

# SUBJECTIVE ATTITUDE AS A KEY PROBLEM OF SOCIAL SCIENCES: A PHILOSOPHICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

## A ATITUDE SUBJETIVA COMO PROBLEMA-CHAVE DAS CIÊNCIAS SOCIAIS: UMA ANÁLISE FILOSÓFICA E METODOLÓGICA

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**Abstract:** The purpose of the article is to identify the socio-philosophical features that influence the formation of subjective attitudes. The social dimension of the human dimension covers almost all problematic issues of the modern socio-cultural space and gives them practically oriented characteristics. The tasks of scientific research are focused on the differentiation of human dimensionality and subjectivism for the sake of clarity of understanding the guidelines used by the scientific and social cluster of knowledge to characterize the individual potential of a person. The research methodology is based on the use of general scientific methodological principles of rationalistic and empirical type. Analysis is a key methodological aspect in highlighting the characteristics of subjective attitudes. The scientific novelty of the study lies in rethinking the positioning of a person and his or her perception and understanding of the world of things and the world of ideas in the context of modern socio-cultural development. Prospects for scientific research on the socio-philosophical interpretation of subjectivism are centered around the synergistic paradigm of the object-subject relationship and the need to maintain a balance between these existential entities. Thus, subjective attitudes are an important issue for the social sciences, since such attitudes shape the human dimension of modern society, regulating the principles of its development. The pluralism of opinions provided by subjectivism is a source for development on a civilizational scale.

**Keywords:** Human Dimension. Anthropocentrism. Subjective Attitude. Pluralism of Opinions. Subjective Experience. Social and Philosophical Sciences.

**Resumen:** O objetivo do artigo é identificar as características sócio-filosóficas que influenciam a formação de atitudes subjectivas. A dimensão social da dimensão humana abrange quase todas as questões problemáticas do espaço sócio-cultural moderno e dá-lhes características orientadas para a prática. As tarefas da investigação científica centram-se na diferenciação da dimensionalidade humana e do subjetivismo, com o objetivo de clarificar a compreensão das orientações utilizadas pelo conjunto de conhecimentos científicos e sociais para caracterizar o potencial individual de uma pessoa. A metodologia de investigação baseia-se na utilização de princípios metodológicos científicos gerais de tipo racionalista e empírico. A análise é um aspecto metodológico fundamental para evidenciar as características das atitudes subjectivas. A novidade científica do estudo consiste em repensar o posicionamento de uma pessoa e a

sua percepção e compreensão do mundo das coisas e do mundo das ideias no contexto do desenvolvimento sociocultural moderno. As perspectivas de investigação científica sobre a interpretação sócio-filosófica do subjetivismo centram-se no paradigma sinérgico da relação objeto-sujeito e na necessidade de manter um equilíbrio entre estas entidades existenciais. Assim, as atitudes subjectivas são uma questão importante para as ciências sociais, uma vez que tais atitudes moldam a dimensão humana da sociedade moderna, regulando os princípios do seu desenvolvimento. O pluralismo de opiniões proporcionado pelo subjetivismo é uma fonte de desenvolvimento à escala civilizacional.

**Palavras-chave:** Dimensão humana. Antropocentrismo. Atitude Subjectiva. Pluralismo de Opiniões. Experiência Subjectiva. Ciências Sociais e Filosóficas.

## 1. Introduction

Subjective attitudes are a human-dimensional element of the process of anthropologizing the socio-cultural space. In past cultural and historical epochs, subjectivity in various interpretations occupied its own niche in worldview paradigms. The positioning of a person and his or her ability to form his or her own opinion or ability to act has always been a key problem of socio-philosophical knowledge. This issue has had both an internal context (the answer to the question of what kind of person, with what characteristics and potential, can represent their own attitude) and an external factor (the influence of culture, science, religion, and society on human thoughts and activities).

The interpretation of the problem of subjective attitudes in the social sciences has acquired not only a theoretical and methodological character but also a rather clear practice-oriented meaning. Social activity in the modern scientific and social context is no longer interpreted as an existential process but is gaining more and more anthropocentric features.

