



## ВОПРОСЫ ИСТОРИИ, ТЕОРИИ И МЕТОДОЛОГИИ

## HISTORY, THEORY AND METHODOLOGY OF SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH

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### Synergistically complex social well-being: The trust factor\*

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**Abstract.** In recent decades, the social has acquired a synergistically complex nature (N.I. Lapin), which is caused both by objective determinants of the dynamic development of social, natural and technological realities, potentially increasing the production of various goods and services, and by subjective meanings of the quality of life — in their materialization, an increasing role belongs to the trust factor. Its study is determined by the civilizational crisis of trust, and its underlying causes are rooted in the formation of a qualitatively new “order out of chaos” (I. Prigogine) and in the staging of “mythical narratives” of the desired, “idealized” social well-being (J. Alexander), the false meanings of which destroy traditional values and dehumanize social relations. Under such challenges and scientific approaches to their analysis, the author designs a nationally oriented model of synergistically complex social well-being, based on the system of trust rooted in the genotype of national culture. This model includes the functional basic institutional structures of society, reproduction of traditional values of interpersonal trust, and implementation of humanistically oriented modernization. Under disequilibrium, risks and vulnerabilities, these components ensure the viability and sustainability of this type of well-being. For its sociological diagnostics, humanistically oriented interdisciplinarity is proposed, organically including both new theories of chaos, complexity and nonlinearity, and humanistic concepts of the sovereign national sociology.

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The content and conceptual interpretation of social well-being are multifaceted, depending on the historical time and social-cultural space. Since the 1960-s–1970-s, social well-being has been actively studied by representatives of various sciences and sociology. In the most general form, they interpret social well-being as the unity of objective resources and subjective meanings, as a foundation of the well-built life: “it presupposes a routine, but not one that suppresses freedom, but one that accompanies it, regulating the flow of life, providing it with internal logic and predictability”. Unlike happiness, “well-being is more stable” [28. P. 6]. At the same time, well-being becomes increasingly dynamic and complex. Non-linear co-development of social, natural and technical realities have a radical impact on the nature and content of social well-being, providing its objective and subjective determinants with a qualitatively new essence, which produces the synergistically complex well-being [20]. Its multifaceted complexity is determined primarily by global trends of uncertainty. According to I.R. Prigozhin, the accelerating and increasingly complex dynamics has become a factor of this nature-society disequilibrium, which leads to the “end of certainty” [25] and to the emergence of the qualitatively new “order out chaos” [26]. This also applies to the content and nature of social well-being. Global trends of chaos have a negative impact on the content of social well-being. There is a demand to identify factors of its sustainability to reproduce not only an increasing number of material goods and services but also the value content. The most important of these factors is the trust factor.

### **Objective and subjective determinants of the increasingly complex dynamics of social well-being**

First, it is necessary to verify the *complex causality* of the objective trends of uncertainty. V.S. Stepin revealed the nature of disequilibrium: its immanent component is self-regulating systems of a complex type, the qualities of which are not reduced to the properties of their parts. It is such systems that define the image of Russia, its future [31. P. 12]. Systems permanently become more complex, forming the previously unseen hybrids. Thus, J. Urry studies hybrids of the living and the nonliving (social and physical). He argues that the division between the physical and the social is a social-historical product that seems to collapse. This is a new view on human life as interdependent with nature, order and chaos that express a certain state of balance in which components are neither completely locked in a specific place nor completely disappear into anarchy [37. P. 18, 22]: “Society, and hence sociology, are a subject within the analyses of climate change, and more generally within a world of objects, technologies, machines and natural environments... the social and physical/material worlds are utterly intertwined and the dichotomy between the two is an ideological construct to be overcome” [36]. Thus, the content

of social well-being is determined by a multitude of co-functioning systems (many are of a hybrid type), which makes the nature of social well-being very dynamic and complex due to both new opportunities for improving the quality of life and risks of its dehumanization.

Globalization has had an ambivalent impact on social well-being, changing its criteria: on the one hand, more people have focused on benefits of the “open society”, a cosmopolitan way of life; on the other hand, a transition has begun — from nationally organized societies to “global disorganization” [21] that has a negative impact on values. Russia’s transition to openness at the end of the last century led to an increase in the number of economic and everyday benefits, labor and professional opportunities: there are activities in which the boundaries between working and non-working time are erased, and employment is increasingly precarized [33]. However, according to Z. Bauman, “openness” is mostly associated with an irresistible fate, unplanned and unintended side-effects of “negative globalization”... The perverted “openness” of societies enforced by negative globalization is the prime cause of injustice and, obliquely, of conflict and violence” [7. P. 7–8]. The result of the “collateral damage” of “openness” is the ill-being of “gated communities”: “people pay all that money in order to liberate themselves from unwanted company: to be left alone. Inside the walls and gates live loners”. They hope that walls will protect them from fears of danger and will maintain the stability of their well-being [5. P. 66].

