

Social Well-Being in System of Traditions and Innovations

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Abstract—Social well-being as a multifactorial phenomenon in the process of social development plays a different role in the systems of traditions and innovations. The purpose of the article is to study characteristics and interrelationship of traditional and innovative values in the context of the Easterlin paradox. Under the traditional economy based on the agrarian structure and natural economy, traditions determine limits of the use of natural resources and needs of the society and the individual. The era of post-reform modernization and market relations changes the social structure of society and increases needs. The analysis of results of the sociological research using formalized interviews shows that events and phenomena of the external environment are refracted in respondents' minds resulting in a conglomerate of traditional innovative values. Thus, the Easterlin paradox is both evidential and unproven.

Keywords — social well-being; traditions; innovation; society

I. INTRODUCTION

Social well-being as a multifactorial phenomenon representing complex interrelation of cultural, social, economic and spiritual factors at different stages of social development plays a different role in the system of traditions and innovations. Ideas about the well-being of society and human played an important role in the traditional society whose worldview shaped values in the single context of primary production, life support, social, normative and humanitarian components of culture. Mountain ethics as a basis for the worldview of the Ossetians and other mountain peoples did not consider material well-being as the highest value. In 1974, the American economist Richard Easterlin proposed one of the basic economic concepts. The key idea of the concept was assumption that there is no unconditional correlation between individual well-being and personal income [1]. The Easterlin Paradox caused lively discussions which are still relevant.

II. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The article considers social well-being as a social phenomenon within the systems of traditional and innovative values in the evolutionary context. The contradictory interpretation of the Easterlin paradox is due to the use of the concepts "individual well-being", "happiness" and "life satisfaction" as synonyms. The Easterlin paradox is interpreted on the basis of two approaches, cross-sectional studies on individuals and countries and the use of time series and panel data. Unlike the first approach which rejects the Easterlin paradox, the second one confirms it [2].

The description of reasons for discussing the Easterlin paradox is reduced to the following factors: various time series, economic cycles, survey technology, specifics of countries with transition economies [3]. We believe that correlation of real income and life satisfaction is influenced by sociocultural features, traditional and innovative values of society.

III. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the article is to study characteristics and interrelationship, interdependence of traditional and innovative values influencing social well-being in modern society in terms of the Easterlin paradox.

Principles and methods of historical science, economics and sociology were used to solve the problem: historicism was used to study historical and cultural processes in interrelation and dynamics, objectivity rejected subjective facts. In addition, the paper describes results of formalized interviews with 15 experts, and presents results of the secondary analysis of sociological data.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The concepts of social well-being “individual well-being”, “happiness”, “life satisfaction”, etc. are used. The definition of social well-being as the highest social value and social ideal that is widespread in the scientific literature expresses its value basis [4]. As a rule, social well-being is considered as a generalized indicator of efficiency of the social area as a whole. Social well-being reflects the level of well-being of society and its quality of life. Economic growth, quality of life and social well-being are correlated.

The concept “subjective well-being” used in foreign studies is more accurate than “happiness”. The meaning of the word “happiness” has different interpretations, it is associated with a positive emotional state of a person. Life satisfaction is how a human assesses his social and economic status.

The ethic of utilitarianism serves as an ideological basis for the economy of happiness [5]. The utilitarian culture with such values as hard work, success, honesty, thrift prudence, egoism is dual. These values had different meanings in the structure of human values.

Classical utilitarianism of the industrial revolution in England corresponded to the economic growth. L. Ivankin and O. Berestnev distinguished between two main questions that define the model of well-being: the meaning of human existence and combination of interests of the individual and society as a whole [6]. Within these two models of social well-being, the answers to these questions are different. The anti-paternalistic model assumes high adaptability and social activity of a person, in contrast to the paternalistic model which is based on traditional ideas about life success and government assistance [7].

