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MODELS OF CIVIL SOCIETY TRANSFORMATION IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD: A SOCIAL-PHILOSOPHICAL REACTION

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Abstract: Civil society, as an institutional form of public life, has undergone a complex transformation, conditioned by socio-political and cultural and technological factors. In modern world, civil society models are characterized not only by process of establishing democracy or reforms, but also by dynamics of newly emerging social interactions. Article attempts to analyze various models of civil society transformation from a socio-philosophical perspective, based on modern theories, global trends and value transformations. Special attention is paid to Western liberal, neoconservative, as well as postmodern models, generalizing their internal logic and possible applicability. The aim of the article is to reveal the deep causal chains of civil society transformation, considering it as a socio-philosophical phenomenon.

Keywords: society, socio-philosophical analysis, model, democracy, values, postmodernity, institutions.

Introduction. Subject, Problems and Goals

The subject of this article is the models of transformation of civil society in the modern world from a socio-philosophical perspective. The study covers the value and institutional structures of the three main models (liberal, neoconservative, postmodern), as well as the possibilities of their complementarity in the context of global trends and modern challenges.

Issues

1. Determining Models
- How to define models of civil society that reflect not only legal, but also socio-cultural and ethical standards?
- Do classical, liberal or neoconservative models address the challenges of a digitalized, globalized field?

2. How identify the complementarities or contrasts between "freedom", "civic activism" and "value discipline" in each model?

3. Logic of hybridization and localization
- How is possible to build a socio-philosophical theoretical unit that will consolidate elements of models, responding to the approaches of digital activism, online groups and value pluralism (Simmons, 2018, pp. 112-130)?
- To what extent can common socio-cultural principles be disseminated through the combination of these models in a format that adapts to the specificities of dif-

ferent societies (linguistic-cultural, regional)?

Objectives

1. Conduct a theoretical analysis

- Identify and compare the main value and institutional positions of the three models (liberal, neoconservative, postmodern) in the socio-philosophical discourse.

2. Assess how the ideas of "freedom", "relationship with the state", "legality" and "digital pluralism" are expressed in each model.

3. Model a hybrid comparison process

- To develop the basis for a possible hybrid structure of social models, taking into account the challenges of globalization, digitalization and value pluralism (Krichli, 2015).

4. Propose socio-philosophical guidelines

- To propose logic and principles that will help both develop theoretical frameworks and build sustainable, multi-layered civil society models in a practical environment (non-governmental organizations, civic initiatives, state-public system).

At the beginning of the 21st century, the idea of civil society is regaining relevance as a way of organizing social life and regulating society-state relations. If at the end of the last century it was seen as a pillar of democratization against authoritarianism and total state control, then in modern socio-philosophical discourse civil society is not only a mechanism of struggle, but also a field of value rearrangements, institutional restructuring and self-organization. In this regard, at the present stage, it is more necessary than ever to examine not only the ideological foundations of civil society, but also its specific models and the logic of its operation in the context of global and local processes.

Various interpretations of civil society, from the ancient Greek polis to the modern images of NGOs and solidarity networks operating on the global stage, show that it is not only the result of political relations, but also an expression of worldview, public consciousness and cultural institutionalization. In theory, civil society unites those spheres where people act as independently acting subjects, not being coerced by state power, but often operating in a framework of mutual investment and interaction with it.

Previously, the liberal model of civil society

was dominant, interpreting it as a network of free individuals operating outside the state. However, in subsequent decades, a number of other approaches have emerged, including neo-Marxist, functionalist, and postmodern trends, which redefine the society-state symbiosis, the structure of social capital, and the role of the public sphere.

From this perspective, the contemporary philosophical task is to reinterpret what models operate in the field of civil society today, what are the prerequisites for their formation, their value content, and their functions, in the conditions of globalization, digitalization, and the hybridization of society.

This research is based on a joint system of socio-philosophical approaches, aiming to reveal the deep assumptions of civil society transformation models, their value foundations, and the logic of modern models. The methodological basis of the research was formed by the following main components:

1. Phenomenological approach:

Phenomenology has been applied at the level of "evidence" and "expression" of civil society phenomena, to analyze theoretical texts, civic sentiments, and public practices. The research phase used texts and analyses of Habermas's preservation of public space, Putnam's social capital, as well as civic identities operating in postmodern platforms. Phenomenological reading has helped to reveal the imaginary structural factors of "freedom," "honesty," and "identity" underlying models of civil society.

2. Comparative-analytical method.

The conceptual typology of models (liberal, neoconservative, postmodern) was subjected to comparative examination, highlighting the fundamental points of each (e.g., autonomy of law, value discipline, network multiplication) and the dialectical conversation arising from contrasting them with each other. The method allowed to clarify the model limitations and complementary possibilities by discussing the circumstance of conceptual "clash" (e.g., free vs. disciplined, universal vs. localized).

