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## AXIOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF BALANCED AND INTELLIGENT DEVELOPMENT

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### AKSJOLOGICZNE PODSTAWY ZRÓWNOWAŻONEGO I INTELIGENTNEGO ROZWOJU

STRESZCZENIE: W artykule przedstawiono rozwój jako kluczową kategorię w sferze społecznej, ekonomicznej i środowiskowej. Pozytywna ocena zmian z punktu widzenia określonego kryterium jest uznawane w pracy jako konstytutywny atrybut definicji rozwoju. Zależność między oceną pozytywności zmian i stosowanym kryterium tej oceny może zadecydować o relatywizmie lub bezwarunkowości kategorii rozwoju. Ogólna definicja rozwoju powinna być podstawą do utworzenia jednorodnej konwencji terminologicznej pojęć pochodnych, poprzez dodawanie różnych przedrostków do słowa „rozwój” (np. „ekorozwój”) lub przymiotników (np. „rozwój trwały”) i przypisanie należnego znaczenia tym nowym pojęciom z uwzględnieniem warstwy aksjologicznej. Ustalanie istoty aksjologicznej każdego paradygmatu rozwoju jest zatem związane ze zdefiniowaniem pewnych zestawów zasad odzwierciedlających określony system wartości i poziom świadomości. Wykazano, że system aksjologiczny odgrywa rolę decydującego kryterium przy ocenie pozytywnego charakteru zmian nie tylko w odniesieniu do rozwoju człowieka, a także do rozwoju społecznego, gospodarczego i środowiskowego.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE: inteligentny rozwój, zrównoważony rozwój

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„You and me. We are one.  
I can't hurt you without hurting myself.”

*Mahatma Gandhi*

## Introduction – a few remarks on axiology and axiologists

Axiology (from Greek *axiā*, ‘value, worth’; and *logos*, ‘science’) is the philosophical discipline focused on the study of value and theoretical investigations of:

- the notion of worth, stemming from ethical concepts of good;
- analysis of the nature of value: what is valuable and what is the nature of it? (for example: subjective, objective, absolute or relative);
- sources of values and mechanisms creating values.

Therefore, axiology seeks to identify and name the object of value in human feelings (emotions), thinking and actions, and looks for different configurations of values, also in a hierarchical system (for example, in the theory of human needs)<sup>1</sup>. And here we have a paradox. Although axiology penetrates with its specific cognitive approach the entire human reality, it is still a narrow and rather niche philosophical discipline, rarely included in university curricula, and yet – according to the author of this work – it should have a high status, and the scope of its interest should be specified both universally (value of the general theory) and specifically (detailed theories of value).

Currently, the second aspect of axiology is still a branch of detailed, non-philosophical scientific disciplines (economic, sociological and others), usually incorporated informally and in a manner that philosophers would consider illegitimate. More and more often, apart from the achievements of general axiology, the increasing role of ‘specialist’ axiological subdisciplines is highlighted, such as sociological axiology, axiology of culture, or axiology of development, addressed in this article.

Axiology constantly generates resources of knowledge, skills and competencies that have a unique component of wisdom and intuition. It also has its closest ‘relatives’ – ethics and morality, forming an increasingly better defined, also in the axiology of development, axiological quadrilateral (Figure 1).

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<sup>1</sup> The modern meaning on which axiology is based was coined by R.H. Lotze (mid-19<sup>th</sup> century), although the term ‘axiology’ was introduced at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century by P. Lapie in: F. Acan (ed.), *Logique de la volonté*, Paris 1902.

