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Choosing a Model of the Agrarian Structure of Ukraine as a Foundation for Comprehensive Sustainable Rural Development

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► **Abstract.** In the current difficult financial, economic, military, social, and environmental conditions, through the unstable political situation, the only leader that "pulls" the economy of Ukraine is the agricultural sector. The purpose of the research – to analyse the models of agrarian structure that have been developed in Ukraine since independence. To determine the model of the agrarian structure that will provide the most efficient way to ensure comprehensive sustainable development of rural areas and preservation of the rural settlement network. The following scientific methods were used for the study: dialectical for cognition of processes and phenomena; empirical (observation, comparison, description); comparative analysis; abstract-logical (theoretical generalizations and development of conclusions). In the process of analysis of the models of agrarian structure that have been developed in Ukraine since independence, it was identified that the most efficient way to ensure comprehensive sustainable development of rural areas, preservation of the rural settlement network will be provided by the model of the agrarian structure, which is based on individual, farm, family farms, small and medium-sized agricultural enterprises. The influence of the choice of the agrarian structure model on the possibility of ensuring comprehensive sustainable development of rural areas and preservation of the rural settlement network is determined. Determined the model of the agrarian structure that will provide the most efficient way to ensure comprehensive sustainable development of rural areas and preservation of the rural settlement network. It is proposed to introduce changes to the legislation of Ukraine, which will contribute to the development of the model of the agrarian structure of Ukraine, which is based on individual, farm, family farms, and small and medium-sized agricultural enterprises

► **Keywords:** rural settlement network, land relations, land reform, agriholdings, agriculture, farming, family farm, land management, competitiveness, rural saving model

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► Problem statement

With the adoption on 18 December 1990 by the Verkhovna Rada of the Ukrainian SSR of Resolution No. 563-XII “On Land Reform”, land reform in Ukraine began and is still ongoing [1]. The preamble of the mentioned resolution states: “The objective of this reform is the redistribution of land with its simultaneous transfer to private and collective ownership, and to enterprises, institutions and organisations to establish conditions for the equal development of various forms of land management, the development of a multi-structured economy, and the rational use and protection of land” [2].

Adopted in 1990-1994 laws “On the priority of social development of the village” (1990); “On peasant (farm) economy” (1991); “On collective agricultural enterprise” (1992),

“On forms of land ownership” (1992) did not answer the questions: “What model of the agrarian system in Ukraine building?”, “What form of management will become the foundation for the development of a rich and confident future Ukrainian peasant, the preservation and development of the rural settlement network and the village as such?”, “What form of management in the countryside will guarantee the food security of the state?”. In Ukraine, for 30 years, there was an opinion that the free market without state intervention will solve everything and settle the problems on its own.

As a result, currently, according to the Latifundist.com website, as of January 1, 2021, the 100 largest Ukrainian latifundia cultivate a total of 6,020.25 thousand hectares of land, which is 18.5% of all arable land in Ukraine [3].

According to the State Statistics Service, in 2020 in Ukraine, 62968 agricultural enterprises used agricultural land. Among them 36277 agricultural enterprises, and 26691 farms [4]. Therewith, there are currently about 1 300 000 farms in Poland.

In Ukraine, on the one hand, the volumes of production, sales, and export of agricultural products, investments in the agricultural sector of the economy, and payment of taxes and rents are growing every year, but on the other hand, the gaps in several indicators continue to grow, and

the differences in the quality of life of rural and urban population deepen. As a result, the quantitative and qualitative features of demographic processes in the countryside are constantly deteriorating, employment is decreasing, migration to cities and abroad does not stop, and the reproduction rate and life expectancy of rural residents are decreasing. It results in the depopulation of rural areas and their decline. The rural settlement network is constantly shrinking, villages are disappearing from the map of Ukraine.

The total dominance of high-margin crops in agricultural holdings and the lack of production of products for the domestic market pose threats to the food security of the state. Evidently, without the active intervention of the state, the depopulation of rural areas and the destruction of the rural settlement network can no longer be stopped. The first step taken by Ukraine to improve the situation is to join the global process of sustainable development approved in September 2015 at the UN Summit with the support of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The following SDGs fully coincide with the problems that should be immediately addressed in Ukraine:

- overcoming poverty;
- overcoming hunger, achieving food security, improving nutrition, and promoting sustainable agriculture;
- ensuring a healthy lifestyle and promoting welfare for all at all ages;
- ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all;
- ensuring accessibility and sustainable management of water resources and sanitation;
- ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy sources for all;
- promoting sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all;
- establishing sustainable infrastructure, promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and innovation;

- reducing inequality;
- ensuring openness, safety, resilience, and environmental sustainability of cities and other settlements;
- ensuring the transition to rational consumption and production models;
- protection and restoration of terrestrial ecosystems and promotion of their rational use, rational forest management, combating desertification, halting and turning back (reversing) the process of land degradation, and halting the loss of biodiversity [5].

Achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals will ensure comprehensive sustainable development of rural areas.

Currently, it is time to determine which model of agrarian structure will most efficiently ensure comprehensive sustainable development of rural areas and preservation of the rural settlement network.

The problems of development of land relations, sustainable development of rural areas, the problems of development of various forms of rural management, and the search for the optimal model of agrarian structure for Ukraine are the subject of study by both Ukrainian and foreign scientists, among which the most significant are: V.H. Andriichuk [6], O.H. Bulavka [7], Ya.M. Hadzalo [8, 9], P.I. Haidutskyi [10-12], A.O. Hutorov [13], A.S. Danylenko [14], V.M. Zhuk [8], R.Ya. Koriniets [15], M.F. Kropyvko [16], R. Levek [17], Yu.Ya. Luzan [9], Yu.O. Lupenko [18-20], Lupenko Yu.O., Khodakivska, O.V. [21, 22], M.Yo. Malik [15, 21,7], V.A. Mamchur [15], A. Mykhnenko [23], O.M. Mohylnyi [24, 25, 1], A.P. Sava [26], M.M. Fedorov [27], O.H. Shpykuliak [15] etc.

The purpose of the research – to analyse the models of agrarian structure that have been developed in Ukraine since independence. To determine the model of the agrarian structure that will provide the most efficient way to ensure comprehensive sustainable development of rural areas and preservation of the rural settlement network.

The subject of the study – assessment of the dependence of the possibility of achieving the

Goals of comprehensive sustainable development of rural areas and preservation of the rural settlement network on the model of the agrarian structure of Ukraine.

► Outline of the main material

Agroholdings

In the early 90s of the last century, collective and state farms left without financial and institutional support quickly went bankrupt. Their reforming was completed only by another change of name from collective farms to CAEs, from CAEs to peasants' unions, and from peasants' unions to economic companies. The galloping inflation "ate" working capital, fuel and lubricants could not be bought, domestic producers of agricultural machinery ceased their activities, the equipment of the enterprise was massively sold for scrap, intermediaries bought the grown products for nothing or they rotted, as there were no specific premises for storage, the number of cattle and pigs was massively slaughtered, racketeering and raiding, on the one hand, and the pressure of fiscal and regulatory authorities – on the other, hindered the development.

The situation was even worse for newly established farmers and private farms. The enthusiasm with which people in the late 80s – early 90s took the land for cultivation quickly faded, thousands of hectares of land remained uncultivated, and once livestock complexes with numerous livestock turned into ruins. Therewith, nothing new was established. The average annual decline in agricultural production, according to the State Statistics Service, in 1991-1994 reached 9.1%, and in 1995-1999 – 6.3%.

It was only in 1999 that the decrees of the President of Ukraine, "On Fixed Agricultural Tax" and "On Support of Agricultural Producers", introduced a simplified system of taxation and use of VAT funds. It has significantly reduced the tax burden on agricultural production.

In 1998, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine adopted the Law of Ukraine "On Land Lease", which defined the procedure for the transfer of land

shares by peasants to lease to economic entities. In December 1999, the Decree of the President of Ukraine, "On urgent measures to accelerate the reform of the agrarian sector of the economy", was signed, under which land shares were received by 6.8 million citizens, with an average size of 4.2 hectares [11, p. 243-248]. Therewith, there are people in Ukraine who, using the absence of state control, clarity, and order in all sectors of the economy, have accumulated significant capital on speculation in oil, gas, coal, on the sale of scrap metal from cut plants and factories, on barter schemes and offsetting schemes, etc. In the early 2000s, they began to invest the accumulated funds in agriculture – the first agricultural holdings were established there is no doubt that poor limited liability companies with the remains of old, still Soviet agricultural machinery and without working capital could not compete with the new rich players in the market.

