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Formation of civil society in Ukraine in the post-soviet period

Становлення громадянського суспільства в Україні у пострадянський період

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Abstract

The article analyzes the main stages of formation of civil society in Ukraine since independence. Formation of the third sector, shown by the authors against the background of state policy in this area and political events in Ukraine. Based on the analysis of Ukrainian legislation, the study identifies the main stages of state policy in the field of promoting the development of civil society institutions. The analysis of statistical sources helped to establish not only the quantitative characteristics of the development of civil society institutions, but also to identify the main areas of their activities. Researchers conclude that civil society in Ukraine has developed over a long period of time against the background of sometimes contradictory state policy in this area and the lack of a broad social base for the activities of public organizations. As large masses of active, purposeful, motivated citizens who were not members of public

Анотація

У статті аналізуються основні етапи становлення громадянського суспільства в Україні за роки незалежності. Формування третього сектору, показане авторами на тлі державної політики в цій сфері та політичних подій в Україні. На основі аналізу законодавства України визначено основні етапи державної політики у сфері розвитку інститутів громадянського суспільства. Аналіз статистичних джерел дозволив встановити не тільки кількісні характеристики розвитку інститутів громадянського суспільства, а й визначити основні напрямки їх діяльності. Дослідники дійшли висновку, що громадянське суспільство в Україні розвивалося протягом тривалого часу на тлі подекуди суперечливої державної політики у цій сфері та відсутності широкої соціальної бази для діяльності громадських організацій. Однак, на думку авторів, маси активних, цілеспрямованих,

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organizations, became not only the driving force of the two revolutions to return to the ideals of freedom and equality, but also hinder the emergence of authoritarianism, and now the occupation of the country in Russian-Ukrainian war.

Keywords: Ukraine, civil society, public institutions, development, stages of formation, state policy.

Introduction

The main problem of our research is the analysis of the process of formation of civil society in Ukraine in the post-Soviet period.

The purpose of the study is to prove that civil society in Ukraine has specific features of its formation, which are largely determined by the general features of the formation of a political nation, the features of the democratization of society in the post-Soviet period and the features of state policy in this area.

Ukraine, like other former Soviet republics and other post-Soviet countries of Eastern Europe, began to form civil society only after the collapse of the Soviet regimes. The formation of civil society in Ukraine had and has common challenges and contradictions with other post-Soviet republics, which often led to the identification of these processes in scientific thought. Despite the common features of our historical past, we claim that the formation of civil society in the post-Soviet period in Ukraine has not only certain features, but also significant differences, on which we emphasize our attention.

To achieve the goal of the study, we focused on several provisions:

1. Ukrainian civil society in the post-Soviet period is characterized by excessive politicization.
2. The unstructured politicized civil society, which very often acted spontaneously, became the main driving force behind the formation of Ukrainian democracy and the newest Ukrainian democratic state.
3. The activities of civil society institutions were mainly directed at resistance to the state, opposition to attempts to restore authoritarianism, protection of human rights and broad charitable activities.
4. It was the pressure of civil society that led to changes in state policy regarding the forms

вмотивованих громадян, які не входили до громадських організацій, стали не лише рушійною силою двох революцій, повернення до ідеалів свободи та рівності в республіці, а й перешкождали появі авторитаризму, а тепер і окупації країни в російсько-українській війні.

Ключові слова: Україна, громадянське суспільство, громадянські інститути, розвиток, етапи становлення, державна політика.

of participation of civil society institutions in making political decisions.

Literature Review

The theoretical basis of our research was the concepts of civil society of the late 20th – early 21st centuries. In this period, representatives of Western democracy faced certain crisis phenomena of the functioning of civil society, and the collapse of post-communist authoritarian regimes in Eastern Europe and the emergence of new democratic states prompted the process of searching for a new effective model of cooperation between the state and institutions of civil society. It is important to emphasize that civil society in developed democracies and civil society in countries that do not have a historical tradition of civil society have certain differences. Likewise, the role of civil society in Western countries today will be somewhat different than it was a few decades ago. As Philippe C. Schmitter rightly points out, “Today’s citizens – even in polities that have long suffered under authoritarian rule and have no prior history of civil society – have quite different organizational skills, are less likely to identify so closely with partisan symbols or ideologies, and defend a much more variegated set of interests” (Schmitter, 1993, p. 7).

