

Conditions of integral community development: culture or civilization?

Problem statement. Problems of community development are a research field of social sciences. It includes different aspects of analysis, such as socio-economic, political, interpersonal communications, etc. However, if there is a need to study fundamental conditions of reproduction and functioning of society, a researcher is primarily interested in the analysis of the basic elements and conditions of social development. Human being, community, culture, structure is the basic spectrum of analysis which forms the structural baselines of any social organization: from a group to the whole society. Therefore, the research of these elements enables to trace prospects, problems and features of social development. To put it another way, while revealing conditions of social organization functioning, it is necessary to focus on the aspects that identify its nature.

Talking about the problem of society integrity (harmony, social order), which had already appeared within the framework of ancient philosophy, it is necessary not only to define a "set" of problem solutions, but also to specify the role of each system element. There are no doubts that society is a projection of individual systems' relations (attitudes, orientations of individuals, groups, communities), and a person is an active participant and transformer of this social reality. The role of culture in the processes of individual and social development is clear, too. Being a basic structure-forming element of relations, it is considered to be the main condition to maintenance necessary balance, order of both man and society. We can say that culture is natural environment for their harmonious development. This environment saves and transfers from generation to generation the basic condition of their integrity, system of objective knowledge about human life in society.

Thus, it is necessary to analyze the elements of the "culture - man - society" system and to determine their roles and influence in order to answer the question how to reach social integrity. Urgency of this question is determined by

perspective of social relations. However, at this stage, the researcher may face a serious methodological problem when culture and civilization phenomena are equated. As a result, it is difficult to distinguish the role of each element and their influence while solving the problem. Thus, *problem situation* of the research is consisted in methodological ambiguity of the criteria that are used to interpret culture and civilization phenomena. As a result, their roles in the problem of individual and social integrity have not been defined yet.

Therefore, it is necessary to understand this situation and to reveal the consequences caused by this authentication of concepts. In other words, the *purpose of this research* is to analyze integral social development, that is, to determine the roles of culture and civilization in the integrity problem and their influence on it. In this connection, in the article it is suggested to solve the following tasks:

- Firstly, to analyze nature, character and potential of the culture and civilization phenomena, to reveal their roles in forming social relations;
- Secondly, to define prospects of civilization development.

The term "civilization" (from Latin "*civilis*") was introduced in the theory of progress (XVIII century). Its appearance and popularization were caused by cardinal social transformations of the western culture of that period, by transformations that led to the change of the whole world. The traditional value model of the social order was substituted for a new one, where there was a basic orientation to materialization of individual and social relations and there was no place for traditional spiritual values. Religious revolution became the pre-condition of such changes due to unification of the sacral options of traditional society: "faith", "human being", "culture", "community", and «spiritual connections. The method of reality understanding changed too: from the intuitional perception of the world to the logic analysis.

In practice these fundamental changes show up while forming new social relations: capitalistic, nationalistic, and civilizational. Their basis includes a mass orientation to calculation, consumption, estimation, personal benefit. The global

product of pragmatic epoch is constituted by a project of the society, which is understood as a rational machine oriented on "mass": production, consumption, prosperity. In other words, it is designing a global conveyer to satisfy human desires. Society, nature, human being, culture are reincarnated into the faceless product of the system, that is aimed at glorifying "independence" of personality, on "omnipotence of human mind".

The stake at human mind is supposed to create unlimited possibilities to "release" a personality from traditional cultural roles and norms. Now it is the human being, but not God, who determines his or her present and future, community, family. There is no need to communicate with the past. The man, his or her all-powerful mind is capable of managing the future. Thus, people are reincarnated in the consumers of blessings given by the life; they are not the participants in former social order anymore.

In such euphoria regarding brilliant human future, human accept only those things that praise them. Therefore, just in the period of "mind" and justice triumph civilization is considered to be the ideal model of society and individual development. It is civilization as triumph of mind, but not culture as work on the spiritual perfection, indexes human material welfare and comfort and becomes a visit-card of the newly forming epoch. The concept of civilization, which was introduced into science by the enlighteners, claimed to form a new system of knowledge, a new outlook of the world, to construct a new social order.

Although, clear difference between civilization and culture was not distinguished in this period, the progress is considered to be an invariable feature of the former ¹. According to the supporters of this idea (D. Diderot, P.-H.

¹ The idea of historical progress was born as a denial of successive law social advance. At first, progressive ideas spread in the sphere of scientific cognition (F. Bacon, R. Descartes), and then in the sphere of social, economic and political relations (A. Turgot, M. Condorcet). However, vacuum between material wealth of society and the level of its spiritual culture become obvious already in the epoch of capitalism crisis. It is reflected in the anti-progressive theories of the XX century (an idea of cyclic rotation by [O. Spengler](#), A. Toynbee, a "social change" by W. Ogburn).

