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Emotion and Value Perspectives in Sociological Investigation of Happiness

***Abstract.** The aim of this paper is to counter the following statement: the criticism of sociology for not involving issues of happiness is not fully justified. In general, both in classical as well as in contemporary sociology happiness has been included into sociological research. However, knowledge on happiness and happiness related phenomena is disseminated into different subfields of sociology (e.g. sociology of health, sociology of everyday life, sociology of culture etc.). Therefore, the main idea of this article is to show different ways of exploring happiness in various fields of sociology. Basically, the concept of happiness can be understood as an emotion (with its various types), a value (or rather a set of values) or an idea of «a good life». Happiness as an emotion is explored by sociology of emotions, sociology of health, sociology of everyday life. Sociology of culture deals with happiness as a set of values. The topic of happiness as an idea of «a good life» appears in sociology of social change as well as in other fields of sociology related to family, education, politics, culture and media. Happiness can also be accompanied with other notions such as optimism, satisfaction with life, hope, or success. Sociology of happiness and well-being has been developed on the interdisciplinary basis and has not excluded studies of ill-being. The author believes that today, in the rapidly changing world, there is a greater than ever need for reflection on happiness and well-being of individuals.*

***Key words:** sociology, happiness, well-being, values, emotion, good life, satisfaction with life, classical sociology, contemporary sociology, an integrated approach.*

*The ideas of happiness
and its pursuit are part of the natural history
of human beings, and so deserve their share
of scientific attention.*

Nettle 2005: 9

Introduction

The word «happiness» is not so popular in academic sociology, contrary to well-being and satisfaction with life. Nevertheless, as this article shows, happiness itself has been, and still is — a subject of interest for sociologists. The

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Table 1

Interconnectedness of happiness with different fields of knowledge

Main topics	Happiness as an emotion (including joy and satisfaction with the whole life)	Happiness as a set of values (including meaningful life goals), as a satisfaction with various fields of life	Happiness as the idea of «a good life» (values+emotions), as an important part of quality of life
Similar categories	Subjective well-being	Objective-well-being	Social well-being
Fields of sociology	Sociology of emotions Sociology of everyday life Sociology of health Sociology of ageing	Sociology of moral life Sociology of culture Sociology of leisure Sociology of work Sociology of family	Sociology of social changes Sociology of family Sociology of media Sociology of culture Sociology of politics Sociology of education
Other disciplines	Psychology	Philosophy	Economics

goal of this article is to show actual and possible contributions of sociological approach to happiness studies, with special interest in some fields of sociology. My argument is that there were no systematic studies on relations between happiness and other subfields of sociology, aiming to show that the existing subfields explore various sociological aspects of happiness.

Happiness is a complex phenomenon with multiple meanings. In academic literature happiness is usually defined as satisfaction with life or as a kind of well-being of an individual. Psychologist Daniel Nettle (2005, p.18) distinguished three senses of the term ‘happiness’. These are momentary feelings (joy, pleasure), judgments about feelings (well-being, satisfaction), quality of life (flourishing, fulfilling one’s potential, what the good life consists of). Similar meanings of happiness can be found in sociology.

From the sociological point of view, happiness can be defined as a value, a mood/emotion, or an idea/concept. Happiness as an idea includes social values and public moods, cognitive and emotional elements. Happiness can be considered from different perspectives: micro (happiness of the individual), mezzo (happiness on the level of social communities, various social groups) or macro (happiness in nations). The table 1

shows an example of the interconnectedness of happiness with different fields of knowledge including subfields of sociology.

A sociologist concentrates mainly on social aspects of happiness. Sociology of health deals with emotions including happiness and unhappiness. Sociology of culture draws attention on functioning of the ideas of happiness in different cultural and social fields, it concerns various dominant and alternative lifestyles of happy life, it focuses on social values and norms. Sociology of politics focuses on macro social aspects of good life.