The purpose of the research is to distinguish the socio-philosophical component of the subjectivist theory for further analysis of subjective attitudes in terms of social or even civilizational development. The objectives of the article specify the differentiation of subjectivity and humanity in the following aspects:

- affirmation of pluralism as a theoretical and methodological guideline for the analysis of subjectivity;
- understanding of the practice-oriented orientation of subjectivity in the context of pragmatic principles in the social cluster;
- identifying points of contact in the issue of reconciling the subject-object relationship in modern socio-humanitarian knowledge.

The research problem of the study is focused on the identification of socially significant (or socially oriented in general) aspects of subjective attitudes and their inclusion in the model of solving socio-cultural problems of our time. The usual role of subjectivism was to multiply entities along with the growth of quantitative indicators along with the diversity of human thoughts, ideas, and actions. In the contemporary socio-humanitarian discourse, subjective attitude is endowed with the status of a principle that qualitatively solves problems, not just quantitatively creates them.

The focus of the article is on a new interpretation of subjective attitude as an element of a synergistic paradigm, whose task is to formulate a problem and find optimal ways to solve it. In this case, the pluralism of opinions expresses the tendencies of the diversity of socio-cultural realities, contributing to the socio-humanitarian establishment as an effective regulator of the worldview and mental paradigm.

## 2. Theoretical framework and literature review

Subjective well-being is the most famous trend in sociological and socio-philosophical sciences of the early twenty-first century (TANG et al., 2020). A conceptual approach that combines economic indicators, social norms, environmental conditions, socio-political relations, cultural diversity, and scientific and technological progress defines the criteria for the human dimension of modern civilization. In each sphere of social activity, a person receives a ratio of the general paradigm and his or her own awareness of the processes and phenomena under control. The sociological direction of science is called upon to harmonize this ratio to a state in which the subjective becoming of a person will become the key to development, rather than slowing down the progress of social activity.

LIANG; YOON (2023) only add to this paradigm of modern subjectivism the aspect of dynamism and rapid change of data that determine a person's perception and understanding of the realities of the present.

One of the practical ways to correlate subjective attitudes in the sociological dimension is to study the theory of planned behavior (LIU et al., 2020). Using the example of the economic construction of consumer behavior, scientists note that subjective attitudes cannot be positioned in isolation. The constant sociological companions of the concept of subjectivism are norms and rules, control over the perception of reality, morality, and reaction to a stimulus (primarily psychological and mental).

An objective or subjective attitude depends on the direction of a person's judgment or observation (RABB et al., 2020). When considering sociological issues related to value or cognitive aspects, subjectivity can be actualized situationally, without claiming a dominant status at all. At the same time, when considering an ethical or aesthetic problem, subjectivity gains all possible advantages over the world of things.

Subjective attitudes are formed from several clusters that are expressed in the sociological sciences. Professional competencies become a kind of human guide to well-being (GOLDMAN, 2022). If we reject the target factor, we are left with the measurement of the objective state of well-being. Achievement of this indicator is the result of subjective knowledge and competencies.

Subjective attitudes are fueled by human activity. In the modern scientific and sociological paradigm, the theory of well-being is being transformed from the concept of "preference-satisfaction" to the principle of "satisfaction-desire" (BARRETT, 2022). Such reorientations are aimed at actualizing human self-sufficiency in terms of determining one's attitude to the processes and phenomena of the material and spiritual world. A person determines his or her understanding and attitude towards an object, completing the subjectivist theory.

The correlation between the sense of rightness and the sense of one's own understanding is a key principle of the subjective dimension in modern sociology (BLANKENSHIP et al., 2022). Social guidelines fuel subjective attitudes, giving them practical expression in social life. Communication, according to OMELCHENKO (2021), is a mechanism that ensures the transmission of human perception and understanding of objects, processes, and phenomena. For sociological issues, subjectivity is rather an anthropologically oriented vector than an existential issue. Therefore, to study subjectivity in sociology and political science, the arsenal of information and communication support is used.

