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NECESSARY CONDITIONS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIETY

> „*What we are saying might not be popular, and indeed is frightening. But we need to be candid, accurate, and honest if humanity is to understand the enormity of the challenges we face in creating a sustainable future.*"
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> (Gro Harlem Brundtland) [1]

Abstract: In this article, I am trying to prove the hypothesis of the delayed implementation of the concept of sustainable development. The current conditions make it impossible to continue the sustainable development fully and on a global scale. Preventing humanity from collapsing is impossible as long as unlimited economic growth continues. The world's rulers are to blame for it, as they, enchanted by the effects of unlimited growth in the second half of the 20th century, did not predict its negative effects. In each chapter I analyse to what extent there are still premises for the implementation of the concept of sustainable development –ensuring the continuity of development, social order, social integration and social consensus.

Keywords: sustainable development, social integration, causes of disintegration, social consensus, collapse of humanity

WARUNKI KONIECZNE DO IMPLEMENTACJI ZRÓWNOWAŻONEGO ROZWOJU SPOŁECZEŃSTWA

Streszczenie (abstrakt): W artykule staram się udowodnić hipotezę o zbyt późnym wdrażaniu koncepcji rozwoju zrównoważonego. Obecne warunki realizacji zrównoważonego rozwoju uniemożliwiają jego kontynuację w pełni i w skali globalnej. Nie pomoże on uniknąć kolapsu ludzkości, jeśli nadal będzie postępować nieograniczony wzrost gospodarczy. Winni temu są władcy świata, którzy zauroczeni efektami nieograniczonego wzrostu w drugiej połowie dwudziestego wieku, nie pomyśleli zawczasu o jego negatywnych skutkach. W poszczególnych rozdziałach analizuję, w jakim jeszcze stopniu spełnione są warunki konieczne do implementacji koncepcji zrównoważonego rozwoju – zapewnienia ciągłości rozwoju, porządku społecznego, integracji społecznej i konsensusu społecznego.

Słowa kluczowe: rozwój zrównoważony, integracja społeczna, przyczyny dezintegracji, konsensus społeczny

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[1] *Scientists Warn Humanity in Denial of Looming 'Collapse of Civilization as We Know It'* (EcoWatch, 13.01.2021).

1. Continuity of development

Sustainable development is defined as development (of the economy, cities, countries, business, communities, etc.), which aims to meet the needs of the present generation to such an extent as to ensure that the needs of future generations can be met. The point is that the exploitation of resources, the structure of investments, the orientation of technical progress, institutional structures, etc., do not run counter to future needs".[2] The current conditions under which sustainable development is being implemented do not allow its continuation on a worldwide scale. In Polish legislation is in force following definition of sustainable development. "*Sustainable development is such a socio-economic development, in which the process of integrating political, economic and social activities takes place, while preserving the natural balance and durability of basic natural processes, in order to guarantee the possibility of meeting the basic needs of individual communities or citizens of both the present and future generations.*"[3] In other words, it is supposed to ensure intergenerational ecological justice. Sustainable development is about the alignment of interests in the synchronic (i.e., in the present social reality) and in the diachronic dimensions (i.e., in the next social realities) as well as in the spatial dimension – on the regional and worldwide scale.

It is necessary to facilitate harmonious economic, social, cultural, educational development, etc., in each of these spheres separately and conjointly in the present and future world. This challenge is as ambitious as it is difficult, and it is not known whether it is feasible. Thus, preserving continuity is one of the conditions of sustainable development.

2. Social order

Sustainable development of a society requires an "integrated spontaneous order", understood as the sum of five orders: ecological, social, economic, spatial and institutional-political.[4] What are an order and a spontaneous order? Both are an organisation of the social system, thanks to which its elements function harmoniously in such a way that the system as a whole can effectively fulfil its goal function and perform the task for which it was established. Both take place when all elements of the system "society" (people, social institutions) operate in accordance with the law and moral norms. However, order is imposed from the outside; it is formal and codified. One must obey it because violating it is punish-

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[2] *Our Common Future, Report of the World Commission on Environment and DevelopmentNote by the Secretary-General United Nations General Assembly*, 4 Auqust 1987.