Sociology is a discipline which emphasizes social relations, social groups, communities and institutions. Therefore, it is important to study happiness-related issues on different levels of various social groups. Thus, sociology is interested not only in a happiness in nation but also in happiness of elders and younger people, rich and poor, single and married, men and women, etc. Such sociological approach was successfully used by Christian Kroll (2011).

It is important to note that happiness takes many different forms. In terms of scope there are three types of happiness: context-free, domain specific, and facet-specific (Warr 2007). In terms of emphasis there are two types of happiness: more af-

fective or more cognitive (ibidem). This is not a full list of possible variations. Warr postulated a need to examine not only general statements on happiness as a whole but also differences between forms of happiness (Warr 2007: 49).

The concept of happiness refers to a broad spectrum of different and yet related phenomena, which makes it difficult to grasp in scientific terms. Among happiness related phenomena that can be interested for sociology there are the following ones: life satisfaction, social moods, social values, social well-being, quality of life, social capital and social trust, social change, consumption, health, culture, and optimism.

Generally speaking, happiness can be understood in two different ways. First, as something coming from the individuals imagination including values and goals. Second, as a social practice realizing in our everyday life where our relations with others and our activities cause our feelings of joy, satisfaction and hope.

Happiness in classical sociology

Early sociologists concentrated on social problems such as suicides, poverty, inequalities etc. At the same time they explored moral issues which should bring happiness into human life. The first sociological references related to happiness issues appeared in the context of social order and social progress (e.g. Comte, Martineau, Durkheim). Yet Harriet Martineau (1838) wrote that people associate to achieve happiness developing their «morals and manners». Human happiness was related to freedom in moral and practical matters, when a social system permitted autonomy of an individual. So, happiness was defined as a goal of human pursuit, it was socially determined, regarded as an important law of social life. In her empirical research she was interested in the condition of less powerful groups of the society, and the possibility of all individuals to realize their autonomy in a given society. Her belief in the progressive evolution of the society was similar to Comte's and Spencer's positivist perspective.

Auguste Comte was interested in happiness as a feeling and a state of mind within his theory of positivism. According to Plé, who analysed concepts of happiness in the works of Comte, Comte's understanding of happiness (which had similar grounds as human dignity) included some components: a scientific conception of the world, the feelings of love and veneration, and a wisely ordered activity (Plé 2000: 423). Comte regarded the state of happiness as a right to live in the good social order. The pursuit of human happiness was possible in a way of overcoming intellectual and moral crisis. Sociology as a science was seen as a last step in pursuing private and public happiness.

Émile Durkheim analysed social solidarity of people which was related to human happiness. In his work *The Division of Labor in Society*, the author noticed that social progress did not necessarily bring more happiness. Durkheim rejected the view of utilitarian political economy on happiness that the source of the division of labor was the human need for happiness. For him, happiness depends on other causes, like a moderate restraint of the human desires that was expressed in Aristotelian approach to happiness. For Durkheim, to be happy meant to adopt achievable goals. As Neevs noticed, for Durkheim hope is one of the forms of happiness, that is a collective sentiment being learned over time and experience, that is something to be cultivated because it is «an existential resource to draw upon in a moment of trial» (Neevs 2003: 178). In another work — *Suicide* — Durkheim claimed that along with better well-being, an increase of the level of suicides was observed. Anomic suicides typical for modern societies decreased the average general happiness of society.

Similarly to Durkheim, George Simmel in *The Metropolis and Mental Life* wrote on unhappy states of minds of a modern man living in a big city, where social ties were significantly weakened. However, according to Zingerle, Simmel was skeptical towards the view on happiness as a goal of human pursuit, focusing rather on happiness as a state of mind and a quality of actions (Zing-

erle 2000: 467). For Simmel, happiness was a fact of subjective life based on set of values of an individual.

Thomas and Znaniecki (1958) used the term «social happiness» indicating the link between social and individual dimensions. The authors noticed that this issue is more relevant for the middle and upper classes of Polish society, so the peasants were excluded from this observations. They mentioned that:

both relations of the sexes and the economic situation are among the fundamental conditions of human happiness, in the sense of making it or spoiling it (Thomas & Znaniecki 1958: 84).

