



UDC 321.7(497.11)
Manuscript received: 20.07.2012.
Accepted for publishing: 18.09.2012.
Review article

Serbian Political Thought
No. 4/2012,
Year IV, Vol. 5
pp. 5-21

Zoran Stojiljković¹
Faculty of political sciences, Belgrade

Serbia Between Electoral Authoritarianism and Consolidated Democracy

Abstract

Transition from mono-organisational, single-party, ideological and authoritarian regimes into plural, competitive and democratic systems has proven a far more complex and uncertain process, with a far higher social price than the analysts, and especially citizens of the transition countries expected and desired. In this text, starting from different qualitative and quantitative criteria and indicators for “democracy measuring”, the author formulates and argues an assessment that after two decades of transitional roaming, Serbia is just a “deficient”, semi-consolidated democracy, and he suggests the elements of “exit strategy” from the status of democratic deficit.

Keywords: democracy, transition, consolidation, consensus

Transition and Democracy

From the mid nineties of the 20th century, the concept of democracy in the transitional bibliography has appeared together with the concept of consolidation.

“Transition is the interval between one political regime and another” (Schmitter and O’ Donell 1986: 3). Transition with the prefix democratic involves establishment of democratic institutions, the government structure arising from elections, free media and access to them, freedom of association and political organising, an independent judiciary. However, the main transitional dilemma isn’t establishing the institutions that will allow a change of government, but a dilemma

¹ Associate professor
zoran.stojiljkovic@fpn.bg.ac.rs

whether it will occur to someone, after the next elections, to abolish these institutions and start renewing those of the old regime. The problem with ending the transition is that, according to Huntington, after the transition begins, as a rule, follows a disappointment in democracy that could result in a turnover in the government politics and an attempt to reconstitute a nondemocratic system. "Democracy does not mean that the problems will be solved; it means that people in the dominant positions may be changed; and that their change, when they do not solve the problems, represents the essence of democratic behaviour. Democracies become strengthened (transition is ending) when people realise that democracy represents solution to the problem of tyranny, but not necessarily for other issues" (Huntington 2004: 251).

In order to be able to more precisely say when the transition is ending, Huntington is introducing the concept of consolidation. Transition towards democracy is ended when the democracy is consolidated. One criterion for consolidation could be the two-turnover test. According to that test, democracy becomes consolidated if the political group that takes over power after the breakup of a nondemocratic regime, loses elections and hand over power peacefully, and if the old (nondemocratic) regime forces return to the power, and then they lose election and hand over power in a peaceful manner (Huntington 2004: 255).

In their study on democratic transition, Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan emphasise that existence of a sovereign country is a fundamental precondition to democratic development.

"Democracy is a form of governing a modern state. Thus, modern democracy is not possible without state".(Linz and Stepan 1998: 32).

In order that democracy is strengthened, Linz and Stepan believe that, in addition to effective state, there also must exist five interactive arenas that make a positive influence on each other: (1) a free and active civil society; (2) a relatively autonomous and respected political society; (3) the rule of law, which guarantees civil freedoms and the freedom of association; (4) the state administrative apparatus that the new democratic government can properly use and (5) an institutionalised economic society.

"There is no civil society without previous, or at least parallel emancipation of a vassal into a self-confident and responsible citizen, sensitive to the usurpation of his rights, but also ready to fulfil his civil obligations. A corpus of accepted and exercised rights and obligations clearly distinguishes citizens from vassals, or arrogant, primitive or infantile

persons unprepared to accept responsibility and self-care” (Stojiljković 2007: 24).

Based on that we could conclude that the starting point of the civil society concept is a citizen with his individual civil rights, and that civil organisations and associations (non-governmental non-profit organisations, media, church organisations and religious groups, syndicates, and many local initiatives for community development) are in its centre. Therefore, in a civil society, three levels can be distinguished: “citizens as persons, individuals; associations of citizens, social movements and civil institutions; and the public” (Pavlović 2006: 58).

Modern democracy and modern democratic societies are created by separation of the private and the public, state and society, and they persevere through synergy and symbiosis of these two fields. Only a robust civil society, with its capability to bring forth political alternatives supervising the government and state, could help start the transition, help resist going back and to finish the process of transition, as well as strengthening and deepening the democracy.

According to that, an active and independent civil society in all phases of democratic process is invaluable.