Due to the lack of elementary monitoring and control of the state, a massive purchase of corporate rights of agricultural enterprises by agricultural holdings began. The leaders of the former collective farms reformed into limited liability companies fraudulently, using the permissiveness and uncontrolled state, on the one hand, and the low awareness of the peasants – on the other, concentrated in their ownership of the corporate rights of enterprises. The executive illegally sold the corporate rights of the enterprise together with the shares leased from the peasants at the rate of 100 to 500 USD per hectare. Shareholders did not receive anything from this deal – they were simply informed about the change of the "owner" and the necessity to renegotiate the lease agreement. Therewith, fraudsters were "working", who concluded lease agreements with peasants not to cultivate them but to collect a more or less decent bank of land and sell it profitably to the agricultural holding.

In 2000, 88% of land shares were leased by enterprises that previously employed peasants who had received shares and 12% by farms. After five years, 23% of the shares were cultivated by agricultural holdings that bought corporate property rights and lease rights to land shares from limited liability companies and farms.

In 2013, agricultural holdings already owned 44% of lease rights to land shares [11, p. 144-145]. The area of land in agricultural entities with a size of land use over 20,000 hectares increases over the years: from 1% in 2001 to 3% in 2005 and 18% in 2016. In 2017, agricultural holdings controlled 29% of agricultural land [17, p. 9].

Since 2010, state support is concentrated on agro holdings and large enterprises by three quarters [11, p. 148]. In particular, in 2017, the enterprises of the MHP holding received a record amount of subsidies – UAH 1.4 billion, or approximately 35% of the total amount of state support for the agricultural sector. The second largest recipient of subsidies was O. Bakhmatyuk's Ukrlandfarming – UAH 517 million [28]. In 2018, MHP enterprises received UAH 970 million in subsidies from the state budget [29].

In 2017-2019, out of UAH 7.25 billion planned in the state budget to support farmers, only ten agricultural companies received almost UAH 3.6 billion in subsidies [30]. According to the Latifundist.com website, as of January 1, 2021, the 100 largest Ukrainian agricultural holdings cultivate a total of 6,020.25 thousand hectares of land, which is 18.5% of all arable land in Ukraine [3].

What are the consequences of the rapid development of agricultural holdings in Ukraine? On the one hand, the volumes of production, sales, and exports of products have significantly increased, and the profits of holding owners, investments, payment of taxes, and rents have increased, on the other hand, serious distortions and disproportions between the agriculture and food industry have occurred. In 2010-2013, there was a decline in the food industry with an increase in agricultural production. It indicates that Ukraine has become an exporter of food raw materials. Meanwhile, retail trade in food products increased due to the import of finished products [11, p. 148].

Serious deformations in agriculture and crop production were established. The area of forage crops has sharply decreased, and their share is 5 times less than optimal. Sunflower crops in Ukraine reach 20% of the arable land at the permissible rate of 9-12%. In some regions, up to a

third of the crops are under a sunflower. Almost half of the large farms have no livestock. Therefore, organic fertilisers have not been applied to the fields of such farms for years. The consequence of such management is a decrease in soil fertility. Agro holdings use the highest level of genetic modification of production and chemicalisation [11, p. 149-151].

Uncontrolled by the state growth of agricultural holdings has resulted in a decrease in competition and monopolisation of agricultural production, changes in the structure of agricultural production, commodity structure of export-import, destabilisation of the domestic food market, and a decrease in the supply of local products with an increase in the area under export commodity crops. It resulted in the growth of price supply in the domestic food market. The total dominance of high-margin crops in agricultural holdings and the lack of production of products for the domestic market pose threats to the food security of the state. The monopolisation of entire sectors of the agricultural economy, such as oilseed, sugar, chicken, and egg production, has resulted in the complete dependence of domestic prices on world prices. Monopolists do not want to sell products on the domestic market cheaper than on the foreign market. In this situation, Ukrainians are constantly suffering from rising food prices.

There is the oppression of other economic forms of management by agricultural holdings, destruction of competition and markets, excessive concentration of land, and violation of the established proportions of management. Agro holdings destroy old collective farms, farms, and other objects that belonged to collective farms to prevent any other business from operating there. The intensive displacement of small farms continues (their number decreased from 42 to 26.5 thousand).

Management practice proves that large agricultural enterprises establish less added value and jobs per 1 hectare of land, although they have much better access to land and other resources. Thus, the newly established added value per 1 hectare of land in farms is 221 euros, while in agricultural holdings – 131 euros [17, p. 11]. The number

of people employed per 100 hectares of land on farms is 2.5 people, and in agricultural holdings – 2 people [17, p. 11]. When growing grain agricultural holdings use even less human labour. There are 10-12 jobs per 1000 hectares of land under cultivation, 3-4 of them are unskilled, which are replenished by residents. Agroholdings refuse to grow labour-intensive crops and animal husbandry.

