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THE INFLUENCE OF POSTMODERNITY ON THE VALUE OF LAND RESOURCES

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Goal. To detect prevailing attitude to land resources and their value in postmodern epoch.

Method. Critical analysis of conceptual suppositions of postmodern society based on opinion surveys.

Results. It is found that the attitude to land as a value is influenced by pragmatic consumption-oriented and ecological value systems.

Scope of application. The findings could be of use in designing legal acts regulating land matters.

Keywords: postmodern society, post-industrial society, land, value and attitude.

ПОСТМОДЕРН КАК ФАКТОР ТРАНСФОРМАЦИИ ЦЕННОСТНОГО ОТНОШЕНИЯ К ЗЕМЛЕ

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Цель. Выявить доминирующее ценностное отношение к земле в условиях общества постмодерна.

Метод. Критический анализ концептуальных положений концепций постиндустриального общества с привлечением данных социологических исследований.

Результаты. Установлено, что современное ценностное отношение к земле образуется на пересечении утилитарно-потребительской и экологической ценностных систем.

Область применения результатов. Выводы будут полезны при разработке нормативно-правовых документов, регламентирующих земельные отношения.

Ключевые слова: общество постмодерна, постиндустриальное общество, земля, ценностное отношение.

Postmodern evolved in the last quarter of the 20th century. Although frequently used, the concept still remains vague.

The main historic events which have influenced the culture of postmodern are the changes, which occurred in economically advanced countries in the period of transition from industrial to post-industrial or information society. Unprecedented economic security, which the post-war generation has experienced caused a gradual shift from 'material values' (where security was the highest priority) towards 'post-material' values (with the emphasis on self-expression and life quality)[3].

Therefore, postmodern tries to embody characteristic features of modern society and is in fact the world vision of post-industrial, information, consumer or noospheric society. Postmodernism attempts to give meaning and express global transformations of modern humankind and its value system. World perception cannot remain unchanged in the world where new technology creates a new socio-cultural environment.

Provision that postmodernism is a world vision, which expresses the main ethical values of the society, which has achieved certain level of socio-economic development, has to be the starting point when giving a definition of postmodernism. At the same time it is not limited to one concept. Postmodernism should be viewed as a wide range of various approaches and viewpoints in various fields, however united by common concepts [2]. The common element, which intellectual life of a certain

epoch is based on is usually called ‘the spirit of time’, which exists regardless of our wish. Postmodern as a complex ideology represents the essence of time-spirit [4] and is the most vivid reflection of present-day spiritual values that contradict former values.

In their social life a person assigns a certain meaning to various objects and phenomena of the world, and they become values in the form of goals and means of their achievement. Therefore, any phenomenon or element in the human activity becomes an element of culture and thus acquires meaning and importance for the social group or an individual linked to it, i.e. has a certain value. However, there is a difference between values and cost.

According to D.Bell, in preindustrial societies land ownership was the axis, around which all societal relations were built, in industrial societies they were production means, but in the last quarter of the 20th century societal relations were centered around information and knowledge [1].

The main task of an agricultural society, whose history dates back to thousands of years ago, was production of food to feed the population and land was of special importance in human life. The land was the very means of sustaining life and a value in itself. For example, in ancient peasant cultures there existed a complicated system of values, social concepts and rules based on respectful attitude to land and labour, which was performed on it. There existed an unbreakable bond between the land and the peasant who cultivated it. Land gave crops and was the human’s motherland, so it was viewed as a mother who did her daily hard work patiently. Thus, in agricultural society land was nearly of intimate value for the human. It was so close and easy to understand that the human felt at one with it and performed numerous rituals, usually at the beginning of agriculture season as if trying to assist the land in giving birth to new life. Most festive occasions confined to the end of seeding time were aimed to persuade the land to accept the seed, which the human has sewn. Ligo festival traditional for the Baltic peoples and Kupala Night in the Slavic culture were the holidays aimed at helping the land to give birth to new life.