Furthermore, they believed that problem of social happiness «merits a very particular consideration, both from the theoretical and from the practical point of view», especially by using the sociological method based on personal writings (e.g. autobiographical life histories, letters) of the individual members of the society (ibidem).

Pitirim Sorokin pointed out that the issue of happiness should not be neglected nor overestimated. He was interested in happiness in its different dimensions. First, he indicated links between social progress and happiness. Similarly to Durkheim, he noticed that social progress does not necessarily lead to human happiness. Second, he focused on social relations as an important factor of happiness. In American research on «good neighbors», he came to the conclusion that «the home is the core of happiness» (Sorokin 1950). People from happy families become good neighbors, they do good things more willingly than others. They are raised mainly in large families. Good neighbors are people behaving in an altruistic way. Happiness is closely related to love, especially altruistic, creative love (Sorokin 1950a; Sorokin 1954). Sorokin believed in power of love for better future of humanity.

To sum up, yet in classical sociological works happiness was seen as an important aspect of human life, as socially determined phenomenon. Human happiness included physical and moral well-being of the members of the society. It was understood as a

goal, individual set of values or a state of mind. Hope and love were acknowledged as very important forms of human happiness. Sociology was understood as a science with a goal of overcoming human sufferings and leading to human happiness. The idea of progress and fulfillment was dominated in early sociology. Positivistic sociology dealt with happiness on a macro level in a context of social change. Humanistic sociology was focused on mezzo and micro levels focusing on social institutions, social groups and individuals feelings. Although happiness was mentioned by many classics, it was hardly ever a main subject in sociological research. That is why some contemporary sociologists noticed that the subject of happiness had been neglected in sociology (e.g. Veenhoven 2006; Kossaka 2006).

Happiness as a subject of research in current sociology

Happiness as a subject of contemporary sociological research is more explicit than in the classical works. They are based on satisfaction with life and subjective well-being concepts. However, there are still many debatable issues on happiness and well-being ahead of today sociologists. First of all, it is a question of definition. What does happiness mean for various social groups? How can it be measured? What are the social factors of happiness and well-being?

Happiness is closely related to satisfaction with life. Both terms include affect and meaning. However, these are different phenomena. They measure different aspects of subjective well-being. Life satisfaction relates more to the objective materials and social living conditions, happiness relates more to dense and gratifying close relationships (Haller and Hadler 2006: 194). When asked about their state of happiness or state of satisfaction with life, people usually give very different answers (Inglehart et al. 2008). Interestingly, individuals declare to be happier than satisfied with their life (ibidem).

The feeling of happiness can be related to the satisfaction with the whole life (Tatar-kiewicz 1962). Ruut Veenhoven also defines

overall happiness (subjective well-being) as an individual life-satisfaction from life as a whole, based on cognitive and affective (feeling good) appraisals of life. He states that «individual subjective well-being is both an outcome of social systems and a factor in their functioning» (ibidem: 11).

However, the generalized approach to happiness is not satisfactory for those sociologists for whom happiness can be explored as an emotion based on various intensity and various spheres of life. Happiness is particularized regarding some particular situations and shorter time periods of a person's experience of everyday life (Feldman 2008). Such types were distinguished by Hyman and Patulny, proposed by them as a new methodology in happiness research, that is Emotion Time Diaries (Hyman & Patulny 2007). It seems that the main idea of shifting the focus of happiness research into more particularized defined happiness is important because, as the authors noted, happiness is a contextual phenomenon that could be experienced in many fields of activities: work, family, social life etc. Warr also postulated a need to examine not only general statements on happiness as a whole but also differences between different forms of happiness (Warr 2007: 49).

