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ECOLOGICAL CULTURE: EXTRA-EVALUATIVE INTERPRETATION

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Abstract

Ecological culture is increasingly being introduced into scientific discourse and is seen as a key strategy for overcoming the global ecological crisis. Many researchers interpret the phenomenon of ecological culture as a new specific form of culture, although ecological aspects are manifested in all historical periods of human development. In accordance with the statement that the interaction of man and nature is a basic condition for the existence of man, the authors come to the conclusion that ecological culture exists in different historical eras. The nature of the ecological culture inherent in a particular historical period depends on the worldview paradigm of this era. The value-based significance of ecological culture as an urgent scientific category is growing due to global changes in all spheres of human life, including the spread of digital culture. The article analyzes various positions in determining the essence of ecological culture and offers an extra-evaluative interpretation of ecological culture. The ecological culture of our time, based on the principle of anthropocentrism, has exhausted itself. New realities associated with globalization, greening, digitalization, inevitably cause the need to create new forms of environmental culture based on other value bases. The new value system is still in the process of formation and discussion. The authors express their hope that a non-evaluative approach to understanding environmental culture is promising, allowing for the positive environmental experience of previous generations, national and ethnic communities and the individual environmental experience of harmonious interaction with nature to be taken into account.

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1. Introduction

The ecological concept of culture is based on the understanding of culture as a naturally occurring structure that develops naturally, in the struggle of human communities for survival in nature through the use of nature. In this process, many diverse forms of culture have arisen and disappeared. Lorenz (2019), a well-known Austrian ethologist, argued that in the 20th century there are up to three thousand different private cultures on the planet competing for ecological niches in the biosphere. The same idea was developed by Gumilev (2001) in his concept of ethnogenesis. Thus, the biosphere, ecological interpretation of culture arose much later than the concept of "culture" entered into the scientific discourse. Therefore, cultural studies have long been carried out regardless of the conceptual field of ecology. The concept of "ecological culture" is still a scientific problem and is actively discussed by scientists.

2. Problem Statement

With the awareness of the phenomenon of the ecological crisis, an understanding came of the need to change not only nature-transforming activities, but, above all, an understanding of nature and culture, the relationship between nature and society, the nature of the interaction of man and nature. It was during this period that an estimated understanding of ecological culture emerged as a special "high" culture, within the framework of which a harmonious interaction of society and nature is realized (Moiseev, 1993). Many researchers associate a change in the orientation of activities in this direction with a radical restructuring of the worldview, especially the scale of values that has taken root in the minds of people under the influence of a long-term opposition of man to nature. There was a conviction that "there will be a thorough breakdown of the values of both material and spiritual culture and the formation of a new, ecological, culture" (Girusov, 2009, p. 77). The key characteristic of ecological culture is the conformity of social activity with the laws of natural integrity, that is, the correlation of human activity with the viability of the natural environment, as opposed to understanding culture in the context of overcoming the natural principle by man through cognition and development (Girusov, 2009).

Ecological culture in this case is considered as a special form of culture of the future, which should be sought. In this interpretation, environmental culture is defined as:

- the manifestation of conscious activity as correctly understood and practically mastered by people;
- the development of society in unity with the natural environment;
- environmental education, a conscious attitude to nature, practical participation in improving environmental management;
- the use of the natural environment on the basis of knowledge of the natural laws of the development of nature, taking into account the immediate and long-term consequences of changes in the environment under the influence of human activity.

This position indicates recognition of the lack of environmental culture in all previous generations, assessing it as correct, positive and considering it only the expected state of culture.

Some researchers take an ambivalent position. On the one hand, they argue that “over its centuries-old history, mankind has become accustomed to living, in essence, without developed environmental thinking, without environmental ethics and without conscious environmentally oriented activities” (Tovbina, 2006, p. 258), i.e. out of ecological culture. On the other hand, when describing primitive culture, they recognize that this first historical type of ecological culture can be considered pre-civilizational, the subsequent historical periods of culture are defined as civilizational and post-civilizational (Tovbina, 2006).