In industrial society the most important assets were money and labour. Industrialism gave rise to the self-sustained production method, which could develop and expand, development of large-scale machine production, urbanization (the population migrated from the countryside to the cities), evolution of market economy and consumer society. Transition from traditional to industrial society was marked by 'all-permeating rationalization of all the societal layers' (according to Weber) and a shift from conventional, mostly religious values, to consumer values in economy, politics and culture. Acceptance of consumption as the main goal of the human being became a vital condition of the mere existence of modernist society. Finally, land became a product, which however possessed certain characteristics.

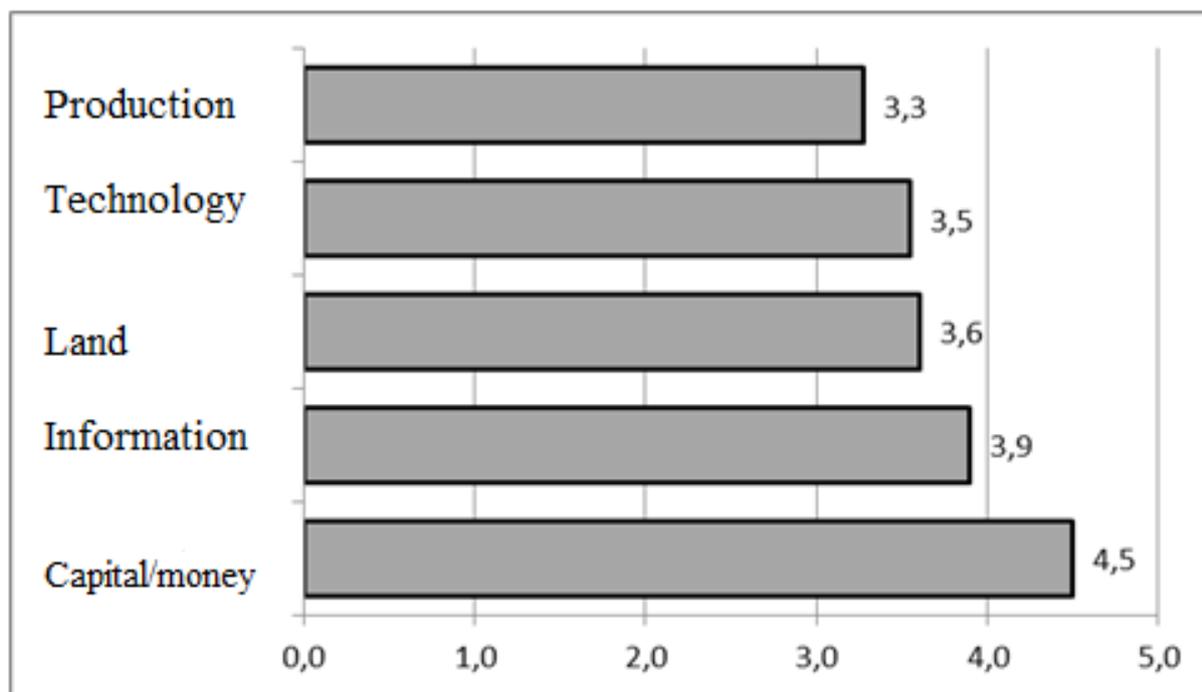
Present-day non-material value system of postmodern society is based on knowledge and information. Therefore, neither land nor capital and production are its main assets like in traditional or industrial epochs, but information and technology. They exist in the form of scientific knowledge, means of performing a certain activity to achieve certain results. Unlike land or capital, information is not limited, can be made available to anyone and cannot cease in the process of its consumption.

Standards of industrial society with their discipline, dedication and achievements gave place to a wider choice of lifestyles and self-expression in postmodern society. [3] Material values are replaced by the value of an individual's quality of life and environmental protection has a priority over economic growth. This gives rise to ecological and noospheric system of values.

