RESEARCH ARTICLES

Civil society as a culturological category

La sociedad civil como categoría culturológica

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Summary

The study is devoted to the current problems of studying civil society by means of culturology. The processes of formation of civil society as a culturological category are highlighted; its place and role in social development, as well as various interpretations of this sociocultural phenomenon, are considered. A fairly unambiguous understanding of the prerequisites of citizenship in the context of political culture and the culture of social interaction is proposed. The main problem situations that hinder the development of the civic activity of the population and their overcoming using the possibilities of state cultural policy are highlighted. A significant place in the study is devoted to the potential of civil society as a sociocultural mechanism of the relationship between the state and society, the institutional reality of the "systemic world" and the culture of everyday life, formed mainly in the space of the "lifeworld".The morphology of civil society as a specific social formation and its cultural potential, which is associated mainly with the implementation of axiological components in social and civic activity in modern society, are analyzed. It also compares the understanding of the civil society in Western countries and the Russian experience of civil life. Further prospects for the study of civil society are outlined in the direction of searching for a synthesis of Russian and foreign experience in the formation and development of civil culture.

Key Words: civil society, culture, society, state, institutions, "lifeworld".

Resumen

El estudio está dedicado a la problemática actual del estudio de la sociedad civil mediante la culturología. Se destacan los procesos de formación de la sociedad civil como categoría culturológica; Se considera su lugar y papel en el desarrollo social, así como diversas interpretaciones de este fenómeno sociocultural. Se propone una comprensión bastante inequívoca de los requisitos previos de la ciudadanía en el contexto de la cultura política y la cultura de la interacción social. Se destacan las principales situaciones problemáticas que dificultan el desarrollo de la actividad cívica de la población y su superación utilizando las posibilidades de la política cultural estatal. Un lugar significativo en el estudio está dedicado al potencial de la sociedad civil como mecanismo sociocultural de la relación entre el Estado y la sociedad, la realidad institucional del "mundo sistémico" y la cultura de la vida cotidiana, conformada principalmente en el espacio del "Mundo de la vida".
Se analiza la morfología de la sociedad civil como formación social específica y su potencial cultural, que se asocia principalmente a la implementación de componentes axiológicos en la actividad social y cívica en la sociedad moderna. También compara la comprensión de la sociedad civil en los países occidentales y la experiencia rusa de la vida civil. Se describen nuevas perspectivas para el estudio de la sociedad civil en la dirección de buscar una síntesis de la experiencia rusa y extranjera en la formación y desarrollo de la cultura civil..

Palabras clave: sociedad civil, cultura, sociedad, estado, instituciones, "mundo de la vida".

Introducción

It makes sense to assess civil society research from a historical perspective. The separate stages of its study can be distinguished. The first stage, which is usually called "natural-legal", is associated with the names of Plato, Aristotle, F. Bacon, H. Grotius, T. Hobbes, J. Locke, B. Spinoza, J.J. Rousseau, C. Montesquieu, and Russian researchers I.T. Pososhkov, and S.E. Desnitsky.

The next stage emphasizes the importance of civil society as basically a state phenomenon; since the second half of the 18th century, it has been developed in the works by A. Humboldt, Guizot, A. Smith, I. Kant, A. Tokville, Hegel, Marx, further E. Durkheim, M. Weber,

Toynbee, Spengler, and Russian researchers, such as M. Bakunin, B. Chicherin, P. Novgorodtsev, S. Frank, I. Ilyin.

By the early 1980s, the idea of civil society as a phenomenon that has a dual nature (institutional, official and spontaneous, public-private) appeared.

By the end of the 20th century, one more aspect of civil society had been added to the studies – its consideration as a manifestation of the process of democratization of public and state life.

In the modern study of civil society, there are two most common approaches. The first approach connects the concept "civil society" with the assessment of the level of democratization of the whole society, as the displacement, wherever possible, of authoritarianism by democratic methods of managing social and cultural processes (Ekadumova, 2002). Accordingly, the more developed the so-estimated democracy, the more "civilized" society is.

