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WELLBEING – CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND AND RESEARCH PRACTICES

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The term wellbeing was introduced with the Gross National Product concept (understood as welfare) and then with the *Bruntland Commission Statement*, together with the concept of sustainable development. It gained momentum after the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (2003, 2005), which opened a new field for interdisciplinary projects. The MEA concept means linking wellbeing to ecosystem services and to sustainable development, looking upon them as inextricable elements of one global process, which are necessary to ensure "our common future". Although the term wellbeing is used very frequently in research and literature, there is a lot of confusion about the content of its meaning. It is sometimes understood in purely economic terms, based on the MEA (2005) definition, from a medical/health point of view or in the socio-psychological way – as the fulfilment of needs or happiness. The article above is an attempt to present the main issues of conceptual background and research practices for wellbeing. The author begins with a conceptual background moving on to the research of wellbeing. The last part of the article gives an overview of participant disciplines (their methodologies and perspectives), the main research topics, and finally – the main gaps in contemporary research and challenges for future ones.

Keywords: wellbeing, subjective wellbeing, methodologies, research practice

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INTRODUCTION

The term *wellbeing* appeared in the 1930s together with the concept of Gross National Product (GNP) and then – seen from a different perspective – with the Bruntland Commission Statement introducing the idea of sustainable development (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987). It gained momentum after the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MEA) (2003, 2005), which opened a new platform for interdisciplinary projects. The MEA concept is linking wellbeing to ecosystem services and to sustainable development, looking upon them as inextricable elements of one global process, which are necessary to ensure "our common future".¹

Although the term wellbeing is used very frequently in research and literature, there is a lot of confusion about what it really means.

The article above is an attempt to present the main issues of conceptual background and research practices for wellbeing. The last part of the article gives an overview of participant disciplines (their methodologies and perspectives), the main research topics, and finally – the main gaps of contemporary research and challenges for future ones. The author will focus on *wellbeing* only, without going deeper into *wellness* literature, which must be subject to independent research.

WELLBEING – CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND

The wellbeing of nations was first analysed through monetary valuation. It got formal status in the 1930s, with the introduction of the term Gross National Product (GNP), in order to talk about the money value of a nation's output (Shea, 1976). The author of the concept – Simon Kuznets, was an economist. GNP was soon transformed to Gross Domestic Product (GDP), which is actually used to represent the value of services and goods produced in a given country. It is basically agreed that the more money is earned and spent, the higher the goodness & wellbeing of a given nation and its citizens is. Generalizing, a country with low GDP must be worse off than one with high GDP (Cummins, Eckersley, Pallant, Van Vugt, & Misajon, 2003, p. 160). The science of economics was seen "as nearest the core of any problem concerning the quality of life because the quality of life of any individual or community can in a direct and simple way be related to income" (Wilson, 1972, p. 131). In a certain sense, this is undeniably true. Rich countries can afford better education or health care for their citizens than those with low GDP (Lai, 2000), but in reality the distribution of national income and its impact on personal wealth is diversified. In many countries with high

¹ The notion of "our common future" comes from the WCED publication introducing the philosophy of sustainable development: "Our common future", Oxford University Press, Oxford.

GDP, the personal income of most citizens does not correspond to the average national numbers (Prescott, 2001). Also, even when GDP is applied to Western nations that have a high average standard of living, it doesn't succeed as a relative measure of citizens' wellbeing (Shea, 1976; Redefining Progress, 1995; Eckersley, 1998; Cummins et al., 2003).

Basically GDP is only the juxtaposition of products and services bought and sold. It does not distinguish transactions and activities that are positive to wellbeing from those that are not (Redefining Progress 1995). In terms of GDP, spending money for cigarettes or fast food will contribute to wellbeing while not spending – will not. GDP also disregards the real cost of living (housing, transport or entertainment), respect or freedom, and is totally insensitive to moral and cultural values, quite important for subjective wellbeing perceptions (Shea, 1976). What is more, while GDP has risen over the last years in Western countries, there was no rise in subjective wellbeing indicators (Eckersley, 2000; Cummins et al., 2003). The literature "proving" links between wealth and self-perceived wellbeing remains open to criticism (Gardner & Oswald, 2007, p. 3).

