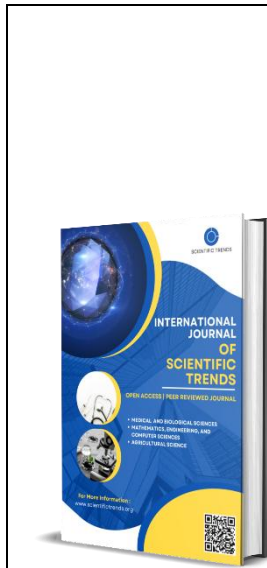


Sociocultural Conditions of Society as A Determining Factor of Ecological Culture

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Abstract

In scientific terminology, the sociocultural environment refers to a space that reflects all conditions of human life activity. This environment encompasses all aspects of human life, from daily routines to spiritual and cultural life. The main elements of sociocultural include cultural-historical heritage, lifestyle practices, socio-psychological, spiritual-moral, political, and ecological culture. Cultural-historical heritage includes customs, traditions, values, and historical monuments passed down through generations. The artistic environment is associated with cultural treasures such as works of art, architectural monuments, literature, and music. While the socio-psychological environment encompasses societal relationships, customs, and moral norms, spiritual and moral values determine people's religious beliefs, ethical values, and spiritual worldview. The political environment includes the political system, laws, and governance principles in society, while the ecological environment reflects the relationship between nature and humans.

Keywords: Ecological culture; ecological safety; sociocultural transformation; social system; global climate change; natural environment.

Introduction

It is appropriate to examine the process of formation of ecological culture in society from a sociocultural approach perspective, as this approach enables understanding the deep essence of human-nature relationships. As humanity becomes increasingly entangled in environmental problems today, it becomes clearer that the success and failure of society-nature interaction depends on human activity. The problem lies not only in the intensity of human activity but also in the methods of activity dictated by society. The cultural level of society, its ecological consciousness and responsibility, attitude towards nature - all these factors play a decisive role in maintaining the balance between humans and nature.

METHODS

The doctrine of systemic functionalism plays an important role in understanding socioculture, as it allows for a deeper understanding of the impact of social order, culture, and education on humans. This theory helps to study society as an integral system and explains how each of its elements

performs a certain function. From the perspective of systemic functionalism, every institution and social phenomenon in society performs a specific function that serves to ensure society's stability.

The initial research based on the systemic-functional approach was conducted by French sociologist Émile Durkheim. He strongly defended the idea that “society is a social reality that is immaterial in its essence, but can be conceived as a natural phenomenon”. According to Durkheim, society is not a mere sum of individuals but a separate reality with its own laws. This reality stands above individuals and determines their behavior.

Durkheim believed that social facts should be studied as entities separated from subjective factors. In his view, social facts exist outside individual consciousness and possess coercive power. For example, language, religion, moral norms, legal rules - all these have an external character relative to the individual and regulate personal behavior.

Durkheim's concept was further developed and methodologically enriched by Talcott Parsons. According to Parsons's fundamental conclusion, “Every individual internalizes social norms and values through the process of social interaction. This process manifests itself as a complex social phenomenon with a permanent character. However, the individual is not just a subject of internalization but also an active participant in the exteriorization process; through creating cultural constructions and values, they implement new approaches and forms of practice in social life. This, in turn, has a significant impact on society's evolution”.

Research has shown that Evans-Pritchard's main ideas about the relationship between ecology and social environment were presented in his 1940 work “The Nuer: A Description of the Modes of Livelihood and Political Institutions of a Nilotic People”. In this work, he analyzed the connections between the natural environment and social structures while studying the Nuer tribe in Sudan. However, his views on this issue were not limited to a single work. The interaction between ecological and social factors was also examined in his 1962 collection “Social Anthropology and Other Essays”.

According to his theory, “climate, precipitation, surface waters, landscape, fauna, and flora, which form the basis of the ecological environment, interact closely with each other and create conditions for the formation and spatial structure of ethnic groups. These natural factors complement each other and form a complex ecological system. Each factor in turn influences and is influenced by other factors, resulting in the formation of an integral ecological environment”.