The second approach in the study of civil society connects the latter with a special sphere of social life, which is not included in the official political and economic reality while possessing signs of publicity (Rostovskaya, Gnevasheva, Fomina, 2019; Nersesiants, 2004; Kamenets, 2005).

There are also attempts to combine both of these approaches. However, even in this case, there are discrepancies regarding the very nature of civil society. Therefore, in the study of civil society in an axiological context, there has been a tendency for its religious-metaphysical interpretation, according to which it is proposed to implement the well-known Christian commandment "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's" (Komarovskii, 1998), which in this case assumes that each person has their own inner world ("Soul"), which belongs only to them, and the attitude to power, as given from God and presupposing service to it, not to the detriment of their own understanding of their spiritual destiny.

The article consists of the Introduction, chapters "Methods", "Results", and "Discussion", and Conclusions.

Methods

Historically and culturally, the concept of "civil society" is a theoretical concept that has developed over various periods at the intersection of practically all social and humanitarian sciences. Its very idea originated in the ancient city-policies, albeit conditionally, with Plato's understanding of a perfect state, in which the solidarity and unity of all citizens are ensured by laws (Plato, 1994, p. 301). Later, Aristotle introduced the concept of "politike koinonia", which in his understanding is a political society or a political state (Aristotle, 1983, p. 376). The Roman thinker Cicero developed and clarified the concept, which in Latin became "societas civilis" (Cicero, 1994, p. 20). It is clear that for him this meant a community that arose based on legal solidarity and the unity of interests of all members of the civil community. The stage of the emergence of the Italian city-republics was reflected in the ideas of civil liberties. Another source of practical formation and strengthening of the concept of "civil society" was craft and trade guilds, that is, forms of civic professional associations in various European cities. At this time, the development of ideas about natural law, social contract, citizenship, and the socio-political basis of civil society took place. However, a clear separation of the concepts of civil society and the state did not appear until the end of the 19th century – the beginning of the 20th century. Only the practical construction of civil society in Europe led to the formation of various theoretical concepts, from ideas based on the principle of universal formal legal equality to the idea of self-regulation of society with minimal state intervention.

Today, in the epistemological aspect, relations between civil society and the state are most often analyzed. Ontologically, modern civil society is presented as a network of non-state

institutions, which, on the one hand, are independent of the state and, on the other, actively interact with it.

Within the framework of the axiological approach, an assessment of the consistency of civil society as a cultural phenomenon in the value-legal aspect, where the observance of the vital rights of every citizen comes to the fore, is highlighted generally (Aivazian, 2000; Vinogradov, Erlikh, 2000; Vorobev, 1998).

In the study of civil society, two concepts stand out as a certain ideal, already in the context of political culture. It is liberal-democratic, the essence of which is the presence of constant communications between the state and society, more and more improving both sides of the communication process and social-democratic, according to which certain democratic processes should be regulated by existing state and institutional structures (Golenkova, 1999).

In accordance with the value approach in the study of civil society, the latter is considered as a social ideal to which one should strive.

Those who see in civil society mainly some special social phenomenon, most often consider it as a socio-cultural reality opposed to the state and official political structures (Vitiuk, 1995). If the participation of civil society in this capacity in one or another state activity is allowed, then this is considered as an episodic phenomenon.

Results

Historically, the idea and concept of Western European and later Anglo-American civil society were interpreted very broadly, from its absolutized meaning (to denying the role of the state in connection with this) to assessing civil society as a historical stage of social evolution (K. Marx) or as a social being in need of ordering and control by the state (T. Hobbes). Functionally, civil society was perceived in different ways: as a form of counterbalance to the state (J.-J. Rousseau, J. Locke), as a kind of transitional part (G. Hegel), as part of the foundation on which the state is built (K. Marx) (Hegel, 1977). In this case, economic rather than political functions are considered. "These are those social relations that are capable of developing independently of the state, and the latter has no right to interfere in this process" (Morozova, 2008, p. 354). Today there are two different approaches. "The first is based on the opposition of civil society and the state and, therefore, the opposition of political and non-political relations. The second approach does not exclude political institutions and relations from the sphere of action of civil society and considers it as a set of all types of social relations, including political ones, within the framework of which the diverse needs and interests of individuals and their groups are satisfied, which are adequate to the achieved level of social development" (Morozova, 2008, p. 354).

