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"Counterfinality" in Sociological Theories of action: a critical analysis

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Relevance of the research topic

Counterfinality is the opposite of the original intentions of the consequences caused by uncoordinated actions. Despite the fact that this term was introduced by Jean-Paul Sartre¹, the concept of counterfinality was developed in sociological theory by Jon Elster². For Elster, counterfinality is a kind of negative³ consequences of actions that need to be overcome, and therefore, first of all, the question of how people cope with these consequences is important. In this regard, the theorizing about counterfinality focuses on the development of various theories of social change and the conditions of these changes based on collective action. Unlike other similar concepts describing the unintended consequences of actions (for example: paradox, perverse effect, suboptimality, social dilemma), counterfinality means a class of phenomena that prevents the normal flow of activity, and therefore this concept has potential for both theoretical and empirical development.

However, counterfinality can also be seen as the result of a sequential process in which a set of actions and the circumstances of those actions form the foundation of its production. In 1936, Robert Merton drew attention to the similarity of many terms describing the problem of unintended consequences, but present in different contexts⁴. The lack of systematic scientific analysis is explained by the wide range of these contexts, in which it is difficult to see the continuity of ideas and the fundamental unity of the problem of unintended consequences. This unity is found, first of all, in the study of the conditions in which the action is carried out. Among these conditions we can distinguish: ignorance, error, imperativeness of immediate interest, publicly voiced predictions. In these factors Merton saw the basis for further analysis of the problem of unintended consequences.

¹ *Sartre J. P.* Critique of Dialectical Reason: volume 1 Theory of Practical Ensembles. London: Verso, 2004.

² *Elster J.* Logic and society: contradictions and possible worlds. Chichester: J. Wiley, 1978

³ "Negative consequences of actions" in the context of the definition of counterfinality here and hereafter refers to those consequences that are the opposite of the original intentions. "Negativity" does not mean an evaluation of the consequences, but merely characterizes their relation to the original intentions. In this respect, positive consequences are those that are consistent with the original intentions.

⁴ *Merton, R. K.* (1936). The unanticipated consequences of purposive social action. American sociological review, 1(6), 894-904.

In defining counterfinality through unintended consequences, Elster links his theory to the tradition of studying the unintended consequences of intentional actions, but makes a number of clarifications to distinguish the two concepts⁵. First, counterfinality refers to those cases of unintended consequences if they occur instead of, rather than in addition to, the intended result. Second, counterfinality is experienced primarily by the participants in the action themselves, and not just by someone else. Third, counterfinality must be distinguished from unintended consequences that arise from a single action. In the latter case, unintended consequences arise when there is a failure in the end-means nexus. In contrast, counterfinality deals with correct rational actions that fail as a result of aggregation.

These differences specify the concept of counterfinality, but at the same time distinguish it as a special case of unintended consequences. However, while many papers have been written about unintended consequences that investigate their causes and possibilities, such a research focus is practically absent with regard to counterfinality. Merton's merit lies, first of all, in his attempt to systematize the problem of unintended consequences of intentional actions and to describe the program of further study, namely, the study of concomitant conditions and factors that produce unintended consequences. In studies of counterfinality and other similar concepts, the focus is rather on their consequences for society and individuals. Such analysis is necessary, but it does not provide a comprehensive understanding of counterfinality. A coherent analysis should include, first of all, a description of the conditions and factors that contribute to the production of counterfinality, and then a description of the process of overcoming or counteracting it. Despite various attempts to analyze individual factors and conditions in this way, their systematic consideration is not widely represented in contemporary sociology⁶. Such an analysis should be based on sociological theories of action, since it is action that is at the center of the analysis of counterfinality.

⁵ *Elster J.* Logic and society: contradictions and possible worlds. Chichester: J. Wiley, 1978, P 108-110.

⁶ *Mica A.* Sociology as Analysis of the Unintended: From the Problem of Ignorance to the Discovery of the Possible. London and New York: Routledge, 2018.

Highlighting counterfinality as a special case of unintended consequences requires some justification for a more in-depth analysis. Thus, we can say that the topic of unintended consequences is quite studied in sociology, and if counterfinality is a special case of unintended consequences, then it is through the study of unintended consequences that counterfinality should be pointed out, and therefore, it is unintended consequences that require a deeper analysis, where counterfinality and many other similar configurations can be identified. Besides "unintended consequences", one can find in the literature many other concepts similar to it, like "paradox", "contradiction", "counterfactual", "conflict", etc. All these concepts, however, refer to broader problems, and often the definition of these concepts is highly debatable⁷. The problem of counterfinality is narrower. First, the history of the study of counterfinality shows that the appeal to studies of unintended consequences is not key and counterfinality can and should be considered as a separate (from "unintended consequences") category. Second, at the theoretical level, counterfinality has a number of attributes that distinguish it from unintended consequences these differences require a different approach, more comprehensive and detailed. All these premises allow us to note that counterfinality includes many elements that have not yet been fully explored. Clarifying these elements and identifying the factors and conditions (mechanism) of counterfinality production will allow us to propose a theoretical and methodological approach to the sociological analysis of counterfinality in the context of the theory of action.

