

ECOLOGICAL SECURITY: THE ROLE OF INDIVIDUAL IN THE PROCESS OF ITS CREATION AND DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

Ecological security is a state and process that ensures that human beings and all living organisms are able to carry out their life processes correctly and without interruption. Actions taken by states and the international community are primarily aimed at reducing the adverse impact on the environment. Pollution of the environment also leads to the deterioration of human health. For an individual, environmental degradation may also mean ecological exclusion when he or she is forced to live in an environment that does not provide even minimum ecological standards. Ecological exclusion in turn may lead to social exclusion. The aim of this speech is to draw attention to those activities which can and should be undertaken by an individual, regardless of the applicable legal regulations and actions or inactivity of the state and its institutions. Its conscious attitude and behaviour in everyday situations may significantly affect the state of the natural environment. An individual is also responsible for his or her own health, the loss of which he or she should prevent. Treating other creatures with respect, and above all yourself and others, is of fundamental importance in maintaining healthy relationships in the world, enabling a dignified and safe life for the present and future generations.

Key words: *ecological security, environment, ecological exclusion, social exclusion, health*

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The concept of ecological security is inseparably connected with nature, whose resources are limited and devastated. However, the threat of ecological security should also be understood as a threat to man. Man needs natural resources, fresh air and clean water for his existence. However, he also needs another human being, who is essential for his life, but also constitutes a threat to him. Respect for nature also means respect for another human being. Meanwhile, inequality, alienation, and the disappearance of human solidarity deepen. Human contacts are limited to purely formal ones.

The purpose of this publication is to draw attention to those activities which can and should be undertaken by an individual, regardless of the legal regulations in force and the actions or inaction of the state and institutions established to defend his rights. Indeed, its conscious attitude and behavior in everyday situations can significantly affect the state of the environment. An individual is also responsible for his or her own health, the loss of which he or she can and should prevent in many cases. Treating other creatures with respect, and above all yourself and others, is of fundamental importance in maintaining healthy relationships in the world, enabling a dignified and safe life for the present and future generations.

Ecological Security

The notion of "ecological security" should be understood as obtaining such a state of the environment that allows for safe staying in this environment and enables the use of this environment in a way that ensures human development. Actions improving the current state of the environment and programming its further development (CT

judgment of 06.06.2006r., K 23/05.) are an obligation of public authorities in accordance with the Polish Constitution, but also the duty of the citizens, whom the authorities should support in these activities. It is an obligation to take care of the environment and responsibility for its deterioration. On the one hand, it is the individual's behavior towards the environment as an obligation regulated by law, concretized by the system of orders and prohibitions. On the other hand, it is the application by public authorities of legal instruments ensuring the individual's right to the environment and the right to live safely in the natural environment.

The state, the international community, but also, and perhaps above all, the individual is responsible for the state of the environment. The question arises whether an individual needs legal regulations that impose what and how he or she can do, or whether he or she will take actions on his or her own initiative that serve or at least do not harm the environment.

Environmental (ecological) security can be seen as a practical category and a mental category. A practical category is the factual state of the environment in a given place and time, which depends on politics, international relations. Actions taken should serve the purpose of maintaining the state of the environment, restoring the disturbed state to the level of the existing standards, undertaking undertakings to improve it. In the sense of the mental category, it is a full and universal awareness of the environment by the human population, i.e. environmental awareness. One of its manifestations is the creation of legal acts which constitute the basis for strategic decisions and planning and investment activities for environmental protection (Nowak and Nowak 127). Ecological awareness means making right decisions, making right choices. However, in order for this to happen, it is necessary, first of all, to know and, secondly, to develop the right attitudes.

Due to the importance of the environment and natural resources, ecological security is of the utmost importance for human life and determines its further existence and development (Michalski 2017(7), 104). Man is permanently connected with nature and its products. Recognition of this fact will make man take care of it and use it in moderation. The production of the natural environment is not limitless, with sustainability in mind, and must meet the needs not only of the present but also of future

generations. Meanwhile, man irresponsibly exploits and exploits goods in an irresponsible manner, behaves like an owner and ruler entitled to rob the Earth, forgetting that 'our own body is made up of the elements of our planet, its air allows us to breathe, its water revives and renews us'. (Francisco 3-4).

An anthropological error lies at the root of mindless destruction of the environment (John Paul II 1991, 74). Man has the impression that he can arbitrarily dispose of the land, subordinating it to his absolute will. Man takes the place of God in the work of creation and provokes the rebellion of nature. Nature for whom he is a tyrant (John Paul II 1991, 74-75).

Since the dawn of time, man has had to draw his livelihood from the environment. Before the industrial age, the exploitation of nature did not affect its regenerative capacity. When fishing, people did not exceed the capacity of the fishing grounds and did not turn back the rivers. They always produced pollutants, but before the invention of plastics, they were organic in nature, they entered into natural cycles of metabolism and did not exceed the ability to self-clean the environment. Human activity at that time did not change the natural order. It was only the full bloom of technical civilisation that contributed to excessive environmental pollution. The expansive human population not only restricts other non-human species' access to environmental resources, but also deprives them of living space. (Piątek 22).