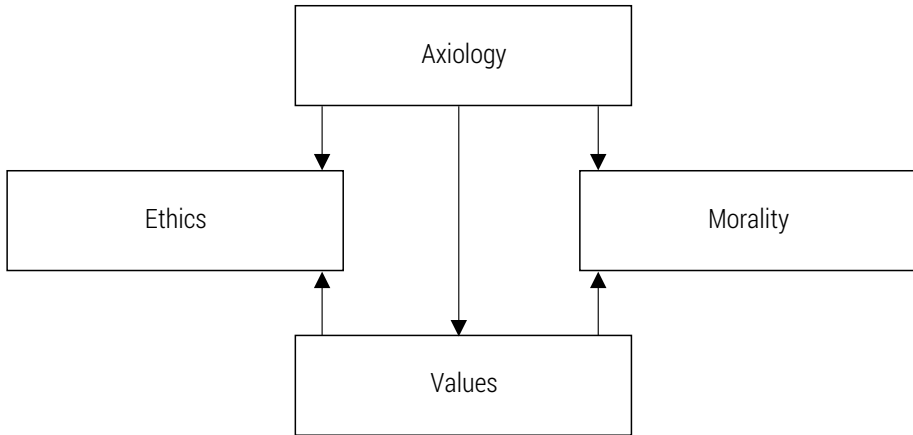


Figure 1. Axiological quadrilateral

Most scientific publications distinguish between the ethics of morality. Ethics (from Greek ἦθος *ethos* 'custom') is a subdiscipline of applied philosophy dealing with the concepts of right and wrong conduct. It is therefore a theory (systematized knowledge) regarding morality. Ethics creates systems of thought from which moral principles can be derived. The aim of ethics is to search for the sources of morality, to study the effects of morality or lack thereof on people, and the search for the basic premises which could be used in a rational way to create sets of moral precepts. Ethical views usually have the form of a theory, which consists of a set of notions and the resulting statements (rules), based on which sets of moral precepts can be formulated<sup>2</sup>. Ethics – like axiology – has both a feature of a general theory, and its specialist areas, such as business ethics.

Morality is a system of views, beliefs, practices, and feelings (emotions) defining human awareness and interpersonal relationships from the point of view of right and wrong (right-doing and wrong-doing, honesty and foulness, truth and lie, etc.). Thus, morality is actually a system of views functioning in a society, and the moral beliefs of people, reflected in their attitudes, activities and relations. Morality gives people who unconditionally respect the values and moral principles, above all, self-esteem, the sense of value of their humanity and being humane. The opposite phenomenon is the lack of morality (immorality, immoral attitudes and behaviours) or illusory (ostensible) morality<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. K. Kietliński, V. Reyes, T. Oleksyn, *Etyka w biznesie i zarządzaniu*, Kraków 2005.

<sup>3</sup> R.C. Solomon, *Etyka biznesu*, in: P. Singer (ed.), *Przewodnik po etyce*, Warszawa 1998, pp. 401–410; see also: M. Ossowska, *Normy moralne*, Warszawa 2001; B. Klimczak, *Etyka gospodarcza*, Wrocław 2006.

It is also worth proposing rarely asked questions: who is the axiologist, and what is the role of this specialist? For professional philosophers such a question seems to be entirely unimportant, since it is obvious to them that the right to practice axiology is given to philosophers, because they are formally authorized to do so, are educated in this area, and can professionally deal with axiology. But is it just about the professional practice of axiology? – Probably not, because axiology – according to the author of this paper – cannot be identified as a discipline specific just to philosophers or professional ethicists. At a certain stage of personal or professional development the duty of every human being, especially an educated one, is to become an axiologist, regardless of whether he or she is an engineer, psychologist, economist or naturalist. An axiological approach or – in other words – an axiological reference, is our fundamental human duty. This approach should be reflected not only in our personal lives, but also towards social, economic, and environmental issues, and especially the way we see development. The understanding of the ‘anatomy of values’ and assessment of the systems of values that function in real life is the primary task of an axiologist.

### Axiological aspects of the definition of ‘development’ – does an axiology of development exist?

Is there an axiology of development as a coherent well-described sub-discipline of the theory of development? It is difficult to give a positive answer to this question without second thoughts. In the Polish literature some strong axiological accents with reference to the category of development can be found in works published in the late 1990s and early 2000s, especially those written by Z. Hull (compare, e.g.: *Aksjologia ekonomii a ekologia* – 1996<sup>4</sup>), F. Piontek and B. Piontek (compare, e.g.: *Osobowy aspekt wartości w procesie rozwoju* – 2004, *Refleksja nad nauką i edukacją w aspekcie urzeczywistniania rozwoju* – 2006, and in the first paper by these two authors on the theory of development published in 2016)<sup>5</sup>, A. Papuziński (compare, e.g.: *Polityka edukacyjna na rzecz zrównoważonego rozwoju w Polsce w świetle aksjologii zrównoważonego rozwoju* – 2006<sup>6</sup>), J. Czerny (compare, e.g.: *Aksjologiczne*

<sup>4</sup> Z. Hull, *Aksjologia ekonomii a ekologia*, in: W. Tyburski (ed.), *Ekonomia-Ekologia*, Toruń 1996.