The concept of “civil society” is multidimensional. For example, one of the Ukrainian researchers singled out 57 definitions of this concept (Berchenko, 2014, p. 21). John Keane believes that the proliferation of meanings of the term “civil society” is beginning to proliferate to such an extent that it, like the all-too-common advertising slogan, may “self-destruct” from overuse. There is a growing general belief in the importance of civil society, but there is also growing inconsistency regarding the meaning of this concept (Keane, 2000, p. 42).

The work uses the research of Jürgen Habermas, Jean L. Cohen, Andrew Arato, John Keane,

Marc M. Howard, Nancy L. Rosenblum and a number of Ukrainian researchers.

Thus, the ideas of civil society participation in the democratic legitimization of state actions by Jürgen Habermas (Habermas, 2012), the understanding of civil society as the voluntary character of a non-political association by Jean L. Cohen and Andrew Arato (Cohen & Arato, 1994) are important to us. We are interested in Nancy Rosenblum's thoughts on the disordered, unsystematic "electoral civil society" and the need for the government to create an appropriate climate for the constant formation of new associations and for the dynamic exchange of members between them (Rosenblum, 1994). The position of the Ukrainian researcher Antonina Kolodii is particularly consonant for us, who argued that since there was a pre-revolutionary or revolutionary social reality in the societies transitioning to democracy in the 1980s and early 1990s, the politicization of public life and politicization became characteristic of Ukrainian civil society concepts of civil society. It is precisely the problems of civil society's resistance to the state that began to be given more attention, to the detriment of emphasizing its socializing functions (Kolodii, 2001).

Methodology

Our research is built on an interdisciplinary approach using methods of history, political science, sociology and law. Thus, following the historical methods of periodization, historical-comparative, chronological, the development of civil society is shown taking into account various stages in the formation of democratic Ukraine in the post-Soviet period.

The formation of civil society in Ukraine was closely related to taking into account the general political processes in society, which in some cases either inhibited the development of civil society or became catalysts of this process.

Using sociological methods of collecting and analyzing data on the total number of civil society organizations and content analysis of legal acts, the development and functioning of Ukrainian civil society was shown, taking into account the peculiarities of state policy at various stages of the development of democracy.

The main legal research methods were comparative legal and institutional, which allowed to consider the civil society of Ukraine as an institution of the state legal system of

Ukraine, which is recognized by the state at the official level.

Results and Discussion

1. Formation of civil society in the conditions of defective democracy (1990s – 2004)

In our understanding, civil society is a social element that exists between the state, society itself, the economy and the political sphere of the state and is a set of various institutions, associations and organizations that represent the interests and will of citizens, represent the public initiative, control the authorities and oppose the dominance of the state. Jean L. Cohen and Andrew Arato understand "civil society" as a sphere of social interaction between the economy and state, composed above all on the intimate sphere (especially the family), the sphere of associations (especially voluntary associations), social movements, and forms of public communication (Cohen & Arato, 1994, ix). Here, the question immediately arises whether the concept of civil society should include the intimate sphere (especially the family). In our opinion, the family should not be considered the element a civil society. Likewise, we do not include in this concept elements of socio-political relations – political groups.

At the same time, we share the opinion of John Keane, who believed that for the complete independence of civil society, it cannot do without political institutions, including the state. Since it is impossible to do without regulating social relations, overcoming conflicts with the help of laws (Keane, 1988, p. 1).

The development of civil society in Ukraine has been going on for a long time along with the transformation of the political model of the state and continues today. Sometimes, for the next stage of its development, it was even necessary to go through political and social upheavals. The Velvet Revolution of 1989-1991, the Orange Revolution of 2004 and the Revolution of Dignity at the turn of 2013-2014 became significant catalysts for the formation of civil society and launched new approaches of public policy in this area.

The first sprouts of civil society institutions emerged in the late 1980s, when the authoritarian Soviet regime partially weakened ideological and party control.

The formation of public activity and self-organization of citizens directly depended on state policy in this area. Unfortunately, we can say that the state did not have the will to create an appropriate climate for the development of civil society. That is, the conditions that, according to Nancy L. Rosenblum, the government should create for the constant formation of new associations and for the dynamic exchange of members between them, simply did not exist (Rosenblum, 1994). However, it was at the beginning of the 1990s that the Law of Ukraine “On Association of Citizens” was adopted, which defined the legal status of public organizations (Law of Ukraine No. 4572-VI, 1992).

