

**AN ASSESSMENT OF THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN
THE DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION:
A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF CROATIA AND SERBIA**

By

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Posebno hvala *Melini, Laći i Bakiju!*

ABSTRACT

This paper analyses the impact of civil society on the final stage of democratization process – consolidation, using qualitative methodological tools. I start from the theoretical explanation of the concept of democratization and elaborate its specificities in the two countries of the Western Balkans – Croatia and Serbia. By introducing the concept of civil society, I am showing that not only formal governmental institutions play an important role in the consolidation process, but that organized citizens also play a crucial role in consolidation. I use the concept of political opportunity structure which I am applying to the political change in Croatia and Serbia. The theoretical overview of the debates of consolidation and civil society will be supported by two cases where civil society has been crucial, Croatia and Serbia. This thesis will demonstrate how organized attempts of citizens can change political regimes and introduce democracy as “the only game in town”. I argue that civil society due to its functions was the most efficient factor for making democratic consolidation possible.

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INTRODUCTION

Ralph Dahrendorf, one of the most frequently quoted scholars when it comes to the democratization process in Central and East Europe, in his book *Reflections on the revolution in Europe* has a compelling thought about democratization: “It will take six months to reform the political systems, six years to change the economic systems, and sixty years to effect a revolution in the peoples' hearts and minds.” (1990) Bearing this in mind, my goal is to write a comprehensive analysis of the 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. It seems to me that political scientists and politicians have lately deviated from the study of interaction between the society and the state towards merely studying institutions of the state and policy processes that are happening within those institutions (for more on the nature of political science at the end of 20th century see Thelen, 1999).

From my point of view, civil society is one of the most impressive concept in contemporary democracies due to its structured organization on the one hand, and pure representation of interests of citizens on the other. The concept of civil society encompasses an explanation for the sphere in which there are active citizens who grasp and can manifest the basic principle of freedom of association and solidarity.

In order to understand political dynamics of the Western Balkan 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 institutionalized, civil society organizations (CSOs) have been playing key roles, while in Serbia, aside from an institutionalized version of civil society action, there was a real social and political movement that helped erode the authoritarian power and lead to the victory of a more democratic political option. Concretely, 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 consolidation process in both countries. In 2000 Milošević’s¹ and Tuđman’s 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.

In short, in Croatia in 1999, 145 (later four more will join) nongovernmental organizations decided to form a coalition which would participate in the electoral campaign with the (primary) goal of increasing the turnout rate in the subsequent elections of 2000. At the same time, the GONG association began to insist on the importance of electoral transparency. The significance of those organization lies in that it was one of the first organized attempts to better the freedom of speech. One of the first strategies of the “Glas 99” was to make citizens aware of the electoral law changes and their influences on the results brought by the Croatian Democratic Union². It is often referred that Serbia is the case in which civil society started a *revolution* against President Slobodan Milošević and his regime. But in Serbia there were two civil society meta-actors: first – “Izlaz 2000” and second - social movement “Otpor”. “Izlaz 2000” (a kind of Serbian version of „Glas 99“) was a campaign of approximately 150 CSOs that demanded free and fair presidential elections in Serbia. Slobodan Milošević and his Socialist Party of Serbia were ruling the country (and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia) in an autocratic way where civil liberties were largely ignored. Two questions arise. How did the student social movement “Otpor”³

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

² Even though the public knew about manipulation this was the first time that some organization said it publicly because most of the media were under the influence of CDU

³ „Otpor” in Serbian language means “resistance”, while “Izlaz” means exit

that formed in 1998 grew into a *revolution* that brought down Milošević. Also what was the role of “Izlaz 2000” campaign? These questions will be thoroughly answered in this paper.

Research Question and Hypothesis

The research question is focused on identifying the difference in factors which impacted the democratic consolidation in Croatia and Serbia. I would like to analyze how important factor was civil society in the path of democratic consolidation in Croatia and Serbia alike. What were the circumstances, both in Croatia and what were the factors in Serbia that led to the fall of Milošević and Tudman respectively? 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 of 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 on civil society and the overall population can at some point burst and produce a huge resistance towards political structures responsible for that oppression.

My hypothesis is that civil society was the most effective structure that could aid democratic consolidation of Croatia and Serbia. In that process there were other actors such as government, opposition and judiciary, but this thesis strive to show that only civil society could make democracy consolidated given in the conditions of Croatia and Serbia were at the end of the 1990s because it was the 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 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 socialization, watchdog function, representation and subsidiarity, only civil society had the legitimacy and the power to endorse democracy in Croatia and Serbia. On the other hand I will present arguments against the positive impact of civil society and evaluate their validity. Through the concrete examples where civil society has made maturing democracy possible, I will explain the context, methods, structure of civil societies and polity of those countries. Hence, I will demonstrate the weakness of the other potential factors for consolidation of democracy. By comparing those two cases by their outcomes I will make a conclusion about the impact of civil society on democratic consolidation.

Relevance

The topic is relevant because there is no serious and adequate scientific research on the subject. As far as the literature review uncovered, there is no an author who compared Croatia and Serbia through the perspective of civil society even though civil society has played a major historical-political role in those countries. Scholars such as: Zakošek (1995), Jašić (2000), Veljak (2001), Bežovan (2005), Pavlović (2006), Forbig & Demeš (2007), Mihailović (2006), Popović, Milivojević & Dinić (2007), but as well as other foreign authors such as Barlett (2002), Fisher (2006), Rahmet (2005) deal only with one aspect of civil society. Some write about media, some note nongovernmental organizations and some the political context of 1999 or 2000. There is no comprehensive analysis of civil society sphere in Croatia and Serbia, nor a the comparison of these two countries. Croatia and Serbia are pivotal for understanding the democratization process due to several reasons.

Firstly, if I manage to provide plausible arguments that only civil society could enhance democratic change in those two countries that can be used for later analyses of post-communist countries. Hence, rule of law and civil liberties are a challenge for all new

democracies, yet countries of former Yugoslavia are a special case. Yugoslavia was a non-aligned state in the Cold War, equally (not)influenced by the West and the East. It is relevant for political science to determine the heritage of communist past in order to understand present dynamics of political processes.

Secondly, eleven years after the regime change, there is not one scientific text that deals with the comparison of the Croatian and Serbian cases. I find it is important to know what the nature and beginnings of consolidation are in order to better understand the present political systems of both countries better. The present political and social factors in Croatia and Serbia are direct products of the events in 2000, thus by studying those movements we can infer the structure of the political culture and the nature of institutions in those two countries. Knowing the scope and methods of civil society, from their experience we can conclude about the contentious character of the people and learn about the present politics.

In short, the novelty of this paper is that the structures, methods and the results of civil societies' actions in Croatia and Serbia at the end of the 1990s are for the first time examined through the perspective of political science and explained through the concept of political opportunities. This is relevant because political processes, both in Croatia and Serbia after the year 2000, are influenced by the happenings in 2000. Therefore, a comparative analysis of the year 2000 is essential for understanding differences in the speed and the direction of political changes between Croatia and Serbia.

Why Croatia and Serbia? Why two similar cases but not identical? The answer is: to demonstrate the real power and possibilities of civil society through their dissimilarities. Even though at the first sight it seems that those cases are identical, we will see that there were many differences among Croatia and Serbia⁴.

⁴ More detailed methodological justification why Croatia and Serbia are adequate cases of the study of impact of civil society on democracy will be provided in the part IV (comparison of Croatia and Serbia) where I will list all common and different factors of those two countries. Hence, it will be shown why civil society was The Factor.

The thesis consists of four main building blocks. In the first part I am presenting the methodological framework on which I am building the rest of the argument. In the second part I am providing the theoretical background, defining civil society, describing the development of the term and giving the preview of its functions. Hence, in this part democratic consolidation is defined and theoretical discussions are given on the positive and negative impact of civil society on the democratic consolidation. The second part ends with a brief description of political opportunities structure. The third part is about Croatia and Serbia. In section A I am doing case studies of the civil society impact and presenting a political context for civil society action in both states, while in section B I will be doing a comparative analysis of those two cases.

CHAPTER 1: METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

When it comes to the study of democratic consolidation, there is no rule whether quantitative or qualitative research methods are more suitable. It depends on the part of the democratic consolidation that a researcher wants to examine. Considering that the goal of this thesis is to determine the structure and the contextual impact of certain social phenomena (civil society), I believe qualitative methods are more suitable for explaining those processes and the role of actors in the democratization process. Even though there are some excellent works on democratic consolidation from the perspective of quantitative methodology (for instance Schneider, 2009), I believe that qualitative methodological tools can clarify motives, political opportunities as well as specialties of the democratic building transition changes in depth, which is in this case relevant. In order to understand the institution building, as well as the actions of civil society and the products of those actions I will employ the following research methods: case study, process tracing and semi-structured interviews. In the final and the most innovative part of this thesis, as noted in the introduction, I will do a comparison of the two cases using a third methodological technique – Mill's methods of agreement and difference.

Case study is a “detailed examination of an aspect of historical episode which is used to develop or test historical explanations that may be generalizable to other events” (George & Bennett, 2005). There are several types of case studies that are used depending on the part of the case a researcher wants to cover. John Gerring (2007) suggests using a single-outcome study to “a situation in which the researcher seeks to explain a single outcome for a single case” (187). Considering the theoretical framework of political opportunities structure that will be used for the explanation of the regime change in Serbia and Croatia, I believe that a single-outcome study, which requires a rigid understanding of causal relations, is an appropriate method for the study of the impact of civil society and its outcomes. In short,

political opportunities structure theory and a single-outcome study are compatible theoretical-methodological tools so their combination will allow me to understand the context and incentives that have led to a regime change in Croatia and Serbia. Hence, by using a single-outcome study, I will show the internal logic of those two events (bringing down Milošević and the Croatian Democratic Union) and examine the causality of several factors that have played a big role in government changes in Croatia and Serbia. Case study requirements will be combined with the theory of political opportunities which requires detection of the event or incentive that causes some political or social change.

The second method that will be used in this thesis is process tracing. *Process tracing* is a method that is used to test whether the residual difference between two similar cases were casual or spurious in producing difference in their outcomes. In order to examine the process of civil society organization and actions in the two countries, process tracking will help me understand the steps towards the regime change. This method will be mostly useful for the study of Serbia where there are several steps in forming “Otpor” and “Izlaz 2000”, but as well as for Croatia in order to show the way of forming responsive civil society.

