

Contemporary dimension of citizenship of the inhabitants of Wloclawek and the region

Abstract

The dissertation has an interdisciplinary character, as it contains elements of such scientific disciplines as history, sociology, political science, philosophy and social psychology. The work contains historical, investigatory and empirical chapters. The adopted time caesura, which defined the analyzed phenomena, extends between the epochal event which was the Great French Revolution (1789 - 1799) and the reality in which contemporary society exists.

The work was guided by two basic goals:

1. Analysis of views presented by prominent Western European and Polish thinkers from the end of the 18th century to the beginning of the 21st century on the issue of the mutual interaction between society and the state.
2. Examining the sense of civic awareness of the residents of Wloclawek and the region, the role of non-governmental organizations, and the relationship of citizens towards self-government authority.

In order to obtain a comprehensive picture of these two aforementioned goals, more detailed phenomena have been analyzed:

- defining the process of the evolution of scholarly views on the position of society towards the state in all analyzed epochs of European civilization with emphasis on Polish realities,
 - defining the areas of social and state cooperation,
 - identification of social capital manifestations in the population studied,
 - clarifying the role of non-governmental organizations in forming civil society,
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- practical tips for implementing civic behaviors of the residents of Wloclawek and the region.

The following terms have been analyzed:

1. Civil society is defined as the space of activity of institutions, social groups and individuals, extending between the family, the state, the market in which people cooperate with each other for common interests.
2. The definition of a state that has been used, is a term referring to the structure ordering with the use of clerical apparatus the activity of individuals and groups.

Chapters of historical nature containing the views of West European and Polish thinkers regarding mutual relations between society and the state begin in 1789 and end in 2017. For the purpose of the analysis There was selected the opinion on the researches presenting the liberal, conservative and leftist attitude.

When considering mutual references between society and the state in Poland, the specificity of their functioning on the Polish territory has been emphasized, both during the partitions of Poland, the Second Polish Republic, real socialism, as well as during the period of political transformation. It has been pointed out that throughout the analyzed centuries Polish society always had a poor civic condition and low political culture of state decision makers, which prevented the formation of civic skills and virtues.

In the considerations the statements of many outstanding sociologists were taken into account. Florian Znaniecki's wording was the closest to the author. They were used in the case of research carried out on the population of the residents of Wloclawek and the region. After their completion, the process which takes place in contemporary society in the era of systemic

transformation was presented. The conclusions drawn from the "Methodological Note" included in Znaniecki's work: "The Polish Peasant in Europe and America" proved to be useful. They served to present the model of a citizen including external circumstances, i.e. values characteristic for the behavior of social groups and subjective tendencies - understood as attitudes.

Research topics of the dissertation

The problems distinguished for resolution included:

The main problem:

- what political and civilization processes affected thinking about the relations between society and the state within 250 years in Europe and in Poland?

Specific problems:

- Postmodernism?
- which of the categories: society or state dominated in Enlightenment, Modernism, Postmodernism?
 - what are the values guiding the inhabitants of Wloclawek and the region in public life?
 - what is the degree of tolerance among the residents of Wloclawek and the region?
 - what do the inhabitants of Wloclawek and the region understand by the term "civil society"?
 - what accompanied the development of civil society in Poland over the centuries?
 - what does the activity of associations in Wloclawek regarding social initiatives consist in?
 - does the program offer of the Dobrzynsko-Kujawski Cultural Society strengthen the regional identity of society?
 - do the activities of the Wloclawek Scientific Society have an impact on the increase in the activity of society?
 - what is the current role of foundations and voluntary service in satisfying social needs in Wloclawek?
 - are civic initiatives implemented by the Municipal Office in Wloclawek?
 - what is the state of cooperation between the third sector organizations and the Municipal Office in Wloclawek?