Holbach, J. Herder, Ch. Montesquieu, C.Saint-Simon, Au. Comte a etc.), progress is the final stage of the world history development, where mind will become a basic value and condition of social order and justice, and the level of material production will reach the apogee. A city, state, written right, written language, science, material development will become human' prerogatives and instruments to form a new order. Progress can now solve all problems and contradictions of the old social order.

"Popularity" and effects of the concept "civilization" result in washing out the value of culture on the whole. Civilization supporters convinced that the prospects of society development depend exactly on the level of its progress. They consider that culture is just an attribute of national features, but civilization is the final stage of global historical process. This distortion of concepts determines scientific position for a long period and it influences the methodology of society research. Supporters of civilization didn't manage to see the difference between these two phenomena, erasing borders between culture and civilization.

In practice this situation conduced to popularization of utilitarianism, scientific and technical progress values (city way of life, technological effectiveness, market relations, and individualism), and that force the traditional symbols of faith, such as spirituality, community, unity, out. The most powerful forces of the civilization (market, national state, new technologies, science, and urbanization) were aimed to form a new rational vision of the reality. Human beings made their choice in favor of civilization blessings and illusions. Thus, the theory of progress oriented to intensive development of society deprived culture of its initial value: culture is a system of objective knowledge aimed at the spiritual development of humans. It is depreciated and transformed into one of civilization aspects.

But in this intellectual euphoria most researchers failed to notice an obvious threat. "Human' liberation" and their orientation to the material aspects of development turned them into hostages of the system. Rationalization of the world became the tragedy for humanity. Building a new reality, people have lost their

spiritual essence. They forgot about their main gift (spirituality), while bogging in material temptations, turning into an inexhaustible source of desires, for which civilization worked out a new system of knowledge about a new order - illusion of progress.

However, crisis of progressive illusions started together with intellectual euphoria concerning the progress. Rich ethnographic material of "the trips epoch" discovers variety of cultural traditions outside Europe. Therefore, at the end of the XVIII century and beginning of the XIX century it had already been obvious that the aims of culture and civilization development are fundamentally opposite. It is this fact that makes researchers to return to the problem. One of the first attempts to reveal the difference was made by I. Kant, the German philosopher. In his book "Conjectural Beginning of Human History" the researcher notes that we have attained the high stage of culture due to art and science. We are too civilized in terms of courtesy and politeness... but we haven't had enough yet to consider ourselves morally accomplished. The idea of morality refers to the culture, however, if this idea is reduced only to the likeness of moral in love to honor and in external propriety, only civilization constitutes" [1, p. 384].

The similar attempts to connect culture with the conditions of comprehensive and integral development of the human being were also taken by G.Hegel, K.Marx, V. Dilthey, G. Simmel, J. Ortega y Gasset, H. Bergson. Culture is interpreted as an original and local reality, possessing originality, special mentality, and "heartfelt mood" of life. In contrast, being a result of mind orientation and rationalistic values civilization threatens social life.

At the beginning of the XX c. the identity between the concepts "civilization" and "culture" was refuted completely. Civilization is opposed to the culture as material - to spiritual. The characteristic signs of civilization development were acknowledged as follows: city, monumental architecture, intensive economy, written language and state². Civilization threats became the

² In the middle of the XX century English researcher G.Childe suggested to determine civilization on the basis of the following features: cities, monumental public structures, taxes or

real danger for human development. In his work «The Decline of the West» [O. Spengler](#), a German cultural analyst, understands these signs as preconditions of cultural death. Determining civilization as a phase of cultural sunset (cultural and historical type), he foresees death of the European cultural tradition. [O. Spengler](#) opposed culture wealth to progressive ideology. The culture involves all manifestations of people life, their perceptible and physical world, their spiritual potential. Civilization is an absolute antipode of culture. It is a stage when the soul of culture dies because civilization is strictly utilitarian, and focused only on achieving practical, useful results. There is nothing sainted in civilization. City becomes its cult center, where a man is turning into a faceless mass, where industry and machinery are developing enormously fast, but art and literature are degrading. Civilization is callous techno that penetrates to all spheres of human life. It is soullessness where [O. Spengler](#) sees a danger of civilization. There is nothing bad in equipping life with modern amenities, but when this process swallows up a man fully, there is no buoyancy left for the culture [2].

The philosopher fears concerning future of the western culture are understandable: when culture is substituted by civilization, the social order collapses! A lot of other researchers also declare about the threat of this transformation. Russian philosopher N. Berdyaev also analyzes this problem by contrasting the concepts of culture and civilization. The researcher emphasizes that culture originates from a cult; it is bound with the cult of ancestors. On the contrary, civilization doesn't pay attention to the past, it isn't related with spirituality; it is mechanical. Culture gives humanity a necessary set of symbols, senses, values, that determine the purpose and meaningfulness of the life. Civilization loses symbolism and is limited by material needs. A human becomes too rational and practical and stops believing so sincerely in better life somewhere

contribution, intensive economy, trade, artisans-specialists, written language and science, developed art, privileged classes and state. Later K.Klakhholm offered to shorten a list to three signs: monumental architecture, cities and written language.

there. The man wants to get everything here and now and substitutes the purpose of life for facilities, instruments of life" [3].

