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An Assessment of the Role of Civil Society in the Early Phase of Democratic Consolidation: A Comparative Analysis of Glas 99 in Croatia and Otpor in Serbia

ABSTRACT

This article analyses the impact of civil society on the beginning of the final stage of the democratisation process – consolidation – in Croatia and Serbia (1999-2000). I start with a theoretical explanation of the concept of democratisation and elaborate its specific nature in two countries of the Western Balkans – Croatia and Serbia. By introducing the concept of civil society, I show that not only formal governmental institutions play an important role in the consolidation process, but organised citizens too, play a crucial role in consolidation. I use the concept of political opportunity structure, which I apply to political change in Croatia and Serbia. The theoretical overview of the debates of consolidation and civil society is supported by two cases where civil society has been crucial: Croatia and Serbia. The article demonstrates how organised attempts of citizens can change political regimes and introduce democracy as "the only game in town". I argue that civil society has, due to its functions, been the most efficient factor in making democratic consolidation possible.

Introduction

Ralf Dahrendorf, frequently cited by scholars when it comes to the democratisation process in Central and Eastern Europe, has a compelling thought about democratisation in his book *Reflections on the Revolution in Europe* where he stated that it will take six months to reform the politi-cal systems, six years to change the economic systems, and sixty years to effect a revolution in the peoples' hearts and minds (1990: 42). Bearing this in mind, my goal is to write a comprehensive analysis of the impact of civil society on consolidation of democracy in two countries of the Western Balkans in order to better understand the nature of that process, its dynamics, structure, as well as the role of the people in the process of anchoring of democracy. The article consists of three main building blocks. In the first part I provide the theoretical background, define civil society, describe the development of the term, and give an overview of its functions. Hence, in this part democratic consolidation is defined, theoretical discussions are given on the positive and negative impact of civil society on democratic consolidation together with a brief description of political opportunity structure. The second part is about Croatia and Serbia. I offer case studies of the impact of civil society and present a political context for civil society action in both states. This part is followed by a comparative analysis of these two cases.

In order to understand the political dynamics of the Western Balkans at the end of 1990s, I will present two cases where civil society has shown its strength and argue that neither politics nor oppression can and will be tolerated if citizens do not support it. In Croatia, this movement was more institutionalised, and civil society organisations (CSOs) have been playing key roles, while in Serbia, aside from an institutionalised version of civil society action, there was a real social and political movement that helped erode the authoritarian power and led to the victory of a more democratic political option. Specifically, I will investigate how civil society (in Croatia the coalition of 149 CSOs is named "Glas 99", and CSO GONG, while in Serbia the social movement is known as "Otpor" and the campaign as "Izlaz 2000") has helped in the democratic consoli-

dation process in both countries. In 2000 Milosević's and Tuđman's[1] parties lost the election, which is considered to be the beginning of democratic consolidation. Regarding the time frame, this paper will concentrate on the years 1999 and 2000 with some historical overview from the early 1990s in order to present the circumstances that produced civil society actions.

The research question is focused on identifying the difference in factors which impacted the democratic consolidation in Croatia and Serbia. I would like to analyse how important a factor civil society was in the path to democratic consolidation in Croatia and Serbia alike. The literature often suggests opposition being a key factor for democratic consolidation (see Merkel 2006). Therefore, my aim is to examine to what extent opposition played an important role in Serbia and Croatia. In the literature there is no clear description of the nature of civil societies in these two countries, thus it is interesting to find out what that structure looked like and how it created (or used) political opportunities in the year 2000. By introducing Sidney Tarrow's concept of political opportunities (1998) I shall present the circumstances that have helped the regime change in Croatia and Serbia. An argument will be presented according to which long-lasting oppression of civil society and the overall population can at some point burst and produce huge resistance towards the political structures responsible for that oppression.

My hypothesis is that civil society was the most effective structure that could aid the democratic consolidation of Croatia and Serbia. In that process there were other actors, such as government, opposition and judiciary, but this article strives to show that only civil society could consolidate democracy given the conditions that prevailed in Croatia and

Serbia at the end of the 1990s, because it was an entity not influenced by the state or the governing party.

There are two dimensions that will be presented in this paper in order to understand the political processes in Croatia and Serbia. The first one is theoretical. In this part the main functions and responsibilities of civil society will be presented and the actual functions of civil society in Croatia and Serbia shown. I will argue that, due to the functions of socialisation, the watchdog function, representation and subsidiarity, only civil society had the legitimacy and the power to endorse democracy in Croatia and Serbia. In addition, I will present arguments against the positive impact of civil society and evaluate their validity. Through the concrete examples where civil society has made it possible for a democracy to mature, I will explain the context, methods and structure of the civil societies and polity of the countries. By comparing these two cases by their outcomes I will make a conclusion about the impact of civil society on democratic consolidation.

The topic is relevant because there is very little serious and adequate scientific research on the subject (Gazivoda 2012). As the literature review uncovered, no author has compared Croatia and Serbia from the perspective of civil society, even though civil society has played a major historical-political role in these countries. There is no comprehensive analysis of the civil society sphere in Croatia and Serbia, nor a comparison of these two countries. But why are Croatia and Serbia relevant enough to be compared? In my opinion, there are two reasons: the first one is that the years 1999 and 2000 in both countries were pivotal for understanding the later political system and political dynamics. In those years there was an obvious break with the political tradition of the 1990s and, for the first time, a strong democratic impulse. For me it is relevant to analyse those events in order to get date that could be used in later empirical research regarding Serbian and Croatian democratic transition. The second reason is the possibility for model-building. This paper has

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[1]Slobodan Milošević (1941-2006), former president of Serbia and Montenegro; Franjo Tuđman (1922-1999), former president of Croatia. More information will be given on them in the third part of this paper.

the intention to see what the similarities and differences in the beginning of democratic consolidation are, and possibly to provide a platform for the study of democratisation in the other former Yugoslavian countries.

Theoretical Background

There are three concepts relevant for the article which should be elaborated before the analysis of Croatia and Serbia. The first concept is civil society, one of the most discussable and fashionable terms in contemporary social sciences. In the first part I will elucidate the idea of civil society by presenting its historical development, its functions and different aspects of the phenomenon. The second concept is democratic consolidation, which will be defined, elaborated and placed in the context of the topic by presenting theoretical discussions on the impact of civil society on the consolidation of democracy. The model of political opportunities which will be used for the analysis of Croatian and Serbian civil society activities is the last concept to be expounded in this theoretical part of the text.

Civil society

The term "civil society" usually refers to the "state-society" relations in a regime. It is considered to be a sphere in which there are active citizens with the basic principle of freedom of association and solidarity. In my opinion one of the best chronologies of the development of civil society is giving by Mary Kaldor (2003). She offers five different versions of civil society that correspond with periods in the history of social ideas.

The first concept is civil society as *societas civilis*. This concept encompasses the rule of law, zone of civility and reduction of violence. In this concept it is impossible to separate state and civil society because civil society as an area of policymaking is different from uncivil society or

the state of nature. This is the historical state of ancient Greece and Rome, the idea of civil society that can be found among scholars of consent theory.

The second concept of civil society is grounded in Marx's and Hegel's texts. This bourgeois version of civil society is a product of the development of capitalism and the main actors are the market, individuals and social organisations. All of these organisations are counterbalances to the state.

The activist concept of civil society, as described in Kaldor's book, is inherent for the 1970s and the 1980s. This concept is described as a post-Marxist and utopian version of civil society. Features can be summarised in the request for redistribution of the state's power in order to increase the level of democracy and spread the realm of political participation, and the main mechanisms are social movements.