On the basis of cross-sectional researches, L. Rodionova concludes that in modern Russia there is a positive relationship between the growth of income and the growth of life satisfaction. However, this dependence is not linear and has a saturation point - the income in the amount of 60 thousand rubles [8]. The study of the Easterlin paradox in terms of traditions and innovations can provide new data for understanding the link between wealth and well-being in society.

With reference to the analysis of the concept “social well-being”, an approach basing on an analysis of the social capital of various social groups is, in our opinion, also promising (the developers are P. Bourdieu, R. Putnam, J. Coleman, F. Fukuyama, etc.) [9-12].

The first theoretical concept of social capital was proposed in 1980 by P. Bourdieu in his work “Forms of capital”. The social capital of P. Bourdieu is “real and potential resources”, which are closely connected with group membership [9] and which, under favorable conditions, can be extrapolated to economic capital. The social capital of P. Bourdieu is exclusively a group resource, i.e. social capital is associated with certain profit, but when “the benefit is accumulated due to group membership” [9], it becomes the basis of solidarity. It is impossible to disagree with this thesis of P. Bourdieu, since any conflict is, of course, aspiration of opposing social groups

to achieve certain benefits (economic, political, etc.) in their favor.

J. Coleman introduces new concepts - group strengthening of norms, mutual entropy, privileged access to information - into the theory of social capital [12]. In addition to that, he believes that social capital is significantly different from other types of capital, since it is inherent in the structure of relations between actors (actors can be both an individual and a group - a collective actor) and does not depend on actors themselves. Relationships within actors, both individual and corporate, are ultimately social capital. Social capital is created by actors to achieve their own goals, as in the case of P. Bourdieu, social capital is “resource entities ... and their assistance to certain actions of actors is realized within the structure” [9]. However, unlike P. Bourdieu, who believed that social capital is available to few members of society, J. Coleman defines social capital as a common-pool resource. J. Coleman’s social capital is more democratic than P. Bourdieu’s is, but at the same time he considers it as a secondary or minor product of social bonds.

A broader interpretation of social capital is proposed by F. Fukuyama, who, in his conception, links the concept of social capital with national culture. Social capital closely correlates with social norms and values dominating in a particular community. An ideal state of social capital is a combination of “norms that were born as a result of rational choice”, but on the other hand, inherited by society from their ancestors and are essentially irrational [11]. It is natural that in various forms and types of conflicts, irrational social norms will act most often as dominants of social capital; irrational norms are both functional, uniting representatives of one ethnic community, and dysfunctional in nature hindering interaction with other ethnic communities.

The concept of social capital was introduced into political discourse by American researcher R. Putnam. Highlighting two main elements – social networks and norms of mutual trust and interaction – in the concept of social capital, R. Putnam believes that a large stock of social capital has a beneficial effect on socio-political processes occurring in society. A low level of social capital, on the contrary, contributes to emergence of destructive socio-political processes and threatens the integrity of society [10]. The main constant in R. Putnam's concept is the problem of trust, both interpersonal (social) and political (institutional).

The problem of trust is fundamental in intergroup relations as far as different groups can trust each other. In order for the norms of trust to exist between different groups, existence of civic associations and organizations that contribute to development of cooperation in society is necessary [10]. The associative activity of citizens creates conditions for the emergence of trust in society, which, in turn, allows solving problems of political nature, including contradictions of social interaction.

In addition to the general approach to the analysis of social capital, R. Putnam singles out specific indicators through which it is possible to measure the level of social capital. According to R. Putnam, the individual indicators, using which one can measure the level of social capital, include: the

intensity and strength of contacts; satisfaction with relationships; membership in public associations; electoral activity of a group community; sense of security; trust in neighbors and social institutions.

In his work "Bowling Alone: the Collapse and Revival of American Community" [10] R. Putnam differentiate between two types of social capital: connections of capital and the overcoming of capital. Accumulation of the first type of social capital – the connection of capital - occurs when people socialize with other people like them (common age, religion, ethnicity, etc.); but to interact, for example, in a modernized society, it is necessary to accumulate a different type of social capital — overcoming. Combining, these two types of social capital reinforce each other, a reduction of one of the types leads to the weakening of the other.