Russian sociologist P. Sorokin contrasts the phenomena of culture and civilization, too. He asserts that death of culture forms material civilization [4]. Thus, at the end of the XIX century a scientific tradition, which contrasts spiritual and material spheres, has been formed. The culture involves the sphere of spiritual values (H. Rickert, W. Windelband, W. Dilthey), and civilization - technical sphere (A. Weber, E. Spranger, M. Scheler).

This tendency became obvious when works by German cultural analyst A. Weber were published [5]. Culture and civilization, according to A. Weber, participate in forming historical creation. They are understood as a sphere of higher aims and means of their satisfaction. Basis of this understanding can be found in the area of consciousness. Culture is based on "metaphysical sense", and civilization - on "technical mind"; it is a process of life rationalization. Thus, in civilization A. Weber includes results of material production, economy, law, state, etc. The culture determines the higher sense of human existence; it doesn't depend on material needs [5].

Modern scientific tradition sets the materialistic understanding of civilization, as a sphere of technological development of society. Moreover, technogenic catastrophes, gene modification and nuclear weapon proved failure and utopia of the progressive ideas. Therefore, prospects of modern society development, correlation of its material level with the level of spiritual crisis attracted modern analysts' attention. The fact that humanity is losing its spiritual nature becomes more obvious. Focusing mostly on material welfares of civilization, humanity is breaking their community spiritual bonds more and more and losing, as a result, the succession of generations. Only these orientations enable a man to open his/her Human potential, to keep social connections. Since, it is the only prospect of Human society development.

It is getting more obvious that the model of rationalized society has failed. Humanity is becoming more and more certain that the end of sociality is real, since

under the current circumstances both a personality and the whole society face a real threat of their further development. By glorifying the high level of scientific, technical, educational, political and economic development, modern humanity experiences global cultural degradation in bigger and bigger extend. Behind the luster of civilization blessings, comfort and technologies of intensive development people start noticing the shocking real progress repercussions.

By refusing the system of objective knowledge about life (the culture) and focusing on materialization of social life, humanity forced themselves into the deadlock of Human development. Modern people are becoming more and more addicted to the unbearable gobbling consumption and as a result they are paying for their own greediness a high price – their freedom and humaneness. They strive to prosperity, development, order, vote for them, and criticize when they are absent. But at the same time they distort the only condition of the harmonious development – culture, and exchange it for material welfares. They forget about their spiritual nature, forgot that Human life needs satisfying spiritual needs, that it demands good relations, trust, love, acceptance, unity, development of [uniqueness](#). Without all these they won't be able to live, to create, and to develop.

But it is very difficult to hear the needs of the soul in the world which is reigned by material prosperity and comfort, prestige and status, where everything is aimed at suppression of these needs. And without understanding this fact, human takes brilliance of civilization for veritable happiness, rescue from spiritual vacuum tearing from inside. People let consumption desires push them around and forget the real needs.

To avoid this degradation is possible only by instilling the culture consumption. This phenomenon is based on harmonious perception of environmental values. Moreover, this task can be solved only by the culture which is responsible for forming creative ways of human development, attaching us to maintaining the integrity of the surrounding reality. By transforming into pseudo twin of culture and trying to replace it, civilization uses all its forces to enslave a man in his/her out-of-control desires to consume. Incarnating in economic and

political patterns, civilization parasitizes on the body of culture. It can't exist without culture, because it loses the subject - a human being, creative character who can reproduce the terms of civilization, depend on it. And for this purpose it gives new effects of blessings. And the targeted man's mind buys into them and stops distinguishing true from false.

Thus, the tasks of civilization and culture are straight opposite. The culture is oriented to human's spiritual development. It develops his/her originality and saves conditions for the harmonious life. Thus, culture supports individual and social order. Regarding civilization everything is vice versa. Being pseudo culture it carries destroying knowledge "about possibilities to prevent people from wasting irreparable time of their individual life on mediocre natural survival". This knowledge pursues the only purpose that is to push culture and spirituality out of man's life, to standardize conditions and character of his/her life.

That is why civilization produces facilities that are constantly breaking connections between a man and reality and as a result it leads him/her away to the illusion of virtual life. By promising comfort and hedonistic pleasures, civilization actually hides the last point of man's progressive development – the perspective to turn into faceless Golem among the same alienated masses. At the same time, instead of the real picture of its development (slow death of Human relations society and loss of culture) civilization produces the illusion about individualization as liberation of individuality, about society as rational project, about capitalism as only possible system of prosperous economic relations, about mass consumption as condition of human happiness.

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