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# CIVIC MOVEMENT, SOCIAL CAPITAL AND INSTITUTIONAL TRANSFORMATION IN POST-SOCIALIST SERBIA

## Građanski pokret, socijalni kapital i institucionalna transformacija u post-socijalističkoj Srbiji

APSTRAKT *Problem institucionalne promene je jedna od centralnih tačaka post-socijalističke transformacije i glavna osa njene održivosti. U Srbiji je ovaj problem bio izražen kroz pitanje kako iskoristiti društvenu energiju skoncentrisanu u građanskom pokretu tokom 90-ih godina prošlog veka za (re)konstrukciju stabilnih društvenih institucija. U ovom radu moja namera je da testiram da li je socijalni kapital koji je očito bio akumuliran u Srbiji u građanskim protestima opstao u formi pozitivne vrednosne orijentacije ka izgradnji demokratskog i tržišno orijentisanog društva. Od mogućih načina shvatanja socijalnog kapitala ja koristim ono najšire koje podrazumeva kolektivni karakter socijalnog kapitala (Štulhofer, 2000). Za empirijsku proveru relacije iz naslova koristim podatke iz nekoliko anketnih istraživanja obavljenih tokom protesta i nakon političkih promena iz 2000. godine.*

KLJUČNE REČI *građanski pokret, socijalno-kulturni kapital, socijalne institucije, post-socijalistička transformacija, društvene vrednosti.*

ABSTRACT *The problem of institutional change is one of the focal points of post-socialist transformation and the major axes of it's sustainability. In Serbia this problem was expressed through the question of how to use the social energy that was concentrated in civic movement throughout the 90's for (re)building of stable social institutions. In this paper, my intention is to test whether the social capital that was apparently accumulated in Serbia in the civic protests can persist in the form of positive value orientation towards building of democratic and market oriented society. Out of many ways to understand social capital I am refering to the most wide one, the one that assumes collective trait of the social capital (Štulhofer, 2000). Data from couple of surveys conducted in Serbia, during civic protests and after political change of 2000, are used to test the relation from the title empiricaly.*

KEY WORDS *civic movement, social-cultural capital, social institutions, post-socialist transformation, social values.*

# Post-socialist transformation, institutional order and social-cultural capital

This paper deals, in general way, with the problem of post-socialist transformation (PST) in Serbia. PST is defined as set of processes that bring political democracy and market economy in old, socialist institutional and social environment (Lazić, ur, 2000). The key issue for success of new social system is stability of institutional arrangement in frame of which citizens can practice new 'rules of the game'. Introduction of new institutions and practices is a sensitive task. Its sustainability depends on old institutional heritage, interests of the social actors, level of expectation of the citizens, first experiences in transformation process, etc. Under these circumstances another feature gets high importance for the success of PST and that is a kind of common identity shared by participants in PST processes, which assumes their motivation to stand the challenges of PST, the extent to which they share simmilar values and goals and are ready to support collective effort to build new social order (Cvejić, 2002). This general social factor is usually recognized in literature on social capital as collective form of social capital or social-cultural capital (SCC) (Bankston and Zhou, 2002; Boggs, 2001; Fukuyama, 1995; Portes, 2000; Putnam, 1993; Štulhofer, 2000). So, in this paper social capital will be treated as the basis of integration of social community. I will try to describe the way of building (transforming) and importance of social capital for constitution of new social order in Serbia after the fall of socialism. In this sense, social capital will be treated in this work in broadest possible meaning of the term, as it is defined by the concept of social-cultural capital. 'Social-cultural dimension, operationalized through mechanism of social-cultural capital..., plays the role of catalyst of social change' (Štulhofer, 2000: 87). Social-cultural capital is 'inter-personal reality of trust, reciprocity and limited solidarity, or their deficit', i.e. the set of norms, values and believes in certain social group that is being transfered through socialisation. These norms and values make cultural framework into which a loose network of individuals, social groups and organizations is being reproduced, that act in unique system of social and economic reproduction. It influences individual coping strategies, as well as shaping of formal institutions and respective set of sanctions. After errosion of socialist institutions, general support is needed for introduction of alternative institutions. If free riders and criminals become celebrated by the majority as 'successfull businessmen', SCC stops its reproduction and slowly decreases (Štulhofer, 2000).