Scientific progress of the problem

The theme of counterfinality is presented in the works of J. Elster⁸, A. Giddens⁹ and many of their followers¹⁰. Counterfinality is considered as a kind of

⁷ *Van Parijs P.* Perverse effects and social contradictions: analytical vindication of dialectics? // *The British Journal of Sociology.* 1982. Vol. 33. № 4. P. 589–603.

⁸ *Elster J.* Logic and society: contradictions and possible worlds. Chichester: J. Wiley, 1978.

⁹ Giddens, A. *The constitution of society: Outline of the theory of structuration.* Univ of California Press, 1984.

¹⁰ *Van Parijs P.* Perverse effects and social contradictions: analytical vindication of dialectics? // *The British Journal of Sociology.* 1982. Vol. 33. № 4. P. 589–603., *Baert P.* Unintended consequences: a typology and examples // *International Sociology.* 1991. Vol. 6. № 2. P. 201–210., *Mica A.* *Sociology as Analysis of the Unintended: From the Problem of Ignorance to the Discovery of the Possible.* London and New York: Routledge, 2018.

unintended consequences. The theoretical applicability of this concept is substantiated. However, in these works, the concept of counterfinality is not systematically analyzed using a broad theoretical framework, but is rather given in the classification of broader concepts such as unintended consequences and perverse effects. On the other hand, there are enough works in the literature that use synonymous concepts to describe counterfinality. These include "The Natural State" ("The War of All Against All"), "The Invisible Hand", "The Cunning of Reason", "Perverse Effect", "social dilemma".

The broader topic of unintended consequences was developed in the works of R. Merton, J. Elster¹¹, A. Giddens¹², R. Boudon. While Merton was interested in the factors and conditions of unintended consequences, and later in their connection with functions and dysfunctions, subsequent authors discussed this topic in the context of social change and reproduction of society. At the same time, unintended consequences themselves are taken as a given, rarely requiring clarification, and counterfinality, along with other varieties of unintended consequences, is rarely singled out as a separate category. In domestic sociology, the topic of unintended consequences and partly counterfinality is presented in the works of O. V. Kildyushov¹³, S. A. Kravchenko¹⁴, S. P. Bankovskaya¹⁵, N. N. Zarubina¹⁶, which, however, did not include a systematic analysis of this concept.

The problem of counterfinality includes the problem of describing and explaining a single action, revealing intension. The development of the theory of

¹¹ Elster J. Merton's functionalism and the unintended consequences of action // Robert K. Merton. Consensus and Controversy. / Ed. J. Clark. London New York: Falmer Press, 1990. P. 129–135

¹² Giddens A. Central Problems in Social Theory. London: Macmillan Education UK, 1979.

¹³ Kil'djushov O. «Nevidimaja ruka» i «hitrost' razuma»: klassicheskaja versija paradoksa neprednamerennyh posledstvij [The "invisible hand" and the "cunning of the mind". The classical version of the paradox of unintended consequences] // Logos. 2007. № 5. S. 21–53. (in Russian).

¹⁴ Kravchenko S. A. Sociologicheskaja teorija: diskurs budushhego [Sociological theory: the discourse of the future] // Sociologicheskie issledovanija. 2007. № 3. S. 3–12. (in Russian).

¹⁵ Ban'kovskaja S. Ponyatie geterotopichnoy sredy i eksperimentirovanie s ney kak s usloviem ustoychivogo netselenapravlennoogo deystviya [The Concept of Heterotopic Environment and Experimentation with It as a Condition of the Stable Purposeless Action] The Russian Sociological Review, 1-2, pp. 19-33 (in Russian). Ban'kovskaja S. Chuzhaki i granicy. Issledovanija po sociologii marginal'nosti. SPb.: Vladimir Dal', 2023. (in Russian).

¹⁶ Zarubina, N. N. Teoreticheskie osnovanija analiza neprednamerennyh sociokul'turnyh posledstvij razvitiya cifrovyyh tehnologij: aktualizacija podhoda L. Mamforda [Theoretical bases for analyzing the unintended sociocultural consequences of digital technologies: updating the approach of I. Mumford] // Vestnik Moskovskogo gosudarstvennogo oblastnogo universiteta. Serija: Filosofskie nauki. 2020. № 3. S. 85-97. (in Russian).