The third qualitative method I will use is semi-structured interview. There are three types of qualitative interviews: the structured version, semi-structured interview and the unstructured interview. While in the structured interview questions are permanent, and the script is given, in the semi-structured version the script is incomplete so that the researcher can improvise and implement some in questions depending on the subject. The positive side of the qualitative interview is its ability to go into depth. By conducting it the researcher can find out the motives and values of the interviewee that otherwise would stay undiscovered. The possibility to discover the context is another useful thing that can be done by the qualitative interview. The topic of this thesis is to determine the social concepts of the actors of the political circumstances. For this is the reason I will use interviews as a method of

gathering and structuring data. There will be four interviews taken: one with the coordinator of the campaign “Glas 99”, and three with the citizens of Serbia who will share their life story in order to understand the atmosphere of 2000 better. The interview about Croatian case is important because it explains the structure and power relations in “Glas 99”, while interviews about Serbia at the end of the 1990s will demonstrate the atmosphere and the perception of the regime through the eyes of citizens.

The last methodological tool I will use is *Mill’s method of agreement and difference*. This method helps researchers in discovering the cause or the effect of a phenomena. In my case that will allow me to identify and extrapolate the main factors that caused the regime change. Bearing in mind the standards and framework of Mill’s methods of agreement and difference, I will make an inference on the movements that occurred in the two countries of Western Balkan as well as offer a possible theoretical argument why what happened has actually happened.

In all, case studies and process tracing will be used to present the logic of the beginning of the consolidation in Croatia and Serbia. That will be supported by semi-structured interviews with the actors that participated in the civil society actions, while Mill’s methods will be a tool for comparison of the two cases and the developing deductive argument on civil society impact on the democratic consolidation of Croatia and Serbia.

CHAPTER 2: A THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

There are three concepts relevant for the thesis 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 set in the context of the thesis in a way that I will present 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 the Croatian and Serbian civil society activities is the last concept to be elaborated in this theoretical part of the thesis.

2.1 Conceptualization: Civil Society

There are few concepts in social sciences that have caused so many discussions and interpretations as civil society (*koinonia politike*, *societas civilis*, *societe civile*, *burgerliche Gesellschaft*). Even though the idea of civil society is not young as it dates back to Ancient Greece, in today's social science there is still no unanimously agreed definition of this concept. The discussions are various: are political parties a part of civil society? What are the limits of civil society – can we include some part of family life in the realm of civil society? Does civil society have a positive or negative impact on democracy? Is there a clear distinction between the economic sphere and civil society? How to balance civil society's independence of state and state's financing of civil society? In order to get the glimpse the answers to these questions it is crucial to define the concept properly and understand the historical development of the idea. As such I am offering a historical overview of the changing meaning of civil society and some contemporary definitions of the concept.

2.1.1 Evolution of the Concept

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. Division of all social spheres⁵ in three main sectors date back to the Middle Ages: the emergence of that conceptual separation can be tracked back to the distinction between the *oikos* and *polis* in ancient Greece. Manfred Riedel (1991) claims that the term civil society is a literal translation of the ancient Greek term *politike koinonia*, which will evolve into the Latin version *societas civilis*. He emphasizes that the modern version of civil society is particularly different from the antique understanding. Hence, in Greece and Rome those terms were used for the sphere of free citizens⁶ where citizens were participating in policy- and politics- making. One of the best chronologies of the civil society development is giving by Mary Kaldor in her book *Global Civil Society and, An Answer to War* (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 the 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 in the consent theory scholars.

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

⁵ Private, state, civil sphere

⁶ Only those in the upper class were citizens per say; then you had the middle class who were free men but NOT citizens (usually immigrants) – merchants, manufacturers etc; then you have the lower class: free-men who were once slaves; finally the slaves themselves who had no rights at all. (Meier, 1984)

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 post-Marxist and utopian version of civil society. Features can be summarized in the request for redistribution of state's power in order to increase the level of democracy, 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 in decreasing state's power. Civil society is a set of citizens' associations that help other citizens in solving problems and replace some state's functions (especially in the area of social protection).

The last concept of civil society has a postmodern trait. In this version (that is present today) the main principle is the principle one of toleration. Civil society is an arena of pluralism, deliberation and different identities. In this stage of civil society development 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 am presenting some of them that emphasize different aspects of civil society.

2.1.2 Definitions of Civil Society

Joan Keane, a famous contemporary English philosopher sees civil society as an ideal type construction that describes complex and dynamic sphere of non-governmental organizations that have the tendency to be nonviolent, are self-organized and auto-reflexive. Those organizations have specific relationship with the state which frames their actions (1998).

Habermas (2002) proposed the criterion of deliberation in the public sphere as a key feature of civil society, while Gramsci offers neo-Marxist perspective of civil society as an

independent area of interaction between state, market and people in which people are fighting against the hegemony of the market and the state (in Pavlović, 2009).

CIVICUS⁷, defines civil society as “the arena, outside of the family, the state and the market where people associate in order to advance common interests.”

Additionally, civil society can be defined as “any grouping that assumes representation of collective interests can be claimed as part of civil society, or civil society can be defined as the totality of civic engagements citizens commit to join in the polity” (Tusalem, 2007: 363).

A more precise (and commonly accepted) definition is proposed by Kopecky and Mudde in their article *Rethinking Civil Society* (2003) where they say that civil society is a set of organizations that operate between the state, the family (individual; household) and the economic production (market: firms). Hence, civil society is independent from the state in financial terms and does not aim to occupy the state, but rather tries to influence it.

Perhaps the most comprehensive, concise and analytically the most appropriate definition for the terms of this thesis is one by the Philippe Schmitter⁸. According to him, “civil society can be defined as a set or system of self-organized 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, 2003; 240).

⁷ “CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation is an international alliance of members and partners which constitute an influential network of organizations at the local, national, regional and international levels, and span the spectrum of civil society including: civil society networks and organizations; trade unions; faith-based networks; professional associations; NGO capacity development organizations; philanthropic foundations and other funding bodies; businesses; and social responsibility programs” (<http://www.civicus.org/who-we-are>).

⁸ There is an academic discussion whether political parties should be considered as a part of civil society. (Gershman, 2004). For the purpose of this paper I will exclude political parties from the concept of civil society.

In addition to that, it is important to note different manifestations of civil society. We have seen that civil society is a vague and broad concept, but we have not seen real manifestations of it. There are two forms of civil society – social movements and civil society organizations. Social movements are a type of group action in which a group of people is focused in changing some social or political issue. This term, introduced in the glossary of political sociology by Lorenz von Stein, became very fashionable in the last decades of the 20th century. In contrast to social movements, civil society organizations are more institutionalized forms of civil society. The Council of Europe defines non-governmental organizations as voluntary self-governing bodies or organizations established to pursue the essentially non-profit-making objectives of their founders or members, characterized by a certain degree of stability and a sort of institutional structure⁹. In other words, the difference between civil society organizations and social movements is the degree of stability and the level of institutionalization.¹⁰ *Nota bene*, as Andrew Arrato noticed this distinction is fluid and mobilization always seeks at least some institutionalization (Arato, 1995).

All these definition are important because they show complexity of the term “civil society” and bearing them in mind is relevant for understanding the processes that happened in Croatia and Serbia at the end of the 20th century.

2.1.3 Functions of Civil Society

Briefly, there are four major functions of civil society, namely representation, socialization, subsidiarity and watchdog function. *Representation* is the first one in which civil society organizations articulate interests and preference of citizens and represent it in front of the government or other executive agencies.

⁹ Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)14 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the legal status of non-governmental organizations in Europe.

¹⁰ In the continuation of this work the difference between those two forms will be extremely important for the analysis of Croatia and Serbia.

The second function is *socialization*. Civil society is an arena for learning the virtues important for democracy such as tolerance and collaboration. In the last fifteen years the concept of social capital has become very popular in social sciences. Robert Putnam defines social capital as:

...social capital refers to connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them. In that sense social capital is closely related to what some have called “civic virtue.” The difference is that “social capital” calls attention to the fact that civic virtue is most powerful when embedded in a sense network of reciprocal social relations. A society of many virtuous but isolated individuals is not necessarily rich in social capital. (Putnam, 2000: 19)

Scholars consider nongovernmental organizations factories of social capital due to their ability to solve or/and understand the problems that concern citizens.

The function of *subsidiarity* is vital for democracies as well. Governments due to the big scope of their work do not have the time or resources (as knowledge or people) to ensure its citizens all welfare needs, so they are transferring their responsibilities to CSOs. The various problems are, in that way, solved at the lowest possible level and due to the competence of the CSO members governments trusts them.

The last function is the *watchdog* function where 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 minimize arbitrary policies imposed by the state. (Schmitter, 2003)

We could say that the concept of civil society, regarding its functions¹¹, can be observed from two perspectives: negative (liberal tradition) which supports limiting state’s power upon social activities and positive that supports the idea of many independent points of self-organization in which people are solving their own problems and deliberate about how to increase their welfare.

¹¹ Presented functions are only one typology proposed mostly according to my research interest, however there are some other functions, for remotely succesful analysis of civil society see Diamond, 1994.

2.2 Concept II: Democratic Consolidation

Due to third wave of democratization (described by Huntington) that happened in 1970s, political scientist had a remarkable opportunity to witness regime changes in the world. At that time Dankwart Rustow founded a field of comparative politics – 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 realize 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: 1) the end of autocratic regime; 2) institutionalization 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. For instance, some authors (Hague, Harrop, Breslin, 2001) believe that we can talk of democratic consolidation when the party elected on the first democratic election turns governance to the next elected party. Huntington, on the other hand claims that double turnover¹² is a necessary condition for democratic consolidation. As Andreas Schaller 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 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). Furthermore, Schmitter considers consolidation of democracy as: “the process of transforming the accidental

¹² He argues that there is consolidation if “the party or group that takes power in the initial election at the time of transition loses a subsequent election and turns over power to those election winners, and if those election winners then peacefully turn over power to the winners of a later election” (Huntington, 1991).

arrangements, prudential norms and contingent solutions that have emerged during the transition from autocracy into relations of cooperation and competition that are reliably known, regularly practiced and voluntarily accepted by those persons or collectivities, i.e. politicians and citizens, that participate in democratic governance“ (2003: 241).

Geoffery Pridham differentiates between positive and negative consolidation. He argues that democracies are negatively consolidated when no relevant political or societal actor seeks for one's interests outside democratic institutions (there is no systematic alternative to democracy). The political system is positively consolidated when the whole system is legitimate, and no citizens see any alternative to democracy – they believe in the legitimacy of democracy (in Merkel, 2009: 100).