The concept of subjective attitude is reflected in many aspects of socio-humanitarian problems of our time, in particular: the role of man in globalization transformations (SANAKUIEV, 2022), positioning of a citizen in the process of national self-identification (YATSENKO, 2022), defining the principles of human rights in the modern world (MORSKA; DAVYDOVA, 2021).

The practice-oriented dimension of subjective attitudes should be studied in the context of a separate sphere of social activity. In the current study, the dynamism, mobility, and pragmatism of subjectivism in the modern scientific picture of the world were highlighted in the

context of educational transformations: educational-local (TSEKHMISTER, 2022), educational-information (OLEKSIENKO et al., 2022), educational-digital (KOSTENKO et al., 2023), and educational-scientific (RAK-MŁYNARSKA, 2022) development strategies.

### **3. Research design and methods**

In the general methodological dimension, modern sociology develops relevant concepts on the verge of positivism and subjectivism (ATTA-ASIEDU, 2022). PUEYO-IBÁÑEZ (2021, p. 165) adds the principle of pragmatism to the scientific and sociological discourse, which gives the human dimension a practically oriented content. Relativism, according to ABBOTT (2020, p. 11), gives rise to situational subjectivity. Based on such theoretical and methodological trends, a human-dimensional methodological arsenal has been formed in modern sociological science, which is used in the current study.

The general scientific methods (analysis, modeling, forecasting) used in the current study acquire a synergistic color, as they are focused on the correlation of the subject-object relationship.

EUSEPI (2020, p. 273), guided by socio-economic laws (in particular, the principle of subjective value), attempts to structure the subjective dimension and form its clear holistic framework. However, such attempts are partly unsuccessful. The reason for this is the permanence and dynamism of the subjective dimension. A scientific study of a subject is the exact opposite of a similar study of an object. When such an element as a subjective attitude is added to the conditions of scientific substantiation, the problem of ambiguity in research increases many times over. For sociology, which operates with a number of methodological tools, it is not difficult to systematize the available data. However, the problem is outlined in the aspect of the variability of these data in the actual online mode, when the problem of subjective attitudes is actualized. In such cases, modeling or forecasting usually solves the problem, but only at some stage, until the data changes, which occur spontaneously and on an unpredictable scale.

The impact on human attitudes toward processes, phenomena, or objects in the modern world is only increasing. However, this intensity leads to unexpected and often negative manifestations. In particular, JIAN (2021, p. 845) focuses on disinformation (not only the irrational component but also the rational one), which leads to a distortion of a person's understanding of reality. The process of subjectivization of both everyday life and existential formats automatically takes place.