The second arena is made up of establishing an autonomous, legal, legitimate, plural political society. The following is of key importance to a democratic political society: political parties, elections, appropriate electoral rules, political leaderships, inter-party alliances and the legislatures. These are all elements that make it possible for a democratic government to be elected, and to be appropriately supervised. Therefore, a political society is supplied and ordered with the democratic political and electoral legislation – “game rules” that regulate the funding, conduct and course of political and electoral game in such a way that, at least principally, the battle for an empty space in the power is taking place under the same conditions.

In order that a certain level of autonomy and independence of a civil and political society is developed, and thereby democracy is strengthened, it is necessary to ensure the rule of law that represents the third arena. The rule of law implies, first of all, (1) legitimacy of power. The state power should express the true will of citizens, i.e. it should be the expression of the consent of the people (*consensus populi*) taken at free and direct elections in a political competition in which all political parties had the same opportunity to win the votes. Also, the government should not be concentrated around one state body, it has to be distributed to more power holders, which results in (2) power balance and

establishes the rule of law. The rule of law implies both constitutionality and legitimacy, or rule of objective will expressed in the constitution and laws, which prescribing the rules for behaviour of power holders in advance, exclude the wilfulness of individuals and voluntarism. The constitution must guarantee (3) human and civil rights, and the laws must be interpreted by one (4) independent system of justice, and all this should be supported by (5) one explicit legal culture in a civil society. Therefore, to be able to talk about the rule of law at all, the power must be restricted by the law. All relevant actors, especially democratic government and state, must respect and support the primacy of law.

The fourth arena of consolidation of democratic processes and institutions is made up of establishing “good administration and good governance”. “It includes creation of a professional, competent, responsible (and resistant to daily political pressures) public administration, that is capable of guiding the realisation of the adopted economic and social politics” (Stojiljković 2007: 24).

So, there needs to be a functioning state and a state administrative apparatus that the democratic government can use.

Finally, an institutionalised and plural economic society is the fifth arena that is necessary for democracy to be strengthened. On one side, Linz and Stepan think that there cannot be strengthened democracy if it is about a conducted economy, if all the property is in the hands of state and if the state is making decisions about all prices, workforce, supply and distribution.

On the other side, they claim that there cannot be a modern, consolidated democracy even when it comes to a pure market economy, as it cannot be sustained without a certain level of state regulation. Market specifically requires: regulations on companies, regulation of stock market, standards for measures, and also measures for protection of property, both public and private, and all this requires state intervention in economy. Therefore, modern consolidated democratic regimes require a number of behaviour norms, institutions and regulations what Linz and Stepan call the economic society.

Testing Democracy

Every possible reply to where is Serbia going is preceded by a logical question where is it now, or by testing 3 arguments or criteria for democracy development measures and also the 3 indicators for evalu-

ation of the actual “health status” of actors, processes and institutions in Serbia.

The first criteria questions elementary, initial presumptions of a liberal democratic political design – existence of a competitive, multi-party match for a power position that is taking place under already known and (relatively) equal conditions. Within this framework, starting from differentiating the electoral authoritarianism – a system in which, due to unequal conditions, the opposition is “condemned” to constantly losing the elections, and electoral democracy in which the change of power is a possible and present practice (Andreas Schedler), we could say that Serbia has been classified as the electoral democracy. Certainly, the electoral system and legislation, and particularly the accompanying electoral practice, are far from perfection, but they are within the boundaries of correctness, which is best illustrated by a lack of strong post-electoral conflicts and challenging electoral procedures and results. Nevertheless, a lack of the central electoral register, its untimely update, as well as a lack of a standing, professionally trained and resistant to (direct) party influences electoral administration show that the situation is far from ideal. The money flows in politics, especially in funding regular party activities and election campaigns, have also remained hidden from the public.

Insufficiently developed media regulation of elections and a stream of “leased terms” and paid political marketing threaten to flood the equal access to media as a presumption of fair elections.

The second criteria consists of the system and practice of a responsible government and authorities. The main purpose of political responsibility is that the authorities “respond” to the needs and expectations of citizens– voters. Challenged by the risk of losing the power and “anticipated reactions of voters” (Friedrich), it has to give its best, at least before elections, to show that it “has passed the exam before the citizens”.

In addition to periodical democratic elections, the channels and instruments for determination of political accountability are consisted of self-constituted and pluralised political public, as well as the vertical and horizontal control and division of power itself, supported with the principle of subsidiarity.

