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CONCEPTUALIZATION OF SOCIAL SECURITY WITHIN THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PARADIGM: AN ECOSYSTEM-BASED MODEL

КОНЦЕПТУАЛІЗАЦІЯ СОЦІАЛЬНОЇ БЕЗПЕКИ В РАМКАХ ПАРАДИГМИ СТАЛОГО РОЗВИТКУ: ЕКОСИСТЕМНА МОДЕЛЬ

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The aim of the article is to conceptualize social security in the coordinates of sustainable development and to substantiate the ecosystem structural model. The paper demonstrates that existing approaches to interpreting social security are fragmentary and insufficiently integrated into the framework of sustainable development. The article proposes a definition of social security as an ecosystem, which is determined by interrelated components: economic, social, environmental, behavioral, evolutionary, and regulatory, and has two levels of provision. The author's approach is to include the behavioral component as a corrective mechanism of social security to harmonize individual and collective responsibility. It is concluded that social security functions as a systemic characteristic of socio-economic systems and as a prerequisite for their long-term stability, cohesion, and adaptive capacity in conditions of global uncertainty.

Keywords: social security, sustainable development, social resilience, socio-economic system, social quality, ecosystem approach.

Актуальність дослідження зумовлена посиленням глобальної нестабільності, спричиненої цифровою трансформацією, зміною клімату, військовими конфліктами та соціально-економічною турбулентністю, що перешкоджають сталому розвитку, де соціальна безпека набуває нового значення. Метою дослідження є концептуалізація соціальної безпеки в координатах сталого розвитку та обґрунтування екосистемної структурної моделі, яка відображає її багатовимірну природу. Дослідження ґрунтується на міждисциплінарному, екосистемному та людиноцентричному підходах і використовує методи аналізу, синтезу, абстракції, систематизації та концептуального моделювання. У дослідженні систематизовано чотири домінуючі підходи до тлумачення соціальної безпеки в сучасному науковому дискурсі: конструктивістський, релятивістський, аналітичний та формалізований. Показано, що існуючі інтерпретації є фрагментарними та недостатньо інтегрованими в рамки сталого розвитку. У статті обґрунтовано, що соціальну безпеку в умовах багатовимірної невизначеності не можна тлумачити виключно як елемент національної безпеки чи як механізм політики соціального захисту, а слід розуміти як екосистему, що складається з шести взаємопов'язаних компонентів: економічного, соціального, екологічного, поведінкового, еволюційного та регуляторного. Запропоновано структурну модель соціальної безпеки, яка розрізняє базовий та прогресивний рівні розвитку та наголошує на стійкості, гнучкості та безпеці як ключових атрибутах. Новизна підходу полягає у включенні поведінкової складової як коригувального механізму для прийняття вузько раціональних рішень та у підкресленні важливості гармонізації індивідуальної та колективної відповідальності. Зроблено висновок, що базова модель відображає мінімально необхідні умови для збереження системної стабільності, а прогресивний рівень соціальної безпеки характеризує соціально-економічну систему, здатну не лише до адаптації та відтворення, але й до еволюційної трансформації. У цій конфігурації соціальна безпека перетворюється на рушійну силу сталого розвитку, а не лише як захисний механізм.

Ключові слова: соціальна безпека, сталий розвиток, соціальна стійкість, соціально-економічна система, соціальна якість, екосистемний підхід.

Statement of the problem. The growing instability of contemporary socio-economic systems, intensified by digital transformation, climate change, geopolitical conflicts, demographic shifts, and global health crises, has significantly complicated the achievement of sustainable development goals. In such conditions, traditional approaches to security, which are predominantly focused on military, economic, or institutional dimensions, appear insufficient for explaining the long-term viability of societies. Increasing uncertainty reveals the vulnerability of social systems not only to external shocks but also to internal structural imbalances, erosion of trust, institutional fragmentation, and behavioral inconsistencies among actors. Sustainable development is commonly interpreted through the coordination of economic, environmental, and social objectives. However, practical implementation of this paradigm often results in fragmented policy solutions aimed at achieving specific targets – poverty reduction, decent work, environmental protection, or economic growth – without sufficient consideration of the systemic interconnections between them. As a consequence, the issue of maintaining social cohesion, resilience, and adaptability under conditions of permanent transformation remains insufficiently conceptualized. In this context, social security becomes particularly relevant. It cannot be reduced solely to social protection mechanisms or considered exclusively as a component of national security policy. Instead, it should be understood as a systemic characteristic of socio-economic systems that reflects their capacity to preserve stability, ensure reproduction, and support progressive development in the face of multidimensional risks. At the same time, the existing scientific discourse demonstrates significant fragmentation in the interpretation of social security, ranging from its identification with state policy instruments to its understanding as a measure of protection of individual rights and freedoms. The absence of an integrated conceptual framework linking social security to the paradigm of sustainable development creates a theoretical gap.

