

СОЦІАЛЬНА ФІЛОСОФІЯ ТА ФІЛОСОФІЯ ІСТОРІЇ

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THE THEORY OF CIVILIZATIONS THROUGH THE LENS OF CONTEMPORARY HUMANITIES

Purpose. This paper invites reflections on the further development of civilizational theory through the lens of contemporary humanities. It argues that philosophy is one of the key dimensions of the integral theory of civilizations. The purpose is to promote dialogue-rich interdisciplinary civilizational approach with philosophical understanding of human essence at its core. **Methodology.** The author has used comparative historical analysis, along with hermeneutical methodology and interdisciplinary approach. **Theoretical basis and results.** Faced with the challenges of our time, researchers are turning to the civilizational approach, according to which world history appears to us as a colourful spectrum of the options for the development of humanity. At the present stage of scientific development the integral theory of civilizations seems to be the most productive tool for the interpretation of the events taking place in our world. **Originality.** The problem of human being is a key factor in understanding the dynamics of civilizational process and designing a promising theory of civilizations. Philosophy should occupy an important place in the development of a new theory of civilizations: philosophy is the spiritual quintessence of every epoch, every cultural and civilizational community. In particular, a new theory has to take into account both classic and contemporary investigations in the field of philosophical anthropology and theory of values. The increasing threat posed by the clash of civilizations can become a swan song of humanity. For the preservation and further development of the world civilization, there is no other choice but to elaborate the strategies, mechanisms for consultation and dialogue, cooperation and partnership of civilizations and states. That is why the urgent task is to create the certain philosophical position that will contribute to mutual understanding. **Conclusions.** It is important to involve philosophers in the development of a new integral theory of civilizations. We need to unite our efforts for the sake of human survival. It is only by a constructive and respectful dialogue that humanity will truly overcome mutual misunderstanding, controversy, and aggressiveness. As a result of it, people will realize that the world is much smaller than they previously imagined, and to preserve it the absolute value in the diversity of world civilizations has to be recognized.

Key words: civilization; theory of civilization; global civilization; local civilization; globalization

Introduction

Nowadays, the problems of the essence, dynamics, typology, and future of civilizations and their dialogue are of great importance: humanity's global civilization is going through one of the most complex, controversial periods of its history. The foundations of industrial civilization are destroying and at the same time a new civilization, the essence of which is still uncertain, is emerging. The new civilization may choose either technogenic or anthropogenic orientation. It will depend to a large extent on the humanity, on us all. In recent years the concept of civilization and various theories of civilizations are increasingly being used in political theory, economy, history, philosophy, and other disciplines. People of the 21st century show the growth of civilizational identity that is not based on the common origin, belonging to the same state or religious group. The basis of civilizational iden-

tity is the awareness of common historical traditions, collective destinies, similar cultural values, ideals, and projects of local/global significance. There are two opposite trends: some segments of society are interested in the concept of "contemporary", "world" civilization, the others – in the concept of "local", "regional", "national", i.e. "our" civilization that contrasts to "their", which therefore is "incomprehensible" and "threatening" to some extent. These trends are imbued with the great symbolic value. They are becoming the ideals of social and cultural development.

The problem of human being is a key factor in understanding the dynamics of civilizational process and designing a promising theory of civilizations. Humankind is interested in its destiny because human is an actor in the world historical process. For human beings all investigations make sense only in the context of their lives, their future, their destiny. Human acts as a central point of cul-

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tural space: both the creator and the creation. Civilizational world is always someone's world, it is the world of different races, nations, and peoples. It is created by human and humankind, it is temporary and changeable. "The recognition of pluralistic interpretation of reality in postmodern era casts doubt on complete and absolute truth of any worldview represented by the only one position. Understanding that human self-determination is a probabilistic model, involvement in the situation and attachment to things are features of modern mass psychology, human consciousness is a set of artificial clichés forces us to reconsider the entire scientific worldview" [2, p.95], to develop most up-to-date scientific theories. The world's future is a matter of human choice, and for this choice human has to adapt his/her "I" to the paradoxical world of today. I argue that philosophy should occupy an important place in the development of a new theory of civilizations: philosophy is the spiritual quintessence of every epoch, every cultural and civilizational community. In particular, a new theory has to take into account both classic and contemporary investigations in the field of philosophical anthropology and theory of values. Neglecting these important aspects led to understanding human as a purely economic creature who is enslaved to "the logic of the global market, a logic which is now destroying the ecological conditions for civilization and most life on Earth" [4, p.264].

