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The Dynamic Nature of the Common Good as a Rudimentary Condition for Maintaining Social Resilience

DYNAMICZNY CHARAKTER DOBRA WSPÓLNEGO JAKO RUDYMENTARNY WARUNEK ZACHOWANIA REZYLIENCJI SPOŁECZNEJ

Streszczenie

Długotrwały, harmonijny i w końcu zrównoważony rozwój dobra wspólnego zależy od wielu determinant. Równoważenie czynników destabilizujących trwałość zróżnicowanych dóbr wspólnych odbywa się przy kształtowaniu rezyliencji społecznej, którą w niniejszym opracowaniu analizuje się najpierw z perspektywy dynamicznej koncepcji człowieka, a następnie w uwarunkowaniach dynamiki świata społecznego. Poglębienie i rozszerzenie koncepcji dobra wspólnego dokonało się ze względu na środowiskowe podstawy sprężystości społecznej, na tyle istotne dla życia społecznego, że pod względem etyczno-społecznym nauki socjologiczne wykazują uwarunkowania wyłaniania się zasady zrównoważonego rozwoju jako jednej z wielu szczegółowych pryncypiów etyczno-społecznych w katolickiej nauce społecznej. Zabezpiecza ona właściwe pojmowanie współzależności społeczno-środowiskowych, warunkowanych wdrażaniem zróżnicowanych czynników wynikających ze zmiennych procesów gospodarczych. Przechodząc od ogólnie rozumianych ujęć teoretycznych w naukach socjologicznych do praktyki społecznej, w artykule stwierdza się zrównoważoność dobra wspólnego, z jednej strony innowacyjną cechą *bonum commune* ze względu na pojawianie się kategorii sprężystości i rezyliencji społecznej w naukach ekonomicznych i we współzależnościach środowiskowo-gospodarczych. Z drugiej strony rezyliencję społeczną w nurcie filozofii społecznej dobrze tłumaczą klasyczne odniesienia do ujęć teoretycznych: polityczno-prawnych, społeczno-gospodarczych, historyczno-dynamicznych i aprioryczno-normatywnych. Filozofia społeczna stanowiąca życiodajne źródło dla katolickiej nauki społecznej wobec koncepcji rozwoju gospodarczego bywa wysoce marginalizowaną perspektywą etyczną. Następstwem braku sprzężenia zwrotnego etyki

społecznej z dynamiką rozwoju gospodarczego są lokalne lub bardziej globalne perturbacje dobra wspólnego.

Słowa kluczowe: rezyliencja społeczna, sprzężystość, dobro wspólne, zasada zrównoważonego rozwoju, filozofia społeczna

Introduction

Social resilience is a category appearing more and more widely in the broader social sciences, mainly in psychology, but also in sociology, both in scientific discourse and in colloquial use. The concept of resilience (German: “Resilienz”) is used to denote the ability to maintain the continuity of economic institutions in the context of crisis conditions arising in socio-cultural and economic life and as a result of environmental disasters. The term resilience emerges especially after the resilience limits of the actors of economic life have been exceeded, when social and related economic and ecological damage occurs. Ultimately, resilience is meant to ensure human endurance in the context of one’s relationship to the social structure and economic conditions resulting, for example, from the disruption of supply chains.¹ Therefore, resilience in this study is analysed more from the perspective of the interdependence of social units (sociology) than the psychological processes taking place within a social unit (psychology).

The article attempts to show the scope and context of the occurrence of the category of *resilience* in selected sociological and social philosophy literature. Using a comparative analysis, social resilience, understood as the flexibility of institutions and the ability to reorganise, is juxtaposed with the personalistic perspective of social science, pointing to the dynamic character of the common good. The legitimacy of using a new social category within the scope of sociological literature is explained by means of an analysis of the concept of the common good from the point of view of Catholic social teaching. Other theoretical approaches, in which the existence of social resilience could be further substantiated and explored, are also used in the presentation of the Christian vision of society.