3. Hermeneutic interpretation:

Through hermeneutics, the textual heritage of classical and contemporary philosophical, political, and sociological authors on civil society was analyzed (Knöchelmann, 2024). Moreover, state and civil "philosophical-lexical" for-

mulations were observed, on the basis of which "public perceptions" and "meta-representations" were discussed, forming the strategic perspective of the research.

4. Discourse analysis:

Multipolar online and printed publications, official statements, and messages of social activism were analyzed within the framework of general socio-philosophical approaches (e.g., two-interpretation discourse, public debates, value deliberation). Discourse analysis helped to clarify how "legality" and "experimentation" are formed as social values and how they are included in various models.

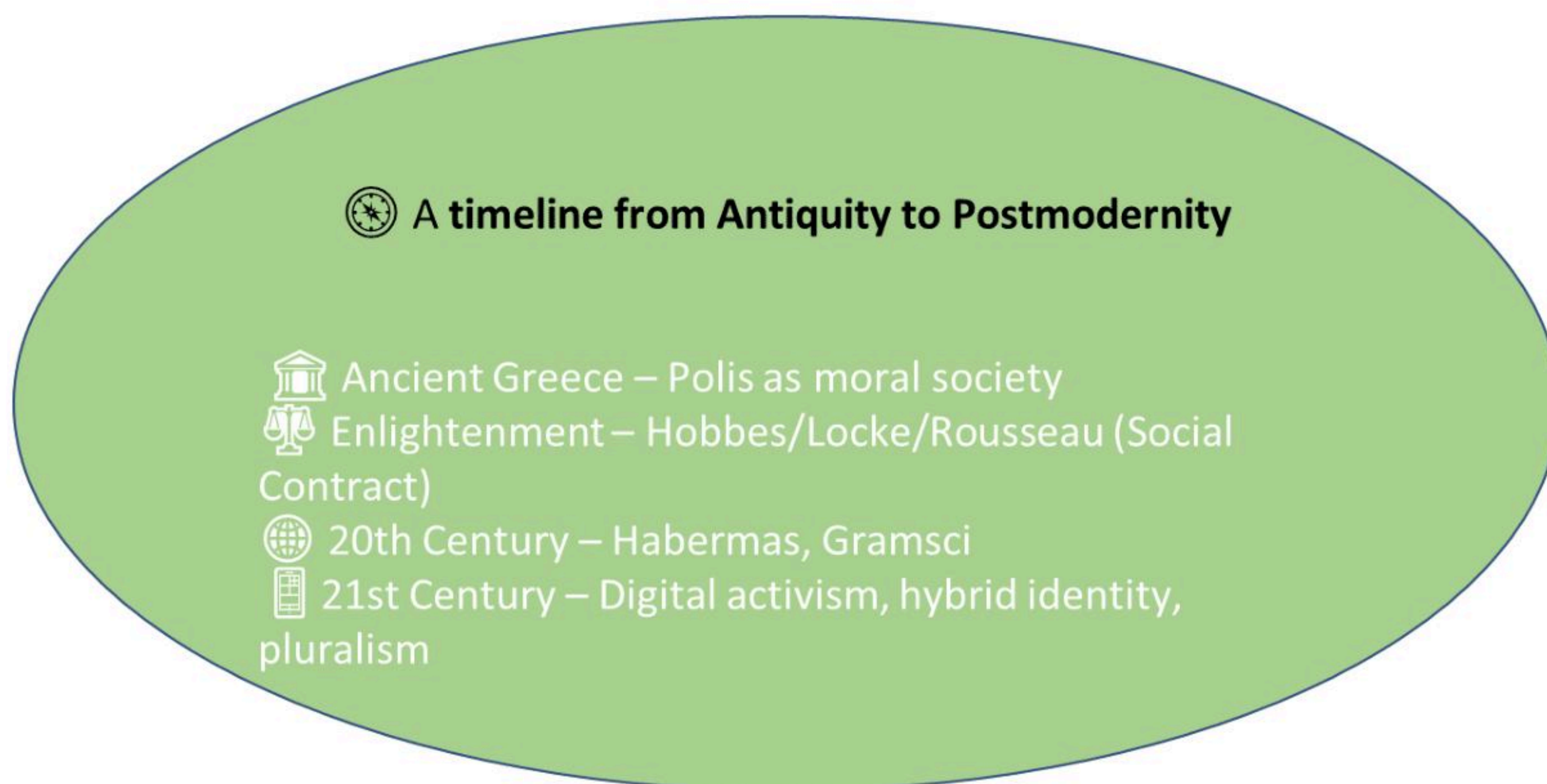5. Dialectical-humanitarian synthesis.