However, the exploitation of the environment threatens mankind above all and can lead to ecological exclusion. Ecological exclusion is an individual's situation in which he or she is forced to live in an environment that does not even provide a minimum of ecological standards. It does not breathe fresh air, may not have access to clean water or green areas. This significantly reduces their quality of life and wellbeing, and then causes them to suffer from health problems. This loss of health makes it difficult for people to do their job, to find a job suitable for their qualifications, and this in turn leads to social exclusion. Without the means to live a decent life, he cannot change his place of residence. The lack of adequate living conditions can, in itself, be an obstacle to finding employment and also lead to social exclusion. Often, the fact that an individual lives in environmentally excluded areas is due to his or her poor economic situation. A person has no job or badly

paid, cannot move. Health is in decline, he loses his job. It is difficult to distinguish between cause and effect here.

As the crisis intensifies, eco-injustice will deepen, meaning that individual groups and communities will be limited or even excluded from the benefits of different natural assets. A deficit of a healthy natural environment may also lead to new conflicts, fights and wars over, for example, healthy water, fertile soil and other goods. (Tyburski 162).

Eco-justice is about caring for the poor, who are restricted in their access to the environment; it is about the fair distribution of natural goods. Limited access to a clean natural environment puts people in an unequal position. Some benefit from good environmental health, others live in a degraded environment with polluted air, water and soil, in conditions that do not meet any health standards. Unfavourable environmental changes are undermining the most elementary foundations of human existence. People experiencing the effects of harmful environmental conditions are not only deprived of, or restricted in their access to, natural, health, recreational and aesthetic values, and thus significantly reduce their level and quality of life. They are also placed in an incomparably worse position than those who are lucky enough to live in environmentally 'healthy' areas, or who can choose to live in such places, using their material status. The favourable or unfavourable environmental situation of individual areas and entire regions becomes yet another cause, and one that is clearly felt, of social disparity, which to a large extent determines the level of satisfaction of many needs and determines the quality of life in groups. (Tyburski 161-162).

Environmental problems directly affect the somatic health and quality of life of individuals, but ecology is also a relationship between people, in a society which is the natural environment of human life: in the family, at school, in the district, in the workplace, in the state, in the world. (Michalski 2017(4), 286). The destruction of the environment occurs alongside the even more dangerous destruction of the human environment (John Paul II 1991, 75-76).

The environmental crisis is a family crisis, a social crisis, a crisis at the level of values. The source of this crisis is excessive anthropocentrism. Man, his goodness and dignity remain the highest goals, but the individual cannot have only his good in mind. There can be no talk of harmony, justice, security if a person does not show respect for the other person and the environment (Michalski 2017(4), 288). Man is to fight not only for the preservation of the environment, but also for the good and protection of the dignity of another human being. (Michalski 2017(7), 113), thus ensuring respect for every human being, regardless of a person's personal qualifications, social suitability, intellectual or physical ability (Bosek 771). The protection of human dignity is inextricably linked to the protection of one of the most important values, which is human life. The protection of human life cannot be understood as merely protecting the minimum biological functions necessary for existence, but as a guarantee of proper development as well as obtaining and maintaining a normal psychophysical condition.

The crisis of the human family is manifested in the stratification of society, isolating the rich from the problems of the poor. Neighbourhoods with unlimited consumption and waste and poverty districts function side by side (Paul VI, 162). People use each other, satisfy particular and secondary needs instead of basic and authentic ones. Man focuses on possession and use, is incapable of mastering his own instincts and passions (John Paul II 1981, 82), becomes a slave to things (John Paul II 1981, 237). As a result of social urbanisation, there is a spatial segregation of inhabitants, created on the basis of racial and ethnic diversity, socio-economic position, specific tastes and preferences. In a mass of people of different origins and past, family, friendship and neighbourly ties either do not exist at all or are relatively weak, and cohesion in such societies is maintained through formal social control mechanisms. Social relationships become impersonal, shallow and fleeting, which affects individual security. Spatial proximity does not entail proximity in the psychosocial sense. At the same time, an individual is dependent on others to satisfy his or her life needs, but the only thing that drives him or her when he or she meets others is rationality and calculating (Gierszewski and Pieczywok 143).

Responsibility and tasks of the individual

The law should be sensible and should be a regulator of social life. Citizens will not respect the law just because it is binding. The conviction that the law is legitimate makes it possible for citizens to carry out their obligations under the law of their own free will, without the need for coercive measures. The law does not have to be comprehensive to regulate the relations needed in social relations, but it must be flexible. It must respond to a changing reality. In the meantime, by making more and more laws and thereby extending the scope of regulation, attempts are being made to resolve all social issues and problems.

In the area of environmental protection, many regulations are in force at international level and oblige states, above all, to take specific direct action, but also to introduce legal regulations. National law applies to institutions, entrepreneurs and citizens and can impose certain obligations on them, restrict them by prohibitions. A number of such restrictions apply, but it is important to consider whether this is sufficient or whether these restrictions are respected. In order to ensure that legal obligations are fulfilled, an effective control system must be established. Is it possible to cover and control all areas of life, around the clock? Such extensive control is possible in a totalitarian state, where every citizen would be a member of a state organisation and thus a member of the state apparatus.