action in sociology is associated with the first theoretical work of Max Weber. By defining action as human behavior (internal or external, refraining or undergoing) if and because the actor associates subjective meaning with it, and social action as in its implied meaning a correlation with the behavior of other people, Weber laid the foundation for future studies of both action itself and its result (counterfactual, among others)¹⁷. No less important was the identification of types of action and methodological developments in its understanding and explanation. Such sociologists as T. Parsons¹⁸, A. Schutz¹⁹, P. Winch²⁰, and A. Giddens developed their ideas about action, relying on many of Weber's ideas. However, the development of the theory of action is not only connected with Weber and the interpretivist tradition. The analysis of action is connected with the microsociology of everyday life and with various theories of practical rationality. Within the first direction, the works of G. Garfinkel²¹, E. Goffman²² and A. Rawls²³ stand out. The idea of constitutive order or interactional order presented in these works makes a significant contribution to the development of the notion of order and everyday actions. Within the framework of the second approach, the logic of practical action and the idea of rational choice constitute one of the most popular explanatory models of many social

¹⁷ Weber M. Hozhajstvo i obshhestvo: ocherki ponimajushhej sociologii / Per. s nem. L. G. Ionina. M.: Izd. dom Vysshej shkoly jekonomiki, 2016. (in Russian).

¹⁸ Parsons, T. *The structure of social action*. Vol. 491. New York: Free press, 1949.

¹⁹ Schutz A. Izbrannoe: Mir, svetjashhijsja smyslom / Per. s angl. V. G. Nikolaeva, S. V. Romashko, N. M. Smirnovoj. M.: ROSSPJeN, 2004.

²⁰ Winch P. Ideja social'noj nauki i ee otnoshenie k filosofii / Per. s angl. M. Gorbacheva, T. Dmitrieva. M.: Russkoe fenomenologicheskoe obshhestvo, 1996. (in Russian).

²¹ Garfinkel H. *Studies in ethnomethodology*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1967., *Garfinkel H. Ethnomethodology's program: working out Durkheim's aphorism*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002., *Garfinkel H. Seeing sociologically: The routine grounds of social action*. Boulder: Paradigm, 2005.

²² Goffman E. Porjadok vzaimodejstvija [Interaction order] / Teoreticheskaja sociologija: Antologija: V 2 ch. // Per. s angl., fr., nem., it. Sost. i obshh. red. S. P. Ban'kovskoj. M.: Knizhnyj dom «Universitet», 2002 (in Russian)., Goffman E. Predstavlenie sebja drugim v povsednevnoj zhizni [The presentation self in every day life] / Per. s angl. i vstup. stat'ja A. D. Kovaleva. M.: «KANON-press-C», «Kuchkovo pole», 2000 (in Russian)., Goffman E. Ritual vzaimodejstvija: Ocherki povedenija licom k licu [Interaction ritual essays on face-to-face behavior] / Per. s angl.; pod red. N.N. Bogomolovoj, D.A. Leont'eva. M.: Smysl, 2009 (in Russian).

²³ Rawls A. W. An essay on two conceptions of social order: constitutive orders of action, objects and identities vs aggregated orders of individual action // *Journal of Classical Sociology*. 2009. Vol. 9. № 4. P. 500–520., Rawls A. W. Social order as moral order // *Handbook of the sociology of morality* / Ed. S. Hitlin and S. Vaisey. N. Y.: Springer, 2010. P. 95– 121., Rawls A. W. Wittgenstein, Durkheim, Garfinkel and Winch: constitutive orders of sensemaking // *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*. 2011. Vol. 41. № 4. P. 396–418.

processes²⁴, such as inequality in education and political activity²⁵. In Russian sociology, the problem of action is presented in the works of V. V. Radaev²⁶, E. I. Kravchenko²⁷, I. F. Devyatko²⁸, V. V. Volkov and O. V. Kharkhordin²⁹, A. F. Filippov³⁰. These works analyze individual theories and identify common problematic aspects of their interpretations.

Object and subject of the study

The object of the study is the concept of "counterfinality"³¹ in the social sciences. The subject of the study is the specificity of the theoretical and methodological approach to the analysis of "counterfinality" in sociological theories of action.

Aim and objectives of the research

Purpose: To develop, justify and empirically validate a theoretical and methodological approach to the sociological analysis of counterfinality.

²⁴ Coleman J. S. Social theory, social research, and a theory of action // *American Journal of Sociology*. 1986. Vol. 91. № 6. P. 1309–1335., Coleman J. The foundations of social action. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990.

²⁵ Boudon, R. Education, opportunity, and social inequality: changing prospects in western society, 1974., Breen, R., & Goldthorpe, J. H. Explaining educational differentials: towards a formal rational action theory // *Rationality and Society*. 1997. Vol. 9. № 3 P. 275–305., Jackson, M. Erikson R., Goldthorpe J. H., Yaish M. Primary and Secondary Effects in Class Differentials in Educational Attainment: The Transition to A-Level Courses in England and Wales. // *Acta Sociologica*. 2007. Vol. 50. № 3. P. 211–229., Lamont M. Addressing Recognition Gaps: Destigmatization and the Reduction of Inequality // *American Sociological Review*. 2018. Vol. 83. № 3. P. 419–444

²⁶ Vadim V (2002) Chto takoe "ekonomicheskoe deystvie"? [What is the Economic Action?] *Economic Sociology*, 5, pp. 18-25 (in Russian).