With this method, we obtained a general socio-philosophical context, where the separate features of each model had the possibility of

hybridization. The goal of dialectical synthesis was to find out where and how the contradictions "freedom-security", "multiplication of identity-organization", "local-global" intersect in the contemporary field.

6. Literature Selection and Rating Criteria:

The selection of sources for the article was shaped by three premises: (a) socio-philosophical concepts of classical and modern authors, (b) research on global experience (atypical and normative) of the last ten years; (c) localized Armenian and English articles from the magazine "Wisdom" and other authoritative digital literature platforms. The sources were carefully selected according to their scientific-archaeological equivalence, orientation to publicization, and analytical power of model analysis.

Evolution of the Concept of Civil Society

A timeline from Antiquity to Postmodernity

🏛 Ancient Greece – Polis as moral society
⚖ Enlightenment – Hobbes/Locke/Rousseau (Social Contract)
🌐 20th Century – Habermas, Gramsci
📱 21st Century – Digital activism, hybrid identity, pluralism

The understanding of civil society has evolved over time, moving from a theory of the "natural" status of society to complex mechanisms of institutionalization of the public sphere (Moyo, 2024, pp. 1-35). In ancient and Enlightenment philosophy, it was presented as a moral form of organization of society, a space for the manifestation of free will. In the theories of the social contract of Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, civil society acted as an intermediate stage on the path of transition from the state of nature to statehood.

Since the second half of the 20th century, the

understanding of civil society has changed significantly. Its independence is expressed not only from the state, but also from the economy. Habermas's theory of the public sphere, Gramsci's theory of hegemony, as well as the analyses of Tocqueville, Putnam, Castells and others view civil society as a mechanism of public communication, accumulation of social capital and social control. These changes provide the basis for talking not about a single general model, but about a variety of transforming models.

Models of Civil Society Transformation

The formation and development of civil society are conditioned by numerous factors, from the nature of the political system to the system of cultural values (Arugay & Baquisal, 2024, p. 90). The processes of their transformation can be systematized by model distinctions, which reflect not only the diversity of theoretical understandings, but also practical approaches. Below we analyze the most widespread and proven models of global experience.
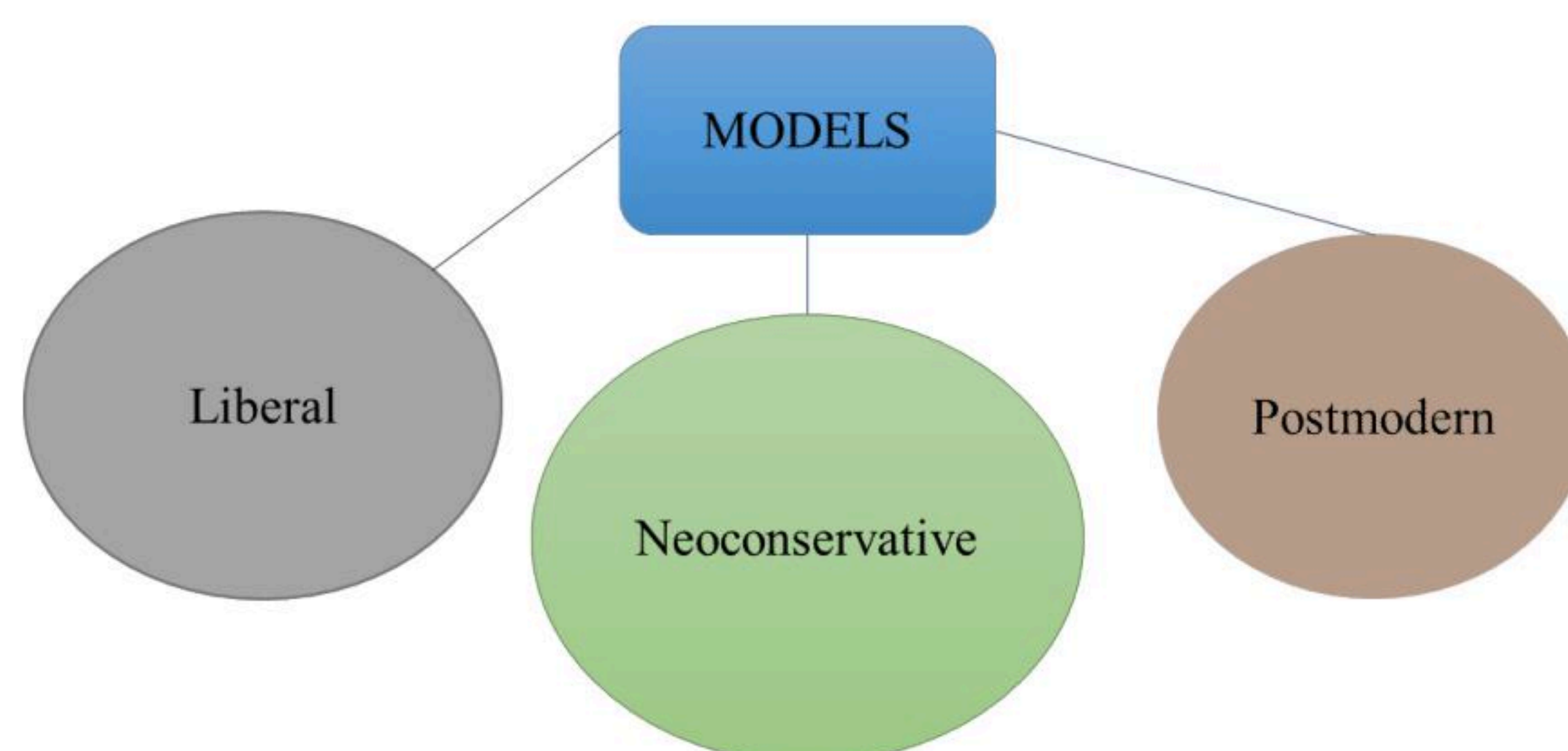