The obvious variety of types and styles of interaction with nature in various human communities and in different historical periods leads to an unappreciated understanding of the term “ecological culture”. In this interpretation, ecological culture appears as an aspect of the general culture, which reflects the character of interaction with nature. Ecological culture is inherent in all historical types of societies. The search for new strategies to solve the environmental problems of our time means the devaluation of the old ecological culture and the formation of a new ecological culture. Humanity, which has realized itself in nature and culture, largely due to the next environmental crisis, faces the question of consciously constructing such an environmental culture that would ensure the sustainable development of humanity in the new conditions of existence (Nazaretyan, 2008).

It should be noted that the modern transformation of environmental culture is taking place in the context of the expansion of digital technology. When designing new forms of environmental culture, digitalization and globalization should be considered.

Thus, we can state that there is a problem in determining the essence of ecological culture. Existing definitions are ambiguous and often contradictory.

3. Research Questions

Ecological culture can be defined as a form of human/society interaction with the natural environment. The nature of this interaction is reflected in the specifics of ecological knowledge, ecological values and ecological practices.

Thus, ecological culture includes:

- ideas about the relationships in the system "man-nature" and in nature itself; ecological signs and symbols;
- value orientations and attitudes through which nature is perceived and evaluated;
- real strategies and technologies for interaction with nature, ecological management practices and conservation; rites and customs by which appropriate actions regarding nature are formalized; social institutions within which flows and which regulates the interaction in the "man-nature" system (Melnik, 2006).

The enumerated components of ecological culture form a systemic integrity. It is the type of ecological consciousness that has developed in society (the totality of ecological concepts and value orientations of an ecological character) that determines the behavior and nature of people's activities in relation to nature. There is also an inverse correlation, when a certain type of behavior forms the corresponding attitude and specific knowledge.

This approach to the concept of "ecological culture" allows considering the historical types of ecological culture, differing in the specifics of ecological knowledge, features of ecological values and the nature of ecological activities. For instance, the ecological culture of the archaic is characterized by psychological inclusion and direct physical dependence on nature, while the ecological culture of the New Age is characterized as an anthropocentric culture of nature conquest. A similar approach already exists in the psychological interpretation of ecological culture, based on an analysis of the nature of attitudes toward nature in different historical periods (Yasvin, 2000). In our opinion, such an attitude is quite applicable to all aspects of ecological culture.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to study the phenomenon of ecological culture from the extra-evaluative standpoint. The main task is to show the consistency and prospects of an extra-evaluative interpretation of ecological culture.

5. Research Methods

As criteria for a comparative analysis of the value scale in different historical periods, ecological values were chosen scrutinized through the prism of the "man – nature" relationship.

An extra-evaluative interpretation of ecological culture allows for a qualitative analysis of the ecological culture of society as a whole, the ecological culture of social groups and the ecological culture of a particular individual.

6. Findings

In the structure of ecological culture, ecological values are a system-forming element, since a certain attitude determines the selectivity of perception, actively affects the information and intellectual sphere, orientates a person in a variety of options for activity, helps to make a choice in a great many possible actions, to choose one or another nature of activity, to do so or otherwise. It is enough to compare the ecological value systems of only a few historical periods (Table 1) to understand the influence of value orientations on a specific life practice, environmental management technology, and, as a result, on the general character of culture.

In the system of environmental values, we can distinguish:

- the value of the living (perception of the living as valuable and the character of this value);
- the value of nature in general (the perception of nature exclusively as a utilitarian value or not only a utilitarian one, i.e., the discovery of aesthetic, sacred, sanitary-hygienic, cognitive values in nature);
- the value of man relative to nature (determining the position of man in the universe, the relationship to the place of man in the world of nature, relative to the world of nature);
- the value of environmental management activities (perception of certain activities in nature as positive or negative, identification of the criteria for such an assessment);

- the value of health (the place of health in the system of values, the definition of nature as a factor in health).

Ecological values in a particular era are correlated with the core of values that determines the nature of the worldview of the corresponding era (see Table 1).