As mentioned earlier, in the 20th century, the theoretical concepts of civil society began to be implemented in practice in various countries of Western and then Eastern Europe, becoming a significant sociocultural institution. The process of its construction was associated with political processes, the struggle of the state against dissidents, criticism of the state dictatorship, etc. The very term "civil society" was perceived with cynicism and hostility (Keane, 2010, p. 461). Later, practical results made it possible to assert that "civil society has become the subject of increased analytical and political attention around the world" (Salamon, Sokolowski, 2004, p. 84). This is confirmed by a recent study by K4D (Knowledge, evidence and learning for development) in the UK in 2018 (Cooper, 2018).

Consideration by some researchers of civil society as an autonomous social and cultural entity, weakly connected with the state, allows some scientists to conclude that this phenomenon is absent in Russian society, in which the social activity of citizens is mainly regulated and controlled by state structures. True, this statement is made with some reservations. In Russia, nevertheless, due to various NPOs, an independent civil life exists, albeit in an undeveloped state.

In relation to Russian society, we can talk about the legitimacy of the existence of civil society, if the latter is evaluated as an ideal goal to which all Russians should strive.

An extremely broad interpretation of the concept "civil society" has also developed. Studies (Svirin et al., 2019; 2021) attribute to civil society all structures that have a socially constructive orientation and the necessary level of legitimacy. However, with such an expansion of understanding of civil society, its specificity as a category of culture (political, social, civic culture) is lost. As V. Mezhuev writes, "The lack of clear criteria leads to a huge range of opinions: some believe that civil society has not yet developed in Russia, it is not known when it will develop and whether it will develop at all (there is also such an opinion). Others are convinced that it already exists and therefore can be an object of empirical research and legal regulation" (Mezzhuyev, 2008, p. 3). This is also consistent with the results of the sociological monitoring "How are you, Russia?" in 2019, which indicate the existence of two logics of action both in Russia and in the world: the conservative logic of war with nature and the new logic of the coexistence of man, society, and nature (Levashov et al., 2019, p. 97). Since civil society is still not a widespread object of research either abroad or in Russia, the necessary theoretical clarity has not appeared in understanding its concept, and there is no reliable understanding of the nature of civil society institutions (Mersiyanova, 2011, p. 43).

To avoid the extremes of excessive narrowing or excessive expansion of the concept "civil society" as a culturological category, it is proposed to consider it as an intermediary structure between the state and society, facilitating the interaction of the interests of state bodies and institutions and the needs of the population (Glazunova, 2002).

It is this interpretation of civil society that seems to be the most promising and can be considered as one of the instruments of state social and cultural policy (Kamenets, 2005; Hegel, 1977).

As a culturological category, civil society is of particular value as the presence in it of a stable value-normative field that includes certain socially significant ideas and established traditional values and beliefs that affect both the public and private life of citizens. In addition, civil society in this capacity can accumulate one or another experience of social interaction and civic activity of the population, which are the property of the general social and political culture of society.

Civil society is capable of carrying out a kind of cultural regulation of the current social interactions of members of society as civil subjects. This is one of the mechanisms for the formation of public opinion on the most pressing and significant social problems that affect the state of the entire society. This opinion is regulated by certain value-world outlook guidelines and attitudes, which are developed in the mainstream of civic activity, largely determining the content of the prevailing public morality (Guseinov, Apresian, 2002).

In accordance with this purpose, civil society itself becomes a cultural symbol around which certain social communities and groups are consolidated on various grounds: social, cultural, political, etc. This ability to unite communities and groups is vital for many members of society as an alternative to individualistic pragmatism, where there is no room for cooperation, partnership, and mutual assistance, which many individuals need. All these expectations and ideal aspirations in relation to civil society allow it to be studied precisely as a culturological category.

