

**FaR 2021**

**International Forum “Freedom and responsibility in pivotal times”**

## **CIVIL SOCIETY IN CIVILIZATIONAL DIMENSIONS**

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### **Abstract**

The article presents a look at the problems of civil society development in the XXI century. The relevance of the topic is determined by the growing civic activity, the need to understand the role of civil society in an increasingly complex political sphere, the debatable boundaries of the concept of "civil society". The multiple crises shaking the modern world have highlighted the contradictions generated by the processes of globalization, on the one hand, and the problems of the civilizational complex of national and cultural identity, on the other. The research methodology is based on a civilizational approach to understanding the concept of civil society, which is based on the values of Western European culture, as well as a dialectical approach to understanding the value contradictions of different cultures as a factor of new vectors of the development of the phenomenon of civil society. The originality of the work consists in substantiating the value-based civilizational conflict as a risk factor in the development of the principles of civil society in a culturally complex world. It is argued that the principles of ideological and value-based colonialism have lost any prospects: the clash of cultures and civilizations leads to devastating consequences for the whole world. The search for an alternative is possible as overcoming the value complex of classical liberalism, including in its framework not only civic qualities, but also cultural patterns and norms that accumulate social experience and traditions of non-European cultures.

2357-1330 © 2022 Published by European Publisher.

*Keywords:* Civilization, civil society, ideological universals, civilizational identity, value complex



## 1. Introduction

The concepts of civil society are included in the problematic field of philosophical research throughout the XX century, representing an intellectual space filled with intense discussions. The socio-historical experience of the development of European society, the institutional features, the basic characteristics of civil culture and political consciousness form a complex of factors under the influence of which the ideas of civil society develop. The liberal values underlying its ideology created a normative, symbolic framework that allowed its structures to integrate individual and public interests. A critical analysis of the classical theories and modern concepts of civil society is given in the voluminous work of Arato and Cohen (2018), where the authors stressed the lack of development of the theoretical framework of the concept of "civil society" at the present stage and its status remains uncertain. In modern research, a critical view of the evolution of civil society ideas remains very much in demand (Dlugach, 2020; Kristalinsky & Baranov, 2014). A review of the research literature showed that the authors mostly analyze the institutional aspects of civil society, the level of formation of structures and the degree of influence on the government (Tasnim, 2021; Zyryanov & Lukin, 2016). The problems of the Western civilizational project, which, in the opinion of researchers, faces many challenges (Grachev, 2019), as well as the question of the extent to which Western civilization can offer solutions to problems that affect the entire modern world, are also in the same problem field with the development of civil society (Taylor & Kim, 2021). At the same time, the analysis of the influence of civilizational factors on the development of civil society ideas in a globalizing world leaves room for further reflection.

## 2. Problem Statement

The modern approach to the problems of civil society development in the XXI century emphasizes their development in the conditions of the global world. The problem of this study is caused by the development of the contradiction between the globalization processes, which are of a comprehensive transnational nature and develop according to the neoliberal scenario, and the polycivilizational nature of the modern world, which preserves traditional national cultures and lifestyles. This dictates the need to study the dialectics of the relationship between the concept and the phenomenon of civil society in this context.

The theoretical framework for the analysis of the problem is based on the following principles: Braudel's theory of civilization as a long-term perspective, as a result of the historical development of the community of people. This is transmitted from generation to generation (Braudel, 2008); Huntington's (2016) thesis is that the modern world is developing in a polycivilizational paradigm; Habermas (2012) understands the problems of the development of civil society in a united Europe.

The research methodology is based on a dialectical approach in understanding the value contradictions of various civilizational modalities that act as an incentive for alternative scenarios for its further development.

### **3. Research Questions**

The subject of the proposed research is the problems of the development of civil society in the modern globalizing world. The research question can be formulated in terms and concepts proposed by S. Huntington in his work "The Clash of Civilizations": why are certain normative socio-political concepts of Western civilization difficult to integrate into the civilizational fabric of other cultures and civilizations? It seems that one of these concepts is the concept of civil society. Does it follow from this that the dynamics of the process of formation of the phenomenon of civil society also reproduces this barrier in its development and does not demonstrate a progressive movement in other, non-Western European civilizational dimensions?

The increasing pace of social development of man-made Western civilization has led to the absorption of traditional societies, to their displacement to the cultural periphery, the transformation of the way of life and lifestyle. In the second half of the twentieth century, the process of the fall of colonial regimes, the democratization of life in countries that represented Eastern civilizations, the idea of civil society was introduced as a worldview dominant in international relations.