Analysis of recent research and publications. Today, depending on how one understands the stability of the system, two concepts of sustainable development are distinguished, each with followers in the scientific community: the intersection and the absorption of different spheres of human life. Agreeing with the position of Scutaru L. [15], we must consider sustainable development from the perspective of integrating approaches from economic, natural, and social sciences. Exploring the role of the human factor, Thatcher A. [19], Kolot A. et al. [7] note that, from the perspective of human kindness, the workforce is improving, but income differentiation is increasing. Speaking about the sustainability of development itself, it is also noted that it is impossible to develop if the system (be it the economy or society itself) does not have an internal core. This framework would hold its components together. Thus, sustainable development presupposes a socio-economic system's ability to «survive» external influences. Based on the theoretical approaches of V. Khaustova and Sh. Omarov, «lifestyle» is an attribute of stable development [6]. At the intersection of achieving economic and social goals, we will have the characteristics of justice in the system; at the intersection of the goals of the environment and the economy – the viability of the system; and at the intersection of the goals of the environment and society – the permissible characteristics of sustainability. But we consider such a composition to be imperfect, since there is no man in it. According to Suprun A., the paradigm of sustainable development is a model of balanced «eco-socio-ecological» development, and its implementation in the socio-economic space should contribute to achieving equilibrium in the model «man-nature» [18]. Based on this postulate, sustainable development is a complex model that integrates various aspects of human life and society. Therefore, its sustainability will depend on balancing all components and their effective functioning (such as society and the economy) while simultaneously implementing environmentally friendly technologies.

As Sabovchyk A. and Popovich A. argue, sustainable development requires a robust financial foundation, since achieving goals entails material costs and institutional design [14], which is often defined by regulatory documents. For example, Ukraine has adopted sustainable development indicators for the period up to 2030 [5]. However, there is no complete document. The project of the Sustainable Development Strategy of Ukraine until 2030, proposed by the scientific community and parliamentarians, explains that the country continues the vector defined by the Sustainable Development Strategy until 2020 and includes ensuring security, economic growth and responsibility; the key priority of sustainable development is to improve the quality of life of the population through the creation of a safe

eco-environment and a stable economy [10]. However, there is no clear understanding of what constitutes a secure environment. Therefore, the development and preservation of human capital, as drivers of development, determine the primary tools for achieving national competitiveness and for integrating Ukrainian businesses into the «green economy» system. In this paradigm, the individual as a value «disappears». The works of Varnalia Z., Mykytyuk O., and others suggest that human social security depends on external factors, including war and pandemics [20; 21].

At the same time, the vector of state security policy is shifting from innovation to the military defense of territories. Shlapak A., Ivaschenko O., and others propose expanding the understanding of social security beyond simply protecting interests to also managing citizens' well-being [17]. Summarizing the various interpretations of social security, we conclude that it reflects the degree of protection of human rights and the breadth of opportunities to ensure human interests. However, this approach ignores the role of the individual, viewing social security as achieved through state influence. As Nazirova Z. notes, a person changes the environment through behavior [12], that is, he is an active creator of socio-economic existence. Accordingly, defining social security with parameters that meet the objectives of the state and its administrations requires clarification.

Highlighting previously unresolved parts of the overall problem. Thus, existing approaches to formulating the social market system do not reflect its multilevel, complex nature as a socio-economic phenomenon, reducing it to individual tasks or "formats". In addition, it is often studied separately from broader societal and economic development, which does not align with the principles of sustainable development and limits the search for solutions to today's complex problems.

