

SOCIAL ACTIVITY AS A VALUE OF CIVIL SOCIETY

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The aim of the article: is to show the relationship between social activity and the values of civil society. An additional assumption is to indicate the essence of the issue in an interdisciplinary approach, to draw attention to its multidimensionality, connection and social significance, leaving room for own research.

Design/methodology/approach: The research method used in this article is the analysis of scientific papers, supplemented by the author's observations and experience. The research procedure included a review of Polish and foreign literature, analysis of legal acts, method of analysis and synthesis, case study and deductive reasoning. The article presents the results of research on the awareness, activity and values of civil society.

Conclusions: A high level of influence of citizens' awareness in the process of building a civic society was demonstrated. Examples of activities and values of the changes taking place in civilization, spontaneity and voluntariness, understood as the principle of subsidiarity setting limits for citizens and authorities. Active citizens is an active society, a community of citizens that consciously and responsibly manages its interests. The conducted analysis shows that a conscious citizen is a conscious choice and a conscious way of their implementation. Intellectually healthy people are the sum of a healthy society, the sick are the sum of destruction and narcissism. Citizenship is inscribed in the life of every human being, although few people are aware of it.

Research limitations/implications: Limitations of the obtained results may result from a limited text sample.

Originality/value: The presented research and conclusions provide practical tips not only to people of science, but above all to average citizens, mainly those who are not aware that civilization change does not arise overnight, it is always preceded by a number of smaller changes hidden under the surface many areas. Thanks to the activity of the society, it is easier to develop a consensus on matters of key importance to society. It is easier to understand another person, learn tolerance, and recognize the differences of interests as natural and desirable.

Keywords: Social activity as a value of civil society. Article category: research paper.

1. Admission

The way we think, speak and act, what language we use, translates into human attitudes and their social dimension. Not all people are interested in social activity, many think: let others do it for us. This is not the case in civil society. The consciousness of an individual translates into group consciousness, and many groups into the level of general consciousness. Citizenship is one of the most important features of social activity in relations between the state – citizen, citizen – citizen, Church – citizen. The level of social awareness shapes the level of social rules and values. The level of values recognized in the society stimulates the development of technology and is not indifferent to ethics. Man as a conscious citizen is part of sustainable development, which is faced by life with more and more difficult tasks. A. Kuzior speaks broadly about the value of civil society and axiological development, pointing to responsibility as a key feature of sustainable development (Kuzior, 2014, pp. 351-363). Civilization change does not arise overnight, it is always preceded by a series of minor changes hidden under the surface of many areas, recognized or not. A healthy society is the sum of healthy people, the sick constitute the sum of destruction and narcissism, acting according to the formula: ideology becomes doctrine, and doctrine becomes dictatorship. Citizenship is assigned to a person, but not everyone is aware of it and not everyone wants to actively participate in it. It is difficult for many people to understand that civil society is a society for everyone. We do a lot separately, let's do even more together.

2. Society – a historical outline

Society is not only a territory, language, culture, it is primarily a system of interconnected elements. These are processes taking place according to the adopted hierarchy of values and principles, relations between individuals, social categories, institutions and broadly understood organizations. Herbert Spencer compared society to an animal organism, saying: "social reality is derived from the natural – there is only a difference in the degree of complexity between them. Social institutions are what makes the naturally non-social man adapt to the natural state of cooperation with society (Kasprzyk, Spencer, 1967, p. 167). What is good is what serves to adapt and develop, what is not – it should not be good, so we should support the strong rather than the weak (Turowski, 1994, pp. 58 et seq). Karl Marx considered a society three successive social formations: "the formation of the primitive community, the slave formation and the feudal formation". The history of all existing societies is the history of class struggles. Humanity only sets itself tasks that it can solve. Individual behavior should be conditioned by the social structure. The entirety of relations creates the structure of society, the real foundation