Also, the development of civil society was largely determined by the type of political regime that functioned in the republic. The fall of the Soviet Union and the proclamation of Ukraine’s independence do not mean the final victory of democracy. Thus, the presidency of L. Kravchuk (1991 – 1994) was spent looking for prospects for the development of society and ways to combine market mechanisms with state methods of protecting the population, ways to combat the economic crisis, market formation and democracy in a country that has long been unaware of these institutes.

The political regime of L. Kuchma (1994 – 2004) was undemocratic for most researchers, but there were significant differences in determining its type. Yu. Matsievsky, who studied different approaches to characterizing the regime of this period, believes that the political regime in Ukraine under Kuchma’s presidency is defined by most researchers as undemocratic in the range from neo-totalitarian to competitive semi-authoritarian (Matsievsky, 2006, p. 22). M. Minakov and M. Rojansky believe that “through the 1990s, the country’s political system developed along two parallel paths, combining a liberal democratic facade with post-soviet oligarch-controlled distribution of power and resources” (Minakov & Rojansky, 2015).

During this period, the state took several steps to bring civil society institutions out of the shadows, but their participation in the formation of public policy was minimal. They were not heard or noticed. In the period before the early 2000s, the authorities showed almost no interest in these forms of self-organization of the population (apparently, not seeing them as particularly useful or threatening). Normative acts legally regulated the activities of various organizations, which were registered en masse,

but did not determine their place in the systems “state – society”, “state power – people”.

In addition, the crisis was in civil society itself. There were several reasons for this. The first reason was that Ukrainian civil society was highly politicized. The first wave of its politicization took place when the independence of Ukraine was fought for and consolidated, and the second was aimed at protecting democracy. Therefore, the most of the NGOs that emerged in the late 1980s and early 1990s were primarily focused on democracy, the restoration of Ukraine’s statehood, and the protection of national-cultural life. With the proclamation of independence in 1991 and the beginning of democratic transformations, these tasks were fulfilled for them. A. Kolodii believes that the reasons for the politicization of Ukrainian civil society are not only the youth of Ukrainian democracy, but also the so-called “catch-up model” of the development of the country, in which the spiritual and intellectual elite – the intelligentsia, which seeks to “tighten up” its people to the achievements of world civilization (Kolodii, 2001).

The second reason that hindered the active development of the civil sector in the 1990s was the preservation of the post-Soviet mentality in a large part of the citizens. There was also a significant mistrust of various kinds of organizations, since in the previous communist period they were all necessarily connected to the state and official ideology.

In the context of low civic activity found almost everywhere in post-communist Europe, the main argument, according to Marc M. Howard, remained three factors. 1) Past experience of citizens’ participation in organizations and traces of distrust in all formal organizations. 2) The stability of the informal circle of communication, which replaces participation in official organizations. 3) Disappointment with the current democratic and political systems, which pushes many away from the public sphere (Howard, 2009, p. 45). In general, confirming the author’s conclusions, we would like to emphasize the importance of the Ukrainian Maidans. We consider the Ukrainian Maidans (revolutions) as a certain phenomenon not only in the recent history of Ukraine, but also as a special stage of the formation of democracy in Ukraine in comparison with other post-communist countries. Ukrainians protested not so much against someone, but for something – for certain values. It is important for Ukrainians to prevent the spread of authoritarianism. When

liberal and democratic institutions cannot cope with it, it is political non-indifference that prompts Ukrainians to go to the streets and protest, defending their rights and freedoms (Yakovliev & Haran, 2015, p. 24).

The socio-economic crisis has also significantly affected the development of the “third sector”. NGOs were forced to seek foreign financial support for their activities. Funding from abroad was important and supported the existence of certain public organizations, but did not significantly change the ways of civil society formation. Sometimes, the use of foreign aid had certain disadvantages. Public organizations were formed that lived on foreign aid. They were contemptuously called “grantoids”. S. Henderson described this problem in detail. He noted that instead of forming developed horizontal networks and supporting grassroots initiatives, vertical, isolated public communities were formed (Henderson, 2002, p. 140). These organizations rented offices, bought equipment, hired accountants, translators, etc. In other words, the funds went to the maintenance of the organizations themselves, and not to the development of civil society itself. However, it is worth noting that often the word “grantoids” was also used to form a negative opinion about the role of public organizations.

Nevertheless, despite all the challenges, the network of public organizations, as one of the largest segments of civil society, was constantly growing.