²⁷ Kravchenko E. I. Teorija social'nogo dejstvija: ot Maksa Vebera k fenomenologam [The theory of social action: from Max Weber to the phenomenologists] // *Sociologicheskij zhurnal*. 2001. № 3. S. 122-142. (in Russian).

²⁸ Devyatko I. Sociologicheskie teorii dejatel'nosti i prakticheskoj racional'nosti [Sociological theories of activity and practical rationality]. M.: Avanti pljus, 2003 (in Russian)., Devyatko I. F., Gavrilov K. A. Obydennye suzhenija o prichinnosti i vine za neprednamerennye negativnye posledstvija dejstvij: jeksperimental'nyj podhod k ocenke vlijanija [Ordinary judgments of causation and blame for unintended negative consequences of actions: an experimental approach to impact assessment] // *Obydennoe i nauchnoe znanie ob obshhestve: vzaimovlijanija i rekonfiguracii / Pod obshh. red. I. F. Devyatko, R. N. Abramov, I. V. Katernyj*. M: Progress-Tradicija. 2015. S. 217-31 (in Russian).

²⁹ Volkov V. V., Harhordin O. V. Teorija praktik [Theory of practice]. SPb.: Izdatel'stvo Evropejskogo universiteta v Sankt-Peterburge, 2008 (in Russian).

³⁰ Filippov A. F. Sociologija prostranstva [Sociology of space]. SPb.: Vladimir Dal', 2008 (in Russian)., Filippov A. F. Dejstvie kak sobytie i tekst: k sociologicheskomu osmysleniju Polja Rikjora [Action as event and text: Toward a sociological understanding of Ricoeur's field] // *V kn.: Pol' Rikjor v Moskve / Pod obshh. red.: I. I. Blauberg, A. V. Borisenkova, O. I. Machul'skaja*. M.: Kanon+, 2013. S. 277-294. (in Russian).

³¹ Here and further, we will use the concept of "counterfinality" both in quotation marks and without them. Quotation marks are necessary to describe counterfinality as a theoretical concept, because our work is primarily theoretical. On the other hand, counterfinality is a social phenomenon that is present in many spheres of society, and therefore we will rely on many examples of this phenomenon and discuss the real factors of its occurrence.

Objectives:

1. To offer a historical and theoretical analysis of the concept of "counterfinality" in social sciences.
2. Identify and interpret the main (and auxiliary) concepts to describe and explain counterfinality in sociology.
3. Identify theoretical resources for describing and interpreting intentional action as the basis of counterfinality.
4. Reconceptualize counterfinality in terms of sociological theories of action and contemporary theories of unintended consequences.
5. To develop a typology of counterfinality and on this basis to propose the logic of its analysis as the basis of theoretical and methodological approach to the sociological study of counterfinality.
6. To validate the theoretical and methodological approach to the sociological analysis of counterfinality on an empirical case of queuing in a subway car during rush hour.

Scope and limitations of research

Although the study reviewed a consistent and extensive history of the ideas of unintended consequences and counterfinality, there are several limitations that are worth keeping in mind when considering the results of the study. First, in considering counterfinality from the perspective of sociological theories of action, not all authors and not all strands were included in the analysis. For example, theoretical orientations such as symbolic interactionism and the constructivist version of the interpretive program were not considered. I focused on theories of action analysis that I believe describe the structure of action in intentional terms (intention, motive, purpose, meaning) and are largely based on Weber's logic of action analysis. Other theories are loosely connected to this logic of action analysis and therefore were not included in the analysis, although I do not rule out that other theoretical resources of action theories can be very useful for analyzing counterfinality.

Second, because counterfinality is a poorly studied phenomenon both theoretically and empirically, both areas are important for a comprehensive understanding of the problem. Empirical studies of counterfinality cases can extend theoretical understanding of the phenomenon and, by limiting ourselves to just one example, we recognize that studies of other cases (especially the cumulative effect of multiple such studies) may also be useful. We do not think that this would significantly change the proposed theoretical and methodological approach, but this step could provide many refinements and configurations that could be considered as actual forms of counterfinality.

Theoretical and methodological foundations of the research

The dissertation research is based on a number of theoretical methods. Critical analysis is aimed at clarifying the logic of description and explanation of counterfinality by comparing different arguments, definitions and examples. The method of conceptual analysis is aimed at identifying key terms to describe the concept of counterfinality, highlighting the core of the concept of counterfinality and its boundaries. In addition, the conceptual analysis will allow to relate counterfinality with other similar terms and concepts and clarify its specificity, uniqueness. Theoretical reconstruction will allow us to redefine counterfinality not in terms of the cause of social change, as presented by Elster, but in terms of the result of a set of actions. The materials for the analysis are classical and contemporary theoretical works on the topic of counterfinality, unintended consequences and action theory, critical literature and some empirical work on counterfinality research.