The Polish psychologist Janusz Czapiński formulated the «onion theory» of happiness. According to him (1992: 192), there are three basic layers in the construct of happiness. The deepest layer, the most stable and least affected by the ups and downs of life, is our will-to-live which is genetically determined. Our will to live was considered as an important variable for a good life by many classic sociologists (e.g. Durkheim). However, it was related to social ties and relationships issues, not to genetics. For Czapiński, the intermediate layer is a general satisfaction with life (general feeling of well-being or happiness). The peripheral layer is composed of satisfactions received from single aspects of life (work, family, children, recreation, friends, housing conditions, income, city, country, etc.).

In the academic sphere there are attempts to present a new subfield of sociology deal-

ing with happiness. It has been given various names: sociology of happiness (Kroll 2011), sociology of happiness and unhappiness (Kossaka 2006), sociology of happiness and subjective well-being (BSA 2011). Reviewing curricula based on the academic subjects (Calvo 2008; Keyes 2010), one may notice that such propositions include sociological perspective into interdisciplinary happiness studies research. This interdisciplinary approach is also seen in journals, in which the subject of happiness and well-being appears (Social Indicators Research, Journal of Happiness Studies).

Happiness as a subject was present in sociological conferences programs. In 2009 Laura Hyman presented a paper «A Sociology of Happiness: reflections and perceptions» at the European Sociological Association conference in Lisbon. In 2011 British Sociological Association's annual conference was devoted to sociology of happiness and well-being. In the same year, at the European Sociological Association conference, within the sociology of emotions session, there were two papers on happiness presented (Rancew-Sikora, Dowgiałło 2011; Dantas 2011).

Analysing the reflections in sociology and other disciplines, Scott (2005) indicates a significant role of sociological imagination for the sociological perspective. This concept can be helpful also in case of happiness and subjective well-being. Wright Mills (1959) in his concept of sociological imagination indicated that understanding of functioning of a society demands looking at various layers of its functioning. First — is the sphere of the structure of the particular society. Second — is the place of society in human history. Third — the men and women prevailing in this society and in this period. If adopting such approach into happiness and subjective well-being study, there is a need to formulate the following questions. What does it mean to lead a happy life in this society? Is it an important value for various groups? How happiness/unhappiness (also optimism/pessimism) is distributed within social structure of this society? What is

the dynamic of such emotions and values? Whether people (representatives of various social groups) are happy/unhappy? Why? What are the factors of their happiness/unhappiness? Which dominant and silent ideas on happiness/unhappiness are present in this society and culture?

Happiness as an emotion

Sociology of emotions is one of the leading subfields of sociology investigating happiness. Happiness is perceived as one of the basic universal emotions for all humans (Kemper 1987; Turner & Stets 2009). From a sociological perspective, happiness — like other emotions — involves certain components:

(1) the biological activation of key body systems; (2) socially constructed cultural definitions and constraints on what emotions should be experienced and expressed in a situation; (3) the application of linguistic labels provided by culture to internal sensations; (4) the overt expressions of emotions through facial, voice, and paralinguistic moves; and (5) perceptions and appraisals of situational objects or events (Turner & Stets 2009: 9).

Thus, happiness is not only socially constructed but also biologically determined. Biology, socio-cultural construction and cognition interact in a complex way. It arises a need to take an interdisciplinary approach to research happiness as an emotion.

There are various types of happiness: joy, pleasure, satisfaction, hope, love and other. Turner differentiates the emotion of satisfaction-happiness based on the level of its intensity. He distinguished three variants of emotions related to satisfaction-happiness. The first group is based on low intensity and includes content, sanguine, serenity, gratified. The second group of moderate intensive satisfaction-happiness includes cheerful, buoyant, friendly, amiable, enjoyment. The third group of high intensive satisfaction-happiness encompasses joy, bliss, rapture, jubilant, gaiety, elation, delight, thrilled, exhilarated (Turner 2000; Turner & Stets 2009: 16). In this way, the group of

emotions related to satisfaction-happiness is complex.