In the same context, we can state the presence of the ambivalent nature of civil society, which combines, at first glance, two seemingly incompatible attitudes: opposition to certain state or power structures and cooperation with them. In this contradictory interaction, the real development of society is ensured, provided that there is no dominance of one of these opposite principles. If civil society is dominated by "protest" and antagonism towards state structures as sustainable social behavior for any reason, then this is social destruction, which, even in the

presence of certain "correct" slogans, programs and strategies is inherently asocial education. If the activity of the civil society is reduced mainly to support under any conditions of state initiatives, organizations, authorities, etc., this is an imitation of citizenship, which excludes independent initiatives and freedom of choice of citizens who lose their own social and political subjectivity.

In accordance with the presence in civil society of two realities – ideal (normative-value) and real (sociotechnical), it is possible to identify trends in its development in the future. As soon as there is a mismatch between these realities, problems arise related to the very existence of civil society. The study of this issue is the prerogative of culturological studies.

The most productive direction is to identify the possibilities of the influence of the normative and value orientations of civil society on its real social functioning, but not vice versa, as often happens in reality and studies of this phenomenon. This leads to the loss of many civil initiatives of their main purpose – to offer the whole society cultural values and norms that contribute to the real development of society, and not to its stagnation and disintegration for the sake of the selfish interests of certain social, cultural and political associations and groups (Dostoevsky, 1989; 2000).

When civil society is viewed as a space for the generation and dissemination of the value-cultural content of social life, it can be studied as one of the main resources of the state cultural policy aimed at improving the spiritual and cultural content of the way of life of all members of society.

As studies show, then it becomes possible to single out and support civil society as the main subject of state cultural policy, which becomes a public-state, has a clear social address, is controlled by the public, and solves real social problems of society by means of culture.

In this case, a general civic culture of society is formed, contributing to the involvement in social and cultural processes of a wide variety of groups, social strata, and communities. According to researchers, "the culture of citizenship and its dominant feature – the civic ethos – should include such principles and conditions as the free and versatile development of a person within a given sociocultural form; priority and concrete historical realization of common tribal ("universal") values; achieving the unity of individual and public interests, the presence of agreement on fundamental worldview issues, where the determining factor is the attitude towards a person; the orientation towards the liberation of a person from the natural and social bonds that hold down their creativity; the requirement to protect specific rights and freedoms of the individual; recognition of the uniqueness of each person and the importance of all civilized forms of life, pluralism, etc" (Romanenko, 1995, p. 213).

Achieving such a culture of citizenship depends on several factors. Political factors include the development of various forms of self-government and self-regulation that develop the political activity of the population. Socioeconomic factors: finding a reasonable balance between government regulation and private-entrepreneurial initiative of the population. Sociocultural factors of the formation and development of civil society: the formation of the legal and spiritual and moral culture of society, significant for its social, spiritual, and environmental well-being.

Civil society as a culturological category can be studied as a product of the sociocultural initiatives of the population itself or, in a broader sense, as a cultural reference point for most members of society in the direction of their greater self-activity, self-regulation, and self-organization.

In the first version, social reality is attributed to civil society, which arises due to the interaction of public and private initiatives that create the necessary mechanisms and energy resources for social development. In the second version, civil society is assessed as a sociocultural

ideal standard that allows setting the appropriate vectors for the development and self-improvement of the general civil culture of the population.

Civil society as a culturological category can be studied based on institutional characteristics, and several options are also possible here.

The first is the orientation of civil society towards constructive partnership with the state, contributing to an increase in the political and social culture of the population (for example, political parties and movements that are ready to cooperate with government bodies). The second option is the formation of civil structures as sociocultural entities tending to independence, it is necessary to fill those niches in society in which the state is interested, but for one reason or another is not able to master them (for example, voluntary associations and societies). The third option is the demonstrated alternativeness of civil structures in relation to state bodies and institutions. These include protest-oriented civic associations that are in open opposition to the state. Another option is the cultural underground, which is usually referred to as associations of marginalized and social outsiders, who often, nevertheless, become a source of social and cultural innovations, social and cultural experiments.

The search for and use of positive sociocultural potential in each of them should be considered a civilized attitude of the state towards all these variants of civic initiatives.

When studying civil society as a culturological category, as shown by special studies, it is productive to consider the social context of the formation of the civil culture of the population (Berger, Lukman, 1995; Bourdieu, 1993). In this regard, it makes sense to consider civil society in the context of opposing social positions and social roles.