Many famous scientists, such as P. Bourdieu, F. Braudel, N. Danilevsky, E. Durkheim, R.F. Graebner, L. Gumilyov, S. Huntington, L. A. Kroeber, L. Levy-Bruhl, C. Levi-Strauss, F. Nietzsche, F. Northrop, V. Pareto, P. Sorokin, A. de Tocqueville, A. Toynbee, L. Frobenius, F. Fukuyama, O. Spengler, C. Jaspers, I. Wallerstein, paid attention to the historical and civilizational processes and problems of civilizational interaction. Many theories of civilization and culture place great emphasis on progress. In particular, linear-stadial approach represented by L. Morgan, F. Engels, W. Rostow, D. Bell, A. Toffler is based on the concept of linear time. Despite certain differences in their views, these scientists proceed from the assumption that the underlying logic of human history is the same for each society. For them, society appears as an integrated system of components and subsystems that develops from simple to complex states, and this development is irreversible. The momentum for change is deeply rooted in human society and generated by needs for self-realization and self-

transformation. In contrast to this interpretation of historical process, civilizational approach to history that is based on the concept of cyclical time was formed. Its advocates N. Danilevsky, O. Spengler, A. Toynbee reject the idea of permanent progress. They claim that every civilization follows the way of living organisms: from birth through flowering to decline and death. Cyclical approach (with certain interpretations) is represented in writings of P. Sorokin, A. Kroeber, C. Quigley, L. Gumilyov. I. Wallerstein's concept of social changes is based on bifurcation theory. Unlike linear, cyclical or wave-like models, it does not focus on the trajectory of changes, but rather on the choice of the future path of development. Relatively new resonant theories of civilizations - F. Fukuyama's "The End of History" and S. Huntington's "The Clash of Civilizations" - reflect certain aspects of the new world order. F. Fukuyama insists that Western liberal democracy is the final point of civilizational development: there are no alternatives to the social market economy and democratic political system. S. Huntington does not agree that there is the only one vector of development and expects world conflicts to unfold along the fault lines between civilizations. In particular, such differences in interpretation are based on their understanding of human nature. It should be mentioned that F. Fukuyama's concept is important and interesting because it draws attention to the sphere of human values. According to it, one of the major components of social transformation is the struggle for recognition and attainment of human dignity.

Various studies have accumulated a large amount of information about the civilizational interactions. However the relationships between civilizations are becoming more complex and contradictory in the modern world. H. Frankfort argues that "all comprehensive theories are probably futile because the forces that motivated the development of civilizations may never be known" [1]. Contemporary situation raises new questions that require integral research. Today we are aware of numerous ways of thinking, perceiving the world and identifying our "I". This is what enables us to identify and explore "alternative realities". Such an expanded consciousness will be capable to reshape and reunderstand human identity (including civilizational identity). This requires a deep philosophical analysis of the essence of humans as actors of civilizational process. That is why it is important to involve philosophers in the development of a new

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integral theory of civilizations.

Purpose

This paper invites reflections on the further development of civilizational theory through the lens of contemporary humanities. It argues that philosophy is one of the key dimensions of the integral theory of civilizations. The purpose is to promote dialogue-rich interdisciplinary civilizational approach with philosophical understanding of human essence at its core.