<sup>5</sup> F. Piontek, A.J. Nowak, *Osobowy aspekt wartości w procesie rozwoju*, Bytom 2004; F. Piontek, *Refleksja nad nauką i edukacją w aspekcie urzeczywistniania rozwoju*, in: T. Borys (ed.), *Edukacja dla zrównoważonego rozwoju*, Jelenia-Góra-Białystok 2006; F. Piontek, B. Piontek, *Teoria rozwoju*, Warszawa 2016.

<sup>6</sup> A. Papuziński, *Polityka edukacyjna na rzecz zrównoważonego rozwoju w Polsce w świetle aksjologii zrównoważonego rozwoju*, in: K. Kalka, A. Papuziński (eds), *Etyka*

*podstawy ekonomii i biznesu – 2004*<sup>7</sup>), or A. Skowroński (compare, e.g.: *Wartości ekologiczne dla zrównoważonego rozwoju – 2003*<sup>8</sup>).

These works present an interesting and inspiring combination of economic, social, environmental and technical considerations with axiological reflections, but still leave many open problems and controversies. They mainly concern the problem of the general definition of development and constructed on this basis a system of derivative concepts, for example 'ecodevelopment', 'balanced development', 'intelligent development', or any conjunctions of these concepts, such as 'balanced and intelligent development'. When trying to define development in general terms authors still raise doubts about the possibility of establishing a general sense of the term. The systemic downside of these discussions is their 'sectorial' nature, very often generating substantial differences in views on the essence of development. They have a common denominator, namely the claim that this concept is not only undefined and ambiguous, but also *indefinable*, primary, which seems to be more or less a dextrous avoidance of the real problem.

In the light of contemporary knowledge these views are not sufficiently justified if we clearly reveal two constitutive features of the category of development. The first feature is the concept of 'change' or terms synonymous with change (for example, 'the transition from ... to, from one state to another'), although the very concept of change does not reveal its axiological layer (Figure 2). The concept of 'change' is expressed in such phrases as: development is a process of change in the object evaluated positively from the point of view of a specific criterion (or a set of criteria), or in a more elaborate form: the process of the object's transition from less desirable states (less positive, regarded as inferior, less developed forms, less than perfect) to more desirable states (more positive, recognized as better, more developed, to a more perfect form) from the point of view of a specific criterion (or set of criteria). It is therefore presumed here that the later state is better in some ways than the earlier one<sup>9</sup>.

While 'increase' and 'decrease' related to the category of development (for example, economic growth) do not raise major concerns, especially with respect to axiology, two other types of changes, i.e. 'developmental changes' and 'regressive changes' lead us to the fundamental question of positivity or negativity (changes assessed positively or negatively from the point of view

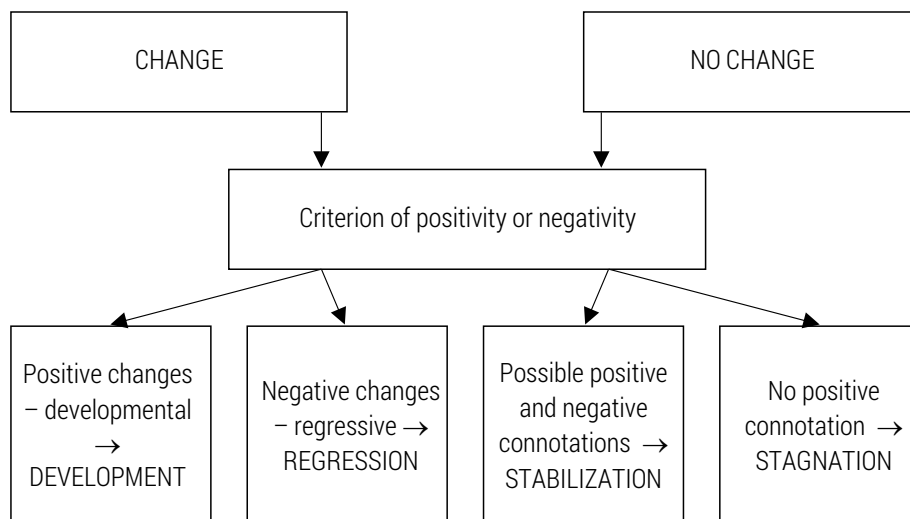
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wobec współczesnych dylematów, Bydgoszcz 2006.

<sup>7</sup> J. Czerny, *Aksjologiczne podstawy ekonomii i biznesu*, Bytom 2004.