These factors influence the material and spiritual structure of ethnic groups, i.e., the social environment, through complex and diverse ways. This influence develops over a long historical period and is reflected in all life activities of the ethnic group. The economic activities, social relations, and cultural values of society develop and change under the influence of the natural environment.

For example, the lifestyle, economic practices, and cultural traditions of peoples living in the Central Asian region are largely determined by the natural and climatic conditions of this area. The unique natural conditions of this region have shaped the way of life, economic activities, and culture of the local population over thousands of years. While nomadic pastoralism developed among peoples living in desert and steppe regions, settled agricultural culture formed in the oases. The differences between these two types of economy are reflected not only in economic activities but also in social structure and

cultural traditions.

Furthermore, the natural environment also has a profound impact on the spiritual culture of ethnic groups. This influence is clearly manifested in folk oral traditions, art, religious beliefs, and worldview. For instance, in the folklore, customs, and beliefs of peoples living in mountainous regions, images and concepts related to mountain landscapes occupy a prominent place. These images and concepts enrich the spiritual world of the people and shape their unique cultural identity.

In the first half of the 20th century, French scholars paid special attention to the interconnection between ecological and social factors. The scientific works of Émile Durkheim and Marcel Mauss are particularly significant in this regard. They conducted in-depth studies of demographic and ecological conditions in the social life of ancient societies. As a result of these studies, the concept of "ecological time" was introduced to science. Durkheim analyzed the relationship between society and nature in his 1912 work "The Elementary Forms of Religious Life." Mauss developed the concept of ecological time in his "Essay on Seasonal Variations of Eskimo Societies," published in 1904-1905.

"An important characteristic of ecological time is that it is irreversible and shows connection with the past". This idea was also reflected in Durkheim's "Rules of Sociological Method". Based on this, it can be said that ecological time influences the development of culture in a particular period and the progress of a civilization, while civilization in turn affects the ecological living environment.

The concept of ecological time remains relevant today. In the context of global climate change, this concept is becoming even more significant. Climate changes are having serious impacts not only on the natural environment but also on the socio-economic life of society. This, in turn, necessitates a review of modern civilization's development directions. In this sense, the concept of ecological time established by Durkheim and Mauss continues to hold important methodological significance today.

From the mid-1970s, the process of scientific understanding and study of global environmental problems became more active. This process ultimately led to the formation of a new direction in our national science - ethnic ecology. Russian scholar V.I. Kozlov provided a detailed account of this science's formation history. According to him, "The main task of ethnic ecology is to study the specific characteristics of traditional life support systems of ethnic communities in natural and socio-cultural conditions".

Research conducted within ethnic ecology shows that each ethnos forms its unique ecological culture in the process of adapting to its living environment. I.I. Krupnik thoroughly analyzed this process in his work "Arctic Ethnoecology" by studying the traditional nature management models of Northern Eurasian peoples. His research holds significant importance in understanding the adaptation mechanisms of ethnic communities to their natural environment.

Currently, ethnic ecology is becoming increasingly relevant. In the context of global climate change, diminishing natural resources, and intensifying ecological problems, utilizing traditional ecological cultural experiences is crucial. According to Kozlov, the knowledge accumulated within ethnic ecology can serve as an important methodological foundation in solving modern environmental problems and developing sustainable development

principles.

Thus, ethnic ecology plays a vital role in studying the complex relationships between humans, society, and nature, generalizing traditional ecological cultural experiences, and solving modern environmental problems. The results of research conducted within this field have both theoretical and practical significance, being used in improving environmental education systems and developing ecological culture.

It can be said without exaggeration that ecological culture is becoming one of the central categories of humanitarian sciences today. In the new century, human worldview, perception of the universe, and activities cannot be imagined without ecological culture. This situation becomes particularly relevant as global environmental problems have intensified in recent years. For example, issues such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and environmental pollution are compelling humanity to pay more serious attention to ecological culture.

