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ECONOMIC-UTILITARIAN AND SPIRITUAL-EXISTENTIAL BASES OF FOSTERING ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS IN MOUNTAIN DWELLERS

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Abstract. The article highlights the psychology economic-utilitarian motivation in mountain dwellers to care for nature as a basic resource in their recreation and relaxation activities – the main means of promoting the social and economic growth of mountain areas. Such motivation provides a psychological foundation for the spiritual-existential bases of ecological culture in mountain areas as well as in all natural climatic regions having recreation, relaxation, and health care potentials.

Keywords: environmental awareness, environmental damage, psychological factors.

Problem statement: the urgency of raising environmental awareness has increased primarily due to a global (planetary-scale) ecological crisis with a marked tendency to turn into a global ecological catastrophe which can actually lead to omnicide (the destruction of all life). This is the most topical problem facing humanity today in the sense of survival and safety from existing and predictable health-threatening environmental damage.

Ecological safety is especially urgent in Ukraine, whose *whole territory* has been declared a zone of total ecological disaster, but not only because it was the place of the biggest technological ecological catastrophe – the accident at the Chornobyl nuclear power plant. Every year over 20 million tons of harmful waste is emitted into the atmosphere in Ukraine, which is approximately 40 kilograms per every citizen. Over 5 million tons of salts get into waterways; other harmful substances are too numerous to mention. Garbage is hardly utilized; hence it pollutes soil, water, air. Garbage dumps take 4% (!) of the territory of our country. Numerous toxic waste landfills, which are not hermetic enough, can be found all over Ukraine. Carpathian virgin forests and groves are being cut down barbarously, and no effective attempts at afforestation are being made, and so forth.

Extensive foreign and domestic research on ecological-psychological and social-ecological problems shows that a consumerist, utilitarian, materialistic attitude to nature is the major factor of ecological accidents, disasters, crises. Such an attitude views nature as a source of material enrichment, satisfaction of everyday demands etc. (B.A. Bazyma, V.L. Derkach, S.D. Deryabo, G. Gibson, A.A. Kalmykov, S.B. Krymsky, V.H. Krysachenko, A.M. Lyovochkina, O.V. Rudomino-Dusyatska, O.I. Saltovsky, V.I. Skrebets, A.V. Tolstukhov, M.I. Khylyko, M. Chernoushek, Yu.M. Shvalb, S.I. Yakovenko, V.A. Yasvin and others).

A consumer's attitude to nature has deep philosophic roots in European culture and mentality^{3,p.8587}. Nowadays it has become a natural feature of the total crisis of spirituality and morality, which, according to western researchers, is vividly expressed in the dominance of selfishness, materialistic values of individuals and groups, in the global epidemic of an overwhelming desire for quick and easy money, in material benefit, immorality, thoughtlessness, ignorance, irresponsibility when a person does not think about possible short-term and long-term negative consequences of their actions, behavior, attitude to nature, culture, society.

The main and the most detrimental expression of an exploitative attitude to nature is the creation and use of manufacture technologies whose economic effectiveness is achieved largely due to meager expenses on environment and resource conservation. Corruption in environment – related activities makes this possible – the individuals who are responsible for environmental protection are bribed by those who damage it for mercenary motives. Even an ecologically educated business manufacturer, who cares for existential ecological problems and sincerely wishes harmony between man and nature, has to consider what expenses the ecologization of the manufacture process will involve, how it will affect the net cost and hence the price of the product, and whether it will be possible to sell it at such a price. Such calculations almost always lead to reducing costs on ecologization.

In Ukraine, all this is especially destructive, cynical, and abnormal. In our country, the ecological policy is ineffective and worth less in comparison with the countries of the EU and the USA. Ecological education, raising environmental awareness, propaganda, upbringing do not have a solid scientific-methodological basis, are still undeveloped, unsystematic, fragmentary and chaotic, shallow, frequently ridiculously primitive.

The low living standards of the majority of Ukraine's population, lack of employment opportunities which would provide honest crime-free ways of earning money for a decent life urge people to use any possibility of making money and distract them from global existential problems, including environmental protection. Concerns about the danger of having no means of subsistence dilute the threat posed by environmental damage. Ecologically harmful enterprises «feed» the population – provide the majority of the population in the neighbourhood with the opportunity to earn decent money. For this reason, the population does not insist on such enterprises being closed or on more effective ecologization which requires great expenses, threatening to “hit the owners in the pocket” and leading to other negative consequences; on the contrary, people support the expansion of such enterprises and the building of new ones.

Firstly, all these factors determine the urgency of fostering ecological culture in Ukrainians, and, most importantly, increasing the effectiveness of the country's ecological policy. Secondly, providing mountain dwellers with employment and proper social and economic conditions remains an urgent problem.

The important peculiarity of the second problem is that its solution depends on the effective solution to the first problem.