1. The dynamic concept of man

Society develops as a result of various factors of a material nature, including natural, economic and technical factors. The dynamic conception of man assumes that he develops in pursuit of full perfection subject to determinisms of various kinds,

¹ J. Erbel, *Mniejsze ośrodki nadają ton*, in: J. Szomburg, J.M. Szomburg, A. Leśniewicz, M. Wandałowski (eds.), *Jaka logika rozwoju miast?*, “Pomorski Thinkletter” 1 (2022) 8, p. 43.

which he sometimes finds difficult to subdue, but to which he is able to adapt quickly and continue to plan. Factors of both the natural environment and social institutions can sometimes stand in the way of the achievement of man's aims, who on the one hand recognises the power and superiority of the forces guiding environmental processes and on the other feels the force of social pressure.² From a Christian point of view, man is not indifferent to the circumstances which hinder him from achieving his goals; moreover, psychological sciences state that specific environmental conditions are unfavourable to man's development, hence he must acquire individual and social resilience. Therefore, the rational human being develops psychosocial competences of defence against turbulent factors in the processes of socialisation and in social relations.³ Understood as a purposeful and dynamic system of social relations, society becomes a systemic environment for man in which his personal improvement takes place as a result of his actions in relation to the other subjects of social life. Society then becomes a functional whole directed towards the achievement of the common good through the realisation of individual goods, differentiated by a broad and deep perspective of needs. The quality of the common good thus depends on the variety of personal goods achieved by individuals who, unable to realise their goals on their own, are forced to co-operate socially. Cooperation generates the degree of individual susceptibility to change, and mechanisms of resilience characterise an organisation's ability to respond to stimuli from the environment.⁴

Social cooperation takes place with the application of ethical and social principles, among which the interdependence of the basic principles is systemically recognised: the common good, subsidiarity and solidarity and the specific principles derived from them, which are sometimes – with changing historical and ideological conditions – somewhat more exposed. From the perspective of the interdependence of socio-environmental resilience, the principle of sustainable development has been brought to the fore.⁵

2. Dynamics of the social world

The dynamics of the natural world differ from the social order. By this, Józef Majka means the capacity for development and the possibility of progress, which man owes to his own action and to God, who has endowed man with reason for the organisation of the created world. Referring to the entry from the encyclical *Pacem in terris*,

2 J. Majka, *Filozofia społeczna*, Warszawa 1982, p. 276.

3 K. Piórkowska, *Koncepcja resilience z perspektywy proaktywnych strategii behawioralnych*, "Marketing i Rynek" 5 (2015), p. 812.

4 Ibidem, p. 816.

5 Ł. Marczak, *Zasada zrównoważonego rozwoju. Perspektywa społeczno-etyczna*, Kraków 2021.

Majka observes that the laws that guide nature and the laws that man discovers and is guided by are fundamentally different.⁶ The social order, in the Christian view, is based on the law which the Creator has engraved deep in the heart of man. Thus, the organisation of the world must result from the endowment of man's cognitive dynamism with reason and conscience, and therefore the social order cannot be detached from the moral law.⁷ It ethically concerns the conditions of resilience in a society created from philosophical-ideological assumptions, with military-economic and energy-environmental risks.⁸

The dynamics of the social order consist in the rational organisation of the created world by reference to man's social nature and not, as it would seem, by reference to the laws of nature, which sometimes seem to recoil at the acceptance of the categories associated with naturalistic-biological views. As a result of their occurrence, the social teaching of the Church and the theoretical reflection on this teaching, bringing together various scientific circles, has evolved on the basis of the renaissance of the thought of St Thomas Aquinas.⁹ For Aquinas clearly distinguished between the order of the laws of nature (the natural world) and the order of natural law, i.e., the world of non-intelligent beings and the order organised by man. In the latter, man chooses for himself the means for achieving his intended aims in every dimension of his human existence. The specific dynamics of human action allows man to shape the social order and to overcome emerging crises according to the rational potential he possesses. Indeed, the dynamics of human progress implies the ability to continuously improve one's abilities and to meet emerging problems in the systems: social, economic and environmental.