In a situation when there is a party impregnated and disciplined parliament – the parliamentary majority above all, the dominant executive power is already outside the zone of effective responsibility. The weak, fourth type of limitation are, for now, the institutions and instruments of the “fourth branch of power”, such as the Ombudsman, the Com-

missioner for information of public importance, or anti-corruption bodies and agencies. Unfortunately, no bigger is the role of tripartite bodies, in which the representatives of the civil society – syndicates and unions of entrepreneurs, through the social dialogue with the responsible government, also design the field of a wide social consensus on the contents, dynamics and “price” of change.

At the same time, Serbia is on a narrow road between the Scylla of unsatisfactory state of economy and the Charybdis of great social spending on the aged population, unemployed and displaced persons.

The third criteria of the extent of democracy development are the contents and the width and quality of citizen participation, or the existence of an active and robust civil society, with civil institutions and movements, and a politically literate “upright” citizen as its source and mouth. In a crisis transitional society, the watergate to the destructive mixture of political irresponsibility and social demagoguery is the corpus of practiced, civil individuals and collective rights and a democratic political culture.

A devastating virus of intolerance and unwillingness to dialogue, provincial xenophobia and narrow-minded nationalism, alternative falling into a state of nationalistic, aggressive and even sometimes paranoid euphoria and lethargy, and the fall into nationalistic masochism and frustrations can only be cured with democratic, civil, political participation and culture.

The late Zoran Đinđić concludes that neither the political elite nor political institutions, but only small, civilian networks through which millions of citizens participate, can ensure that democratic political project is implemented and lives in everyday life.

If, in addition to the project and institutions, the third part does not occur, if democracy does not become culture, if in the value system of a society there is not the norm that democracy is lived as a form of everyday life, then institutions are worth very little and democracy will depend on the balance between political powers, and not the will and consensus in the society itself (Đinđić 2007a: 10).

Without a sufficiently operative, social and political census, two decades after the initiation of the democratic changes, the regime in Serbia still belongs to the “low intensity democracies” (Diamond).

Faced with the heavy burden of authoritarian legacy and many challenges carried by the process of a post-war determination of the state’s framework and identity, Serbia seems to be stuck in “another transi-

tion” (Przeworski) or the controversial process of transferring the powers from groups of people to rules and institutions.

The process of consolidation and stabilisation of democracy is strongly opposed by both personalised political culture and the widespread spirit of intolerance, or “warlike” political style and perceiving political opponent as an enemy.

Widespread poverty and subjective sense of transitional losing present in one third of the population, combined with frustration created by the declaration of Kosovo independence still delegitimize the actors of the democratic changes.

An additional problem is the widespread belief of a present endemic, systemic and political corruption that is eating out the fragile institutions.

The fact that in our country “democracy is not the only game in the town” is not surprising (Linz and Stepan). These assessments have been confirmed by the proposed tests of “health status” of democracy in Serbia.

The first practical indicator is the extent of the democratic sentiment, or the acceptance of democracy as the best possible system and belief of (un)successful functioning of democratic institutions. In the poor, post-war societies, attitudes towards democracy depends, to a great extent, on believes of citizens about developmental, economic effects of the regime. Social consensus around the concept of development, meaning the price of the transition, has to go parallel with the agreement on the democratic constitution of the society.

Lack of a clear and coherent concept of development logically led to already ascertained, barely above average acceptance of democracy and to majority being dissatisfied with the functioning of democratic institutions and to distrust in political actors.

The other indicator is the dominant legitimacy formula of the regime. Possible, legitimacy basis of the system has, throughout the history of Serbia, been searched for in a strong competition between the populist and participative pattern. Due to poverty, no government could count on the third compensational model of legitimacy, or support based on the achievement of material prosperity.

In order that Serbia would be and remain on the right track, we need a clear strategy of modernisation and democratisation, and a good shape for its implementation. Our national mentality is charac-

teristic of big oscillations in occasional eruptions of energy followed by discharge and dispiritedness, even defeatism.

Finally, the third indicator in the “medical records” of Serbia is the check whether legitimately chosen power holders are in fact legitimately chosen power holders and not just formally, or whether “reserve domains of power” – tycoons, oligarchs, semi-public police and security structures are in action? Aren’t they rather perhaps the “outside veto-players” (Sartori) – key international political actors, multinational corporations and their domestic exponents or rather politicised crime, or criminalised politics?