Contribution to the discussion of the problem in existing. Scientific novelty of the dissertation research is presented in the following provisions:

1. For the first time in national sociology, a detailed periodization of key writings and ideas regarding counterfinality as a form of unintended consequences is presented.

2. For the first time in national sociology, a historical-theoretical and conceptual analysis of counterfinality has been carried out. The core and boundaries of the concept of counterfinality and the main sociological concepts that describe the process of counterfinality production are highlighted.
3. The problem of counterfinality is analyzed, on the one hand, as a result of action and, on the other hand, as a point of violation or completion of action that needs to be overcome. Two scenarios of the consequences of counterfinality are highlighted: cyclicity and social change.
4. For the first time, theoretical resources for the description, interpretation and explanation of intentional actions as the basis of counterfinality are systematized.
5. A theoretical and methodological approach to the sociological analysis of counterfinality is proposed, which includes three aspects: the description of counterfinality as a complex sociological problem, the allocation of the typology of counterfinality and the description of the logic of analysis based on three systems of coordinates within which action and interaction are realized.

Statements to be defended:

1. The development of the concept of counterfinality can be divided into three periods. The first period is associated with Jean-Paul Sartre, who introduced this term to describe the consequences of the development of capitalist society. The second period is connected with the ideas of Jon Elster about social contradictions and social change, where counterfinality is the unintended consequences of uncoordinated actions: as a kind of social contradictions, counterfinality creates conditions for social change. The third period of development of counterfinality ideas is connected with the reception of Sartre's and Elster's ideas and inclusion of counterfinality in the classification of unintended consequences. This stage, however, is

characterized by a weak conceptual component and is mainly focused on refinements and empirical studies.

2. As a result of the conceptual analysis, counterfinality is defined as the consequences of spatially and temporally distributed, sequential or simultaneous uncoordinated intensional actions that are contrary to the original intentions. The key concepts for describing counterfinality include: intentional action, uncoordinatedness, spatial characteristics of the situation, time horizon, information background, sequence or simultaneity of actions, and structure of the situation.
3. Conceptualization of "counterfinality" implies expanding its interpretation in two directions. First, counterfinality can be defined not only as a basis for social change, but also in terms of the result of a sequential process that has a certain configuration and mechanism of functioning, where each element makes a meaningful contribution to the final result. Second, counterfinality can be seen as the basis for two types of consequences of its occurrence for the social whole: cyclicity and social change.
4. Sociological theoretical resources for describing and explaining action as the basis of counterfinality are limited either to direct interaction or to general assumptions about rationality and the meaning of action. This allows action as the basis of counterfinality to be explained, but this approach misses the more general elements of counterfinality production (space, time, informational background) that present it as a complex problem.
5. The sociological theoretical and methodological approach to the analysis of counterfinality consists in identifying typifications of counterfinality, describing counterfinality as a complex sociological problem and presenting its conceptual matrix of analysis. Counterfinality should be considered as a complex sociological problem, including the problem of describing the intensionality of actions, the problem of transition from rational individual action to collective non-rational consequences of actions, and the problem of describing the conditions for the emergence of unintended consequences. The

conceptual matrix for analyzing counterfinality includes three coordinate systems within which the process of counterfinality production takes place: the first coordinate system is space and time, the second one is the relation between the initial intention and the actual result, the third one is the general knowledge of the situation and the information background. Consideration of these coordinate systems together allows us to describe the process of counterfinality production and explain the role of each element in this process.

Theoretical and practical significance of the study

The results of the study make it possible to trace the history of the development of the concept of counterfinality and identify theoretical resources of sociological theories of action to describe and explain counterfinality. The study provides a critical review of the main provisions of action theory regarding counterfinality and proposes an updated conceptualization and logic of counterfinality research.

The proposed theoretical propositions and empirical illustration can be used as resources for specific empirical research. For example, the paper repeatedly described examples of counterfinality in everyday interactions, as well as in the fields of economic sociology and political sociology.

The materials of the study can be used in the development of courses on sociological theory in terms of topics on the theory of action and the sociology of unintended consequences. In practice, the results of a specific empirical testing of a new approach to the study of counterfinality presented in the thesis can be used by city authorities managing traffic and social policy.

Structure and scope of the work. The dissertation consists of an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion and a list of literature, totaling 210 sources. The total volume of the work is 160 pages (7.1 a. l.).

