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The 'good life' and Protected Needs

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The aim of this chapter is to present how the notions of the 'good life' and of needs should be approached in order to serve as a foundation for sustainability governance. The starting point is that because sustainability is about making sure that all human beings in present and future generations have the possibility of satisfying their needs and lead a good life, the 'good life' and needs should be the point of reference for sustainability governance. This, in turn, will only be possible if these notions are defined in a way that one can develop suitable policies based on them. The chapter first provides criteria for defining the 'good life' and needs in the context of sustainability and then examines promising approaches to defining these notions based on a literature review. Subsequently, it presents the authors' suggestion to operationalise the 'good life' with nine Protected Needs that should receive special protection within and across societies. The chapter concludes by pointing out that focusing on the "good life" and on needs in sustainability governance and using the theory of Protected Needs would allow to draw on a powerful narrative that is appealing and thus would have the potential to support sustainability governance with a view to the necessary, fundamental societal transformation.

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