According to U. Beck, digital freedom risks have become the basic foundations of well-being: “The more complete and total the invisible global control of information is, the more it disappears from people’s awareness and is rendered invisible”. These risks “are all collateral effects of successful modernization” which manifests the loss of the national state’s ability to ensure democratic control: “Freedom dies without human beings physically hurt” [8. P. 142, 143]. Thus, there is a civilizational crisis of trust. N. Luhmann connects the decline of trust in the modern society with the increase in uncertainties and risks [22]; J. Baudrillard — with the staging of the meanings of the “non-war” and “non-events”, creating the simulated reality [3].

The speed of change as an objective determinant of the nonlinear development of social well-being has become less stable. This produces ambivalent consequences for the quality of life: on the one hand, transformations accelerate, especially the speed of social mobility, and play an increasing role in the dominance and, accordingly, creation of new opportunities for social well-being. Today, the number of positions for which speed acts as a catalyst for a qualitative improvement in well-being has increased many times, providing more viable possibilities for education, professional growth and career. The “fetishism of movement” became a decisive factor for the development of peoples’ social potential [35. P. 197]. On the other hand, these trends sometimes entail dysfunctionality of values and norms, especially of the humanistic component of social well-being. If some people cannot cope with the increasing speed of change, do not have time to reflect on unintentional consequences that traumatize their identity, then fundamentally new, more complex

risks for their well-being may arise, especially for people who, due to their physical, mental or intellectual abilities, will not be able to adapt to the speed of progress. “The game of domination in the liquid modernity is not between the ‘bigger’ and the ‘smaller’, but between the quicker and the slower... Those who are able to accelerate beyond the catching power of their opponents’ rule” [6. P. 188]. Bauman insists on the reconsideration of progress criteria: “Instead of great expectations and sweet dreams ‘progress’ evokes insomnia full of nightmares of ‘being left behind’ — of missing the train” [7. P. 11]. Inevitably, new social risks emerge “to waste economic progress” [7. P. 70]. This can become a latent cause of stress in completely healthy people. Thus, if we do not humanize the speed of change, focusing on the humanistic direction of transformations, risks for social well-being (various uncertainties and tensions) will increase.

Subjective trends of uncertainty are also a result of human activity — they permanently complicate the nature of social well-being, and the “Giddens’s paradox” is of a particular methodological interest: the efficiency of the human activity results to improve the well-being of currently living people in one system (for instance ecological) is assessed outside the context of its self-regulation and self-reflection, i.e. its latent influence on the nature of the future generations well-being. The consequences of a pragmatic policy towards nature, devoid of humanistic meaning, are non-linear in time and space, which is clear in the ongoing climate change negatively affecting the quality of people’s lives [12. P. 2–3].

The most important subjective determinant of the synergistically complex social well-being is an increase in meanings of the quality of life, which, however, retain their national and cultural specificity. Synergistic complexity is not a cosmopolitan amorphous reality — its core is the genotype of country’s culture expressed in the “root system of moral values and life meanings, tastes and norms, criteria for a person to evaluate oneself and the world around” [2. P. 10]. The historical formation of Russians’ meanings of life has been determined by the proximity of two opposite cultures — Western and Eastern. In the genotype of Western culture, the vector of social development “is directed outward, at the transformation of the world”, while the Eastern culture’s vector of social development and social life is directed “not so much outward as inward, at self-education, self-restraint, inclusion in tradition” [29. P. 12]. There is a philosophical justification for cultural reflexivity in relation to the meanings of scientific-technological innovations, the basic principles of which are “social-cultural dimension” [30] and “value foundations” [31]. The main meanings of the Russian’s well-being are expressed in the desire “for social justice and social security, and to understand what kind of society is being built” [34. P. 31]. Underestimation of meanings rooted in the genotype of our culture leads to the belittling of nationally oriented social well-being, which is expressed, for instance, in the infantilization of the youth [27. P. 444–456].

Subjective assessments of well-being are also determined by different types of knowledge, thus, reproducing complex meanings of truth about social well-being.

M. Foucault, the author of the concept of “power-knowledge”, argues that knowledge can never be disinterested: “knowledge is both evil and power, it is animated by passions, instincts, impulses, desires and violence’ power generates knowledge, and knowledge is power” [10. P. 21]. Thus, the meanings hidden in knowledge determine not only healthy and sick state of the members of society but also legitimize the normality of well-being.