Of course, land as a material resource in agricultural and industrial societies is still important in postmodern society; however, according to the authors of information society theory, it can gradually lose its value. At present people are not so much concerned with the land issue as in former times when 90-95% of the population of most countries used to live in rural areas. A modern city dweller gets everything necessary at department stores and supermarkets and does not feel such a close tie with land as their foretime peasant. Getting all the modern conveniences

with the help of machines the humankind ‘forgot’ that land is the most important thing in material world.

However, the opinion poll (Kursk/Moscow, 2012, N=550 respondents from all categories of people) shows that land still remains one of the most important values and plays a special role in the life of present-day society.



Pic. 1. The Respondents' Estimate of Importance of Contemporary Resources against a 5-point Scale.

In present-day value system land is a unique resource. Nowadays, it is not the land in general that is important, but a particular plot of land, part of its surface, which has boundaries, size, location and legal status. The latter depends on how the land is used. A land plot can be used for various purposes. Facilities can be built on it, it can be used for growing vegetables, breeding animals, can be rented out, etc.

Since ancient times nearly everyone has wanted to own a plot of land, and very often it is more the matter of value than of cost.

The opinion survey shows that owing a plot of land gives an opportunity to spend time in the country, relax and enjoy the nature. Another reason why people buy land is their wish to build a house, which can become their shelter and resort in the

turbulent world. The third reason is growing fruit and vegetables. Many middle-aged and older city people grow most of fruit and vegetables for their families at their 500-600 square metre garden plots. The fourth reason is the opportunity to meet friends.

Table 1

Distribution of answers to the question: ‘Why do you and your family need a land plot?’, %.

	Number, in %
To relax and enjoy the nature	51
To build a house	48
To grow fruit and vegetables for the family	38
To invite friends and spend quality time	33
To take children there during their vacation	17
I like cultivating land	8
To have a house and a land plot in case of a crisis	8
To build a holiday home	6
To invest money and protect it from inflation	4
.To get additional revenue from selling fruit and vegetables	3
.To spend time alone, without my family	3
.To rent out my holiday home and get revenue	3
.To establish a peasant farm and become a farmer	2
.No particular goal	2
.Do not want to get a land plot	1
.Do not know	8

Land has always been of value, in demand and gave income in all times. Nowadays, when all world currencies are fluctuating and many banks in the world have shown their ‘vulnerability’ land has become the only reliable kind of investment that can bring income. It can give additional income from selling fruit and vegetables,

which people grow there, is the means to protect money from inflation and an insurance policy against emergency situations. Therefore, consumer attitude to land is still acute even in postmodern epoch.

According to Russian Public Opinion Research Centre, the results of opinion surveys of the attitude to land conducted with a 20 years interval show the change in the attitude while Russia is being integrated into postmodern society. The Centre's experts have compared the respondents' answers in 1990 and 2010. Twenty years ago 56% of respondents wanted to have a garden plot to grow foodstuffs for their families. In 2010 only 15% of respondents need land for this purpose. In 2010 only 7% of respondents want to become farmers, while in 1990 the number was twice as high. People who enjoy gardening are not numerous (8% versus 16% in 1990), want to have a peasant farm (7% versus 14%), to build a holiday home (7% versus 14%) or get additional revenue from selling fruit and vegetables (7% versus 15%). 8% want to become land owners without a particular purpose.

Pragmatic attitude to land, which has never been typical for Russia, appeared in 1990s as the result of transformation of social relations after Russia's integration into the world market, which became the main factor supporting pragmatic approach. Economic efficiency could have become a motivating factor for the majority of population in the last years of the USSR existence. Russia's introduction to mass 'consumer culture' was another reason for the development of pragmatic approach to land, which started dominating in mid-1990s. Presently, most Russians need land for building a house rather than growing foodstuffs. Most respondents would like to own a land plot to build a house and during the last 20 years their number has grown from 16% to 28%. Most respondents interested in building a house are younger than 35 (38-40%) with an average or a high income (30-33%)[5].

In conclusion, present-day attitude to land resources has a certain peculiarity – it is based on both pragmatic and ecological values. There is a tendency towards the shift to the latter, which could give a different view of legal regulation of land relations in Russia.

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