Formation of the objectives of the article. The purpose of this article is to conceptualize social security by systematizing methodological approaches to its definition and to substantiate the author's model of social security within the framework of sustainable national development.

Summary of the main research material. The evolution of the concept of social security for the state and the individual has been marked by several stages in the historical and socioeconomic development of societies. Initially, based on the premise that the state determines the rules of human life, the principle of state self-identification and the formation of independent policies formed the basis for the study of social processes. Based on this, state security strategies emerged, which included programs to ensure the continuous fulfillment of the state's goals and functions. Given that the European community gravitated toward the theory of the welfare state, social security in such countries was reduced to maintaining high social standards. At the same time, the development of transhumanism contributed to a rethinking of human rights, which led to an expansion of the range of social objectives.

The analysis of contemporary scientific discourse has enabled the identification and systematization of four dominant approaches to interpreting social security: constructivist, relativistic, analytical, and formalized. These approaches differ in their object of focus, level of analysis, and functional orientation. Thus, generalizing the dominant approaches to understanding social security as a phenomenon in the scientific community, we can distinguish the following:

1) Constructivist - associated with the identity of individuals (society) and assumes the cultural and value unity of all actors in achieving social goals (this approach can also include theoretical constructs of the communication view, according to which security is the relationship between members of society and the authorities). Primarily, such constructs are oriented towards a strict policy of restricting the autonomy of subjects within the entire association (including the country), fixing borders, and imposing the rule of «collective responsibility». Therefore, such identity is considered national security, and politicians and government officials implement it. In particular, Krebs R. [9] writes that ensuring security is based on the definition, development and implementation of goals by the government, and Bar-Maozu M. noted that «national security strategy is always the product of a political process in which national interests are subjectively determined by political figures who, having their own political program, understand national security issues in accordance with the environment of their own ideas» [1]. Thus, ensuring social security is inherently a subjective process, as it depends on the qualities of those in power and the dominant ideas embodied in legal norms. Thus, the one who shapes social security policy may be influenced by other political actors or parties. Hence, the decision in this area reflects a society's morality and ethics, as well as its leaders' will.

2) Relativistic – involves the implementation of social functions by the subject in relation to the population and requires decisions on the productive operation of critical infrastructure. In accordance with the above, the main feature of social security is a certain (agreed-upon by all actors) level of social quality. In general, social quality is a set of features and characteristics that determine the level of satisfaction of objective socio-economic needs within socio-economic systems (states, societies, individuals, etc.). In a simplified sense, social quality is a reflection of the level of socio-economic, environmental, and psychological well-being of all members of society established in the country.

3) Analytical – based on evaluation indicators (indicators) of the functioning of the entire social sphere (primarily focused on achieving strategic goals in the field of quality of life or social quality in general). This theoretical approach is focused on identifying risks and threats that exist in the implementation of social (mainly) policy (it appeared as a response to the spread of global instability and uncertainty); it is used for sectoral or process «securitization» of processes occurring in socio-economic systems from various influencing factors (external and internal). Such «securitization» of processes, as Boin A. notes, is associated with the efforts of practitioners and politicians to avoid the significant risks inherent in a world of global uncertainty, as crises and disasters are growing in scale and changing in form and content [2]. Unfortunately, modern organizations, states, and societies are becoming increasingly vulnerable to changes (not only of a climatic nature, but also in the field of labor - digitalization of labor processes, etc.). Given the new socio-economic challenges, each subject must develop solutions to mitigate or prevent negative consequences.

4) Formalized – when social security is presented as part of national security and reduced to social security policy (such as social security strategy [11]). This approach is found to a limited extent and is based on the desire to reduce social insecurity in the event of social risks (for the individual); therefore, it manifests itself through the institution of pensions and health insurance, as well as through the implementation of social programs. It is also worth considering that, depending on the strategic goals, social security at the state or global level is a policy component. At the individual level, social security is a level of ensuring human rights and freedoms. Therefore, the first two theoretical approaches are oriented more towards the state, regions, international level, and the last one – formalized and partially analytical – towards the level of a person (personality). At the same time, the analytical approach is also used to describe social security at the macro level.

