

mgr inż. Katarzyna Zofia Gdowska
Akademia Górniczo-Hutnicza w Krakowie

mgr Anna Markwart
Uniwersytet Jagielloński w Krakowie

DEVELOPMENT IN TERMS OF VALUES AND QUALITY OF LIFE

Streszczenie

Milenijne Cele Rozwoju odnoszą się głównie do podstawowych potrzeb ludzkich. Te kwestie są istotnymi wskaźnikami jakości życia. Podstawy teoretyczne ważności takiego podejścia odnaleźć można w myśli A. Sena. Próby modelowania matematycznego tych problemów zostały podjęte, analizy te nie są jednak wolne od niedociągnięć.

Słowa kluczowe: jakość życia, Milenijne Cele Rozwoju, wartości, Amartya Sen

Summary

The Millenium Development Goals refer mainly to the basic human needs. Those issues are important indicators of the quality of life. Theoretical foundations of the relevance of such an approach can be found in the thought of A. Sen. Efforts of mathematical modeling were also taken, yet though very useful, they also create problems.

Keywords: quality of life, Millenium Development Goals, values, Amartya Sen

Introduction

„The process of development has to be judged not only in terms of average improvement, but also in terms of inequalities and disparities, and their causal antecedents” as states the Nobel Prize winner, Amartya Sen [1989, 72]. This paper is to show the importance of values, human rights, human needs, choices’ motivators and non-quantitive aspects in defining the quality of life. It is necessary to underline that such an approach is the core of interpreting development not only in terms of economic growth and hard data but also as fulfillment of

people's desires and improvement of their quality of life. This is the background of defining and evaluating goals of local and international policy. For the quality of life other factors are often as important as income *per capita*. Millennium Development Goals are a good example of creating a strategy of development on an international level. They are based on values and responsibility for others and though they are mostly about developing countries, they can be interpreted as suggestions of the most important areas of development on which every society should focus. Starting from the 80s of the XXth century, economists try to create composite indicator of development and well-being based on income *per capita* and a level of fulfilment of human needs. Its roots are to be found in philosophical distinction between income and well-being. Researchers proved that there is a problem to define well-being and create markers suitable for every country.

I. Millennium Development Goals

The Millennium Development Goals were proclaimed by the Heads of Governments representing the member countries of the General Assembly of United Nations in September 2000. They consist of eight points referring to the foundations of world's peaceful prosperity. Amongst them there are as basic issues as „End Poverty and Hunger”, „Child Health”, „Maternal Health” and „Combat HIV/AIDS” and such social necessities as „Gender Equality”, „Universal Education”, „Environmental Sustainability” and „Global Partnership”. They are supposed to be achieved until 2015. The idea behind them holds that the responsibility are not only to one's society but also „... to all the world's people, especially the most vulnerable and, in particular, the children of the world, to whom the future belongs” [UN Millennium Declaration, 2000, point I.2].

The first Millennium Goal: „Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger” focuses on halving the proportion of people whose income is less than \$1 per day, achieving full and productive employment and halving the proportion of people suffering from hunger. It concentrates on the very basic human needs, indispensable to survive and undertake any other action. Although it primarily refers to the Third World Countries, it can be also applied even to developed countries, as a basis of well-being indexes. In countries, such as Poland, undernutrition of some children is still a social problem, yet we also could apply the goal's purpose to the question of healthy eating habits – life expectancy depends not only on the amount of food but also on its quality and balanced, healthy diet. Obesity and improper nourishment became serious problems in the highest developed countries.

While the second Goal („Archive Universal Primary Education”) concentrates on ensuring full primary schooling for all children, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia, where are still shortages in this field; in addition to next Goal „Promote Gender Equality And Empower Women” is mainly an extension of the former Goal. The emphasis of „Gender Equality” is

being put on equal education of girls and boys at every level. It also raises the problem of the glass ceiling – in developing countries men outnumber women in paid employment and what is more generally to top level post men are mostly employed.

Goals four („Reduce Child Mortality”), five („Improve Maternal Health”) and six („Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Other Diseases”) are strongly connected. The fifth focuses on medical care during the pregnancy period and reduction of maternal mortality ratio, which is the basis for reducing the rate of children mortality. In developing countries it is still necessary to prevent children’s deaths due to pneumonia, diarrhoea and undernutrition. One of the problems pointed: „Use of contraception is lowest among the poorest women and those with no education” [<http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/maternal.shtml>] which suggests that both education and sexual education are very important. It is not only an issue in developing countries but also a problem of developed ones as we can see by the number of teenage pregnancies in the UK. Goal „Combat HIV/AIDS” sensitizes us to preventing and treating the lead diseases, including tuberculosis.