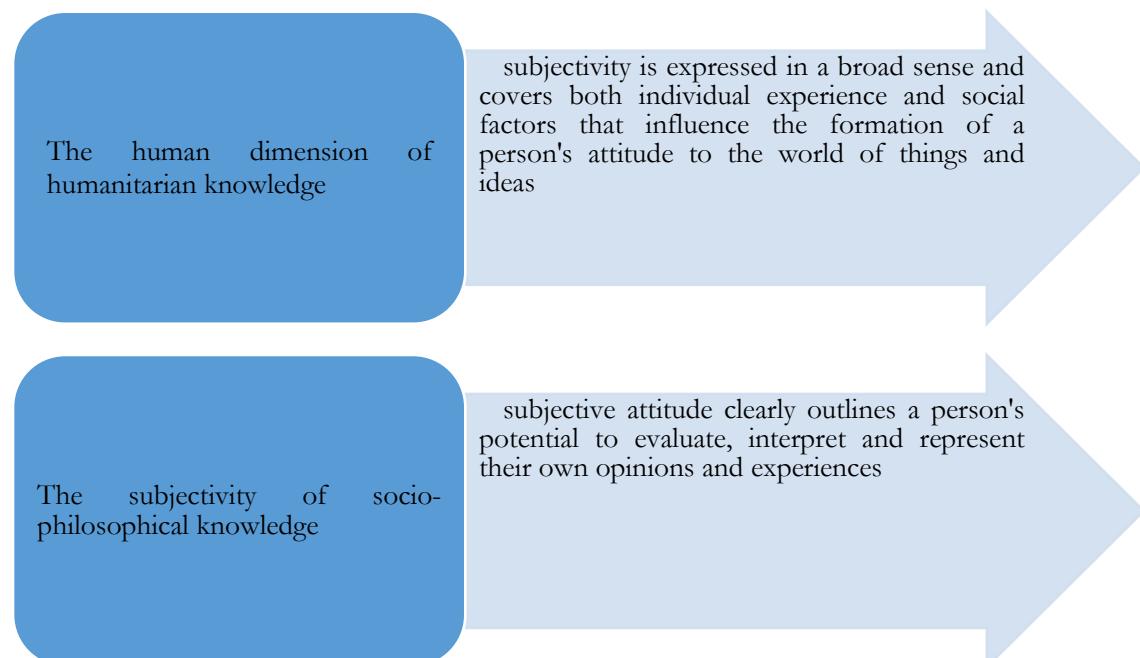
## 4. Results

[Presentation of findings; description and interpretation of results; use of visual aids or tables to support results] For the social sciences and humanities cluster of knowledge, the problem of subjectivism in the modern dimension acquires broader meanings. The classical philosophical interpretation of subjective experience is gradually taking its place in theoretical and methodological guidelines. At the same time, the dynamic development of society calls for a new understanding of human agency in general and subjective attitudes in particular. The rapid social development of all spheres fuels the practice-oriented component of subjectivity, giving this aspect new formats of expression.

### 4.1. Differentiation of anthropological and subjective clusters of humanitarian knowledge

The scientific and sociological discourse has faced the problem of differentiating between the anthropological (mostly philosophical) and subjective (mostly socio-cultural) components of humanitarian knowledge (see Fig. 1).

Fig 1. Subjective attitude in the context of general humanities and science discourse and philosophical and sociological understanding



Source: authors' own development

Subjective attitudes are important for forming a general picture of a process or phenomenon, as they determine a favorable or unfavorable assessment. Subsequently, subjective norms are dominant in determining behavior in a particular environment (TORNİKOSKI; MAALAOUI, 2019, p. 536). Numerous sociological studies only confirm the growing subjectivization of modern socio-cultural processes. On the one hand, such realities allow for greater consideration of the needs and wishes of the individual, but at the same time, there are many contradictions with objective circumstances that are in no hurry to give way to priority.

For a long time, subjectivism remained unclaimed in socially significant dimensions. The reason was the inability of the subjective attitude to explain the causes and course of events, and its limitation to a mere statement (SHEMMER, 2019, p. 630). For social experience, such inefficiency called into question the relevance of subjectivism, giving preference to objective knowledge that provided substantive and practical recommendations and algorithms for action.

Ever since the days of Occam's Razor, which insistently cuts off unnecessary entities and calls for not multiplying additional unreasonable components, subjective attitudes have radically changed their target value-oriented purpose. The uncontrollable number of positions is being replaced by the plurality of principles in demand. This way determines the effectiveness of subjectivism. Social sciences, in turn, have only confirmed this statement with sociological indicators.

Considering the scope (or sphere of influence) of human dimensionality, SHAPIRO (2022, p. 777-778) notes that the subjective component is now present in almost all objective dimensions at the global level. Nature, religions, technology - this is a list of fundamental existential paradigms that have tried to eliminate the subjective element from the world picture. However, even in such stable fundamental models, this did not happen. Therefore, the modern pluralistic paradigm of knowledge is reorienting itself from the dichotomy of object-subject confrontation to a synergistic model of mutual influence.

Contemporary socio-humanitarian discourse offers several variations of the positioning of the subjective factor. In particular, SANTOS ALEXANDRE (2022) points to the persistent criticism of the subjectivist paradigm in contemporary scientific discourse. The anthropological discourse, which is oriented from the beginning to the end on subjective experience, is not able to meet the requirements of the present, especially in the context of the development of information and digital technologies. Whereas in previous eras, a person could comprehend the achievements of science, technology, religion, or culture and give them an appropriate assessment, nowadays a significant number of innovative transformations are available to people

only as a finished product. Subjective experience is simply not enough to explain even simple elements of the modern technological world. Moreover, at the worldview and mental level, the demand for the same technologies is actualized at the stage of their use without immersion in the specifics of the essence of these objects.