Furthermore, the third version (neoliberal) of civil society, characteristic of the United States of America, is a version of *laissez-faire* politics where there is a tendency towards decreasing state's power. Civil society is a set of citizens' associations that help other citizens in solving problems and replace some functions of the state (especially in the area of social protection).

The last concept of civil society has a postmodern character. In this version the main principle is toleration. Civil society is an arena of pluralism, deliberation and different identities. In this stage of development of civil society there is a distinction between civil and uncivil society.

Bearing in mind the historical development of the idea of civil society, we are coming to the contemporary understanding of this concept. There are numerous definitions accepted in the literature, and here I present some of them that emphasise different aspects of civil society.

The contemporary English philosopher Joan Keane sees civil society as an ideal type construction that describes a complex and dynamic sphere of non-governmental organisations that have the tendency to be

nonviolent, are self-organised and auto-reflexive. These organisations have a specific relationship with the state which frames their actions (1998).

Perhaps the most comprehensive, concise and analytically the most appropriate definition for the terms of this topic is that by Philippe Schmitter.[2] According to him, "civil society can be defined as a set or system of self-organised intermediary groups that: 1) are relatively independent of both public authorities and private units of production and reproduction, that is, of firms and families; 2) are capable of deliberating about and taking collective actions in defence or promotion of their interests or passions; 3) do not seek to replace either state agents or private (re)produces or to accept responsibility for governing the polity as a whole; and 4) agree to act within pre-established rules of a "civil" nature, that is, conveying mutual respect (Schmitter 1997: 240).

Briefly, there are four major functions of civil society, namely representation, socialisation, subsidiarity and watchdog function. *Representation* is the first one in which civil society organisations articulate the interests and preferences of citizens and represent it before the government or other executive agencies. The second function is *socialisation*. Civil society is an arena for learning the virtues important for democracy, such as tolerance and collaboration. In the last 15 years, the concept of social capital has become very popular in the social sciences. Robert Putnam defines social capital as: "networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them" (Putnam 2000: 19). Scholars such as Putnam consider nongovernmental organisations as factories of social capital due to their ability to solve and/or understand the problems that concern citizens. The function of *subsidiarity* is vital for

democracies as well. Governments, due to the large scope of their work, do not have the time or resources (as well as knowledge or people) to ensure their citizens all welfare needs, so they transfer their responsibilities to CSOs. The various problems are in this way solved at the lowest possible level, and, due to the competence of CSO members, governments trust them. The last function is the *watchdog* function, whereby civil society supervises the government, actually taking care that what they do is in line with democratic practice. Civil society can challenge the abuses of executive or legislative authority, and minimise arbitrary policies imposed by the state (Schmitter 2003).

Democratic consolidation

Due to the third wave of democratisation (described by Huntington) that happened in the 1970s, political scientists had a remarkable opportunity to witness regime changes in the world. At that time, Dankwart Rustow founded a field of comparative politics called transitology. He suggested that democratic transition can be understood as a compromise between two competing groups in the autocratic regime (autocratic elite, democratic proponents) when both realise the immanence of power sharing (Hague, Harrop, Breslin 2001: 48). In order to understand the path of transformation from authoritarian regime to fully functioning democracy, political scientists (O'Donnell, Schmitter and Whitehead 1986) elaborated Rustow's idea and introduced a phased model of transition that consists of: 1) the end of autocratic regime; 2) institutionalisation of democracy; 3) consolidation of democracy. In this paper, we are interested in the third phase of democratic transformation – democratic consolidation.

Democratic consolidation is a political science concept that enjoys no unanimous definition. As Andreas Schalder says about democratic consolidation, "[…] nobody can be sure what it means to others, but all maintain the illusion of speaking to one another in some comprehensible

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[2] There is an academic discussion as to whether political parties should be considered part of civil society (Gershman, 2004). For the purposes of this paper I will exclude political parties from the concept of civil society.

way" (1998: 36). Nevertheless, this term is usually defined as "initiation and deepening democracy in a polity that was previously authoritarian" (Mungiu-Pippidi 2005: 16).

Wolfgang Merkel (2008) adopted the distinction between positive and negative consolidation and described the positive version by dividing positive democratic consolidation into four levels according to the stages that a state and society go through. He called level 1 *constitutional consolidation*. This refers to the establishment of the main political institutions (parliament, government, president, and judiciary). He calls this level the macro level: that of structures. Level 2 is *representative consolidation*, where the focus is on interest representation and aggregation. The main actors are political parties and interest groups, and they practise the norms and rules established in level 1. This is the mesolevel. Level 3 (*behavioural consolidation*) "is where the informal actors operate – potentially ones, such as armed forces, major land owners, capital business, and radical movements group. […] Success with consolidation at levels 1 and 2 is crucial in deciding whether the informal political actors with potential veto power will pursue their interests inside, outside, or against democratic norms and institutions" (Merkel 2008: 14). The last level is the *democratic consolidation of the political culture*. It is here that civil society starts to be consolidated; civic culture becomes a socio-cultural basis for democracy. This microlevel is characterised by three balances: the balance between different ideological subcultures in society; among three types of political culture (parochial, passive, participatory); and between three values and norms as a result of the three types of political culture (Merkel 2008 2009).

"Civil society contributes to but does not cause the consolidation of democracy" (Schmitter 2003: 240). Civil society, due to its functions, can help in consolidation of democracy because it is impartial and independent from the state, but it cannot take the role of the political regime that is responsible for democratic development. One of the functions is the watchdog function, which allows civil society to supervise government and warns society if government does not act according to the laws. Through the function of socialisation and learning civic virtues (social capital), civil society organisations educate citizens about the advantages of democratic virtues (participation, toleration, deliberation) and help democracy to become "the only game in town". Moreover, civil society helps build identification for individuals with the political community by stimulating them to actively participate.

Figure 1 – Global trends in governance, 1800-2008 (suggests that the number of democracies is constantly rising, while there is decrease in the number of autocracies).

Source: http://www.systemicpeace.org/polity/polity1.htm
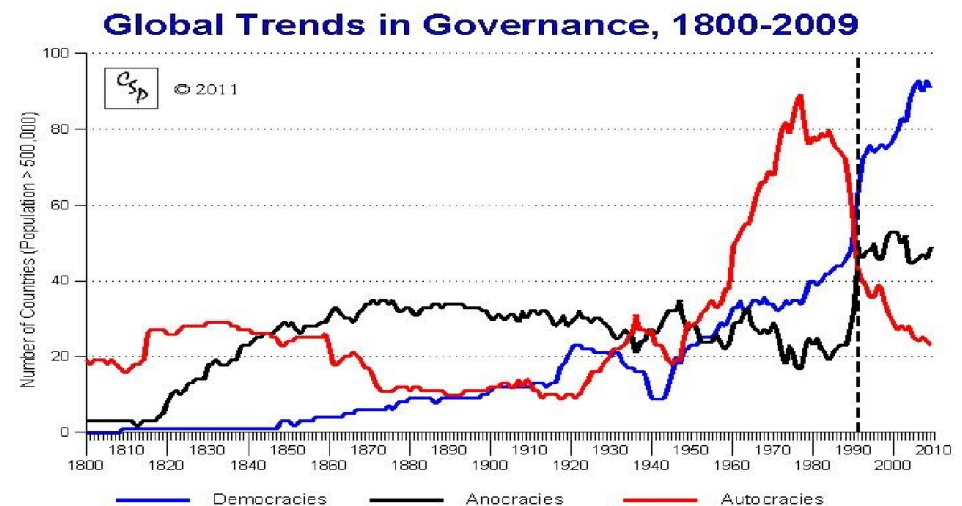
There is an open debate: is consolidated democracy a necessity for efficient and vibrant civil society, or is efficient civil society a condition for consolidation of democracy? From my point of view, the last assumption is the accurate one. I believe that society comes before the state, and

no matter how authoritarian a regime, its people are the ones who have the final word. I would argue that instability of authoritarian regimes and their historical tendency towards democracy (see Figure 1) is the reason why efficient civil society comes before the consolidation of democracy. No matter how strict a regime was, over time it starts to democratise itself. In Figure 1 we can identify a general trend of an increasing number of democracies, and a parallel decrease in authoritarian regimes, since 1800.