An equally important feature of social security, which scientists have been writing about in recent years, is sustainability. It is believed that social security is inherent only in a sustainable society. In the work of Brown L. [4], a sustainable society is defined as one that is capable of self-reproduction, resistant to external challenges, such as natural or artificial disasters, and focused on implementing an effective environmental agenda. That is, social security cannot be achieved unless the goals of ecological balance and security are met. At the same time, Brown B., Hanson M. include the following areas for achieving societal sustainability:

– Continuous support of human life on earth;
– Long-term maintenance of biological resource stocks and productivity of agricultural systems;
– Stable human populations;
– Limited growth economy;
– Emphasis on small scale and self-sufficiency;
– Constant quality of the environment and ecosystems [3].

Therefore, in the context of sustainable development of socio-economic systems, social security is a component of the subject's policy to form conditions for sustainable development based on parity of interests of various actors of socio-economic systems (including social groups) and to create prerequisites for eliminating the emergence and/or reducing the negative consequences of risks and dangers (of a technogenic, environmental, socio-economic, etc. nature) for their joint life and development. And social security itself becomes an ecosystem of sustainable development.

In our opinion, achieving sustainable development is a matter of both individual and collective responsibility, and it builds trust in society. Also, Sheehy B., unchanged is the recognition of corporate social responsibility as the basis of sustainable development [16], which only increases scientific interest in studying qualitative changes in corporate social responsibility policy and in assessing its impact on the natural ecosystem.

Based on the above, it can be argued that the sustainable development of a country (or any socio-economic system) is inseparable

from achieving societal sustainability (its leading indicator being cohesion) and will depend on the quality of management decisions, the ability to negotiate and consolidate to solve urgent problems. In this context, sustainable development should be considered inextricably from such aspects as institutional interaction (productive work and collaboration of various institutions, including state and public institutions), education (acquisition by participants of all processes (from ensuring the operation of mechanisms to management) of the necessary competencies to work under challenging conditions of uncertainty), etc. At the same time, greater involvement (including through the creation and development of social entrepreneurship) and interest from all actors ensure greater sustainability of both society itself and sustainable development as a whole. As Mrudhula Koshy and David Smith point out [8], during crises and heightened global uncertainty, the role of social capital increases significantly, and its proper use helps overcome the negative consequences of crises and contributes to improving security in the country.

Therefore, we believe that, in the sustainable development paradigm, social sustainability is a necessary condition for achieving the country's goals, for implementing government policy, and for assessing the state of processes and phenomena in socio-economic systems (especially in conditions of global uncertainty). Considering the above, we propose treating the sustainable development paradigm as an ecosystem and, for its reproducibility, ensuring social security. Therefore, the paradigm will have a more complex structure than the traditional approach and will also include more components and goal intersections, indicating the multifaceted and multidisciplinary nature of sustainable development.

Therefore, sustainable development in the context of global uncertainty requires a radical shift in this paradigm, taking into account the need for social security. First, to achieve sustainable development of the socio-economic system, it is necessary to move away from short-term planning and adopt long-term strategic planning. It is clear that in the near future we must also achieve results, which is possible through the rational use of natural resources, improving employees' skills, developing partnerships and trust between countries, and so on. But this does not guarantee a long-term effect in maintaining the pace of improvement in social security. For example, it is essential for the health of the population that the air be free of pollution. This can be achieved, including by preserving forests and/or reducing emissions from harmful production. It is extremely difficult to completely close production, because these are jobs and income to local budgets. At the same time, the forest is a valuable economic resource, from which funds are raised to implement social programs, including health preservation. What is the solution? Introduce quotas for air emissions and implement tree-planting programs. But such a chain of thought leads to a false idea of sustainable development. In the long term, such actions do not bring sustainable development. Therefore, it is necessary to implement not only a renewable resource strategy but also a resource-saving one, and to attract new technologies to address shortcomings in the modern wood processing chain. As environmental scientists, OECD note, «not exploitation, but enrichment of natural resources provides economic, social and environmental benefits while simultaneously eliminating degradation and depletion of natural resources» [13].