[3] *Prawo ochrony środowiska* – Dz.U.2001.62.627, art. 3 ust. 50.

[4] „The concept of order is important and extremely useful in programming sustainable development. The experience of many countries and regions is a convincing proof that eco-development is in reality the integration of the five orders. The real interdependence of the basic development zones means that the integrated order must be shaped as a combination of ecological, social, economic, spatial and institutional-political orders, taking into account the objective laws of social development, economic and spatial development and the natural laws of the ecological order." (T. Borys, *Zaawansowanie lokalnej agendy 21 w Polsce strategie zrównoważonego rozwoju gmin i powiatów* (http://agenda21.warszawa.um.gov.pl/borys.htm).

able by the law. And spontaneous order is one that people agree to without any pressure because they simply like it. Spontaneous order is some moral imperative coming from the internal need for order or from voluntary submission to the rules and standards that order the life of a society. In sustainable development, the point is that, firstly, the social system (the whole society) should be optimally ordered within each of its spheres separately, primarily in the economic one, and secondly, that all the structures synergistically contribute to the implementation of the fundamental purpose of this system and to preserving its balance.[5] The social order is largely determined by the most important and final goal of society. The goal is determined primarily by the hierarchy of values recognised by this society. In other words, at the core of the social order lies the system of axiological values accepted by a given society. It can be imposed on it democratically or in an authoritarian fashion. Thus, the implementation of the idea of sustainable development requires reference to some universally applicable system of values, at least on a local, regional and, preferably, on a worldwide scale. Unfortunately, so far there has been no such system in one country, or even within one group. There are different value systems that sometimes compete with each other and each group wants its goal to be prioritised. This makes it difficult to define a common goal. As long as some uniform value system is not formed, it will not be possible to define one common goal. The implementation of the world system of values is highly problematic, especially in liberal democracy. Here, people are not forced to internalise a single value system, imposed by ideology or religion. Based on the functionalist theory of social order, it is believed that people strive for harmony and balance spontaneously because they are guided by some Vis internus. This is because the social system and each of its subsystems are self-regulating and they are endowed with homeostatic mechanisms that cause a decrease in entropy and an increase in order. However, turbulence and growing chaos characteristic of today's society are a testimony to something else – an increase in its entropy, which will eventually lead it to a state of permanent equilibrium, when its further development will be impossible at all. There are many symptoms of this, although no one has yet proved that society is an isolated system, something that the functionalist theory presumes. Hence, there are two opposing trends in the development of social systems: one is to preserve order in them and the other – to destroy it and, consequently, either to preserve these systems or to annihilate them. For that reason, I conclude that the social system is simultaneously self-regulating and self-deregulating, with deregulation processes outweighing regulatory ones. This is because a necessary condition for the development of any material system, including the social one, is the asymmetry between the opposing factors driving its dynamics: physical factors (attraction and repulsion, cold and heat, potentials, higher and lower, high and low pressure), social factors (diversity of groups, social inequality, contradictions, conflicts, the diversification of economic potentials, various ideologies) and ethical factors (good and evil, love and hate, empathy and heartlessness, truth and lies). In addition, the conflict theory of social order, according to which order is based on conflict, still predominates over the functional conflict theory. Thus, in a liberal

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[5] It is about the best, not the highest degree of system organisation under given conditions. The most organised system does not always work the best or most effectively, for example, when it is over-organised.

democracy, one intensifies more often intentionally than spontaneously the struggle for biological and social existence and one fuels the competitive struggle not only in the sphere of the economy. This multiplies and exacerbates social conflicts in various social structures, which destroys their order.[6] This will last until the paradigm of classical economic thought changes and economic values no longer prevail over ethical ones.[7]

