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## **SOCIOCULTURAL NATURE OF WEALTH PHENOMENON**

*Найголовніша, найцінніша річ для кожної людини є його життя, різноманітне, збагачене духовно та матеріально. Стаття присвячена дослідженню феномена багатства в якості підґрунтя розвитку суспільства як основного мотиву та спонукання у діяльності влади щодо громади. У дослідженні чітко сформовані соціокультурні фактори формування соціальних кодів феномена багатства. У статті висвітлено основні інтенції щодо відношення до багатства в Україні.*

**Ключові слова:** надлишковий продукт, розширення населення, соціальна культура, суспільство споживання, соціальне тіло, задоволеність життям.

### **Problem statement**

The today's fastness of living is not created and predetermined by itself. All public processes and phenomena of this world are generated and directed by efforts of every person. However, it should be noted that we cannot even imagine that every our action is caused by social culture impact and formation. Nowadays a man is not capable of waiting at all and is willing to get satisfaction with life immediately. This creates tension and anxiety resulting in dissatisfaction with life and necessity to overcome it, so to speak, fill the vacancy in the heart. Wanting something more means a stronger sense of living and overcoming death. Awareness of the way of creating and encouraging a man's will to power, wealth creation and excessive consumption is very important.

### **Analysis of recent researches and publications**

The issues of revealing the sociocultural nature of the wealth phenomenon were among the interests of the following "pillars" of the philosophical thought: M. Foucault, M. Weber, J. Weatherford, P.-J. Proudhon, R. L. Heilbroner, etc. The given problem was also investigated by Ukrainian and Russian scientists, namely: O. V. Aminova, V. D. Bazilevich, E. O. Kuz'menko, A. Stepanenko, A. Omel'chenko, N. O. Gorelov, E. A. Kobleva, E. A. Koryakina and others. In spite of the fact that there are plenty of researches dedicated to studying the wealth phenomenon, the issues of determinism of society actors' interaction including the influence they exert on each other and increase in wealth have remained outside the scope of scholars' attention.

### **Setting of the aim of the article**

The aim of the article is to reveal sociocultural codes of wealth creation and discover noumenal meanings of the wealth phenomenon and existence in general.

### **Presentation of the research basic material**

As early as in the I-IV centuries B.C. a special sphere of human activity, that is economy, appeared on the territory of Ancient West. This was marked by division of labour, development of exchange, emergence of money and, as a result, by accumulation of economic surplus and stratification of population. The first power institutes appeared and, respectively, the institute of property was formed. Private ownership of land was introduced and this caused the establishment of slavery and emergence of economic surplus. Then the affection of a man for precious metals and stones started to form. People related gold and silver to divinity [4, p. 35]. Appearance of money must be one of the most ponderable and powerful factors of well-organized formation and logical development of economic life and, in general, existence of modern economy. This is money that stipulated the formation of such a complicated form of economy as wealth. To some degree, it is money that is wealth, or to be more precise, its symbol, sign.

In his book “The Worldly Philosophers” R. Heilbroner explained that “...money established a new way of thinking and actions that changed the world immediately. And this world has belonged to a man ever since [12, p. 236]. One of the scholars of authority, a Chinese sage Confucius described the attitude of the Ancient China population to wealth very transparently: “Wealth and honour are things that all people desire, and yet unless they are acquired in the proper way I will not abide them. Poverty and disgrace are things that all people hate, and yet unless they avoided in the proper way I will not despise them” [2, p. 59]. The Golden Mean principle advocated by Confucius provides for temperate life, abandonment from a desire to accumulate wealth and become rich. A man must work, not being forced to do it or seeking to become rich but having a moral stimulus for self-perfection through working. Having studied the determinism of labour and market development, Xenophon was the first to research pricing; he emphasized on the two characteristics of a product – use value and exchange value. The ancient philosopher stated that value is something of use.

This was the way how philosophical comprehension of economic categories of “property”, “price” and “value” took place for the first time. Since then money has been viewed as an opportunity to live in different conditions and this has a positive sense. Wealth is generated as a result of interaction of society actors in the process of production or labour activities, when a product made is accumulated, exceeds population needs and makes up additional welfare. One of the most powerful theories dedicated to the issue of wealth creation in capitalist economy was developed by M. Weber. In his work “The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism” the author emphasized on a causal relation between religion and economy. He showed that capitalism requires some ground for development, something which will stimulate this process not from outside but will be a moral stimulus.