The greater the concentration of land in one commodity producer, the less employment of the local rural population. Of the almost 3 million people employed in agriculture, large enterprises provide jobs for less than 20%, and the rest, 80% – farms, peasants, and households.

The elimination of labour-intensive industries by large enterprises results in the growth of unemployment in rural areas, which in turn causes the outflow of labour to cities and abroad, narrowing of the economic base of rural development and reduction of revenues to budgets of all levels. The budget deficit results in further closure of educational, medical, healthcare, and social protection institutions, deepening of inequality, and tension in ecological and sanitary-epidemiological situations. Lack of funds for the repair of roads destroyed by large agricultural machinery results in total impassability.

Large agricultural holdings are unwilling to invest in rural infrastructure. Farmers and households invest 1.5-2 times more income than large enterprises to improve the living conditions of rural communities.

All these factors not only deepen the demographic crisis but result in total depopulation of the territories. Over the past 20 years, 500 villages have disappeared in Ukraine. The same amount exists only on paper – people do not live there [31]. In such a situation, it can be stated that agricultural holdings do not require either villages or people who inhabit them.

Due to the lack of clearly defined legislation purposes, objectives, and tasks of the land reform, which would correspond to the European practice of agriculture, the Latin American corporate-latifundia model of agriculture was established in Ukraine. This model provides for the concentra-

tion of land in the possession of large landowners and results in the landlessness of peasants.

Farming

In Ukraine, there are 26.5 thousand farms and approximately 600 thousand peasant farms that correspond to the features of farms in the European Union. Small producers produce 50% of agricultural products, including about 70% of potatoes, vegetables, fruits, and berries, more than 60% of milk, almost 50% of eggs, and one-third of meat of all kinds. The domestic and local markets are largely based on this.

Farming provides jobs in rural areas, as defined by rural residents; only local farmers employ local people and provide ongoing support to rural settlements. Farmers live in the community, thus they are closely integrated with the community within which they work. They build and maintain socially important facilities at their own expense. The range of their assistance to the community is very wide – from clearing snow from roads, and ploughing gardens to helping in burying the dead.

Farming preserves local foods and contributes to maintaining a balanced diet and protecting the world's agro biodiversity, and sustainable use of natural resources. Through the processing of products, provision of services, and infrastructures, farming establishes real economic opportunities both for farmers in a particular region and for the entire society.

Increasing farmers' access to infrastructure, technology, communications, and innovations that are tailored to their specific features is essential for the future of food systems and will enable them to attract young people to the sector. Farming supports diversified food systems that help the environmentally sustainable integration of urban and rural areas.

Farming provides an opportunity to ensure food security, improve welfare, manage natural resources, protect the environment and achieve sustainable development in rural areas [32].

Farms should be considered a fundamental factor in preserving the social significance of the village and the object of socio-economic policy at the national level.

Experience of the civilized world

In the countries of the European Union, the USA, and Japan, farms and family farms are considered to be the foundation of the agrarian system.

Thorough scientific research conducted by scientists of the NSC "Institute of Agrarian Economics", in particular O.V. Khodakivska, Y.O. Lupenko, and I.V. Yurchenko, proves that: "The purpose of land policy in the EU is to preserve the European model of multifunctional agriculture, characterised primarily by small and medium-sized family-type farms and cooperative associations, guaranteeing property rights to property and land, equitable access to productive and natural resources in the relevant territory, considering the demands of society, including the interests of future generations" [19].

The countries of the European Union apply different regulatory mechanisms based on national interests, the necessity to guarantee food security, and the specific features of the economy and the organisation of sustainable agriculture. Therewith, priority is given to the preservation and development of family-type farms [19, p. 7].

For example, in Poland, Article 23 of the Constitution stipulates that the basis of the agrarian system of the Polish state is the family farm (family farms) [19, p. 25]. Considering this, the entire policy of this country in the field of agriculture is designed to develop family farming.

After the Second World War, France faced an aggravation of the food crisis. Considering this, food security has become a priority area of national policy. Therefore, France has developed a model of family farming as the foundation of the land system of the country, subordinated to the relevant agrarian and land policy, which is based on the activities of self-regulatory agricultural organisations and state regulation. The model that was used was based on the concept of the development of family-type farms, not large enterprises [19, p. 8].

In Romania, the main purpose of state regulation of the market turnover of agricultural land is the development of family farming [19, p. 24].