Wolfgang Merkel, one of the giants of comparative politics, adopted the distinction between the positive and negative consolidation and elaborated positive version in a way that he divided positive democratic consolidation in four levels according to stages that a state and society go through. In other words, Merkel gives an ideal type preview of chronological graduation of democratic consolidation. Level 1 he called *constitutional consolidation*. It refers to the establishment of main political institutions (parliament, government, president, and judiciary). He calls this level macro level: the level of structures. Level 2 is *representative consolidation* where the focus is on the interest representation and aggregation. The main actors are political parties and interest group and they are practicing the norms and rules established in level 1. This is the mesolevel. In level 3 (*behavioral 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. Here civil society is starting to be consolidated; civic culture becomes a socio-cultural ground for democracy. This microlevel is characterized by three balances: balance between different ideological subcultures in society; balance among three types of political culture (parochial, passive, participatory); and balance between three values and norms as a result of the three types of political culture (Merkel, 2008, 2009). Keeping in mind Merkel's typology, I would like to point out that consolidation of democracy has its behavioral and institutional dimension and the synthesis of both is the key for maturing democracy. All those categories show complexity and multidimensionality of the democratic consolidation.

2.2.1 Political Parties and Party System as a Factor of Democratic Consolidation

Although I have excluded political parties from my understanding of civil society, I cannot neglect their importance for the political system. In the part of case studies I will refer to political parties in Croatia and Serbia and their role in the consolidation process in those two countries, but before that I will be covering the theoretical overview of parties' and party system's impact on democratic consolidation.

Generally, authors (for instance: McAllister and White, 2007; Toka, 1997; Čular, 2000) consider political parties being a crucial constituent of democratic consolidation. Even from a vague definition of political parties (stable organizations that represent some part of society and tend to form government or at least just influence politics) it is clear why political parties indeed have a profound role in democratic consolidation. Political parties represent certain groups in society, which gives them legitimacy for proposing policies in the political arena. In other words, if political parties fulfil their role as populous representatives, there is a certain degree of stability in representation of interests. Gabor Toka considers that "only the electoral arena gives formally equal influence to all citizens" (Toka, 1997: 5). Basically, only

the electoral process ensures political equality and considering that parties are the main actors of the electoral process, they are the ones who reflect the idea of equality.

Institutionalization of party systems is a prime feature in the political parties-consolidation of democracy relationship. When the party system in some country is institutionalized, that produces a certain degree of stability. People know what to expect because parties have defined values, policies and they practice legal ways in influencing politics. There is a general perception that abandoning authoritarianism means proliferation of political options, therefore political parties. In institutionalized party system there are parties that represent diverse interests, which create political stability regarding interest representation. Above all, particular interests of certain individuals are being transformed into a political program that is now transparent. Electors are familiar with those programs and understand the party position in the political arena and the implications of that program if they get elected.

The last point to note is the current trend of Europeization of political parties and creating European party families. With the creation of the European Union and the European parliament, a European party space was created as well. It refers to the set of political parties that operate on the European level, mostly made up of national parties and formed around some ideology (Christianity, federalism, Euro scepticism etc.). Their importance is not just for the European Union, but for the national politics as well¹³. By showing affiliation towards some European family parties, national parties strengthen their position in the domestic ideological spectrum and voters are more aware of the politics they are promoting.

All this impacts democratic consolidation in a way that party policies are becoming more transparent, ways of political competition are more in accordance with democratic

¹³ Country does not have to be an EU member in order to some party is a member of European party family. For example, the Croatian Democratic Union is a member of the European People's Party and Croatia at the moment of writing this thesis is still not an EU member.

rules, particular interests of individuals are narrowed and overall there is more stability in the political system and the representation of groups is more effective.

However, as Mainwaring and Scully emphasized (in Toka, 1997) political parties are a necessary but insufficient factor for democratic consolidation. Hence, there are several other factors that could influence democratic consolidation: the type of the previous regime, coordination and strength of opposition, civil society, judiciary, economic development or electoral system (according to Schneider, 2009). I would argue that we can divide those factors in two categories. The first category would be external factors such as regional context (the impact of the surroundings on the consolidation of democracy), international support (for instance the European Union and its funds for developing democracy) or international market aspect (if we accept the assumption that market economy helps in developing democracy). The second category would be internal factors: mostly those described by Merkel (political actors and elites), but ethnic conflicts and level of violence as well. Depending on those factors (and the strength of each of them), as well as the political context of a certain country (political culture) we can identify the nature and the path of democratic consolidation of a certain country.

2.2.2 Arguments that the Effects of Civil Society on the Democratic

Consolidation are Positive

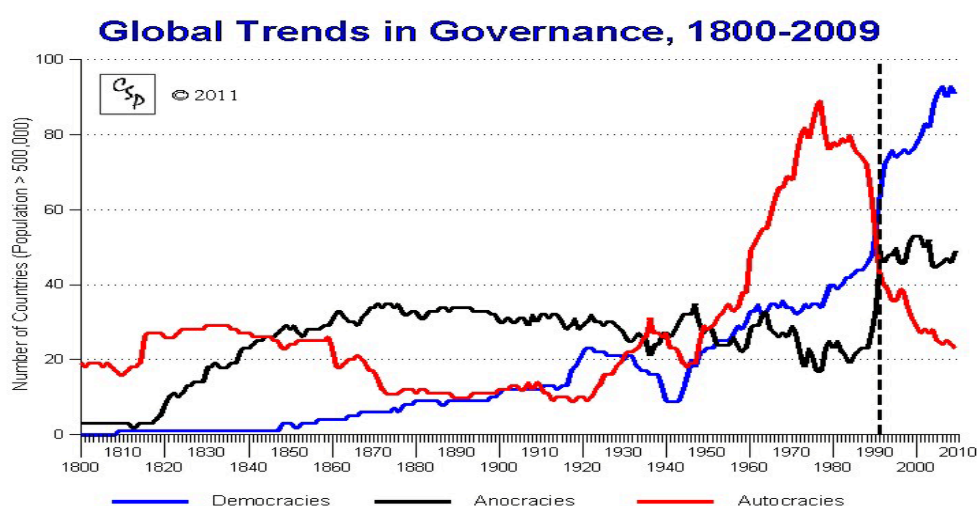
“Civil society contributes to but does not cause the consolidation of democracy” (Schmitter, 2003: 240). Civil society due to its function can help in consolidation of democracy because it is impartial and independent from the state, but it cannot take the role of the political regime that is responsible 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 laws. Through the function of socialization and learning civic virtues (social capital) civil society organizations 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 building the identification for individuals with the political community by stimulating them on active participation.

There is an open debate: is consolidated democracy an necessity for efficient and vibrant civil society, or efficient civil society is 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 is 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 democratize itself. In the Figure 1 we case identify general trend of the increasing of number of democracy, while parallel decreasing authoritarian regimes since 1800.

Figure 1 – **Global trends in governance, 1800-2008** (*it suggests that the number of democracies constantly raises, while there is a trend of decreasing number of autocracies*)



Source: - <http://www.systemicpeace.org/polity/polity1.htm>

Likewise, lately we have been witnessing regime change in Tunisia and Egypt. In these countries there were authoritarian regimes (to different extents) and even though civil liberties and civil society has been oppressed, that did not prevent the mobilization of people and social movements that resulted in democratization. Those examples show how civil society can be mobilized during the 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 the later processes.

2.2.3 Arguments that the Effects of Civil Society on Democratic Consolidation are Negative

Arguments on the negative impact of civil society date from Rousseau. In his book *The Social Contract*, he claims that all partial associations weaken democracy because they do not promote the general will of the people, but particular which is inherent bad for the community. One of the most famous examples of the negative effect of civil society on democracy is the Weimar Republic. Berman in her article on the role of civil society in the Weimar Republic demonstrates how it was possible that democracy collapses with vibrant civil society.

Not only did participation in civil society organizations fail to contribute to republican virtue, but it in fact subverted it. "As the middle class became more and more disenchanted with and hostile towards the republic, their energies ceased to be channeled into proto political organizations and party political organizations of the center and right which the old elites had traditionally headed. Instead the radicalized troops of the middle class deserted these organizations and their leaders". The dense networks of civic engagement provided the Nazis with cadres of activists who had the skills necessary to spread the party's message and increase recruitment. (Berman, 1997: 417 and 420)

In addition, there is the possible problem of foreign donors. Civil society organizations (especially those in the Central and East Europe) are often financed by foreign donors. There is a fear that they will promote interests of those donors because they depend

on their resources. This scenario, as we will see, happened in Croatia and Serbia, where political elites were trying to present civil society as puppets of international donors with the goal of subverting the nationhood of Croatia and Serbia. Hence, civil society can have a strong influence on the government and the policy-making process. Due to the fact that civil society is not elected and can promote particular interests there is a threat that government will be influenced by those particular interests. Basically, there is no check and balance system because the relationship of the government and civil society is not and cannot be defined as it depends on the bargaining power¹⁴.

Besides those arguments there are several more that Schmitter (1993) emphasizes: diverse civil society makes the formation of majority more difficult, lengthy, and precarious, thereby lowering legitimacy of democratic governments or promote ethnical, linguistic or cultural interests in that way to form exclusive minority groups not willing to cooperate with the state

Finally, I would point out the distinction that is rarely used when writing about the concept of civil society and can answer on some of the critiques presented. There is a distinction between civil and uncivil society. Uncivil society is a category that “usually includes organizations that use violence in order to achieve their goals or groups with non-democratic or (right-wing) extremist ideas” (Kopecky & Mudde, 2003: 3).

However, all those negative sides of the civil society’s impact on democracy are more or less exaggerated and they mostly ignore contextual and real effect of civil society actors. We will see that promotion of the negative impact of civil society on the state in Croatia and Serbia was a part of the public discourse, but with one goal – to gain electoral support.

¹⁴ For example unions who can have a big influence on government and promote workers' interest without caring about the other groups' interests.

2.3. Concept III: Political Opportunities 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 success of some social movements. This is a political-procedural approach that observes the process of forming some social movement from the beginning to the end.

Most famous proponent of this theory is Sydney Tarrow who defines political structure as “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 political environment that provide incentives for people to undertake collective action by affecting their expectation for success 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 the metaphor of the window which is opened and some actors jump into the room through that window.

2.4. Regime Change and Democratic Consolidation in the Context of the Thesis

I am adopting Merkel’s understanding of the 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 authoritarian factors of a hybrid regime. Hence, there has to be some kind of critical junction that opens the window for the beginning of the process of democratic consolidation. Here I introduce Sydney 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. There are authors that abide by a different approach, believing that a critical junction is not enough for the beginning of democratic consolidation (Pavlović, Antolić, 2007) but mostly authors that belong to this transition focus on political institutions as being the key for democratic consolidation. The practical application of this approach will be demonstrated in the cases of Croatia and Serbia.