When referring to the concept "tradition", we proceeded from the definition given by A.B. Hoffman who considers traditions as a social and cultural heritage transferred from one generation to another one and reproduced at certain stages of social development [13].

Traditions and innovations are interrelated due to the fact that innovations can act as a kind of a tradition shell, and traditions can act as an innovation shell. In addition, according to A.S. Arutyunov, traditions and innovations should be assessed in terms of their complementarity [14]. If traditions can exist without innovations, innovations cannot exist without traditions.

Another perspective of interaction and interdependence of traditions and innovations, their value basis is the study of the concept "institutional matrix" introduced by S.G. Kirdina. According to the author, the institutional matrix is a primary model of basic social institutions. The essential characteristic of the institutional matrix is that it determines the specificity of society reproduced in the process of social evolution [15]. In Russia with its centralization and collectivism, there is an X-matrix, while in the Western European countries and the USA, there is a Y-matrix characterized by federalism and individualism.

As for traditional values of the Russian society (e.g., collectivism), researchers have different views. For example, G.V. Fedotov believed that individualism was the traditional feature of Russians, and collectivism became an innovation of the Soviet period [16]. Differences are due to author's approaches and the sociocultural split when mutually exclusive traditions, individualism and collectivism, exist simultaneously. In the context of the system of traditions and innovations, let us consider the evolution of the concept of social well-being in the traditional and modern society of Ossetia.

The level of success in mountain society was determined by traditions as a basis for the worldview of society, a mechanism regulating the whole complex of life activities, the highest spiritual and moral value whose preservation was a priority task.

Under the traditional economy based on the agrarian structure and natural economy, the tradition determined the

use of natural resources, social and individual needs. Violation of the established order of consumption was condemned.

Ossetian hunters were not allowed to kill more than three animals. Similar restrictions were known to the Adygs, who were allowed to use only three arrows to kill one bird, one fish and one animal. Three arrows denoted the environmental conservation mark [17]. Ossetians cared about wild animals, which is evident from hunting regulations, magical acts, prayer and even a special hunting vocabulary. Irrational tree cutting was perceived as an immoral phenomenon. When a tree was cut for vital purposes, it was obligatory to perform the rite of sacrifice [18]. A person who did not follow limits in pursuit of well-being, got a contemptuous nickname *кафхъуындар* - a monster, a dragon, a character from Ossetian tales and legends who barred the way to water and allowed people to water sources only after getting tribute.

Key definitions of *фарн* and *бæркад* associated with abundance mean material well-being and happiness, peace, grace, healthy children [19]. The idea about a decent life was formulated as a desire to have "a lot of cattle and children" (*бюра фос æмæ бюра сом*).

Public opinion in traditional society was an important criterion of well-being. It consisted of many evaluative factors. The well-being of the Ossetians manifested itself in a broad system of social ties, success in various social formations - a family, a family union, a rural society.

The birth of a person in a certain social group, his belonging to a privileged class was a serious basis for social well-being. But the community member who was not a noble person had a high social status due to his inclusion in *æгъдау*.

Knowledge of customs, traditions, etiquette norms, hard work, family, male children were criteria of a high social status. For the majority of community members following *æгъдау*, well-being meant a peaceful life. The era of post-reform modernization leading to market relations, formation of small families changed the social structure and increased social mobility and needs. Striving for education became a form of the Ossetian national movement contributed to formation of the Ossetian intelligentsia [20; 21]. Education became a new criterion for assessing well-being.

A city, an urban lifestyle became powerful factors of social well-being. The dynamics of ideas about social well-being in the traditional and modern society of Ossetia can be traced when analyzing results of expert interviews.

According to the respondents, social well-being implies the ability to use rights to life and freedom. Social well-being involves opportunities to obtain social benefits regardless of social status, health and intellectual abilities. One of the foundations of social well-being is the opportunity to have free, high-quality medical care, education and other social resources. An integral indicator of social well-being is a developed system of support for low-income citizens.