3. Deepening and broadening the concept of the common good

The progress of civilisation creates circumstances for human improvement and conditions social development. The achievement of new human goals can take place through social progress. This means the continuous improvement of society and its evolution as a result of the development of new areas hitherto remaining inert to man. Civilisational progress has made it possible for man to become familiar with the mechanisms which, on the one hand, have led to social development, but on the other hand have not incorporated all the factors determining progress into the Christian conception of social life. According to Józef Majka, such processes

6 J. Majka, *Filozofia...*, p. 199.

7 S. Kowalczyk, *Człowiek w myśli współczesnej*, Warszawa 1990, p. 429.

8 T. Nowak, *Budowa odporności na obecne i przyszłe zagrożenia o charakterze hybrydowym*, "Roczniki Nauk Społecznych" 14 (50) (2022) 4, p. 30.

9 J. Majka, *Filozofia...*, p. 198.

could be seen in the case of biologism, organicism, the demographic concept, psychologism or economism. This is not to say that many factors did not and do not play a significant role in shaping social life, but it should be noted that these factors influence society from outside and do not constitute a significant element of the social system and its essence. The regularities present in the above-mentioned ideologies can similarly be seen in the case of multidimensional environmentalism, although it is a fact that in some of the activities noticeable in social life, man has exceeded and continues to exceed the limits by destroying the environmental foundations essential for the balance of socio-economic life and the regenerative capacity of ecosystems.¹⁰ Hence, on the one hand, the increasing importance of the value of the natural environment and its reproductive capacity must be recognised; on the other hand, certain external factors affecting social life cannot be included in Christian social concepts. The broadening and deepening of the concept of the common good and its evolution in the context of the spread of ecological trends requires the preservation of the clear presuppositions of Christian social philosophy.¹¹ For society is a system of organised individuals, and specific environmental conditions, both natural and digital, are determinants of the evolution of social philosophy. The evolving concepts of social theories *vis-à-vis* the adaptation of social systems intensify the flexibility of the concept of the common good, in which the integral human being as a human person still remains the central value and the most protected social unit. Natural and physical systems in social ethics still remain subordinated to the good of the person and are susceptible to improvement and development.

4. Environmental basis for social resilience

Resilience is a category considered from the point of view of the natural sciences, explaining the causes of natural disasters of various scales, most often: local, regional and global. The resilience of ecological systems in the face of these often unpredictable events correlates significantly with social systems and economic infrastructure, which, when exposed to the risk of environmental resource scarcity, carry the risk of unbalancing social systems.¹² Resilience, therefore, refers to socio-ecological interactions and the maintenance of long-term socio-economic stability even in the presence of high risks exposing social systems to insufficient or

10 A.J. Sójka, *Europejski Zielony Ład – Unia Europejska od zrównoważonego rozwoju i bezpieczeństwa środowiskowego do ekologizmu*, "Studia Administracji i Bezpieczeństwa" 12 (2022), pp. 128–129.

11 T. Nowak, *Budowa odporności na obecne i przyszłe zagrożenia...*, p. 30.

12 A. Fekete, G. Hufschmidt, *Der menschliche Anteil an einer Katastrophe – Verwundbarkeit und Resilienz*, "Geographische Rundschau" 70 (2018) 7–8, pp. 10–13.

no environmental resources. The category of resilience denotes the process that takes place after the limits of resilience have been crossed and defines the ability of a society to survive in a crisis situation, its temporary adaptation to changed environmental conditions despite significant deviations from a fixed norm.¹³ In extreme environmental conditions, resilience is defined by adaptability combined with flexibility that does not allow for permanent deformation of the social system. Also co-existing with resilience is the term redundancy, denoting the emergence of new systems, hitherto unknown, as a result of exceeding the limits of resilience.¹⁴ The survival of a social system is not associated with routine and stagnation, but with long-term learning and acquiring the ability to temporarily adapt to changing environmental conditions, quickly find a way out of a crisis situation and return to the original state, but at a higher level.¹⁵ This can happen in social life through synergies with digital systems. Resilience therefore points to the potentiality of social systems (subsystems) and their ability to survive in even the most crisis-like conditions, such as the Covid-19 pandemic. The conditions of the principle of sustainability and other principals governing the ecosystem stability and security of social entities, including above all humans, then emerge. Sociological literature calls unfavourable circumstances a turbulent environment and they include not only environmental resources, but also cognitive resources centred around human capital.