3. Social consensus

Social order requires a consensus as to the definition and selection of the basic tasks that society must fulfil and the goal it wants to achieve. It could be reached if everyone were to accept one ideology, religion, ethical value, interest or dream. In each of these cases, it is relatively easy to unite people, but only partially, and to reach a one-dimensional consensus. However, this is not enough to implement the concept of sustainable development. What it requires is a multidimensional and complete social consensus. One can achieve it on the basis of what integrates ideology, religion, values, interests, dreams, etc., namely philosophy. On its basis, universal attitudes, behaviours and hierarchies of values, as well as overarching goals and tasks can be created.

However, not all strands of philosophy are suitable for this, especially the speculative ones. We need a philosophy of life for which practical problems of man, his life and the environment are more important than useless discussions and abstract speculations. Therefore, in my opinion, different kinds of the eco-philosophy or sozo-philosophy are the best.[8] In particular, the philosophical environmentalism that proclaims, inter alia, the principle of tolerance and the principle of synergy.[9] Respect for the first principle results from the will to maintain social order in the conditions of rapidly increasing diversification and condensation of the environment, mainly due to the rapid population growth since the mid-20th century. In addition, reverence for the other comes from striving for what is most important for humanity, that is, to preserve life and peace and facilitate the survival of the human species in conditions of progressive degradation of the natural and social environment. With the dissemination of knowledge about ecological threats and environmental philosophy, ecological awareness is developing. It is also a necessary condition for the implementation of the idea of sustainable development. The higher their environmental awareness, the more people strive for sustainable development.

4. Social integration

Integration is a prerequisite for sustainable development of the society. It depends on the durability of the social structure, which consists of a multitude of dependencies, relation-

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[6]   Life shows that various elites of financial and political power, organised into various lodges and quasi-mafias, wanting to maintain themselves in power and ever greater wealth, intentionally strive to conflict and polarise societies.

[7]   Classical economic thought is based on the following assumptions: the balance between supply and demand, economic stabilisation and laminar flows of capital, goods and labour.

[8]   W. Sztumski, *Człowiek wobec środowiska*, Wyd. WSL Częstochowa 2012.

[9]   W. Sztumski *Enwironmentalozm i cywilizacja życia*, Wyd Res-Type Katowice 1997.

ships, connections, interactions between its elements (people, institutions, organisations, etc.) and their composition, configuration and organisation. The structure is flexible to some extent. It can change as long as the changes taking place in it do not violate the empirical identity (genidentity) of the society. Sustainable development, continuous by nature, should be carried out in such a way that the changes in structure caused by it are flexible (this is the case, for example, in ontogenetic development). The factors that strengthen the structure of the society include "order" and "spontaneous order". They make the structure more compact, stable, coherent and "denser". The denser and more coherent the structure of society and the stronger the interpersonal relations, the more resistant it is to external disruptions to the sustainable development. Usually, the integration of the society benefits from its better organisation. It is proportional to the degree of organisation, but only until it reaches an optimum. The over-organisation can cause disintegration and destruction of the social system.

People have always had to organise themselves for collective actions in order to achieve their common goals from the simplest and local communities to the most complex and global ones, such as families, tribes, teams, professional groups, religious communities, nations and societies. The technological progress and science play a huge role in organising and integrating a society because of inventions and discoveries. Although individuals are capable of operating technological devices, it is necessary to work in a team in order to invent or discover something.