According to the answers of experts, social well-being means that the welfare state fulfills its social obligations. The ideas about the social role of the state fit well into the paternalistic model of social well-being.

However, the post-Soviet experience of transition to the market economy led to the awareness of the need for social mobility. The experts say that when the government fails to fulfill its social obligations and the market stimulates personal development, personal well-being path development becomes a priority.

Gradual expansion of the space of individualism in value orientations of society acquires quite visible outlines. The experts answered how Maslow's pyramid of needs is applicable to the modern human needs system and how these needs correlate with life satisfaction. Biological needs are primary, and in any society there is an eternal issue - being or consciousness. In any society there is a stratum which moves the underdeveloped society. The inverted Maslow's pyramid where the need for self-realization is dominant caused skepticism in the experts. There is a biological entity, everything else is secondary.

Experts believe that the hierarchy of interests of the average resident of North Ossetia is based on the needs and is described as a survival strategy. One of the consequences of an excessive increase in the values of the consumer society is degradation of universal human values and inhibition of civilizational development [22].

R. Inglehart and C. Wenzel [23] associate self-expression with replacing survival values with values of self-expression focusing on personal independence and freedom of choice. In addition to the values of self-expression, the factor of modernization is the quality of social capital, that is, the potential of trust maintained and transferred between members of society through cultural mechanisms, including traditions [24]. In this sense, the broad system of social ties of Ossetians in the mountain society determines the relatively sufficient level of development of social capital in modern Ossetian society.

To characterize value orientations of individuals, ranking of the most important concepts is important. Thus, the most valuable words are "security", "family", "prosperity", "peace", "dignity", "success", "law" [25]. The word "success" is at the end of the line, and the word "wealth" is among the three most valuable concepts.

This word order shows that in the minds of respondents, there is a complex process of refraction of events and phenomena of the external environment resulting in formation of a conglomerate of traditional and innovative values.

In addition, in the traditional mountain society and modern society, meanings of the concepts "wealth" and "success" are different. If in the mountain society, there were tough regulators of success and prosperity in the form of traditional norms, public opinion, in modern society, the law, fulfills the role of a regulator.

The significance of the sociocultural aspect of the problem of social well-being was revealed during the Swiss referendum on introduction of the unconditional basic income for all citizens which was rejected. The unconditional income was suggested as a measure for eliminating poverty and social inequality, providing citizens with free time for self-realization. However, self-realization is not always associated

with leisure, and a guaranteed income deprives of motivation to work. The referendum in Switzerland showed that the Easterlin paradox operates within a long time series and here and now.

Thus, social well-being as a social phenomenon determines the environment in which people satisfy their needs. Hierarchical needs analysis is related to their vertical mobility and needs for self-realization. This is the question about the role and place of the needs for self-realization in postmodern society, when the digital economy and the scientific and technological revolution cause unemployment of large groups of people. Under the digital economy, the Easterlin paradox acquires a new dimension that requires additional research.

Different approaches to the study of the category "social well-being" conditioned the existence of different approaches to the measurement of social well-being.

One of the rather interesting social well-being ratings of social well-being in various countries of the world is the prosperity index, annually compiled since 2009 by the British analytical center "Legatum Institute" based on the study of a variety of indicators in 9 categories, including economic quality, business environment, governance, personal freedom, social capital, safety and security, education, health, national environment.

In 2018, according to the prosperity index, Russia ranked 96th among 150 countries and slightly improved its position compared to 2017, when the prosperity index was 99 [26]. At the same time, the distribution by categories in 2018 was as follows: economic quality – 63rd place, business environment – 60th place, governance – 124th, personal freedom – 143rd, social capital – 114th, safety and security – 105th place, education – 22nd place, health – 90th place, national environment – 78th place. As can be seen from the above mentioned data, experts estimate education as the most prosperous in Russia, but public administration and personal freedoms are, in their opinion, in the worst position.