<sup>8</sup> A. Skowroński, *Wartości ekologiczne dla zrównoważonego rozwoju*, in: A. Pawłowski (ed.), *Filozoficzne i społeczne uwarunkowania zrównoważonego rozwoju*, „Monografie nr 16 Komitetu Inżynierii Środowiska PAN”, Lublin 2003.

<sup>9</sup> T. Borys, *Kategoria rozwoju a systemy wartości*, in: B. Piontek (ed.) *Rozwój – godność człowieka – gospodarowanie – poszanowanie przyrody*, Warszawa 2007, pp. 107–125.



**Figure 2.** Changes and their positivity (axiological background of development) as the constituting features of development

Source: author's own elaboration. See also: T. Borys, *op. cit.*, p. 108.

of a particular criterion or set of criteria). And the criteria for these assessments provide a basis for the evaluation of the practical aspect of development, that is making a judgment about whether the change means growth or regression, and what the reasons are for such a decision.

The answers to these important questions seem to be difficult, since the premises for this process are also subject to developmental processes. An obvious weakness of judgements distinguishing between growth and regression is the often seen inability to identify the original source of 'positivity' and 'negativity'. The hypothesis proposed in this article is that all the criteria for the assessment of 'positivity' or 'negativity' of changes used in theory and practice are derivatives of a supercriterion, which is a system of values (egocentric or panegocentric) expressing a certain level of human awareness (the actual level of awareness or its illusion)<sup>10</sup>, (Figure 3). Therefore, a decisions on the classification of changes should be made on the basis of an explicit and consciously adopted value system.

<sup>10</sup> Even very popular criteria for the positivity of changes such as 'complexity' or 'desirability' (changes implementing the goals of a development strategy as positive states to be achieved after a certain time) always reflect in fact a certain system of values. This is why the category of 'complexity' cannot be comprehended in absolute terms, because this criterion is arguable without revealing the axiological aspect. For example, 'simplicity' can be a positive value, and development can be understood as 'the process of change towards simplification', as it is with spiritual development.