As GDP is inadequate for measuring wellbeing, alternative – but still – economic indices have been proposed. An example can be the Genuine Progress Indicator (GPI) that distinguishes negative expenditures from positive ones (Halstead, 1998; Hamilton, 1998), or the Human Development Index (HDI) (Lai, 2000) that broadens traditional economic indices to population longevity and education (Cummins et al., 2003, p. 161). HDI attributes equal weight to three variables: GDP, literacy and life expectancy (UNDP, 2003). But still there is no distinction with reference to the real power of money – how much one can buy with an average income in regard to daily accommodation, food, holiday, entertainment etc. Without doubt, when talking about the GDP/ money impact on someone's wellbeing, the real power of money will have an important impact. The real value of a dollar will be different in Norway, where the price of a hamburger in a fast food chain is ten times higher than the same food in the same chain in Poland or Lithuania.

The concept of *capabilities* introduced by the economist A. Sen (1985) is the proposition of thinking about wellbeing in a broader way than purely the economic one. The concept has been developed into *capability approach* – a platform that brings together economic, social and political analyses. Individual wellbeing is seen in the space of *capabilities* which contains 3 main dimensions: functioning, capabilities and agency. The approach has become very influential in the interpretation of social and economic development in the world (Deneulin & McGregor, 2009, p. 1). The question of values is presumed

to be central, although the literature based on *capability* does not say much about the reasons, origins or transformation of those.

Social sciences present three of the most important philosophical approaches when determining wellbeing (Brock, 1993; Diener & Suh, 1996). The first one relates the good life to normative ideals (religious, cultural, philosophical etc.). In this sense wellbeing may be derived from helping other people, as this is advised by cultural norms or religious beliefs (Diener & Suh, 1996, p. 189). The second approach is based on the individual's preferences and satisfaction. The third one looks at the problem in terms of the individual's experiences. In this perspective, if somebody feels their life to be satisfactory, it is assumed to be so (Land, 1996).

The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment used many indicators of human wellbeing (Carpenter et al., 2009) to finally define wellbeing as a multivariate state comprising 5 dimensions:

- 1) Health,
- 2) Basic material for a good life,
- 3) Good social relations,
- 4) Security, and
- 5) Freedom of choice and action.

Poverty is seen as the extremal deprivation of wellbeing (MEA, 2005).

The inclusion of population wellbeing & welfare & happiness measures, based not only on monetary indices, has given rise to numerous approaches of social functioning, the so-called – Social Indicators (SI) (Cummins et al., 2003). SI have been described as a "statistic of direct normative interest which facilitates concise, comprehensive and balanced judgments about the condition of major aspects of a society" (U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, 1969, p. 97). The idea was to create categories that could show quantities and / or frequencies and can be verified by different people in different places. The popularity of SI occurred at the same time while the positive impact of economic growth was being questioned, arguing that more is not always better (Land, 1996). Diener and Suh (1996, p. 193-194) talk about several strengths of SI, such as objectivity, the fact that they often reflect the normative ideals, and that by involving indices from different domains of life, they are able to catch whole aspects of societal wellbeing, also those not related to economic ones. The weakness of SI is first their fallibility, the fact that they "are usually selected in an ad hoc fashion, constantly creating controversies among researchers as to which variables to choose and how they should be weighted" (Diener & Suh, 1996, p. 197) and that the selection of measures and weights is always a subjective decision. Life quality of given nations may be

ranked very high, or just the opposite – as very low, since the interpretation totally depends on the selection and weighting of measures. An example of this can be found in the research done by Becker, Denby, Mc Gill, and Wilks (1987), who researched life quality in 329 metropolitan areas in the USA. Another confusing fact is that people attribute different importance to the same indicators. Also, as Diener and Suh (1996, p. 197) pointed out "as goals and means to those goals are often assessed simultaneously in many social indicators studies, it is difficult to determine whether means indicators are the cause or an effect of the referred phenomenon".

An important methodological question is also, whether to use the individual indicators separately or if it is better to use a combination of indicators (general index)?