Research hypotheses

The following research hypotheses result from the research problems defined above:

the main hypothesis:

- relations between civil society and the state from the end of the 18th century to the beginning of the 21st century were subject to evolution and adopted various configurations,

specific hypotheses:

- Enlightenment there was no advantage of one of the considered categories over the other,
- in Modernism, civil society was in opposition to the state,
- Postmodernism was characterized by the domination of the state over civil society,
- Today, the tendency to develop the interdependence of civil society and the state is increasing,
- the sense of civic awareness is low among the inhabitants of Wloclawek,
- only few of the third sector organizations in Wloclawek fulfill their role,
- the activity of the Dobrzynsko-Kujawski Cultural Society affects the formation of regional identity,

- the activities of Wloclawek Scientific Society give the city prestige and recognition being examples of grassroots social and civic initiatives,
- citizens' initiatives are considered and implemented by the Municipal Office,
- cooperation between the third sector organizations and Wloclawek Municipal Office has been intensified.

Selection of the research group and research area

The research process included inhabitants of Wloclawek and the region. The basic study was preceded by a pilot study conducted by the students of the University of the Third Age in Wloclawek, full-time and part-time students of the Kujawy Higher School in Wloclawek, and students of the Academic High School in Wloclawek. After analyzing the data, the questionnaire was adjusted so that it would reach a specific population. It included full-time and part-time students of the Kujawy High School in Wloclawek, from the Kujawy and Ziemia Dobrzynska regions, as well as upper-secondary school students from both Wloclawek as well as from the region. The population which has been subject to research was drawn out of 200 students of the University of the Third Age, 400 full-time and part-time students and 500 high school students.

Source materials, methods and techniques applied

First of all, these were materials included in the scientific literature. They concerned the analysis of the deliberations of researchers of particular epochs as well as interpretations and polemics, in which modern adversaries took part and also formulations made by contemporary political scientists, sociologists, psychologists and philosophers.

The questionnaire of a specially developed research survey, interviews and participant observations were used to acquire materials for the empirical chapter. To prepare the chapters describing the activities of the 3rd sector in Wloclawek and the region, source documents as well as interviews with their leaders and activists, thematic questionnaires, analysis of documentation gathered in the archives turned out to be useful. Web sites were also used.

The following research methods were applied: behavioral, ethnographic, opinion and observation studies. When applying each of them, I took into account both quantitative as well as qualitative aspects.

The structure of the dissertation

Its content has a classic layout. It was preceded by an introduction along with the justification of the topic choice. The development consists of a methodological chapter, three historical and research chapters, an empirical chapter, a chapter analyzing the activities of contemporary institutions of the 3rd sector in Wloclawek and the region, and the conclusion with practical postulates regarding the development of civil society.

Each of the chapters has been divided into the appropriate number of subsections, and these in turn have been divided into smaller parts.

The introduction contains the theoretical foundations of the notions of society and the state. These categories were analyzed from a sociological, historical and civilization perspective. An attempt was also made to define the term civil society in the public space of contemporary Poland.

Chapter one contains methodological assumptions of the entire dissertation, focusing on the use of guidelines provided by American, Western European and Polish methodologists.

The operational definitions were prepared for the objectives of this dissertation. They referred to civil society, stereotype, civic awareness, regional identity and globalization. The operational definition of "civil society" was used to develop a questionnaire, which was one of the most important ways of measuring variables. The key element was to determine the sounding of questions and to construct a cafeteria.

In the second chapter, the views of the thinkers of the Enlightenment were subject to analysis, for whom it was difficult to solve the dilemma who should be given the priority - society or the state in the eternal rivalry of these structures.

As the period of Enlightenment falls is dated in the territory of Poland at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, that is why the polemics of writers, philosophers and ideologists on the vision of the future state and the place of society after regaining independence were presented.

The third chapter is devoted to presenting the views of researchers in a period called Modernism. They assumed that civic organizations would gradually take over the prerogatives of the state, which would be a mediator in resolving conflicts.

The specificity of modernist thinking in Poland consisted in the fact that, on the one hand, it assumed a break with the all-power of the state in favour of voluntary associations gathering citizens, and on the other, its cult was dictated by the supremacy of general interest over the particularisms of various social groups.