Theoretical basis and results

The interaction of civilizations is becoming the imperative of contemporary world politics. The contradictions that can be decisive in the 21st century are manifesting in this interaction. On the one hand, the world is becoming the unified whole through economic, technological, and informational integration. On the other hand, this increased integration leads to the growth of cultural awareness. Societies, which have distinctive geographic features, history, traditions, languages, religions, and cultural practices, have to coexist within a single information space. They interact and influence each other through intercultural communication. The principle of multi-polar world system serves as a base norm and ideological reference point. However, in reality this approach comes into direct conflict with the ideology of unipolar globalism [11]. Different interpretations of the future structure of the world lead to political and economic clashes with opponents and emergence of dangerous strategies that absorb enormous resources and put the world on the verge of the new political order that does not exclude military methods. In this process, “national minds, ideas” are colliding with their opponents and fighting for their best “projects” for the world development. Modern civilization theory reflects the world globalization processes, increased interdependence of the states, and at the same time the deepening of regional cooperation and confrontation of existing regional blocks.

In this process, the civilizational identity is beginning to play a significant role in the political culture in any given country. Today the civilizational status of the countries and regions is a subject of scientific research as well as political speculations. Due to proliferation of religious influences that largely mediate civilizational identity, attention is focused on the threats of military conflict between countries that represent various local civi-

lizations. These civilizations are not always friendly to Western liberal values, processes of modernization, and development of post-industrial mass society. “The rivalry of the superpowers is replaced by the clash of civilizations. In this new world the most pervasive, important, and dangerous conflicts will not be between social classes, rich and poor, or other economically defined groups, but between peoples belonging to different cultural entities. Tribal wars and ethnic conflicts will occur within civilizations... And the most dangerous conflicts are those along the fault lines between civilizations... The philosophical assumptions, underlying values, social relations, customs, and overall outlooks on life differ significantly among civilizations. The revitalization of religion throughout much of the world is reinforcing these cultural differences. Cultures can change, and the nature of their impact on politics and economics can vary from one period to another. Yet the major differences in political and economic development among civilizations are clearly rooted in their different cultures. East Asian economic success has its source in East Asian culture, as do the difficulties East Asian societies have had in achieving stable democratic political systems. Islamic culture explains in large part the failure of democracy to emerge in much of the Muslim world. Developments of the postcommunist societies of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union are shaped by their civilizational identities. Those with Western Christian heritages are making progress toward economic development and democratic politics; the prospects for economic and political development in the Orthodox countries are uncertain; the prospects in the Muslim republics are bleak” [7, p.28-29].

Faced with the challenges of our time, researchers are turning to the civilizational approach that gives an opportunity to look at the history of mankind through the eyes of others, see its different facets, and deeply examine controversial issues. This approach has a number of advantages. It gives a new perspective of the multidimensional vision of history. According to this approach, world history appears to us as a colourful spectrum of the options for the development of humanity. Each of them has its advantages and disadvantages, and none is perfect. The history of civilizations is not a ladder that let humanity to go up, but shining peaks of a mountain chain that complement each other and form a magnificent and unshakable in its

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glory panorama.

At the present stage of scientific development the integral theory of civilizations seems to be the most productive tools for the interpretation of the events taking place in our world. It allows to connect linear-stadial and local approaches, switch from the monistic explanation of the past to the pluralistic, and take into consideration the diversity of the factors causing human activity: from economic and technological to spiritual. Civilization is a social cultural community united by spiritual tradition, which allows people to combine and improve patterns of behaviour, values and ideals of local cultures, material culture, the environment, resources, and ways of using them. Unlike other human communities, civilizations, as a rule, try to extrapolate their cultural principles, especially their worldviews, to the representatives of the other regions. They create the so-called civilizing projects that are trying to actualize their own ideas about the perfect world order. Civilizational identity is directly connected to a sense of self as the link in the historical chain of humans. The theory of civilizations reflects an experience of thinkers who sought to build a logically consistent and historically accurate image of the past. It allows us to understand the present and predict the future. It has scientific, cultural and philosophical significance, can serve as the basis of historical consciousness, and promote the successful activity in our contradictory world. Thus, the integral theory of civilizations is a promising strategy for contemporary humanities.

The integral theory of civilizations is trying to combine the study of “our” and “their” civilizations, general and particular history, the major trends of global development, as well as the local variants of the historical process, the logic of which can only be understood within the ideology and values of local cultures. It is considering the new knowledge about human historical development in a broader context.