Likewise, lately we have witnessed regime change in Arab countries. In these countries authoritarian regimes were in power (to different extents), and even though civil liberties and civil society were oppressed, that did not prevent the mobilisation of people and social movements that resulted in democratisation. These examples show how civil society can be mobilised during authoritarian or semi-authoritarian regimes. In addition, if we accept Merkel's argument that consolidation starts with democratic institution-making, we see that civil society plays distinctive roles in later processes.

Political opportunity structure

Political opportunity is a theory primarily used for the analysis of social movements which suggests that political opportunities are the main factors that determine the success of some social movements. This is a political-procedural approach that observes the process of formation of some social movements from beginning to end.

The most famous proponent of this theory is Sidney Tarrow, who defines political structure as the "consistent – but not necessarily formal or permanent – dimensions of the political struggle that encourage people to engage in contentious politics" (1998: 85). Hence, he sees political opportunity as "dimensions of the political environment that provide incentives for people to undertake collective action by affecting their expectation for suc-

cess or failure" (Tarrow 1998: 85). The point is that when a political system starts to be vulnerable, there is a group of people who sees the opportunity to initiate some kind of political and/or social change. He introduces elites as a vital factor of the contention in the analyses of social movements and in that way introduces voluntarism as his approach. Tarrow argues that a social movement's leaders interpret the complex social movement's nexus and promote it to the ordinary people.

This theory suggests that there has to be some breaking point, some event that creates political opportunities that can be used. The metaphor that explains this theory is that of a window which is opened and through which some actors jump into the room.

Regime change in the context of this article

I am adopting Merkel's understanding of regime change (1999) as a process that consists of three general phases: the end of the authoritarian regime, hybrid regime and consolidation of democracy. I argue that we can define democratic transformation as a rejection of the authoritarian factors of a hybrid regime. Hence, there has to be some kind of critical juncture that opens the window for the beginning of the process of democratic consolidation. Here I introduce Tarrow's concept of political opportunities. Therefore, my argument goes in the direction that society has the ability to influence the dynamic of democratic transformation. Certain authors abide by a different approach, believing that a critical juncture is not enough for the beginning of democratic consolidation (Pavlović, Antolić 2007). The practical application of this approach will be demonstrated in the cases of Croatia and Serbia.

Serbia and Croatia: Time-space contextualisation

In the region of South-Eastern Europe, after the dismantling of Yugoslavia, some new countries were formed. These countries have nominally become democracies overnight, while in reality many reminiscences of the former regime were still represented in the political and social life. There are clearly differences and similarities between Croatia and Serbia which should be noted. Regarding similarities: besides the fact that Croatia and Serbia were "predominantly agrarian and experienced only partial modernisation and integration into the European market before the foundation of the common Yugoslav state" (Zakošek 2008: 590), both countries had experience with command economy, self-management socialism and the preservation of revolutionary heritage. Hence, Croatia and Serbia were faced with state-building and war approximately at the same time. When it comes to differences, later we will see that Serbia in the 1990s was established by Milošević's repressive apparatus and semi-legal networks with radical right and left populism, while Croatia was a highly institutionalised semi-presidential country without extreme right and left-populism[3] (Zakošek 2008: 509). Besides that, in Croatia there was more political freedom (the approximate value of Freedom House's results on civil liberties and political rights for Croatia in 1991-2000 was 4:4, while the Serbian results were 6:5.5[4]). Equally important is the difference in political culture manifested in contentious politics. While in Croatia there were not so many contentious actions in the early 1990s, Serbian civil society was more active and organised several protests.

The bad financial situation enforced by nationalism and ethnic tensions caused an economic and political crisis in 1991 in both Croatia and Slovenia, as elections were held and the communist party was defeated in

both countries. In Croatia, independence from Yugoslavia occurred in 1991; declared, after a referendum, by the parliament on June 25. In 1992 Franjo Tuđman won the first presidential elections, becoming the president of Croatia, a function he held until 1999 when he died. At the same time, Serbia remanded part of the country named the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia – FRY (with President Slobodan Milošević), though in 1992 it changed its name to Serbia and Montenegro. Milošević, who had been changing his positions as president of Serbia and president of FRY, governed until 2000, when he was defeated in the parliamentary elections.

Croatia: institutional and structural analysis of the Croatian political system (1990-2000)

There are open debates about the nature of the Croatian political system in the last decade of the 20th century. Some consider it authoritarian (Pusić 1998), others believe that this is an exaggeration but that there are some authoritarian elements (Kasapović 1999), while some (mostly politicians attached to the Croatian Democratic Union) claim that in that time period Croatia was nothing more and nothing less than a true democracy. I am of the opinion that Croatia in the 1990s was a type of defective democracy where there were free and general elections but with a lack of protection of human, civil or minority rights (Merkel 1999).

Mirjana Kasapović (2001) identifies four institutional features of the key role of president. The first is harmony among the president and the parliamentary majority. She argues that parliament was de facto legislature, and government the executive "service" of the president. The second feature is the charismatic-clientelistic nature of the governing party (the Croatian Democratic Union). The CDU was governing by buying support with state positions, controlling the national broadcasting company, influencing the judiciary, misusing the national security agencies and limiting liberal-democratic rights (especially minorities). The CDU surrounded them

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3 There was no extreme right as an autonomous political force in Croatia for a longer period of time because it was successfully integrated into the nationalist regime.
4 www.freedomhouse.org/uploads/fiw/FIWAllScores.xls

with veterans, communist political prisoners and refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina. Tuđman, Croatian president at that time and president of the CDU, had strong charisma and presented himself as the founder of the independent Croatia which had given him a legitimacy to govern as he wanted. The third feature of the key role of president was the lack of effective and efficient opposition due to the equation of the Croatian Democratic Union with nationhood, which meant that everyone who was not with the CDU was against Croatia. The last one is the structure of the actor (President Tuđman), who had a tendency towards expression and absolute control (Kasapović 2001: 21-25).

The electoral system is indeed the most visible link between society and the state. In the case of Croatia electoral law and electoral system have been the subject of major change. In ten years (1990-2000) Croatia had four main types of electoral systems. It had a majority electoral system (absolute majority), in 1992 replaced by the segmented electoral system (60 electorates) with D'Hondt's method of calculation of mandates. In 1995, just before the parliamentary elections, the CDU again changed the electoral system. They kept the segmented system, but it was modified.[5] The last change happened in 2000, when Croatia introduced the proportional electoral system as a method of electing representatives for the national parliament. Even a person without any knowledge in psephology could notice that four changes in one decade is a sign that there is something wrong in a political system of that kind. Hence, "there is no new democracy in Central and East Europe where there were changes of electoral system so often and so fundamental as in Croatia" (Kasapović 2001: 27). Considering all these changes of electoral system, we can state with certainty that Croatia at that time was not a consolidated democracy.