For providing a steady growth of capital, the ruling clique had to suggest the idea for the majority of population that labour, namely, professional labour and enrichment due to labour is blessed by God, and poverty and laziness are sins. According to M. Weber, Protestantism and professional ethic conceived by it were

serious factors for economic growth of the West at the time when oriental religions hindered industrial rise. The doctrine of double predestination is a core of Protestantism. From the very beginning God chose some people for salvation and others for damnation. Everything is decided by God and cannot be changed. Good works or asceticism cannot grant God's divine grace. That is professional activity which can make a man feel selected and unique. The indicator of a man's success is an increase in wealth and this is the only salvation and a sign of God's mercy. Laziness and poverty are vices and damnation [3, p. 223].

A recognized philosopher of this period, J. Locke said that "...every man has a property in his own person, the labour of his body and the work of his hands", that is why labour "...makes it his property", id est., labour becomes the source of a property right. J. Locke grounded the necessity and importance of wealth existence. Market economy and civil society were built on the principle, which asserts that a man has a right to own everything he produces. P.-J. Proudhon had an extremely negative attitude to enrichment and private property. He was the founder of anarchism, a trend in socialism. He said that a society must perish or destroy property as "property is theft". According to him, any property is a way to appropriate fruits of somebody's labour and receive fraudulent gains, which is the ground of wealth creation. Property is the main reason for public inequality and, subsequently, for all revolutions being attempts of people to obtain justice. A desire to receive gains results in violence and exploitation. The property right is based on a man's desire to earn on labour without any efforts made that is why such enrichment is not moral and has no right to exist. Thus a proprietor enjoys wealth, which was not produced by him. The source of such enrichment is economic surplus or rather wages not paid to workers in full. Workers create more values than they get back as wages. This surplus is a proprietor's profits and a source of enrichment. [9, p. 247].

A prominent sociologist D. E. Durkheim wrote: "Individual natures are merely the indeterminate material which the social factor determines and transforms. Such mental conditions as religiosity, sexual jealousy and paternal love are not simply initial organizations. Almost everything existing in individual consciousness originates from society". He asserts that it is possible to influence a man's consciousness, especially that of economic man, using the following features: greed, desire for power and enrichment. [2, p. 638] In other words, instead of grounding the model of social life built on a principle of generality, the economic theory has switched to an individual as he is a source of earning. Economy starts working for consumption, using psychology of a man and mechanisms of influencing him. This is where the sources of "consumer value" lie and the priority of consumption over production is established. The basic desire, which induces a man to accumulate, is not possession of a specific benefit but improvement of his living conditions, a possibility to live an interesting life of high quality and satisfy his desires. A man's behaviour is not rational, depends on various factors and takes into account his perception of the world.

It is wealth that gives a stimulus to society development as what is owned by a smaller part of society becomes available to the majority in the course of time due to a huge desire to have a life similar to that of selected part of population; this fact promotes public progress. The methodology of social and philosophic phenomena research saw transformation in the twentieth century. Previously the economic views on society's development and functioning had been restricted and one-sided. The response to it was the methodology of post-modernism, the conception which analyses socioeconomic phenomena with special attention paid to cultural, ethic aspects of social co-operation and equilibrium. It concerns the wealth phenomenon to a full degree; this promotes reproduction of people's logical vital activity, harmonization of their relations and formation of the society of justice [5, p. 47]. M. Foucault in his work "The Will to Truth" revealed the mechanisms of formation of social culture and sociocultural codes of wealth creation, which show us the noumenal meanings of the wealth phenomenon and existence in general. Authorities introduced disciplinary practices; then abandoning guillotine and bloody violence, they made a transition to economy of humanism, where society of consumption with a man as a boon and production mechanism, was formed. The philosopher outlined the pre-conditions of isolation emergence related to socio-economic reasons. The authorities faced the task to force the isolated to work in order to prevent unemployment and stabilize production [11, p. 148]. A material and subject approach providing for a commodity character of wealth is outside the system of values of a modern man. Currently a man exists under terms of economy – capitals accumulation, he makes great efforts to get material enrichment, which is the basic constituent of being but not major. Nevertheless, a spiritual constituent of being is the main thing, life is the greatest value. M. Foucault, who described the process of wealth formation as both of material and spiritual constituent of a man's vital activities in the context of senses of a right to die and power over life, says that the situation, which took place in some countries of the West in the XVIII century, was a crucial point in the development of capitalism.

Since then a human body has been an instrument, which allows to earn capital, and this encourages authorities to care about life of a man. Authorities started to protect a human body, contribute to its development, health, reproduction, nutrition, life conditions and space of existence in general. Authorities aim to reveal and use maximum capabilities of a human body, and they do it in a regulative way rather than a "punitive" one. The techniques of compulsion and control used by authorities up to the XVIII century were replaced by encouragement, namely, by a reward with labour and, as a result, remuneration for labour. No longer was "penalty" the main form of power, it only became one of its elements. Authorities concentrated on creating productive forces, "encouraging them to increase rather than on forcing them to obey or destroy them" [11, p. 249].

