NATIONAL AND CIVILIZATIONAL CHOICE IN THE SPACE OF THE SOCIOCULTURAL REALITY

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ABSTRACT

Goal: The article aims to determine the features of the national-civilizational choice as an act of activity of a social subject, aimed at actualization one of the possibilities inherent in social reality. **Methods:** Due to the complexity of the subject under study, a civilizational approach was chosen. **Conclusion**: Consideration of the national-civilizational choice in the context of sociocultural reality makes it possible to determine the factors influencing the choice, the obstacles that arise in its way, as well as the very content of the choice, which ultimately determines the dynamics and trajectory of social changes in society.

Keywords: National choice; Civilizational choice; Sociocultural reality; National identity.

ESCOLHA NACIONAL E CIVILIZACIONAL NO ESPAÇO DA REALIDADE SOCIOCULTURAL

RESUMO

Objetivo: O artigo visa determinar as características da escolha nacional-civilizacional como ato de atividade de um sujeito social, voltado para a atualização de uma das possibilidades inerentes à realidade social. **Métodos:** Devido à complexidade do tema em estudo, optou-se por uma abordagem civilizacional. **Conclusão:** A consideração da escolha nacional-civilizacional no contexto da realidade sociocultural permite determinar os fatores que influenciam a escolha, os obstáculos que se colocam no seu caminho, bem como o próprio conteúdo da escolha, que acaba por determinar a dinâmica e trajetória de mudanças sociais na sociedade.

Palavras-chave: Escolha nacional; Escolha civilizacional; Realidade sociocultural; Identidade nacional.

1   INTRODUCTION

Today, the modern world system is in a state of transition, there is a global transformation of the world order. In the last 20-30 years, there has been a tendency towards strengthening of economic and political role in the world of the countries of the East (primarily China and India). This, in turn, represents a challenge to the unconditional hegemony of the developed countries of the West, to the monopolar world that has developed after the collapse of the USSR. All these create prerequisites for the formation of a multipolar world. Academics talk about it, politicians admit it too. Thus, in particular, Tony Blair (2022) believes that

> as in 1945 or 1980, today the West is experiencing a turning point. In 1945 the West had to create new institutions of international governance, defense and European cooperation... In 1980, after many years of a nuclear arms race, we saw the collapse of the Soviet Union and the triumph of liberal democratic values. Today's turning point is qualitatively different from the situation in 1945 or 1980. ***For the first time in modern history, the East can be on an equal footing with the West*** (emphasis added).

2   METHODS

The presence of various approaches, sometimes diametrically opposed, to the definition of civilization and national-civilization choice, as well as inter-civilization conflicts demonstrates the complexity of these phenomena; it is not surprising that they acquired the status of interdisciplinary and are the objects of an entire complex of social research. In the study of these phenomena, the civilizational approach has great heuristic possibilities. This approach has a long tradition in the social sciences. Today, in the context of intensification of inter-civilizational contradictions, this approach is of particular relevance.

3   RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The process, called the inter-civilizational shift, is now becoming the subject of reflection not only within the framework of political and economic research, in philosophical and cultural thought, interest in civilizational issues is also reviving, the relevance of studying the patterns and comparative analysis of the development of Western and Eastern civilizations is increasing, and, as It seems to us that the problem of national-civilizational choice acquires special significance.

Despite the fact that the concept of "civilization" has long been widely used both in

social studies as well as in everyday life, there is still no clear definition of it. First of all, the question arises, what is meant by the concept of "civilization": one iwhole civilization or many civilizations? No less complex and important is "the question of the possibility of the existence and interaction of world civilization and its specific types" (Mchedlova, 1999, pp. 156-157).

In social thought, an approach called the civilizational or the theory of local civilizations, has long been formed: it asserts the existence of many civilizations in history. The Russian historian of the middle of the 19th century N.Ya. Danilevsky in his work "Russia and Europe" formulated the concept of cultural and historical types, which are characterized by a common language, political independence, and a system of values. Danilevsky believed that world history is a process of coexistence and replacing secluded civilizations, and that a global human civilization is impossible. These ideas were developed by such representatives of this approach as O. Spengler and J. Toynbee. Thus, Toynbee (1991) states:

> the thesis of the "unity of civilization" is a false concept, very popular among modern Western historians, whose thinking is strongly influenced by the social environment" ; one of the reasons that gave rise to this misconception, the historian saw in the fact that "modern Western civilization has spread its economic system throughout the world. (p. 81).