on which appears a legal and political superstructure to which certain forms of social awareness correspond. The process of social, political and intellectual life and the consciousness of people determine their existence, and their social existence determines their consciousness (Adamus-Matuszyńska, 2017, p. 24). According to Plato's concept, society (the State) is a multi-dimensional organism, in which every sphere of social life, however trivial it may seem, is functional in relation to the whole organism, therefore the individualization of society poses a great threat to the social order (Plato, *State*, 1958, p. 25). Aristotle thought differently – the society "State" is by nature a multitude, if it develops towards ever greater unity, then from this unity a family will emerge, and from the family an individual (Aristotle, 1956, p. 1189). In the heyday of Stoicism, people began to seek not so much a good life in the state, but a good life despite the state (Szacki, 2005, pp. 35 et seq).

Philosophical schools no longer perceive the individual solely in the context of social life, focusing on the creation of a universalist anthropology, they understood man as a human being, a member of the human race, a being endowed with an innate social urge (Berlin, 1998, pp. 5 et seq).

The change in human philosophy influenced the emergence of the concept of a universal community in which all people would participate (Ranowicz, *Hellenism*, 1961, pp. 403-404). Marek Tulliusz Cicero ascribes to man "an innate drive to collective life", he writes about society as a great group, connected by the element of common existence, by recognizing the same principles, law and morality (Cycero, 1960, pp. 133-135).

Society perceived Seneca in a different way, for whom the bond of humanity is not law or politics, but moral and religious ties, a drive to act naturally devoid of institutional corruption (Seneca, 1961, p. 417).

The emergence of the Christian idea significantly revised a number of existing philosophical and political thoughts. The pursuit of understanding group life as a path to eternal salvation according to the Christian doctrine created a new perspective, the ideal of a community of conscious choice and participation in a specific goal. Christianity has triumphed wherever the philosophies of the ancient world, which advocated a completely different ideal of community, did not meet the requirements of the times. Since then, the fact of belonging to a community was not dependent on birth, social position, wealth, power and ethnic origin, and it became a matter of conscious choice of purpose and way of life.

The community of values, as it came to be defined, did not focus on temporal things: "none of its members called his own what he had, but they had everything in common (Borowski, 1980, 1 Cor 12). The issues of the early Christian community were widely discussed by St. Augustine in the work *On God's State. Against the pagans of books XXII (De civitate Dei contra paganos libri XXII)*. Augustine characterized this community as people of one faith, where exceptional laws, incomprehensible to the "ordinary" man, were in force. with the social order, he was able to reconcile both to good effect. The foundation of the Augustinian social

idea was the conviction that, in fact, every society is a community of values (Augustine, 1977, pp. 161-163).

The internal order of the "unspiritual" community is completely different. The "earthly" community is inherently imperfect, since each member is primarily concerned with his own interests. When the goods are not sufficient for all, the community is divided into parts, one oppresses the other.

The divine community is - according to St. Augustine – a true peace in which no one will be hurt, and all are united by one idea, one goal. These two very different value systems correspond to two types of social order, one based on conflict, the other based on consensus.

The fact that a person belongs to one of these models of social community determines what he believes and how he acts, not the conditions under which he comes to live. Each community must have a meaning and purpose, the right school and the right teacher to be a diligent student.

In the opinion of Robert A. Nisbet, the essence of the social order consists in the fact that each person gives and receives what his functional place in society requires, according to the scheme of community and belonging. Within the community of communities, regardless of status, each individual was obliged to serve it (Guriewicz, 1976, pp. 72 et seq). Each link in the chain was considered an important part of the whole. The ideal of human relations in the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas becomes the model of the earthly world, it begins to be applied in society to all kinds of collectives (Maneli, 1967, pp. 178). Theology is mixed with politics, and the ideal is mixed with reality. The claim that man is a social creature has a broader meaning than in the ancient world. Despite the strong emphasis on the religious character of social thought, the individual – not self-sufficient by nature – was placed in the family, local community, state and co-option, according to the vertical and horizontal relations of domination and dependence. The Lutheran concept of life radically belonging to Christianity expressed the model of casteism – the superiority of Christians over other people, equal to the position of other Christians (Szcucki, 1972, pp. 39 et seq).