The Croatian polity in the 1990s was determined by the dominance of the CDU, an example of a party that was created from the social movement that was demanding Croatian independence and nationhood. Another important actor was the Social Democratic Party, which emerged out of the old communist structure even though it lost the 1990 elections. Other types of parties are those that have renewed some historical tradition of parties (in Croatia the Croatian Peasant Party or the Croatian Party of Right) and completely new political parties (like the Croatian People's Party). Goran Čular writes that in the period between 1989 and 2000 some 80 political parties, were registered but only a few of them had any kind of influence in politics. Furthermore, he argues that only five had a coalition potential (Čular 2001).

Franjo Tuđman and his modus operandi

Tuđman (1922-1999), a former communist general, and the first president of the Republic of Croatia, was a central figure of the 1990s in Croatia. In April and May 1990 the first multi-party elections took place, in which the Croatian Democratic Union won more than 60% of seats and Tuđman was appointed as the president of the Presidency of the Federal Republic of Croatia. In 1992, after the change to the constitution, Tuđman won direct presidential elections and officially became the president of Republic of Croatia. Five years later he again won the presidential elections. He was in charge of Croatia during the war for independence. His political orientation was demochristianity, with strong nationalistic connotations.[6]

Tuđman's regime had several characteristics. One of them was strong anti-Serb resentment. He "rejected all power-sharing mechanisms and privileged veto powers previously given to the Serbian minority in Cro-

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[5] The number of electorates was increased from 60 to 80, the representative segment was decreased from 60 to 28 seats, and the threshold was increased from 3% to 5% (for coalitions of two parties 8%, for coalitions of more than two parties 11%). In addition, new electoral unit – the diaspora – was introduced, with 12 seats, and the number of seats for Serbian representatives was decreased from 13 to three (Zakošek, 2002).

[6] Adapted from http://www.hdzusa.com/dr-franjo-tudman/zivotopis-dr-franje-tudmana/.

atia" (Zakošek 2008: 598). Tuđman wanted to ethnically cleanse Croatia. Serbs were discriminated against and marginalised, which resulted in the formation of the so-called *Krajna* (a state in a state where there was a Serbian majority). From my point of view, the creation of this para-state can be considered as the background of the Homeland War.

Tuđman had a very simple narrative: whoever was against a single suggestion of his or the CDU was against Croatia. In the 1990s Serbs had the status of state enemies. Crimes against Serbs or even a warning about the marginalised position of Serbs in Croatia was unacceptable from the perspective of the Croatian president (Veljak 2000). Human rights were not a priority and, as Vrcan (1995 and 1999) wrote, there was no possibility of winning elections with human rights policies. As for the opposition, the best sentence to describe them in this period was written by Fisher & Bijelić (2007): "One of the central questions for Croatia's opposition during the 1990s was whether and to which extent to cooperate with the HDZ [CDU]…" (55). Radical nationalism was among the main values of Croatian society (Veljak 2000).

In 1995 the war in Croatia ended. As Croatia won, the circumstances slowly started to change. "The Croatian public started to distance itself from the nationalism, as ordinary people no longer perceived any real treat to the country's existence" (Fisher & Bijelić 2007: 56). At that time the media slowly started to become freer and occasionally criticise the ruling party and the president. While the national broadcast company and the most important daily newspapers still stayed under the government's control, there were some independent newspapers that dared to speak up against the ruling party, the CDU.

Civil society in Croatia in the 1990s

The civil society arena in the early 1990s was very limited. In his analysis (2000: 2) of Croatian civil society in the 1990s, Lino Veljak suggests the term "reduced civil society". He emphasises that Croatian polity was not liberal-democratic at that time and that civil society could not have been fulfilling all of its roles. It is important to keep in mind two factors about civil society in Croatia: the first is that the NGO sector had a big problem with the ruling elite that was placing obstacles to the development of the civil society. The CDU promoted a negative image of NGOs in public as being the entities whose purpose was "subverting the Republic" (Fisher & Bijelić 2007: 56). NGOs that were pro-democratisation and transparency[7] were not usually taken seriously by the Croatian government and president. The second point was the lack of financial support from the state towards the sphere of civil society. That was the reason why CSOs were mostly financed by foreign donors.

When the war ended in 1995, civil society organisations started to develop more quickly. Due to the decreased number of Serbs, it was more difficult to use the fear of Serbia as a legitimisation for political moves.

Nongovernmental organisations started to be louder and more proactive. Even though their most common methods of reacting were just writing letters of complaint and press conferences, these attempts created an atmosphere for the later, more intensive, civil society actions. The beginning of coordination and structuralisation of civil society in Croatia can be found in the seminar on elections and parties in Croatia (financed by the Friedrich Neumann Stiftung) held in December 1998, where there were discussions about the role of civil society in the Croatian political process (from the interview with Ting Gazivoda).

The parliamentary elections were approaching. Tuđman was trying to attract the support of voters when a revolutionary thing happened: for the first time his public support was quite low. Considering that living standards and pensions were low and that Tuđman and his party had been governing

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[7] There were some civil society organisations that were close to Tuđman and CDU, such as the Humanitarian Organisation for the Children of Croatia, led by Tuđman's wife Ankica, and the Foundation of the Croatian State Vow, whose president was Tuđman's closest advisor Ivić Pašalić. In addition, various veteran associations supported the government.

for the past ten years without significant improvement in social welfare, people started to doubt Tuđman's competence to assure a better life.

At the end of 1999 Tuđman died after a long illness. The party was in chaos. Without any coordination and clear goals some groups became even more extreme[8] in society, resulting in defiance among people, especially civil society. By using Sidney Tarrow's terminology (Tarrow 1998), we can say that this was a signal to civil society that the political opportunity structure had been changed. In the CDU there was fractionalisation among the party elites, which moved their focus from the elections. Due to the chaos in the party, the opposition saw their opportunity to take things into their own hands.

In November 1999 six opposition parties signed the Declaration on the Fundamental Direction of Post-Election Activity, which would be the basis for the later government formation.

In the second half of the 1990s there were two civil initiatives, namely Glas 99 and GONG, which I would argue were a vital incentive for democratic consolidation. I will now briefly sketch their structure, goals, methods and importance for democratic transition in Croatia.

Glas 99[9]

Encouraged by the Slovakian pro-voting action "OK '98", civil society organisations in Croatia decided to try a similar thing. The problems were that civil society was not recognised as something "appealing" in society and that these organisations had little money. In May 25th 1999, 114 (later 25 more would join) nongovernmental organisations decided to form a coalition which would participate in the electoral campaign with the (primary) goal of increasing the turnout in the elections in 2000. This was how the "Civic Coalition for Free and Fair Elections", or Glas 99, was established ("crisis of political, social and economic development of Croatia binds citizens to help in conducting free and fair elections" – from the Bulletin of Glas 99).

