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## MENTAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC WELL-BEING

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*Formulation of the problem.* The issue of well-being is a constantly important issue for the existence of humanity in terms of its components. The ideology of the dominance of the "mother" model increasingly appears as a marked kind of animation, becoming at the same time a universally recognized priority and a cultural and "status" compulsion related to the quality of life. *The purpose of the article* is to determine the interdisciplinary principles of well-being in terms of its mental, social and economic components. The subject of research is the conceptual foundations of mental, social and economic well-being. *Research methods:* analysis and synthesis, comparison, grouping and analogies. *Presenting main material.* The article reveals the authors' reflections on well-being. Arguments and reasons are presented to confirm the principle of equal opportunities in access to social and economic benefits of individuals, which in turn predict their mental well-being. Issues related to well-being in the above dimensions will be considered in the context of the need for changes that are introduced in social life through, among other things, man's opus magnum, which is the phenomenon of globalization. The issue of well-being and, as a result, happiness is presented as a subject of interdisciplinary analysis carried out by representatives of many scientific disciplines, including philosophy, psychology, sociology, economics and ethics. Different interpretations of approaches to well-being and well-being are presented. The essence of the concept of well-being in the system of related concepts, such as wealth, standard of living, quality of life, economic well-being and social well-being, is revealed. Attention is focused on socio-economic well-being, which is revealed in the context of the implementation of the above-mentioned principle of equal opportunities in access to benefits related to the spheres of mental, social and economic components. *Originality and practical significance* of the research. The practical value of the research lies in the fact that the obtained results deepen in the conditions of globalization and consist, among other things, in supporting poor countries and equalizing differences in the income levels of citizens of different countries. Access to and use of even basic economic goods and services is critical to the integration of members of modern society. *Research conclusions.* In the conditions of deepening globalization, the problem of economic and social well-being takes on a new expression. On the one hand, it will be economic alienation, and on the other - alienation in the social sphere. It should be remembered that economic and social exclusion (caused, among other things, by low income or even no access to the labor market, inability to meet certain needs, services, etc.) is closely related to mental well-being. Therefore, the modern world must face the problem of economic and social inequality and organize social life in such a way that it promotes the development of all people as much as possible, i.e. "pro

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publico bono", which in turn will contribute to the equalization of their mental well-being.

**Key words:**

well-being, mental well-being, social well-being, economic well-being.

## ПСИХІЧНИЙ, СОЦІАЛЬНИЙ ТА ЕКОНОМІЧНИЙ ДОБРОБУТ

*Постановка проблеми.* Питання благополуччя є постійно важливим питанням для існування людства розрізі його складових. Ідеологія домінування моделі «мати» все більше видається позначеною своєрідною анімацією, стаючи водночас загальноновизнаним пріоритетом і культурним і «статусним» примусом, пов'язаним з якістю життя. *Мета статті* – визначити міждисциплінарні засади благополуччя у розрізі його психічного, соціального та економічного складових. *Предмет дослідження* – концептуальні засади психічного, соціального та економічного благополуччя. *Методи дослідження:* аналізу та синтезу, порівняння, групування та аналогій. *Виклад основного матеріалу.* У статті розкрито роздуми авторів про добробут. Наведено аргументи та причини для підтвердження принципу рівних можливостей у доступі до соціальних та економічних благ індивідів, які, у свою чергу, передбачають їхнє психічне благополуччя. Питання, пов'язані з добробутом у вищезазначених вимірах, розглядатимуться в контексті необхідності змін, які вносяться в суспільне життя через, серед іншого, *opus magnum* людини, яким є феномен глобалізації. Питання благополуччя і, як наслідок, щастя представлено в якості предмета міждисциплінарного аналізу, який здійснюють представники багатьох наукових дисциплін, зокрема філософії, психології, соціології, економіки та етики. Представлено різність трактування підходів до благополуччя та добробуту. Розкрито сутність поняття добробуту у системі споріднених понять, таких як багатство, рівень життя, якість життя, економічне благополуччя та соціальне благополуччя. Акцентовано увагу на соціально-економічному благополуччі, який розкрито у контексті реалізації вищезазначеного принципу рівних можливостей у доступі до благ, пов'язаних зі сферами психічного, соціального та економічного складових. *Оригінальність і практична значущість дослідження.* Практична цінність дослідження полягає у тому, що отримані результати поглиблюються в умовах глобалізації та полягають, серед іншого, у підтримці бідних країн і вирівнювання відмінностей у рівнях доходів громадян різних країн. Доступ і використання навіть основних економічних товарів і послуг мають вирішальне значення для інтеграції членів сучасного суспільства. *Висновки дослідження.* В умовах поглиблення глобалізації проблема економічного та соціального добробуту набуває нового виразу. З одного боку, це буде економічне відчуження, а з іншого – відчуження в соціальній сфері. Слід пам'ятати, що економічне та соціальне відчуження (спричинене, серед іншого, низьким доходом або навіть відсутністю доступу до ринку праці, нездатністю задовольнити певні потреби, послуги тощо) тісно пов'язане з психічним благополуччям. Отже, сучасний світ має зіткнутися з проблемою економічної та соціальної нерівності та організувати соціальне життя таким чином, щоб воно максимально сприяло розвитку всіх людей, тобто «pro publico bono», що в свою чергу сприятиме вирівнюванню їх психічного благополуччя.