Chapter four highlights the tendencies which emerged in thinking on society and the state in the era called Postmodernism. There was a conviction about blurring the boundaries between society and the state until the total domination of the state, which became the binding doctrine in Central and Eastern Europe. In consequence, this contributed to the gradual degradation of civil society in Poland.

This chapter describes the complex rebirth of the "civil society" category at the turn of the 20th and 21st century, as well as the functions that were to be fulfilled in the times of systemic transformation, activity in the structures of the European Union and the impact of globalization processes.

The fifth chapter of an empirical nature contains an attempt to answer the fundamental research question of the study: what values are the values exercised by the residents of Wloclawek and the region in the public life? The research carried out on the population of 700 randomly selected people has led to the formulation of a civic image of a modern resident of our region. Its preparation was based on the analysis of surveys, interviews and documentation obtained.

Chapter six defined the positions of the institutions of the third sector in Polish civil society from 1918 to 2017. Particular attention was given to the role played by associations, foundations and volunteering in the process of regaining subjectivity by society in the eighties and nineties of the previous and the beginning of the new century.

The first subsection discusses the role played by associations operating in Wloclawek aimed at supplementing the institutional structure of the state and self-government. An integral part of this subsection included summaries illustrating the trends which occurred in individual years in terms of the number of associations in the studied area, as well as qualitative systematisation of these organizations according to the fields of their activity. Having analyzed the available materials, it was decided that for the purpose of achieving a more precise picture of the functions performed by the associations, seven most representative ones for Wloclawek and the region ought to be selected. These included the Society of Children's Friends, the Polish Red Cross, the Association for Children and Adults with Intellectual Disability "Oligo", the Association of the Disabled "Eurointegration", Association of Social and Economic Initiatives "Success", Dobrzynsko - Kujawskie Cultural Society and Wloclawek Scientific Society.

The next section analyzes the functioning of foundations which fulfill a useful role in promoting and satisfying social needs. Only four of the foundations operating in Wloclawek received the status of a public benefit organization.

Their rise occurred at the beginning of the 21st century, when the symptoms of the new economic order, ie the market economy, were consolidated. This resulted in the liquidation of many industrial plants in the city and the region, the collapse of entire industries of the economy and the degradation of the city and the region as a result of these phenomena. It also led to the pauperization of many social groups, requiring support not only material, but also equally psychological. It was meant to ease their sense of marginalization and to overcome the trauma of transformation. Hence,

the burden of equalizing the chances of those specifically excluded has been taken on, apart from specialized self-government institutions, by foundations grown from the most powerful factories remaining in the city.

Therefore, the selection for illustrating positive activities of the foundation concerned those which grew out of two enterprises: "DGS" and "Anwil". The former is called "Lonely Mother" and the latter "Anwil for Wloclawek" and "Vladislav" associated with Cuiavian University in Wloclawek.

The next section presents a broad cross-section of systematic action aimed at those in need and the excluded. The organizations which have in their status volunteering and those who gather around themselves people willing to participate on the occasion of specific actions have been exposed. The spectacular mobilization of volunteers in Wloclawek and the mechanism of their emergence under the "Great Orchestra of Christmas Charity" have been described.

The process of consolidation of the volunteering community was also presented as well as its activity not only in the city and region, but also on the nationwide forum.

The activity of these associations was highlighted, which alongside their core activity do not lose their volunteering aspect. In this subsection activities of such institutions as: Polish Red Cross, "Caritas", Society of Children's Friends, Municipal Center for Family Assistance, Cultural Center Browar B, Wloclawek high schools: Maria Konopnicka High School, Cuiavian Land High School, School Complex No. 4 are mentioned in this subsection.

A significant subchapter is the subchapter which discusses the manifestations of civic activity. It emphasizes the involvement of the residents of Wloclawek in raising the standard of living. On this occasion, initiatives aimed at increasing their participation in city management, participation in discussions on the solutions proposed by local government authorities for all the housing estates of the city have been discussed.