The artificially created symbolic codes, detached in meaning from specific objects, can form distorted ideas, especially about humanistic values of well-being. According to J. Alexander, meanings in the form of performances began to form a “mythical narrative” of the desired, “idealized” social well-being, creating an artificial gap between objective and subjective components of social well-being through a biased designation of good and evil and the “dramatization of consciousness”. Spectacles, whose drama is empty, are mere mystifications. “In the spectacle societies of modernity, everything is top-down; nothing comes from the bottom up. We occupy Foucaultian subject positions; we can never be active, drama-providing agents ourselves” [1. P. 2]. In presenting false meanings about society, its leaders, culture, values of human qualities, drama is a fundamental factor that sometimes leads to color revolutions, conflicts and irreparable losses for social well-being — trust, norms and standards of well-being in a particular culture are destroyed: “For participants and observers alike, revolutionary conflicts are experienced as a life and death struggle between not just social groups but social representatives, one representing the sacred, the other the profane” [1. P. 46].

### **The trust factor: Dynamics and sustainable development of social well-being**

Trust is largely determined by the public consciousness and its basic values and does not remain unchanged as a product of history. According to E. Durkheim, trust, being a significant social fact of solidarity [9], minimizes risks of breaks and traumas to social well-being, maintaining the stability of its basic material values and its historically and culturally determined meanings. According to J. Habermas, communications are the most important social-cultural phenomenon expressing human nature, without them trust is impossible [15]. In the minds of people who communicate in a virtually closed society, confidence dominates, associated with the conviction in the immutable order of well-being. Ideas about well-being were mainly based not on rational calculation but on faith. In this context, periodic failures in the functionality of trust — unscrupulous fulfillment of community or family obligations, negligent handling of property that result in damage to well-being — were interpreted not as personal guilt that undermined the confidence in honesty and integrity of specific people but rather as a punishment or retribution from outside. Trust was based on emotional devotion to the community, fears of otherworldly forces, which does not imply rational arguments and opposes them. According to M. Weber, faith is a worldview system in the form of a practical commitment

to certain ideas, through the prism of which people look at the world; thereby, faith is a powerful incentive for social behavior, but the historical development of faith follows the path of rationalization [38].

Trust has developed from faith under the transition from the traditional society to the industrial modernity associated with industrial revolution, urbanization, and the rise of capitalism. An ever-expanding sphere of anxiety and uncertainty about life and social well-being has emerged. Since then, culture of trust includes risks as an attribute of the uncertain social well-being, the effects of which people sought to minimize by following principles of formal rationality and pragmatism. Trust, according to F. Fukuyama, is an expectation among members of the community that other members will behave more or less predictably, honestly, with attention to the needs of others and in accordance with some of their common norms [38. P. 52], i.e. a certain degree of risk is assumed. Social well-being is based on the rationalization of trust and on the transition from interpersonal to institutional trust. Rational choice of goods and services is increasingly dominant — legal contracts are a kind of insurance for well-being.

The Age of Enlightenment gave impetus to confidence in the omnipotence of scientific knowledge, which was expressed in the slogan “knowledge is power”. Trust in knowledge as a driver of renewal and increase in social well-being became especially popular. Theorists of the Enlightenment (Ch. Montesquieu, J.-J. Rousseau, etc.) advocated the dominant role of reason and rationality in thoughts and actions and the need to overcome lack of freedom, proceeding from the belief that society can become perfect and prosperous and attributing dysfunctions of ill-being to backward forms of knowledge.

At the same time, trust as the degree of trust in knowledge has gained strength, which even led to a critical revision of objective cause-and-effect dependencies that can be calculated. It was revealed that the nature of the mutual influence of trust and social well-being is determined by the type of rationality. According to Habermas, formal rationality based on goal-rational action led to an unprecedented growth of productive forces and material goods but at the same time to technological control over people’s lives. This has led to many problems, including challenges to the humanistic component of social well-being. Habermas sees their fundamental solution in opposing formal rationality with rationality of communicative action free from external coercion and violence: actions of the agents involved are coordinated not by egocentric calculations of success but through acts of understanding. Participants of the communicative action do not put their successes first — they pursue individual goals, provided that they can harmonize their action plans on the basis of common situational definitions [15. P. 286], i.e., trust and social well-being are possible provided value rationality and ethics.