Along with the natural environment, society is also composed of a complex of characteristics and features inherent to collective and individual life activities of humans. These characteristics and features have formed and developed throughout human history and are considered fundamental pillars of society. Thus, humans join a separate world detached from nature, which forms their unique socio-cultural environment. According to sociologist K.H. Momdjian's definition, the term "society" corresponds to the concept of "sociocultural reality", which implies the multifaceted and complex structure of society. Specifically, although society is separated from nature, it cannot survive without interaction with the environment, as all aspects of human life are closely connected with nature. Furthermore, cultural changes also occur in interconnection with nature, and this process continues uninterrupted. This interconnection is important not only in material culture but also in the development of spiritual culture. Maintaining balance between society and nature and ensuring their harmonious development is one of today's urgent tasks.

Naturally, an important question arises about the dialectical relationship between ecological culture and general socioculture. The essence of this question has both theoretical and practical significance, determining one of the main directions of our society's development. This issue is considered one of the most pressing problems of modern society and is being thoroughly studied by many scientists, specialists, and public figures today. The point is that these two concepts cannot exist in isolation from each other, as they continuously complement and enrich each other. This process is a natural phenomenon that continues uninterrupted and is observed at all stages of society's development. Ecological culture is an integral part of general socioculture, and the close connection between them has become one of the important factors in human development. Moreover, the interaction and harmony between these two types of culture play a crucial role in creating foundations for sustainable development for future generations. This, in turn, creates a solid foundation for society's sustainable development and future prospects.

CONCLUSIONS

The unique standards, rules, and norms concentrated in the core of culture are closely connected with society's destiny, its victories and defeats, established real conditions, specifics of the natural environment, national customs, adaptation processes, and the civilizational conditions under

which this core was initially formed. This connection, formed over centuries, is reflected in all aspects of society's life and determines the distinctive cultural identity of the people.

Ecological culture, as a fundamental and integral part of universal human culture, encompasses a system of social relations, collective and personal moral-spiritual requirements, theoretical views, regulatory norms, and values related to the multifaceted relationships between human activity and the natural environment. This system expresses society's attitude towards the natural environment, its ecological consciousness, and level of cultural development. Furthermore, it ensures deep harmony and mutual adaptation between society and the environment. This harmony is not limited to attitudes towards nature but manifests as a complex phenomenon encompassing all areas of human activity. Ecological culture functions as an adaptation mechanism between human and natural systems, which is implemented through society's long-term and short-term approaches to the environment and global ecological problems, resulting in the implementation of management systems aimed at preserving and improving the natural environment.

Ecological culture and self-awareness play important roles as mechanisms for culture's adaptation to changing environmental conditions. These two factors complement and reinforce each other. The first, ecological culture, involves forming relevant knowledge about the environment that exists outside cultural reality. This knowledge helps in properly understanding and managing the relationships between nature and society.

The second, self-awareness, is a system of knowledge aimed at understanding the internal essence of cultural processes and evaluating how well they correspond to reality. Through this system, society gains the ability to review its cultural values based on modern requirements and make necessary changes.

These two phenomena - ecological culture and self-awareness - are closely interconnected. Because the level of ecological culture is directly proportional to the global ecological situation and largely depends on society's general cultural level and ecological consciousness. A society with high ecological culture pays more attention to environmental protection, rational use of natural resources, and solving ecological problems.

Thus, socioculture, ecological culture, and self-awareness processes together serve to maintain balance between humanity and nature and ensure ecological sustainability. This enables the creation of a healthy and sustainable living environment for future generations. The development of ecological entrepreneurship, "green" technologies, and ecological tourism in many countries today is a clear example of this. In conclusion, the sociocultural meaning of modern ecological culture is manifesting as a continuously developing and improving process that encompasses all layers of society. The success of this process largely depends on applying scientific achievements to practice, implementing innovative solutions, and raising the ecological culture of society members.

Today, ecological culture is gaining importance not only as a theoretical concept but also as a practical action program. It holds a significant place in all levels of the education system, various spheres of social life, and international relations. Through ecological culture, we have the opportunity to accomplish important tasks such as preserving a healthy environment for future generations, rational use of natural resources, and protecting biodiversity.

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