CHAPTER 3: CROATIA AND SERBIA: CASE STUDIES

In this part I will discuss the cases of Croatia and Serbia and demonstrate the role of civil society in the two specific contexts. Firstly, in order to understand political dynamics of those countries, I am offering a time-space contextualization of the Balkans area in the early 1990s. Afterwards, I will examine the Croatian political and social arena in the 1990s by focusing on three points: the nature of regime, analysis of civil society in the time period 1990-2000 and the context of parliamentary elections in 2000. In the third part I will analyze the Serbian state and society from the same perspectives as did in the Croatian case.

3.1 Time-space Contextualization

In the region of South East Europe, after the dismantling of Yugoslavia, some new countries were formed. These countries have nominally become democracies overnight, while in reality many of the former regime reminiscences were still represented in the political and social life. There are clearly differences and similarities between Croatia and Serbia which should be noticed. Regarding similarities; besides the fact that Croatia and Serbia were “predominantly agrarian and experienced only partial modernization and integration into the European market before the foundation of 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 extreme right and left populism, while Croatia was a highly institutionalized semi-presidential country without extreme right and left-populism¹⁵ (Zakošek, 2008: 509). Besides that, in Croatia there was more political

¹⁵ 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.

freedom (approximate value of Freedom House's results of Civil Liberties and Political Rights for Croatia 1991-2000 was 4:4, while Serbian results were 6:5.5¹⁶). 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 organized several protests.

Generally speaking the year 1990 is considered to be the year of the collapse of Yugoslavia. At the end of January of 1990 at the 14th League of Communist of Yugoslavia, Croatian and Slovenian representatives demanded more democratic electoral procedure on the next Yugoslavian elections but Serbia was against that proposal in order not to lose its domination in Yugoslavia. At the same time, in addition, Yugoslavian minister of finance began the economic reform that caused a drop of 18% in the industrial development and 100% percent devaluation of the currency. All this, enforced by nationalisms and ethnical tensions, has caused the economic and political crisis of 1991 both in Croatia and Slovenia as elections were held and the communist party was defeated in both countries. The Croatian Democratic Union took over the governance in Croatia, the president of the Presidency of the Federal Republic of Croatia was Franjo Tuđman (while in Slovenia the same thing was done by party DEMOS with Lojze Peterle as the first prime minister of Slovenia). 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 country named Federal Republic of Yugoslavia - FRY (with President Slobodan Milošević) though in 1992 it changed its the name into Serbia and Montenegro. Slobodan Milošević who had been changing his positions of the president of Serbia and the

¹⁶ www.freedomhouse.org/uploads/fiw/FIWAllScores.xls

president of FRY was governing till 2000 when he was defeated in the parliamentary elections.

These presidents, even though on different sides, had several similarities. Firstly, they were nationalists. Franjo Tuđman saw Croatia as an independent and nationalistic entity of Croats in which other nations were often seen as the enemies of the state. Slobodan Milošević, on the other hand, described by Sell “was an odd kind of dictator... [H]is was generally a soft authoritarianism – at least until shortly before the 1999 war with NATO”. (Rahmet, 2005:161). Milošević had a special problem with the Albanians on Kosovo. Data say that “by the end of 1993, Milošević’s policies had induced about 400 thousand Albanians to flee from Kosovo and provide an estimate of 12 000 Albanians killed by the Serbian forces during 1998-9” (Rahmet, 2005: 162). The second similar characteristic (during the 1990s) of those two presidents was that they created the polity in which there was no strong opposition. Every disagreement with some policy proposed by Tuđman or Milošević was presented as anti-state propaganda with the goal of destroying Croatia and Serbia.

3.2 CROATIA: Institutional and Structural Analysis of 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 this is exaggeration, but that there are some authoritarian elements (Kasapović, 1999), while some claim that in that time period Croatia was nothing more and nothing less than true democracy (mostly politicians attached to the Croatian Democratic Union). I am of the opinion that Croatia in the 1990s as a type of defective democracy where there were free and general elections but with the protection of human, civil or minority rights lacking (Merkel, 1999). Thus let’s look at the Croatian situation in the 1990s in order to see the nature of the political regime.

This analysis of the Croatian political system should begin with December 1990 when the new constitution was adopted. By that constitution the semi-presidential political system was created which is important because the main actor in Croatian politics till 2000 was the Croatian president. Mirjana Kasapović (2001), identifies four institutional features of the key role of president. The first is the harmony among the president and 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). CDU was governing in a way that they were buying their support with state positions, they were controlling the national broadcasting company, influencing the judiciary, misusing national security agencies and limiting liberal-democratic rights (especially minorities). CDU surrounded them with veterans, communist political prisoners and refugee from Bosnia and Herzegovina. Franjo Tuđman, Croatian president at that time and president of the Croatian Democratic Union, had a strong charisma and was presenting 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 equalization of the Croatian Democratic Union with nationhood, which meant that everyone who was not with the CDU were against Croatia. The last is the structure of the actor (president Tuđman) who had a tendency towards expression and absolute control (adapted from Kasapović, 2001: 21-25).

3.2.1 Electoral Systems and Political Parties

Perhaps the best indicator of the nature of political system is the way the elections are regulated and the structure of party system.

3.2.1. 1 Electoral Systems

The electoral system, a set of rules and methods of transforming votes into seats, is indeed the most visible link between society and the state. In the case of Croatia the first thing (electoral law and electoral systems) was a subject of major change. In ten years (1990-2000) Croatia changed four main types of electoral systems. In the 1990s Croatia had a majority electoral system (absolute majority) that was in 1992 replaced by the segmented electoral system (sixty electorates) with D'Hondt's method of calculation of mandates. In 1995 just before the parliamentary elections the CDU changed the electoral system again. They kept the segmented system, but it was modified¹⁷. The last change happened in 2000 when Croatia introduced the proportional electoral system as a method of electing representatives for 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 the 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). But those changes become more logical if we know their background. The Croatian Democratic Union (responsible for 75% of changes) wanted to win as many seats as possible in legislative by extending the general suffrage to the diaspora (mostly to Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina) because they were traditional voters of the CDU. Moreover, the electoral reform in 1992 indicated the wish of the CDU for staying in charge because of the fear of that *winner takes it all* electoral system perhaps in future would not assure enough mandates for forming government (Kasapović, 2001: 31). Moreover, an important factor of the electoral system that has some kind of proportional features (in Croatia segmented from 1992-1999) is the size and the structure of electoral constituencies. It

¹⁷ The number of the electorates was increased from sixty to eighty, the representative segment was decreased from sixty to twenty eight mandates, and threshold was increased from 3% to 5% (for coalitions of two parties 8%, for the coalitions of more than two parties 11%). As well, the new electoral unit – diaspora was introduced with the twelve mandates, and to Serbian representatives there was decreased number of mandates from thirteen to three (Zakošek, 2002).

is a well known fact (Vrcan, 1995 and 1999; Veljak, 2000) that the Croatian Democratic Union manipulated the electorates in order to assure the majority. That is why Croatia was divided in the constituents regardless of the official administrative unit or inhabitants. Considering all those changes of electoral system we can claim, with certainty that Croatia, at that time, was not a consolidated democracy.

3.2.1.2 Political Parties and Party Systems

The other most important factor of political system is political parties. Croatian polity in the 1990s was determined by a dominance of the Croatian Democratic Union, is an example of the party that was created from the social movement that was demanding Croatian independence and nationhood. Another important actor was the Social Democratic Party that emerged out of the old communist structure even though it lost the 1990 elections. Other types of parties are parties 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 time period of 1989-2000 eighty political parties were registered but only few of them had any kind of influence in politics. Furthermore he argues that only five of them (the Croatian Democratic Union, the Social Democratic Party, the Croatian Socio-Liberal Party, the Croatian Peasant Party and the Croatian Party of Right) had a coalition potential (Čular, 2001).

The same author proposes three phases of the party system development, namely formative stage, stabilization phase and the stage of competition. In the first stage (1989-1991) there was, paradoxically, the biggest correlation between policy preferences of parties and values and attitudes of voters. The reason for that was the main issue of this phase – transition from communism to democracy. The second phase was characterized by the process of establishing stability in the popular support of parties and domination of the CDU.

This phase can be described as the predominant party system¹⁸. The third stage (starts at the end of 1995) is a phase of confrontation and cooperation with opposition. In this stage due to the end of war, opposition starts to be more visible and oppose Tuđman's and CDU's regime. Even though the CDU is still the strongest and most influential political party in Croatia, opposition parties are becoming real policy options as well (Čular, 2001).

3.2.2 Franjo Tuđman and his *modus operandi*

Franjo 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 there were the first multi-party elections in which the Croatian Democratic Union won more than 60% of seats and Franjo Tuđman got appointed as the president of the Presidency of Federal Republic of Croatia. In 1992, after changing of the constitution, F. 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.

There are several characteristics of Tuđman's regime. One of them is strong anti-Serb resentment. Tuđman "rejected all power-sharing mechanisms and privileged veto powers previously given to the Serbian minority in Croatia" (Zakošek, 2008: 598). Tuđman wanted ethnically clean Croatia. Serbs were discriminated and marginalized, which resulted in forming the so called *Krajina* (a state in a state where there was a Serbian majority). The creation of this para-state can be considered as the background of Homeland War¹⁹.

¹⁸ One party has an absolute majority of mandates, total control of executive without need of forming coalitions (Čular, 2001 taken from Sartori, 1977).

¹⁹ There is a difference in terminology about the war that happened between Croatia and Serbia. Some refer it to as civil war (mostly Serbs), while in Croatia the official name is Homeland War. Some foreigners call it "Croatian post-Yugoslavian war".

From the comparative perspective Croatia had a very good prospective for successful transition, as it was characterized by relatively high living standards, successful tourism, openness towards the West (in Yugoslavia Croats were ones who could travel abroad) but the war that happened (in 1991) slowed Croatian development. There was one other thing that was shaped by the antagonism between Croats and Serbs – nationalism. Vesna Pusić, Croatian politician and university professor of Sociology of politics in her analysis of Croatian tradition emphasizes two types of nationalisms – liberal (grounded in Enlightenment movement and Rousseau) and cultural nationalism (xenophobic, authoritarian, closed society, bonded with religion). Croatian nationalism started as the first version, but over time and CDU's governance it transformed into the cultural version (Pusić, 1998). Tuđman had a very simple narrative: whoever is against a single suggestion of his or the CDU is against Croatia.