The German Land Privatization Agency (BVVG) takes measures to prevent the deterioration

of the farm structure by reducing the size of land use, which can reduce its efficiency, parcellation, or the development of inconvenient land masses for cultivation [19, p. 33-35].

The main producer of agricultural products in the United States - farms. Their number in 2017 exceeded 2 million. Of all farms, 90% are family-type farms. On average, in 2017, the farm area in the United States was 180 hectares [20, p. 83].

In Japan, 85% of all agricultural land is cultivated by farmers, which describes land relations as farmer-oriented. As of January 1, 2017, in Japan, 42.7% of farmers cultivated 1-5 hectares of land, and 17.1% – less than 1 hectare. The area of 5-10 hectares was cultivated by 13.2%, 10-20 hectares – 9.8% and 17.3% of land users performed economic activities on land plots with the area exceeding 20 hectares.

As a result of the study of agriculture in 10 countries, 7 of which are members of the European Union, it can be stated that none of the countries has free, unregulated, liberal agriculture. The regulation of the agricultural sector is designed to preserve and develop the family farming model, which has been and remains the benchmark for these countries [33, p. 104].

Farming in the civilized world is not so much a business as a guarantee:

- national food and environmental security;
- high social standards in rural areas;
- preservation of the settlement network in rural areas.

► Conclusions

From the analysis, it becomes obvious that the possibility of reaching the Goals of comprehensive

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sive sustainable development of rural areas and preservation of the rural settlement network significantly relies on the model of the agrarian structure of Ukraine.

The foundation of the agrarian system model, which will provide an opportunity to ensure the most efficient comprehensive sustainable development of rural areas and the preservation of the rural settlement network, is considered to be individual, farm, family farms, and small and medium-sized agricultural enterprises (farming).

Only this model of the agrarian system can ensure the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals approved by the UN. The development of farming will allow stopping the depopulation of rural areas and the destruction of the rural settlement network. However, it is impossible without the active intervention of the state. It is essential, following the example of Poland, to enshrine in the Constitution of Ukraine the provision according to which the foundation of the agrarian system of Ukraine is based on individual, farm, family farms, and small and medium-sized agricultural enterprises (farming). After that, the entire policy of Ukraine in the field of agriculture should be designed exclusively to help farms.

Therewith, it is necessary to unconditionally stop the practice of providing multi-million state subsidies and tax benefits to one enterprise or one group of related enterprises. In addition, the state is obliged to provide farmers with unimpeded access to the main means of production – agricultural land. Farmers are not capable of competing with agricultural holdings in a free, non-state-controlled agricultural land market.

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Вибір моделі аграрного устрою України як основи всебічного сталого сільського розвитку

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► **Анотація.** У сучасних складних фінансових, економічних, військових, соціальних, екологічних умовах, через нестійку політичну ситуацію, єдиним лідером, який «витагує» економіку України, є аграрний сектор. Мета статті – проаналізувати моделі аграрного устрою, що сформувалися в Україні за часів незалежності. Визначити модель аграрного устрою, яка надасть можливість найефективніше забезпечити всебічний сталий розвиток сільських територій та збереження сільської поселенської мережі. Для проведення дослідження використано наступні наукові методи: діалектичні для пізнання процесів і явищ; емпіричні (спостереження, порівняння, опис); порівняльного аналізу; абстрактно-логічний (теоретичні узагальнення та формулювання висновків). У процесі аналізу моделей аграрного устрою, які сформувалися в Україні за часів незалежності, з'ясовано, що можливість найефективніше забезпечити всебічний сталий розвиток сільських територій, збереження сільської поселенської мережі надасть модель аграрного устрою, основу якої становлять одноосібні, фермерські, сімейні фермерські господарства, малі та середні сільськогосподарські підприємства. Визначено вплив вибору моделі аграрного устрою на можливість забезпечення всебічного сталого розвитку сільських територій та збереження сільської поселенської мережі. Визначено модель аграрного устрою, яка надасть можливість найефективніше забезпечити всебічний сталий розвиток сільських територій та збереження сільської поселенської мережі. Запропоновано внесення змін у законодавство України, які сприятимуть розвитку моделі аграрного устрою України, основу якої становлять одноосібні, фермерські, сімейні фермерські господарства, малі та середні сільськогосподарські підприємства

► **Ключові слова:** сільська поселенська мережа, земельні відносини, земельна реформа, агрохолдинги, фермерське господарство, фермерство, сімейна ферма, управління земельними ресурсами, конкурентоспроможність, селозберігаюча модель