Introduction

Chapter 1. "Counterfinality" in the social sciences: conceptual analysis

- 1.1 Proto-sociological introduction to the problem of counterfinality
- 1.2 The logical construct of counterfinality in Elster's theories
- 1.3 Counterfinality in the classification of unintended consequences in sociology
- 1.4 Counterfinality in game theory
- 1.5 Basic concepts to describe counterfinality: "inventory of theoretical resource"
- 1.6 Conclusions to Chapter 1
- Chapter 2: Theoretical resources for describing and explaining action as a basis for counterfinality
 - 2.1 Interpretive theories of action
 - 2.2 Counterfinality and microsociological analysis of the action
 - 2.3 Counterfinality and theories of practical rationality
 - 2.4 Conclusions to Chapter 2
- Chapter 3: Theoretical and Methodological Approach to the Sociological Analysis of Counterfinality
 - 3.1 Counterfinality as a complex sociological problem
 - 3.2 Typology of counterfinality
 - 3.3 Logic of Analyzing Counterfinality: Operational Aspect
 - 3.4 Empirical illustration of the theoretical and methodological approach to analyzing counterfinality
 - 3.5 Conclusions to Chapter 3
- Conclusion
- List of references

MAIN CONTENT OF THE WORK

In the **introduction** to the dissertation study the relevance of the research topic is indicated, the degree of scientific development of the research problem is

considered, its object, subject, goals, objectives, tasks, methodological foundations are defined, and the main statements put forward for defense are formed.

The **first chapter** provides a conceptual analysis of "counterfinality". The first two paragraphs of the first chapter are aimed at describing the core and boundaries of the concept of "counterfinality". The third and fourth paragraphs are aimed at analyzing counterfinality in relation to other similar concepts and including counterfinality in a conceptual grid where the main term is "unintended consequences". The fifth paragraph finalizes the conceptual analysis: it presents a refined definition of the concept of "counterfinality" and describes the main elements of counterfinality.

The first paragraph provides a proto-sociological introduction to the problem of counterfinality and highlights the main stages in the development of the idea of counterfinality. The features of counterfinality, which are related to the contradiction between individual aspirations of actors and the collective results of a set of actions, are found in the works of T. Hobbes, A. Smith, and G. Hegel. There are three stages in the development of ideas about counterfinality. The first stage is associated with the philosophy of J. P. Sartre, where counterfinality denotes unintended consequences of a set of actions in the history of social development. It is concluded that in Sartre's concept of counterfinality three conditions of counterfinality are important - objectivity, systematicity (temporal extent) and spatiality, but the lack of a clear definition and a lot of contradictory examples form a conceptual blurriness of the concept. In the second stage, Elster gives a more precise definition of counterfinality and draws the boundaries of this concept. At the third stage, there is a return to Sartre's ideas (attempts to reconstruct counterfinality as a significant concept in his theory of history and development of society), and discussions of Elster's ideas (criticism and attempts to link his views with the great traditions and inclusion of counterfinality in the classification of unintended consequences), and most importantly, we observe the growth of empirical studies of counterfinality (although most often synonymous terms are used in the literature).

The second paragraph describes the logical construct of counterfinality in Elster's work. Counterfinality is defined as "the unintended consequences that arise when each person in a group act on the basis of such an assumption about his relations with others that, when generalized, they yield a contradiction in the conclusion of a composition error, even though the antecedent of that error is true"³². A criticism of this definition is given, primarily concerning the appropriateness and interpretation of the "error of composition". By the latter is meant the fallacy of concluding that what is possible for each individual must be possible for all at the same time. It is concluded that behind this criticism one of the properties of counterfinality can be identified - limited information about the actions of others and the various conditions of the resulting situation (structural constraints). The analysis of many examples of counterfinality has shown that the core of the concept of "counterfinality" is the opposite of the result to the initial intentions of actors, and other elements include the aggregation of actions, uncoordinated, the presence of active participants and a group of "victims" of counterfinality. In addition, the consideration of counterfinality as a basis for social change allows us to identify spatial characteristics and time perspective in the analysis of counterfinality. The definition of counterfinality, refined as a result of the reconstruction of Elster's theory, is derived - it is unintended consequences that arise not only as a result of a set of individual rational actions, but also as a characteristic of space and time, structural conditions and information systems.

The third paragraph analyzes the problem of unintended consequences in sociology. Unintended consequences is an "umbrella" term to describe a set of consequences that are not included in actors' intentions. Unintended consequences include not only those consequences that are contrary to the original intentions, but also those that accompany the intended outcomes. Merton's systematization of ideas about unintended consequences identifies several factors and conditions for their occurrence: state of knowledge, error, imperativeness of immediate interest, and

³² Elster J. Logic and society: contradictions and possible worlds. Chichester: J. Wiley, 1978. P. 106.

publicly voiced predictions. It is shown that some of these factors can lead to counterfinality. The subsequent development of ideas about unintended consequences is connected with the works of R. Boudon, A. Giddens, A. Zingerle, F. de Zwart, and A. Mica. It is concluded that after Merton, the studies of unintended consequences were aimed at clarifying a variety of similar terms (perverse effect, unintended consequences, unexpected consequences) and highlighting the Mica's analytical framework (table 1).