A "social body" acquired the right to secure and protect his life as it became the main instrument of wealth creation and the authorities take advantage of this. The body is viewed as a machine to be trained, whose skills are to be developed.

Thus, authorities undertake a function of control over a human body, at the same time concentrating on ensuring its efficiency increase. Authorities do not kill as they used to; on the contrary they invest in life of productive mechanisms – people.

The "adjustment of accumulation of people to accumulation of capital" takes place by stimulating the birth-rate. Investing in a "living body, recognition of its great value and distribution of its forces management were necessary" for capitalist relations establishment [11, p. 244]. "Management of bodies and reasonable supervision of life" is hidden beyond the care of authorities. Educational establishments are set up. State administers the issues of medical care, social institutes' establishment, problems of birth-rate, longevity, public education. All these are done in order to provide "availability of people for use and their obedience"; this creates necessary terms for earning money for state [11, p. 245].

Currently the situation is very much the same but with emphasis being shifted. After the era of technologies started, a man ceased to be the main instrument of production but became the only consumer of goods. Therefore, authorities continue to "take care of" the problems of human body maintenance from a different angle but pursue the same purpose – wealth accumulation. Society views wealth as a necessary constituent of "living well". Only a well-to-do man takes a place of influence in society and can cope with his life. But it should be noted that any wealth is relative. For some person it is a usual thing to buy a masterpiece of a prominent artist Jean-Michel Basquiat for 4.5 million USD, but for another this picture is not the real wealth unlike the sum to be paid for it, while someone cannot consider such an action as a constituent of the real life. According to E. Kobleva, "The truth of the consumption ideology is disguised and consists in the fact that an individual is not the subject of a consumption system, he is an object of an industrial system, and consuming its products, in fact, he serves interests of the system, obeys it". However, we insist on a man's leading role in the production and consumption system, and, in general, in the system of relations of a man with a surrounding world. Creating wealth, a man does not submit to the material world but reshapes it, tailors the world for himself, introduces his internal world into the external, subject world. A man realizes his qualities and needs, materializing them in things [6, p.63]. Nevertheless, nature certainly responds to such man's actions in two ways: it either consents and obeys or, vice versa, rebels and destroys a man immediately or gradually. Therefore, the current views suggest dialogue, communication with nature rather than domination over it.

Thus, the consumption ideology is formed in a post-modern society as a system of views about the world oriented to consumption of commodities and services and expressed in simulacrum. This is the world that is necessary for enhancing individual prestige and personalisation. Speaking about Ukraine, we should remark that stratification of the post-Soviet society has its characteristic features. Firstly, it is a constant deepening of the chasm between the rich and poor, and secondly, it is a gradual extinction of the population's middle class caused by unemployment, impoverishment, rise in prices and decline in living standards. But it should be said that the resources providing a proper social functioning are

distributed unevenly, according to world standards; this cannot provide the development of living standards favourable for the information era for the entire population even under conditions of surplus economy. The world tendency to increase the role of human capital in the socio-economic development forces the Ukrainian authorities to rely on an increase in labour productivity, modernization and development of industries, which determine quality of human capital. Thus, the necessary conditions are enhancing of growth of the Ukrainian population middle class and a steady reduction of inequality in the socium [10, p. 9].

For its further development our country should make a transition to an innovative level of economy, use energy- and resource-saving production technologies. Today Ukraine must solve plenty of problems: geopolitical threat posed by Russia, separatism, military operations in the East of the country, energy-dependence, ecological issues, etc. Under conditions of the Internet swift development, enhancement of the informational and technological development, strong shadow economy, processes of globalization our country should work out a new strategy of development, which would consider both internal and external factors. However, it should be said that without regard to all the difficulties the model of socio-economic development includes proper directions and principles.

An oligarchic trend of the present society generates a desire for increasing material wealth. In its turn, this results in an increase of production volume due to an increase in its load; it also causes indifference to such fields as education, law, services, environmental pollution. Society development is only seen in an increase of economic indices; it does not take into account a degree of development of people's spiritual wealth.

An approach to wealth level determination is rather interesting. According to O. Koryakina, "the basis of such an approach is selection of a stratification criterion immanent to social branching, and, therefore, to wealth" [7, p. 123]. Thus, it can be concluded that the wealth criteria meet the maximal level of satisfying needs existing in a certain society and realization of interests. That is, the wealth phenomenon means not only a specified amount of material welfare for providing a proper life but propagates a possibility of self-realization, availability of a certain lifestyle and confidence in the future. Modern Ukrainian researchers in the field of philosophy also admit significance of wealth only in case it is appreciated by others, otherwise it loses its value [1]. Nowadays scholars in the field of economics are concerned with studying the issue of national wealth and its significance in the national economy structure and draw parallels between wealth and production efficiency. Thus, an important feature of wealth as an economic category is that it is a result and a pre-condition of socio-economic development simultaneously [8].