Diener (1995) proposed an index of life quality based on values (QOL). QOL is based on the structure of values introduced by Schwartz (1994), who elaborated a configuration of 45 universal, ethic values arranged around a two-dimensional circular structure consisting of 7 "pie-shaped value regions" such as Intellectual Autonomy, Affective Autonomy, Mastery, Harmony, Hierarchy, Conservatism and Egalitarian Commitment (Diener & Suh, 1996, p. 198). In order to ensure equal representation, the QOL scale was built by taking from each of the "7 value regions" two variable samples. Diener used indices from the *1991 Demographic Yearbook* (United Nations, 1992), the *Compendium of Social Statistics and Indicators* (United Nations, 1991) and the *World Development Report 1994* (World Bank, 1994). The QOL Index contains two independent indices – the Basic QOL Index (better for measuring the life quality in poor societies), and the Advanced QOL Index (adapted for wealthy ones).

The largest defect of SI is related to the fact that objective measures do not always show people's real feeling of their wellbeing (Andrews & Withey, 1976; Campbell, Converse, & Rodgers, 1976). Much research proved that objective factors were related with an individual's declared level of perceived wellbeing to a very limited degree only (Campbell et al., 1976; Diener & Suh, 1996, p. 199-200).

While Cummins et al. (2003) include into their survey the category of "state of environment", Prescott (2001) gives the same weight and rights to the environment and humans, stating that "The underlying hypothesis of wellbeing assessment is that a sustainable development is a combination of human wellbeing and ecosystem wellbeing. Human wellbeing is a requirement for sustainability because no rational person would want to perpetuate a low standard of living. Ecosystem wellbeing is a requirement because the ecosystem supports life and makes possible any standard of living. Although trade-

-offs between the needs of people and the needs of ecosystems are unavoidable, they must be limited" (p. 4).

He introduced the category of "ecosystem wellbeing" defining it as: "a condition in which the ecosystem maintains its diversity and quality – and thus its capacity to support people and the rest of life – and its potential to adapt to change and provide a wide range of choices and opportunities for the future".

Human wellbeing is understood as: "a condition in which all members of society are able to determine and meet their needs and have a large range of choices to meet their potential." (Prescott, 2001, p. 5).

Most authors (e.g. Allardt, 1993; Prescott, 2001; Hall, Scott, & Gössling, 2013; Tuula & Tuuli, 2015) argue for an extensive understanding of wellbeing, which can be achieved by involving the needs of the environment. When studying wellbeing, one must also research the dependencies between the material level of people's life with the biological and physical environment.

SUBJECTIVE WELLBEING – CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND

The theory of wellbeing based on needs was proposed by sociologist Erik Allardt (1990). As wellbeing was described through the fulfilment of particular needs, thus needs constitute the dimensions of wellbeing (Allardt, 1976, pp. 228, 230). Allardt has distinguished three core needs that constitute the wellbeing of humans in each culture and nation, such as:

- 1) Having,
- 2) Loving,
- 3) Being,

thus only the first pillar is related to monetary perspective. *Doing* was seen by Allardt (1993, p. 89-91) as one of the *Being* components, while Tuula and Tuuli (2015) involved *Doing* as a fourth, independent pillar, expanding the wellbeing definition. Following Allardt and Uusitalo's work (1972, p. 11), they distinguish material versus – non-material needs, and interpersonal versus intrapersonal ones (p. 170). The article concludes with a call for research.

An important question for the research of wellbeing is whether SWB is based on environmental factors or rather on personal ones? The answer will lead to the most common distinction of wellbeing approaches used in academic literature, introduced by Waterman (1993), which is the one between *hedonic* and *eudaimonic* accounts (Blackmore, 2009, p. 4). The *eudaimonic* ones highlight the quality of social life and community engagement as the key factors contributing to human wellbeing. They acknowledge that SWB is based on the reali-