One of the first strategies of Glas 99 was to make citizens aware of the changes to the electoral law and their influences on the results delivered by the Croatian Democratic Union. The *get-out-the-vote* campaign was run through "posters and billboards, radio jingles, TV advertisements, as well as brochures, flyers and rock concerts for young people. Some of the Glas 99 materials focused solely on voter education, informing citizens of who had the right to vote and why elections were important. It is noteworthy that Glas 99 began its pre-election campaign well before the political opposition did" (Fisher, Bijelić 2007: 56). Even though the agreement within Glas 99 was that they would be impartial, my opinion is that this did not prove to be the case. Criticisms of the current government were common, and calls for change were often mentioned in public.[10]

Glas 99 had a remarkable and highly developed structure. A general assembly in which each organisation had one vote was the supreme authority. The assembly elected four regional coordination committees (four big Croatian regions) and set the main office that was in charge of coordination of the campaign, public relations and project funding. According to Tin Gazivoda (interview with Tin Gazivoda), the main principle according to which Glas 99 was acting was decentralisation, not only territorial, but financial and project. Hence, the civil society organisations that signed the citizens' declaration for free and fair elections had the autonomy to write

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[8] It is interesting how fast all this was happening. Tuđman was admitted to hospital on November 1st, at which point he stopped governing the country. In the 40 days he was in hospital, he signed one document – the one announcing parliamentary elections (Orešić, 2010).

[9] Glas – voice in Croatian.

[10] The anthem of the campaign was the song Novo vrijeme (New time), while the slogans were "Circle and you win!", "Happy New 2000!" and "Think with your head!"

and do projects as they wished; the important thing was that they promoted the democratic electoral process and mobilisation of voters.

Glas 99 was divided among the main groups in Croatian society. The programmes were made up of four separate groups: focusing on youth, women, environmental organisations and pensioners.[11] The key method of Glas 99 was the education. They aimed to make the electoral process more transparent and closer to the citizens. They organised round tables and debates among the candidates, but many politicians did not want to participate. After seeing that Glas 99 had strong support and had become very influential, the opposition started to stress the "friendship" of the opposition and the civil society sector.

GONG[12]

GONG was "established in February 1997 by a group of NGOs eager to address the inequities in Croatia's electoral system." (Jašić 2000:160) The organisation was established with the goals of mobilisation of citizens for observation of elections, education of citizens about their civil rights, securing the conditions for the running free and fair elections and raising the level of public trust in the electoral process (ibid). According to Jašić, GONG's highest authority is the General Assembly, which elects the executive board and president. GONG's headquarters were (and still are) in Zagreb, and in 1998 it had 13 regional offices. By successful lobbying and organised actions (posters, seminars, commercials and personal contacts with politicians), GONG succeeded in its aim to have proposals for free and fair elections adopted in electoral law. It should be mentioned that GONG never joined Glas 99 because of the fear of being perceived as anti-CDU.

In all, the results were fascinating. The campaigns of these two organisations succeeded in mobilising 64% of voters to go to the elections (Galović, Rudež 2010). "The manipulation of the intelligence services and the media, the authoritarian nature of the government […] led to progressive reduction in the popularity of the CDU." (Bartlett 2003: 55) All of this, emboldened by the structured and meaningful campaign of civil society actors, resulted in an opposition win. Ivica Račan became prime minister, and Croatia, by electing the left option, stepped into the new phase of political development – consolidation. But this was not all that Glas 99 and GONG did; they helped in changing the negative image of civil society in Croatia and emphasised the importance of civic education.

Serbia: polity, politics and the nature of the regime change

If we accept the fact that the determination of the Croatian political system in the 1990s was difficult, in Serbia it was doubly hard. Classification of the Serbian political regime between 1990 and 2000 is a true challenge for political scientists.[13] In this analysis I will consider Serbia in the given time period as a hybrid regime, one with both democratic and authoritarian characteristics. My conclusion is based on the following facts: in the 1990s Serbia had a constitution, separation of powers (the legislature, the executive and judiciary), elections at a local and national level, as well as a civil society. On the other hand, separation of powers was just nominal (real power was concentrated in one person or one party), elections were multiparty but not fair and completely free, and hence civil liberties were often suspended and were not universal. Even though there was governmental control over the media and public administration, there was an

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[11] For more on this see the Bulletin of Glas 99.
[12] GONG – Građani organizirano nadgledaju izbore, or "Citizens Organised to Monitor Voting".

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[13] Without going into discussion upon this, I will refer to several texts: Pavlović, Antonić, 2007; Molnar, 2008; Goati, 2002; Zakošek, 2008. The important feature that I would emphasise is that in Serbia in the 1990s there were several different "types of regime" (post-totalitarian, pseudo democratic and tyrannical – Molnar 2008: 123).

opposition that could participate in parliamentary elections. Levitsky and Way (2002) call regimes like this competitive (electoral) authoritarianism, pointing out that it does not fulfil even the minimal requirements for being a democracy. However, I will use the term "hybrid regime", as a middle ground between authoritarianism and democracy, due to the context of the text.

What was the institutional organisation like in Serbia in the 1990s? As mentioned previously, there were nominal democratic institutions but they were under the influence of Milošević. Molnar (2008: 91) argues that there were three dimensions of weaknesses in the Serbian parliament in the 1990s: firstly, representatives were not independent, meaning Milošević could change MPs from his party as he wished in order to assure complete obedience. The second feature was the non-parliamentary activities of the parliament. The parliamentary rule of procedures was suspended as it suited Milošević's party, and parliamentary committees did not propose laws at all. The third point that Molnar suggests seems somewhat controversial. He sees the fact that 90% of the laws came from the government as a sign of the weak parliament (2008: 91). However, today in most parliamentary systems government proposes around 90% of laws – the so called "90% rule" (Hague, Harrop, Breslin 2001). For this reason, I would not interpret this feature as a Serbian specificity. What I would agree to be problematic is agenda-setting in Serbia in the 1990s, where there was no interpellation and responses of the government members in parliament were limited.

As for the electoral system in Serbia in the 1990s, this was – as in Croatia – subject to a great deal of change. The first electoral system after the collapse of communism was "imposed" by the SPS. They introduced the law which established from then onwards (for parliamentary elections in 1990) the Serbian political system as a two-round majority system (absolute majority). This type of electoral system favours major parties. The opposition did not participate in this policy-making, so they had the feeling that the electoral system was something external. In all subsequent elections (1992, 1993, 1997 2000) there was a proportional electoral system with a threshold of 5% (Goati 2001). The idea of a shift from the majority electoral system to proportional representation was to create greater convergence between electoral and parliamentary power.

Vujadinović points out the vast number of manipulations and electoral frauds committed by the SPS, who tailored electorates as they wished; there was "regular fluctuation in the number of electoral districts" (Vujadinović et al. 2003: 275) as well as "improving" electoral results.

Serbia is a country with a large number of parties. "By the end of 1990 around fifty parties were formed, at the beginning of 1996 that number had increased to 161, at the beginning of 2002 the number was around 250 and at the end of the same year it was more than 30" (Goati 2002: 9). On its own this information does not say much, because one does not know the real strength and influence of all those parties.

At the beginning of the 1990s there were three major questions in the Serbian polity: the matter of the identity of the community, the character of the state and the territorial definition of the country. Upon those questions we could identify two main cleavages in the Serbian political life that influenced the party system. The first is the ethnic cleavage, which basically differentiated "citizens" from "ethnic Serbs". The consequence of the claim that "Serbia is a country of Serbs" was discrimination and marginalisation of the ethnic minorities on the territory of Serbia. This ideology, supported by a strong belief in religion and a sort of limited communication with the rest of the world, was characteristic of the Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS) and the Serbian Radical Party (SRP) – the two parties that formed all the governments in the 1990s. The second pole was the citizen version, which argued in favour of ethnic and religious tolerance and democracy. It is important to note that besides these two parties, there was no fixed position of parties upon this question. Parties swung from one pole to the other depending on the current situation in society, but this cleavage has always been present in the Serbian polity.