If in 1991 there were about 300 all-Ukrainian public organizations, in 1997 their number grew to 800 (Tokar, 2020, p. 127). In 2000, the number of public organizations with all-Ukrainian status reached 1267 (State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2011).

Thus, in the period of the 1990s, the legal framework for the activities of civil society institutions was formed. However, the state authorities did not actually notice its existence. On the other hand, NGOs themselves have not yet gained sufficient influence on social processes. This can be explained by the fact that with the creation of a strong state apparatus of Ukraine and overcoming the socio-economic crisis in the second half of the 1990s, their role has significantly decreased. Moreover, non-governmental institutions did not attract public attention during this period. Confidence in them

was extremely low. In fact, despite the growth in the number of registered public associations, the number of people involved in the work of the organizations actually remained at the same level. Yes, on the question “Which public or political organization are you a member of?” answered negatively: 1994 – 82.2%, 1996 – 86.7%, 1998 – 86.6%, 2000 – 82.9% of respondents (Reznik, 2019, p. 99).

What was missing for the full development of civil society? Here we absolutely share M. Howard’s conclusion: stabilization of the economic situation, growth in the well-being of the population and a reassessment of the role of the state and its relationship to civil society organizations (Howard, 2009, p. 171-172).

In the early 2000s, a growing socio-political crisis in Ukraine led to an increase in the level of politicization of the social movement. The establishment of oligarchic governance and the attempt to establish an authoritarian consolidation of power in the last term of Kuchma’s presidency provoked mass opposition in civil society.

Between 2000 and 2001 in the republic was protest campaign “The Ukraine Without Kuchma”, organized by the political opposition. The protest was joined not only by opposition political parties but also by some non-governmental public organizations. After the aggravation of the situation and a series of violent confrontations between the police and the protesters, Kuchma for the first time at the national level took some steps to meet non-governmental organizations. In our opinion, the beginning of the dialogue with the institutions of civil society was aimed, on foot, at removing the degree of political tension. This calls into question the sincerity of the government’s intentions to promote the development of an independent civil society that would influence public policy and control government activities. The government’s attempts to level and limit the role of non-state institutions in the processes of governing the state by supporting only the activities of third-sector structures loyal to the regime were also noticeable (Ivaniuk, 2013, p. 44).

However, even under these conditions, the number of public organizations was constantly growing.

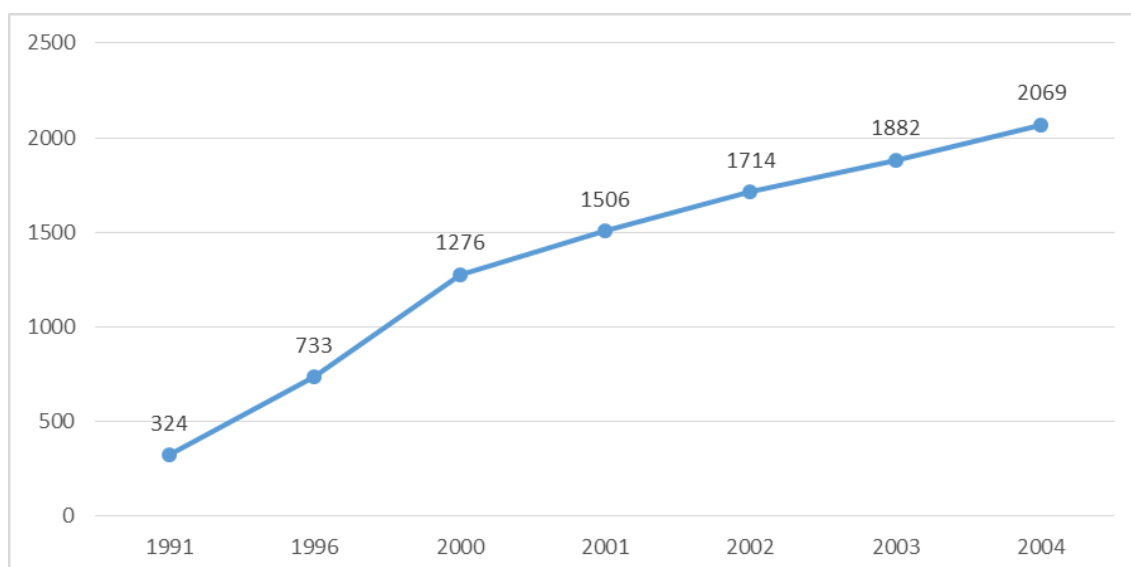


Figure 1. The number of officially registered civil organizations by the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine. Source: Formed by the author based on the research of M. Tokar (Tokar, 2020, p. 127) and the statistical bulletin of the State Statistics Service of Ukraine (State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2011).