**Key words:**

добробут, психічне благополуччя, соціальне благополуччя, економічне благополуччя.

**Formulation of the problem.** The issue of well-being is a very important (nontemporal) issue for our functioning from the point of view of human existence. Almost every day we problematize the components of well-being, therefore they become the leading actor in the axis of our lives. The discussed topic is important because the so-called the ideology of the "have"-model domination increasingly seems to be characterized by a kind of animation, becoming at the same time a universally accepted priority and a cultural and "status" compulsion related to the quality of life.

Issues related to well-being in its various dimensions are non-temporal, because in my opinion, the satisfaction of human needs (mental, social or economic ones) determines the sense of happiness. According to T. Hobbes, an English

baroque philosopher, "it refers to the possibility of fulfilling human desires in every era" [15]. It is worth mentioning in this context that in the 20th century, the most comprehensive collection on the concept of happiness was prepared by W. Tatarkiewicz, one of the greatest philosophical minds of the 20th century, in his work *Treatise on Happiness*.

The principle of equal opportunities in access to social and economic goods became my inspiration for reflections on well-being. Therefore, in this essay, the author will mention the most important arguments and reasons for validating the principle of equal opportunities in access to social and economic goods of individuals, which in turn imply their mental well-being. Moreover, issues related to well-being in the above dimensions will be





considered in the context of the necessity of changes introduced into social life due to, among others, human's opus magnum, which is the phenomenon of globalization.

For the purposes of this study, the authors will allow themselves a huge shortcut (justified by editorial requirements) in explaining the most important concepts and terms used in this essay, and at the same time will clarify the area of their considerations.

Issues of well-being and, consequently, happiness are the subject of interdisciplinary analyses, in particular undertaken by representatives of many scientific disciplines, including: philosophy, psychology, sociology, economics and ethics.

**Analysis of recent research and publications.** The first problem encountered while preparing to write this essay was defining well-being. The controversy surrounding this concept is primarily related to its complexity and differences in the interpretation of its rudimentary dimensions. According to the analyses, the literary concept of well-being is often identified with welfare (e.g. S. Kot 2000, D. G., Blanchflower and J. Oswald, 2000). The conducted analyzes show that both of these concepts primarily refer to the income or possessions of an individual or group (material approach). Therefore, it can be a rudimentary determinant of happiness. This position is strongly emphasized by, among others, economic sciences. This belief clearly appears in the publication of R. Wilkinson and K. Pickett: *The Spirit of Equality. Why equality is better for everyone*, 2011). In addition, an in-depth analysis of such works by the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu as: *Practical Reason; On the theory of action* (2009), *Sociology in Question*, Sage Publications (1995), allows us to state with a high degree of assertion that the components of well-being - using Bourdieu's expression - may also be socially distinctive features. In turn, welfare is usually a subjective issue that does not refer to a material approach. This position is shared by, among others, Diener, who states in one of his works that "well-being means an individual feeling of happiness and satisfaction with life. The assessment of well-being is usually subjective (subjective well-being (SWB)) and is based on two categories: on the examination of experiences of pleasure and pain and the mentioned satisfaction with life [5].