Figure 1 shows models of civil society transformation.

1. Liberal Model

The liberal model views civil society as a self-organizing sphere independent of the state, composed of voluntary organizations created by individuals and groups whose purpose is to protect their rights, participate in public affairs, and monitor state power. The principles of personal freedom, the rule of law, and social diversity underlie this model.

The liberal model was formed in Western Europe and North America within the framework of the development of democratic institutions (Prozorova, 2024, pp. 1683-1702). It expresses a picture of society in which civil society acts as an intermediary between the state and the individual, ensuring social balance and legal protection.

However, since the end of the 20th century and especially in the 21st century, under the influence of globalization, mass media, and new technologies, the liberal model has faced a number of challenges: the deepening of social hierarchies, the relativism of values, and a decline in citizen participation. All this leads to the need to redefine civil society.

The interpretation of globalization as supremeness, shows that globalization is not only scientific and technological progress (rational improvement of society), but also artistic and technical progress ("emotional" improvement of the same society) (Oganyan et al., 2023, pp. 85-97).

In contrast to the liberal model, the neoconservative model emphasizes the connection of civil society with national, cultural, and religious traditions. Here, civil society is considered not as an independent structure from the state, but as a structure closely cooperating with the state, which is called upon to strengthen social order, preserve traditional values, and national identity.

The neoconservative model emphasizes the role of family, community, religious, and moral institutions as the main sources of stability in public life (Ward, 2025, pp. 1-18). This model was widely used, especially in the United States during the Reagan administration, as well as in a number of Eastern European countries during the stages of national identity redefinition.

The neoconservative model is often criticized for its one-sidedness, as it, while defending "traditional" values, sometimes tends to limit cultural diversity, the right to free choice, and the interests of minorities. However, it is a response to global challenges that threaten the unity and moral and psychological stability of society.

From a socio-philosophical perspective, this model is important for understanding the conservative side of civil society as a mechanism

for ensuring social order and institutional continuity. It reminds us that civil society is not only a manifestation of freedom, but also a space of responsibility and institutional discipline.

3. Postmodern Model

1. The postmodern model develops as a response to the limitations of both liberal and neoconservative understandings. In this model, civil society is viewed as a polycentric, networked structure, where the formation of individual and group identities is based on diverse affiliations, temporal connections, and cultural multiplicity (Schmidt, 2019, pp. 78–95).

The postmodern approach rejects the idea of a homogeneous, universal citizenship, emphasizing instead the importance of the voices of marginalized groups, the manifestations of diverse agency, and the emergence of new hybrid forms (Jopling et al., 2025, pp. 31-77). Here, civil society takes on a post-national, global character, encompassing not only traditional organizations but also movements, networked platforms, and digital public spaces.

This model, although often seen as an expression of a lack of stability, is important for understanding contemporary philosophical realities. It allows us to analyze how civil society responds to value pluralism, the information revolution, and the identity crisis.

In the postmodern model, a citizen ceases to be simply a legal subject and becomes an active participant operating on online platforms, who can simultaneously be a member of several movements, ideological fields, and network groups.