The current conflict in the sphere of interstate cooperation shows, among other things, that the Western civilizational matrix has not abolished the features of the categorical thinking of each culture, which in philosophical terms is designated by the deep programs of social life. In traditional cultures, stable behavioural stereotypes, norms that accumulate the experience of previous generations, and canonized thinking styles remain unchanged. Innovative activity, which acts as a dominant value in a technogenic civilization, is in contradiction with the need to follow established patterns and is allowed only within the framework of traditions that have been tested for centuries (Stepin, 2011). Thus, the liberal ideas and values of civil society, based on the ideas of the European Enlightenment, are not shared by all cultures at deep levels.

### **4. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study is to understand the contradictions in the development of civil society in the modern world as a result of the confrontation of various civilizational complexes and cultural codes.

### **5. Research Methods**

The proposed methodology of the analysis is based on the civilizational approach, which assumes a look at the concept of civil society and its current phenomenal state through the prism of the worldview universals of various civilizations. At the same time, an axiological approach is used, in which value is considered as a certain normative category that determines the general program of the life of society, its socio-cultural foundations. The dialectical approach allows us to consider the phenomenon of civil society in the contradictions inherent in it at the present stage, which are a possible basis for its further development.

## 6. Findings

The emergence of Western man-made civilization lays its special genetic code, worldview dominants that express the understanding of man and the world, the forms of his life activity and communication. In the early Modern period, the ideas of European civil society were born, which form the basis of the political and philosophical code of Western civilization, first of all, the recognition of individual freedoms and rights as the highest civil values. The concept of civil society, which has slowly matured in the bosom of Western European culture and Western civilization, is based on the value principles of liberalism, which is based on the assertion of the imperative of individualism, accompanied by the idea of a limited state or state as a "necessary evil", in the words of Tom Payne.

The "values" category closely related to the problem of civilizational development. The process of the birth and formation of civil society is associated with the establishment of liberal values that underlie its ideology, which are designed to create a normative, symbolic framework that gives the basis for its structures to integrate individual and public interests. However, the world development in the XXI century demonstrates a different vector. In modern research concerning value systems in modern society, statements about the growing fragmentation of fundamental social values, the lack of a certain scale of values are updated (Halman & Gelissen, 2019). As a result of globalization processes, the problem of identity blurring is highlighted, and the tendency to form models of multiple identity is revealed (Astafieva, 2016).

A great deal of public attention today is focused on the phenomenon of «diversity», which has the widest manifestations in the linguistic and ethno-confessional aspects and requires substantive study in the political and economic spheres (Beugelsdijk et al., 2019). In the same complex, heterogeneous field of values, the development of civic culture continues in Russia and other countries of the post-Soviet space. The process of adapting society to new values has shown that for many years the democratic socio-political reality was based rather on the declaration of liberal values, while experience has shown that they did not have an adequate political representation. At the same time, there were clearly other values that were taken out of the brackets of the value complex of the liberal-democratic culture. Russian philosopher Akhiezer (1993) recalled that liberalism, despite the weakness of its immediate soil base, from a certain point, namely in the XIX century, turned out to be a constant participant in Russian history, with the specificity that Russian society absorbed only individual liberal elements, and not the philosophical system of liberalism as a whole. The influence of the value factor is also due to the contradictory process of assimilation of liberal ideas not only in post-Soviet Russia, but also in other countries of the near abroad, which were once part of the Soviet system.

At the end of the XX century, the end of the bipolar world and the destruction of the Soviet Union created a new contradiction in the assessment of civilizational models, expressed in the famous manifesto of Francis Fukuyama, who argued that the obvious triumph of the Western idea and the lack of viable alternatives to the concept of liberalism. Fukuyama called the period of post-war history the end of history, the end of the ideological revolution of humanity and the establishment of Western liberal democracy as the final form of government (Fukuyama, 2007). Does this not create prerequisites for the value disorientation of a huge part of society that inhabits the states that emerged on the post-Soviet territory? Taking into account both the propaganda orientation of this text and the author's recognition of his haste in

assessing the situation of the "end of history", we nevertheless recognize that this text created prerequisites for value contradictions due to the discrepancy of cultural and historical codes that arose as a result of consistently developing traditions in different countries.