The number of legal provisions is immeasurable, new ones are still being created, as if they were a remedy for all human ailments. Meanwhile, it is being forgotten that the most important thing is the attitude of the individual. No legal system will change it. Even assuming that the public authorities will punish it severely for inappropriate, unhealthy behaviour, they are unable to organise the police apparatus in such a way as to control everyone. Punishment is not always effective either. Sometimes it is more profitable for an individual to pay the penalty, the mandate, than to comply with the rules. It is therefore important to influence, to shape attitudes. It is important to make each

individual aware of the role of the small steps he or she takes in creating a clean environment, but also healthy interpersonal relations. These are inextricably linked.

Is there a need for legislation that states that an animal, as a living being, is capable of suffering and is not a thing, and that man owes it respect, protection and care? Will legislation convince those who treat animals as objects, or will it convince those who treat even another person as objects? There are a number of regulations that set out the obligations of citizens to reduce negative environmental impact and pollution, but violations of these regulations are constantly being recorded.

The individual's responsibility also applies to his or her own health. Here, we are not in a position to create legislation that would induce an individual to behave like this, for example, in terms of healthy eating and sports. There are regulations to encourage healthy lifestyles, although they are primarily restrictions and are intended to stop or discourage people from doing harm to them.

Another example of pro-environmental actions can be actions such as cleaning up the world, clearing forests and rivers, but also the adoption of resolutions by various bodies, the protests of ecological organisations and even intimidation by ecoterrorists.

However, only a lasting change in human mindset is effective: from exploiting nature to living in harmony with nature. (Irek 113).

Environmental awareness is created through education, upbringing. Caring for the environment as a natural right is written in the conscience. The solution to ecological problems should start with a change in the way of thinking (Irek 104). This can only be achieved through education. Education should be carried out by the family, school, church, ecological organisations, the mass media, state institutions, by the self-education of the individual (Michalski 2017(7), 104). Environmental education, education covering all areas of life should be present at school and, above all, at home. It should refer to the emotional sphere, and not be limited to the intellectual delivery of knowledge. It should start in kindergarten and last a lifetime. (Irek 104).

The family should instill the right attitudes: eliminating waste, preventing waste, using recyclable packaging, teaching care for animals, increasing responsibility, being sensitive to the beauty of nature, pointing out the ecological problems of the local community, which are close, not necessarily national or international (Irek 105), because these seem too abstract.

We should also bear in mind aspects of the human environment. Today's ecological threats are not only about taking care of nature and other living creatures, but also about pulling man out of the matrix of the virtual world and computer games, introducing him to the real world, the world of living nature (Irek 104). It is about drawing attention to another, living human being, with his or her worries, feelings and needs. Perception of a man other than the one who is available on a computer screen.

Social campaigns, health programmes and health policy programmes are to play a fundamental role in health care. They are intended to promote the right attitudes, encourage and motivate. To inform and convince, or at least to draw attention to the problem. They are an important element of education, although there is no doubt that there are differences in susceptibility to this type of undertaking. In order for such a campaign to bring about a change in attitudes and behaviour, the person concerned must first and foremost perceive the message coming out of it as being aimed at herself or himself.

Summary

The state is obliged to take care of the protection and safeguarding of such collective goods as the natural and human environment (John Paul II 1991, 79). However, it is primarily the individual who should take care of the environment. The individual is responsible for the state of the environment, for respecting other creatures, for healthy relations in the world. The multiplicity of legal regulations and the law enforcement apparatus will not replace responsible behaviour and ecological awareness. Man should take a selfless, noble and sensitive attitude to aesthetic values (John Paul II 1991, 75).

Man should see the environment as a place of life and development, and as the greatest cultural heritage that should be passed on to future generations in the best possible condition (Nowak and Nowak 125). The natural world is home to people. This is possible when man uses nature without destroying it. Therefore, an ecological attitude towards the environment must overcome one-sided pragmatic-utilitarianism (Tyburski 160).

A conscious and responsible attitude to one's own health and environment determines one's maturity. Man must understand that his own actions depend most on his own. Man should also recognise that his attitude to his own health and environment is subject to assessment and ethical qualification. Respect for life and health is a consequence of man's privileged position among other creatures, because he was created in the image and likeness of God. Just as life is a gift from God (Michalski 2014, 269), the environment also represents a value in itself as a work of God (Michalski 1998, 171). Regardless of the acceptance of this position, respect for nature should result from its significance for human existence, and care for the condition of natural goods should be taken out of respect for the other human being, both the present and future generations. Evil done to nature is an evil done to another human being, an act against health and life (Michalski 1998, 169).

The human individual is also obliged to accept that harmony with the environment, which is a common good of all people, is a guarantee for its continuation, because man is one with nature. Even the most advanced technologies cannot replace man's water and air. It is also a prerequisite for its continuance that we strive for a physical and psychophysical condition, thanks to which the individual can enjoy the goods of this world and develop and perfect himself.

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