Having analysed the works of foreign scientists dedicated to the wealth phenomenon, we can conclude that developing countries are dominated by an economic constituent when estimating the level of wealth; in the developed countries a social constituent of the problem is principal. However, a level and quality of life, which determine the measure of satisfaction with life on the basis of population's material and spiritual needs, is important.

## Conclusions

Appearance of money must be one of the most ponderable and powerful factors of well-organized formation and logical development of economic life and, in general, existence of modern economy. Wealth is generated as a result of interaction of society actors in the process of production or labour activities, when a product made is accumulated, exceeds population needs and makes up additional welfare. The basic desire, which induces a man to accumulate, is not possession of a specific benefit but improvement of his living conditions, a possibility to live an interesting life of high quality and satisfy his desires. A man's behaviour is not rational, depends on various factors and takes into account his perception of the world. A human body is an instrument, which allows to earn capital, and this encourages authorities to care about life of a man. Authorities are to protect a human body, contribute to its development, health, reproduction, nutrition, life conditions and space of existence in general. Authorities aim to reveal and use maximum capabilities of a human body, and they do it in a regulative way rather than a "punitive" one. Scholars, including philosophers, have always paid great attention to the economic field and wealth as a factor of influence, which determines human life and administers social processes. According to G. Soros, everybody aimed to comprehend such a complicated world but a man, who made a fortune and then was able to kill for it, attracted special attention. "We can call them worldly philosophers as each of them aimed to make a philosophic system, which will explain the most prosaic human desire – a rush for wealth" [5, p. 69].

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## СОЦИОКУЛЬТУРНАЯ ПРИРОДА ФЕНОМЕНА БОГАТСТВА

Самой главной и ценной вещью для каждого человека является его жизнь, разнообразная, обогащенная духовно и материально. Статья посвящена исследованию феномена богатства как основы развития общества и главного мотива действий власти по отношению к обществу. В исследовании четко сформулированы социокультурные факторы формирования социальных кодов феномена богатства. В статье рассмотрены основные интенции отношения к богатству в Украине.

**Ключевые слова:** добавочный продукт, расслоение населения, социальная культура, общество потребления, социальное тело, удовлетворенность жизнью.

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Sociocultural nature of wealth phenomenon



### SOCIOCULTURAL NATURE OF WEALTH PHENOMENON

*The greatest, most valuable thing for each person is his diverse, enriched spiritually and materially life. The article is concerned with research of the wealth phenomenon as a basis of society development, the main cause and stimulus for government activities as to society. The sociocultural factors of wealth phenomenon social codes formation are clearly formulated in the research. The article highlights the main intentions concerning the attitude towards wealth in Ukraine. The methodology of social and philosophic phenomena research saw transformation in the twentieth century. Previously the economic views on society's development and functioning had been restricted and one-sided. The response to it was the methodology of post-modernism, the conception which analyses socioeconomic phenomena with special attention paid to cultural, ethic aspects of social co-operation and equilibrium. It concerns the wealth phenomenon to a full degree; this promotes reproduction of people's logical vital activity, harmonization of their relations and formation of the society of justice. Nevertheless, a spiritual constituent of being is the main thing, life is the greatest value. A man's behaviour is not rational, depends on various factors and takes into account his perception of the world. It is wealth that gives a stimulus to society development as what is owned by a smaller part of society becomes available to the majority in the course of time due to a huge desire to have a life similar to that of selected part of population; this fact promotes public progress. M. Foucault, who described the process of wealth formation as both of material and spiritual constituent of a man's vital activities in the context of senses of a right to die and power over life, says that the situation, which took place in some countries of the West in the XVIII century, was a crucial point in the development of capitalism. Since then a human body has been an instrument, which allows to earn capital, and this encourages authorities to care about life of a man. Authorities started to protect a human body, contribute to its development, health, reproduction, nutrition, life conditions and space of existence in general. Authorities aim to reveal and use maximum capabilities of a human body, and they do it in a regulative way rather than a "punitive" one. The techniques of compulsion and control used by authorities up to the XVIII century were replaced by encouragement, namely, by a reward with labour and, as a result, remuneration for labour.*

**Keywords:** economic surplus, population stratification, social culture, consumer society, social body, satisfaction with life.