According to P. Sztompka, the qualitative complication of trust and well-being occurs in the reflexively modern society subjected to becoming, which a feature of constant incompleteness of development [32]. Permanently increasing meanings

of trust related to the quality of life (objects around us, services provided, ecology) acquire an independent significance. Many such meanings are staged, i.e. socially and culturally constructed. At the same time, people are placed in conditions determining daily needs to communicate and diagnose trust, assess its degree, i.e. reliability, and decide a behavior strategy that will evidently and latently affect one's well-being. In everyday life, a person is concerned with trust/mistrust in institutions, specific people and social groups (In a doctor, in 'normality' of one's body, in relationships with family and colleagues). As a rule, the becoming complex trust involves a combination of rationality and emotional attitudes towards sincerity, which generally ensures predictable functionality of people and the predictable social well-being.

Giddens argues that the modern culture of trust is essentially an adaptive response to incalculable risks, offering security under various possible futures, which ultimately forms reflections on desirable innovations in social well-being. The complexity of trust is also manifested in the fact that it acquires reflexive specificity. Giddens identifies two dominant reflexive types of trust: the first, related to the structural-institutional reflexivity, is trust in expert systems as opposed to local knowledge; actors strive to ensure that these systems demonstrate their validity in the largest possible space, up to the global level; however, one cannot rely even on global expert systems due to the increasing uncertainty of knowledge. The second type of trust is based on individual reflexivity, relating to interpersonal relationships and assuming trust in people whom we personally know and interact face to face ("intimate others"). Each type of trust aims at minimizing risks and stabilizing social well-being. Under increasing uncertainties and risks, trust remains the most important component of social well-being, a basis of people's safety, a factor of everyday-life reliability. Trust, determined by life in a certain social and natural world, in turn determines predictability of events" "Trust originally becomes generalized from some of the same contexts as risk... Trust involves a more directly future oriented relations with whomever or whatever you are trusting... To survive in life at all you need a generalized notion of trust, and that's essentially something people get from their early emotional experiences. If you don't have that, you're in big trouble [13. P. 108–109]. Without trust, people, especially the youth, get fears that challenge social well-being they receive through socialization in their cultural environment [16. P. 102–121].

Based on the risk-assessment, people essentially choose whom to trust with their well-being — which social institutions or individuals. Both trust and risk are characterized by contingency — the possibility of another existence as a result of the decision found or the action taken. Their consequences complicate the nature of social well-being for its vulnerability depends on trust/mistrust. According to Parsons, the dynamic equilibrium of society leads to the previously unseen vulnerabilities, the most important of which are vulnerabilities to social self-sufficiency as a property of a complex social system (society) manifested not only in the ability to control internal processes but also its relationships with other systems. Without trust in social

institutions, values and norms, rational human activity to improve material well-being can reproduce vulnerabilities in the form of unintentional irrational consequences. In addition, vulnerabilities are rooted not only in risk-producing human activity but also in the absolutization of trust in science and innovative technologies, functioning on the basis of formal rationality, pragmatism and mercantilism, diminishing the humanistic component in human relationships.

B.A. Misztal identifies three types of vulnerabilities associated with the complexities of modern trust. The first is dependence on others, which an individual experiences in providing care or achieving recognition. Our body and identity need support from social actors: we are vulnerable because our well-being, respect and self-realization depend on others, whom we are forced to trust. The second is uncertainty about the future: under the growing and more complex social-cultural dynamics, both ordinary people and scientists realize the impossibility of accurate forecasts, which makes them feel the fragility, instability of social well-being and even experience fear. Fears and anxieties increase during periods of radical change. Well-being of social groups and individuals becomes more vulnerable under potential pluralism of development trends and life strategies. In general, uncertainty and insecurity of everyday life increase vulnerabilities of social well-being. The third is the irreversibility of past actions and experiences, which can be expressed in the consequences of cultural traumas of trust. Past negative experiences can limit our constructive actions to cooperate at the present time. Thus, “We should view trust, on the one hand, as a remedy for vulnerability; on the other hand, we need to account for the vulnerability of trust” [24. P. 220]. Vulnerabilities can be minimized with forgiveness that stops suspicion and mistrust: “By choosing to forgive, individuals can set aside potentially destructive feelings, such as bitterness and hatred, and they can also reduce the likelihood of an erosion of trust”. Forgiveness presupposes mutual communication (dialogue and subsequent development of cooperation). “Forgiveness is not achieved unilaterally, it requires the offender to change oneself and to show that he or she is worthy to trust... Forgiveness does not necessarily mean a return to the previous high level of trust as a sense of vulnerability tends not to disappear easily” [24. P. 229, 230].