It has been also emphasized that the process of cooperation between residents in managing the city has been growing year after year. Internet voting on proposals for the citizens' budget contributes to this. It is a tangible proof of citizens' participation in spending funds for investments. For several years, the amount they can spend has been increased.

The state of cooperation between the organizations of the 3rd sector and the local government of the city has also been presented. This is done harmoniously when both sectors jointly solve problems in the field of social assistance, care for the disabled, health protection, popularization of physical culture and sport, counteracting pathologies and supporting culture.

Due to the extensive activity outside the city and the region, extensive excerpts from this chapter have been devoted to the presentation of the efforts made by the leaders and activists of Wloclawek Scientific Society and Dobrzyn-Kujawskie Cultural Society in the times of political transformation.

While discussing the activities of each of these societies, the main focus was on the period ranging from 1989 to 2017.

The subject of the analysis in the case of the Wloclawek Scientific Society became its three basic functions: research, popularizing and publishing.

On the occasion of their presentation, a lot of space has been devoted to the emphasis on cooperation with the university established years ago. In particular, the activity of members of the society and their involvement in the organization of nationwide conferences on historical and contemporary topics has been emphasized. It turned out that they integrated not only the academic environment in Wloclawek, but also public opinion about vital problems for Poland and Europe.

Dobrzynsko-Kujawskie Cultural Association took a unique place in the presented discussions. The efforts of its activists and members to fuel and cultivate the attachment of the community inhabiting the Kujawy region and the Dobrzyn region to their small homeland became the subject of a detailed analysis. In addition, it has been noted that people from here create values that testify to their culture and regional identity. That was confirmed by projects in the field of popularizing regional culture, practicing rituals and folklore, dialects and promotion of artistic talents.

Attention has been paid to the leaders and activists caring for folk artists, cooperation with theaters, exhibitions, patronage over the Creative Environment Club, organization of competitions, workshops, open air and regional education.

Conclusions from the dissertation

The two analyzed categories of society and the state in the aforementioned epochs had to function in the same public space. Their coexistence experienced their ups and downs.

And so during the Enlightenment it is difficult to determine which of them prevailed. Theoreticians once tended to recognize that the state was dependent on the society, and that it was the guardian of citizens' freedom and they also set the task of forming civil society. On the territory of Poland during the nineteenth century, in the absence of state structures, discussions about the vision of the future state after regaining independence were held. Various views on the reconstruction of the state apparatus were presented. On the one hand there was assumed the evolutionary transformation of society and the state, and on the other, the liquidation of the traditional order. That was to lead to the construction of a new reality.

In the next era of Modernism the dominance of society over the state took place. It was considered that society should gradually take over the prerogatives of the state. The state was to act as a mediator in resolving social conflicts. There were also views identifying these two categories, and even completely excluding the state from public space. In Poland, most theoreticians ignored the role of the state in favour of voluntary associations, or the priority function was assigned to the nation and society. A different view was presented by Florian Znaniecki, who preached the cult of the state, situating it above the society, nation and church.

In the next era called Postmodernism, mutual penetration of the relationship between society and the state was a common tendency. The attitude of conservatives and liberals was diversified. Conservatives assumed that the authorities had a duty to maintain order in the state, whereas liberals excluded state intervention in maintaining privileges of any social group.

In this era, the processes of civil society revival in Central and Eastern Europe follow. Their intensity took place in the eighties and nineties of the last century. In Poland, it was strengthened thanks to Solidarity. The only dilemma that remained at that time was: whether civil society should be built from scratch or not disturbed, and it would reactivate itself.

At the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries, most political scientists and sociologists attempted to redefine the category of civil society. It was difficult to be carried out because it is currently functioning in too many contexts. An attempt was made to determine the dividing line that separated the state from the society. The prevailing view was that for proper functioning of the structures of society and the state it was necessary to maintain a balance between them. This peculiar balance was supposed to inhibit the impulses of the state bureaucracy on the one hand and limit the pressure exerted by civic organizations on the other. The state has been assigned the role of a guide and protector for shaping the way in which associations could work in such areas as: education, culture, economics, sport.