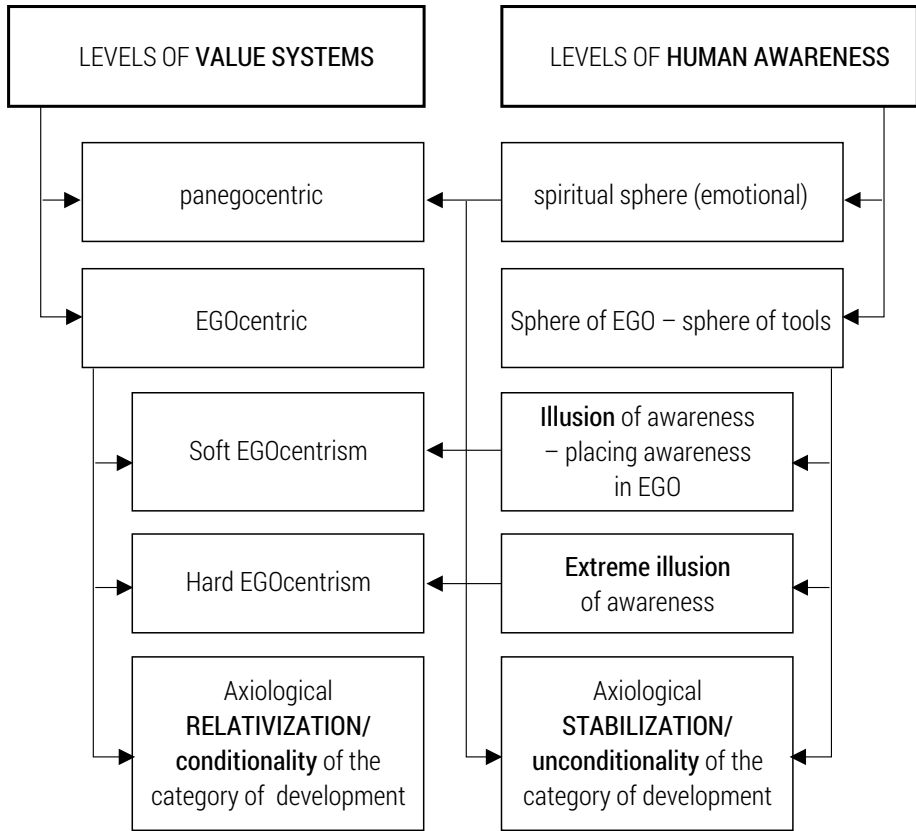


Figure 3. Development as an axiological category

The lack of our awareness as to what system of values we have is not an obstacle to express the view that the concept of development is, in fact, by and large an axiological category (Figure 3). One should be aware of the negative consequences of relativization of development as the effect of the relativization of core values, namely the relativity of good, truth, etc. by questioning their unconditional nature, which is typical for the practical egocentric approach. This shows us a kind of multiple personality disorder (schizophrenia) in the approach to development, revealed in practice by the simultaneous implementation of two or more conflicting concepts of development from the point of view of axiological foundations.

The popularization of the panegocentric approach to development would be extremely beneficial primarily for the reinterpretation of the category of civilization progress by giving development solid foundations – key warm axiological values such as: good (unconditional good), truth (unconditional

truth), love (unconditional love), empathy (unconditional empathy), and honesty (unconditional honesty).

Therefore, the answers to the two fundamental questions:

- does the use of different criteria for the assessment of the positivity of changes make the concept of *development* relative?
- is there one supercriterion determining in a non-relativistic way which change means development and which means regression or just apparent development (or the illusion of it)?

have been in general formulated by linking those answers with two interdependent axiological categories: systems of values and levels of human awareness (Figure 3).

The answers to these questions are also vital for further investigations into the essence of development and the implementation of this category in different specific forms. There is, after all, one supercriterion determining in a non-relativistic way which change means development and which means regression or just apparent development (or the illusion of it). It is – as already mentioned – a panegocentric system of values and the high level of awareness presenting the unconditional values of the emotional sphere. This means that the departure from the dictates of relativism and conditionality in the approach to development and adoption of unconditional value as a primary criterion for the positivity of changes is necessary because the disapproval of this criterion may allow, unfortunately, the implementation of apparent (illusory) development or even antidevelopment.

### Five practices for the explication of the category of development – do they all reflect axiological foundations of 'balanced and intelligent development'?

In recent years, in various disciplines, especially in economic science and applied economics, five fundamental practices for the explication of the general sense of development and its paradigm have emerged. Each of them in a very different way reveals the axiological foundations of this category. For example (compare 'the house of development', Figure 4):

1. The first trend is reflected in the explication of the sphere to which development refers. Here we have a practically unlimited number of explications when we define and use derivative categories of development such as: social development, economic development, spatial development, spiritual development, technical development, etc. For aggregated spheres to which development refers we use, for example, the notion of 'socio-economic development'. This trend, neutral in the axiological



sense, not emphasizing developmental features specific for individual spheres, is characteristic for the 1970s and 1980s, when interest in practical applications of comparative analyses increased rapidly, particularly with respect to multicriteria comparative analyses of development at national and regional levels. This was expressed not only in many attempts to assess development, but also in a vast number of theoretical works, particularly on composite measures, selection of important criteria, and defining the function of preference (ratings)<sup>11</sup>. It should be pointed out, however, that this fascination with the formal aspect of the assessment of development, particularly the aggregation of partial measures, was completely deprived of an axiological background, especially ignoring the fact that the properties of the composite measure (for example, the arithmetic mean and non-linear measures) actually reflect specific concepts of development.

2. The second trend in the explication of the general category of development can be contractually termed benchmarking approaches. The first approach is best expressed by the theory of integrated order. It can be defined as a positive target state of developmental changes (similar to the goal), bringing together component orders in a coherent and consistent way. As previously mentioned, the integrated order is a benchmarking way to express the development pattern or, in other words, the target system of development for developmental changes. This implies that development, for example sustainable development, cannot be identified with integrated order, because the first term refers to a process and the second one refers to the target state of developmental changes. Strategic planning practice distinguishes, depending on the level of management, either three component orders (social, economic and environmental) or four component orders, including institutional-political order within social order or spatial order within environmental order, or five (especially at the local level), where the most evolved form of integrated order is considered, merging the institutional-political order, social order, economic order, environmental order and spatial order. This approach is presented mainly in works by J. Kołodziejski, S. Kozłowski, B. Zaufal, the author of this article and, recently, by M. Burchard-Dziubińska.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Compare e.g.: T. Borys, *Kategoria jakości w statystycznej analizie porównawczej*, „Prace Naukowe AE. Seria Monografie i opracowania” 1984 No. 23; E. Nowak, *Metody taksonomiczne w klasyfikacji obiektów społeczno-gospodarczych*, Warszawa 1990.