This combination of approaches developed by the best historians of civilizations reflects on a theoretical level the coexistence of two objective trends in the modern world processes: the trend toward universalization, formation of the world civilization and the trend toward differentiation, awareness of personal cultural identity and the desire to preserve it. Neither world system analysis, which considers mainly the global aspects of the historical life of mankind, nor culture-centered ap-

proaches that spread from Europe to the Third World and focus on restoring the uniqueness of historical fact, are able to reflect and take into account these two features of the modern historical process. The integral theory of civilizations has to consider the deep multidimensional crisis of the world civilization, peoples desire to rethink their experience as a part of their own cultural traditions, as well as the fact that the crisis itself is a manifestation of the existence of the world civilization. Therefore, the ways to overcome it require the preservation and development of the global social and cultural structures and forms of self-consciousness.

For the fruitful development of the modern theory of civilizations we need to move away from both total universalism and overemphasis on cultural differences, since in the above mentioned cases universal and particular, theory and factual account, linear-stadial and cyclic models of the historical process are opposed to each other. Thus, researcher’s attention is focused on a small part of the historical reality. Various concepts of the theory of civilizations come into conflict with each other forcing a scientist to insist on the “only one truth” and reject the achievements of the opponents.

United States researchers G.W. Hewes [6] and H.L. Guilderson [5], whose works were devoted to the study of the daily life components in civilizational analysis and the development of civilizational ideas during the Enlightenment, gave a new impetus to the activity of The International Society for the Comparative Study of Civilizations. In particular, G.W. Hewes stated that:

“1. An effort should be made, in connection with a serious study of any civilization to determine if there have been serious efforts to investigate its everyday life aspects.

2. Scholarly aids in the search for useful daily-life evidence should be consulted, and if they are inadequate, remedied by means of bibliographies and examination of sources likely to have been overlooked.

3. Assuming that substantial information can be assembled on everyday life in the history of a given civilization, it would be worthwhile to check the evidence for systematic regularities or discontinuities. Thus, some historians have asserted that “private life” has only existed in civilizations, or perhaps only in comparatively recent ones. The “grand narrative” approach should be examined for

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possible deficiencies.

4. Some civilizations may exhibit marked differences in everyday life patterns from one region to another, rural and small towns to large cities, and especially from class to class, or different religious sects within a civilization, or from one age-group to another" [6, p.90]. It will be helpful in expanding our knowledge of certain civilizations.

Many classic books on the history and theory of civilizations have recently been issued and reissued. For example, "The Story of Civilizations" (11 volume set) by W. Durant and A. Durant [3] was reissued in 1993 and at the beginning of the 21st century (it also exists as e-book (2014). "The History of Civilization" originally published between 1920-70 started being reprinted in 1997. It covers prehistory and historical ethnography, Greek, Roman, Eastern, Judeo-Christian, European civilizations. The general editor C.K. Ogden summarized up-to-date findings and theories of historians, anthropologists, archaeologists and sociologists. Along with reissues of classic writings of O. Spengler, M. Weber, A. Toynbee, C. Jaspers, F. Braudel, A. Toffler, N. Danilevsky, etc., there are many new research works devoted to the theory of civilizations. A historiographical study of this theory, comparative study of values and norms of the cultures are necessary conditions for the further development of the integral theory of civilizations.

Today we can observe a process of synthesis of linear-stadial and local approaches to the theory of civilizations, in particular the world system approach, the history of local civilizations and micro-historical research. In USA comparative studies of civilizations involve a more comprehensive investigation of historical anthropology, history of daily life, and intellectual history. In turn, European historians are recently demonstrating great interest to comparative studies referring to the challenges of EU and the "rebirth" of civilizational identity in Europe. It should be mentioned that even linear historical processes, such as preconditions of modernization (the Anthropoc, Agricultural, Urban, Axial, Scientific revolutions) [8] and modernization are considered recently in close connection with the peculiarities of local civilizations. The Eastern and the Western paradigms of civilizational development are seen as complementary. They are studied through the analysis of personal spiritual experience and social role of certain public figures performing similar functions/roles in different social cultural systems. "Many civilizations

developed in ways that influenced each other. Their own rhythms, if any, were considerably changed, having been influenced by other civilizations. For example, Japanese civilization changed considerably under the influences of the "Axial Revolution" of East Asia and the "Scientific Revolution" of the West. Therefore, the lateral axis comparing civilizations is not an assumed contemporaneity, but common transformations on the global scale" [8, p.5].