Among the main problems that accompany the principles of subjectivism in the sociological field are repeated (and each time failed) attempts to idealize future results (DE CANSO, 2022). The ideal society remains a pipe dream, but scientists often want to subordinate subjective attitudes as a parameter of such a society. This is seen as a negative manifestation of the socio-humanitarian focus on human activity.

According to contemporary sociologists, subjective attitudes are relevant as long as they retain an interest in the object. As soon as actualization disappears, any differentiation in terms of priority disappears. The concept of well-being has a rather broader meaning in contemporary scientific discourse (LEMAIRE, 2021, p. 85). This concept should be understood as any elements of a material or spiritual nature that have positive manifestations for a person. In this way, the dichotomy of the world of ideas and the world of things, which is familiar to the scientific and epistemological dimension, is lost.

#### **4.2. Practice-oriented axiological dimension of subjective attitude**

Of particular importance to the subjective attitude is its purpose and value orientation. The end result of the subjective dimensions offered by modern sociological science is subjective sociological theories of the social condition (theory of desire satisfaction, theory of value realization). A separate element of the sociological dimension is the theory of well-being, according to which priority is given to a positive attitude towards objects, states, or processes (VAN DER DEIJL; BROUWER, 2021, p. 767). An absolute or relative model of well-being is ensured by the level of satisfaction of human needs. The key problematic issue is the level of influence of the socio-cultural environment on the status of the subject and the ability of the same subject to be autonomous and self-sufficient.

Among the ways to reconcile subjective principles in the modern scientific and sociological paradigm, it is worth highlighting COCOZZA'S (2023, p. 3-4) attempt to individualize the worldview beliefs of modern society. One of the components of subjective attitudes is a normative judgment, which is an indicator of a person's perception of properties of various types (BEDKE, 2019, p. 657). For the sociological cluster, this feature of subjectivism is acceptable and in demand, as it provides the conceptualization of necessity. Judgment is the basis

for the formation of not only worldview and mental beliefs but also practical and everyday aspects of human activity.

This gives rise to another dimension of anthropocentric beliefs that come into conflict with the objective world of things. Sociology is called upon to analyze and present the results of the development of the socio-cultural space. And the clash between man and the world of things is crucial for further civilizational progress.

Exploring the environments of modern society in which subjective attitudes are formed, KELLEY (2022) suggests distinguishing between the individual and the collective nature of this phenomenon. The verification of something positive or negative for a particular person occurs only if the status is confirmed by the person himself or herself. When public opinion is taken into account, or external influence is exerted, it is impossible to assert the realization of the subjective factor in its full sense.

In the socio-legal aspect, a kind of contrast between subjective attitudes and objective realities is proposed (GRIGOLEIT, 2021). At the same time, the concept of normativity remains one of the main problems of subjective attitudes (ASARNOW, 2019, p. 246). The uncontrollability of subjective expression gives rise to a number of socio-cultural threats, so society has learned to regulate and normalize the subjective dimension (both in individual manifestation and in the context of social experience).

## 5. Discussion

However, as soon as normative issues appear in the scientific discourse, they create a number of contradictions regarding the characteristics of these norms and rules. If the issue of subjective attitudes is considered, the usual normative paradigm that is inherent in the organization of the objective world becomes ineffective. For the socio-humanitarian community, the real challenge is to develop axiological guidelines that would regulate subjective influence on the functioning of the social order.

PAWLUCH (2019, p. 204) gives a special role to subjective attitudes, focusing on the construction of modern society and future formats of social development. This positioning of the human component is quite opposite to the passive understanding of subjectivity. Developing this trend, AEENI et al. (2020) emphasize that rapid changes in society trigger processes of radicalization of the subjective factor.