sation of the individual's deep potential and has also to do with worthwhile engagement (Ryan & Deci, 2001). An example of this can be the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) proposed by Ryan and Deci (2000). SDT is based on the conditions related to the social context that stimulates the processes of healthy psychological development, self-motivation, and wellbeing. It identifies three core needs – the needs for *autonomy* (Deci, 1975), *relatedness* (Baumeister & Leary, 1995) and *competence* (White, 1965; Harter, 1978), which are supposed to be fundamental for best functioning of the natural predispositions for social integration and personal development, but also for personal wellbeing (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 68). SDT takes into consideration both – the personal positive developmental tendencies, and the socio-environmental ones that are disruptive toward them. The theory proposes that some social events, related to the contextual feeling of personal competence, can enhance intrinsic motivation for given actions. Ryan and Deci underline that environmental factors impede or weaken social functioning, self-motivation, and personal wellbeing, but describe them in terms of preventing from accomplishing the three basic psychological needs.

The hedonic approaches focus on the individual's happiness. Wellbeing is seen as achieving the maximum of *own* pleasure and avoidance of *own* pain. The discussion focuses on what makes *us* happy, not how we contribute to other people's happiness. A key issue is the role of affective (e.g. lottery winning, parenthood, religion) and cognitive (self-predisposition) components of wellbeing, and the correlations between them.

The affective components are seen as extrinsic, and the cognitive as intrinsic ones. Socio-cultural values and extrinsic circumstances with time are taking the form of personal ones and influence self-motivations (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 70). "Human beings can be proactive and engaged or, alternatively, passive and alienated, largely as a function of the social conditions in which they develop and function" (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 68). A basic need, with no difference if it is a psychological or physiological one, is an energizing state that is determinative for best experience and personal wellbeing. If the basic needs are not fulfilled, it can even lead to pathologies and so-called ill-being.

The hedonic point of view could be considered as selfish and contradictory to the wellbeing of others, future generations and the environment, although numerous researches argue that responsible, prosocial behaviours are important, also from a hedonic point of view (Thoits & Hewitt, 2001; Brown & Kasser, 2005; Blackmore, 2009). Being pro-social may have a positive impact on self-confidence and support the feel-

ing of competence. As a result, it fulfils a key psycho-social need (Ryan & Deci, 2001).

The role of being pro-social is also underlined in Ryff and Keyes (1995) multidimensional model of wellbeing. The model includes six separate elements of positive psychological functioning, which encompass a breadth of wellness. One of them is *Positive Relations with Others*. The other five are: *Purpose in Life*, *Environmental Mastery* (understood as the ability to positively manage one's own life and have impact on the surrounding world), *Self-Acceptance* (positive evaluation of oneself and one's past life), *Personal Growth* (perceived continued growth and development as a person), and – *Autonomy* (self-determination).

In order to centralize the personal role of individuals in sustainable development Chambers (1997) introduced the *responsible wellbeing* concept. Chamber's vision of wellbeing is not individualistic, but it involves an individual perspective of each person as deeply grounded in a particular social and cultural context. Key principles of *responsible wellbeing* are sustainability and equity, seen not as a cost to individual wellbeing, nor as a conflict with someone's personal goals (Chambers, 2005, p. 193). It is just the opposite – the SWB is supposed to strengthen when it is added to equity and sustainability. *Responsible wellbeing* "recognizes obligations to others, both those alive and future generations, and to their quality of life." (Chambers, 2005, pp. 193-194). The concept of *responsible wellbeing* is close to *eudaimonia*, which describes it as "worthiness rather than happiness and pleasure" (Blackmore, 2009, p. 4) and to Prescott's (2001) vision of human and ecosystem wellbeing contributing to sustainable development.

Wellbeing dimensions are difficult to capture as they are all context-oriented. S. White (2009, p. 4) proposes two wellbeing lines such as: *doing well* (objective measures) → *feeling good* (subjective measures) and *doing good* → *feeling well* (subjective measures). The first one is typical of western societies where good material status is often understood as a key determinant of wellness. The second one is supposed to be mostly observed in developing countries, where "living the good life" means having good relations with other people, believing in God and making people happy.