In the 1990s Serbs had the status of state enemies. Crimes against Serbs or even a warning about the marginalized 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 to win elections with human rights policies. In total, Croatian society was faced with the fear and “croatization” of every single aspect of society and the state. When it comes to the opposition, the best sentence that describes Croatian opposition in that time 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 HDZ [CDU]...” (55). Therefore we can conclude that in Croatia there was no developed civic culture, moreover taking into account Almond and Verba’s classification of political cultures (1963) in Croatia there was a subject political culture (people were subjected to all decisions and rules that come from the central government). Hence, this type of political culture is complementary with corporativism,

believing in tradition and radical nationalism that were the main values of the Croatian society (Veljak, 2000).

In 1995 the war in Croatia ended, Croatia won, so the circumstances slowly started to change. “The Croatian public started to distance itself from the nationalism, as ordinary people no longer perceived any real threat to the country’s existence” (Fisher & Bijelić, 2007: 56). At that time media slowly started to become freer and occasionally criticize 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 Croatian Democratic Union.

3.2.3 Civil Society in Croatia in the 1990s

The civil society arena in the early 1990s was very limited. Lino Veljak in his analysis (2000: 2) of Croatian civil society of the 1990s suggests the term “reduced civil society“. He emphasizes that Croatian polity was not liberal-democratic at that time and that civil society could not have been fulfilling all of its roles. Besides several intellectuals and merely visible non-governmental organizations and few independent media in the first half of the 1990s there was no efficient civil society. It is important to keep in mind two factors of civil society in Croatia: the first is that the NGO sector had a big problem with the ruling elite that was putting obstacles to the development of the civil society. The Croatian Democratic Union promoted a negative image of NGOs in public as being the ones whose purpose was “subverting the Republic” (Fisher & Bijelić, 2007: 56). Nongovernmental organizations, that were pro-democratization, and transparency²⁰ were not usually taken seriously by the

²⁰ There were some civil society organizations that were close to Tuđman and CDU like Humanitarian Organization for the Children of Croatia led by Tuđman's wife Ankica or Foundation of the Croatian State Vow whose president was Tuđman's closest advisor Ivić Pašalić. In addition, various veteran associations supported the government. Organization like that enjoyed privileges such as serious budgeting from the state and the ability to promote their activities through different state companies and institutions. Organizations of that sort have been publishing newspapers and bulletins in which Tuđman and the Croatian Democratic Union were glorified.

government and the president of the Republic of Croatia. The second point was the lack of the financial support of the state towards the sphere of civil society. That was the reason why CSOs were mostly financed by foreign donors. As can be seen in Figure 2 there is a vast number of foreign donors that were giving money for different community development actions. George Soros and his Open Society at that time played a vital role in promoting the values of democratization and tolerance. Of course, Tuđman was very antagonized towards Open Society, hence in one of his speeches he characterized George Soros and his collaborators as “Red, yellow and green devils that are attacking Croatia” (Tuđman, 1996). Mostly, CSOs in the early 1990s were dealing with antiwar campaigns and helping victims of the war.

It is worth noticing the role of media in Tuđman’s Croatia. Earlier it has been mentioned that the Croatian national broadcasting company was under the strong influence of the regime. But there were some other media that were the voice of opposition. The first one was *Slobodna Dalmacija*²¹ where there were articles that questioning the impeccability of the President. In 1993 this newspaper were bought by a company close to the CDU so the columns and articles against Frano Tuđman stopped. *Feral Tribune* was considered to be one of the most important factors in the media scene in Croatia. It was the only newspaper that was openly against Tuđman’s regime. In a satirical way *Feral* was the voice of freedom and critical thinking. The interesting thing was that Tuđman, no matter how hard he was trying never succeeded in shutting down *Feral Tribune*. In this context *Arkzine* should be mentioned, as a weekly newspaper against the war and violence and *Novi list* as a regional newspaper that promoted freedom as a value. *Globus* was the first political media in Croatia that did something unimaginable – it published the secret bank accounts of Tuđman’s wife

²¹ In Croatian *Slobodna Dalmacija* means Free Dalmatia.

Ankica and linked them with the president and his illegal activities (adapted from Veljak, 2000).

Figure 2 - Overview of focuses of civil society and foreign donors

pre-1991 Socialist Self- management	1991- 1995 War and Crisis	1996-1998 Authoritarian nationalism	1998 – 2000 Transitioning democratisation	2000 – Consolidating democratisation Towards EU
Participation in self-management Financial crises (indebtedness)	Trauma (psycho- social intervention) Humanitarian relief and Aid	Reconstruction & Reconciliation Human/Minority Rights Gender/Domestic Violence Civil society	Minority reintegration Youth Democratisation Elections	Good governance Economic development/ SMEs Community development Inter-sectoral cooperation Philanthropy/ Corporate responsibility
Non-aligned Movement UN Agencies IFIs	UNHCR ECTF Embassies Red Cross Caritas INGOs	OSCE USAID UNHCR Embassies European/US Feminist groups INGOs OSI	OSCE USAID IOM DFID Embassies OSI World Bank INGOs	EU USAID World Bank UNDP Embassies OSI OSCE INGOs/ICC's

Source: Stubbs. 2006.: *Aspects of Community Development in Contemporary Croatia: Globalization, Neo-liberalization and NGO-isation*

When the war ended in 1995, civil society organizations started to develop more quickly. There were no more Serbs, as a threat so it was more difficult to use the fear of Serbia as a legitimization for political moves.

I would point out one event that definitely opened the way for democratization and contentious politics in Croatia. That event is a protest of the support of the Radio 101. On November 21st 1996, while F. Tudman was in the USA, almost 120 thousand people gathered on the main square of Zagreb to protest against the decision of the National Council for Telecommunications for taking off the concession for the Radio 101, one of the symbols of

the Croatian urban culture and free thought. In 1996 Tuđman decided to shut down this radio station and delegated one of his advisers – Ivić Pašalić to do that, but the citizens were strongly against that. 120 000 people with candles in their hands came to the main square of Zagreb to demonstrate against the obvious freedom of media restriction. The protest was organized in less than twenty four hours. When the host on the Radio 101 announced that the radio had lost the concession, people started coming in the redaction, after that spontaneously went to the second main square of Zagreb. At that time, the president of “The Croatian Helsinki Committee”, Ivan Zvonimir Čičak announced that the day after the big protest would be held. Even though the government that had an urgent session and changed the decision of the Council for Telecommunications, on the 21st of November 1996 people still decided to protest. This collective decision shows that this protest was not only against shutting down the Radio 101, it was the first protest against the political regime of Franjo Tuđman and his Croatian Democratic Union. The protest of support for the Radio 101 was the beginning of the actions that would cumulate in 2000 when the Croatian Democratic Union finally lost the majority in the Parliament.

Another crucial factor was the growing strength of the trade unions that had been trying to mobilize workers in order to achieve better social and economic positions. Nongovernmental organizations started to be more loud and proactive. Even though their most common methods of reacting were just writing letters of complaint and press conferences, those attempts created the atmosphere for the later, more intensive, actions of civil society. The beginning of coordination and structuralization of civil society in Croatia can be found in the seminar on elections and parties in Croatia (financed by Friedrich Neumann Stiftung) that was held in December 1998 where there were discussions about the role of civil society in Croatian political process.

As time passed, the ruling party started to be more sensitive to the nongovernmental sector, mostly because of foreign pressures. In 1998 the government established the Office for Associations whose goal was to regulate the financing of associations from the state's budget. In the next year and a half the CDU was supporting various events organized by the CSOs. Even though some thought that all of that had been the indicator of the change in the discourse of the CDU from the Right towards the Center, the civil society sector did not trust Tuđman's new affection towards them. But as we will see, they were not alone in that discredit.

The parliamentary elections were approaching. Tuđman was trying to collect the support of voters when a revolutionary thing happened: For the first time his public support was quite low. CDU always had the ability to feel what people wanted, using demagogy they were promising better life, economic welfare and the independence of Croatia. Considering that living standards and pensions were low and that Tuđman and his party had been governing for the last ten years without significant growth of social welfare, people started to doubt Tuđman's competence to assure a better life.

At the end of 1999 (December) Tuđman died after a long illnesses. The party was in chaos. Without any coordination and clear goals some groups became even more rigid²² on the society which resulted in defiance among people, especially civil society²³. By using Sidney Tarrow's terminology (Tarrow, 1998), that was the signal to the civil society that the political opportunity structure had been changed. In the Croatian Democratic Union there was fractionalization between the party elites, which moved their focus from the elections. Due to

²² It is interesting how fast all this was happening. Tuđman was admitted in the hospital on November 1st since than he stopped governing country. In forty days how long he was in hospital, he sighed on one document – the one that announces parliamentary elections (Orešić, 2010).

²³ In the interview with the coordinator of "Glas 99" and one of the most eminent civil society actor in Croatia, Mr. Tin Gazivoda said that founding of "Glas 99" and mobilization and activation of civil society did not have much to do with Tuđman's death. I partially agree with his evaluation. From my point of view, Tuđman's death was accelerant of social change that was about to happen. Even though the idea of forming two most important CSOs was born while Tuđman was alive, I think that he being alive would change the course of socio-political history.

the chaos in the party, the opposition saw its opportunity to take things into their own hands.²⁴

In November 1999 six opposition parties signed the:

“Declaration on the Fundamental Direction of Post-Election Activity”, in which the parties vowed to create a common government, promised not to form a coalition with the HDZ and agreed on various policy issues. Due to the fact that the electoral law was changed to a purely proportional system, the six parties established two coalitions: the Coalition of Two and the Coalition of Four. While the Coalition of Two included the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the Croatian Social Liberal Party (HSLP), the Coalition of Four grouped together the conservative Croatian Peasants’ Party (HSS) with three small liberal parties, including the Croatian People’s Party (HNS), the Liberal Party (LS) and the Istrian Democratic Assembly (IDS) (Fisher, Bijelić, 2007: 60-61).

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

3.2.3.1 GLAS 99²⁵

Encouraged by the Slovakian pro-voting campaign, civil society organizations in Croatia decided to try a similar thing. The problem was that civil society was not recognized as something “appealing” in society and that organizations had little money. In May 25th 1999, 114 (later twenty five more will join) nongovernmental organizations 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. That is 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 the “Glas 99” was to make citizens aware of the electoral law changes and their influences on the results brought by the Croatian Democratic Union.

²⁴ Again, even I do not think that Tudman’s illness and death was the real cause of this Declaration, I think that opposition saw the opportunity due to the weakening president.

²⁵ Glas – voice in Croatian.

The campaign *get-out-the-vote* was run through “posters and billboards, radio jingles, TV spots, 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” had begun its preelection campaign well before political opposition did” (Fisher, Bijelić, 2007: 56). Even though the agreement within the “Glas 99” was that they would be impartial, my opinion is that it did not happen. The critiques of the actual government were common and the call for the change was often mentioned²⁶.