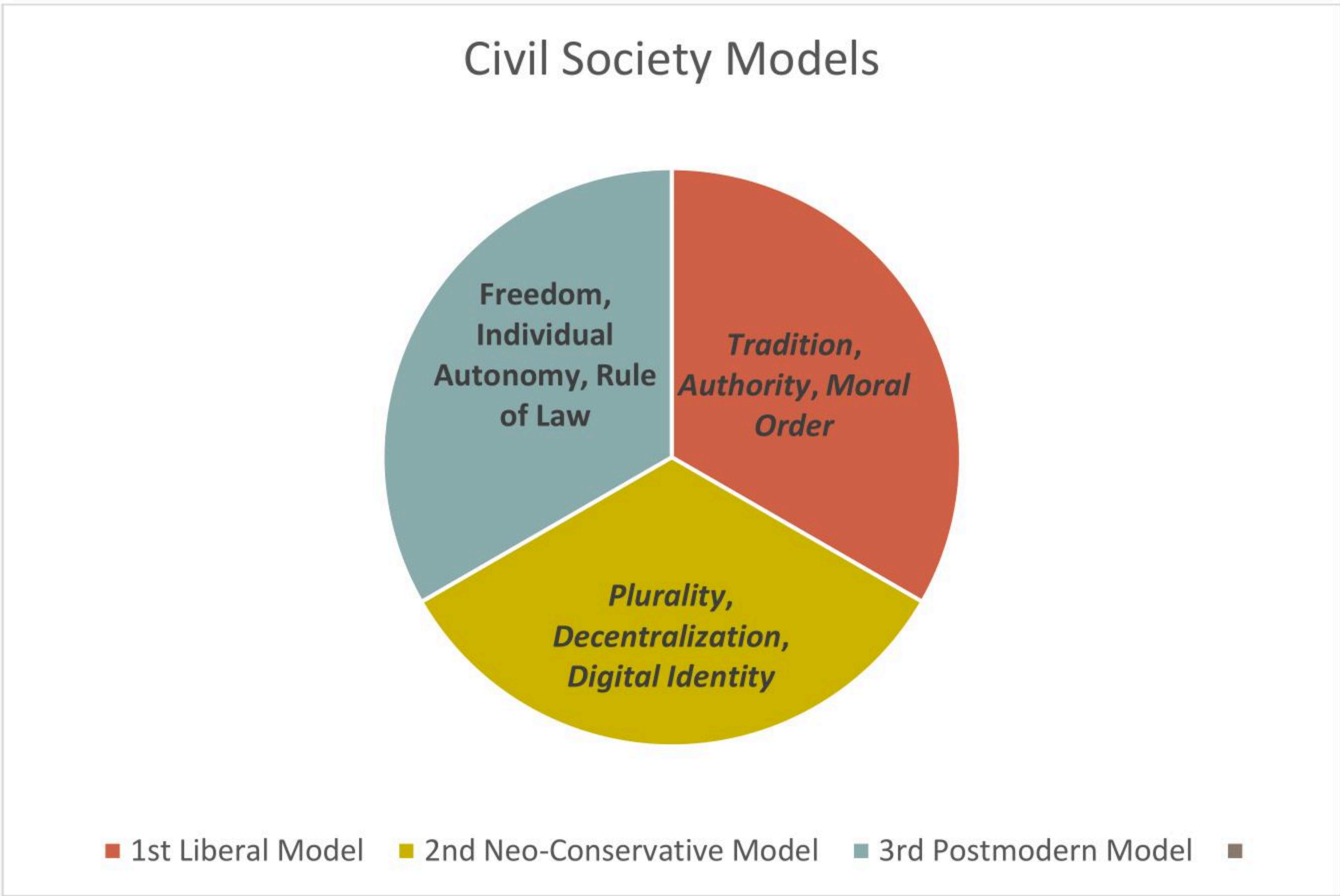I. Comparative analysis of models and limits of applicability

The models presented above – liberal, neoconservative and postmodern – are different ways of conceptualizing civil society, reflecting different logics of social organization, participation in public life and value systems. Their comparative analysis allows us to reveal the deep motivations and possible limitations of civil society transformations.

Model	Relationship with the state	Core values	Advantages	Negative aspects
Liberal	Independence, critical control	Individual freedom, rule of law	Promotes participation, autonomy	Polarization of society, formal participation
Neoconservative	Collaboration and control	Traditions, order and responsibility	Institutional stability, value system	Limits diversity, risks of discrimination
Postmodern	Multi-layered, dynamic relationships	Diversity, networking, freedom of identity	Flexibility, inclusion of marginal voices	Lack of stability, weakening of content