Huntington (2003) also believes that the concept of a universal civilization "is a characteristic product of Western civilization", helping to "justify Western cultural dominance over other societies and the need for these societies to copy Western traditions and institutions" (p. 90). According to the Russian philosopher V.M. Mezhuev (2016),

> the main thing in the concept of universal civilization is… not the idea of the geopolitical superiority of the West over the rest of the world, but the idea of the superiority of a special type of scientific and legal rationality formed in the West over all other forms of social association of people. (p. 48).

Another debatable aspect of the problem is: is world civilization a reality or an abstraction, a process or an idea? "What is meant by "civilization by itself" – the general concept of civilization or the concept of a general (universal) civilization?" Is it possible to recognize the existence of a universal civilization "in the very reality (albeit in the distant future)?" (Mchedlova, 1999, p. 157; Mezhuev, 2016, p. 48).

In our opinion, the concept of "civilization" can be used to denote a certain stage in the development of human society, which has certain characteristics, in this sense we

say "modern civilization". But at the same time, one cannot ignore the fact that this civilization, being a certain integrity, is a coexistence, a dialectical interaction of various civilizations. So, speaking of human, world civilization, it is necessary to consider it as a combination of the one and the many, as unity in diversity.

In the era of globalization, the creation of a global culture based primarily on the Western system of values has been and is considered as the most important condition for the success of this process. In reality, everything turns out to be much more complicated. Today the contradictory nature of this process is more and more clearly manifested, and the idea of creating a unified society with a one whole value system, economy, political institutions on a global scale does not seem feasible today. We are witnessing the value crisis of modern civilization, which is expressed, among other things, in the aggravation of the contradictions between the value systems of the West and the East, the intensification of the confrontation between Western and Eastern, Christian and Islamic civilizations,.

The specifics of the development of the non-European world, the desire of nations and civilizations to preserve their identity, their cultural foundations, and the growing resistance to the trend towards universalization are becoming more and more clearly realized. In this situation, the problem of national-civilizational choice, facing the countries and peoples of both the West and the East, acquires great theoretical and practical significance.

The national-civilizational choice, in our opinion, is one of the most important types of socio-historical choice. Under the socio-historical choice, we mean an act of activity of a social subject, aimed at realizing one of the possibilities inherent in social reality, due to economic, socio-cultural conditions, the historical experience of the social subject, his mentality, value system, ideals. At the same time, choice is always both a process and a result (Gizatova & Ivanova, 2008, p. 45). Ori Schwarz (2018) rightly notes that "Being able to choose is increasingly considered the core of identity, citizenship, and even humanity itself" (p. 846).

The realities of today actualize the consideration of social processes as multidimensional processes and the identification of a national dimension in them, the study of the relationship between the national, civilizational and social as a whole will determine the essential features of these phenomena. The destabilizing processes taking place in society, reflected in the discourse of tension, are invariably refracted in the minds of people as representatives of one or another national community. Ignoring this factor will lead to a reductionist interpretation of social reality. Therefore,
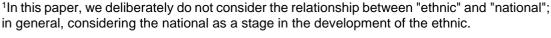
the comprehension of social space as transnational, which is characteristic of many social theories, should not exclude deliberate attention to the analysis of social processes as "nationally conditioned".

One cannot but agree that in modern conditions of ever-increasing dehumanization of social relations, fragmentation of the social world of an individual, transnational subjectivity is gradually imposed on the latter, its most important factor is transnational culture, the homogenization of which generates a one-dimensional determination of subjectivity (Gizatova & Ivanova, 2013). Of course, this tendency should be taken into account in the social reality analysis, however, the use of an analytical concept "national dimension" will contribute to a deeper reflection of modern social processes. The national, the core of which is the ethnic[1], is considered as a social relationship through which some cultural markers become filled with social and political meaning in the process of intense group interaction (Malesevic, 2011, p. 71). Hence the deliberate attention to the philosophical understanding of the formation of such a phenomenon as a national-civilizational choice precisely in the context of socio-cultural reality in general is required.