Sidney Tarrow believes that “collective action frames [are] purposively constructed guides to action created by existing or prospective movement organizers” (Tarrow, 2010: 77). He includes elites as a vital factor of the contention in the analyses of the 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. The same thing happened in Croatia: the leaders of the “Glas 99”²⁷ were well educated intellectuals that were trying to briefly political reality close to ordinary people.

“Glas 99” had a remarkable and highly developed structure. General assembly where each organization had one vote was the supreme authority. Assembly elected four regional coordination committees (four big Croatian regions) and set the main office that was in charge in coordination of the campaign, public relations and project funding. The main principle, according to Mr. Gazivoda upon “Glas 99” was acting was decentralization, not only territorial, but financial and project. Hence, civil society organization that have signed Citizens’ declaration for free and fair elections had the autonomy to write and do projects as

²⁶ The anthem of the campaign was the song *Novo vrijeme* (New time), slogans: Circle and you win! Happy New 2000! Think with your head!

²⁷ “Tin Gazivoda, an employee of HHO, became director of the main office. He was joined by Darko Jurišić (program coordinator), Sonja Vuković (marketing coordinator), and Koraljka Dilić (public relations representative)” (Fisher, Bijelić, 2007: 63).

they wish, the important was that they promote democratic electoral process and mobilization of voters.

“Glas 99” was divided upon the main groups in Croatian society. Programs were made up of four separate groups: one focusing on youth, another on women, a third on environmental organizations and a fourth on pensioners. The theme song was *Novo Vrijeme* (New Time), slogans were: *Izađi i bori se* (Go and fight), *Misli svojom glavom* (Think your head), *Zašto ste nam lagali?* (Why did You lie to us?), and *Sretna Nova 2000!* (Happy New 2000!). The message was clear – it was time for the change. The key method of the “Glas 99” was the education. They were trying to make an electoral process more transparent and closer to the citizens. They were organizing round tables and debates among the candidates but lots of the politicians did not want to participate. Some media (*Novi list*, *Radio 101*, *Nacional*, *Globus*, *Feral Tribune*) helped in visibility of campaign, while the most influential newspapers and Croatian national broadcasting company mostly ignored actions. The opposition, after seeing that “Glas 99” has a strong support and it has become very influential, started to stress out the “friendship” of the opposition and the civil society sector.

But there were some problems regarding the action. Tin Gazivoda pointed out that there was a problem of coordination (Vijesnik, 1999 and an interview). We should bear in mind that “Glas 99” was the coalition of organizations which number grew to 149. They were scattered all around the Croatia so the activities were a bit difficult to supervise. The second problem was the hostile atmosphere that the government (CDU) created. The government who controlled media usually has not allowed the media coverage of the activities of “Glas 99” because they were afraid that every extra attention of public might cause their lost in elections. Problems of coordination and justifiability of the foreign donation was another

problem due to strict state's regulation regarding the international donors²⁸. However, that was not enough in obstructing of "Glas 99" and their activities.

3.2.3.2 GONG²⁹

"[Gong was] established in February 1997 by a group of NGOs eager to address the inequities in Croatia's electoral system." GONG was established with the goals of mobilization 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 (Jašić, 2000: 160). According to Jašić, GONG's highest authority is General Assembly which elects executive board and president. GONG's headquarter was (and still is) in Zagreb and in 1998 it had thirteen regional offices. By successful lobbying and organized actions (posters, seminars, commercials and personal contacts with politicians) GONG managed in its intention of adoption proposals for free and fair elections into the Electoral Law. It should be mentioned that GONG never joined "Glas 99" because of the fear of perceiving it as anti-CDU.

In all, the results were fascinating. Campaigns of those two organizations succeeded to mobilize 75% of the voters to go to the elections. "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 that, enmeshed by the structured and meaningful campaign of the civil society actors has resulted with the opposition to win. The prime minister became Ivica Račan and Croatia, by electing the Left option, stepped into the new phase of political development – consolidation. But this was not

²⁸ In the interview with Mr. Gazivoda I have found out that Open Society institute, USAID, National Empowerment for Democracy, Freedom house, embassies of Finland, Netherland and UK were the biggest donors and "Glas 99" approximately got 1.5 million dollars for its activities. It is crucial to stress that this financial support was unconditional, meaning that central office of Glas 99 was not influenced by the wishes of donors however there were some attempts of influencing individual organizations (interview with T. Gazivoda).

²⁹ GONG – Građani organizirano nadgledaju izbore or Citizens Organized to Monitor Voting.

the only the “Glas 99” and GONG did, they have helped in changing of the negative image of civil society in Croatia and emphasized the importance of civic education.

3.3 SERBIA: Polity, Politics and the Nature of the Regime Change

If we accepted the fact that the determination of the Croatian political system in the 1990s was difficult, in Serbia it was double as hard. Classification of Serbian political regime in the time period 1990-2000 is a true challenge for political scientists³⁰. In this analysis I will consider Serbia in the given time period as a hybrid regime, a regime with both democratic and authoritarian characteristics. My conclusion is based on the following facts: in the 1990s Serbia had the constitution, separation of powers (the legislature, the executive and judiciary), in Serbia there were elections on local and national level, as well as a civil society. On the other hand, separation of powers was just nominal (the real power was concentrated in one person or one party), elections were multiparty but not fair and completely free, hence civil liberties were often suspended and were not universal. Even though there was governmental control over media and public administration, there was an opposition that could participate in parliamentary elections. Levitsky and Way (2002) regimes like this call competitive (electoral) authoritarianism and point out that it does not fulfill even the minimal requirements for being democracy. However, I will use the term hybrid regime, as a middle step between authoritarianism and democracy due to the context of my thesis.

What was the institutional organization like in Serbia in the 1990s? As mentioned before, in Serbia in the 1990s there were nominal democratic institutions but they were under

³⁰ Without going into discussions upon it, I will refer to on several texts: Pavlović, Antonić, 2007; Molnar, 2008; Goati, 2002; Zakošek, 2008. The important feature that I would emphasize is that in Serbia in the 1990s there were several different “types of regime” (post-totalitarian, pseudo democratic and tyrannical – Molnar, 2008; 123).

the influence of Slobodan Milošević. Parliament is considered to be the most popular institution in democracies whose goal is to represent citizens and bring laws. Just to sketch the fragility of the democratic institutional organization in Serbia I am presenting the weakness of this legislative body. Molnar (2008; 91) argues that there are 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 non-parliamentary activities of the parliaments. 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. However, today in most parliamentary systems government proposes around 90% of laws – the so called “90% rule” (Hague, Harrop, Breslin, 2001). That is why 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.

3.3.1 Electoral Systems and Political Parties

3.3.1.1 Electoral System

When it comes to the electoral system in Serbia in the 1990s, it was as in Croatia subject to lots of change. The first electoral system after the collapse of communism was “imposed” by the SPS. They brought the law which establishes then onwards (for parliamentary elections in 1990) Serbian political system as a two-round majority system (absolute majority). This type of electoral system favors major parties. Opposition did not participate in this policy making so they had a feeling that an electoral system was something external. In all following elections (1992, 1993, 1997, 2000) there was a proportional electoral system with a threshold of 5% (Goati, 2001). The idea of shift from the majority

electoral system to proportional representation was to create greater convergence between electoral and parliamentary power.

What should be pointed out is the vast number of manipulations and electoral frauds committed by the SPS, which was tailoring 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.

3.3.1.2 Political Parties and Party System

Serbia is a country with a large number of parties. “Till the end of 1990 there was formed around fifty parties, at the beginning of the 1996 that number increased in 161, at the beginning of 2002 the number was around 250 and at the end of the same year – more than 30” (Goati, 2002: 9). By itself 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 ethnic cleavage which basically differentiated “citizens” from “ethnic Serbs”. The consequence of the claim that “Serbia is a country of Serbs” was the discrimination and marginalization of the ethnic minorities on the territory of Serbia. This ideology, supported by the strong belief in religion and a sort of limited communication with the rest of the world, was a part of the Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS) and the Serbian Radical Party (SRP) – two parties that formed all governments in the 1990s. The second pole was citizen option that was arguing in favor of ethnical and religion tolerance and democracy. It is important to note that besides those two parties, there was no fixed position of parties upon this question. Parties were swinging from

the one pole to the other depending on the current situation in society, but this cleavage has always been present in Serbian polity.

The second cleavage was about the difference in favoring the regime. The Socialist Party of Serbia was (and still is) a reformed League of Communists Serbia (SKS). At the beginning of the 1990s they were still favoring 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 on that pole were arguing in favor of the liberal market and dropping the communist heritage. On this pole the Democratic Party of Serbia (DPS) was most prominent.

According to Florian Bieber (2003) opposition in the 1990s in Serbia was fragmented in 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 the real political power (governing party has not been consulting opposition about relevant political questions), and no effective answer for the “National Question” (79-82)

In short, the governing parties were pro-socialism, supporting distribution of goods and nationalism, while opposition was arguing in favor of democracy, market economy and resolving Serbian national question (What is Serbia – a heterogenic country of all citizens living on its territory or a country of Serbs?). Similarities among all parties were the party organization of Serbian parties: loose internal organization, the lack of internal democracy, big influence of the party management (Goati, 2002: 17).

Regarding the classification of party system of Serbia in the 1990s, Goati (2001) taking Sartori’s classification believes that Serbia can be considered a polarized multi-party system because it fulfils all three criteria: there is an ideological distance between political

parties, opposition is promising impossible if they get elected and there are more than five hot issues in the parliament (31).

3.3.2 Milošević and His Way of Governing

Slobodan Milošević (1941-2006) was governing Serbia for thirteen years (1987-2000) and eight years of Federal Republic of Yugoslavia³¹ (1992-2000) (Molnar, 2008: 168). In the beginning of his presidential career he seemed to be a president that would embrace democratic values and allow pluralism in country, but over time things started to change. Authors (Molnar, 2008 or Goati, 2002) believe that there were a three phases of Milošević's governance. The first was post-totalitarian where he was using unclear conditions after the fall of communism to impose his own will. Over time his regime started to be something like electoral authoritarianism. At this stage Milošević and his SPS control the economy, influence media and do not allow true practicing of civil liberties. The last phase, tyranny was the time period between September 24th and October 5th 2000 when Milošević despite the loss in the elections tried to stay into power.