Even with an unfavorable legal framework for NGOs and the government's efforts to discredit foreign-funded organizations, the overall rating of civil society has improved over the years. According to the study "Nations in Transit" (Sushko, 2005) of the Freedom House, in 1998 it was 4.25, in 1999 – 4.00, in 2001 – 3.75, in 2002 – 3.75, in 2003 – 3.50, in 2004 – 3.75, then in mid-2005 – 3 (Sushko, 2005).

It is important to note that even in these conditions, Ukrainian civil society has shown a fairly high level of maturity and organization, which came as a surprise for many political experts. The main locomotive at that time was non-governmental organizations that existed with international support and were focused on the development of democracy, protection of human rights and freedom of journalism. A new impetus was achieved through self-organization citizens, the development of youth and student movements and journalists' associations (Kurt et al., 2005, p. 27).

2. Development of civil society in Ukraine after the Orange Revolution

The Orange Revolution of 2004, as a mass public resistance to the falsification of the presidential election in Ukraine, was a new impetus for the establishment of civil society institutions. The new state policy on the development of the independent civil sector also contributed to this. The ideals of the Maidan, among which the main postulates were freedom, justice, independence and unity of Ukraine, prompted the state authorities to start an open dialogue between the

government and society. In our opinion, the Orange Revolution can be called a revolution of civil society, even if the level of political participation of Ukrainian citizens remained low during this period. For example, in 2007 83.7% of Ukrainian citizens were not members of public, political organizations and movements, while in 1994 such citizens were 82% (Panina, 2005, p. 26). However, it was during this revolution that the middle class took an active part in political events. Entrepreneurs, managers, and company employees not only provided material support to the protesters, but also provided food, clothing, housing, and so on.

On September 15, 2005, the Decree of the President of Ukraine Viktor Yushchenko "On Ensuring Public Participation in the Formation and Implementation of State Policy" was issued (Decree of the President of Ukraine No. 32/2012, 2005). It was aimed at establishing effective mechanisms of the state with the institutions of civil partnership, improving the activities of public authorities and local governments, ensuring its transparency and openness. It was during Yushchenko's presidency that a list of civil society institutions was formed. For the first time at the level of normative acts it was determined that civil society institutions include: public organizations, trade unions, employers' organizations, charitable and religious organizations, self-organization organizations, non-governmental media and other non-profit associations and institutions legalized.

In the post-revolutionary period, the number of political parties and public organizations grew

steadily. In 2007, 141 political parties and 2,678 public organizations were registered in Ukraine, of which 2,086 had an all-Ukrainian status and 592 an international one (Osaulenko, 2008, p. 22). As of January 1, 2011, 185 political parties and 3,344 public organizations were already registered in Ukraine, of which 2,619 had an all-Ukrainian status and 725 an international one (Osaulenko, 2011, p. 22). In total, in 2010 the number of all non-governmental organizations was about 52 thousand.

In general, in 2010 the Civil Society Organizations Sustainability Index (CSOSI) was 3.5. It was higher than the index of former post-Soviet countries, except for the Baltic countries (Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia). For example, in Armenia it was 4.0, in Azerbaijan – 4.7, in Belarus – 5.9, in Georgia and Moldova – 4.2, in Russia – 4.3, while in Estonia – 2.0 (USAID, 2010, p. 4).

At the end of 2010, Viktor Yanukovich was elected the new President of Ukraine. On the one hand, in the first years of Viktor Yanukovich's presidency there was a positive trend of cooperation between the government and civil society. The slogan of his election campaign is “I will hear everyone!” contributed to the spread of faith in society in the further development of civil society, and Viktor Yanukovich himself at the beginning of his presidency repeatedly stressed the need for cooperation between government and civil society. At least outwardly it was so perceived by society. On the other hand, at the beginning of his term, he began a gradual concentration of power in his hands, which in turn negatively affected the functioning of civil society in the future. Already in April 2010, two months after Yanukovich was elected president, former PACE Co-Rapporteur on Ukraine Hanne Severinsen was struck by the level of coagulation of democracy in Ukraine (Ukrinform, 2010). Here it is worth mentioning the words J. Keane: “The birth and revival of civil society is always associated with dangers. It grants freedom to despots and democrats equally” (Keane, 2000, p. 51). During this period, the main shortcomings of the young democracy were clearly manifested: the immaturity of the democratic political system, the lack of a system of deterrence against the usurpation of power, and the weakness of civil society institutions. However, we fully agree with the view that resistance to authoritarianism has already been embedded in the political consciousness of Ukrainian society and “this is a bottom-up phenomenon, spurred on by Ukraine’s vibrant civil society, the rising class of independent journalists and local activists who