In order to clarify the positive ranges of values in human wellbeing, Cummins (1998) built The Theory of Subjective Wellbeing Homeostasis (Cummins, 1998; Cummins & Nistico, 2002). Homeostasis is performed at an abstract level, and can be illustrated by the standard question "How satisfied are you with your life as a whole?" The response reflects the general state of subjective happiness & wellbeing of the respondent, which is supposed to be exactly the stage at which the homeostatic system will operate. On a scale where 100 shows full

satisfaction with life, and zero shows total dissatisfaction, an average set-point for most people is usually between 50-100, thus it is rather positive on the scale range (Cummins, Gullone, & Lau, 2002). For western countries' inhabitants, the average is 75 (Cummins et al., 2003, p. 162).

The homeostatic system builds a positive sense of life, which is always deeply personalized. It talks about the general state only and concerns the individual, the perceived state of wellbeing of the person making the assessment. As a result, people can believe they are "superior" or "inferior" to others, better or worse than average, more moral, happier or more lucky (Dodge & Kahn, 1931; Andrews & Withey, 1976; Headey & Wearing, 1988, 1989; Diener, Such, Lucas, & Smith, 1999; Cummins et al., 2003). Such positive self-perception is an added value, being a part of "positive bias" (or the opposite: negative bias, when such a comparison does not give positive results), which results in a general positive (or negative?) self-view (Taylor & Brown, 1988; Weinstein, 1989; Cummins et al., 2003; Marmot, 2004). The Theory of Subjective Wellbeing Homeostasis can be an explanation of low level of life satisfaction declared by many citizens of former socialist countries, expressed in the preferences in parliamentary or presidential elections, showing nostalgia for "the good old times" and complaining about financial misery of contemporary ones. While economic indicators prove a growth in the relative income of the majority, including the complaining ones, the comparison with others has changed dramatically. People cannot feel better & richer by buying a car or going on holiday abroad, as such expenditures become accessible for a much larger group.

The negative consequences of subjective wellbeing homeostasis will also occur in the case of tourism, creating the so-called *tourism dysfunctions* (Dłużewska, 2009). In many tourist destinations, where hosts are relatively poorer than guests, the comparison would add to the negative bias for host feeling, when they compare their situation with tourists (Peake, 1989; Tosun, 2001a, b; Middleton, 2004).

The question about "life as a whole" is helpful in approaching the homeostatic "set-point" only. It will not go further into which components of life have a positive or negative impact on our wellbeing. To provide more detailed information above, questions and measuring procedures should address particular life domains (Cummins et al., 2003, p. 164).

The discussion then focuses on the identification of domains that should be included in the research of personal wellbeing and the minimal set of domains. One proposition is the Comprehensive Quality of Life Scale (ComQol: Cummins, 1997) which selects seven wellbeing components, such as:

1. Health
2. Standard of living
3. Achievement in life
4. Safety (how safe you feel)
5. Personal relationships
6. Future security
7. Community connectedness

The literature proved that the mean score of satisfaction taken from the domains above, provides information about the level of satisfaction of "life as a whole" (Cummins, 1996). "The domains' mean score and life as a whole score are not, however, expected to be identical, due to the differing levels of abstraction in each" (Cummins et al., 2003, p. 164). The analysis of SWB should be then context-oriented.

WELLBEING – RESEARCH PRACTICES

As wellbeing can be seen from very different perspectives, the range of publications using wellbeing in their title is enormous (between 500 000 to 600 000 indications for the last 15 years, based on different science research platforms). The most numerous are those related purely to economic, medical & health issues and the environment impact. However, still an important number of publications look at wellbeing from the socio-psychological perspective, or involve socio-cultural indicators in the wider understanding of this term.

Systematic research with the use of social indicators was initiated already in the 1970s, much earlier than the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, by two independent studies (Andrews & Withey, 1976; Campbell et al., 1976). Both were done in the USA, both applied subjective indices of wellbeing, involved numerous surveys, and provided an insightful and detailed analysis of the data obtained.

After the publications of Andrews and Withey (1976) and Campbell et al. (1976), numerous researches with surveys based on SI followed. The topics of contemporary research within the framework of wellbeing are from sports participation and emotional wellbeing of adolescents (Steptoe & Butler, 1996), alcohol and drug use disorders (Teesson, Hall, Lynskey, & Degenhardt, 2000), impact of atypical employment (Bardasi & Francesconi, 2004), role of religion (Chamberlain & Zika, 1988; Fry, 2000) up to the wellbeing of humans during the transition to parenthood (Condon, Boyce, & Corkindale, 2004).