A good illustration of a different approach here is an example from the "Clash of Civilizations" by Huntington (2016), who talks about the value manifesto that defined the "common values" of Singaporeans. It manifests the priorities of the nation before the ethnic group, society before the individual; consensus before the dispute; declares the values of the family as the main unit of society; society's support for the individual; racial and religious harmony. It is obvious that in this set of values there is a new composition of values adapted to the interests of a particular society (a particular civilization), which refuses the dogmatic perception of the concepts proposed by other civilizations, assimilates some values and rejects others. Huntington predicts that copying other national structures can make Singapore a torn country and deprive it of an advantage and a firm position in the international arena. The metaphor of the "torn country", which expresses the process of redefining identity, is proposed by Huntington's (2016) term for a long and painful process that engulfs all spheres of life and does not lead to success.

We see that in the modern world, the value systems associated with the acquisition of ethnic identity and religious identity, what Huntington (2016) calls the basic values of various civilizations, which are characterized by the dominance of a different, often opposite set of values, are gradually drawn into the maelstrom of value contradictions. There is a multidimensional system of persistent contradictions, and in these circumstances, the value and social significance of the concept of civil society for representatives of different states and civilizations is not at all obvious. This trend was already revealed at the turn of the XX–XXI centuries. For example, studies that have examined civil society organizations in Africa have noted that Western donors and international NGOs do not pay much attention to traditional organizations in the African social formation; in this regard, an attempt was made to "redefine the concept of civil society" to include all civil society activities in Africa, recognize both so-called civil and non-civil organizations in civil society (Nkwachukwu, 2003). Considering the changing role of civil society organizations in global and national governance, Cheema and Popovski (2010) note their status among the gaps: large donors, government agencies, and international institutions often have a greater voice as stakeholders, as they control financial flows and influence the legal climate.

Whaites (2000) in the analysis notes that many ideas for the development of civil society organizations are largely dictated by the priorities of donors. Referring to one of the leading researchers of civil society, Whaites agrees that the growing popularity of the concept of "civil society" accelerates the accumulation of ambiguities, new misconceptions and obvious contradictions. Tasnim (2021) shows the vulnerability of civil society in Bangladesh. The research question whether civil society organizations can contribute to democratic consolidation does not receive an affirmative answer, the reason for which the researcher sees in the loss of autonomy and dependence on political parties and political blocs. The study of civil society in South Asian countries was motivated by the desire to understand how the idea that was born in the XVII–XVIII centuries, in the era of absolutism, was perceived in other historical conditions, to what extent it can be applied to modern political processes (Taylor & Kim, 2021).

Contradictions are also revealed in the Western world itself. According to the outstanding German philosopher Habermas (2012), who analyzes the conflicting nature of views on the future of Europe, their

explosive power lies not only in the depth of contradictions, the reasons for which lie in different interests and the size of the potential of national states, but also in the different ways of their development, in the historical memories of peoples (Habermas, 2012). One can recall the statement of one of the founders of modern liberalism, Dewey (1994), according to which democratic values should not be introduced into a person from the outside, but should originate in the person himself, that the intonation of democracy is the responsibility of the individual, the individual initiative. A very accurate thesis, in our opinion, was proposed by Akhiezer (1993), who argued that the basis for analyzing the real potential of liberal reforms is the need to deepen knowledge about the entire thickness of the socio-cultural processes of the country, about the limits of our capabilities in a certain limited specific period of time.

In addition, it is impossible not to mention the practice of solving external and internal problems in the modern global world, based on methods developed in supranational political institutions without taking into account the national characteristics of states, which leads to new contradictions and does not contribute to the promotion of liberal ideas and civic values (Semenov & Kuznetsova, 2021).

## 7. Conclusion

Understanding the problems of the formation and development of civil society consists in overcoming the conflict of values and value collisions. At the moment, it is naive, and sometimes dangerous, to demand that other cultures and civilizations adopt a unified value matrix, a single cultural and civilizational code. Here it is appropriate to recall the experience of preparing the European Constitution, which was never adopted by a number of EU countries and was replaced by other documents (the Lisbon Treaty). If countries that base their present and future on a single value-civilizational platform cannot reach common agreements among themselves, then should they make excessive demands on countries whose basic value systems have obvious differences?

While we agree that the days of colonialism are a thing of the past, we should probably also agree that the principles of ideological and value-based colonialism have also lost any perspective. It is the conflict of values that largely determines the disagreement in modern political processes.

At the same time, the search for agreement on the ways of the model of "sponsorship" of developing societies proposed by the Western world dissolves the very idea of social independence, the opposition of civil society, the focus on discussion, on the search for intellectual truth as its basis.

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