The second cleavage was about the difference in favouring the regime. The SPS was the reformed League of Communists Serbia (SKS). At the beginning of the 1990s they still favoured the concept of worker self-management, distribution of goods and joint ownership – the leftovers of communism. Besides the SPS, the SRP had the same economic orientation. This was the first pole of the second cleavage. The second pole was anti-systemic. Parties at this pole were arguing in favour of the liberal market and dropping the communist heritage. The Democratic Party of Serbia (DPS) were the most prominent at this pole (Goati 2002).

According to Florian Bieber (2003), opposition in the 1990s in Serbia was fragmented into three different streams (extreme nationalists, democratic nationalists and reform-oriented parties). Other features were: the lack of internal democracy (domination of party leaders), the lack of distance from the regime (cases of swing parties), the lack of real political power (the governing party has not consulted the opposition about relevant political questions), and no effective answer to the "National Question" (79-82)

In short, the governing parties were pro-socialism, supporting distribution of goods and nationalism, while the opposition were arguing in favour of democracy, market economy and resolving the Serbian national question (What is Serbia – a heterogeneous country of all the citizens living on its territory, or a country of Serbs?).

Milošević and his way of governing

Slobodan Milošević (1941-2006) governed Serbia for 13 years (1987-2000), and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia for eight (1992-2000) (Molnar 2008: 168). At the beginning of his presidential career he seemed to be a president who would embrace democratic values and allow pluralism in the country, but over time things started to change. Authors (Molnar 2008 or Goati 2002) believe that there were three phases of Milošević's governance. The first was post-totalitarian, where he was using the unclear

conditions after the fall of communism to impose his own will. Over time his regime started to be something resembling electoral authoritarianism. At this stage Milošević and his SPS controlled the economy, influenced the media and did not allow true practising of civil liberties. The last phase, tyranny, was the period between September 24th and October 5th 2000, when despite his loss in the elections Milošević tried to stay in power (ibid).

Milošević was a charismatic leader who enjoyed popular support. If I have to identify the overall characteristics of his regime, there seem to be five: namely populism, clientelism, charismatism, nationalism and corruption. As Zakosek emphasises, "Using Kosovo Serb dissatisfaction, he mobilised a broad nationalist protest movement, the so-called anti-bureaucratic revolution, in the form of officially instigated mass rallies and movements" (Zakošek 2008: 593). The fact that in the 1990 presidential elections Milošević got 20% more votes than his party the same year in parliamentary elections, and almost 46% more votes in the 1992 elections (Goati 2002: 21) demonstrates his charisma and popular support. In the first half of the 1990s, Serbs saw Milošević as a person who would regain Serbian glory and allow the prosperity of the country. He often used demagogic rhetoric to mobilise Serb nationalism by promoting the idea that all Serbs should live in the same country. This was one of the main motives of the war, because Milošević wanted to keep a reduced Yugoslavian state under Serbian control (Zakošek 2008:594) just in order for all Serbs to live in one state. Moreover, he did not use this nationalistic impulse to strengthen the economy and stimulate foreign trade and in that way further the Serbian economic situation. If we add "the propaganda which built up tendencies towards dysphoric rumination, exaggerated perception of conspiracy" (Rahmet 2010: 291) and the lack of true opposition with the strong brain drain, we can get a picture of the conditions of Serbian society in the first half of the 1990s.

The economic situation in Serbia in the 1990s was devastating. From 1992-1995 Serbia was under a UN embargo due to the war in Bosnia

and Herzegovina and Croatia, GDP was decreasing and the grey economy was around 50% of GDP. With his great political and economic power Milošević could basically do whatever he wanted. One of the characteristics of his regime was the incredibly high level of corruption. This corruption, inflation of about 313%, reduction of pensions and the huge spending on the war that Serbia was waging caused great dissatisfaction (Molnar 2008: 162).

The civil society sphere in Serbia and the fall of Milošević

The structure of civil society in Serbia at the beginning of the 1990s was highly complex. On the one hand, there was a powerful dictator who did not allow opposing opinions, values and methods other than his, but on the other hand, there was a different world consisting of numerous CSOs that were promoting civil and human rights and education fighting against war. All this nationalistic and populist rhetoric was the cause for forming "another Serbia", a counterbalance to Milošević's authoritarianism. That other side of the Serbian polity would later play an important role in the dethroning of Milošević. However, as Florian Bieber notes: "actors of civil society concerned with democratisation suffered from pronounced structural weaknesses" (Bieber 2003: 82).

Like every pro-democratic actor in Serbia, CSOs had to struggle for their existence. The state provided hardly any funding to civil society organisations, which were considered anti-state actors. "State-controlled media issued nationalistic and xenophobic propaganda and systematically bashed the democratic opposition and all the other democratically-minded activists. The ultimate goal of this type of propaganda was to discredit democratic forces in the eyes of the public by labelling them as collaborators and traitors, thereby disqualifying them from political and public life" (Minić, Dereta 2007: 81).

As mentioned earlier, Serbia (as opposed to Croatia) is a country with a contentious tradition. The reason for that claim can be found in the fact that there were "seven waves of significant protest during the rule of Milošević: antiregime protests, March 1991; student protests, June-July 1992; the opposition Vidovdan assembly, June 1992; protests against electoral fraud, November 1996-February 1997; student protests, November 1996-March 1997; antiregime protests, Fall 1999; protests against election fraud and for a change of power, September-October 2000" (Bieber 2003: 83). Even though those protests failed, the reason was the inability of the opposition to challenge the regime on the basis of these protests (Bieber 2003: 83).

For instance, in 1997 there were two parallel protests, one from the opposition side (Đinđić, Drašković etc.) and the other by students with almost the same nominal goal – better quality of life for Serbs, and less oppression. But I believe that the main reason for these protests was the fact that Milošević refused to accept the defeat on the local elections in 1996. This protest was an example of civil disobedience of citizens towards the corrupted state apparatus, defending general suffrage and the electoral process. This example shows that, even though democracy was very fragile in Serbia, people were able to act and get what they wanted. In the end, Milošević accepted the results of the local elections, which would later turn out to be the beginning of his end. I would suggest that there were two vital civil society formations that helped in the regime change and bringing Milošević down. Those are the student movement Otpor and a Serbian counterpart of the Croatian Glas 99 and Izlaz 2000.

Otpor, a synonym for democracy in Serbia, was firstly created as a student social movement in 1998 when Milošević proposed a law that drastically decreased the autonomy of the university which the students protested against. To put this student protest into context: Serbia lost the war in Croatia in 1995, ICTY set the issue of indictment against Milošević, and the outbreak of the Kosovo conflict led to NATO air strikes against Yugoslavia in March 1999. Serbia was at that time in political and economic isolation. The embargo was imposed; reductions in electricity and constant

bombing lasted for almost 80 days, proving devastating for the people of Serbia.

In 2000, CSOs came under serious attack for being national enemies and NATO collaborates. Several months after the war against NATO it seemed that Milošević had increased his power. People were confused, tired and exhausted. It was clear that Milošević would not give up his position as president.