The contents of prevailing value and normative set influences the way in which individuals, social groups and organizations are being integrated into economic and social system, to which extent their action is harmonized with action of other actors in the system and whether as such they will contribute to the growth

of diferentiation of the system, strengthening of individual and collective rights and freedom, economic efficiency and growth. It is considered that good performance of social and economic system is grounded in actions of individuals who express limited solidarity with other members of society, who expect reciprocity in actions of other individuals (and behave in that manner) and who believe that the result of common action gives more than simple summ of individual inputs. Concept of trust might be defined even wider in this contest, not only as interpersonal trust, but also as trust in social actors who represent embodiment of the given system of social relations (individuals, institutions, organizations). It is the weakness of basic dimensions of SCC to which crucial influence on rise of informal sector, corruption and criminal (same, 86, 109) is being ascribed, individualy or combined with elements of macro-economic policy,. Accepting such an approach I do not reject Putnam's understanding of social capital as a trait of micro-community and organizational integration, but I try to find common thread of civic integration at more abstract level, in wider community. Here, it is being recognized in acceptance of certain set of social values and application of respective norms (as well as in respective behaviour) which enable social integration in a community of 'organic solidarity'.

In the story of SCC institutions play a special role. They represent observable side of social consensus over 'rules of the game' in society. Thanks to them individuals, social groups and organizations have parameters of social action defined and make calculus of costs and benefits of their behaviour in given system of social relations in economy and society. It is not only formal institutions that play such a role, but informal too, like above mentioned trust, reciprocity and limited solidarity. Three major informal institutions have the following meaning:

trust is 'probability that one side in interaction will ascribe cooperative behaviour to the other side (Hwang and Burgers, 1997: 67);

reciprocity in multitude of social interactions and observed in longer time span ensures durability of cooperative relations, binding the bearers of interaction at the same time;

limited solidarity relies upon 'basic norm of sociability' and means readines of the actors to give up a part of their own benefit in favor of other participants in interaction (Štulhofer: 84)

Informal institutions are not only '... structural limitation of economic actions, but also 'ethical space' that incites social changes (or blocks them) and participates in the shaping of formal institutions'. Formal institutions (judicary, executive, educational, political, economic) have recurrent influence on informal institutions. Informal institutions are perpetuated thorugh socialization and inertion, and have historical continuity. Their persistence is evident in change of ideological systems, and is based upon perceived functionality, i.e. upon measure to which they enable

successfull interactions. This instrumentality of informal institutions doesn't have to have economic optimum as an outcome (same: 58, 81-82). Decline of informal institutions (decline of SCC) is directly tied to the form of formal institutional order and is stronger where vertical institutional ordering is dominant. The division on horizontal and vertical institutions derives from their substantial aiming at three goals: (1) the decrease of transaction costs, (2) the decrease of the effect of individual irationality (rational profiling of social action) and (3) maintanance of hierarhical structure of power. Horizontal institutions are focused on the first two goals, and vertical ones subordinate the two to the third goal. The nature of institutional organization of social groups or communities influences the character of institutional change – where horizontal institutions dominate the changes are continuous and are based on adaptation to the changes in environment; where vertical institutions prevail the change is discontinuous and eruptive, due to slownes in perception of social changes and hierarchical (slowed down) information flow (same, 70-72).

In the situation where 'rules of the game' are not sufficiently transparent and institutions are not flexible enough to adjust to changing needs of the society, like it often happened after the fall of socialism, individuals turn to primal relations in order to fullfill their social needs. They try to find their social embeddedness in direct relations with family, informal or formal organizations or movements. Weak formal institutions or lack of formal institutional setting means that the major form of social integration are social ties, i.e. social networks (Granovetter, 1985; Stark, 1995). Sometimes, networks are operating in the absence of and sometimes parallel to institutions. They get speciall importance in situation where there is a need to overbridge the historical gap between two institutional settings. This gap happens when institutions are hierarchicaly organized (vertical vs. horizontal) and are not capable of changing simultaneously. They simply collapse and some time is needed for building the new ones. During that time social survival of the community and the level of integration of the society depends on informal rules of social life (informal institutions – North, 1990; Štulhofer, 2000). These rules are based on interaction between prevailing values and social network into which these values are woven ('style' – White, 1993). In the case of such a change on national level, the whole society is perceived as a loose network, and values that direct social behaviour towards maintanance of the community are treated as an independent phenomenon. This loose network is best described by the term of civil society and such an independent set of values that reflects social consensus is defined as a whole of informal institutions, namely the SCC. SCC can be higher or lower, it can be accumulated, or exchanged for economic performance (growth). When consensus breaks down, when values mentioned above become politicized, a struggle over meaning and morality takes place. SCC, than, makes the key component for (re)integration of the society in the period of transition from one stage of