Sustainability mostly refers to environment and development. Goal seven: „Ensure Environmental Sustainability” includes environmental protection, providing access to drinking water, saving bio-diversity and implementing international climate desiderates such as The Montreal Protocol. Another issue raised is an improvement of living conditions in slums. From another point of view this subject is considered in Goal eight: „Develop a Global Partnership for Development”. It focuses on ways of improvement developing countries’ economics – their international debts reduction, implementing fair trade idea, enlarging their access to the markets of developed countries, essential drugs and new technologies. It is declared by UN that „aid continues to rise despite the financial crisis” [<http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/global.shtml>].

The Goals mentioned above are based on fundamental values considered as essential to international relations such as freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, respect for nature and shared responsibility [see *UN Millennium Declaration*, 2000, point I.6].

However, The Millennium Development Goals may seem related only to the Third World countries, in more expended understanding they apply to social reality in Poland. As far as „End Poverty and Hunger” is concerned it is essential to mention activity of Polska Akcja Humanitarna and „Pajacyk” project. PAH states that 47% of school children in Poland should be nutrished at school as they lack regular healthy meals. „Pajacyk” project was inspired by The Hunger Site and it tries to provide meals at schools for the children in need. Similar activity is conducted by „Podziel się posiłkiem” project. In Poland we can also observe governmental campaigns promoting healthy eating habits that is essential for health as one of the most important factors of the quality of life.

In Poland children’s mortality at birth rate is 5,6 per 1000 life births [*Statistical Yearbook of The Republic of Poland*, 2009, 39]. It is mostly the problem of early births. Therefore the question of „Child Health” concentrates on providing their future quality of life by early finding and diagnosing their illnesses (Wielka

Orkiestra Świątecznej Pomocy) and dealing with them if found. To both child and maternal health contribute tests and medical care which are obligatory if you apply for State support and promoted by healthcare institutions and feminist organisations. It can be observed that programs concerning newborns and their mothers relate to human dignity as a value. Projects such as „Rodzic po ludzku” and „Okno Życia Caritas” therefore concentrate on providing women in labour with proper care and comfortable conditions while giving birth. Unfortunately, it is still far from perfect. Another issue is the possibility to make a free and conscious decision of giving the child to adoption without scapegoating.

The issue of the woman’s dignity is raised not only in context of maternity but also in the area of education, employment and politics. Feminist and governmental organisations (eFKa, Feminoteka, Pełnomocnik Rządu do spraw Równego Traktowania) create projects that are supposed to make us aware of phenomena such as „glass ceiling”, disproportions of the pay rates of women and men.

All these issues, raised in Millennium Development Goals, are essential for the analysis of development in terms of the quality of life. They are being referred to not only by the theorists of economy and sociology but also by researchers.

2. Development and the quality of life in theory of Amartya Sen

According to Amartya Sen, development cannot be regarded only in terms of economic growth. Though GNP *per capita* is an important issue, rules of functioning of state’s economy have to be founded on values. Rapid economic growth can be gained without freedom, liberty, solidarity and equality, however, it will not be a real development of a society. Sen considers economic growth as fundamental for development. It is an important factor not only regarded as shortage of basic products and goods or a marker of enrichment of the society, but also he describes poverty in terms of the lack of possibilities and opportunities to choose. As he states, „Incomes and commodities are valued mainly as ‘instruments’ – as means to other ends. We desire them for what we can do with them; possessing commodities or income is not valuable in itself. Indeed, we seek income primarily for the help it might provide in leading a good life – a life that we have reason to value (...). Since an increase in income from very low levels would help a person to be well nourished, rather than being hungry and deprived (and possibly dead), a higher income would be instrumentally valued” [Sen, 1998, 2]. The same argument can be used considering freedom: free press, politics etc. are essential in enabling to choose. There exist also other factors that have to be taken into consideration, such as mortality rate that is central for Sen’s analysis.

Sen claims that „There are, thus, many factors not included in the accounting of personal incomes that can be importantly involved in the life and death of people. The point is not the irrelevance of economic variables such as personal

incomes (they certainly are not irrelevant), but their severe inadequacy incapturing many of the causal influences on the quality of life and the survival chances of people” [Sen, 1998, 6].