At that time Otpor started to prepare its actions for bringing Milošević down. They began to train activists for the political struggle, writing projects for foreign donors and making people sensitive to the concept of regime change. Otpor began to mobilise people and to run a campaign against Milošević. It was not a traditional political party, but a movement that often engaged in unconventional activities. Activities included displaying an effigy of Milošević which passers-by could punch after paying one dinar; or painting red footsteps on the pavement which they claimed to be Milošević's bloodied steps, leaving office for the final time (BBC 2000). It continued directly addressing the president during the presidential campaign in 2000, when it launched its campaign called *Gotov je!* (He's done!) and came to be widely credited for its role in ousting Milošević. Slowly, the movement started to infiltrate society with numerous performances, protests, flyers.

Milošević became the main culprit for the situation in which Serbia found itself. The media, especially ANEM[14] and local TV stations, started to broadcast short clips against Milošević .The atmosphere in society was contentious, with sudden widespread euphoria and optimism. The people wanted a change. An interesting note is that every day at 7.30 pm, when the pro-regime daily informative programme was starting on national television, people started to beat pots with spoons. By doing this they have demonstrated their dissatisfaction with Milošević and his regime (interviews with Serbian people living in that time in Serbia).

It became clear as the elections were approaching that the citizens had to understand that it was they who would win against Milošević and that all citizens should have the chance to clearly say what kind of future they wanted for themselves and for their children. Having recognised this, the civil society sector's primary goal became that of restoring citizens' trust in the importance of their votes, of convincing them that every vote counts and of re-establishing their faith in the ability of the people to win democratic change (Minić, Dereta 2007: 86). That was the goal of the Izlaz 2000 campaign.

This campaign, inspired by the Croatian and Slovak example, had the goal of mobilising people to get out and vote. Focuses of the campaign were rural areas and women voters. Around 150 civil society organisations signed the declaration that bound them to participate in a political, but non-partisan campaign that would increase the number of citizens actively participating in the electoral process and enable citizens to better understand the electoral process.

At the presidential elections in 2000, September 24 over 71% of citizens cast their votes, giving a clear victory to the democratic candidate Vojislav Koštunica (50.24%) over the incumbent Slobodan Milošević (37.15%) (Official Gazzet 2000). At first Milošević did not want to accept his loss, but that changed on October 5th 2000. I believe we can consider that date to be the beginning of the consolidation of democracy in Serbia. At that date the protests against Milošević cumulated. People went onto the streets of Belgrade, but not only the people of Belgrade. Several hundred thousand protesters from all over Serbia arrived in Belgrade to protest. Unlike previous protests, there was no large-scale police crackdown, as police realised that Milošević was no longer their chief officer and refused to beat and arrest demonstrators. The parliament building was partially burned during the protests. This protest is known by the name "Bulldozer Revolution"

14Association of Independent Electronic Media.

because the protesters used a wheel loader in order to take over the national broadcast company (RTS). When the RTS, the fortress of Milošević, fell down that was a sign that Milošević's regime had lost the power and legitimacy. Two days later, Slobodan Milošević resigned.

In conclusion, in 2000 political parties were weak, unable to mobilise people. From 1998, however, there was a general opinion in society that something had to be changed. Civil society saw its opportunity in that, starting to mobilise the rest of society. Thus, they created an environment where political parties could call for elections, and they succeeded in this in July when Milošević decided to set early elections for September. Tarrow (1998) would call that "creating of political opportunities". Political parties saw their chance in this and used it, but Milošević tried to "steal elections" – unsuccessfully. Civil society actions, mainly organised by the members of Otpor that later mostly became members of the Democratic Party, are the best example of how important a role active and organised civil society can play in democratisation.

Analysis and arguments

As we have seen, there were similar types of regime in Croatia and Serbia; the difference was in its character. While in Croatia Tuđman's regime was more focused on the Serbs and the limitation of their numbers in Croatia, in Milošević's Serbia, according to Freedom House (2011), civil liberties in general were almost suspended and political rights limited. While this is true, in both countries there was a more or less vibrant civil society. In Serbia civil society was more active and visible to the extent that some authors (Bieber 2003; Minic, Dereta 2007) talk about the "other Serbia", a sphere of social movements and active civil society organisations independent from Milošević's rule. In Croatia, on the other hand, civil society during the 1990s was not so visible, due to Tuđman's personal dislike and fear of it. Hence, Croatia is known for its uncontentious tradition (Veljak

2000). However, in both countries civil society prepared the grounds for the first change of government.

Due to the weak opposition and the lack of innovative policy solutions in Croatia, there was no real political alternative to the CDU. All of this was supported by nationalistic rhetoric, which glorified Croatia and Croats. In these conditions civil society had a restricted opportunity to act. Nevertheless, civil society played a vital role in the democratisation of Croatia, as it seems to me that it created political opportunities for the regime to change. Considering that there was no other institution that was independent from the state and the CDU but civil society, it had the opportunity to act in order to change political situation.

Civil society's intentions were empowered by the death of Tuđman, when the state apparatus (basically the CDU) became more repressive towards the opposition and (civil) society. I would argue that the Tuđman's death was the critical juncture for the beginning of the true consolidation of democracy. His death created and caused chaos due to his role in the Croatian state and society. When such an omnipresent figure with considerable power and authority is not in the polity any more, people get confused. Civil society actors at that time doubled their efforts in order to mobilise the Croatian public to get out and vote. The results were fascinating, looking retrospectively. Croatia started its negotiations with the European Union, its GDP started to grow,[15] and the country's international reputation improved.

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15 Račan's government ruled Croatia for three years. Even though during that time there was economic stagnation, the results of the efforts of this government were visible afterwards. In spite of the CDU's attempt to present the growth in GDP as due to them, it was the previous government that was to credit. "Once one of the wealthiest of the Yugoslav republics, Croatia's economy suffered badly during the 1991-95 war as output collapsed and the country missed the early waves of investment in Central and Eastern Europe that followed the fall of the Berlin Wall. Between 2000 and 2007, however, Croatia's economic fortunes began to improve slowly, with moderate but steady GDP growth between 4% and 6% led by a rebound in tourism and credit-driven consumer spending. Inflation over

All those results enabled Croatian politics to enter a phase of democratic consolidation. After Stjepan Mesić won the presidential elections in February 2000 the constitution changed, which consequentially transformed Croatia from a semi-presidential into a parliamentary system. Moreover, there was no longer such a strong influence of one person on politics (as was the case with Tuđman), so we could say that Croatia started to be more institutionalised in terms of its checks and balances system. In addition, people realised that they were the ones who had the power to change the government if the government does not act according to their wishes. According to Merkel's phases of democratic consolidation and Schmitter's definition, the changes in Croatia after 2000 bring me to the conclusion that with the government change Croatia entered a new phase of maturing democracy – democratic consolidation.

Serbia was a country under a strict and authoritarian president whose goal was to create one country for all Serbs. Milošević's regime was characterised by electoral fraud, limitations on the media, clientelism and a catastrophically bad economic situation (Molnar 2008). Another equally important feature of the 1990s was weak and fragmented opposition, but vivid and active civil society. The synthesis of those two factors, as I am about to show, led to the collapse of Milošević's regime.

It was interesting to see the public discourse change in Serbian society after 1997. Until that time, Milošević was the unquestionable leader of Serbia, a popular figure who enjoyed great public support. But over time this image started to fade. After the student protests of 1996/97 which followed decreased university autonomy, Milošević started to be perceived more negatively (as stated in interviews). I believe that was the critical juncture in society that would later result in a critical juncture in the state. At this time, people realised that Milošević was a demagogue who could not (or

did not know how to) solve the critical economic crisis in the country which people wanted to be solved. Civil society, as a more coordinated part of overall society, saw its chance in that perception change. They started to train, to learn and to organise the way to mobilise national masses in order to bring Milošević down. We have to bear in mind that this was a time of absolute resignation. There was no hope, no motivation for political struggle, for entering elections or attempting to change the political system.