Core material presentation: An essential psychological factor of ecological damage is the phenomenon of a weak environmental stimulus which was identified by the American researchers P.G. Zimbardo and M.R. Leippe as a result of an extensive scientific study of human behavior in critical ecological conditions and when these conditions improve, which creates an illusion of environmental well-being. They have found a regularity: people tend to feel concerned about environmental hazards and to actively react to them only when these hazards are real, tangible, recurrent, annoying, damaging. But before this happens, most people display their ignorance, primitive selfishness and narrow-mindedness by polluting the environment, wasting water, electricity, etc. There are many people who despite being well-informed about environmental hazards, do nothing to resolve environmental problems because they rely on God, guardian angels, politicians, scientists. The unpleasant fact that environmental damage is not felt immediately contributes to environmentally negligent behavior. Like a cancerous tumor, it builds up unnoticed and becomes evident only after reaching a deep crisis stage.

In the USA and other highly developed countries, there have been numerous attempts to raise environmental awareness by material encouragement. For instance, employees who do not smoke are better paid; those who go to work by public transport get free hamburgers and coffee every day, etc. However, such measures are not effective enough. It is necessary to use more reliable means of generating environmental existential motivation and fostering ecological culture in individuals and groups of all social strata. They need to form existentially responsible, caring attitude to nature and fight utilitarianism, irresponsibility, negligence.

The above – mentioned avaricious is responsible psychology of an average contemporary individual needs to be changed by implementing radical ecological development changes and psychological educational measures; in Ukraine, it seems promising to establish an economic-utilitarian motivation albas is of authentic active care for the environment and better ecological conditions in mountain are as well as in other climatic regions having prospects for relaxation, recreation, and health care.

In many countries, mountain areas have turned from depressive regions into thriving are as for relaxation, recreation, sport (especially skiing), tourism, healthcare, somatic and neurotic disorder treatment. Mountain dwellers make a handsome profit, have steady well-paid jobs and work in healthy conditions. In other words, the living standards in such mountain areas are rather high. A representative example is the Alps, which are geographically and culturally close to our country.

Our Carpathians have a great potential for thriving: a mild climate and landscape; rich vegetation; berries and mushrooms in marvelous coniferous and deciduous forests; an impressive variety of herbs and flowers in valleys and healthy dairy and meat products obtained from them; crystal clear brooks and rivers; numerous healing mineral water springs, most of which are unique; highlands which are good for all kinds of ski trails – all these constitute a fertile area for ecologically friendly tourism, which is rapidly becoming more and more popular. All these opportunities attract people to the Carpathians. The number of visitors directly depends on how clean the natural resources are. Therefore, mountain dwellers need to make a constant active effort to conserve and improve their ecological resources which are the main, crucial determinants of their well-being and hence their somatic and psychological health, which is part of general well-being.

Undeniable facts grounded on solid mathematical – statistical calculations show that improving ecological living and working conditions is proportionally dependent on employees' physical and mental health, which constitutes the state of general well-being – they feel better if the environment al conditions improve both where they work and live (WHO). It is economically ben official for both employers and tax-payers because healthy employees are industrious, active, efficient, productive, they do not need medical treatment benefit, temporary or permanent sickness benefit etc. It is an important component of the economic-utilitarian basis of fostering environmental awareness.

Developing economic-utilitarian motivation for nature conservation should be the basis, the alpha and omega of fostering environmental awareness in mountain dwellers. It is an integral concept of the economic-utilitarian basis of fostering environmental awareness in mountain dwellers and in all other inhabitants of natural climatic regions with a potential for recreation, relaxation, and health care.

The psychological basis of economic-utilitarian motivation for developing an ecologically conscious, active, environmentally friendly attitude can and must be used for fostering a spiritual-existential, authentically responsible attitude to nature. It is well-known that the psychic basis of an individual's authentic (personally salient) attitudes, values, psychic orientations is a synergic complex of emotions connected with the object of these attitudes and orientations. An individual does not care for something that does not arouse relatively strong emotions in them, does not disturb them, leaves them indifferent. Value-related emotions and environmental concerns reflect a whole spectrum of human feelings, with a certain feeling dominating in every case.

Probably, within the paradigm of fostering environmental awareness discussed in this article, the following dominant emotions constitute a modal field: concern-anxiety-fear arising from realizing death threats from a global environmental crisis; grief for someone who has died, been killed or will soon die or be killed in nature; love of native nature as an essential component of ethnic identity – the

emotional and psychological basis of patriotism which is fed by gratitude to nature for welfare and pleasures and by faith in a divine origin of nature. Therefore, fostering love of nature as an essential component of environmental culture is a necessary and significant aspect of raising not only environmental but also patriotic and Christian awareness.