Mortality rate – which is more adequate as an indicator of the quality of life than morbidity rate – depends on many factors. One of them is access to medical care – public or private. According to Sen the fact that the country is not rich does not mean that it cannot provide medical care – he claims that in poorer countries the cost of paying the staff and building the facilities is lower. Yet, in more developed countries people are more aware of medical threats and better diagnostic equipment is available: „people’s **perception** of illness varies with what they are used to, and also with their medical knowledge. In places where medical care is widespread and good, people often have a higher perception of morbidity, even though they may be in much better general health” [Sen, 1998, 18]. At this point Sen brings education into consideration. It is consistent with one of Millennium Development Goals. Sen’s arguments can be used as a theoretical foundation for them. Well educated people can help others and are an important factor of society’s development in many areas – they are able to transmit their knowledge to others. According to Sen gender equality, especially in education, is very important for development.

Education and health care themselves are not only goals but also are indicators of the quality of life. Educated and healthy people work more effectively. The more educated people are, the more they are able to produce, they earn more and more effectively they develop the country. Their education helps building the wealth of the country. It also allows the health care to exist, although the more educated people are, statistically, the longer they live and the less their medical care costs the state as they are also more likely to eat healthier.

Teaching how to read and write is essential. Being educated also helps adapting to changing conditions, gives more possibilities in a world that requires many abilities. It also gives a chance to women who, especially in poorer countries, in many cases are still dependent on their fathers or husbands. It can give them not only financial independence, but also a possibility of deciding about their own lives. What is more, according to Sen, investing in citizens’ education is not only beneficial in rich countries. He thinks that free education in poorer countries can speed up the growth and is in fact cheaper than in the more developed countries – as teachers and doctors’ wages are lower. Yet, he seems to forget that in the globalised world, the market is no longer the one within single country, but it is international.

Features of democratic systems, founded on the same values as the UN, have very important influence on the quality of life. Democracy is much better system than any kind of tyranny not only in the terms of freedom. As being literate, educated people are also able to control the government, read newspapers and be conscious citizens. In democracies, as states Sen, we do not have as many examples of hunger that kills people. As the Nobel Prize winner notices, famine is usually present in regimes where the power cannot be taken away from a certain limited group. Sen compares China and India, considering many aspects,

amongst them great hungers. He gives the example of India, where since it gained independence and became a democratically ruled autonomous state, there was no famine disaster [see Sen, 2002, 196–202].

According to Sen, political freedom (provided by well functioning democracy, combined with elections every few years, the freedom of speech and free media) can also be a goal and a tool and it helps developing economic growth and the quality of life. All features of democracy are founded on social trust. As Piotr Sztompka notices, in democracies trust is necessary to develop proper communication, social consensus, public debates, civil society. Without credence and values democracy and market are instable [see Sztompka, 2007, 337–360]. The basic freedoms should not be sacrificed in the name of development; especially since he thinks that they are even supporting it. Sen refers to Adam Smith and his idea of the invisible hand which harmonizes the market and helps reaching harmony within the society. Also *Theory of Moral Sentiments* [Smith, 1982] presents the role of values and freedoms in the societies. What is more, both of those authors – Sen and Smith – notice the state's role in the market society.

3. Choices' motivators

In creating mathematical and statistical tools for preparing rankings of the quality of life it is necessary to utilize quantitative indicators, however, it is essential to include non-quantitative factors, such as values that are taken into consideration in the process of making individual choices. Motivations that are taken into account while choosing and the variety of choice possibilities suggest what is really important for individuals and how they understand the quality of life. What is more, according to Sen, wide range of possible choices shows the level of development of the society. He stresses that the influence of the choice act on preferences or on the identity of the chooser can go with different motivations [Sen, 1997]. One of them is taking under consideration one's reputation and indirect effects: the person may expect to profit in the future from the credibility. This reason is most in harmony with the established conventions of standard neoclassical economics where satisfaction is regarded as optimization of one's benefits and well-being. It can be derived from classical economics since Adam Smith noticed that we were „programmed” by Nature to value a group position and respect from others more than temporary benefits. Sen underlines that social commitment and moral imperatives – referring to „moral sentiments” like in Kant's or Smith's thought – are essential to our choices. We also take into consideration established rules of „proper behaviour” rather than other reasons. Nobel Prize winner argues that there also exists direct welfare effect as a motivator. The one's well-being may be affected directly by the process of choice, reflective utility function (and person's conception of her self-interest) is defined over culmination outcome and over choice process and their effects.