Of course, the scientific community cannot afford to allow manifestations of nihilism and the elimination of legal status. At the same time, no other ways of legalizing subjective attitudes in the concrete and subjective expression of legal norms or institutions have been identified so far. This leads to a kind of freezing of the problem. Subjective attitudes are left in the status of a theoretical and ideological element, without any influence in the paradigm of social activity. However, this positioning of a person and his or her potential in modern society has no prospects and will be transformed in the short term.

The Sociological Research Cluster emphasizes the dynamism of the modern world. This feature has led to the differentiation of subjectivism into subjective and epistemic (BYERLY, 2019, p. 278). While the traditional psycho-physiological potential of a person (sensations, feelings, imagination, experience) is sufficient for a simple level of subjective understanding and expression, the epistemic dimension requires an appropriate level of knowledge and skills. As the level of information and technological equipment grows, the epistemic aspect gains new opportunities.

Under such conditions, modern sociology records a paradoxical discrepancy. On the one hand, the socio-cultural space creates all the prerequisites for weakening subjective attitudes (the scientific picture of the world dominated by information and digital technologies attempts to decompose all the data about an object as completely as possible). But on the other hand, a person, gaining new opportunities related to innovative transformations, increases the level of his or her own experience, simultaneously actualizing personal experience.

HAMILIN (2022) emphasizes the variability of subjective attitudes. The differentiation of the diversity of perception and reflection of reality depends not only on the person but also on the environment in which he or she lives. This feature is the field of research of the sociological research cluster. The influence of a society or culture on a person's perception of reality in the modern globalized world plays as important a role as individual human attitudes.

Despite the totality of the anthropocentric principle inherent in the modern socio-cultural space, scholars offer options for reducing subjectivity (NEROSLAVSKY, 2023, p. 1-2). This process is fully consistent with current trends in culture, science, and worldview. Excessive (or uncontrolled) anthropologization poses certain threats to the further development of the 4.0 industrial society and its transformation into the 5.0 model. Information and digital technologies are actively removing people from the key processes that determine the design of modern civilization.

As an intermediate reconciling option for the coexistence of the subject-object relationship, a synergistic paradigm is proposed, in which the distance of processes, phenomena, and objects from humans is maintained. The balance between the world of things and the world of ideas is neither created nor rejected by the scientific community. In fact, the subjective dimension is put on hold in relation to the other components of the world order. Such a state of uncertainty is common to cultural and historical experience, but in the future one of the trends (anthropologization or ontologization) will become the dominant worldview factor.

Sociological studies show that subjectivity is increasingly regulated by various norms. The usual presence of one's own opinion or one's own vision is no longer enough to broadcast it to the general public. THONGPAIBOOL; HALBERSTADT (2022, p .485-486) emphasize argumentation as an option for integrating a personal view into a public vision. At the same time, the sources of this argumentation and the ways of proving it are completely different problem, mostly of a philosophical and epistemological nature, and are a promising area for further research on this topic.

## 6. Conclusion

Thus, subjective attitude in the system of modern socio-humanitarian knowledge has received a new guideline for the development of socio-philosophical direction. The traditional understanding of subjectivism, which was based on the worldview and mental existential positions, is gradually being reoriented to a subjective and practical interpretation of subjective attitude as a concept of the social sciences. The separation of the subjective-dimensional cluster from the general humanitarian human knowledge is important for the conceptualization of the subject in modern sociological, philosophical, or political science terms.

The regulation of the subject-object relationship is a traditional problem in the social sciences and humanities. However, in the contemporary socio-cultural space, there are practice-oriented factors that can give subjectivism orderliness and certainty of purpose. Uncontrolled large-scale manifestations of subjective experience were obviously focused exclusively on quantitative indicators, with no prospects for qualitative application. The pluralism of the modern world picture did not correlate with pragmatic value characteristics. However, current trends in the development of society (globalization, active use of information and communication technologies, increased human responsibility) contribute to the assignment of a special role and status to subjective attitudes in the system of social sciences and humanities.

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