In the perspective of environmental threats and the development of technologies that condition economic activity on renewable energy sources, theoretical approaches are developing the concepts of so-called resilient economic agents.¹⁶ They allow the state to manage resilient social capital in the event of environmental catastrophe by focusing attention on acquiring the competences necessary to maintain enterprises in extreme conditions, arising from a deficit of environmental resources, environmental disasters or other risks.¹⁷ The occurrence of extreme environmental turbulence has prompted the inclusion of resilience within the scope of economic concepts, among which *resilience* is accompanied by the category

13 Ch. Walker, Ch.L. Peterson, *A Sociological Approach to Resilience in Health and Illness*, "Journal of Evaluation in Clinical Practice" 24 (2018) 6, pp. 1285–1290.

14 W. Tarelko, *Redundancja jako sposób zwiększenia niezawodności siłowni okrętowych*, "Przegląd Mechaniczny" 11 (2017) 11, pp. 56–61.

15 K. Wojtanowicz, M. Pękała, *O korzyściach płynących z wykorzystania elementów mediacji w obszarze interwencji kryzysowej*, "Ur Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences" 24 (2022) 3, p. 120.

16 Cf. A. Chodyński, *Przedsiębiorstwo sprężyste – odpowiedzialność w skrajnie turbulentnym otoczeniu*, in: D. Fatuła (ed.), *Obszary zrównoważonego zarządzania w zmiennym otoczeniu*, Kraków 2016, pp. 37–51.

17 T. Nowak, *Budowa odporności na obecne i przyszłe zagrożenia...*, p. 32.

of performance (*Effizienz*).¹⁸ Environmental and economic conditions also contribute to calls for the definition of the category of social resilience in the social sciences. Social resilience would be used to signify the degree to which social needs are met and to guarantee the continuity of operations during adverse socio-economic and environmental conditions.

5. From theoretical approaches to social practice

Joseph Schumpeter's theory of creative destruction (*schöpferische Zerstörung*) is usually regarded as the theoretical context for the emergence of the category of *resilience* in sociological literature. The limits of systemic resilience in the German sociological literature are also extensively explained by Niklas Luhman's social systems theory, which methodologically deviates from the concept of the common good as seen from the perspective of Catholic social teaching. Social resilience, as theorised, has become a useful category in the field of concepts related to the concept of sustainability and, according to Markus Vogt and Martin Schneider, this category is linked to a broader view of economic efficiency with environmental issues, mainly in the context of the applicability of renewable electricity. The resilience of energy supply has become an important aspect of the energy transition in Germany.¹⁹ The impetus for understanding the socio-economic resilience of resilience has come from an understanding of public goods, which includes publicly available services that are both non-competitive in their consumption and their use does not deprive other users of their use. Within the scope of public goods, the environment has also emerged, which, as technology advances and issues of climate change predispose it to be an important factor in energy provision and the degree of energy citizenship.²⁰ As social practices related to the use of renewable energy become more widespread, new theoretical approaches and new social categories are also emerging, which are, as it were, a sign of the socialisation of the natural environment, since economic action in the use of technologies based on renewable energy resources is gradually becoming dependent on environmental conditions.²¹

18 P. Banaszyk, *Rezyliencja ekonomiczna i model biznesu przedsiębiorstwa logistycznego*, in: S. Konecka, A. Łupicka (eds.), *Logistyka gospodarki światowej*, Poznań 2022, pp. 26–43, <https://doi.org/10.18559/978-83-8211-106-4/2> [accessed: 10.01.2023].