Life constantly brings new needs and poses more and more difficult challenges. It is only possible to satisfy them if we improve the organisation of social life in various spheres: work, trade, management, etc. Effective management poses the greatest problem despite using the latest scientific achievements and "smart" technological devices. Efficient management and good organisation are necessary to plan work, free time, study, leisure, economy, shopping, finance, etc. In most cases, the best organised groups have been the smallest social groups occupying small territories, for example families. They are basic and the most stable social cells that make up the social fabric. Social systems are mostly based on them and the stability of entire societies depends on them. However, for some time, one perceives the gradual erosion of the family because of civilisational and cultural changes accompanying the processes of globalisation. In Western civilisation, the traditional family model was strongly influenced by Christianity. It is based on the sacramental, heterosexual marriage. Recently, it has been slowly giving way to a new model based on non-sacramental, homosexual and informal marriages, such as partnerships. Traditional family functions and structure are changing. Various social and state institutions are taking over more and more functions of the family. Today, no one knows if the new family model will be better. Time will tell if it will be better adapted to the future conditions of life. The formation of a new family model is accompanied by the fear of the destruction of the well-established social order based on the traditional family, which has so far guaranteed the chance of survival. Therefore, is comes as no surprise that the conservatives and the clergy oppose the new order and defend the traditional family. It seems to them that some social forces – ideologies and political systems – purposely destroy the traditional family model.

They do not allow the thought that it is not the result of a programmed conspiracy, but of objective factors – the progress of civilisation, the regularity of social evolution, the cultural revolution and globalisation. They do not accept the fact that the fight against the progress and regularities of social evolution is as useless as the proverbial fight against windmills. Although it is not certain whether the old social order will work in the future, one can assume with a high probability that it will not. This is because each epoch or phase of social evolution creates a new social order as the old order inhibits further civilisational progress. Successive community types in history – tribes, nations and states – were characterised by increased complexity and a higher degree of organisation. Social order grew proportionally to this, especially in the over-organised dictatorial and totalitarian systems. In highly developed countries, organisation was faster and better, because technological progress and the development of the economy forced it to do so. It is worth of note that this progress was possible thanks to an increasingly efficient organisation and a better social order. Other countries will also follow them as a result of the globalisation processes aimed at equalising the levels of technology and economy in the world. The social order can be based on the vertical (hierarchical) structures managed centrally, which prevail in totalitarian states or on horizontal structures (dispersive and interdependent), found mainly in democratic states. In our times, the degree of freedom as well as the tendency for management dispersion and transferring decision-making centres to lower levels of power as a consequence of the development of liberal democracy increase. The development of neoliberalism means there are more and more alternative, scattered and parallel centres of power and horizontal management structures, which complies with the principle of dispersion or subsidiarity. This occurs not only in the domain of politics but also in other areas. For instance, in urban planning (dispersed shopping and service centres instead of a single department store), in warfare (hybrid wars, numerous flank attacks instead of one concentrated frontal attack, covert attacks scattered instead of overt and concentrated warfare), in art (monolithic composition or construction aimed at in order to focus the viewer's attention on the central point of the work is replaced by an aggregate of elements branching horizontally in many directions, which distracts their attention), in ethics (the hierarchy of values in traditional ethics is replaced by their equivalents in relativistic ethics, for example by anti-values) and in philosophy (hierarchically ordered philosophical systems built on one axiom are replaced by postmodern disordered systems). The horizontal organisation creates a social order based on the relationship of being and functioning "next to each other". In other words, the elements of the horizontal structures can exist and function independently – each for their own good – and do not have to combine synergistically for the common good. The fewer elements there are in a horizontal structure, the easier they work together, and the more there are, the more they work individually, as they compete with each other. The competitive struggle typical of neoliberalism is an obstacle to integration for the common good. In a society where the vertical order has already been greatly weakened, and the horizontal order has not yet been fully introduced, there is disintegration, disorder and increasing chaos. The transformation of the vertical order into the horizontal one is accompanied by an increase in social disorganisation. The more parallel orders there are, the more disorganised, unpredictable and chaotic is the social system. This causes not

only the inhibition of integration processes within it but it also disrupts its functioning and causes disappointment and mental disorders in people. This is the situation which one has to currently deal with in many countries. The exponential growth of the population is contributing to the increasing disintegration of contemporary societies. The more populous a society is in liberal-democratic systems, the more diverse it is and the more difficult to integrate.