Certainly, issues of vulnerability are not limited to interpersonal relationships, although they are very important for trust and, accordingly, for the stability of synergistically complex social well-being. For instance, today sociologists are interested in dysfunctionality of marginal groups and possibilities of their social protection, in consequences of climate turbulence/change for humans [36], in effects of genetically modified foods on health of future generations [19]. Bauman is particularly concerned about vulnerabilities determined by the growth of constant anxiety, self-reproducing political and economic structures that produce an atmosphere of phobias or “liquid fears” [4].

The ideas of normal or deficient social well-being are culturally conditioned, which is reflected in knowledge. Mannheim considers all forms of knowledge in the



perspective of the value system dynamics, in relation to which truth or falsehood is identified: “The reason for ‘one-sidedness’ and ‘falsity’ is not the intention to hide the real situation, but the difference in the structure of consciousness of subjects of different positions in the socio-historical sphere” [23. P. 220]. Russians’ public consciousness and, accordingly, the historically established interpersonal types of trust are fundamentally different from those that developed in the West with its liberal principles of formal rationality, pragmatism and mercantilism, which contributed to the formation of trust in the institutions of the market economy, private property and legally sound contracts, thereby minimizing the risks of dysfunctionality and deviation.

The nature of trust is significantly influenced by the socialization features of cultures. Types of trust are developed by primary groups and learned through such communications as games, competitions, communication with peers and adults. This is how the individual and group habitus of trust is formed — through the predisposition to communicate with others based on the risk perception. However, the basic values in the culture of trust continue to be reproduced, setting the nature of the nationally and synergistically complex social well-being.

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Today we witness the development of the synergistically complex well-being, the core of which is the genotype of culture and the corresponding types of trust. Accordingly, in the contemporary society, there is a demand for a nationally oriented model of social well-being based on trust. Thus, it is necessary to support both sociological studies and political initiatives which aim at identifying and preserving those basic institutional structures that ensure sustainable reproduction of national practices of social well-being under the “order out of chaos” and geopolitical challenges. It is important to rethink the “universality” of institutional trust in bureaucratic structures: even rational results include unforeseen consequences of an irrational nature — interpersonal trust diminishes, its functionality is limited, which is important specific areas of well-being (love and family happiness as opposing the trends of loneliness). We need to replace the traditional modernization which aimed at the transition to a qualitatively new level of productive forces to satisfy the ever-increasing material needs with an alternative type — a humanistically oriented modernization [17]. For the sociological diagnostics of the synergistically complex social well-being, we need innovative theoretical and methodological tools of a synergistically complex type — open and flexible in content, combining global and national methodological approaches, based on the principles of humanistically oriented interdisciplinarity, organically including both new theories of chaos, complexity and nonlinearity and national humanistic concepts [18. P. 51–62]. On this methodological basis, promising studies of the trends in the hybridization of society, nature and new technologies are possible, taking into account their ambivalent influence on the nature and content of the synergistically complex social well-being.

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## Становление синергично сложного социального благополучия: фактор доверия\*

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**Аннотация.** Сегодня социальные реалии обретают синергично сложную природу (Н.И. Лапин), обусловленную как объективными детерминантами динамичного развития социальных, природных и технологических реалий, потенциально увеличивающих производство многообразных благ и услуг, так и субъективными смыслами качества жизни — в их материализации все возрастающая роль принадлежит культуре доверия. Актуальность данной проблематики обусловлена возникновением кризиса доверия, глубинные причины которого коренятся в становлении качественно нового варианта происхождения «порядка из хаоса» (И. Пригожин), а также в инсценировании тех «мифических нарративов» желанного, «идеализированного» социального благополучия (Дж. Александер), ложные смыслы которых разрушают традиционные ценности и дегуманизируют человеческие отношения. С учетом перечисленных вызовов и сложившихся научных подходов к их анализу автор предлагает и обосновывает контуры национально ориентированной модели синергично сложного социального благополучия, основанной на системе доверия и своими корнями уходящей в генотип отечественной культуры. Предлагаемая модель включает в себя оптимально функционирующие базовые институциональные структуры российского общества, воспроизводство традиционных ценностей межличностного доверия и реализацию гуманистически ориентированной стратегии национальной модернизации. В нынешних условиях возрастающей неравновесности, множества рисков и разнообразных уязвимостей указанные компоненты национально ориентированной модели смогут обеспечить жизнеспособность и устойчивость синергично сложного социального благополучия. Для его социологической диагностики предложена гуманистически ориентированная междисциплинарность, органично включающая в себя как новые теории хаоса, сложности и нелинейности, так и гуманистические концепции, содержащиеся в суверенной отечественной социологии.

**Ключевые слова:** синергичные сложности; «порядок из хаоса»; синергично сложное социальное благополучие; культура доверия; неравновесность; риски; уязвимости; гуманизм

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