19 M. Vogt, M. Schneider, *Zauberwort Resilienz. Analysen zum interdisziplinären Gehalt eines schillernden Begriffs*, "Münchener Theologischer Zeitschrift" 67 (2016) 3, p. 186.

20 K.R.S. Hamann et al., *Interdisciplinary Understanding of Energy Citizenship*, Leipzig 2022.

21 L. Olsson et al., *Why Resilience is Unappealing to Social Science: Theoretical and Empirical Investigations of the Scientific Use of Resilience*, "Science Advances" 4 (2015) 1, DOI: 10.1126/sciadv.1400217.

In this way, through human labour, the environment becomes socialised, and such a process is justified in the resilience of enterprises, which also implies the need to determine the energy risks associated with potential changes in external conditions, which are important indicators of the functioning of certain economic entities dependent on environmental resources.²² Stability is then governed by the principle of sustainability containing an ethical reference to the concept of multiple and diverse common goods resiliently interacting.²³

6. Sustainable common good

The contemporary understanding of social resilience in the context of the concept of the common good permits noting the premises of balancing determinants of the common good. Its systemic sustainability together with the concept of resilience is explained by the concepts of the common good: political-legal, socio-economic, historical-dynamic and *a priori*-normative.²⁴ The primary goal of each of these ethical perspectives of the common good is the realisation of integral human development, and sustainable development in an external and intergenerational perspective can then contribute to the perfection of the human person.²⁵ The realisation of the goals of sustainable development is then primarily a political-legal perspective finding exemplification in socio-economic processes. The sustainability of the common good is not limited to these concepts, as the mainly inductive axionormative plane of the common good allows its flexibility to be noticed.²⁶ The dynamic character of the common good is due to its intrinsic (immanent) references, which are discovered most in historical-dynamic and *a priori*-normative conceptions. It is in these dimensions that the common good is systemically structured in the identity of social individuals and entire social groups invariably pursuing objectives aimed, on the one hand, at the preservation of a correct understanding of the concept of the human person and, on the other hand, at the development of external (instrumental) conditions that allow the human person to perfect himself. Social resilience, therefore, derives from the integrity of the concept of the common good from the *a priori*-normative, through the historical-dynamic and on to the socio-economic. Ultimately, the harmony of these areas is noticeable in the politico-legal order and

22 J.W. Moore, D.E. Schindler, *Getting Ahead of Climate Change for Ecological Adaptation and Resilience*, "Science" 376 (2022) 6600, pp. 1421–1426.

23 M. Vogt, M. Schneider, *Zauberwort Resilienz...*, p. 189.

24 S. Fel, *Dobro wspólne jako wartość i zasada etyczno-społeczna. Perspektywa katolickiej nauki społecznej*, "Zeszyty Naukowe KUL" 64 (2021) 1–2, pp. 121–136.

25 J. Höffner, *Chrześcijańska nauka społeczna*, trans. S. Pyszka, Kraków 1993, pp. 15–21.

26 H. Joas, *Powstawanie wartości*, trans. M. Kaczmarczyk, Warszawa 2009, pp. 251–289.

the emerging civic energy socialising the environment's hitherto non-material wealth. This happens harmoniously and sustainably, provided that the relevant ethical and social principles are applied.

The coherence of the above-mentioned dimensions significantly influences the maintenance of social resilience and individual endurance, both in the economic or environmental dimension and in the psychological dimension integrating man internally at a higher level of personal development. This process takes place together with an integral understanding of the immanent and instrumental common good. In such a justification, the common good, on the one hand, remains dynamically variable in its external structure; on the other hand, in its internal structure, the rudimentary condition for maintaining social resilience is the actualisation of the *a priori*-normative plane in the thinking, ethical evaluation and action of the social individual. In these contexts, Catholic social teaching draws attention to the subjectivity of human action, for man himself, through his action, most sustains his structure of identity, values and commitment.²⁷