The increasing threat posed by the clash of civilizations can become a swan song of humanity. For the preservation and further development of the world civilization, there is no other choice but to elaborate the strategies, mechanisms for consultation and dialogue, cooperation and partnership of civilizations and states. That is why the urgent task is to create the certain philosophical position that will contribute to mutual understanding. Modern theory of civilizations is not an isolated endeavor, but it should be placed in the wider philosophical context. As J. Searle stressed, "Philosophy is easily the most important subject, because all the other subjects make sense only in relations to their philosophical implications" [10]. Every question has at its core a philosophical perspective. Basic issues that are raised within a new paradigm for relationship between humans and societies could be encountered within philosophy. Focusing on philosophical understanding of human being in Western and Eastern traditions and perspectives, examining the question whether representatives of different groups/cultures/races can understand each other and overcome their emotional barriers and mental stereotypes in the process of communication, we explore our own self and through philosophy come to new conclusions in experiencing our own realities.

Such experience in the scope of philosophical approaches to the theory of civilizations cultivates human strength without brutality, self-confidence without arrogance, empathy without weakness. Going deeper into philosophical narratives, we learn to interpret human nature and condition from diverse world perspective, avoid and overcome interpersonal and intercultural conflicts.

I am inclined to agree with T. Lombrozo who emphasizes urgent need to engage philosophers in public life: "When a political issue concerns the economy, we often turn to economists – they're quoted in news stories and interviewed on air. When a policy issue concerns the environment, we

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sometimes hear from ecologists or biologists of an appropriate ilk. But when it comes to the kinds of issues we've confronted in a single week of news - issues about race, identity, moral responsibility and more - we rarely hear from philosophers. I think it's time we did" [9].

Conclusions

We need to unite our efforts for the sake of human survival. It is only by a constructive and respectful dialogue that humanity will truly overcome mutual misunderstanding, controversy, and aggressiveness. As a result of it, people will realize that the world is much smaller than they previously imagined, and to preserve it the absolute value in the diversity of world civilizations has to be recognized. Dialogue participants will realize that each of them has a unique experience, own way of posing problems and resolving them. The conversation will take on new meaning. The recognition of the

multifaceted/multicultural/multicivilizational world and the right of the "Others" to be who they are contributes to the true integration of diverse societies.

A disciple came to Zen Master and asked him:

- Why some people are beautiful and others are ugly, some are wise and others are stupid? Why does this contradiction exist? Why did God create some beautiful and others ugly? And do not tell me about karma, that all this is due to past lives. What it was in the beginning, when there was no past?

Zen Master took him into the garden and said:

- This tree is big and that one is small. I used to sit under these trees and think about the difference. But when I cleared my mind, the question disappeared. Now, I just know that this tree is big and the other one is small. There is no problem. They are equal in their existence.