In contrast to the prosperity index of "Legatum Institute", Russia's position is somewhat better in the rating of the Sustainable Economic Development Assessment, or SEDA, which since 2012 has been calculated by experts of the international company Boston Consulting Group. In this rating, researchers analyze such parameters as economic stability (inflation, Gross Domestic Product), employment, health, education, infrastructure, equality, civil society, governance, environment, income. The SEDA methodology, used since 2012 as an alternative to traditional methods of assessing the level of economic development based on gross national income, allows more clearly tracing the relationship between gross national income, citizens' incomes and their well-being.

In 2018, among 152 countries, Russia ranked 59th by the index of well-being and sustainable economic development. According to researchers, Russia demonstrates relatively good results in achieving economic stability and infrastructure development. Russia shows the lowest indicators in the field

of public administration and in the growth of citizens' incomes.

The authors of the research believe that the countries focused on improvement of society well-being, not only improve the standard of living of their citizens, but also move to a trajectory of a stronger and more sustainable economic growth [27]. According to the authors' opinion, the fact that mainly Nordic countries are represented in the top ten countries is associated with the presence of strong institutions and active social policy in these countries. All in all, the authors of the study note a positive relationship between the economic growth and well-being of the population.

In our opinion, the SEDA rating more fully reflects the concept of social well-being as a multifactor phenomenon than perhaps the most renowned well-being index — the human development index (HDI) with its main components — life expectancy, a literacy level and a standard of living of the population. The history of HDI calculations began in 1990.

From the point of view of the presence in the methodology of parameters expressing, in a varying degree, value orientations, the Global Well-Being Index (Gallup-Healthways Global Well-Being Index) is of interest, which has been calculated since 2005. The study is based on surveys in more than 100 countries with a basic set of questions consisting of 5 blocks: success, social well-being, financial well-being, physical and social well-being.

It is quite remarkable that a high level of well-being according to all components of the global index is usually observed in the countries of North and South America, which, in the opinion of O.A. Kislitsyna, partially accounts for peculiarities of the people's mentality in these countries, inclined to express positive emotions [28]. In case of citizens of Russia, quite good indicators in such aspects as financial well-being, success and social well-being and low indicators in the field of social and physical well-being are typical.

Since 2011, the OESD Better Life Index has been calculated, which includes two main components: material surroundings and quality of life. In accordance with the methodology, the following aspects of material surroundings of life are considered: housing conditions, incomes, work in the context of employment and unemployment, average salary. Quality of life is analyzed in the following areas: subjective well-being as life satisfaction, education, healthcare, safety, ecology, society, etc.

The data of the Better Life Index show that within 2007-2017 subjective well-being in Russia increased from 5.1 to 6 according to the scale from 0 to 10 [29]. The situation concerning personal security, social support, education and healthcare, work and household incomes also improved in the country. At the same time, negative dynamics formed in the sphere of ecology and civil rights.

A brief overview of some methods for determining the level of social well-being shows that existence of different methods and approaches in this area is related to some uncertainty and the multidimensional nature of the very concept of social well-being. The emergence in the past decade of the main methods of calculating social well-being

with an emphasis on the socio-cultural component of the concept evidences the relevance of this dimension. In this respect, the question of the balance between objective and subjective components of social well-being, positive or negative relationship between economic growth and a sense of life satisfaction in people is of particular importance.

V. CONCLUSION

The study on social well-being from the perspective of traditions and innovations in the evolutionary context in terms of the Easterlin paradox allows the following conclusions.

In the mountain society, the level of success was subject to strict regulations: traditional norms and public opinion were important criteria of social well-being.

In modern society, there are a lot of values, including mutually exclusive traditions of collectivism and individualism. Social well-being and individual well-being are influenced by events and phenomena of the external environment.

According to the sociological analysis, sociocultural characteristics influence the correlation of real income and life satisfaction.

Under coexistence of traditional and innovative values, the Easterlin paradox is both evidential and non-evidential.

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