At the end of the twentieth century, there were functioning two parallel structures in Poland in public space, and civil society was fragmentary, because both the public and economic spheres were still dominated by the state.

That is why the fight against totalitarianism was to be aimed at the reconstruction of civil society. It was run reluctantly. Today, Poles still do not take into account its recognized attributes which include tolerance for diversity, various forms of relationship, views, preferences. Ethical principles are not obeyed. The search for the optimal transformation model overlaps here. Theorists believe that external solutions should not be implemented, but adapted to our conditions while maintaining the identity of Poles.

The debate led to the construction of basic functions which civil society should perform in the modern era:

- protection against state interference in the privacy of its citizens,

- constant observation and control of state power,
- permanent process of socialization of citizens,
- creation and articulation of community values.
- democratization of local structures,
- shaping social pluralism.

How far is the implementation of these principles can be seen by analyzing the results of the research carried out in 2013-2014 on the population of the residents of Wloclawek and the region drawn randomly. The results confirmed that they were significantly affected by largely limited resources of social capital in the respondents. This resulted from the lack of mutual trust between the respondents and the representatives elected in the parliamentary and local elections. They also justified the vitality of the of non-citizen stereotype of Poles.

It stems from the research that breaking this stereotype, which recognizes Poles as individualists being far from community actions, still faces difficulties. However, there have appeared symptoms of ordering this sphere of public life. This was confirmed by legal regulations supporting the functioning of the 3rd sector organizations. This affected the intensification of mutual contacts between leaders of associations, foundations and voluntary work and local self-governments.

The implementation of assumptions jointly worked out testified in the case of Wloclawek and the region of diverse involvement of each organization. At the end of 2014, out of 394 registered, only 256 were active.

Out of this relatively large number of non-governmental organizations, seven associations, three foundations and five volunteers deserved closer description. Due to the supra-regional activity, extensive parts of the dissertation regarded the efforts of leaders and activists of two associations: Wloclawek Scientific Society and the Kujawsko-Dobrzynskie Cultural Association.

Since the idea of cooperation between citizens and self-government authorities is becoming more and more important in Wloclawek, there is a place in this work to refer to civic initiatives which were forwarded to the Municipal Office. They focused on signaling needs in the area of street renovation, launching public facilities, organizing integration events. Creating a civic budget turned out to be helpful in the citizen - office integration.

The quoted examples gave an affirmative answer to the research questions of the dissertation, and the hypotheses were confirmed. This concerned the evolution of thinking about the relations between the society and the state in the analyzed epochs. The results presented in the empirical chapter testified to the unsatisfactory sense of civic awareness of the residents of Wloclawek and the region.

The practical postulates which result from the dissertation include:

- adopting proven forms of coexistence between the society and the state from democracy in the West of Europe,
- building up an atmosphere encouraging a discussion on the rational use of funds from the participatory budget.

In order to achieve this, we need a cross-party agreement in the City Council to increase the amounts available to residents on the one hand, and on the other to put pressure by neighborhood and local groups on local authorities through their participation in the construction of the civic budget, as well as organize local referenda in the event of controversial intentions of local authorities. In order to achieve harmonious cooperation between citizens and the local government, constant contact between the authorities and the residents of each estate is necessary.

Non-governmental organizations functioning in Wloclawek should be a coordinator of activities performed by civic groups, set a direction for the integration of society. It is worth extending their influence not only to their environment, but to attract all social groups through their participation in proven events.

Increased voter turnout can be achieved through the activities of local party leaders

presenting to the public real visions of the development of the city and the region. It is necessary to reject the manners of promising without securing financial means. Only such an approach would give an opportunity to break the circle of impotence and the lack of citizens' confidence in politicians.