development to another if this transition assumes some level of discontinuity, and PST does. What is important here is to emphasize that this form of social capital, like other forms, operates only if implemented through social action. If not practicized, SCC decreases (Putnam, 1993). This means that the values on which it is based are of instrumental and not just immanent kind. Instrumental values are held commonly by the members of society and they are adjusted to the exchange with other members of society, while immanent values serve to attain goods and ends that are desired purely for people's own sake (Hechter, 1993).

Implosion of European socialism showed weakness of socialist institutions and mistrust that citizens had towards them. This way it made disintegration of societies to which socialism gave a form completely transparent. In large number of Central-Eastern European countries different forms of civic engagement that were confirmed through social protests pointed to new hub of social cohesion and to core of new social values around which SCC might have been constituted. Ties between a part of new political elite and these civic associations and movements brought to further profiling of new institutional order directed toward the building of SCC. New institutions were formed in horizontal way, which allowed for bilateral flow of information and easier adaptation to real social circumstances. Such a concept of social order allowed for gradual increase of trust, participation and limited solidarity of citizens and decrease of non-cooperative behaviour of new economic elite (former nomenclature) which found space for quick enrichment in institutional vacuum.

## Transformation of social-cultural capital in post-socialist Serbia

As a part of general social change, formation of SCC in post-socialist Serbia is 'path-dependent' (Stark, 1992; Hausner, Jessop, Nielsen, eds, 1995). It has been constituted on heritage of socialist form of integration in which institutions were weak, and huge amount of social energy has been concentrated around authority faced in single leader and nomenclature gathered around him. Due to lack of civil society, most of social living was unfolding in lower and primary forms of sociability (core and wider family, school and enterprise, etc.). In authoritarian surrounding social institutions were not formed as embodiment and service of mutual trust of large number of individuals, members of the society, but as service for execution of commands given by state or local leadership towards which the basic (mis)trust of social community was turned. Consequently, in Serbia a step was made from one to another model of authoritarian order, from socialism to nationalistic populism (Greskovits, 1995). Instead of strengthening of horizontal trust and loyalty, opportunism and hierarchical loyalty that grew up during socialism were directed towards nationalistic leader and ethnic community (Ilić, Cvejić, 1997; Golubović, 1995). Such an outcome had impacts on transformation of SCC.

Situation in society and economy could be characterized as lacking the SCC, simmilar to description of Russia (Nichols, cf. Stulhofer, 2000): lack of substantive cooperation and trust is expressed through corruption of public officials, large share of informal economy (Cvejić, 2002), increasing risk from organized crime, clientelism, etc. Institutional order was almost completely ruined, and consequently citizens were even more directly focused on the leader's authority in recognizing 'the rules of the game'. On the other hand, accepting nationalistic values as dominant collective identity framework and constituting series of social actions in support to nationalistic policy of political elite, they formed a nationalist movement. This movement represented relatively dense social network in which respective SCC grew. However, such a SCC didn't strengthen trust, solidarity and participation of all members of the society, becouse mutual trust of activists and supporters of the movement was centered primarily arround populist leader. Besides that, the movement excluded large number of individuals and social groups which didn't belong to Serbian ethnic group or to whome ethnic origin was not primary axes of collective identity. Moreover, the movement was violently opposed to some of these groups and individuals. Nevertheless, being more firmly constituted (closer to Putnam's definition) than in case of wider social community, SCC formed through nationalistic movement was harder to transform (change basic set of values towards higher interpersonal trust and limited solidarity) and than increase (spread on society's majority). Additional obstacle to strengthening of global trust and orientation towards wider integration was made by NATO military operation in Serbia in 1999, which tied members of nationalistic movement even more firmly to nationalistic values, and turned part of undecisive population in the same direction. Such a context produced in Serbia (and probably in other countries in the region with simmilar experience) significantly higher obstacles in post-socialist transformation than in countries of Central Europe.