After thoroughly analyzing the literature, I consider it inappropriate to equate well-being with welfare. Therefore, I will refer my

considerations about welfare to the economic and social spheres. However, the concept of well-being will be focused on the mental sphere. The above thesis is more justified in the context of the methodology of calculating welfare and well-being. According to references, the above-mentioned dimensions of well-being are assessed through objective (quantitative, measurable) indices, the so-called "hard" ones (e.g. indices determining volume and quality). In turn, mental well-being refers to a subjective assessment (qualitative, unmeasurable), related to, for example, lifestyle. That is why welfare should not be equated with well-being. These issues are highlighted, among others, by: D. Phillips (2006), E. Diener and E. Suh (1999).

Turning now to the definition of the concept of well-being, it should be mentioned that several terms are associated with this concept, such as: wealth, standard of living, quality of life, economic well-being and social well-being. The above terms are often used as synonyms, which in my opinion is a subjective error [9].

N.G. Markiv and M.P. Taylor state that well-being "...is the degree to which a person feels happy or satisfied with life [11]. In turn, A. Sen notes that "The well-being of a given person can be understood as his quality of life (...), life is a set of "functionings" which can be very diverse, ranging from such elementary as proper nutrition, enjoying good health (...), to more complex achievements, such as participation in social life"[16]. Therefore, each of the "functionings" creates the specific well-being of each individual.

In turn, in ethics and normative economics, well-being is determined through an ethical assessment of the life or condition of a given entity [18].

**The purpose of the article** is to determine the interdisciplinary principles of well-being in terms of its mental, social and economic components. The subject of research is the conceptual foundations of mental, social and economic well-being.

**Presentation of the main research material.** When analyzing the definition of economic well-being, it most often refers to material goods, their distribution, and, above all, to the income and financial situation of an individual, group, etc. B. Kasprzyk and A. Kasprzyk in one of their works confirm the above conclusions: The category of material situation has direct relationship with income, which is a certain dimension of a person's

resource stream. This stream means the currently achieved level of income, as well as all types of property understood as the so-called wealth. Hence, the financial situation should be treated as a simplified level of well-being [8]. In turn, E. Aksman defines economic well-being as the level of real income and wealth (the level of total expenses, i.e. consumption of goods and services, is assumed) [1].

The concept of well-being refers not only to the economic sphere, but also to the social sphere. Since the concept of well-being was enriched with this category, it has been one of the most frequently discussed and problematized issues in scientific and journalistic discourse. The elements of social well-being are:

- freedom, incl. words, criticism, print, choice of: worldview, confession, profession, associations of political orientation or national affiliation, and no discrimination;
- justice, which means, among others: equal application of legal and moral standards to everyone and reliable, non-biased conflict resolution;
- internal security, which means the maximum possible reduction of any threats within the state community, and external security, which means the maximum possible reduction of any threats to society and the state from the foreign environment;
- scientific, technical, educational, managerial and moral progress contributed by society to the global achievements of civilization.
- employment security, price stability,
- ensuring health care, social security), level of knowledge and education, lifestyle [1].

To sum up this part of the considerations, it should be stated that both economic and social well-being are constitutive features of the so-called economics of well-being, which include: a well-functioning economy, a desired level of economic and social well-being, the efficient allocation of scarce resources, and a fair distribution of wealth [12].

It must be admitted that quality of life is definitely a subjective category, difficult to measure. It is broadly understood as the level of satisfaction an individual receives as a result of the consumption of goods and services purchased on the market, consumption of public goods, forms of spending free time and other characteristics of the environment (material and social) in which he or she is located. In other words, the quality of life, including the economic and non-economic dimensions, is the

degree of human satisfaction with one's existence.