Consideration of the national-civilizational choice in the context of sociocultural reality makes it possible to determine the factors influencing the choice, the obstacles that arise in its way, as well as the very content of the choice, which ultimately determines the dynamics and trajectory of social changes in society. Sociocultural reality can be represented as a text within which identification processes take place. This perspective allows us to explore identity as a construct, which is a factor that simultaneously affects the process of constantly changing choices, and as a result of this choice, which appears as a discursiveness inherent in modern society, as a kind of text determined by socio-cultural factors. So, according to Erickson, identity is a kind of choice made by the subject as a response to historical, sociocultural reality. The study of the national-civilizational choice as a projection of national identity in the perspective of its socio-cultural conditioning creates a theoretical field for understanding its iconic nature. As Wendy Leeds-Hurwitz (2009) points out:

> The largest topic to which social construction has been applied has been the social construction of identity, especially cultural identity. This links to language by way of narratives;

[1]In this paper, we deliberately do not consider the relationship between "ethnic" and "national"; in general, considering the national as a stage in the development of the ethnic.

> it is through story construction that people make sense of experience and give it shape, and so some researchers have examined narratives told in various contexts as a form of identity construction through language. (p. 892).

The national-civilizational choice, in our opinion, can be considered as the most important mechanism for constructing social reality. The social nature of choice determines the fact that the latter always appears as a space of social meanings. The construction of this space cannot be considered in isolation from the ethno-political processes taking place in society. Today, the problems associated with the peculiarities of these processes, their sources, and, in particular, with understanding the nature of ethnopolitical conflicts and contradictions, are the most acute in social theory.

It seems appropriate to consider such an aspect of this problem as the symbolic basis of the national choice. The space of the symbolic exists in a broad context, the most important determinants of which in modern society are socio-political factors.

It should be noted the shift of research interest in the study of contemporary social problems towards emphasizing their national and ethnic foundations. Indeed, the national is something that is experienced, felt by a person at the deepest level of his consciousness. As the Russian philosopher N.A. Berdyaev (2010) noted: "Of all the super-personal values, it is easiest for a person to agree to subordinate himself to the values of the national, he most easily feels himself a part of the national whole" (p. 165).

A national choice is always an existential choice; this naturally leads us to the trajectory of choice in the space of the symbolic: in this context, the pole of the Other is found in the focus of this trajectory. The image of the Other is constructed only as a derivative of the identity, in its space, appearing in a dialectical relationship with it, since the identity exists only in comparison with the Other. Identity, no doubt, is based on a certain socio-cultural community, but at the same time - on opposition to Others.

Placing choice within the framework of the symbolic makes it possible to more clearly trace the explicit and latent ways of creating the image of the Other, including, first of all, ideological narratives. As Miller notes, for ... countless ... modern culturologists, the term "other" means a racial, class, gender or national other. This cultural other is necessarily posited as the basis for the dominance of the hegemonic culture. This other, whose existence I postulate to assert my superiority, is always a caricature or parody, riddled with ideological lies, just like the sense of myself or my nation, culture or society. However, this ideological image of the otherness of the other

has great power. It is used to justify the most inhuman acts of cruelty, ethnic cleansings… (Hillis Miller, 1994).

The perception of the Other has different levels; first of all, these are individual and social levels, but it is the socio-cultural reality that gives the formation of the image of the Other its purposefulness, its paradigm.

In our opinion, there is a coherence between the image of the Other and the national choice. The latter is always based on identification processes that cannot develop without differentiation, articulation of differences from the Other. It can be argued that national identity and the image of the Other are inextricably linked.

One of the founders of modern Nationalism Studies, Anthony Smith, in one of his last interviews, notes:

> There is also the belief that nations should have the right to express themselves most fully, and that they are cultural units which need to "find their identity"; that is to say, that people should seek to identify with nations, see how they are distinctive from other nations, and cultivate those distinctive characteristics. (E-International Relations, 2013).

Thus, the identity of a nation is always determined through comparison, the influence of the Other significant for this nation in order to assert its own identity. As Eriksen (1995) notes, "Though there may be multiple oppositional identities, in practice it is often the "significant Other," or the identity conceptualized as most opposed, most pressing, or most timely, that is brought to the forefront of identity questions" (p. 427).

4 CONCLUSIONS

The national-civilizational choice, therefore, is derived from national identity and, like identity itself, is not a static phenomenon. National-civilizational choice is always a process that is influenced by many factors. The most important of them are the historical path passed by the ethnic group, as well as the socio-cultural reality, in the space of which the choice is formed.

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