SWB questionnaires are often related to or even copied from the methodology of measuring psychological health. An example of such can be the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ) score (Gardner & Oswald, 2007, pp. 5-6). The GHQ combines answers to the following questions, all starting with "Have you recently"?:

1. Been able to concentrate on whatever you are doing?
2. Lost much sleep over worry?
3. Felt that you are playing a useful part in things?
4. Felt capable of making decisions about things?
5. Felt constantly under strain?
6. Felt you could not overcome your difficulties?
7. Been able to enjoy your normal day-to-day activities?
8. Been able to face up to your problems?
9. Been feeling unhappy and depressed?
10. Been losing confidence in yourself?
11. Been thinking of yourself as a worthless person?
12. Been feeling reasonably happy all things considered?

In 1995, in an extensive research project, Cummins proposed 16 estimates of life satisfaction (concerning the populations) typical of Western societies. The surprising finding was that the score averaged to 75 percent of the maximum scale (75% SM) and the average deviation was 2.5% SM only (Cummins et al., 2003, p. 161).

In the article published under the meaningful title "Money and mental wellbeing: A longitudinal study of medium-sized lottery wins" Gardner and Oswald (2007) are trying to answer one of the most typical questions in social sciences, whether money makes us happy? The research was based on longitudinal data on a random sample of the British, who received medium sized lottery wins. The results proved that in the long-term perspective, the expected mechanism: more money – more happiness (in other words: more money – higher level of SWB) is very slight. Gardner and Oswald's (2007) findings are then similar to those of Myers (1992), Diener et al. (1999), Argyle (2001), Nettle (2005), Layard (2005) or Kahneman, Krueger, Schkade, Schwarz, and Stone (2006). Their field research conclusions state that the mechanism: more money – more happiness is very weak or most often does not exist.

An important part of the research addresses different aspects of wellbeing of the elderly generation (e.g. Lawton, 1983; Fry, 2000; Lusardi & Mitchel, 2005). Lawton (1983), looking at the varieties of elderly people's wellbeing, states that it is represented in the impact of the environment, personal behavioural competences, perceived quality of life and psychological estimation, thus by both subjective and objective indicators. The findings were that two dimensions of psychological wellbeing (such as negative and positive affects) are of high importance, but the negative ones are more strongly related with the inner aspects of the individual person, while the positive ones – to the external aspects of the world. The results have supported Bradburn's (1969) two-factor theory. Those two aspects of wellbeing were discussed in relation to

personal causation, introversion – extraversion, neuroticism and life events.

An interesting analysis of the national index of subjective wellbeing was done for Australia (Cummins et al., 2003, p. 159). The Australian Unity Wellbeing Index was created as a new measure of people's satisfaction with their lives in the country and with their own life. The index was based on the subjective wellbeing homeostasis theoretical model. It included two sub-scales of Personal plus National Wellbeing.

Except the personal wellbeing set of 7 questions, the survey included:

National Wellbeing Life in Australia

Domain Inter-correlations

1. Social conditions
2. State of the environment
3. Economic situation

National Sub-domains

1. Wealth/income – distribution
2. Health services
3. Family support

Social Capital

1. Trust in people

Trends

1. Australia (changing for) better
2. Own life (changing for) better

The description refers to the measurement of satisfaction related to selected dimensions. One of the indices of such measurement is the (imaginary) self-distance from the societal / global level attended (Harris & Middleton, 1994).

The research in Australia proved that for some age groups (in case of Australia 36-45 years old) a measure of future security (e.g. for having a job) has an important impact on the level of wellbeing in general (Cummins et al., 2003, pp. 175-176).

The psychological model of mental health argues that wellbeing is strongly affected by positive or negative life events, income or social resources. More recently some authors looked at the role of existential factors such as religiosity and spirituality, finding their crucial role in the SWB (Chamberlain & Zika, 1988). However, the research of the influence of religion is done mostly within the framework of gerontological literature, regarding elderly people only. An example of this can be Fry's (2000) study which examined the contribution of religiosity and its impact of personal meaning of life as predictors of wellbeing. The results showed that the level of satisfaction taken from religion was a significant predictor for the wellbeing of the researched sample. Fry used hierarchical regression analysis.