4. Multidimensional Indexes, neoclassical economics

After the Second World War in Management Science an approach derived from the school of New Classical Economics dominated. Researches assumed that people were egoists and concentrated on optimization their conditions (benefits maximization or loss minimization) and strongly concentrated on describing economical and social problems with the tool of marginal quantities. Michael D. Slater examined the quality of life in terms of shapes of marginal loss curves. He was not surprised by achieved results: „The real clinching argument is the Samuelsonian one, that if we postulate maximizing behaviour, and observe stable market equilibria, then this implies that all the curves **must** have the appropriate convex shape. (...) I have emphasised a particular kind of non-convex interdependence, an externality which affects **qualities** rather than **quantities** of commodities. (...) Economists have recognised the importance of non-convex interdependences within firms since the time of Adam Smith. Why should **external** interdependences be any different?” [Slater, 1975, 871]. Into the category ‘external’ fell diseconomies which affected one’s quality of life. Amongst the factors taken into consideration there were such as pollution, noise level, freedom of speech or free time. And he stressed that economist hardly saw that these aspects influencing on quality, not quantity, of life, what is often of higher importance to people.

From the 80s of XXth century economists started to create proper measurement of the quality of life, because the hitherto analysis were focused only on economic growth and not on development. It is to be said level of GNP *per capita* and industrialization are not sufficient for meeting human basic needs. The earliest physical quality of life index (PQLI) as an indicator utilized weighted average (with equal weights) of indices of literacy, infant mortality and life expectancy. The advantage of these factors is that are not ethnocentric, they measure results not inputs, reflect distribution and aggregate wealth and are internationally comparable [see Slottje, 1991].

Sen did not agree with elements of the PQLI mentioned above. He claimed that there should be a differentiation between capabilities and commodities: not only level of consumption (GNP) and life expectancy, but also economic and political environment. With this aim, Daniel J. Slottje and his group created multidimensional (20 indicators) ranking of the quality of life in 126 countries. They wanted to show how relative rankings of well-being across countries varied because of different individual indicators of the quality of life. In the sensitivity analysis, they demonstrated how world’s rankings of the quality of life vary as they alter the way of summarization of the information from several economics well-being indicators into one summary index. A summary for all the indexes was constructed by taking the average of all the indexes and then taking the ranking of these averages. The final ranking: 1st place – Switzerland, 2nd – UK, 3rd – New Zealand, 4th – Jamaica, 5th – New Guinea, 6th – Canada, 75th – Poland, 107th – United Arab Emirates, 112th – USSR¹ [see Slottje, 1991]. It shows the influence of civil freedoms on our quality

¹ The researches was conducted before in the second half of the 80 s.

of life – although they are not material, without them it is difficult to enjoy one's income. The ranking is far from being perfect since no ethics and moral values are included into the list of the examined categories.

The importance of values and the essential role of freedom of choice is being confirmed by systematically collected and analyzed global data. „Data from representative national surveys carried out from 1981 to 2007 show that happiness rose in 45 of the 52 countries for which substantial time-series data were available. Regression analyses suggest that the extent to which a society allows free choice has a major impact on happiness. Since 1981, economic development, democratization, and increasing social tolerance have increased the extent to which people perceive that they have free choice, which in turn has led to higher levels of happiness around the world, as the human development model suggests” [Inglehart, Foa, Peterson, Welzel, 2008]. In the broad research of the World Values Survey, subjective happiness, life satisfaction and level of democratization of a country are as important as economic factors, such as GNP. It can be easily noticed that the quality of life is being reflected by both: material and post-material values, although a shift towards post-material values in developed democracies in which basic human needs and freedoms are fulfilled, can be observed [Inglehart, 2005].

For a decade the turn towards ethical aspect can be observed in Management Science and Operations Research. It is derived from the sustainable development paradigm that dominates in economics and social sciences. The foundation is a notion that may be presented with quotation from a paper by Marc Le Menestrel and Luk N. Van Wassenhove: „In fact, we believe that the traditional rigor and search for objectivity that has characterized OR/MS since its inception should not be seen as a barrier to the integration of ethical concerns, even if such concerns are particularly difficult to define objectively, to measure quantitatively, and to translate smoothly into practical prescriptions. In our experience, this is indeed not an easy endeavor. On the other hand, the richness of an inclusive and complementary consideration of both analytical methods and ethical values is worth the effort, if only for the sense of professional relevance and self-accomplishment it brings” [Menestrel, Wassenhove, 2009, 1039].

5. Concluding Remarks

Values are indispensable part of human condition. They are basis for setting personal goals and making individual choices. As reflected in Millennium Development Goals values are also a background for creating states' and local and international organisations' policy. The need of including non-quantitative markers and values as well as economic indicators was shown in the thought of the Nobel Prize winner, Amartya Sen. This approach is becoming more and more useful in description of the world we live in, also in researchers' empirical studies.

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