Table 1: Three analytical frameworks for research on unintended consequences

Analytical framework	Unintended unexpected consequences of social action	Institutions as unintended consequences of social interaction	Mechanisms of reproduction of institutionalized practices
Key authors	R. Merton, A. Portes	R. Boudon, J. Elster	A. Giddens, Ch. Tilly
Production Mechanism	Unintended consequences are related to a specific action, its internal structure and external reaction.	Unintended consequences are related to the mutual influence of individual actions, the effect of composition and the influence of the current conditions of the action.	Unintended consequences contribute to the reproduction of social structure.
Key factors and processes	Error, ignorance, imperativeness of immediate interest, publicly	Composition effect, lack of coordination, counterfinality, suboptimality.	Orderliness and systematicity of action, cognitive,

	voiced predictions.		emotional, cultural, social processes.
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The analysis suggests a related conceptual grid: perverse effects include both side effects and unintended consequences. In this sense, they can be both a side effect in achieving the main goal and completely opposite to it. Unintended consequences can be desirable or undesirable. In the first case it is a positive effect, in the second case a negative effect. Unintended consequences can be the result of a single action or a set of actions. On this basis, we can say that counterfinality is an unintended consequence of a set of actions, which is negatively related to the original intentions of some actors.

The fourth paragraph describes the formal game-theoretic structure of counterfinality. To begin with, a definition of a game as a strategic interaction between rational players is given, with the outcome of the game depending on the combination of the chosen strategies of each player. Possible criteria for typologizing games and different ways of solving games are presented. It is shown that counterfinality is the result of solving a game in which the Nash equilibrium does not coincide with Pareto-optimality. Various forms and examples of counterfinality are considered: the prisoner's dilemma, the tragedy of the commons, and social dilemmas. The key characteristic of all these examples is incomplete information about the actions of others and lack of coordination, which leads to the situation of counterfinality.

The fifth paragraph describes the basic concepts for describing counterfinality: intentional action, uncoordinatedness, spatial characteristics of the situation, time horizon, information background, sequence or simultaneity of actions and the structure of the situation. We propose to understand counterfinality as negative unintended consequences of uncoordinated intentional actions distributed in space and time, sequential or simultaneous.

The sixth paragraph presents the conclusions of the chapter.

The second chapter analyzes theoretical resources for describing and explaining intentional action as the basis of counterfinality. Three groups of theories of action are considered: interpretive theories of action, theories of microanalysis of action and theories of practical rationality.

The first paragraph analyzes the interpretive theory of action. The concepts of action by M. Weber, T. Parsons, A. Schütz, P. Winch, A. Giddens and J. Habermas are considered. Weber's definition of action as a behavior connected with subjective meaning is highlighted, as well as the typology of action and methodological features of understanding and explaining action. The subsequent development of ideas in the interpretive tradition is connected with the clarification of the structure of action and the possibilities of its explanation. Parsons distinguishes in the system of action a "unitary act", which includes an agent, a goal, a situation and a normative orientation. In addition to Weber's ideas, Schütz singles out in the structure of action the project and the intention to cause the projected state of affairs by means of body movements. According to Winch, an action is defined by following a rule. The correlation with the rule allows us to establish the meaning of an action, or to discover the semantic equivalence of two physically different actions. According to Habermas, counterfinality is associated with a lack of coordination and mutual understanding which presuppose in particular teleological and normatively regulated models of action. It is concluded that the main tools for identifying motives (purpose, intention) and explaining an action are social knowledge, understanding of typical situations and typical motives, and correlation with norms and rules. The interpretive approach to action allows us to explain action and thus explain a key element of counterfinality, but many other elements are often left out of the analysis.

The second paragraph considers the theories of action microanalysis. Among the main authors of this direction stand out G. Garfinkel, E. Goffman, and A. Rawls. The concept of "constitutive order" is the main idea of this direction, where the key elements of everyday order production are constitutive expectations (or working consensus) and the sequence of actions. Violation of the sequence of actions leads

to a violation of order and, in some cases, to a situation of counterfinality. It is concluded that counterfinality is related to constitutive order in such a way that at the moment when the sequence of actions is violated, the transition from one state of the situation to another begins. This change of situations allows us not only to observe the process of production of counterfinality, but also to identify the constitutive order that is formed again and again, as counterfinality is constantly being overcome. To summarize the paragraph, we note the characteristic orientation of microanalysis of action towards the analysis of temporal and spatial characteristics of interaction, which is a necessary element of analysis for counterfinality as well. On this basis, action microanalysis offers extensive theoretical and methodological possibilities for analyzing counterfinality at the level of immediate interactions.

The third paragraph analyzes the theories of practical rationality. A wide range of concepts and authors are presented: V. Pareto's concept of equilibrium of social system, theories of rational choice, threshold approach to the analysis of action, M. Olson's theory of collective action. Pareto's theory provides a logical explanation of why counterfinality may arise when a certain limit of utility for the community is reached, but the very mechanism of reaching this limit lies at the level of feelings and preferences. Rational choice theories are aimed at explaining the action by subjective reasons and "internal" processes: cognitive grounds, interests, beliefs, values. However, when moving from individual rational action to collective action, social dilemmas arise, where the key issue becomes the question of non-participation and the "stowaway problem". It is noted that the possibility of achieving counterfinality is related to the analysis of benefits and costs, the possibility of communication and limited information. However, this is not sufficient to explain the process of counterfinality production, as other variables not related to rationality remain outside the scope of the analysis.