3. Evolution or revolution

Civilization change does not arise overnight, it is always preceded by a series of smaller changes hidden under the surface of many areas, including economy, law and culture. At some point, the world realized that the position of an individual depends not only on himself, but on how the individual manages to fit into society. People who can live in a community with a limited degree of dictates and traditions are internally controllable, they feel safer and more courageous. The unlimited are undecided and more submissive.

All times require an appropriate diagnosis. Machiavelli, making a diagnosis of his times, claimed: "Between what is happening in the world and what should happen, there is a great difference that whoever neglects reality in the name of the ideal of reality would cause his own loss than improve his situation; a man who would be governed only by the principles of good, would have to have a gulf in the environment of people governed by other principles" (Machiavelli, 1969, p. 66).

John H. Butterfield believed that discovering the rules of effective action is possible because circumstances are repeatable, human characteristics are constant, and human behavior is predictable – provided we have the appropriate knowledge. Fate does not rule the world so far that free will has no influence on what is going on around it (Butterfield, 1963, p. 41).

The development of society, including civil society, was significantly influenced by the emergence of the concept of Jean Bodin, who, in addition to the relations between the ruler and his subjects, took up the problem of social relations in general. Bodin believed that one cannot speak of a state if there is no supreme power endowed with the attribute of empire and dominion, if the community is not naturally organized in communities (Suchodolski, 1968, pp. 320-321).

The idea of a human society, such as Thomas Hobbes – Baruch Spinoza, John Locke, assuming the durability of human nature, helped to organize public life that guarantees the individual freedom and security, focused on a scientific representation of the future. John Locke wrote: "the overriding purpose for which people unite in community and submit themselves to government is to preserve their property" (Locke, 1992, pp. 250 et seq).

Thomas Hobbes, apart from competition and struggle, pointed to the sources of social order – the natural social state as a state without ties between individuals, not only redundant, but also harmful (Hobbes, 1954, pp. 5-7). According to Giambattista Vico, people act in a group because of a sense of belonging, a sense of shame, a search for authority and truth, because of anti-rationalism and criticism. Man is a social and historical being at the same time – there is no human nature as a given substance once and for all. The process of shaping human nature went through several phases, each of which was a consequence of the previous phase. Human development depends mainly on his relations with other people, which translates into the social order, thanks to which permanent interpersonal relations are possible.

According to Immanuel Kant, human immaturity is a state of underage, lack of courage to use reason without foreign guidance (Vico, 1966, pp. 150-151). "Have the courage to use your reason" – this appeal from Kant influenced human consciousness, developed in individuals a sense of the importance of their own mission (Kroński, 1966, pp. 165-167).

Voltaire saw man as a being who always lived in society, with an instinct that made him love himself and others, as well as the work of his hands (Dierżawin, 1962, pp. 300 et seq). Jean Jacques Rousseau, author of the treatise *On The Origin and the Foundations of Inequalities Among People*, writes that "man of nature" is free, good, independent, equal to all other people. According to Rousseau, a society does not arise in order to satisfy already existing needs,

but itself produces new and new needs that can only be satisfied in it. The savage lives in himself, the socialized man is also outside himself, he knows how to live in the opinion of others, and derives a sense of his existence from their evaluation. As a result of the social contract, a social organism (Leviathan) is created, in which the parts are inseparable from the whole, the will of the individuals transforms into the social will (Rousseau, 1956, pp. 141, 229; Peretiatkowicz, 1966, pp. 166-167).

A controversial figure was Niklas Luhmann, who argued that society is not only made up of people, because man cannot be placed in any sub-system of society. Social systems are communication systems: society consists of closed interpersonal communication systems that do not maintain external contacts. They are also autopoietic systems that produce their own elements, define their boundaries and structure, are self-producing, and each of their operations depends on previous operations and the information they have collected. Each system has its own code which cannot be translated into the code of other systems. Communication takes place within the systems, not between them (Szacki, 2002, pp. 935-942).