According to Cesid surveys, “the triumvirate in power” in the opinion of the citizens of Serbia, is consisted of political leadership structure, international representatives and before all, the rich individuals, known as the “thieves and criminals”.

In these and such circumstances, there are no conditions for the existence of a strong state of Joel Migdal – a state capable to achieve goals, including the capability to penetrate society, to regulate social relationships, to gain funds, to direct or use these funds in developmentally productive ways.

Weak states – often even uncompleted or emerging states, or international protectorates that we encounter in the Balkans (euphemistically said in the Southeastern Europe) are weak for two main reasons. Firstly because they are unautonomous, by powerful interest groups captured states, but also because they are deprived of efficient and professional state apparatus and sufficient total organisational resources (Migdal 1988).

It is most often about selectively weak, cunning states. The truth is they do not manage to limit the vast sector of informal economy but they are very successful in balancing between the pressures of the international community and their own public, and in paternalistic promotion of narrow interests – first of all the interests of the ruling elite itself.

In many of these countries, there is a realistic risk that a weak state regresses into an unsuccessful – a failed state. A failed state – a state that does not manage to solve the problem of the national and state identity and to productively employ its citizens, who are then ready to leave it, searching for a certain, better existence, leads to hopeless citizens and societies. States deprived of hope in return contribute to the failure of the state (Blue Bird, The inflexibility trap 2004: 35-42).

Consolidation of Democracy

Recombining different indicators and indexes of mapping and measuring of democracy “it could be concluded that, two decades after the collapse of a single-party system, Serbia seems to be trapped in a plane of semi-consolidated, “lacking” or “defective” democracy.

Defective or semi-consolidated democracies (Merkel) are in fact unstable and prone to political crisis democracies which are characterised by: (1) partocracy and the resulting (2) weak structural (parliamentary) representations; (3) unfinished decentralisation of power; (4) limited, foreign sources dependant potentials of a civil society; (5) influence of “the powerful”- specific economic and political interest groups on media; (6) slow, inconsistent and judicial processes not resistant to pressures and (7) weak capacities for fighting the widespread corruption.

An indirect evidence of the reached, only lacking and defective character of democracy are also critical suggestions contained in the reports of the European Commission. Gaining the candidate status for acceptance into the EU will, in addition to “Kosovo weight”, largely depend on the acceptance of critiques related exactly to the “fragile health of democracy”.

First of all, there is a request for implementation of transparent system of funding political activities, as well as the abolition of blank resignations of the selected parliament members, as key preconditions for “anchoring” electoral democracy.

Serbian authorities must also prove a systemic improvement in the creation of conditions for the efficient work of formed regulatory and control bodies and far more effective fight against the widespread systemic corruption in the public sector, which puts us at the bottom of the European list.

A sort of embarrassment is also the “repeat exam” of the judiciary reform. Due to illegal procedures and nontransparent process of election and re-election of judges and prosecutors, i.e. suspicions in the influence of political criteria and reasons during the elections, the pompously announced judiciary reform has been very compromised.

The first strategic course of change is precisely linked to the stabilisation and consolidation of democracy and the smooth functioning of democratic institutions. The government should really live at its constitutionally defined address, and not reside in informal assemblies of power and in “reserve domains of power” (Diamond) between internal

and external veto players that, outside the public scene and defined responsibility influence the making of key decisions, conditioning, blackmailing and even corrupting the official power holders.

The role of civil society organisations is to “push” and control the field of politics through development and implementation of 4 complementary strategies of influence spreading: (1) through networks of civil and legislative initiatives, (2) partnership and cooperation with state bodies in formulating and implementation of public politics and developmental strategies, but also thorough (3) lobbying and public advocacy and (4) application of different forms of workers protests and civil disobedience.

Democratic stabilisation in Serbia has its 5 key prerequisites or priorities. The first precondition certainly consists of rounding up democratic political and electoral legislation which guarantees Serbia a sustainable minimum threshold of at least electoral democracy.

Clear electoral procedures and processes, a possibility for citizens to learn about the offered electoral actors and platforms in campaigns, and to know who and under what circumstances gives the money to those who fight for their vote and trust, as well as permanent professional and resistant to political pressures electoral administration are just some of preconditions for democratic constitution of the government.

Key importance on the “road map” towards the consolidated (electoral) democracy therefore has the formation of a professional and independent State electoral commission – resistant to pressures from political actors, controlling electoral process, as well as an accompanying amendment to the regulative that controls political and electoral activity, by handing over control and monitoring of the funding to the independent regulatory body – Agency for fight against corruption.