Happiness as an emotion can be explored from different theoretical perspectives. Generally, researchers of emotions distinguish between structural and cultural approaches. In the structural approach (e.g. Kemper 1990) happiness is seen through power and status relations of actors. Culturally oriented approach is based on social norms and feeling rules which determine the expression of happiness. An important issue relates to «emotion management» (Hochschild 1983) in situations when an individual should adapt their real emotions to a concrete socio-culturally determined situation. Among other important sociological studies on emotion of happiness it is worth mentioning Eva Illouz' works (Illouz 1997; Illouz 2008), dealing with the topic of the unequal distribution of emotional development and emotional happiness within different social classes. The author looks at the emotional happiness in the intimate relations, spheres of love and family, and in the context of modernity.

Happiness as an emotion has also found its application in the field of sociology of health, in which the subject of happiness and unhappiness has become of particular interests. Here, happiness is understood as a psychological wellbeing (Putnam 2000) — and its lack — as ill-being. For Robert Putnam, happiness improves state of health of an individual.

The more integrated we are with our community, the less likely we are to experience colds, heart attacks, strokes, cancer, depression, and premature death of all sorts. Such protective effects have been confirmed for close family ties, for friendship networks, for participation in social events, and even for simple affiliation with religious and other civic associations (Putnam 2000: 326).

Positive influence of happiness on health is found in psychological research (Seligman 2011; Diener & Biswas-Diener 2008; Lyubomirsky 2008). For sociologists of health it can be interesting:

how some people manage to be cheerful even if they live in appalling places and have awful ailments, and how being

cheerful may lead to these appalling places and awful ailments changing for the better (Morral 2009: 161).

Happiness also is seen as a psychiatric disorder (Bentall 1992; Morral 2009). In western culture, not being happy and satisfied can be perceived as a kind of illness that should be treated. Many tools of psychological and medical therapies arouse for dealing with unhappiness, misery and depression. This individualistic approach diminishes social and structural reasons of feelings of sadness and unhappiness (Morral 2009).

Thus, sociology of emotions and sociology of health are important fields of sociology where happiness as an emotion has been investigated. However, within those fields some important happiness related issues are absent. Among them are values perspective and conditions of social happiness as a model of a «good life».

***Happiness as a set of values
and as the idea of a «good life»***

In terms of autotelic values happiness means a purposeful, good and moral life. A philosopher Julia Annas defines happiness as an achievement of important goals of an individual. For her, happiness is not just a positive feeling (Annas 2008). She makes a link between happiness and a set of values. Happiness always includes several other values. Every type of happiness takes reference to a different set of values. For eudaimonists values like honesty and family are important. Hedonists in turn, prize pleasure, money, freedom and liberty. However, common belief not always differentiates between pleasant and good. Moreover, elements of hedonism and eudemonism often overlap (Deci, Ryan, 2008: 3). In practical terms, when someone achieve an important goal, he/she may experience a feeling of joy, i.e. pleasure for himself/herself. From sociological perspective of social change, happiness is a kind of postmaterialistic value in postindustrial societies (e.g. Inglehart).

Sociology of culture draws attention to functioning of the ideas of happiness in different cultural and social fields; it concerns

various dominant and alternative lifestyles of happy life, it focuses on social values and norms. Culture can be understood as a system of shared values, including those related to happiness and unhappiness. Why happiness is so important in some countries, why it is less significant in others? What does it mean to be happy for people from various cultures? What cross-cultural research show on patterns of feeling happiness in different cultures and situations?

There is a link between cultural values and happiness. For people from European-American culture happiness means personal achievement, whereas for East Asian culture it is the realization of social harmony, the realization of positive social relationship (of which the self is a part) that contributes to the feeling of happiness (Uchida et al. 2004). People in individualistic societies claim to be happy more often than people from collectivistic societies (Myers & Diener 1995).

Well-being is always connected with «good life», however what constitutes «the good» varies across countries (Diener & Suh 2000; Uchida et al. 2004; Jugureanu & Hughes 2010). The idea of «a good life» appears in the field of social policy. It is related to a continuum, which begins from misery and social exclusion and develops towards well-being and social cohesion. The classic concepts of the «good society» were concentrated on material welfare and social equality, whereas the current concepts emphasize quality of life dimension, especially social capital encompassing close networks and active voluntary associations (Veenhoven 2007; Putnam 2000).