Whatever you say, the activity of social contacts, as opposed to the feeling of uselessness or the feeling of isolation, not only influences the development of civil society, but is able to maintain this state, even develop it. Social institutions are what makes the naturally non-social man adapt to the natural state of cooperation with society.

It is thanks to the creation of these institutions that an individual can integrate, take part and decide about his and other positions for today and tomorrow (Kaczmarczyk, 2007, pp. 144 et seq). There is always greater potential in man than he realizes, the point is that he should be aware of his possibilities, also aware of his freedom and value, because the dualism of being and values is inevitable.

Freedom leads to values – and vice versa: values lead to freedom. According to Immanuel Kant, this dualism can never be abolished or resolved (Kant, 2002, p. 49). When people wonder why they should do this and not otherwise, the answer seems short: because it should. The words of Saint-Simon seem to be the key to success: any social reorganization must begin with a reform of consciousness (de Saint-Simon, 1968, p. 357). Conscious man is conscious choices and a conscious way of their implementation. You can be a personality and not be an authority, you can be an authority, but not a personality, you can be both, and not be one or the other.

4. Democracy – social activity

The participation of citizens in political, social, religious and cultural life (...) has been the subject of scientific research for many years. The interest in the social activity of citizens results from many reasons – for scientific, statistical, propaganda, historical and ideological reasons.

There is currently no doubt among the community that one of the conditions necessary for the proper functioning of democracy is to obtain an appropriate level of civic participation. (...) every human being is to be obedient and humble during his life. By being faithful to the principles, he is to create and be a moral and spiritual activist for a common cause (de Chardin, 1984, p. 87).

As the indicators of citizen engagement show, it depends on many factors: place of residence, education, degree of awareness and responsibility for the fate of a given country and Europe (Boguszewski, 2016, p. 4). As of April 1, 2012, EU citizens have at their disposal a new tool to participate in the EU policy-making process. Citizens' initiative, introduced by the Treaty of Lisbon. The civic budget, also known as participatory budget, is a democratic process whereby residents co-decide on public spending in the city for the next financial year is another example of a civic initiative.

Originally, democracy was to be the power of the people and for the people. Every citizen was to participate in the life of the state and decide on its affairs. In turn, civic activity is how members of society express their opinions, take part in elections, run the state, and thus their own lives. Activity and self-organization is a key issue for the quality and durability of a democratic state. According to Cicero, the state, *res populi*, is a moral community of people bound by rights and obligations.

The factor constituting the state community is participation in social life and the legal community. According to Cicero, law takes the first place – each type of system is only a type of state management in which law is a sovereign element, used in the spirit of the values of democratic principles (Brożek, 1969, p. 128).

The idea of Cicero was to combine the advantages of monarchy, elite rule and democratic principles – without their drawbacks – into a balanced whole that would resist corruption and prevent tyranny. For democratic thinking, adequate knowledge is necessary, for knowledge – social facts and the specificity of social phenomena. In order to understand the variability of the relationship between an individual and society, to treat social facts as a certain thing, it is necessary to use a certain mental attitude in the historical, philosophical, cultural and legal aspect (Durkheim, 1965, pp. 118-119). What binds people together is not that they are similar to each other, but that they are different and because of their differentiation they need each other. The essence of freedom and rationality requires that rights and obligations be properly understood in society. A man has knowledge mostly thanks to his reason, more extensive when he develops the adopted principles through an appropriate organization (Hegel, 1889, p. 75).

In a democracy for a higher idea, for a good cause, it is even possible to sacrifice personal interests. To do business, the community must be active, it must engage in public life, participate in elections, referenda and plebiscites. Being aware of how much depends on ourselves, through passive or active participation in public life we shape our life, our freedom mainly through the environment.