The process of increase of SCC in Serbia had its positive side, too. Four years after the constitution of nationalistic movement, 1991 in Belgrade the first long (several weeks lasting) civic protest occurred that proclaimed civic values, claimed for higher civil freedom and constitution of institutions of civil society. In years to come, in situation in which energy of nationalistic movement shifted from ethnic gatherings to military clashes, civic protests had unfolded with changing frequency, intensity and effects. A hundred days of protest in Belgrade in winter 1996/97 and its spread over other cities in Serbia showed that it was not all about series of separate social happenings, but that energy of civic protest was gradually growing and expanding (Lazić, ed, 1999).

Evidence from the research on the protests in 90's shows clearly that these protests were firmly related in form, contents and, consequently in participants. This means that these series of happenings formed manifestations of the same social movement that was increasing in time in number of participants, firmness and

outreach (Vuletić, 1999). Participants' perception of mutual correlation and trust is obvious from the following table.

Table 1. The major cause of the longevity of the protest, in % (1996/97 Civic protests survey)

| | |
|---|---|
| Popular will | 29 |
| Individual determination of the participants | 28 |
| Merging with student protest | 16 |
| Oppression from the power | 9 |
| Biased media | 6 |
| Leaders of political opposition | 5 |
| International support | 4 |
| Other | 3 |

The core of the movement was formed by Serbian middle class and youth, and basic goals were social change, democratization and economic growth (Cvejić, 1999). Durability of the movement and readiness of its members to stand severe clash with armed police forces emphasized strong solidarity among the participants and the fact that large success of the movement was reached in tight cooperation between leaders of political opposition and citizens points to the shared system of values and perceptions (Babović, 1999) that were characteristic to other social movements in post-socialist countries (Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary, etc.). Following tables show participants' readiness and self-determination to support the movement.

Table 2. Ready to hurl eggs even being aware of police camera recording, in % (1996/97 Civic protests survey)

| | |
|---|---|
| Yes | 66 |
| No | 33 |
| DK | 1 |

Table 3. Assessment of personal contribution to the protest, in % (1996/97 Civic protests survey)

| | |
|---|---|
| 5 (very high contribution) | 50 |
| 4 | 24 |
| 3 | 19 |
| 2 | 5 |
| 1 (very low contribution) | 2 |

The network of movement participants was the most effective form to build up and practice civic consciousness as cultural layer of SCC. Civic movement was also the best form for practicing of solidarity, trust and reciprocity as major informal institutions, i.e. the best form to reproduce SCC. The following table shows that participants of the movement were taking much more care about rights and freedom than about nation-state or economic position.

Table 4. Changes expected after Milosevic's fall down, in % (1996/97 Civic protests survey)

| | |
|---|---|
| Dignity and freedom | 41 |
| Safer future | 25 |
| Increase of standard of living | 16 |
| Serbian nation-state | 7 |
| Career advance | 6 |
| Other | 5 |

This movement had passed through different stages of growing up untill 2000 and became a strong social actor. However, unlike nationalistic movement, civic democratic movement rested on much more firm inter-personal trust and concentrated communication and collective self-identification of its members and supporters and much less on the elite of the movement (leaders of political opposition, former disidents, cultural elite). Also, it assumed at least equal stregth of limited solidarity of movement members and supporters as in case of nationalistic movement, and had much wider participatory outreach (it excluded only members of the ruling political-economic oligarhy and the hardest core of nationalistic movement). Being like this, democratic movement represented a 'workshop' of social capital, practicing all three basic dimensions of social capital: generalized trust, (mis)trust in institutions and civic participation, and all of this in real physical

space, direct communication and with visible (co)participants. The following table shows much higher awarness of need for citizens participation among movement participants than among the rest of population.

Table 5. Attitude towards the spending of tax money, in % (2000 survival strategies survey)

|  | Civic movement participants | Non-participants | Overall |
|---|---|---|---|
| Stop taxation, always someone stills the money | 15 | 11 | 13 |
| Those in rule know best how to spend it | 14 | 41 | 29 |
| Each citizen should know and influence the way of spending | 70 | 46 | 57 |
| Other | 1 | 2 | 1 |

After loosing control over Kosovo in 1999, Milosevic's authority suddenly erroded, and with functional institutions of the system being absent the nationalistic movement fell apart very quickly. However, this didn't mean that the movement members had changed over night their value orientation and perception of the boundaries of social community they belonged to. In the context of retraditionalization of the society that has been in power for several years, they easily redirected their social identity to narrower, primary social forms (family, neighbourhood, local community). However, this was by all means a situation in which civic movement values could gain in strength and in which the process of building up of SCC could be started. Since the civic movement itself lost its reason of being in new circumstances, it was logical that maximum of transformation energy would have been directed towards the building up and strengthening of social institutions. Also, it was logical for multi-party political system, parliament and government to be first to become a field of presentation of value and ideological conceptions that were primarily presented through social movements up to that point, i.e. it was logical for social institutions to overtake the role of bearer of social cohesion from mass social movements.

