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Modern social welfare in the light of the sustainability model

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Abstract

The paper presents the analysis of interaction between the social welfare and sustainable development. The aim of this paper is to show that the social development mostly depends on community values that form the pathway of the social movement. It is shown that mankind can influence the future choosing the optimum way of its development. Therefore, it is necessary to appreciate personal aspects of sociogenesis and a mechanism of its functioning, differences between social and natural dynamics. From the authors' viewpoint, a philosophical understanding of sustainability by means of welfare as a regulation mechanism, is one of approaches to the study of social life and social development. A model of socio-practical man's existence mostly oriented towards satisfaction of needs helps to analyze the relationship between the categories under review. The more so as an ordinary intake of consumer amenities transforms to the instrument of construction of social identity, the sociocultural integration of individual with society. Social welfare is presented as a multiple-factor construct represented by a synthesis of cause and effect. Explication technique, hermeneutical approach, and comparison study are used to clarify basic notions of this research.

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1. Introduction

The relevance of scientific interest to the problem of social welfare is currently conditioned by a shift of paradigms and principles of the quality of living assessment in terms of increasing instability of the modern world. Different research trends are unified by integrated factors and economic, socio-political and moral guides to the social development. The modern approach implies a search for a balance between the dominated economic and ignored cultural determinant approaches. In other words, it is a search for synthesis and integrated solution of contemporary problems rather than separation or superseding one by another.

Alvin Toffler is one of the first futurists who attracted the attention to the problem of social welfare and sustainability in his study of such survival strategy when 'the response to a future shock is not a stability but a

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change'. At that, the development of scientific scope 'threatens with the change of the production not only *how* but *why*' (Toffler, 2002).

In this content, the concept of welfare is directly connected with the idea of the sustainable development oriented towards the choice of solutions which create optimum proportions and equal opportunities for present and future generations judging from the safe character of measures taken for a prospective existence of mankind. Helen Clark, the convenor of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, also known as Rio+20, noted that 'justice, dignity, happiness, sustainability are significant for our life, however, absent in the GDP' (Rio+20, 2012).

Whitehead stated that 'civilization must regulate relational connections between people and the surrounding world in a way that will provide phenomena in which the dominant is the imperative harmony of stable things' (Whitehead, 1990). Is it possible to refer welfare to stable things?

For the answer, let us address to the problem of survival. In order to survive, the society must solve minimum three problems: to satisfy man's needs and develop the production; to provide the recovery of utilized resources; to pursue the policy of prevention and protection of socioeconomic turbulence from the inside. These problems can be solved in terms of interconnection between welfare and sustainability acting as basic values and ideas of human society.

2. Notions of *welfare* and *sustainability*

Aristotle was one of the first philosophers who noticed the diversity of understanding of the term *welfare* stipulated, first of all, by its multiple-factor construct represented by a synthesis of cause and effect. What is the relation and what are the cause and the effect of welfare?

Welfare cause lies in the necessity of overcoming a need for something, i.e. satisfaction of needs, whereas the effect is saturation and satisfaction from accomplishment. This interconnection is traced at the etymological level of a broad conceptual construct relating to the term *welfare* which includes the broad context of social existence. Social welfare is, concurrently, the objective and subjective phenomenon determined by everyday conditions of people's vital activity under which they satisfy their needs, implement plans and social expectations.

Traditionally, understanding of the term *welfare* is connected with the state of society which possesses all necessary facilities for life support. Objective and subjective properties of man's existence are described by many notions among which are such as satisfaction, life satisfaction, quality of living, welfare, happiness, etc. These understanding of the term *welfare* allows drawing a conclusion that it serves as a socio-personal ideal which can be achieved by specific means. A subjective personal component reflects the concrete historical tension and social aspirations to the social order, and is charged with a choice of many prospects relating to certain resources and technologies of achieving new desirable social conditions.

To summarize definitions stated above, three aspects can be emphasized in understanding of the notion *welfare*. First, it means satisfaction with the life and is connected with its standards. It is also a global assessment of the quality of living in conformity with social and personal criteria. In these terms, welfare is coincidence of satisfaction of needs and aspirations with really achieved ones or with what a person possesses in a real situation. Second, it implies the existence of a certain welfare standard. This understanding is 'recorded' in the requirements for moral life conditioned by the correspondence to the value system accepted in a certain culture at a certain historical age or time. Third, understanding of the welfare standard is further reflected by a subjective experience in reality that is fixed by the notion of *happiness*.

The term *sustainability* is a synthesis of concepts of changes and stability, and expresses real dialectical contradictions and a tendency to their harmonization as well. The ontological character of these contradictions is defined by the scope of social existence.

3. Social welfare as a factor of sustainability

Welfare implies a self-evidence of satisfaction of what a person or society possesses in a real situation because it means the obtainment of welfare that becomes possible due to external factors (subsistence resources, normalization of relationships, etc.) and internal factors (psychological emotions, assessment of welfare standards based on individual self-sentiment).

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