Freedom is a difficult thing – says Leszek Kołakowski – “man needs a point of reference, democracy is no longer a rebellion against oppression and is not a measure of moral attitudes. Contemporary reality is defined by money, which has ceased to be a tool of exchange, but has become a means in itself, which leads to the degradation of man and the degradation of things that can be bought with money. Never before has political life been so dependent on opinion and interpretation, which leads us to doubt the stability of capitalism and democracy. Perhaps, in the long run, modern democracy will not be able to deal with such phenomena as terrorism, religious fundamentalism, the LGBT issue, the problem of abortion and euthanasia” (Kołakowski, 2014, p. 284).

A well-educated and well-informed society that knows that most important state decisions depend on it strengthens the democratic system and makes it better and better for the needs of the individual and the general public. It depends on us who rules us, what our country looks like and how we live. Democracy has nothing to rest on unless society itself believes it can do something by participating.

By not taking part in the life of our country, we rely on absolute subordination to those whose views and actions do not necessarily align with our values and our interests. Solidarity and consistent action not only strengthen the sense of belonging to a civic community, but also stimulate social awareness and combine the interests of the individual with the general interest. Until we realize that the interests of the individual depend overwhelmingly on the well-being of the public, little will change in our lives. As the classic used to say – the uniqueness of a human being is mainly based on the freedom of choice, which is synonymous with freedom, inventiveness and progress. Power is at the forefront of values. To "have power" and to use power is to get used up and use others (Tyburski et al., 2002, p. 388). The essence of power is the power of consumption, which is constantly changing into the consumption of power itself (Tischner, 2015, p. 167).

5. Social factor

Social activity as a relatively new phenomenon in the democratic system is gaining more and more attention. The activity of individuals and the whole society is primarily influenced by motivations, culture and tradition. The increase in social activity increases, people are more and more aware of problems and issues, they feel the need to participate in social life. A good example of a civic attitude are various types of campaigns, programs and rallies, referenda, local initiatives of national and international scope, characterized by openness, creativity and integrity (Bocheński, 1997, p. 17).

The participation of the social factor in the administration of justice is one of the essential areas of civic participation for a common cause. The principle of openness, contained in Art. 45 of the Polish Constitution, is one of the basic pillars of fair conduct functioning in democratic countries.

Openness of proceedings is an institution thanks to which the society can not only learn about the work of the judiciary. Due to the principle of openness, the public has a real influence on shaping the image of judges, prosecutors, attorneys-at-law and legal advisers.

The principle of the audience may be an effective instrument for building public confidence in the judiciary, improving the quality of work of judiciary representatives and increasing the awareness and legal culture of citizens (Skorupka, 2012, p. 29).

There is more and more bold talk about the necessity to involve citizens in the law-making processes, in the decision-making processes regarding the conducted public policies. An example is the introduction of the institution of public hearing in the Sejm into the Polish democratic system in 2006 (Juchacz, 2015). The situation is different in connection with the departure in the Polish Constitution of 1997 from the provision contained in Art. 49 of the Constitution of 1952, which stipulated that “cases in courts are heard and adjudicated with the participation of people's lay judges, except in cases specified in the act”. Due to this change, the participation of lay judges in adjudication panels ceased to be the rule and became the exception (Constitutional Tribunal, 2005, p. 9).

Good examples of social activity can also be: a trade union, a sports club, a charity organization, eg Wielka Orkiestra Świątecznej Pomocy, Christmas Parcel. It can also be a political party, a social movement, a political movement or a church or religious organization such as Caritas.

A manifestation of social activity are also social clubs, youth clubs and discos, pensioners associated in a senior club or day care center, humanitarian organizations and a number of non-governmental organizations. Civic activity groups also include deputies and senators, the Catholic Church and Churches of other denominations, committees and extra-parliamentary groups supporting the Sejm and the Senate. The condition of democracy and the activity of individuals depend on all these groups.

The scale of the collective civic activity of Poles can be seen in social organizations with various profiles and areas of activity. The results of the Eurobarometer survey show that only one in four Poles is a member of organizations and associations with specifically defined economic, social, environmental, cultural, sports and other goals, trade unions, professional associations, chambers of commerce, industry and agriculture, and employers' organizations. This places Poland in the 21st place among the 27 countries of the European Union (in general, the percentage of associates in the EU is 43%) (Flash Eurobarometer, 2013, p. 373).