Within the framework of socio-cultural literature, the linkages between life satisfaction and religiosity are rather obvious and researched abundantly. The results show that religion plays a core role in many societies, thus must have a meaningful impact on people's subjective wellbeing (Rinschede, 1992; Barber, 1991; Vukonic, 1966; Jackowski, 2003; Dłużewska, 2009).

The University of Bath research group on wellbeing in developing countries (WeD), emphasised three interrelated but distinct dimensions of wellbeing: the material, subjective and relational one, deeply depending on the social context and culture (White, 2009). The social context is seen as an important factor in shaping people's aims and perceptions, thus adding meanings to all relationships.

The WeD research confirmed a strong, positive impact of prosocial behaviours on SWB. Living a good and honest life, having good relations with others, were extremely important to people (Blackmore, 2009; Copestake, 2009; Copestake & Campfield, 2009; Deneulin & McGregor, 2009; White, 2009). It also proved that inhabitants of developing countries (e.g. Bangladesh, Ethiopia) are happier than the inhabitants of most western, developed societies. Yet the results call for a discussion about Appadurai's (2004) "capacity to aspire" concept and individual maps of ideas concerning life (White, 2009, p. 6). A frequent conclusion is that poor and not educated inhabitants of those countries are not in a position to estimate whether they are happy enough, thus we must help them to be happier, using our more knowledgeable measures (White, 2009, p. 6).

The western perspective imposing western measures for anybody's wellbeing, is subjected to criticism, mostly by researchers experienced in the research of developing countries (White, 2009; Copestake & Campfield, 2009).

Probably the most extensive review of wellbeing indicators around the world was done by Prescott (2001) in the book "The wellbeing of nations". Prescott (2001) researches different factors that can influence both human and ecosystem wellbeing, e.g. catastrophic events (such as earthquake, tsunami, drought etc.) and selected life events. The book is divided into: the quest for wellbeing and sustainability chapter (with the explanation why we need new indices), the ones about human wellbeing and ecosystem wellbeing, and finally – a chapter about combining ecosystem and human wellbeing. So far the book has had a "double life", and has become more popular as its follow-up project named Environment Change & Security.

The domains analysed for each wellbeing category are much wider than those suggested five years later by the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment. Among human wellbeing domains there are: health, wealth and equity (of the individ-

ual, household and the whole nation), then knowledge, culture, community, peace and order (safety) (pp. 13-58).

To research human wellbeing Prescott is using many components similar to those applied in the Theory of Subjective Wellbeing Homeostasis: e.g. "How far from having nothing – or how close from having it all" (p. 17). Most measures and domains are the same as those proposed by Cummins et al. (2003), although Prescott does not use the same names for them. The main difference is the domain of "Future Security", omitted by Prescott (2001) and considered quite important in Cummins's research results.

Among ecosystem wellbeing domains (2001, pp. 59-106) there are: land quality and diversity, water, air – global atmosphere and local air quality, species and genes – wild and domesticated diversity, resource use – energy, materials and sectors. The chapter contains indices for measuring ecosystem wellbeing, biodiversity and environmental quality, discusses the impact of humans: "the size of foot – or where it's put?" (p. 65), and gives the wellbeing ecosystem index (p. 59).

Prescott (2001) finishes with a pretty large spectrum of domains, presenting an overview of wellbeing for different countries, which could serve as a sustainability guide for most policy makers. He uses five components of the Barometer of Sustainability to measure the human and ecosystem wellbeing stages on a scale of 0-100 p., where Bad (1-20 p.) means unacceptable performance, Poor (21-40 p.) – undesirable, Medium (41-60 p.) – neutral or transitional; Fair (61-80 p.) – acceptable, objectives almost or barely met; and finally – Good (81-100 p.) – desirable performance with fully met objectives.