Thus, a dynamic understanding of the common good implies a continuous but harmonious development, which, however, must not be destabilised by the presence of interpretations of diverse socio-economic or environmental-informational ideas. Social resilience is conditioned by the dynamic character of the common good, when the social unit can independently achieve its own goals insofar as external conditions are created for this. From the point of view of Catholic social teaching, however, the value of the human person is not stabilised by reference to external conditions, but is stabilised by actualisation with an adequate conception of the human person. The *a priori*-normative presuppositions provide a platform for stable reference and resilient adaptation to external conditions, which in the logic of the principle of the common good are first immanent and then instrumental. This is because socially, the goals of sustainable development are pursued and the effectiveness of achieving a systemic balance will depend on invoking the status of the human being as a social unit and supreme value above all other values. The external conditions of instrumentally pursued goals must not undermine the stability of the human person – the development potential of the human being and the guarantee of its sustainability, however, are realised within the limits of the preservation of the conditions of the common good. Social resilience then applies to widely differing values, which should remain in appropriate norms that are ethically proportional to one another.

27 J. Krucina, *Wznoszenie wartości podstawowych*, Wrocław 2007, pp. 49–70.

Conclusion

The interpretation of social resilience demands a subjective understanding of man pursuant to the principle of subsidiarity, of his social nature subject to the principle of solidarity in the reality of the common good. Among other specific principles of social ethics, the principle of sustainable development is gradually becoming more and more desirable for the application of a social principium which, in the external conditions of technological progress, will still be sufficiently effective in impeding developmental dynamics to not only preserve the integral structure of man, but even more effectively ensure the regenerative capacity of environmental systems and ecosystems managed by free man. Social resilience understood in this way derives from the dynamic character of the common good, in which free man must remain a subject of rights to the exclusion of all conditions that would reduce his understanding to a mere passive object, as can be exposed by natural sciences and materialist approaches to the concept of a human being deprived of the limits of freedom, e.g., when artificial intelligence systems take over the dominant role. In this case, not only classical Catholic social teaching, but also Christian social ethics opposes the tendency to deprive man of the ability to decide freely about himself and to organise social life, even if the level of technological development is so high that man could already be replaced by a machine or a digital system that makes decisions for him. In the emerging model of energy citizenship, a rudimentary condition for the preservation of normatively integrated social resilience is the dynamic character of the common good and the appropriately defined limits of human freedom.

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THE DYNAMIC NATURE OF THE COMMON GOOD AS A RUDIMENTARY CONDITION FOR MAINTAINING SOCIAL RESILIENCE

Summary

Long-term, harmonious and finally sustainable development of the common good depends on many determinants. Balancing the factors destabilising the durability of diverse common goods takes place while shaping social resilience, which in this study is analysed first from the perspective of the dynamic concept of man, and then in the conditions of the dynamics of the social world. Deepening and expanding the concept of the common good took place due to the environmental foundations of social resilience, which are so important for social life that in terms of ethics and social science, sociological sciences show the conditions for the emergence of the principle of sustainable development as one of many detailed ethical and social principles in Catholic social thought. It ensures proper understanding of socio-environmental interdependencies, conditioned by the implementation of various factors resulting from changing economic processes. Moving from generally understood theoretical approaches in sociological sciences to social practice, the article states the sustainability of the common good, on the one hand, an innovative feature of *bonum commune* due to the emergence of the category of resilience and social resilience in economic sciences and in environmental and economic interdependencies. On the other hand, social resilience in the current of social philosophy is well explained by classic references to theoretical approaches: political and legal, socio-economic, historical-dynamic and *a priori*-normative. Social philosophy, which is a life-giving source for Catholic social thought in the face of the concept of economic development, tends to be a highly marginalised ethical perspective. The consequence of the lack of feedback between social ethics and the dynamics of economic development are local or more global perturbations of the common good.

Keywords: social resilience, resilience, common good, principle of sustainable development, social philosophy

Author's note

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Cytowanie

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