**Use of survey data in economics: methodological barriers and their overcoming**

Economists are traditionally thought to be wary of surveys as a source of data for empirical work — this is especially true of questionnaires called self-reports, in which respondents (such as consumers or businessmen) report their opinions, assessments, intentions, and expectations. using nominal and ordinal scales. Nevertheless, despite the criticism that such data often faces, they are collected in huge quantities by governments and international organizations, becoming more and more common in economics. Business self-reports date back at least to the 1920s: the first surveys were conducted by trade associations such as the Confederation of British Industry. In Russia, such surveys began to take place in the 1990s. within the framework of the analysis of the transformational economy, however, the roots of the approach can also be found in pre-revolutionary zemstvo statistical works.

In this context, from a methodological point of view, of great interest is the nature of this disciplinary skepticism about subjective data, as well as the ways in which adherents of this research toolkit in economics overcome it. It should be noted that in the literature the problem of using surveys by economists has already been studied in the historical and methodological plane. In particular, the significance of the famous dispute between R. Lester and F. Machlup regarding the validity of empirical testing of the theoretical premises of marginalism based on survey data was discussed; the “measurement without theory” controversy, as well as the outcome of the discussion on the use of survey-based data on consumer assessments, intentions and expectations in the United States Federal Reserve in the 1950s and 1960s. Somewhat less attention in this literature has been paid to the parallel development of this approach in Europe - primarily at the German Ifo Institute for Economic Research and the French National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies (INSEE), and later at the global level under the auspices of the Centre for International Research on Economic Tendency Surveys (CIRET). The reasons for the development of the approach in Germany were related to pragmatic and practical goals: the need to collect cheap statistics that could serve as a guide for the economic authorities of a country reconstructing after the Second World War, as well as the need for information not presented in official quantitative statistics, such as production and investment plans, the level of stocks of finished goods and the level of capacity utilization in various industrial sectors. Modern methodological discussions about the use of survey data are primarily due to the rapid development of new directions, such as economics of happiness and environmental economics, relying heavily on self-reported data.

Despite the fact that the topic under consideration has already begun to be mastered in the specialized literature, it seems to us that there is still room for methodological reflection, in particular, in connection with the rapid development of new areas of use of survey data penetrating into the mainstream of economic science. In this paper, we would like to evaluate the main methodological arguments put forward by economists against the use of self-report data, explore the strategies for refuting them and the consequences of overcoming them for the transforming hierarchy of research programs within the discipline of economics and the dynamics of the interdisciplinary synthesis in which economics has been actively involved in recent decades.

The main objections regarding the quality and accuracy of subjective survey data are the distorting influence of cognitive factors on the respondents' answers (the influence on the answers of wordings, the order of questions in the questionnaire etc.), "non-responses", the effect of social desirability, as well as the fact that mental attitudes can be unstable, poorly defined, false. Nevertheless, such problems are quite solvable with the right choice of research design and methods and cannot lead to a priori disbelief in the information provided by the respondents. Moreover, there is a long tradition in psychological science of examining biases in survey results, in which many solutions have been proposed to improve the quality of responses, although this literature has remained largely unfamiliar to economists.

There is a more radical form of skepticism, applied primarily to the results of questionnaires using ordinal scales, according to which mental states cannot in principle be measured. Despite the fact that this radical thesis has been refuted in the methodological literature, until recently it remained unclear how accurate measurements of subjective opinions using ordinal scales can be, and this is the subject of recent debate among applied researchers.

Another type of argument has been widely discussed in the literature, focusing not on problems with measuring mental states but on the irrelevance of subjective survey data to economic theory. Various such arguments, as we show in the paper, appearing similar, often relied on their own unique logic: the argument could be based on the attempt to delineate disciplinary boundaries, or methodological considerations regarding the status of economic models, or criticism of “naive” empiricism, which is usually associated with the "measurement without theory" controversy.

Based on the historical and methodological analysis of this discussion, we want to trace the broader process of establishing a new paradigm in economics — “data-driven science”, where the desire to adhere to the principles of the scientific method is combined with an openness to new forms of empiricism associated with the spread of big data and its corresponding analytical methods, which leads to a hybrid combination and a compromise between abductive, inductive and deductive approaches.