<sup>12</sup> J. Kołodziejski, *Koncepcja metodologii kształtowania strategii ekorozwoju w procesach transformacji systemowej*, in: *Europejskie studia bałtyckie*, Gdańsk 1994; S. Kozłowski, *Droga do ekorozwoju*, Warszawa 1994; B. Zaufal, *O potrzebach kodeksu ekorozwoju*, „Aura” 1987 No. 12; T. Borys, *Ład zintegrowany jako punkt docelowy rozwoju zrównoważonego*, in: F. Piontek (ed.), *Zagrożenia cywilizacyjne a kategoria rozwój*, Warsza-

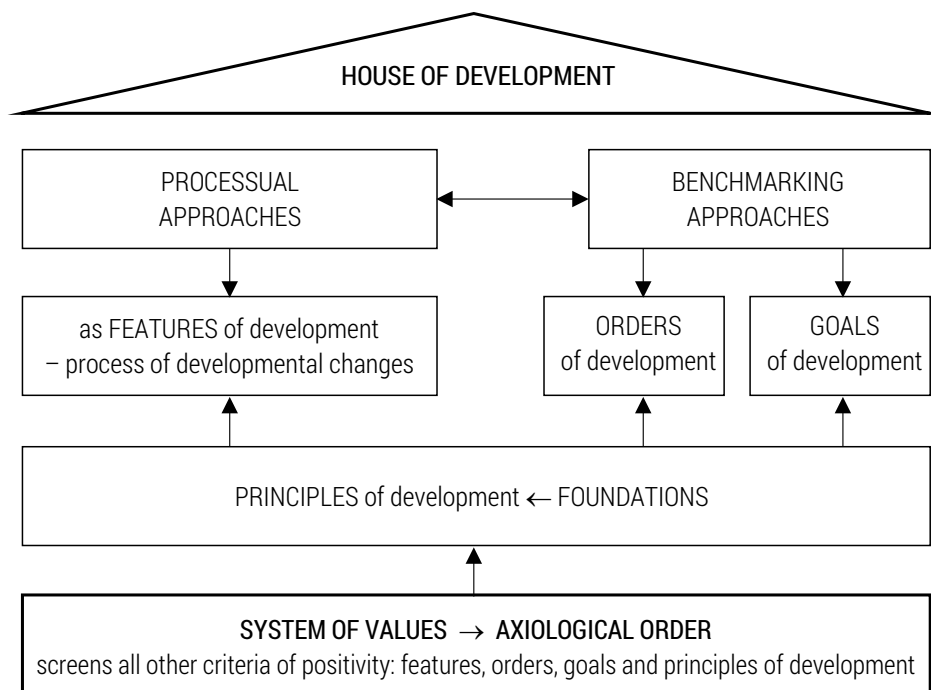


Figure 4. House of development – explication of development and the criteria of the positivity of changes

Of note in the structural foundation for shaping integrated order is a system of strategic goals of ecological, social, economic and spatial natures. The benchmarking approaches have a sound axiological foundation, because both notions of order and goal denominate positive target states of changes taking place or being planned; in the first instance the transition is from disorder to order, and in the second instance from the identified initial state to the target state defined in the structure of goals: the overarching goal (quality of life linked with the vision of development), main goals and operational goals.

3. The third trend is the dominant to date processual approach to the new paradigm of development, referring to its basic positive characteristics, namely *balance* (*Balanced Development*), *durability* (*Durable Development*) and *sustainability* (*Sustainable Development*).

This approach points quite clearly to a link between the new paradigm of development and the vision of human evolution – the development of human

awareness (humanity) as a transformation of *homo oeconomicus* into *homo sustinens*.<sup>13</sup> In the new paradigm of development this emphasis on the panegocentric system of values as the axiological foundation strongly contradicts old paradigms of development in which egocentric systems of values, if disclosed at all, were justified by the downsides of human nature (people by nature are greedy, rapacious and selfish), which is primarily typical of *homo economicus*.