Secondly, the author's model of the sustainable development paradigm puts the economy, politics, society, with their goals and interests, and ecology on the same level. That is, sustainable development is considered to be harmonious changes across all these components without harming any of them. For example, climate change contributes to declining access to potable water, and as a result, the population migrates in search of better living conditions. At the same time, in a new territory, this is an additional burden on agriculture: more food is needed, and arable land should be used more intensively. But the constant intensification of resource use leads to their depletion and impoverishment. In addition, there is a need for housing, social infrastructure, etc., which suppresses the economy of the «hosting party». And further, the circle of problems spirals. In such a situation, the component of socio-cultural aspects can «play a cruel joke» when conflicts arise not only over resources but also because of the ethnic or historical peculiarities of people's existence in a particular territory. Therefore, the search for sustainability in the face of «distortions» of any component in the pyramid – the paradigm of sustainable development in conditions of global instability – lies in the search for compromises and partnerships.

Thirdly, the author's model of sustainable development of socio-economic systems introduces a behavioral component, focusing

not just on the goals of people and society as a whole, but also on behavioral reactions and motives. For example, business is primarily oriented towards increasing profits, and when evaluating people and business partners, it is guided by the dogmas of rational behavior. That is, if it is profitable, then such a project, event, etc., will be implemented. But human motives are not always rational; sometimes they are influenced by irrational (ethical or religious) factors. Thus, the «problem» of newly built areas, in particular in Kyiv, is that they have a poorly developed social infrastructure (there are no hospitals, kindergartens, schools, etc.), sometimes there is no possibility to park your own car, road junctions are not adapted to such a large amount of traffic, etc. This became possible due to the rational behavior of business developers: they are not interested in increasing the cost of a residential building, as it would make the building uncompetitive in the market, and they place the problems of social infrastructure on local authorities, which are unable to find the financial resources to solve them. Even emerging social enterprises are mainly focused on problems that offer economic benefits (for example, the reintegration of people, ethnic minorities, or migrants). Similarly, in the field of science, mainly those projects are developed (financed) that are in urgent demand (i.e., focused on solving current problems) and are not interested in solving «outdated» complex fundamental issues, such as the fight against tuberculosis and HIV, and the search for new, safe, and environmentally friendly sources of energy. Precisely because rational behavior dominates society and the economy, the author's model includes a «safety net» for this dictate in the form of behavioral and regulatory measures (which must be harmonized). That is, in the author's opinion, sustainable development requires the consolidation of efforts by all market actors and participants across socio-economic, socio-political, and labor processes, where collective (global) interests will be a priority over individual needs.

The evolutionary component is also essential, and it shows that the ecological state of our planet is not the problem of a single country, but a field for joint work to achieve sustainable development. Governments and businesses perceive social costs very negatively. But in the long term, the loss of natural resources and the deterioration of living conditions are not a good solution. Therefore, it is worth seeking joint solutions to preserve nature and promote the rational use of resources, etc. In this sense, human resources are also an essential component of sustainable development. And we should be attentive to the quality of human capital. That is why the issues of modern human competencies and trust are becoming another sign of sustainable development.

Another key point of the author's paradigm of sustainable development in conditions of global instability is the importance of regulatory and legal support, which governments are responsible for providing. Given the experience of crises – the COVID-19 pandemic, war, more and more scientists are inclined to believe that the decisive role should be assigned to the state. Unfortunately, businesses cannot solve all global problems, so intergovernmental cooperation is needed to find solutions and achieve sustainable development worldwide.

Summarizing the above, in the coordinates of sustainable development, the construct of the social security model, in accordance with the content and properties of the development components, should be represented as an equilateral triangle, where each side means a «manifestation» of social security (Fig. 1).

This model presents a three-pronged approach to understanding the essence of social security in the context of sustainable development, focusing on the basic level of its achievement. After all, social security is both the state of the system and its ability to adapt to changes, as well as a specific stability, manifested in the security of participants in the security process. Therefore, the resilience of the social security model is realized and/or achieved through scientific potential, people's loyalty and cohesion, and the acquisition of relevant competencies (lifelong education). It is these aspects that allow the socio-economic system to remain stable and secure even in the face of external factors. If we talk about external factors, they require the socio-economic system to create the following aspects of social security: the interaction (as homeostasis) among participants, balance of interests, effective structure, and institutions. These aspects allow counteracting internal conflicts in the system and contribute to achieving security. Safety is the basis of the social security model, as it is oriented towards preserving health and the rational use of resources, as well as relevant rules and norms of behavior, interaction, and communication.

