used by E. Fromm to describe the psychological orientation of being attracted to anything living and vital.

Wilson uses the term in a related sense, suggesting that biophilia describes the connections people subconsciously seek with the rest of animate matter, and that people's deep connections with other life forms and nature as a whole are rooted in our biology. Although it was given its name by Fromm, the concept of biophilia has been proposed and defined many times, beginning in antiquity. Aristotle was one of the many exponents of the concept, which could be summarized as "love of life."

Delving into the term "philia" or "friendship," Aristotle brings up the idea of reciprocity and how friendships are mutually beneficial in more ways than one, but especially in terms of happiness (Santas, 2014). This hypothesis has since been developed as part of the theory of evolutionary psychology. Taking an evolutionary perspective, humans are drawn to life and nature.

This can be explained in part because of our evolutionary history of living in natural environments, only recently disrupted by urbanized lifestyles. These connections to nature, however, can still be seen in people yearning for a more complete identification with it.

An interesting contemporary technology proposal is to complement architectural designs with natural matter. In architecture, biophilic design is a sustainable strategy that involves reconnecting people with the natural environment (Söderlund and Newman, 2015). It can be seen as a necessary complement to green architecture, which reduces the impact of the built world on the environment but does not explicitly address the reconnection of humans with the natural world.

Biophilic design is defined as a type of architecture that is able to satisfy our innate need to integrate with living processes (Joye, 2007).

## **1.6 Ecological Systems Theory**

Ecological systems theory is a broad term used to capture the theoretical contributions of developmental psychologist Bronfenbrenner, who developed the foundations of the theory throughout his career, publishing the essential characteristics of the theory in his most cited book, *The Ecology of Human Development*. As the theory developed, it placed increasing emphasis on the role of humans as active agents in development and on understanding the developmental process rather than "social addresses" (such as gender or ethnicity) as explanatory mechanisms (Bronfenbrenner, 1977).

As part of his description of the theory, Bronfenbrenner criticized the methods of testing children in laboratories at the time, claiming that the results obtained through this route provide limited room for observing development. For this reason, he was quite sarcastic about the science of children's strange behavior in strange situations with strange adults for the shortest possible period of time, calling for more "ecologically valid" research on developing individuals in their natural environment. In doing so, he argued that laboratory studies of children provide insight into their behavior in unfamiliar surroundings, which offers limited generalizability to their behavior in environments more natural to them (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Therefore, a logical proposal for scientifically reliable observation of human development was the innovative method of education through nature and in nature in the form of field physical education lessons implemented in Poland, promoting the concept of sustainable development of the individual through his contact with the natural environment.

As part of the natural experiment, selected students implemented 75% of the lessons in the field, while students in the control group implemented the same percentage of the lessons on school premises. The study area, which included areas with a low degree of industrialization, provided conditions for positive verification of the hypothesis assuming better effects of lessons conducted in open space compared to those implemented indoors (Pańczyk, 1996; 1999).

Among the undeniably positive consequences of exercise in groups subjected to pedagogical innovation was an increase in empathy and solidarity as evidenced by the significantly higher, in the case of the outdoor groups, indices of the behavioral component of attitude. The impact of the natural environment on the level of socialization enables, and sometimes even forces, the cooperation of individual group members to achieve a common good for the group.

This good can be the realization of a group goal or, in extreme cases, the survival of



the group and its individual participants, as observed in a study of amateur mountain climbers (Dzik, 2010). Thus, both the nature of these outdoor activities and the staying of a larger number of people in a relatively small space make it possible to see the formation of close bonds of partnership and friendship. The internal balance achieved in this way becomes a potential stimulator of a staggered process of the emergence of a sustainable society as the final outcome of the sustainable development process.

### **1.7 Taxonomy-Legal Determinants of Ecological Balance**

Taxonomy, taxology, according to the dictionary definition, is "the science of the principles used in the systematics of organisms in describing species, naming them and including them in the systematic arrangement of animals and plants" (SJP, 2024). Taxology in the European Union, on the other hand, is a classification system that helps private entrepreneurs, but also potential investors, identify their own economic activities (activity) as "environmentally sustainable" in order to make sustainable, environmentally and climate responsible investment decisions (EU Taxonomy, 2024).

An environmentally and climate-sustainable economic, business or investment activity is described in EU documents as one that "significantly contributes to one or more of the EU's climate and environmental objectives, while not significantly harming any of these objectives and meeting minimum safeguards" (EU Taxonomy, 2024). The basic document constituting the taxonomy at the EU level is Regulation (EU) 2020/852 of the European Parliament and of the Council of June 18, 2020 establishing a framework to facilitate sustainable investment, amending Regulation (EU) 2019/2088 (hereinafter: Regulation 2020/852).

It should be emphasized that sustainable human development is an integral part of economic development. Business activity is always a human activity, so without conducting it in a sustainable and environmentally responsible manner, the condition of global environmental sustainability will not be achieved. EU taxonomy regulations aim to bring any area of business activity that has an impact on the environment into proper environmental impact.

The EU taxonomy aims to promote instruments and tools that allow those doing business to transition to a carbon-free business in the future. This goal is part of the broader premise of environmentally sustainable business. The latter is described as one that "significantly contributes to one or more of the EU's climate and environmental goals, while not significantly harming any of these goals and meeting minimum safeguards" (EU Taxonomy 2024). Article 9 of the already mentioned Ordinance 2020/852 directly indicates the environmental goals that humans should strive to achieve, these will be (Regulation (EU) 2019/2088):

- climate change mitigation,

- climate change adaptation,
- sustainable use and protection of water and marine resources,
- the transition to a closed-loop economy,
- pollution prevention and control,
- protection and restoration of biodiversity and ecosystems.