According to J. Czapiński, well-being is additionally determined by a person's will to live and satisfaction with particular areas of his or her life, e.g. private life, including social life, work, health or housing conditions. However, these factors are related to a much broader quality of life, assessed mostly objectively (through the analysis of statistical data). The recurring categories of quality of life measured by the most popular indices are: physical and emotional health, health behaviors, access to basic goods, education, natural environment, work, income, subjective evaluation of life and gender equality.

Moving on to the merits of the matter, I would like to emphasize that in terms of social and economic well-being, the above-mentioned principle of equal opportunities in access to goods related to the above-mentioned areas should apply. Fulfillment of this principle, in turn, implies equalization of the mental well-being of individuals. The above conclusions are reflected in the literature. It is worth mentioning here, among others, M. Noyak, who in his book "Christianity, democracy, capitalism" talks about the concept of the so-called democratic capitalism, based mainly on Abraham Lincoln's idea that "all men are created equal"[14].

Therefore, every person should have equal opportunities for economic development, obtaining specific material goods and becoming rich. Moreover, every state unit should have equal access to the so-called social gains, among others access to education, health care, labor market, various types of services and meeting the very current issue related to security. Implementation of the so-called distributive justice would be a guarantor that would equalize individuals' access to economic and social well-being. This state of affairs, as I mentioned earlier, is the spiritus movens of mental comfort, i.e. mental well-being. Of course, taking into account Lincoln's idea that all people are equal, one must be aware of the subjective feelings of an individual, especially their mental well-being.

In today's, seemingly very "progressive times" and in the era of democratic capitalism, this idea could be justified. However, as numerous examples taken from social reality show, discrimination still occurs. It can be noticed, among others, when hiring employees, primarily due to skin color, gender, age, religion, class, political views, disability or appearance. It







already appears during job interviews, when unethical questions are asked.

Although common norms and standards are defined to counteract this unfavorable phenomenon, they are not effective enough to completely eliminate it. Therefore, companies that try to operate in accordance with basic ethical principles are looking for new, innovative, and sometimes slightly controversial solutions in this area. One of them is the so-called compensating effect. G. Chryssides mentioned it in his book "Introduction to business ethics". Its essence is for the company to take steps [14], which aim to help groups that are particularly discriminated against, e.g. on the labor market. An example of such activities may be organizing special programs for discriminated groups (sending employees to courses and interpersonal training), which will allow them to increase their self-confidence.

The method of compensatory action has both many opponents and supporters. The main argument against its use is the statement that "entrepreneurs who use positive discrimination in favor of certain groups may be accused of using exactly the same type of discrimination to which they were allegedly opposed". Supporters of this method counter the attacks by putting forward unconvincing counter-arguments. One of them is the view that men should take responsibility for the advantage they have in society, therefore "compensatory action is a type of sanction imposed on those groups that have traditionally dominated in the spheres with the greatest power". Another argument is the statement that the so-called positive discrimination will equalize women's opportunities in the labor market, provide them with much better prospects and at the same time contribute to gender equality. Another way to eliminate discrimination in the workplace is to "set certain quotas for the employment of particular categories of employees". This involves assigning predetermined limits, most often expressed in percentages, for admitting socially discriminated groups.

Of course, these programs also face some obstacles. One of them may be the emergence of a situation in which employees are hired not based on their skills and qualifications, but to fill the planned quota.

The methods of combating discrimination at work presented above have both advantages and disadvantages. However, a positive aspect should seem to be the fact that ethical companies are constantly improving them so that, as it is

emphasized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, "every person, regardless of any differences, has the right to equal pay for equal work" [4].

However, the fact that even in countries with the highest level of welfare there are significant areas of poverty proves the ineffectiveness of this policy or – in the case of effective social policy – a specific understanding of welfare. Economic inequality is also observed in every society. Finally, regardless of the sources of these inequalities, they may be perceived by society as fair or unfair. In-depth scientific reflection on well-being, inequality and distributive justice seems necessary.