A corpus of laws belonging to the electoral codex also involves a model of election of parliament members that should be changed so that advantages are combined in an optimal way and key disadvantages of both majority and proportional system are avoided. Personalised proportional system, i.e. solutions making it possible that with the saved proportionality at the level of total electoral results citizens are able to vote (by majority) for a candidate with “full name” at a concrete voting place, is the essence of the proposal for alteration of the previous model of indirect proportional election from the list that is under control of party oligarchies.

The other priority, i.e. a group of priorities is consistently implemented horizontal and vertical power sharing. In this context, credible

towards the public, turned and supplied with an effective legislative, representative and control function, not purportedly devalued and delegitimised parliament, in which members of parliament are reduced to the role of marionettes in a puppet theatre, and the autonomous, and not politically vassal judiciary are the links of democracy stabilisation.

No less importance has the democratic control of executive power and stopping and turning around the trend of moving the power to the government coordination and regulatory bodies and agencies, hard to access for the public and in fact irresponsible.

The same function also have the rounded up de-centralisation and regionalisation of Serbia, based on the principles of government subsidiarity and further strengthening of the local authorities.

Instead of political bargaining and arbitrariness, the process of regionalisation must also be guided by the logic of optimal distribution of authorities and functions at a level of the government where it gives the best results.

The model of forming regions (with 800 000 - 3 000 000 inhabitants) and sub-regions (150 000 - 800 000) seems to be optimal, integrating territorial, traffic and economic, and also cultural and traditional entities. Subsidiarity also involves full coordination of the government operation with civil stakeholders and under public scrutiny. Otherwise, it is of no use to citizens if closeness and centralisation at one level of power are replaced with the same established relationship at the other (lower) level.

The next, third direction of political and administrative reforms is the “abolition of sacred cows” of public (political) administration. Reduction of an over-populated space of state administration and building its capacities is, however, a matter of designed long-term strategy based on the quality of projected services as the key criteria.

Unfortunately, already seen short-term political campaigns reducing the bureaucratic apparatus are in action. The same goes for rationalisation of total public sector. Public sector must be economically rational and sustainable, and it must remain out of reach and logic of both the distribution of party and political prey, according to which public companies and institutions are run by party commissioners from the ruling coalition, and the short-term interests motivated by privatisation from “above”. Concessions, public and private partnerships and independent regulatory bodies that set standards for prices and quality of services are the most acceptable solutions for products and goods of public interest.

The fourth area consists of further democratic designing and civil control and professionalisation and de-politisation of “repressive” state apparatus - army, police and security services and agencies. Politically impregnated, “party” armies and police, the war between “our” and “their” services, placing trusted informants and unauthorised tracking and eavesdropping, fabrication of classified files and mutual blackmailing and trading of “compromats” – compromising materials must become a thing of the past.

Finally, bodies and institutions of “the fourth branch of power”, such as the Representative of the citizens, Commissioner for information of public importance and personal data protection, auditors, anti-monopoly and public procurement commissions, including the newly formed Agency for fight against corruption, must be reinforced materially and with staff.

How they are equipped and what their effective authorisations are, i.e. respect for their decisions and suggestions linked to the registration of property and de-acumulation of functions are the best test of the willingness of the political elite to deblock democratic processes. At the same time, it is testing the willingness for realisation of an integral and effective anti-corruptive strategy.

Transparency of public procurements and tendering, prevention of money laundering as a channel for politisation of crime and criminalisation of politics, and control of public finances, primarily rationality behind budgetary funds spending and economy of public companies have, in addition to legal and political, also an important economic and developmental dimension and price.

State, Social Cohesion and Solidarity

The other wide field of reforms consists of socially and ecologically sustainable development. Political instability, frequent elections (4 parliamentary cycles) and the change of governments (5, and if we count in Cvetković’s reconstructed office, 6 coalition offices) even beyond 2000, led towards the absence of a developed coherent and integral developmental strategy despite the adoption of dozens of strategies dealing with reforms of certain economic and social areas.