In our opinion, the main axiological ecological content of Christianity, on which environmental awareness should be based, is contained in the following assumptions: God created life on earth – nature and man (human society) with an aim which is still unknown to people but which is noble; this is undoubtedly proved by the following lofty ideals He suggested to people: Truth, Good, Beauty, Faith, Hope, Love. God expects people to be devoted to these ideals in relations to their people, to nature and culture by fighting evil which opposes them, distorts, destroys life – God's creation, which He loves. Therefore, an individual and society which strive to sincerely believe in God, to live according to His ideals, "to have a reverence for life", as Albert Schweitzer vividly puts it, in all its life-giving, life-affirming and therefore wonderful facets – to love nature, protect it, conserve it, care for it not less than for people, society, and culture. If people destroy nature, they will destroy themselves, will commit homicidal suicide, which is a serious sin.

According to E. Fromm, belief in God is the most reliable basis for satisfying a person's fundamental existential needs. In our opinion, at least two of them carry a vivid environmental meaning:

1. The need for roots – a person needs to feel inseparable from the world and to be sure that the environment they live in is stable, reliable, solid, safe, and secure. According to E. Fromm, this feeling is like a baby's feeling of security generated by its symbiotic connection with its mother. For a religious person and a person striving for sincere faith, the world is Father God's creation, which He loves, defends, saves, cares for and expects the same attitude to the world (to nature, culture, people) from His every child – a person.

2. The need for a system of views and devotion – a person needs a stable, steady system of views for explaining the world, its complexity, problems, contradictions. This system directs a person in life, determines senses, reason, aims in their actions, behavior, deeds.

A huge number of psychotherapeutic studies prove that the most perfect and powerful of all such systems is sincere faith in God which directs a person towards love for others, of nature, culture – all the wonderful creations by God and His child – man, which gives hope for an eternal after-life in the Realm of Truth, Good, Beauty, which inspires optimism about the prospects for the world and the desire to perfect it – a believer is sure that with God's blessing and support people can preserve life and civilization on the Earth and perfect it in accordance with Christian ideals. A Christian basis should be the starting concept in creating and practicing environmental culture not only in mountain dwellers but also in all people.

E. Erikson's theory of psychological and social development has considerable potential for developing the emotional basis of an individual's spiritual-existential authentically responsible ecological culture. According to this theory, descendants (children, grandchildren etc), their life, health, well-being are the greatest values for those people who have descendants. Ukrainians, including Carpathian mountain dwellers, have such an attitude. Care for descendants is the priority in an individual's psychological and social development in the second, middle, phase of maturity – 26-64 years of age^{1, p.67-69; 2, p.208-209}. That is why developing a stable sense of anxiety resulting from environmental damage, a global ecological crisis which can turn in to a catastrophe and lead to onmicide and threaten descendants' life, health, future is a powerful factor in fighting utilitarian selfish motives to damage nature, ecological indifference and passivism, as well as in stimulating environmental consciousness.

As regards teaching this theme in the process of ecological education and fostering environmental awareness, it should be stressed that inability to care for descendants, to worry about them is the main psychopathological symptom in mid maturity, according to E. Erikson^{1, p.70; 2, p.209}. It is one of the signs of "a crisis of love" – an individual's inability to love someone altruistically, to devotedly care for them, which is a favorable psychological basis for depressive neuropathic disturbances of existential

character– a meaningless life, anhedonia, apathy, abulia, etc. Stimulating active interest in the lives of other people, nation, culture, nature is the most effective treatment of such disturbances.

To conclude, it should be stressed that, in a psychological and propagandist sense, objective, well-structured and well-interpreted information in the mass media is an indispensable and powerful mean so raising environmental awareness; without its permanent influence, it is impossible to achieve any formative developmental changes in individual and, especially, mass consciousness. Why don't the mass media create the popular conception of a splendid "pysanka land" our region is going to turn into in the near future, according to M. Vyshyvanyuk, head of Ivano-Frankivsk Region Council?

The main credo of human wisdom and reason is "the main thing is health". Existing ecological disasters exert a considerable influence on human health, and predicted environmental problems can be even more detrimental. Therefore, in the process of ecological education, propaganda, fostering environmental awareness, it is necessary to use such facts in order to impress and create an emotional response which can promote environmentally conscious activities.

The ecological revival and prosperity of Ukraine should begin in mountain areas which have a potential for effective recreation and relaxation activities.

Great care for the environment is economically beneficial for the inhabitants of the Carpathians; it is the source of turning mountain areas into thriving zones of recreation, relaxation, tourism, especially ecologically friendly tourism, and health care. Both economic and ecological education of mountain dwellers should be based on the development of economic-utilitarian motivation for nature conservation.

Such motivational psychological factors should be the basis for the spiritual-existential paradigm of fostering environmental awareness, developing mountain dwellers' ecological culture, which is universal for people of all social strata.

Mountain dwellers' ecological culture should have a positive impact on all those who come to mountain areas for recreation and health care.

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