The ideal case is the lack of predominance of one of these poles of a given opposition. In the real existence of civil society, such a balance is often absent, which leads to negative consequences for the very possibility of forming a civilized civil society. If in public life the redundancy of social positions prevails in comparison with social roles, this means that evaluative components begin to dominate in all spheres of society's life with a shortage of various social, economic, and cultural practices. The result is the emergence of a totalitarian regime that suppresses any initiative, including with the help of public opinion, morality, ideology, etc.

If the scope is open for unlimited social-role behavior while neglecting the social position of the performers of these roles in accordance with their beliefs, principles, and moral guidelines, then the civic consciousness of a "mechanized" and "technocratized" civil society based on narrow pragmatism and utilitarianism with a lack of spiritual-moral values.

Civil society is called upon to eliminate these imbalances in the direction of eliminating the redundancy of social positioning through the socially significant activity of citizens with a shortage of social practice offering a variety of social-role interactions – when many know what is needed, but do not know how to achieve this or overcome the abundance of social-role opportunities in the absence of a variety of social positions (many know how to act, but do not really know what to do to show their own socially significant activity).

If the state does not pay special attention to the processes of possible dominance of one of these extremes, then there is a threat of a social explosion, which can lead to unpredictable consequences.

Discussion

The study of civil society as a culturological category is promising if the opposition "cultural value" – "sociocultural activity" is introduced. The formation of a full-fledged cultural space in society is possible if these two poles are interconnected and interact. If the value-normative

cultural reality dominates in society, then ideological dictate and total censorship arise in relation to any cultural initiative. With the prevalence of cultural activity devoid of any cultural and value foundations, there is a real threat of extinction of genuine culture as such, and its place is taken by anti-culture and post-culture, artifacts devoid of any cultural significance, which is especially characteristic of many postmodern cultural practices.

The potential of civil society, considered as a culturological category, in overcoming these extremes is quite large. If there is a deficit in the value field in the cultural space in a society, then civil structures functioning in a value-normative context can make up for this deficit (for example, through the cultural initiatives of religious organizations). If the diversity of cultural initiatives is absent in full, with the domination of the value-normative impact on cultural activity, then this imbalance can also to a certain extent be eliminated by the structures of civil society (for example, experimental public cultural projects).

One of the positive results of this involvement of civil structures in solving cultural problems is their influence on the content and forms of everyday culture, whose potential is not used sufficiently in state cultural policy.

The culturological study of civil society will be incomplete if one does not include in the research process the civic initiative of people, which is realized mainly in the sphere of free time. It should be considered in the socio-ecological aspect, the essence of which is the availability of opportunities for self-preservation, physical and social well-being of people by means of cultural activities and culturally oriented civic engagement. In this regard, civil society forms a kind of "culture of survival", which is the mastery of the skills and abilities of a person's creative self-realization in the field of culture and art as protection and counteraction to the suppression of the independence of the individual as a creative and proactive subject.

Thus, in the study of civil society as a culturological category, the study of its potential in the development of the axiological space of the social and cultural life of society is in demand. If the so-called "systemic world" produces socially significant social roles; "lifeworld" – the values and norms of individual groups and communities, then civil society produces all new cultural codes of civic behavior, as well as its corresponding symbols, signs, and cultural meanings. Thus, civil structures constantly renew the semiosis of culture, carry out the value normalization of the products of cultural activity created and contribute to their dissemination.

The researchers propose an integrated model of any social structure, through the prism of which it is possible to study civil society as a culturological category. This model includes an ideal substructure in which 1) ideal representations (imagination, beliefs); 2) normative substructure (value-normative plan); 3) organizational substructure (positions, statuses); 4) random substructure, including personal interests, available resources, etc. are integrated. It is noted that the first two substructures are determined by the more general structure of culture, and the last two are associated with the societal structure (Osipov, 2003).

Accordingly, as a culturological category, civil society is related to the first two substructures as a kind of normativity and ideal reference point, and civil society as a sociological category can be studied by correlating it with the last two substructures.