In the same way, one can analyze historical forms of ecological knowledge and practices of interaction with nature. The nature of knowledge about character and ideas about the interaction both within natural complexes and in the human-nature-society system has radically changed over the history of mankind. It is obvious that a person always had ecological knowledge, but did not immediately acquire the character of scientific knowledge. So, primitive people had great empirical knowledge about a specific natural environment, which allowed them to survive and provide a relatively safe existence. Under the influence of this knowledge and ecological values, a peculiar activity, a specific nature of nature management in the form of nature-user technologies that provide food, home improvement, and the extraction of materials for the production of material culture items took shape in each historical period. A special place in this activity was occupied by technologies for solving ecological problems. In all historical periods, humanity was faced with ecological problems, but their solution was determined by the specific level of intellectual, ethical and technological development of mankind, i.e. the nature of environmental knowledge, environmental values and environmental activities.

Table 01. Ecological values in various historical periods

Ecological values	Middle Ages	New Age	Future (proposed)
attitude to living	The utilitarian and religious value of the living. The living is valuable in that it is a creation of God, and in its design is a utilitarian value for man	The utilitarian and cognitive value of the living. The mysteries of life can be solved using science, the object of which is nature and, in particular, life. Living is a business entity. Object-based relation to the living.	Not only the utilitarian value of the living. Subjective attitude to living as unique and valuable
attitude to nature	Nature is a God's creation. The world of nature is a world of symbols and signs through which a person comprehends the divine will. Nature has been given to man as a means of survival and an instrument of punishment.	Nature is a workshop and laboratory. The utilitarian and cognitive values of nature are the basis of human activity in nature	The universal value of nature as a combination of utilitarian, sanitary-hygienic, aesthetic, cognitive, emotional, spiritual values
attitude to man, man's place in the universe	Man is integrated with nature because of his divine creation and physicality, but he is estranged from the rest of nature by his spirituality and is thus close to God,	Man is a great user, researcher, transformer and master of nature. Being a representative of the animal world, man is the crown of evolution, the pinnacle of the	Man is an element of rational nature, endowed with will and reflection creating a culture (second nature) and responsible not only for his future, but also for

	and therefore occupies the highest step in the natural hierarchy. Man is the pinnacle of the earthly world	universe. The highest position in the hierarchy of values belongs to man.	the evolution of natural systems, for managing the socio-natural systems of the Earth.
man's position regarding nature	Leveraging nature management, knowing God through the interpretation of nature as a divine creation, teaching through deciphering natural phenomena	Environmentalists, an active and productive study of nature in the name and for the purpose of its economic use for the benefit of mankind	Co-evolution, co-evolution, sustainable development of anthropoecosystems
attitude to activities in nature, the criterion of positivity of nature management	Positive activities aimed at the careful use of nature in the interests of man and not violating the commandments authorized by the church	Large-scale transformative activity in nature must meet the criteria of rationality, utility for humanity and economic efficiency	Nature management activities must comply with the principles of sustainability of anthropoecosystems, take into account environmental costs and long-term consequences for the biosphere
attitude to health	Health is a divine gift, a reflection of God's attitude toward man (punishment by diseases)	Health is the result of the rational use of natural inclinations, a resource of man and society to achieve social well-being	Health is a manifestation of the uniqueness of human nature. Rational management is essential for sustaining life
highest value	God	Man	Life
worldview	Teocentrism	Anthropocentrism	Ecocentrism

The modern period is characterized by a crisis of anthropocentrism, which indicates a paradigm shift in the field of ecological culture. This is found in the transformation of ecological awareness, especially among young people (Kudryavtseva et al., 2017).

7. Conclusion

Thus, environmental culture as a way and result of human adaptation to the natural environment, including ecological knowledge, ecological values, ecological activity, is inherent in all societies at all times. However, each time and people have their own unique ecological culture. The analysis of historical and national forms of ecological culture, understood as an integral part of the general culture, may turn out to be promising in constructing the ecological culture of the future, which will allow mankind not only to survive in the current ecological crisis, but also to transition to sustainable development. This design is possible only with a clear idea of the essence of ecological culture, taking into account the historical experience of mankind in solving ecological problems. It seems to us promising to use an extra-evaluative interpretation of ecological culture to achieve optimal results.

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