The World Happiness Report (2012) shows a need for taking into account not only economic development but also subjective well-being, which includes both feelings of happiness and satisfaction with life. The authors of the report believe that:

The case of taking happiness seriously, even in a world still marked by evils of many types, is based on a belief, increasingly supported by evidence, that it provides a broader range of possible ways to build a better world, including more effective solutions for poverty, illness and war. (WHR 2012: 20).

Social happiness depends on numerous factors including those coming from governments policy. Not surprisingly perhaps, subjective well-being is higher in nations with decent material standard of living, democratic systems, social trust and tolerance (Veenhoven 2008). Within nations, subjective well-being depends on marital status and state of health (ibidem). Economic development enhances well-being for poor people, in poor nations (Zagórski et al. 2010), however, materialist orientation itself does not make people happier (Frank 1999). More recent sociological studies stress that it is not money, but social capital that brings happiness (e.g. Pelletier 2009; Kroll 2011).

In understanding of ideas of a good life research on fears and uncertainties are useful. What people are worried about indicate what they appreciate, what is important in their life. Both happiness and unhappiness can have similar social correlates. For instance, people without work and income can feel very unhappy not being able to meet their basic needs. However, people who have a job can be happy that they have possibility to meet their basic and other social and cultural needs. On the other hand, those people may worry that they can lost their job, they may also feel quite unhappy while having too many difficult tasks in their job. One part of job can make someone happy, another part — unhappy (Warr 2007). Family and children seem to be a way of making people happy and fulfilled. Nevertheless, those spheres can also cause many worries and stress. In other words, the same factors, like a job, a family, children — can be both a source of happiness and unhappiness. It is impossible for sociologists to focus on happiness alone, without saying a word about unhappiness or a risk to be unhappy. Within subfields of sociology many dilemmas of happy life can be put into research: work-life balance, time and money, pleasure or development, inequalities and happiness, sufferings and happiness, life in big/small cities and (un)happiness, social isolation and social communities etc.

An idea of «a good life» or «better life» for individuals as well as for different socio-

demographic groups encompasses the whole sociological knowledge from micro to macro levels. On micro level, it involves research on strategies used by an individual in different biographical situations when striving for better life. On macro level, the sociology of social change can show various dimensions of people's life. Objective forms of well-being include income, employment, political rights and freedoms, social relationships, marriage, religiosity and health.

Another part of interest in better life comes from social institutions of socialization, including family, education, mass media and others. For instance, sociology of family looks at how models of everyday relations between spouses/partners can contribute to happiness studies. Research on love as a kind of happy family life (Kaufmann 2012) can be a good example. Here, happiness has been realized at the level of everyday activity in various tactics of partners.

Thus, happiness can be understood as the outcome of an interaction process between individual aspirations, expectations and more or less favourable micro and macrosocial conditions (Haller and Hadler 2006: 171). In order to reveal those conditions a cooperation between various fields of sociology is needed.

Critics of one-dimension approaches toward happiness

Happiness as a pure emotion leads to many criticism, which arises from moral perspective and extreme consumerism, that treats happiness as profitable commodity, including self-help happiness industry. Hughes (2006) suggests that many aspects of our lives can be understood better by our striving for meaning, not for happiness. Happiness or precisely happy life is life consisting of important goals, of meanings. As Hughes accents for a sociologist studying quality of life a question «are you happy?» is a wrong one. It would be a wrong question for a parent sitting up with a sick child, for a volunteer who fought in the Spanish Civil War or for a combatant in Iraq today (Hughes 2006: 619). These are examples of situations where

affect is low but meaning is high. The opposite examples of high affect and low meaning show illusion types of happiness. Among them are drugs, alcohol, sex and materialism (ibidem: 619). However, happiness itself can be understood broader than just feeling.