It should be noted that references made in the new paradigm of development to the three aforementioned characteristics of development are still diverse, which often generates artificial problems and unproductive debates.<sup>14</sup> In practice, definitions of this paradigm:

- usually highlight single features of development in the definitions of balanced development (the most popular legislative representation of the paradigm), durable development, and more precisely very durable development, based on the complementarity of capitals, and sustainable development;
  - less often, put emphasis on two features of development, usually in the term 'durable and sustainable development';
  - since 2012<sup>15</sup> increasing approval has been given for the paradigm which is termed integrated order, combining the three above-mentioned complementary features of development: balance, durability and sustainability, while considering a moderate anthropocentrism as an axiological minimum for this concept of development<sup>16</sup>.
4. The fourth trend in the explication of a new development paradigm directly exposes the axiological foundation of development (see Figure 4). It is reflected in the principles of development (the principle of sustainability, durability and the 'mother' principle: intra- and intergenerational justice), and through the disclosure of the subjective aspect of

<sup>13</sup> See also: B. Fiedor, *Antropologiczne podstawy koncepcji zrównoważonego rozwoju z perspektywy ekonomicznej: od homo oeconomicus do homo sustinens*, „Prace Naukowe Akademii Ekonomicznej we Wrocławiu. Ekonomia” 2006 No. 1131, pp. 104–119.

<sup>14</sup> A good example of this is the apparent problems with translating *Sustainable Development* into Polish, because this English term cannot be translated as *rozwój trwały*, *rozwój zrównoważony*, or *rozwój sustensywny (samopodtrzymujący)*, or *ekorozwój* if these terms already have their English equivalents: *Durable Development*, *Balanced Development*, *Sustainable Development* and *Ecodevelopment*.

<sup>15</sup> A. Barczak, T. Borys, *Polski system wskaźników ZR – problemy metodyczne i aplikacyjne*, in: B. Pawełek (ed.), *Modelowanie i prognozowanie zjawisk społeczno-gospodarczych – aktualny stan i perspektywy*, Kraków 2012, pp. 25–39.

<sup>16</sup> T. Borys, *Wybrane problemy metodologii pomiaru nowego paradygmatu rozwoju – polskie doświadczenia*, „Optimum. Studia Ekonomiczne” 2014 No. 3(69), pp. 9–11.

developmental processes. This approach directly refers to human awareness (compare Figure 3), i.e. to the 'warm' categories, particularly:

- responsibility → responsible development;
- maturity → mature development,
- wisdom → wise development,
- intelligence → intelligent development,
- fairness → fair development,

or the category of 'awareness' itself, generating the concept of aware development. An example of thinking about development in terms of responsibility is the government document *Założenia Strategii na rzecz Odpowiedzialnego Rozwoju/Assumptions of the Strategy for Responsible Development*, which is meant to be the 'main tool for the flexible management of development processes in Poland'<sup>17</sup>. In the subjective approach to development some values assigned to this category clearly indicate the soundness of the axiological foundations of development. It applies to a situation when development is attributed with wisdom, fairness, responsibility or other 'warm' values. As with the notion of 'smart development', the high axiological level of development is not clearly predetermined, because it is not always clear what kind of intelligence is meant here: emotional, cognitive, intuitive, or intelligence based on 'warm' values – feelings/virtues, or intelligence integrating all these types.

5. The last observed trend in the explication of the new paradigm of development is reflected in creating combined definitions and notions, encompassing features of development, but also accentuating other values important for the new paradigm of development, especially those stemming from the subjective approach to developmental processes, that is the quality of life. It is often achieved by a quite random addition of other values (categories) in a non-systematized way. This approach does not emphasize in a systematized way the human role in development, that is the quality of human life directly linked with the level of human awareness (the preoccupation of this awareness with 'warm' values). One example of such a definition is the category of 'balanced and intelligent development' used in the title of this article. In this case we are dealing with the transfer of the axiological foundations of 'balanced development', i.e. at least a moderate anthropocentrism (accepted as the minimum axiological requirement) into 'smart development' in conjunction with 'balanced development'.

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<sup>17</sup> *Założenia strategii na rzecz odpowiedzialnego rozwoju*, Warszawa, 17 May 2016, p. 1.

## Conclusions

The article demonstrated that the disclosure of the axiological foundations in the category of 'balanced and intelligent development' mentioned in the title can only result from:

- a broad-based approach to the 'axiology of development';
- the presentation of this 'composite' category in the context of five fundamental practices identified in the paper for the explication of the general notion of the category of development as well as its paradigm.

As shown here, each of these practices reveals in a very different way the axiological foundations of 'development', but they still provide a quite insightful and complementary overview of the new development paradigm, represented, for example, by the concept of balanced and intelligent development.

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