This was the role of civil society: to mobilise people, to initiate civic participation; and that was exactly what civil society in Serbia did. Influenced by the Croatian and Slovak example, but also by their previous experience in protesting, they organised numerous actions with one goal – to mobilise people. Perhaps the best example of their success on the microlevel was that people were beating pots every time during the central news in the national broadcasting company as a way of expressing their dissatisfaction with Milošević and his regime.

Civil society in the case of Serbia was responsible for changing the attitude towards political action. Opposition parties, scattered, undecided and unable to present their policy options, used this new situation and won the elections. However, Milošević tried to dispute the electoral results, and then civil society then showed all its strength, almost literally dethroning him. Similarly to the death of Tuđman in Croatia, in Serbia the critical juncture for allowing the consolidation of democracy was Milošević's loss in the elections. This allowed Serbia to begin its transformation into a stable democratic country with limited leftovers from authoritarian regime. However, it is debatable whether Serbia entered the last phase of democratic transformation. After the end of Milošević's era the public administration was still crowded with his people. Despite that, my opinion is that without bringing Milošević down it would not have been possible even to exit the hybrid regime Serbia was during his governing. Moreover, October 5th 2000 definitely showed that democracy was in the minds of people and that society realised that the ultimate power was in their hands (as seen in protest

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the same period remained tame and the currency, the kuna, stable" (CIA – The World Factbook).

actions such as the boycott of RTS News etc.). For me, this is enough reason to call Serbia a country that had entered democratic consolidation.

There are two points I need to elaborate in order to conclude this analysis: to specify the concrete functions of civil society in 1999/2000 and to answer the question of why it was civil society, and not some other factors, that aided democratic consolidation the most.

Regarding the first point; in Croatia, as noted, the opposition was weak and civil society was an instrument of strengthening democracy. The opposition parties used the political opportunities that civil society actors developed and won the elections. Their role was merely secondary. I would argue that people voted for the opposition because they realised they wanted a change. Hence, they did not vote for the coalition, but voted against the CDU and Tuđman. Civil society helped people understand their role in the Croatian polity and the fact that they were the creators of the political scene.

On the other hand, in Serbia the story is a little more complex. Opposition in Serbia was an anti-system option. Even though it was weak and fragmented, their position was well known. They were against Milošević's way of governing, mostly pro-Europe and supporting political liberties. People in Serbia were aware of their existence, but were not motivated because it seemed that Milošević's regime was omnipresent. Hence, all protests organised by society, as shown earlier, were unsuccessful. Over time, civil society realised that coordination and organisation are vital for success. The result of this realisation was successful overall mobilisation and a return of trust in politics among Serbs. This is where the first part of the function of mobilisation of Serbian civil society ends. Later, when the opposition realised that people were more interested in politics, civil society took a more instrumental function. The opposition won the elections, Milošević refused to admit it, and the opposition called upon the people to demonstrate. The people, at that time eager for change and revenge against Milošević, answered the opposition's call and brought Milošević down.

These two roles in the context of political change (the role of mobilisation and the instrumental role) are two possible missions of civil society in the phases of transition. These roles encompass a vital task of civil society – to be a link between the state and the society.

The last question in this analysis that should be answered regards explanation of the reason why precisely civil society played such a crucial (mobilisation or instrumental) role in Croatia and Serbia. I will provide two possible explanations.

The first explanation comes from the contextual perspective of civil society in Croatia and Serbia at the end of the 1990s. The point of view of society was limited; the political culture would correspond to Almond and Verba's (1963) second type – subjective political culture. Under these conditions, I suspect that only civil society could be an internal factor for imposing social and political change towards democratic consolidation. In other words, civil society as a structure was the most efficient factor for several reasons.

The first reason is the well-structured organisation which civil society organisations in Serbia and Croatia had. They were well organised, with clear divisions of roles and goals. Their strategies were highly developed and they knew the pulse of the people. Because of that they knew how to organise campaigns that were publicly accepted and efficient in their goals. Secondly, they were learning from the experience of their foreign colleagues. In the case of Croatia, that was Slovakia and their get-out-and-vote campaign OK 98, and Serbians also learned from Croats and Slovaks. This international component is important because, as mentioned earlier, society in general was closed to foreign influences due to the nature of regimes in Croatia and Serbia. Civil society ultimately saw its chance, taking the opportunity and changing (directly or indirectly) the regime.

The second explanation of why it was civil society that played such a vital role in bringing Tuđman and Milošević down is found in its position regarding the political regime. Hence, the civil societies in Croatia and Serbia were independent from the state; moreover, they suffered from a lack of financing (civil society organisations gained most of their funding from abroad) and inadequate legal protection. I think this independent position of government towards civil society was beneficial for civil society and its goals in general. They knew they could not have much to lose, so they were willing to take a risk and organise (more or less direct) actions for change of government. Without being under the influence of the government they could fulfil their watchdog function better. The inherent function of the ideal-type of civil society – to protect society from authoritarianism – was realised in Croatia and Serbia.

Conclusions

After decades of being in one state and the collapse of that state, Croatia and Serbia became enemies, and despite their wish for independence and insisting more on differences rather than similarities, their political development was (and still is) similar. However, there were some significant differences in the way democratic transformation happened. These differences are important in order to comprehend the political dynamics and the essence of the current political system in Croatia and Serbia. In this article I focused on one of the segments – civil society.

In the article I used Tarrow's simplified concept of political opportunities structure and applied it to regime change in Serbia and Croatia. I wanted to see whether it is possible to observe two regimes from the perspective of political opportunities and analyse political change focusing on critical juncture. I showed that both in Croatia and Serbia there was a critical point that was important for breaking with the old regime and which opened the door to democratic consolidation. In Croatia the death of President Tuđman al-

lowed more democratic procedures in politics and consequently made the polity more stable in a democratic sense. In Serbia, the same happened with the protests in 1997, where the critical juncture came when civil society actors realised that the time for change had come. All actions and dissatisfaction of civil society culminated on October 5th 2000, when the energy of civil society burst, showing all its strength in demonstrations against Slobodan Milošević. The result of this was his announcement of election loss and allowing Serbia to become more democratic.

My hypothesis was that civil society was powerful enough to enhance democratic consolidation due to its structure and organisation. Civil society in Serbia and Croatia was efficient and determined in its intention to making the two countries more democratic. Due to the fact that its organisations were among the rare institutions not under the control of the state apparatus, they could act freely.

The political opposition, an actor that usually has the biggest impact on democratic consolidation, played a different role in Croatia than in Serbia. While in Croatia the opposition was more passive, in Serbia it saw the opportunity civil society created by mobilising people against Milošević's regime and involving them more actively in the campaign against him. The result was obvious – Milošević was not president any more after his loss in the elections, despite his attempts to ignore the will of people.

In conclusion, this analysis has shown that civil society was a pivotal factor in the democratisation of two countries of the Western Balkans. From the examination of the structure and the position of civil society in Serbia and Croatia as well as the nature of the regime (change), we were able to infer the features of civil society that helped in that change. Hence, we saw the position of the opposition in the political system of Croatia and Serbia and observed its role at the beginning of democratic consolidation.

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