It is interesting to note that a prominent psychologist Martin Seligman (2011) known from his early works on depression at first and, on optimism and authentic happiness later, in one of his recent work has changed his perspective from positive psychology and true happiness towards balanced psychology and a full life (flourishing concepts). That change links positive emotions with meanings. Specifically, flourishing concept of Seligman includes positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meanings and achievement.

Looking at happiness as a system of values may risk missing on an emotional meaning of happiness. Affect is very important part of happiness which is neglected in theories of social construction and social comparison (Veenhoven 2008). People act according to their values and emotions. In surveys on happiness people often indicate that they appreciate some systems of values. However, this does not automatically mean that they feel happy and satisfied. The system of declared values is not necessarily a system of real/avowed values. Moreover, happiness can be perceived as a utopia, as something unachievable.

The less accepted ideas of good/happy life in philosophical and sociological literature are mainly those associated with the hedonistic model, such as excessive consumption, the rejection of spirituality and morality (e.g. Bauman 2008). His book *The Art of Life* starts from the philosophical question — what is wrong with happiness? — put forward by Michel Rustin. His answer boils down to the demonstration that affluent societies do not always boast more happy people than poorer countries. As Bauman points out, *in consumer society we are happy as long as we do not lose hope of achieving happiness; as long as we have hope we do not fall into depression* (Bauman 2008: 32).

Bauman also shows some contradictions between postulating happiness (in a sense of affluence) as a goal (a right) for everybody in the individualized society of consumers and real situation of so many individuals which are unable to achieve such a goal (Bauman 2008a: 26). He criticizes modern-capitalist society for «being inhospitable for morality» (Bauman 2000: 84). Similarly, Robert Frank (2000) wrote on ‘luxury fever’ which pushes people to buy more new products to pursue happiness but such activity does not bring happiness. According to Oliver James concept, ‘selfish capitalism’ which turns luxuries into necessities makes people unhappy (James 2008).

Inspirations towards postulating an integrated approach towards happiness and subjective well-being can be found in the integral concept of Pitirim Sorokin (1947), whose sociology consists of the indivisible trinity: personality, culture, and society. The research problem is how culture and society influence subjective well-being of individual and how individual happiness influence culture and society. In sociology an approach based on triangular methodology and taking into account feelings, values and social activities within various social groups and categories, examining static and dynamic aspects, general and specific, and looking at various contexts — would be of great interest.

Concluding remarks

This article has presented some reflections on happiness in sociology. It has shown that happiness and subjective well-being issues have been in the focus for both early and contemporary sociologists. There were some strengths and weaknesses discussed when dealing with happiness as an emotion, a set of values or part of quality of life. It was shown that one-dimension approach to happiness is not enough for deeper understanding of social phenomenon of happiness.

Thus, from a sociological point of view we can study happiness related emotions in-

cluding joy and optimism (emotional capital) and satisfaction with life, set of values and goals for meaningful happy life. Finally, we can examine the ideas of good life in different cultural dimensions which can influence everyday life of individuals as well as their lifestyles. For sociologists, changes within practices of feeling joy, satisfaction with life, optimism and hope are of most interest, both at the level of everyday life (qualitative research) and at the level of social groups, institutions, social movements, culture and society (qualitative and quantitative research).

Answering the question why happiness should be taken into account in contemporary sociological research it is important to show some reasons. First, a shift from materialistic into postmaterialistic values in the developed Western countries contributes to

the question of quality of life rather than survival. Second, secularization and individualization of the western societies put forward the significance of expert knowledge, especially psychology and sociology. Third, the increasing uncertainties of the everyday life follow to appreciating of today's happiness rather than future perspective. Fourth, the increasing reflexivity of a postmodern man needs a new answer on the sense of life as well as a way of good life which can be full of pleasure or full of sense.

Yet many important questions were not included into this article. Among them there are more profound reflections on theoretical and methodological dimensions of happiness research. Nevertheless, indicating on various contributions from different fields of sociology enriches the previous sociological knowledge.

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