2. None of these models fully describes the multi-layered reality of modern civil society. In the current phase, a hybridization of models is observed, when traditional structures are intertwined with new network forms, digital environments and personalized approaches to activism. In this context, civil society is evolving into a multi-level platform of coexistence, where identities, interests and values are actively clashing and negotiating (Ciancio, 2024).
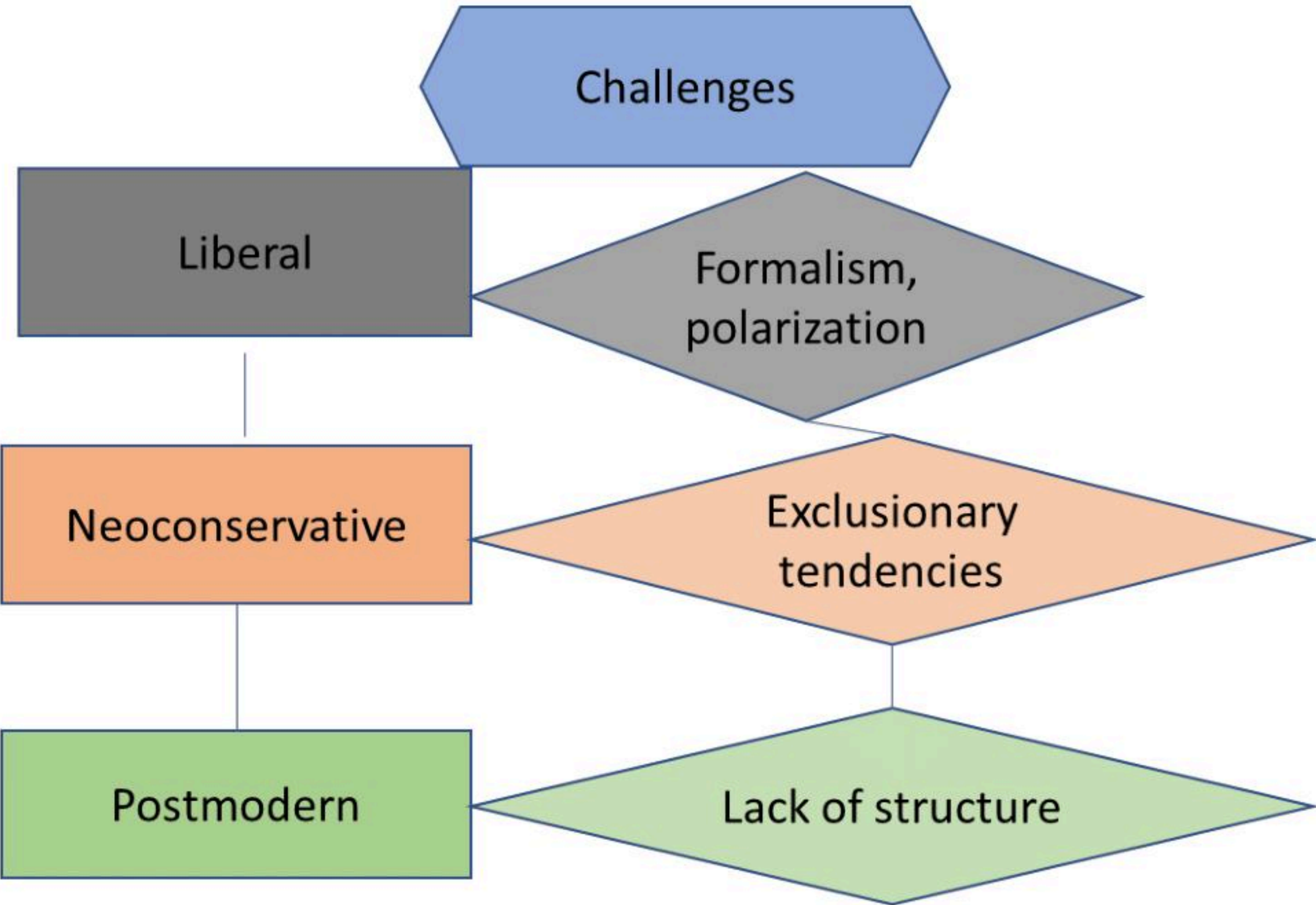
Civil Society Models

Pie chart showing three civil society models: Freedom, Individual Autonomy, Rule of Law; Tradition, Authority, Moral Order; Plurality, Decentralization, Digital Identity. Legend: ■ 1st Liberal Model ■ 2nd Neo-Conservative Model ■ 3rd Postmodern Model ■

Challenges

In the modern world, civil society models are facing a number of challenges:

- Digitalization and the influence of social media, which are reshaping forms of participation and mechanisms of legitimacy.
- The strong role of the state and large corporations, which can lead to the marginalization of the civil sphere.
- Value pluralism and the post-truth regime, which complicate public debate and concerted action.
- The spread of political populism, which often introduces formality into civil society without content.

Flowchart: Challenges → Liberal → Formalism, polarization; Neoconservative → Exclusionary tendencies; Postmodern → Lack of structure.

Conclusion

The process of transformation of civil society in the modern world is multifaceted and complex. From a socio-philosophical perspective, it expresses the deep tendencies of restructuring public life, identity formation, reinterpretation of participation, and value transformation.