From a sociological perspective, lifestyle can be related to classes, levels, groups and social units, so we can talk about, for example, a specific lifestyle which, using Bourdieu's expression is a distinctive, status and prestigious value" [10] for the given social categories.

**Conclusions and prospects for further research.** There is an opinion that equality is an "empty idea", an "empty form that has no content". Nevertheless, I believe that equal access to economic and social goods is a necessary condition for individuals to achieve psychological well-being. Unfortunately, in every country in the world there is a group of people having significant difficulties in accessing or using the above-mentioned goods. These difficulties are strongly related to the phenomenon of social exclusion.

An opportunity to implement the discussed principle could be civilizational changes, the technological and IT revolution, and, above all, globalization processes. They include, among others: economic sphere. The idea of globalization also draws attention to the issues of free flow of capital, goods and services between countries of the world. In turn, the social sphere indicates the building of one social world. Therefore, we can say that globalization is about economic and social integration (solidarity) of the world. However, we should remember that globalization does not only bring benefits. A derivative of globalization in the international dimension (macro approach) is the widening development gap and differences in living standards between highly industrialized countries and countries that were recently classified as the Third World. Another important consequence of globalization is the deepening of income disparities and social inequalities at the scale of individual nation states (micro approach). Increasing economic competition is

pushing many groups to the margins of social life (e.g. the unemployed, immigrants). New forms of “exclusion” [17], poverty and social pathology are emerging, which pose a serious challenge to contemporary social policy.

B. Holyst draws attention to the above mentioned problems, resulting from exclusion. He states that the effects of social exclusion include: (...) the creation of organizations dealing in people smuggling (...), an increase in begging and vagrancy (...), the emergence of usually petty criminal crimes committed by foreigners (...), the emergence and development of organized crime of an ethnic nature (drugs, racketeering, money laundering, sex business, trafficking in women and children and others) (...) [7].

E. Currie also shares the above thesis, writing that “(...) the increase in social exclusion has a negative impact on the life of local communities, which suffer from the loss of permanent income of their members, the constant flow of residents and the weakening of the cohesion of the environment. Excluded people are unable to achieve the economic status and level of consumption promoted in society through legally available means. According to the above-mentioned researcher, bypassing legal - and choosing illegal - means of achieving a goal is the most harmful aspect of the relationship between social exclusion and crime [6].

The problem of economic and social well-being therefore takes on a new expression. On the one hand, it will be economic exclusion, and on the other hand, it will be exclusion in the social sphere. It should be remembered that economic and social exclusion (caused, among others, by low income or even lack of access to the labor market, inability to meet specific needs, services, etc.) is strongly related to mental well-being. Access and use of even basic economic goods and services are crucial for the integration of members of modern society.

In modern conditions of orientation towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, the opposite process to social alienation, namely, social involvement is realized to a greater extent through the spread of social responsibility practices in socio-economic systems of various levels [19].

To sum up, it can be concluded that globalization ideas involving, among others, to support poor countries and equalize differences in the income levels of citizens from different countries, however, seem to remain only in the sphere of theory. In practice, the rich become richer and the poor become poorer. The

following words of R. Marx should be a confirmation of the existing disproportions: “A billion people in the world today live in extreme poverty; they have to survive on less than a dollar a day, which means their biological existence is directly threatened. If we conventionally set the obvious poverty line at less than two dollars a day per person, the number of those who must live below this line is estimated at over two and a half billion. This dramatic poverty of so many people can be contrasted with the equally dramatic wealth of few others” [13].

The existing antagonisms may be the spiritus movens of the rebellion of people characterized by low economic and social well-being against the “epidemic of loneliness” described by A. Toffler [20]. Therefore, today's world must face the problem of economic and social inequalities and organize social life in such a way that it is as conducive to the development of all people as possible, i.e. “pro publico bono”, which in turn will contribute to equalizing their mental well-being. Otherwise, as one of the most outstanding philosophers of the 20th century, Karl R. Popper [3], writes in his work entitled *The Misery of Historicism*: “(...) neither science nor any other method will allow us to predict the course of the future history”.

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