The intermediate level of social security (satisfactory) characterizes a system capable of reproduction and with sufficiently high adaptability

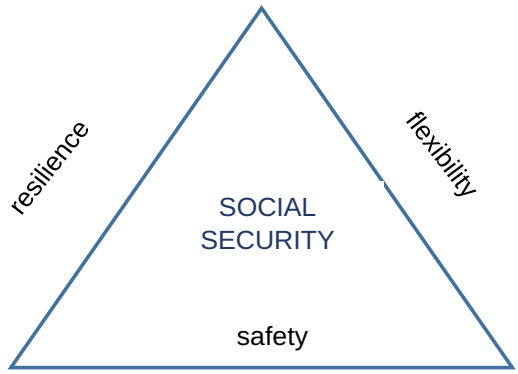

Figure 1. Construct of the author's basic model of social security in the coordinates of sustainable development (baseline level)

Source: created by the author

to external influences, but not oriented towards maintaining stability in the face of increased uncertainty. Therefore, schematically, it has a «double» basis: «viability» (the ability to counteract external influences). If we consider social security in the context of progress, in addition to the above-mentioned definitions, it will be characterized by a system that can evolve (for the better). Therefore, the model of social security at the progressive level of its achievement in the coordinates of sustainable development will also include the development facet, forming a pyramid (Fig. 2).

At the progressive level, the model of social security extends beyond the baseline equilibrium of safety, flexibility, and resilience, incorporating a development dimension, transforming the structural configuration into a dynamic, multi-level system oriented toward qualitative advancement. While the baseline model reflects the minimum necessary conditions for preserving systemic stability, the progressive level characterizes a socio-economic system capable not only of adaptation and reproduction but also of evolutionary transformation. In this configuration, social security functions as a driver of sustainable development rather than merely as a protective mechanism.

Conclusion. The results of the study made it possible to develop a conceptual model of social security that incorporates sustainable development goals. This model helps avoid one-sidedness in preparing measures to strengthen countries' security and takes into account the specific features of the ecosystem characteristic of a given time period. The proposed model conceptualizes social security as a dynamic system in which a balance is created between protection, adaptability, and evolutionary potential. The differentiation between basic and progressive levels clarifies that social security performs not only a stabilizing but also a developmental function, ensuring the qualitative transformation of socio-economic systems amid global instability. An innovative feature is the inclusion of a behavioral component, which expands the traditional triad of sustainable development and allows for the consideration of value-oriented motivations, long-term strategic orientation, and collective responsibility as structural determinants of stability. Thus, social security should be viewed as a structural prerequisite for maintaining cohesion and long-term viability, rather than simply as a reactive response to social risks.

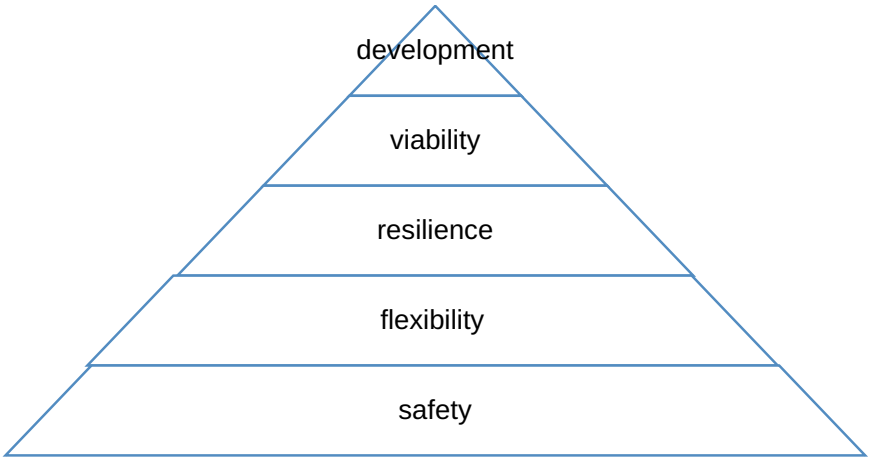

Figure 2. Construct of the author's model of social security in the coordinates of sustainable development (progressive level)

Source: created by the author

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