Decision-makers must act morally and be accountable to all citizens. The aspect of democratic control is characteristic of different types of democracy and different governance strategies (Zwoliński, 2010, p. 112). For the proper functioning of the state, complex and

increasingly complicated decisions must be taken. For this you need specialized experts, politicians, professionals and managers. The model of indirect democracy works better today. Through elections, society decides which people are to represent them - to manage the fate of the state (Welzer, 1983). One should not forget that there is always the risk of over-professionalization and politicization of politics, which contributes to the exclusion of citizens from real responsibility and the reign of demagoguery on the political scene (Grabowska, 1998, pp. 39-79).

In a given social organism, the key issue is the relationship between the subject of political action and the authority that runs the state. It is important to distinguish between the political and social system which gives the characteristics of a democratic order.

The quality of order is determined by the functionality of the consensus at the local, procedural and political levels. In political practice, many procedural aspects differentiate the forms of democracy in favor of citizens or vice versa (Sartori, 1994, pp. 449-469). "The democratic system is based on the values adopted by the society. It exists thanks to the principles of freedom, equality, proportionality, solidarity and justice (...).

People have to learn tolerance, recognize as natural and desirable the differences in interests and achievements of individuals" (Hook, 1983, p. 31). It is not about the abstract freedom and liberty of the individual, but about the freedom and liberty of many individuals. As much individual freedom as possible, as much state intervention as necessary.

6. Summary

An important element, if not the most important one, in shaping the civil society is the awareness of the individual and his activity in achieving common goals. In a democratic state ruled by law, an initiative supported by the awareness of the rightness of action seems to be the key to success. Everyone should realize that for a good cause sometimes personal interests have to be sacrificed. The fact that the community is constituted by participation and involvement in social life.

People are not bound by the fact that they are similar, but by the fact that they differ. A well-educated, well-informed society that is aware of how much depends on it strengthens democracy and the state functions better for the needs of the individual and the general public. The uniqueness of a human being is mainly based on the freedom of choice, which is synonymous with activity, inventiveness and progress. The higher the level of the individual's awareness, the greater the involvement in social life. People must learn tolerance, recognize as natural and desirable differences of views and tolerance of individual individuals, follow the pattern for the benefit of the public, where my freedom ends, another person's freedom begins. The state should not take away natural powers or hinder the tasks of individual people.

When assessing civic activity, the so-called Bockenford's paradox: "The secularized state is founded on something that it cannot guarantee by itself" (Bockenforde, 1994, p. 120). One should bear in mind that the social system is a primary phenomenon in relation to the political system. As a result of evolution, mankind began to organize itself politically, not the other way around. This cannot be undone, it must be respected.

If societies manage to reach a consensus on all matters and do not lack determination in action, one should be calm about civic activity according to the statement: nothing about us without us. There is enormous potential to increase citizen involvement in social activities, a particular challenge for those who are not indifferent to democracy.

Nobody gives democracy to anyone forever, so you have to systematically talk about it, write about it and be involved in its survival and development, because the community simply pays off. In a democracy on a high level and in high culture, you need to know something, be able to speak and make it a substantive voice. Today, there is no talk of democracy at all, there is talk of democracy separated from the rule of law as artificial intelligence, cyberspace, genetic experimentation, mature patriotism, nationalism and internationalism.

Politics is attempted at every level of human life, almost everyone is involved in it with varying degrees of success, because it does not require any special preparation. The media often claims that if you are not interested in politics, politics will be interested in you. One can get the impression that high culture and a high level of democracy are becoming alien to people, art simply ceases to be needed for us, or democracy and civility too? May this trend not become a permanent fixture in democracy and culture. We will have such democracy, citizenship and culture as we want and deserve, and what we want and deserve – it is not difficult for everyone to imagine.

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