have strengthened their voice and power since the Orange revolution” (Jarabik & Shapovalova, 2010, p. 2). In our opinion, the Maidan phenomenon should be considered as a form of civil disobedience of civil society in a democratic society. This is what Jean L. Cohen, Andrew Arato considered possible and desirable for radical institutional reforms. They thought “civil disobedience, aimed at further democratization of the institutions of constitutional democracy, strengthens the principles of majority rule” (Cohen & Arato, 2003, p. 519, 546).

At the beginning of his presidency, Viktor Yanukovich repeatedly stressed the need for cooperation between the government and civil society. However, in our deep conviction, since 2012, cooperation and the level of trust between third sector institutions and public authorities has significantly decreased, which later led to a political crisis, new social upheavals, revolution and war.

In 2013, on the basis of the Law of Ukraine “On Public Associations”, there were 67,155 in the republic, of which 409 had all-Ukrainian status (Kalachova, 2014, p. 7). The increase in the number of public organizations is due to partial liberalization of the creation and registration of organizations. On the other hand, Ukrainian society remained politicized. In general, citizens were poorly informed about the activities of the non-governmental sector. With the report U.S. Agency for International Development in 2013 only 15 percent of Ukrainians say that they know of CSOs that are active in Ukraine, while 59 percent say they do not know any, and a further 19 percent said that they do not know what a CSO is (USAID, 2013, p. 230).

Civil society reacted sharply to socio-economic problems and the collapse of democratic processes. In addition, the most active public organizations, whose activities were aimed at protecting democratic procedures and upholding the rights and freedoms of citizens, were formed at the expense of international and private donors.

With the victory of the Revolution of Dignity 2013-2014, a new stage in the formation of state policy in the field of civil society development began. It is connected, first of all, with the legislative consolidation of Ukraine’s movement towards the European Union, where the role of civil society institutions in public administration is extremely high. In 2016, the “Strategy for promoting the development of civil society in

Ukraine for 2016-2020” was adopted (approved by the Decree of the President of Ukraine “On promoting the development of civil society in Ukraine”). She noted Strategy for Promoting Civil Society in Ukraine for 2016-2020” noted that “The Revolution of Dignity opened a new stage in the history of civil society, demonstrated public influence on socio-political transformations, was the impetus for the renewal and reformatting of power” (Decree of the President of Ukraine, 2016).

In 2005-2021 the CSO Sustainability Index that measures the strength and overall viability of

civil society sectors, constantly grew. We will remind that seven different dimensions of the CSO Sustainability Index: legal environment, organizational capacity, financial viability, advocacy, service provision, infrastructure, public image. The assessment is based on a scale from 1 to 7, with a score of 1 indicating a very advanced civil society sector with a high level of sustainability, and a score of 7 indicating a fragile, unsustainable sector with a low level of development.