These two approaches complement each other, combining ideal orientations and technological aspects of social activity in accordance with these orientations. This research strategy is consistent with considering culture in the context of various spheres of life. These are "work culture", "ecological culture", "communication culture", etc.

For the study of civil society, it is relevant to appeal to the following components of culture:

– communicative component involves the development of "languages of culture", its semiosis, which is being formed in the space of civil society;

– semantic component consists in defining the semantic, meaningful manifestations and programs of the activities of various civil structures;

– normative component includes standards, cultural norms, patterns, traditions, and rituals;

– information component presupposes the formation of a holistic picture of the world in accordance with accepted mythologemes, aesthetic ideas, and the experience of everyday culture.

The following characteristics are distinguished as a phenomenology of the culture of civil society. This is the assimilation of the cultural norms of civil society through the appropriate mechanisms of enlightenment and education; the social nature of this culture in the form of various social interactions that form the cultural space of civil society and its ideal-normative level; the ability of civil society to meet basic psychological needs in the process of population participation in certain civic initiatives and movements.

Civil society as a culturological category can be studied morphologically – depending on the composition of its participants, which may include, depending on the tasks solved by civil structures, informal associations, and communities; business communities; nonprofit associations that enter into partnerships with the state or oppose representatives of state bodies, if there is a violation of the current legislation, generally recognized moral and legal norms; politicized associations, including various political parties; religious and ethnic-confessional organizations; associations of cultural and art workers; representatives of public funds and charitable organizations, etc. A common feature of these organizations and associations as subjects of civil society as a culturological category is their participation in the formation of an ideal value-normative field that ensures the preservation and improvement of the culture of social interactions necessary for the preservation and development of the entire society.

Conclusion

Summing up the results of the study of civil society as a culturological category, it seems possible to single out several cultural norms that this phenomenon must comply with. It is the availability of opportunities to demonstrate and realize the rights of the individual, which are necessary to satisfy their own social and cultural needs of public importance. It is also an opportunity to be involved in solving problems and problems that are important for the activities of state bodies and the functioning of social institutions. Equally important is the presence in this civil society of the mechanisms and conditions necessary for the self-preservation and well-being of individuals and groups, the deficit of which is experienced in society.

It is in these aspects that the formation and development of a culture of self-organization of all members of society, who are ready, if necessary, to defend and implement personal and public interests, is especially relevant.

If the foreign experience of the existence of civil society (primarily Western countries) boils down mainly to the possibility of defending someone's personal or corporate interests before the state authorities, then for Russia civil initiatives and movements are more common, which are mainly implemented as partnerships with state structures.

Based on the cultural and historical experience of Russia, it can be concluded that the category "civil society" traditionally included additional content in comparison with the experience of civil life in many other countries. This is the understanding of citizenship as serving one's country and society. The best option is a reasonable balance of rights and obligations in

various civil structures and initiatives. Modern Russian society is moving in this direction. However, for this movement to be sufficiently intense and effective, it is important to understand that, ultimately, the upholding of someone's rights must still meet the interests of society, and not only the needs of individuals, groups, and communities.

The era of bourgeois enlighteners proposed to world civilization the problem of human rights as an urgent one, creating the preconditions for the subsequent formation of an appropriate civil society that protects these rights. And this understanding of the main purpose of civil society remained predominant in Western political and civil life for many years. It can be argued that the role of civil society in the formation of social solidarity and public service has been insufficiently studied.

In addition, in different countries and societies, civil society has different cultural content, embodying the corresponding national and cultural traditions, mentality, ethnic psychology, type of religiosity, etc.

With all the diversity of civil life in certain societies and countries, some common features of civil society as a culturological category can be identified:

– focus of civil society on the formation of the relationship between society and the state;

– creation of socio-ecological niches for the existence of individual social strata, communities, and groups necessary for their survival and self-preservation;

– providing conditions for civil self-realization, social and cultural activity for those members of society who have not found this opportunity in the existing institutional and legal field;

– maintaining the necessary level of altruism and public service in society to avoid the collapse of modern society to the level of "social jungle" due to the dominance of "ego-orientations".

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