The three main models considered in the article: liberal, neoconservative, and postmodern, interpret the role of civil society, its structure, and the relationship between the state, society, and the individual in different ways. Each of them represents a unique understanding of citizenship and public participation, a value foundation, and a mechanism of organization.

The liberal model focuses on individual rights and views civil society as a field of state control and the manifestation of free will. The neoconservative model emphasizes the need to maintain social order, tradition, and value stability. The postmodern model, in turn, presents the possibility of diversity, networking, and the inclusion of new identities.

The contrasts between these models, however, do not exclude their complementarity. Moreover, at the current stage, the hybrid development of civil society is more likely, when elements of different models are combined in response to global challenges, digitalization, cultural pluralism, and the complexity of public relations.

A socio-philosophical analysis of the transformation of civil society requires perceiving the civic sphere not only as an institutional system, but also as a socio-cultural space where public debates, reinterpretations of values, and identity formations take place. The meaning of being a citizen in the 21st century goes beyond legal definitions, acquiring civilizational, cultural, and ethical layers.

The bold and comparative analysis of each model (liberal, neoconservative, postmodern), as well as the application of a methodological framework (phenomenological, comparative-analytical, hermeneutic, discursive and dialectical), showed that the process of transformation of civil society does not lend itself to any single theoretical explanation: it presents multi-layered, value-based and institutional radiations, which are both localized and globalized in nature.

The main subject, the socio-philosophical analysis of models of transformation of civil society, was fully covered: the comments revealed that the range of problems (the crisis of theoretical diversity, contradictions of assumptions, the logic of hybridization and localization) are real problems that exist both in the theoretical field and in the practical political-cultural context. However, the analysis carried out at the level of the mentioned problems showed that each model has unique formats of the relationship between the individual, society and the state, but no model taken separately fully describes the modern flexible, multidimensional civil field.

The application of the methodology (structural discovery of civic "identity" through a phenomenological perspective, description of dialectical contrasts of models through a comparative-analytical method, discovery of "meta-representations" of public values through hermeneutic and discursive readings, as well as demonstration of hybridization possibilities through a dialectical-humanitarian synthesis) provided the opportunity:

- to find out that the word "freedom" is not fully equivalent in all models: for example, in the liberal model, "freedom" is further concretized in the formats of legal freedom, while in the postmodern model it is redefined as individual pluralism.
- To prove that the idea of "relationship with the state" does not have a monolithic format: in the neoconservative model, it is viewed as a synergy with traditional institutions, while in the postmodern model, this relationship is on the simultaneous "global-local" border, when the state becomes not only a legislative, but also a coordinating (for example, on digital platforms) actor.

Pillars of the Hybrid Model

Pillar	Description
• **Legal-Institutional**	Constitutional rights, autonomy, NGO-state coordination
• **Cultural-Value Based**	Ethical traditions, community foundations, shared identity
• **Digital-Networked**	Online participation, flexible identity, global-local engagement

- As a result, at the level of philosophical assumptions and discourses, the need to develop a new hybrid theory around the oppositions of "legality-values", "identity-organization", and "global-digital" emerged.

Within the framework of the research objectives (theoretical analysis, elucidation of the dialectical breadth of assumptions, development of a hybridization model, proposal of socio-philosophical guidelines), the following main conclusion was reached:

- The liberal model includes the protection of individual rights and freedoms, but without a deep-rooted "value discipline", it often leads to the polarization of society.
- The neoconservative model is important from the perspective of preserving social order and traditions, but it lacks the "experimental innovative logic" that requires the successive "accumulation of experience."
- The postmodern model emphasizes the inclusion of multiple identities, but its "inherent institutional nature" requires new formats of sustainability.