Consequently, in times of a current crises of planetary proportions, Serbia must abandon its previous model of development based on an overheated demand and importation, overblown public and private

spending and consequently created, internal and foreign deficits and imbalances. Following the developmental logic and the EU strategy for the next decade Europe 2020, this new model of development could, on the contrary, be based on savings, investments, production and the increase of import. The key, final goal of the strategy should be employment growth and the prosperity of citizens. There must be a high level of agreement also on the orientation for socially responsible state – partner state, which is in a counterposition with polar models of a minimum and neutral country, on one side, and a custodial, omnipresent – paternalistic country, on the other. A partner state, in dialogue and cooperation with associations of civil societies, first of all syndicates and employers, defines industrial and social relationships and achieves social politics and goals.

Social cohesion of society and increase of social involvement of vulnerable and marginalized groups, apart from obligatory developmental, economic dimension, has its own complex social component. Social cohesion requires a sustainable, wide and strong enough safety social network through which you cannot fall into the whirlpool of poverty, a network which includes measures of preventive action or mechanisms for increase in education, and a total social capital. Making a safety social network includes, among other things, activities for reduction of destructive effects of 4 groups of factors which, if interrelated, lead to poverty and social exclusion: unemployment, disease, financial poverty, and poor and non-functional education.

A New Role of the State

Social transfers, aimed at the reduction of poverty and active and passive measures of assistance to the unemployed, seek to protect and enable “persons in social need” to exit the circle of the marginalized and poor primarily by their own efforts.

Partnership between the state and civil and market sector in formulation and implementation of the employment strategy and the overall poverty reduction strategy, is ultimately based on the logic of linking the scope and structure of social transfers to the growth in production and strengthening economic performances of the society.

If the state is no longer, and should no longer be an exclusive organiser, controller and financier in the sector of education, health, culture and social services, it must keep taking active part as the key ac-

tor in monitoring and evaluation of defined standards and quality of services.

The model of exclusive state control and organisation should not be replaced with completely open market “supermarket model” that is too much vulnerable to dictation of current and conjunctive needs, as well as to corruption and overthrowing the quality of services. The solution lies in a multi-stakeholder, corporative model in which, beside the state bodies, syndicates and employers, professional organisations and interest associations of providers and users of services have the key role.

Having in mind their formative importance and role in shaping the informed and critical public, these principles, to even greater extent, apply to media and editing media space. At the same time, setting professional standards, media ethics and solutions for prevention of the concentration and creation of media monopolies have a particular importance.

We could conclude that the initial, widest political dialogue and agreement on the new constitutional and political vesture of Serbia must also start from giving firm guarantees of accomplishing the full list of individual and collective rights of citizens, as well as an effective process of controlling and limiting the government and its consistent vertical and horizontal division.

The rule of law and the final consitutionalisation and political institutionalisation are necessary, however not sufficient enough a precondition for democratic consolidation and Serbia's exit from the zone of high social and political risk.

It is also necessary to have a wider social consensus, an open and mutually binding social dialogue between the Government and social partners – employers and autonomous syndicates.

The contents of the dialogue is primarily directed towards getting an agreement on the strategy of economic development, the effects of privatisations, employment policies, conflict regulation in the process of collective negotiations and decision-making, and more importantly, implementation of a balanced, adjusted to the European standards, working and social legislation.

A permanent exit is signing the social pact on development and employment in which the government would guarantee the increase of production and price and investments trends, and syndicates would negotiate conditions of generating incomes and employment, wages, pensions and social benefits trends.

Whenever someone does not fulfill his part of obligations, a red lamp would light up warning that the fuel in the car is running out or we are heading in the wrong direction.

Only through an argued and critical dialogue can responsible citizens and responsible, competent and uncorrupted government be accomplished.

Social dialogue and transition towards democracy are also a framework within which the citizens of Serbia are taking the test of their strength, maturity and ability to organise themselves.

Instead of Conclusion

At the end of analysing the conflict process of transitional changes in Serbia, and an attempt to discover the logic and effects behind them, we could conclude that in the current transitional phase characterised by overcoming electoral authoritarianism and establishment of electoral democracy, social gaps and conflicts concerning basic issues of state and political identity of community still dominate over less hazardous interest disputes.

The only way out of this vicious circle is a developed and operational reform strategy.

Five basic goals, and criteria for democratic transition at the same time, are as follows: (1) economic growth; (2) socially and environmentally sustainable development; (3) open economic and political market deprived of monopoly; (4) social cohesion and (5) quality of life and social prosperity.