A given economic activity qualifies as making a significant contribution to the indicated goals if the activity makes a significant contribution to stabilizing the climate situation. The same regulation also specifies the types of activities that have an impact on climate change and should strive to achieve climate neutrality.

Article 17 of the commented Regulation 2020/852 also indicates the types of activities that are identified as those that have the potential to cause serious environmental damage. This impact shall be assessed taking into account the life cycle of the products provided, and services rendered by that specific economic activity, including data from existing assessments of the life cycle in question, including human life (Regulation (EU) 2019/2088).

The clarification of the types of activities that cause serious environmental damage is carried out in delegated acts issued by the European Commission on the basis of Regulation 2020/852. These are atypical regulations that are intended to implement the legal regulations contained at the level of the regulation issued by the European Parliament and the EU Council. Delegated acts can be compared to acts implementing laws at the national level in the form of regulations issued by individual departmental ministers.

Thus, at the EU level, these are delegated regulations, which are under the exclusive jurisdiction of the European Commission. Of interest to us from the perspective of the case at hand is Commission delegated regulation (EU) 2023/2486 of June 27, 2023, supplementing Regulation (EU) 2020/852 of the European Parliament and of the Council by establishing technical qualification criteria for determining the conditions under which an economic activity qualifies as making a significant contribution to the sustainable use and conservation of water and marine resources, to the transition to a circular economy, in the prevention and control of pollution, or in the protection and restoration of biodiversity and ecosystems, and to determine whether that economic activity does not cause serious harm to any of the other environmental objectives, and amending Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2021/2178 as regards the public disclosure of specific information in relation to those economic activities.

It is worth noting that the aforementioned document defines individual types of economic activities affecting the environment (naming them explicitly, e.g., in the context of tourism- hotels, vacation homes, campgrounds and similar accommodation facilities), but does not specify sanctions for violations

(Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2023/2486). Interestingly, such regulations are also lacking at the level of the regulation issued by the European Parliament and the EU Council. Article 22 of Regulation 2020/852 specifies that any punitive measures and sanctions are to be imposed by member states at the national (internal) level. It is incumbent on the latter entities to establish regulations on penalties.

The only guideline is that the measures envisaged must be effective, proportionate and dissuasive. It is a noteworthy breakthrough for such issues to be defined in this way in a regulation that is directly applicable (as a rule, such obligations are established on the basis of directives). However, the analysis presented here shows that in terms of taxonomy, the European Union provides a base to be developed by member states to strive for climate neutrality.

Sustainable human development results from the EU regulations presented in this discussion and is a condition for global environmental sustainability. Unfortunately, it is established only at the EU level; it is in vain to find similar obligations outside the Community on other continents. The principle that has been constituted in the regulations under discussion as striving for sustainable human development is "do no serious damage." This is a condition for achieving global environmental sustainability, which can be achieved through good management practices and ensuring compliance with the precautionary principle so as not to cause serious environmental or social damage (Regulation 2020/852).

## **2. Conclusions**

An urgent need of modern times is to direct human efforts toward balance at the individual and environmental levels. The concepts mentioned in this manuscript, despite their sometimes-distant origin in time, have not lost their relevance and should guide current activities in the areas of human development, societies and the natural environment. Effective tools for implementing this strategy are outdoor recreation and green tourism. The convergence of recreation and green tourism with environmental sustainability is all the more feasible to implement because it does not take place solely under socio-legal compulsion but is primarily the result of spontaneous and dictated by personal passions.

A review of popular concepts, including legal regulations linking equilibrium at the level of the human interior to the equilibrium of the environment in a cause-and-effect mechanism proves more similarities than distinguishing features between the various theories, regardless of the spatial source of their origin and the period of their formation.

According to the gloomy prognosis of German natural scientist and politician Richard v. Weizsäcker, the present and perhaps the next generation are already the last to save humanity from extinction, provided they manage to put an end to the trend toward ideologically connected consumerism and further uncontrolled

economic growth. Therefore, modern man should treat sustainable development more as a necessary condition for his own survival and less as a pious wish. But this condition can be fulfilled primarily by environmentally sustainable people. Only they are capable of remodeling modern economic trends and all other fields of social activity, guided not only by Enlightenment rationality, legal regulations, but also by intuition, emotions and the instinct of self-preservation.

An environmentally balanced man is sufficiently immune to the precepts and stereotypes relating to culture, fashion and behavior established by various fashion dictators. He should not allow culture, and above all artificiality, to prevail over nature and naturalness. The bodily, intellectual and spiritual inner balance that characterizes him is a potential at least equivalent to education, subjectively perceived health well-being or economic status. In spreading a vision of a secure future for human civilization, it is important to remember that the simplest leading road to this should be traversed by increasingly intrinsically environmentally balanced human beings.

As indicated above, the inclusion of modern man in recreation and green tourism plays an important role in building his inner balance, while supporting the pursuit of environmental balance (the surrounding environment). Regular contact with nature, outdoor physical activity and conscious and responsible use of natural resources promote stress reduction, improve mental well-being and develop environmentally friendly attitudes among tourists.

Green tourism and recreation, based on the principles of sustainable development, enable harmonious coexistence of man with nature and become an important element of his lifestyle, which respects the needs of both the individual and entire communities (both tourists and visited communities).

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