Combining elements of the previous three models, especially considering the dynamics of digital platforms and the spillover to online activism, a hybrid model can be proposed that includes:
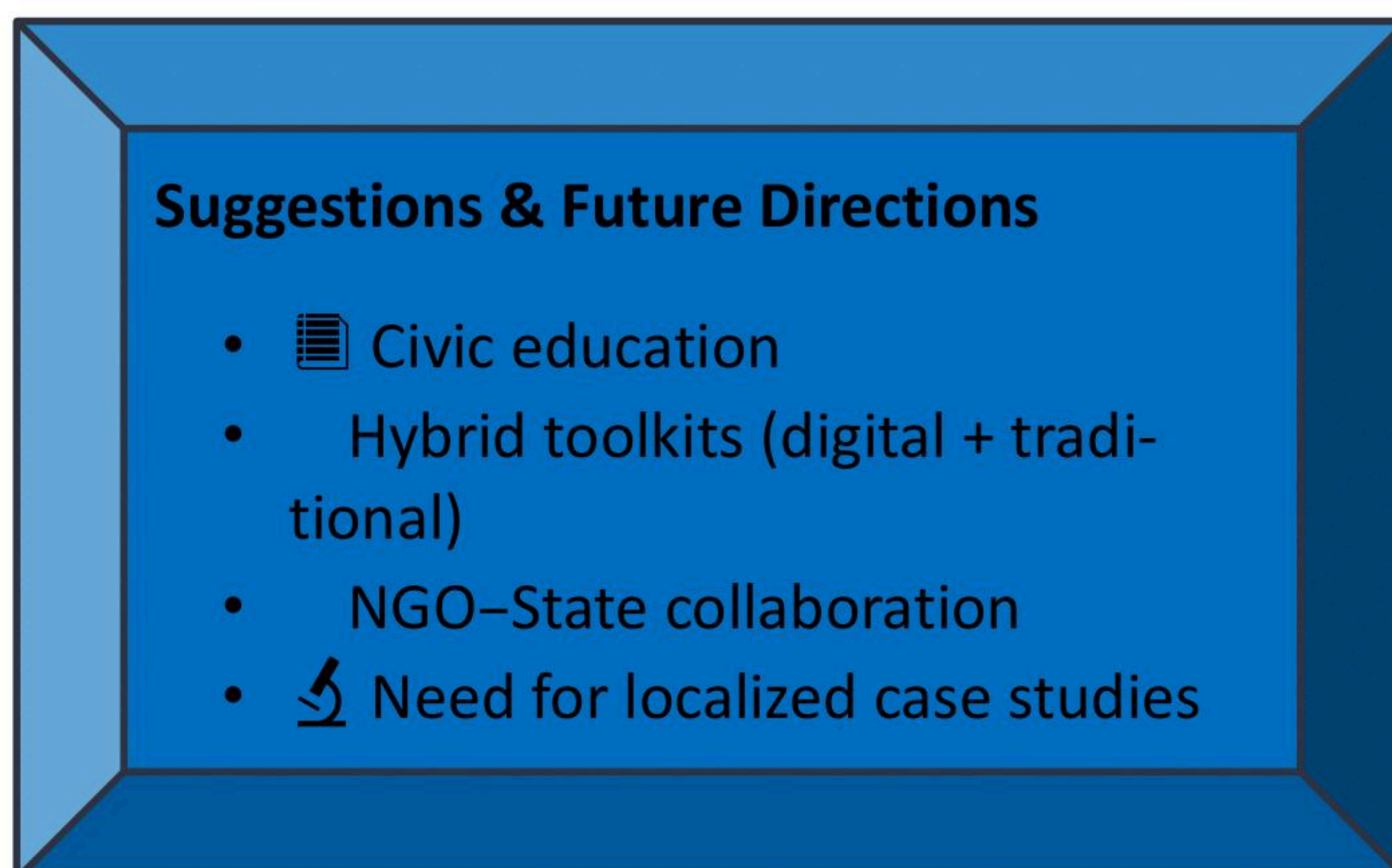
- Liberal "legal autonomy", which ensures individual freedoms and the protection of civil rights.
- Neoconservative "protection of values", which is entrenched in local culture and traditions, creating a "joint platform of public values".
- The possibilities of forming postmodern "network identities" that will enable the implementation of multi-layered, temporary, digital community processes.

This hybrid model has three main components:

- A legally governed institutional environment where the standards of individual and group rights are clarified.
- A cultural-value foundation, which is based on historical-cultural traditions and ethical discourse, through the reinterpretation of existing values and the creation of new value platforms.
- A digital-networked innovation function that allows citizens and individual initiators to participate in initiatives not only on local but also global platforms, serving as a new opportunity for self-expression.

Suggestions:

Suggestions & Future Directions

- 🗐 Civic education
- Hybrid toolkits (digital + traditional)
- NGO–State collaboration
- 🔬 Need for localized case studies

- Civic education programs to include theoretical and practical courses that reinforce the idea of "legal-ethical identity".
- A toolkit that will combine traditional and digital methods, empowering the potential of individual activism while ensuring their ethical standards.
- Cooperation platforms between NGOs and state institutions, where "value discourses" are carried out, turning uncertainties into a process of creating a common vision.
- New formats of public discipline, forming cultural generalizations (inter-subjective) based on formal and informal public spaces, where not only the law, but also ethics and professional guarantees are regulating.

5. Limitations of the analysis and future research directions

The main limitation of the research is that the proposal of a hybrid model requires testing in different socio-political dimensions.

- Case studies are needed in different cultural and political environments to identify indicators of cultural "acceptability" and "adaptability."
- The ever-changing speed of the digital-global factor creates new "information crises", the speed requires constant phased analyses: new metrics and indicators are required to assess the success of the hybrid model.

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