So, at this point a question arises: which social circumstances are needed to enlarge SCC in situation when society has stepped the road from movements regime to institutional regime? In the context of social movement SCC leaned on social network that gathered large number of individuals. Relations in that network were

not personified as they were in smaller social groups and communities. Nevertheless, interrelation assumed wide spectrum of communication and forms of identification, from personal acquaintances and direct contacts, through the sharing of the common social space, to media promotion of common goals and values. Direct active participation in protests, during which different manifestations of political will were created by means of common action, contributed to process of formation of the feeling of reciprocity among the participants. Steadiness of the protest produced high level of trust among participants, and readiness in front of numerous challenges which protests had faced produced feeling of mutual solidarity among participants. It is not unimportant that members of civic movement physically shared same space (streets and squares) and same challenges (police violence, long walks, cold, etc.) and that in this process they produced and spread symbols of their good organization and political goal, compensating this way the weakness of their media presentation.

When through couple of last mass gatherings such a process of accumulation of SCC was ended, a need appeared for new principles of homogenization around common set of universal values. Few factors were important for successful continuation of the process of formation of SCC:

achievement of social and political consensus over the goals of social development

definition of boundaries of common social space

harmonization of views on wishful form of social order

overcoming the past

To fulfil these tasks, creation or recovery of respective mechanisms was needed, such as:

appropriate political organization

appropriate institutional political representation

adequate media presentation

international recognition

Intention of this paper is not to go deeper into these tasks and respective mechanisms, but it is worth mentioning that the process of fulfilment of the tasks started to slowly unfold after year 2000. However, after some speed achieved in 2002 and initial achievements in transformation of social consciousness towards civic self-identification (Golubović, 2002), social changes in Serbia slowed down and instead of quick transition to new institutional setting today we are facing frequent shifts between slow progress and stagnation, which is not good enough for significant change (rise) of SCC. The following tables show slight decrease in reciprocity and trust (both in other individuals and society in general).

Table 6. Agreement with the attitude that it is completely justifiable to solve some problems by bribery , in % (2002 and 2003 survival strategies surveys)

|  | 2002 | 2003 |
|---|---|---|
| Agree and completely agree | 17 | 27 |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 16 | 9 |
| Disagree and completely disagree | 67 | 64 |

Table 7. Agreement with the attitude that most people are ready to abuse other people, in % (2002 and 2003 survival strategies surveys)

|  | 2002 | 2003 |
|---|---|---|
| Agree and completely agree | 52 | 63 |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 18 | 9 |
| Disagree and completely disagree | 30 | 29 |

Table 8. Influence on decision making at local level, in % (2003 survival strategies survey)

|  | Big | Small | Not existing |
|---|---|---|---|
| Politicians | 87 | 8 | 5 |
| Entrepreneurs and businessmen | 46 | 43 | 11 |
| Experts, intellectuals | 14 | 53 | 33 |
| Citizens | 3 | 18 | 79 |

## Concluding remarks

Opportunity for spread of values that were dominant among civic movement participants to whole society and transformation of collective identity formed in that movement into prevailing informal institutions was permanently endangered by strong nationalistic counter-movement. The (older) nationalistic movement maintained rival instrumental values upon which Milosevic's regime built its political vitality. Moreover, political elite of the civic movement split immediately after getting to the power, each fraction mostly utilizing different of the value sets mentioned above, which kept alive collective nationalistic identity built during war

period. Also, as usuall in post-socialist countries, strong resentment towards communist egalitarianism and state protection persisted under circumstances of increasing inequalities and unemployment. Corruption and informal economy rates in Serbia are among the highest in the world which makes stabilization of economic institutions difficult. Even the most of middle class social energy turned from care for common prosperity and social change to care for individual economic benefit and panic consumer behaviour. It seems that instead of struggling for prosperous institutional environment on the basis of stable informal institutions, Serbia is back to the beggining of accumulation of SCC sufficient for successfull transformation, but this time with even more loose civic network. This makes development of new institutions urgent and responsibility of political elite for completing this task even higher.

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