Prescott indicated the so-called "slow zones" (wellbeing areas) where human and ecosystem wellbeing is better than elsewhere (p. 147), but the general statement is quite pessimistic:

"At present no country is sustainable or even close. Nations with a high standard of living impose excessive pressure on the global environment. Nations with low demands on the ecosystem are desperately poor. No country knows how to be green, without going into the red" (p. 1-2).

CONCLUSIONS

Although the term *wellbeing* is used in different contexts and with different meanings, in all kinds of approaches it focuses on good quality of life. The nature of wellbeing is multi-dimensional. "Wellbeing is open to the whole range of human experience, social, psychological and spiritual as well as material" (Chambers, 2005, p. 193). All this is related to individual needs and perceptions, socio-cultural contexts, religion, values and many other factors.

The conceptual background for wellbeing, in the majority of the literature is based on the economic or psychological perspective, using different methodologies applied in psychological sciences. There are remarkable linkages with economic sciences (including in surveys questions about the monetary situation of individuals and countries). Although monetary valuation is also seen from a subjective perspective (determining if people feel rich, not if they are rich in relative terms only). Despite broad agreement that all measures should be "place focused", relatively little attention is paid to culture and religion. Such a lack of attention to spiritual and cultural issues must be considered an important gap in the research of subjective wellbeing and the main challenge for future ones.

Regarding the theoretical framework and most "call for research" parts of the reviewed articles, there is a broad agreement that the concept of wellbeing must be grounded in our deep dependency on the world that surrounds us (Prescott, 2001; Hirvilammi & Helne, 2014; Tuula & Tuuli, 2015). Numerous authors argue for linking wellbeing to ecosystem services and the sustainable development concept, the same as the MEA suggested. It is commonly accepted that the understanding of wellbeing must respect the interrelation of wellbeing, health and the ecosystems (Tuula & Tuuli, 2015, p. 168). The MEA (2005) opened a new framework for interdisciplinary research linking wellbeing to ecosystem services and sustainable development, but still, in spite of the common interest platform, until recently, most studies were done separately, with no linkages.

There is a broad agreement that wellbeing analysis needs insights from anthropology, not psychology and behavioural studies only. The analysis should focus both on the individual level (more typical for those disciplines) but also on the collective one, thus relating with collective values such as culture (Chiesura, & De Groot, 2003). We should agree with Carpenter et al. (2009) that: "The gaps in knowledge that exist today cannot be addressed through un-coordinated studies of individual components by isolated traditional disciplines".

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Dobrobit – pojmovno utemeljenje i istraživačke prakse

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Pojam dobrobiti uveden je uz pojam bruto nacionalnoga proizvoda (koji se tumači kao blagostanje) te kao rezultat izvješća Bruntland Komisije, zajedno s konceptom održivog razvoja. Zamah je dobio nakon Milenijske procjene ekosustava (MEA, 2003, 2005), koja je otvorila novo područje interdisciplinarnih istraživanja. Koncept MEA povezuje dobrobit s uslugama ekosustava i održivim razvojem, promatrajući ih kao neraskidive čimbenike jedinstvenoga globalnog procesa, koji postaju prijeko potrebni za pravilno vođenje "naše zajedničke budućnosti". Iako se pojam dobrobiti vrlo često rabi u istraživanjima i literaturi, mnogo je nedoumica o njegovu sadržaju i značenju. Dobrobit se ponekad smatra čistom ekonomskom kategorijom na temelju definicije MEA (2005) ili se promatra s medicinsko-zdravstvenoga ili socio-psihološkoga motrišta kao zadovoljavanje potreba ili jednostavno kao sreću. Ovaj članak pokušava predstaviti osnovna pitanja pojmovnog utemeljenja i istraživanja dobrobiti. Autor počinje s pojmovnim obrazloženjem i nastavlja s praksom istraživanja dobrobiti. Zadnji dio članka daje pregled pratećih disciplina (njihovih metodologija i perspektiva), osnovnih istraživačkih tema i na kraju – glavnih praznina unutar suvremenih istraživanja i izazova što ih trebaju rješavati buduća istraživanja.

Ključne riječi: dobrobit, subjektivna dobrobit, metodologije, istraživačka praksa



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