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ТЕОРІЯ ЦИВІЛІЗАЦІЙ В КОНТЕКСТІ СУЧАСНОЇ ГУМАНІТАРИСТИКИ

Мета. Ця стаття запрошує до дискусії щодо подальшого розвитку теорії цивілізацій в контексті сучасної гуманітаристики. Вона наполягає на тому, що філософія є одним з ключових аспектів створення і розвитку нової теорії цивілізацій. Робиться наголос на застосуванні інтердисциплінарного цивілізаційного підходу з філософським розумінням сутності людини в його основі. **Методологія.** Автор використовував порівняльно-історичний аналіз, а також філософську герменевтику та інтердисциплінарний підхід. **Основна частина.** Стикаючись з викликами сьогодення, дослідники звертаються до цивілізаційного підходу, оскільки він дає можливість поглянути на історію людства очима інших людей, побачити різні її грані, дослідити питання, поставлені сучасною епохою перед кожною країною і світом в цілому. **Новизна.** Проблема людини є ключовою для розуміння цивілізаційної динаміки, а, отже, для створення перспективної теорії цивілізацій. Філософія повинна посідати чільне місце в процесі розробки нової інтегральної теорії цивілізацій, адже філософія є духовною квінтесенцією кожної епохи, кожної культурно-цивілізаційної спільноти. Зокрема, створення нової теорії потребує використання класичних і сучасних набутків філософської антропології та аксіології. Наростаюча загроза зіткнення цивілізацій може стати лебединою піснею людства, і для самозбереження та подальшого розвитку світової цивілізації не існує іншого виходу, крім вироблення певної стратегії, механізмів діалогу, співробітництва та партнерства цивілізацій і держав. Саме тому нагальною потребою є формування певної філософської позиції, яка сприятиме порозумінню, а не конфронтації культур. Таким чином, філософія є одним з ключових аспектів створення і розвитку нової інтегральної теорії цивілізацій. **Висновки.** Людство повинно об'єднати зусилля заради свого виживання. Для подолання взаємного непорозуміння, культурних розбіжностей, агресії необхідний конструктивний діалог, в результаті якого люди усвідомлять, що світ є набагато меншим, ніж це уявлялося раніше, і абсолютна цінність існуючих світових цивілізацій повинна бути визнана.

Ключові слова: цивілізація; теорія цивілізацій; глобальна цивілізація; локальна цивілізація; глобалізація

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ТЕОРИЯ ЦИВИЛИЗАЦИЙ В КОНТЕКСТЕ СОВРЕМЕННОЙ ГУМАНТАРИСТИКИ

Цель. Статья приглашает к дискуссии, посвященной дальнейшему развитию теории цивилизаций в контексте современной гуманитаристики. Она подчеркивает, что философия является одним из ключевых аспектов создания и развития интегральной теории цивилизаций. Делается упор на применении интердисциплинарного цивилизационного подхода с философским пониманием сущности человека в его основе. **Методология.** Автор использовал сравнительно-исторический анализ, а также философскую герменевтику и интердисциплинарный подход. **Основная часть.** Сталкиваясь с вызовами современности, исследователи обращаются к цивилизационному подходу, поскольку он дает возможность взглянуть на историю человечества глазами других людей, увидеть различные ее грани, исследовать вопросы, поставленные современной эпохой перед каждой страной и миром в целом. **Новизна.** Проблема человека является ключевой для понимания цивилизационной динамики, а, следовательно, для создания перспективной цивилизационной теории. Философия должна занимать важное место в процессе разработки новой интегральной теории цивилизаций, поскольку философия является духовной квинтэссенцией каждой эпохи, каждой культурно-цивилизационной общности. В частности, создание новой теории требует использования классических и современных достижений философской антропологии и аксиологии. Нарастающая угроза столкновения цивилизаций может стать лебединой песней человечества, и для самосохранения и дальнейшего развития мировой цивилизации не существует другого выхода, кроме выработки определенной стратегии, механизмов диалога, сотрудничества и партнерства цивилизаций и государств. Именно поэтому насущной необходимостью является формирование определенной философской позиции, которая будет способствовать взаимопониманию, а не конфронтации культур. Таким образом, философия является одним из ключевых аспектов создания и развития новой интегральной теории цивилизаций. **Выводы.** Человечество должно объединить усилия ради своего выживания. Для преодоления взаимного непонимания, культурных разногласий, агрессии необходим конструктивный диалог, в результате которого люди осознают, что мир намного меньше,

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чем это представлялось ранее, и абсолютная ценность существующих мировых цивилизаций должна быть признана.

Ключевые слова: цивилизация; теория цивилизаций; глобальная цивилизация; локальная цивилизация; глобализация

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