Milošević was a charismatic leader who enjoyed popular support. If I have to identify overall characteristics of Milošević's regime, there seem to be five of them, namely populism, clientilism, charizmatism, nationalism and corruption. "Using Kosovo Serb dissatisfaction, he mobilized 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 Milošević in presidential elections in 1990 got 20% more votes than his party the same year in parliamentary elections, and almost 46% more votes in the elections in 1992 (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 mobilize Serb

³¹ In 1992 Serbia and Montenegro proclaimed the creation of a new state – The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

nationalism by promoting the idea that all Serbs should live in the same country. This is 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. This was a clear case of populism, where people in power do not use their power to help political and economic situation, but to stay in that position. Moreover, this nationalistic impulse Milošević did not use to enhance economy and stimulate foreign trade and in that way help Serbian economic situation. Hence, Milošević and his party supported clientilism in a way that they were awarding loyal individuals with political positions and jobs in public administration. If we add “the propaganda which built up tendencies towards dysphoric rumination, exaggerated perception of conspiracy” (Rahmet, 2010: 291) and the lack of the true opposition with the strong brain drain, we can get the picture of the conditions of Serbian society in the first half of the 1990s.

There are two more interesting points regarding Milošević’s regime that describe the situation of Serbia at that time. The first was the nationalistic rhetoric canalized through *turbo-folk* music, a characteristic type of music with a lot of vibrato and considered to be a Serbian brand³². Milošević supported musicians that were performing that kind of music because this was the way of distracting people from the devastating political and economic situation. The second feature was the negative correlation of Milošević’s authoritarian behavior and his popularity. Over time, citizens started to become more and more dissatisfied with their circumstances. But that did not stop Milošević for being even more authoritarian. He started bringing laws against the freedom of media, autonomy of universities etc. thinking that that would help him keep power.

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

³² Even though the same music can be found in all the Balkan region and Turkey.

GDP was decreasing and grey economy was around 50% of the GDP. Over time Milošević's power was growing: for instance, in 1992 the Serbian Assembly authorized Milošević to exert greater powers over economy. Even though 15 000 students protested against, did not change anything. With the great political and economic power Milošević could basically do whatever he wanted. One of the characteristics of his regime was the incredibly high percentage of corruption. High levels of corruption, inflation of about 313%, reduction of pensions and huge spending for the war that Serbia was leading caused great dissatisfaction.

3.3.3 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 opposite 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, education fighting against war. All that nationalistic and populist rhetoric was the cause for forming "other Serbia", a counterbalance to Milošević's authoritarianism. That other side of the Serbian polity would later play an important role in the dethronization of Milošević, however as Florian Bieber notes: "actors of civil society concerned with democratization suffered from pronounced structural weaknesses" (Bieber, 2003: 82).

Like every pro-democratic actor in Serbia, nongovernmental organizations had to struggle for their existence. The state did not provide almost any funding to civil society organizations, which were considered the 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).

We have said before that 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 biases 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 life quality for Serbs, and less oppression. But the main reason of 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 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 local elections, what would later turn out to be the beginning of his end.

From my point of view there were two vital civil society organizations that helped in the regime change and bringing Milošević down. Those are the student movement “Otpor” and a Serbian match of Croatian “Glas 99” – “Izlaz 2000”.

“Otpor”, a synonym for democracy in Serbia, was firstly created as a student social movement in 1998 when Slobodan Milošević proposed a law that drastically decreased the autonomy of the university which the students protested against that. To put this student protest into context: Serbia lost the war in Croatia in 1995, ICTY set the issue an 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 eighty days were devastating for the people of Serbia.

At the same time, the NATO bombing of Belgrade significantly increased the level of social and political consciousness of pro-democracy activists and groups. They quickly realized that effecting lasting change in Serbia could only be achieved if they joined forces and built cross-sectoral cooperation to oust the ruling Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS), which for more than a decade had been an increasingly destructive force in Serbia's political and social development (Minić, Dereta, 2007: 81).

In 2000 civil society organizations came under serious attack by being the national enemies and NATO collaborators. Several months after the war against NATO it seemed that Milošević increased his power. People were confused, tired and exhausted. According to the people I interviewed the situation was – bleak. People did not know what to do; there was a situation of despair and hopelessness. It was clear that Milošević would not give up his position of president.

At that time “Otpor” started to prepare its actions for bringing Milošević down. They started to train activists for political fight, writing projects for foreign donors and making people sensible to the regime change. “Otpor” began mobilizing people. They started to run the campaign against Milošević. “Otpor” was not a traditional political party but a movement that often engaged in unconventional activities. Street theatre is an important part of these protests. Activities included displaying an effigy of Milošević which passers-by could punch after paying one dinar; or painting red footsteps on the pavement what 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 they started to infiltrate into society by numerous performances, protests, flyers.

Something started to happen again. Milošević became the main culprit for the situation in which Serbia was. The media, especially ANEM³³ and local TV stations started to broadcast short clips against Milošević. The atmosphere in society was contentious. The feel of future was in the air. Everyone suddenly became euphoric and optimistic. They wanted a change. Interesting note is that people every day at 7.30 PM when the pro-regime daily informative program was starting on the national TV, started to beat pots with spoons. By doing this they have been demonstrating their dissatisfaction with Milošević and his regime.

It became clear as the elections were approaching that 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 recognized this, the civil society sector's primary goal became that of restoring citizen 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 campaign "Izlaz 2000".

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

The cumulating of the contentious collective action occurred in 2000 when Milošević announced preterm election. He was hoping that all those attempts for discrediting him were

³³ Association of independent electronic media.

not powerful enough. He announced that Serbia had won the war against the NATO and that this was the glorious victory against all the enemies of the Serbia.

But that was the beginning of the Milošević's end. At the presidential elections on September 24, 2000, over 71% of citizens cast their vote and gave a clear victory to 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. This date is considered to be the beginning of the consolidation of democracy in Serbia. At that date the protests against Milošević cumulated. People went on the streets of Belgrade, but not only 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 realized that Milošević was no longer their chief officer and they refused to beat and arrest demonstrators. The parliament was partially burned during the protests. This protest is known under the name *Bulldozer Revolution* because the protesters used the wheel loader in order to take over the national broadcast company (RTS). When the RTS, the fortress of Milošević, fell down that was the sign that Milošević's regime had lost the power and legitimacy. Two days later, Slobodan Milošević resigned.

In short we can divide the civil society process of bringing Milošević down into two phases: the first one is from the July 27th when Milošević announced presidential election to September 24th 2000 when elections were held. In that phase civil society had two tasks: to inform voters and to protect electoral abstinence. The second phase (September 24th-October 5th) is the phase when Milošević refuses to accept his loss and then civil society actors do four types of actions: legal actions (they appealed to the court due to the electoral fraud), religious actions (Serbian Orthodox Church appealed for non-violence), demonstrations, and civil disobedience (Molnar, 2008).

In conclusion, in the 2000 political parties were weak, they were unable to mobilize people but from 1998 there was a general opinion in the society that something had to be changed. Civil society saw its opportunity in that; they started to mobilize the rest of society. Thus, they created the environment where political parties could call for the elections and they succeeded it in July when Milošević decided to set early elections in September. Sydney Tarrow (1998) would call that “creating of political opportunities”. Political parties saw their chance in this and they used it, but Milošević tried to “steal elections”. Unsuccessfully. Civil society actions, mainly organized 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 organized civil society can play in democratization. Without the civil society, Milošević would not have resigned, and consolidation would not have had a chance.

CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS AND ARGUMENTATION

We have seen what the situation in Croatia and Serbia in the 1990s was alike. In the previous part I demonstrated the main structures, institutions and forces that led to the bringing down of Franjo Tuđman and Slobodan Milošević, however I still did not show the circumstances of their dethronization and set it in the context of the maturing democracy.

In this chapter I will do three moves: firstly I will provide my interpretation of the Croatian and Serbian cases helped by the political opportunity structure theory. On this basis, I will examine similarities and differences between Croatia and Serbia in the matter of regime change. The second task is to present my argument of the impact of civil society on the democratic consolidation. This will be done in a comparative perspective with the structure and the role of opposition. The last point will be the presentation of my argumentation regarding the topic of the thesis.

As we have seen, in Croatia and Serbia there was a similar type of regime, the difference was in the character of it. While in Croatia Tuđman's regime was more concerned with the Serbs and limiting their number in Croatia, in Milošević's Serbia, according to Freedom House, civil liberties in general were almost suspended and political rights limited. While it 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 organizations 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 civil society. Hence, Croatia is known for its uncontentious tradition. However, in both countries civil society prepared the ground for the first government change.

4.1. Croatia

As noted earlier, I consider Croatia in the 1990s a hybrid regime. The reason that is there were democratic institutions but with limited political accountability and responsiveness towards society. Hence, there were multiparty elections, yet they were not fair and not completely free. Due to the weak opposition and the lack of innovative policy solutions, there was no real political alternative to the Croatian Democratic Union. All of that was supported by nationalistic rhetoric which was glorifying Croatia and Croats. In these conditions civil society had restricted opportunity to act. Nevertheless, civil society played a vital role in the democratization of Croatia, as it seems to me that it created political opportunities for the regime to change. Considering that there was no other institute 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 enmeshed by the death of Franjo Tuđman when state apparatus (basically the Croatian Democratic Union) became more repressive towards the opposition and (civil) society. I would argue that the death of Franjo Tuđman was the critical junction 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 a big power and authority is not in the polity any more, people get confused. His followers had trouble accepting Croatia without a powerful leader, and his opponents were still not consolidated thus they did not know how to offer an acceptable political alternative. Civil society actors at that time doubled their efforts in order to mobilize the Croatian public to get out and vote. Results were fascinating, watching retrospectively. Croatia started its

negotiations with the European Union, BDP started to grow³⁴ and the international reputation of Croatia improved.

All those results enabled Croatian politics to enter the phase of democratic consolidation. After Stjepan Mesić won the presidential elections in February 2000 as a candidate of the Croatian People's Party (one of the parties that formed the government), the constitution changed which consequentially changed Croatia from being a semi-presidential to parliamentary system. Moreover, there was no more such a strong influence of one person on politics (as that was the case with Tuđman) so we could say that Croatia started to be more institutionalized in terms of check its and balance system. In addition, people realized that they are the ones who have the power to change government if the government does not act according to their wishes. In other words, people became more conscious of their role in the political process.

According to Merkel's phases of democratic consolidation and Schmitter's definition, changes in Croatia after 2000, take me to the conclusion that with the government change Croatia entered the new phase of maturing democracy – democratic consolidation.

4.2 Serbia

Serbia was a country under the strict and authoritarian president whose goal was to create one country for all Serbs. Milošević's regime was characterized by electoral frauds, limitations of media, clientilism and catastrophically bad economic situation. Another equally important feature of the 1990s was weak and fragmented opposition, but vivid and active

³⁴ Račan's government was governing Croatia for three years. Even though in that time period there was economic stagnation, results of the efforts of that government were visible afterwards. In spite of the CDU's attempt to present the growth of GDP as their result, that was the previous government's merit. „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 the same period remained tame and the currency, the kuna, stable“ (CIA- The World Factbook).