Mass migration of people also contributes to the disintegration of the social systems. Diverse ethnic groups from poor, backward and war-stricken countries, mainly for economic reasons, come to rich European countries and settle in them permanently. These newcomers do not want to adapt to the social orders that have long been established in these countries. They try to impose on the natives their own orders and customs derived from other cultures, beliefs and value systems. The number of immigrants has reached several percent of the population in the target countries and is constantly growing. Perhaps, soon there will be more of them than indigenous people. Moreover, they have a strong sense of identity, are well-organised. Some are linked to terrorist organisations and armed. That is why they feel strong and they do not want to integrate with the natives. They live in enclaves (Chinese towns, Turkish residential districts, etc.) where they have their own laws and where natives and even the police are afraid to enter. In common territory, they live out of control, alongside native and not with them. So, homogeneous clusters of natives in cities governed by an order respected by all inhabitants transform into communities of ethnic groups, of hordes and of their social orders.

Another cause of disintegration is the growing contradiction between rich and poor. For example, rich city dwellers, who often snobbishly claiming to be "better class", isolate themselves from the poor and create their own districts, fenced off and closely guarded, like castles of medieval rulers. Thus, the homogeneous population of cities is transformed into a heteronymous one, and cities become divided into exclusive housing estates and of areas for the poor (council housing and slums). Their inhabitants do not contact each other and do not understand each other.

Finally, the cause of disintegration are artificial conflicts created by government-led politicians guided by the principle "divide and rule". Using mass media and "haters", they create imaginary enemies of individuals or groups who will then fight each other. In this way, society becomes more and more divided and antagonised.

5. Recapitulation

The implementation of the concept of sustainable development should be made in the right place and time, under the right conditions. The most important of them is ensuring the continuity of development, social order, social consensus and social integration. In the past such conditions were found in some countries, mainly the ones leading in terms of economical and civilisational development. In the developed liberal democracies, everything prospered, the economy boomed and the living conditions were constantly improving. No one tried to predict how long this boom would last, where further spontaneous development might lead, and no one felt the need to control it. The planned economy in the social-

ist countries was rightly derided as it led to crises and backwardness. However, it soon turned out that the spontaneous and unlimited economic growth also causes crises and setbacks in capitalist countries.

Gro Harlem Brundtland introduced the concept of sustainable development in 1987. This idea was soon taken over by representatives of the neoclassical environmental economics trend, mainly under the influence of ecologists. Since then, the concept of sustainable development has been in the centre of interest of economists, politicians, specialists in various fields of science and technology, and philosophers. The Report of the Club of Rome (1972) also contributed to this, showing to what crossing the limits of growth can lead to. It was then that the search for ways to avoid a collapse began rapidly. Unfortunately, it seems it was already too late. It was necessary to think about the dangers resulting from uncontrolled development in advance and start implementing sustainable development when there were still appropriate conditions for it. Not ex ante, and not ex post, not by force when more and more difficulties arose. Who was at fault? Economists who did not foresee it and who looked at ways to accelerate economic growth, or politicians who were fascinated by the economic success in the developed countries, which resulted from the exploitation of weaker countries, and thought it would always be so? Maybe, both of the parties, blinded by the temporary successes.

The situation is getting worse every day as the conditions necessary for the implementation of sustainable development are less and less favourable, with the continuously increasing air pollution, the global warming, water acidification, soil desertification and the reduction of natural resources. The remedial action now is more like patching the holes than repairing. In addition, not all of the world's rulers – corporocrats, financiers, and politicians – believe that the ominous estimates of the experts will soon come true, perhaps as early as in the twenty-first century. Meanwhile, the threats are growing, the time is running out and social evolution is accelerating. The only thing that gives hope to avoid the collapse of humanity is the increase in ecological awareness among the masses. This could lead to an ecological revolution that will force decision-makers to develop the economy in a controlled, planned and responsible way.

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