



## About the minimalist principle and non-double standard rules in environmental protection

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We are bombarded with recommendations from official sources, recommendations which, gradually, tend to be proposed as rules for the new normality in health or environmental protection. Many of these recommendations are common sense principles, but some interfere with human rights or others apply a double standard. Limitations are often addressed to the average citizen rather than to corporations responsible for pollutant emissions or energy consumption, or to states. In this critical note, we will not address the issues of pandemic health policy, but we will limit ourselves to those related to climate change policy.

Thus, we will take the recent example of the Romanian State, which buys 32 used F-16 planes from Norway, planes that are over 40 years old (Digi24.ro). At the same time, Romania aims to remove cars older than 15 years (Capital.ro). Of course, these cars are mostly owned by citizens in the midst of a health and energy crisis. Romania will put out of circulation over 200,000 cars (Capital.ro), that is, it will indirectly oblige the citizens to purchase new cars. The plan to withdraw cars older than 15 years of age is determined by one of the conditions of the European Union's PNRR funding program, initiated by the European Union. Note the double standard applied to the state and the citizens of the country, respectively.

Another aspect we want to highlight is how the leaders of the European Union and the World Economic Forum in Davos propose to save the planet's climate through minimalist life. Of course, some of the proposed principles are reasonable and viable. Among those that we consider aberrant and frequently circulated we list: the principle of imposed vegetarianism (at first by surcharge) (National.ro), the principle of the poor and happy citizen, the principle of solidarity and equality through expropriation (Schwab 2020, 2021; Schwab & Malleret 2020).

Related to the principle of imposed vegetarianism, it is true that food of animal origin is more expensive in terms of energy consumption and carbon emissions (Shafiullah et al 2021), but we must not forget that by his nature man is not a vegetarian being. Citizens' vegetarianism must be optional and not mandatory. More ethical and efficient alternatives would be: the principle of purchasing food adapted to daily needs, the principle of full consumption and avoidance of food waste, the principle of purchasing food as unpackaged as possible. Also important aspects of environmental protection are reuse and recycling.

In connection with the principle of the poor and happy citizen, and the principle of solidarity and equality through expropriation, they have their origins in the dystopian discourses presented at the World Economic Forum in Davos. In our opinion, the citizen could avoid buying extra clothes and shoes. It would be a protective measure against the

environment pollution to use clothes and objects until they wear out. Never buy a fourth coat as long as you already have three coats. This is what we mean by minimalist life, a self-imposed minimalism or induced by education and not by coercion. Coercion would generate rebellious opinions and positions in society. A minimalist principle generated by one's own beliefs is more robust than the coercive one, generated by a leader like Klaus Schwab, who assures the citizen that in the future he will be poor and happy. The poor citizen is dependent on the state, lacks decision-making power and is forced to accept the rules of the corrupt leaders of the society. Such a citizen is vulnerable, feels threatened, and consequently will take anti-system positions even when the system proposes viable, logical and ethical solutions.

**Conclusions.** It would be useful for leaders not to use coercive measures in order to persuade society to accept health and environmental protection measures. Education and free will will generate fewer anti-systemic effects and more cooperation from citizens. Citizens who feel that their freedom is threatened develop justified radical convictions, which can no longer be corrected even through education.

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