Effective strategy must rely on a wide social and political partnership for democratic changes. Civic field and stakeholders in this partnership have the central role to mobilise, control and integrate, but also an important initiative function. Social movements, and not just fragmented, incoherent and often willing to pseudo-party arrangements and engagements non-governmental scene, can be the mediator of changes, the prime actor as far as dynamics of society is concerned – the means of accomplishing (desirable) future.

The other side of this process of partner cooperation and development is the necessary parallel evolution of the political field – its democratic institutionalisation, followed by and related to stabilisation of political ground and legitimising political actors.

However, both the potential of political and civic field and the destiny of democratic reforms are, in the end, linked to the mass transformation of vassals – their structure of consciousness and mentality, and the creation of “adult and upright” citizens. We are not born as citizens. Namely, one becomes a citizen by working hard on oneself (Fuko). Male and female citizens are aware not only of their rights but of their duties and obligations too. Self-esteem, a sense of being able to carry out public activity, self-awareness of rights that the state must respect, but also awareness of the need to balance private motives and interests with the sense of community and solidarity, practically differentiate citizens from vassals.

Bibliography

- Beetham, D. (1999) *Democracy and Human Rights* Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Beyme, K. (2007) *Suvremeni oblici predstavničke demokracije*. Zagreb: Analitičko društvo Hrvatskog politološkog društva.
- Blue Bird Project (2004) *Zamka nefleksibilnosti*. Beograd: UNDP – BFPE.
- Diamond, L. (1999) *Developing Democracy*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Đinđić, Z. (2007) “Uloga nevladinih organizacija u demokratskom društvu”. In Paunović, Ž. (ed.): *Budućnost civilnog društva u Srbiji*. Niš: Milenijum.
- Hantington, S. (2004) *Treći talas*. Beograd: Stubovi kulture.
- Keane, J. (2007) *Prijedlog za pravno promišljanje podrijetla i budućnosti predstavničke vladavine*. Zagreb: Analitičko društvo Hrvatskog politološkog društva.
- Linz, J. (2000) *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes*. Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Linc, H. i Stepan, A. (1998) *Demokratska tranzicija i konsolidacija*. Beograd: Filip Višnjić.
- Lajphart, A. (2003) *Modeli demokratije*. Beograd: Sužbeni list SCG – Podgorica: CID.
- Migdal, J. (1988) *Strong Society and Weak States: State - Society Relation and State Capabilities in Third World*. Princeton, Princeton University Press.
- Pavlović, V. (2006) *Civilno društvo i demokratija*. Beograd: Službeni glasnik, 2006.
- Pavlović, D. and Antić, S. (2007) *Konsolidacija demokratskih ustanova u Srbiji posle 2000. Godine*. Beograd: Službeni glasnik.
- Przeworski, A. (1988) “Democracy as a Contingent Outcome of Conflict”. In: Elster, J. and Slagstad, R. (eds.) *Constitution and Democracy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Przeworski, A. (2004) “Democracy and economic development”. In : Mansfield, E. D. and Sisson, R. (eds.) *The Evolution of Political Knowledge*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press.

- Schedler, A. (2001) What is Democratic Consolidation ? in: *The Global Divergence of Democracy*, The John Hopkins University Press, Columbus
- Schedler, A. (2001) "What is democratic consolidation?". In: Diamond, L. and Plattner, M. (eds.) *The Global Divergence of Democracy*. Columbus: The John Hopkins University Press.
- Schmitter, C. and O'Donnell, G. (1986) *Transition from Authoritarian Rule. Tentative Conclusion About Uncertain Democracies*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Stojiljković, Z. (2007) "Civilno društvo i konsolidovanje demokratije". In: Paunović, Ž. (ed.) *Budućnost civilnog društva u Srbiji*, Beograd: Milenijum, Centar za razvoj građanskog društva.
- Stojiljković, Z. and Mihailović, S. (2010) *Stanje socijalnog dijaloga u Srbiji posle dvadeset godina tranzicije*. Beograd: SLA.
- Stojiljković, Z. (2011) „Serbia in the Party Labyrinth“, *Serbian Political Thought* 3(1): 87-110
- Vujačić, I. (2009) "Dokle smo stigli u konsolidaciji demokratije?". In: *Fokus: kvartalni izveštaj o institucionalnim reformama*. Beograd: Centar za liberalno-demokratske studije. pp. 10–14.
- Wolfgang M., Puhle H.J. et al. (2003) *Defekte Demokratie, Band 1: Theorie*. Opladen: Leske + Budrich.