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 discourse change in Serbian society after 1997. Until that time, Milošević was the unquestionable leader of Serbia, a popular figure that enjoyed a great public support. But over time this image started fading. After the student protest 1996/7 because of the decreased university autonomy, Milošević started to be perceived more negatively. I believe that was the critical junction in society that will later result in critical junction in the state. At that time, people realized that Milošević is a demagog who can not (or does 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 is chance in that perception change. They started to train, to learn and to organize the way to mobilize national masses in order to bring Milošević down. We have to keep in mind that this is the time of absolute resignation as people I have interviewed witnessed. There was no hope, no motivation for political struggle, for going in elections or attempt to change the political system.

Here comes the role of civil society to mobilize people, to initiate civic participation and that was exactly what civil society in Serbia did. It was their goal to shake society, to show them that there is hope. Influenced by the Croatian and Slovak example, but by their previous experience in protesting, they organized numerous actions with one goal – to mobilize people. Perhaps the best example of their success on the microlevel was the experience of one of my interlocutors saying 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. This story illustrates the result of the research from late 1998 in Serbia which says that 60.3% of people supported demonstrations against the unjust regime (Molnar, 2008: 130).

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 electoral results and then civil society showed all its strength and literally dethronized him. As in Croatia the death of Tuđman, in Serbia the critical junction for allowing the consolidation of democracy was Milošević's loss in the elections. This allowed Serbia to start transforming into a stable democratic country with limited leftovers from authoritarian regime. However, it is discussable whether Serbia entered the last phase of democratic transformation. After the end of Milošević's era public administration was still crowded with his people. Despite that, my opinion is that without bringing Milošević down it would not be 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 realized that they have the ultimate power. For me, this is enough reason for calling Serbia a country that entered democratic consolidation.

There are two points I need to elaborate due to my hypothesis ("civil society was the most effective structure that could aid democratic consolidation of Croatia and Serbia") in order to conclude this analysis: to elaborate concrete functions of civil society in 1999/2000 and to answer the question "why civil society aided democratic consolidation the most, and not some other factor".

Regarding the first point; in Croatia, as noted, opposition was weak and civil society was the instrument of enchainning democracy. Opposition parties used political opportunities that civil society actors developed and won the elections. Their role was merely secondary. I would not argue that people voted for the Left because of their well developed and coherent program that was promising prosperity and welfare; I would argue that people voted for the opposition because they realized they wanted a change. Hence, they did not vote for the

coalition but they were voting against the CDU and Franjo Tuđman. Civil society helped people understand their role in Croatian polity and the fact they are the creators of 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 they were weak and fragmented, their position was well known. They were against Milošević's way of governing, 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 organized by society, as shown earlier, were unsuccessful. Over time, civil society realized that coordination and organization are vital for the success. The result of that realization was successful overall mobilization and a return of the trust in politics among Serbs. Here ends the first part of the function of mobilization of Serbian civil society. Later, when the opposition realized that people were more interested in politics, civil society takes a more instrumental function. The opposition won the elections, Milošević refused to admit it, and the opposition called people for demonstration. People, at that time, eager for change and revenge against Milošević answered the oppositions' call and brought Milošević down.

Those two roles in the context of political change, the role of mobilization and the instrumental role, are two possible missions of civil society in the phases of transition. Those 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 is regarding the explanation of the reason why precisely civil society played such a crucial (mobilization or instrumental) role in Croatia and Serbia. I am providing two possible explanations.

The first explanation comes from the contextual perspective of civil society in Croatia and Serbia at the end of the 1990s. Let me remind you what society in Serbia and Croatia was like. People in those two countries in the 1990s were not participating in the political life,

laws were arbitrary and biased, civil liberties limited. Society did not have much contact with foreign countries and societies. Hence, there was limited political alternative due to poor media visibility and omnipresence of the actual governance structure. The point of view of society was limited, political culture would correspond to Almond and Verba's second type – subjective political culture. Under these conditions, only civil society I think could be an internal factor of imposing social and political change towards democratic consolidation. In other words, civil society as a structure was the most efficient factor due to several reasons.

The first reason is the well structured organization which civil society organizations in Serbia and Croatia had. They were well organized, with clear role divisions and goals. Their strategies were highly developed and they knew the pulse of the people. Because of that they knew how to organize campaigns that were publicly accepted and efficient in their goals³⁵. 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 were learning from Croats and Slovaks as well. This international component is important because, as mentioned earlier, society in general was closed for foreign influences due to the nature of regimes in Croatia and Serbia.

Civil society at the end, saw its chance, used the opportunity and changed (directly or indirectly) the regime.

The second explanation why it was precisely civil society that played such a vital role in bringing Tuđman and Milošević down is found in the position of civil society regarding the political regime. Hence, civil societies in Croatia and Serbia were independent from the state, moreover they suffered from the lack of financing (most of the funding civil society organizations were getting from abroad) and inadequate law protection³⁶. I think this

³⁵ In Croatia, for example first time voters were the target, considering they were young, Glas 99 organized rock concerts in order to make elections closer to them.

³⁶ In Croatia in 1998 government established The Office for the Cooperation with NGOs, but its function was not well defined and civil society organizations were suspicious about its nature and goal.

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 organize (more or less direct) actions for the government change. Without being under the influence of the government they could fulfill their watchdog function better. The inherent function of the ideal-type of civil society – to protect society from authoritarianism was realized in Croatia and Serbia.

In light of the given analysis and supported by the theoretical part presented in chapter two, I would say that we can see that civil society in Croatia and Serbia at the end of the 20th century showed and defended its functions and image in supporting and preserving democratic values. Those examples show that civil society, despite arguments against it, is an essential factor of maturing democracy.

CONCLUSION

The territorial area of the Balkan region has always been an interesting topic for social scientists. For years historians have been trying to understand the historical impulses that have shaped this region. The goal of sociologists that deal with Balkan is to determine why people of the Balkans are so inclined to conflicts among themselves, but on the other hand feel a very strong bond between themselves. Anthropologists seek the answer to how was the term “Balkan” created and what the issues in the contemporary understanding of the region in regard to the human nature are. And what about political scientists? Political scientists have the privilege to comprehend all those views and emphasize them with the political dimension of the region. That political dimension is crucial for understanding the structure and the interaction of the people(s) living in the area of South East Europe commonly known as the Balkan region. Someone once said that liberal democracy is a torture over the traditions of the Western Balkans. The goal of my thesis was to examine changes in politics that happened at the end of the 20th century in two, probably the most influential countries in the Western Balkans – Croatia and Serbia.

Croatia and Serbia are countries intriguing for political scientists due to the specific nature of their relations. After centuries of being in one state and the collapse of that state, they 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. Those differences are important in order to comprehend the political dynamics and the essence of the current political system in Croatia and Serbia. In my thesis I focused on one of the segments – civil society. I demonstrated the nature of political community in the 1990s and showed how non-state actors can be as important (if not more important) as conventional state actors for entering the phase of democratic consolidation.

Civil society is the arena of active citizens where they freely participate, express their fears, wishes, satisfactions, and organize actions for increasing their rights and in that way influence politics and polity. There are several possible functions (representation, subsidiarity, watchdog, socialization) that civil society can have in the state and the success of democracy partially depends on the effectiveness in fulfillment of those tasks.

Democratic consolidation as the last phase in the path of maturing democracy is the biggest challenge for all countries. The simplest definition of democratic consolidation is that this is the process of accepting democracy being “the only game in town”. When people perceive democracy as the inevitable alternative, they mean there is no fear of returning in previous authoritarian regime. If we believe Dahrendorf, it takes sixty years for democracy to become fully consolidated. No matter whether he was right or not, the study of democratic consolidation and its critical junctions allows us better insight into the characteristics of polity of certain country because it reflects political culture and the structure of institutions of that one country.

In my thesis I have been using Tarrow’s simplified concept of political opportunities structure and applied it on regime change in Serbia and Croatia. I wanted to see whether it is possible to observe two regimes through the perspective of political opportunities and analyze political change focusing on critical junction. I showed that both in Croatia and Serbia there was a critical point that was important for breaking with the old regime and opened the door to democratic consolidation. In Croatia the death of president Franjo Tuđman allowed more democratic procedures in politics and his death consequentially made the polity more stable in a democratic sense. In Serbia, the same happened with the protests in 1997 where no critical junction was when civil society actors realized that the time for change had come. All actions and dissatisfaction of civil society culminated on October 5th 2000 when civil society energy burst showing all its strength in demonstrations against Slobodan Milošević. The

result of that was his announcement of electoral 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 organization. I argued that civil society was the best channel for directing the wishes of society and that was the reason for its great role in Serbian and Croatian polity. Civil society in Serbia and Croatia was efficient and determined in its intention of making those two countries more democratic. Due to the fact they were one of the rare institutes not under the control of state apparatus they could act freely.

Opposition, a part 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 the opposition saw the opportunity civil society created by mobilizing people against Milošević's regime and involved more actively in campaign against him. The result was obvious - Milošević was not president any more after the loss in elections despite his attempts to ignore the will of people.

There are several recommendations for the future research of civil society in Croatia and Serbia in the context of bringing Tuđman and Milošević down. It would be interesting to see the role of the judiciary in the whole process. Due to the space limitations and the nature of this paper, I did not focus on that aspect but the evaluation of the efficiency of judiciary and its role regarding political change could add to this topic. This thesis showed that civil society plays a significant role in the process of maturing democracy, using the example of Croatia and Serbia, two, even though different countries in societal perspective, similar countries in historical background. In order to assess the real role of civil society a future researcher should consider choosing some other post-communist country (such as Georgia or Armenia) and the functions of civil society there. An analysis like that could enlarge the validity and our detailed conception of civil society in post-communist countries. Hence,

there are some indications that actors of Serbian “Otpor” were involved in training and organizing civic actions in Armenia (in the case of the youth movement HIMA), in Georgia and in the social movements that happened in 2011 in Northern Africa. Further studies should examine link between those contentious actions in order, not just to understand movements in Africa or Asia but to see scope and limits of “Otpor” as well.

In conclusion, this analysis has shown that civil society was an important factor of democratization in 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 made an inference on 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 in the beginning of democratic consolidation. Taking all that into consideration and having the imperative that topic should be relevant for academic community and practical usage, I think I have succeeded in my intention, for the first time to compare Croatia and Serbia focusing on civil society and its role in political and social change. This paper can help in interpreting the current political situation in those two countries and understanding their political dynamics.

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