The fourth paragraph presents the conclusions of the chapter.

The third chapter presents and validates the sociological theoretical and methodological approach to the analysis of counterfinality. The approach to the analysis of counterfinality includes the identification of a typology of counterfinality, the presentation of counterfinality as a complex sociological problem and the description of the logic of analyzing counterfinality.

The first paragraph substantiates the necessity of considering counterfinality as a complex sociological problem, which includes the problem of understanding action, the problem of transition from individual rational actions to collective non-rational consequences, and the problem of unintended consequences. This means that the theoretical explanation of counterfinality should be sought by solving three problems: what are the intentions of the actors of action, what is the logic of the transition from individual rational actions to collective non-rational consequences, and what are the typological features of a particular counterfinal situation. For each step, we justify the use of theoretical resources of sociological theories of action and the theory of unintended consequences, which only in complex application allow us to provide an adequate explanation of counterfinality.

The second paragraph typologizes counterfinality according to a number of criteria: the scope of the group's goal achievement, the size of the "victim" group, the functionality of the consequences, the indirectness and immediacy of the interaction, the frequency and periodicity, and the order of actions. These criteria identify key forms of counterfinality. In terms of the scope of goal achievement by the group in counterfinality either all actors fail to achieve the goals or some part of them. In terms of the size of the "victim" group, counterfinality can refer to all or some of the actors involved in the action, but also include a wider group, even those who did not participate in the action. In terms of the functionality of the consequences, counterfinality may positively or negatively affect a group or society, but may not affect it at all. Counterfinality can occur in situations of co-presence in a particular space and time, or indirectly, in spatially and temporally distant sets of actions. In terms of periodicity, counterfinality takes a cyclical or one-moment form. By the order of actions, counterfinality can be the result of parallel actions or

sequential ones. The typology of counterfinality allows us to highlight the variety of forms that can be encountered in empirical research.

The third paragraph describes and justifies the logic of counterfinality analysis applicable to empirical research. Three systems of coordinates are distinguished, the combination of the analysis of which forms a whole picture of the description of the process of counterfinality production. The first coordinate system is space and time as basic conditions of action. Space represents the element that constrains and enables action. Time is defined as the flow of events within which the process of counterfinality production unfolds, and therefore the time span and duration of action play a key role. The second frame of reference is the relationship between the intension, that is, the initial idea, the project that the participants in the action saw as an end result that would satisfy certain of their desires and needs, and the actual result. The first step is the most important - fixation of actors' intentions. The actual result and reaction to it are one of the tools of this fixation. The third is the knowledge or information available to the actors and its influence on the action, more precisely on the specific choice and character of the action. This includes both general knowledge about typical situations and actions, and actual information received by actors during the action.

The fourth paragraph provides an empirical illustration of the application of the approach to the analysis of counterfinality. In the logic of description and explanation of three coordinate systems, counterfinality is investigated in the order of entry into a subway car during rush hour.

The fifth paragraph presents the conclusions of the chapter.

The conclusion summarizes the main content and conclusions of the dissertation research.

List of publications of the author of the dissertation, in which the main scientific results of the dissertation are reflected

The conducted conceptual and critical analysis of the concept of counterfinality formed the basis for a number of articles:

1. Latypov I. Mekhanizm proizvodstva kontrfinal'nosti v konstitutivnom poryadke [The Mechanism of the Production of Counter-finality in a Constitutive Order] // The Russian Sociological Review. 2021, vol. 20, no 2, pp. 70-103. (in Russian).

2. Latypov I. 'Counterfinality' in sociological theory: Reconceptualization of the concept // RUDN Journal of Sociology. 2021, vol. 21, no 4, pp. 697-710. (in Russian).

3. Latypov I. Action and Unintended Consequences: Counterfinality as a Complex Sociological Problem // Sotsiologicheskie issledovaniya [Sociological Studies]. 2022, no 5, pp. 3-14. (in Russian).

The results of the dissertation research formed the basis for a number of reports that were presented at the following conferences:

1. The fifth International Conference of young scientists "Alliance of Social Sciences". October 9-10, 2021. Moscow, Russia. Report: Counterfinality as a special case of unintended consequences and a factor of social change: a sociological analysis

2. VI All-Russian Sociological Congress "Sociology and Society: traditions and innovations in the social development of regions" June 10-12, 2021. Tyumen, Russia. Report: Unintended consequences of everyday interaction: counterfinality in the constitutive order.

3. Social theory as a vocation? The state of sociological theorizing in Europe. August 25-26, 2022. Copenhagen, Denmark (online). Report: Sociological theory in Russia and the New European Sociological Discourse.

4. XX World Sociological Congress ISA. June 25 - July 1, 2023. Melbourne, Australia. Report: Rational Choice and Unintended Consequences under constraints during a pandemic: Theoretical Reflection.