

Environmental Justice in the Context of Social Work

León Richvalský, Jana Levická

The scholarly monograph *Environmental Justice in the Context of Social Work* represents a timely and highly significant contribution to the discussion on the interconnection between environmental issues and social work. The authors—León Richvalský and Jana Levická—respond to the global environmental crisis and its social consequences, which increasingly affect socially vulnerable groups of the population. The publication is the outcome of a long-term research project and thus reflects not only theoretical foundations but also extensive research findings from the context of the Slovak Republic.

The aim of the monograph is to identify the impacts of environmental burdens on the everyday lives of residents of communities located in their vicinity, while also identifying factors and strategies that may contribute to the elimination of these negative effects. The authors emphasize that the environmental crisis is not only an ecological issue but also a social problem that deepens existing inequalities and injustices. The publication is intended primarily for professionals and students of social work; however, its thematic focus extends beyond the boundaries of a single discipline and may also be of value to scholars in the fields of sociology, environmental studies, and public policy. The monograph is structured into several logically interconnected chapters that gradually move from theoretical foundations to research findings and the conclusions of the study.

In the first chapter, the authors focus on the concept of environmental justice itself. They outline the historical development of social work's engagement with environmental issues and highlight a gradual shift from the individualization of responsibility for living conditions toward a systemic and structural understanding of environmental risks. The chapter elaborates on the interconnection between social work and four key areas: social justice, the right to a healthy environment, the risks of the environmental crisis, and sustainability. Within the Slovak context, the authors identify a low level of implementation of environmental social work in education and professional practice.

The second chapter focuses on ecological burdens in Slovakia. Through concrete examples, the authors document the scope and severity of environmental problems caused primarily by industrial and mining activities. The chapter is complemented by maps and photographic materials, which significantly enhance its explanatory value and enable the reader to better understand the real impacts of ecological burdens on the lives of local residents.

In the third chapter, the focus shifts to environmental issues in marginalized Roma communities (MRK). The authors analyze selected localities and highlight the connection

between environmental degradation and social exclusion, poverty, and limited access to basic resources such as drinking water, sanitary conditions, and safe housing. The chapter demonstrates that environmental injustice often has both an ethnic and social dimension.

The fourth chapter addresses the environmental issue in the context of the strategic document *Action Plan within the Strategy for Equality, Inclusion, and Participation of Roma until 2030 for the years 2025–2027*. The authors analyze the extent to which this document reflects the environmental aspects of life in marginalized communities and its potential to improve their living conditions.

The fifth chapter focuses on the concept of sustainability, which the authors understand as an essential framework for the future development of social work. Sustainability is presented not merely as an ecological objective but as a comprehensive process requiring the collaboration of individuals, communities, institutions, and public administration.

In the concluding chapter, the authors summarize the main research findings and emphasize the need for a more systematic involvement of social work in addressing environmental issues. They stress that without trained professionals and without linking theory, research, and practice, it will not be possible to adequately respond to the consequences of the environmental crisis.

The monograph *Environmental Justice in the Context of Social Work* represents a comprehensive and socially relevant work. Its strength lies in the integration of theoretical concepts with research data and its focus on specific Slovak realities. The publication makes a significant contribution to the development of environmental social work and opens avenues for further research and professional discussion.

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