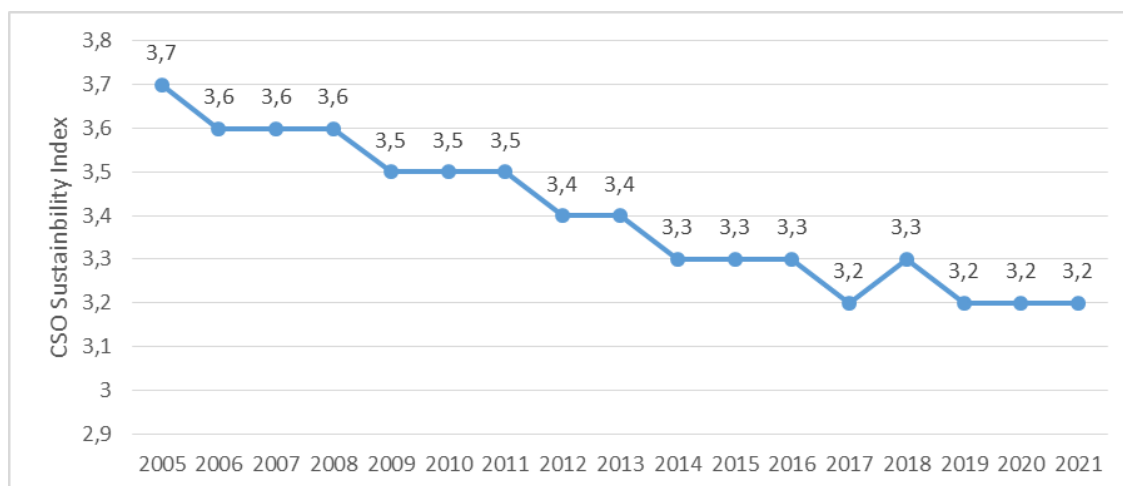


Figure 2. USAID’s Civil Society Organization Sustainability Index (the Index or CSOSI).

Source: The graph is based on the annual reports of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID, 2013).

We believe that after the revolution in Ukraine, a strong civil society began to form, which was a participant or even an initiator of positive changes in recent years. It influences the agenda of the state, controls the activities of the government, as well as formulates its own reform proposals.

While writing this article, Ukraine and the Ukrainian people faced a new challenge – the war with the Russian Federation. We can say with confidence that the tragic events of the war showed the maturity of Ukrainian civil society. Forgetting about political disputes and dissatisfaction with the lack of rapid change in certain areas, political parties and NGOs have united around the government to defend the homeland.

According to a poll conducted by the Rating Sociological Group on March 1, 2022, 93% of Ukrainian citizens support the activities of President Zelensky, and 84% support the actions

of heads of local governments (Sociological group Rating, 2022, p. 9-11). Also, support for the foreign policy vector of public policy, in particular Ukraine's accession to the EU and NATO, is extremely high. Thus, 86% of respondents supported joining the European Union, and 76% supported membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (Sociological group Rating, 2022, p. 16).

Today, in response to the challenges of wartime, many NGOs are reformatting their activities and setting themselves other goals and objectives than those set out in their founding documents. The most common are, for example, financial and organizational assistance to the Armed Forces of Ukraine and Territorial Defense, organization of assistance to injured people and animals, coordination of assistance centers for internally displaced persons, organization of humanitarian assistance, car volunteering and more.

The Orange Revolution of 2004 and the Revolution of Dignity of 2013-2014 were turning points in defining state policy on civil society development, determining the place of civil society institutions in the country's political system and creating a real opportunity to influence state policy and ensuring system of public control.

Since the early 1990s, civil society in Ukraine has gone from an expression of public interest to a truly influential political institution.

Conclusions

Thus, we can say that the civil society of Ukraine has developed over a long period of time against the background of sometimes contradictory state policy in this area and the lack of a broad social base for the activities of public institutions. For a long time, the government not only did not promote the formation of civil society institutions, but also tried to suspend the formation of the third sector, take it under control, contributed to the formation of "manual" public organizations. First of all, the public sector was deprived of the functions of real influence on public policy and effective control over government activities. In the absence of true democracy, the only thing that NGOs could hope for in their activities was to outline the range of issues that needed to be addressed. At the same time, with the gradual resolution of socio-economic problems since the late 1990s, the number of active middle-class members has grown, becoming the social base of civil society and the driving force behind future revolutions. The existence of these citizens outside public associations has led to a low assessment of the development of civil society by Ukrainian and foreign experts on the eve of the Orange Revolution. However, it was the pressure of millions of representatives of small entrepreneurs, business, officials, intellectuals, students, not only led to significant changes in the socio-political sphere, but also gave the opportunity to talk about the formation of civil society.

The Orange Revolution of 2004 and the Revolution of Dignity of 2013-2014 were turning points in defining state policy on civil society development, determining the place of civil society institutions in the country's political system and creating a real opportunity to influence state policy and ensuring of public control.

In our opinion, it was the strength of civil society institutions that hindered the country's attempt to return to the oligarchic authoritarianism of the Yanukovich era and moving away from the pro-European course of development of country. The period from 2014 was marked by a rapid increase in the number of citizens and public associations involved in charity, charitable and volunteer activities, and monitoring, analytical practices.

Today, civil society in Ukraine has become a cementing intermediate link between the political power and society, which by all means contributes to the fight against the aggressor and the struggle for the preservation of statehood. At the same time, even in wartime, civil society institutions actively monitor the government and demand that it be cleansed of corruption.

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