SREČO DRAGOŠ AND VESNA LESKOŠEK

SOCIAL INEQUALITY AND SOCIAL CAPITAL

Peace Institute
Institute for Contemporary Social and Political Studies

Srečo Dragoš and Vesna Leskošek
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FOREWORD

The understanding and justification of social inequality vary depending on the point of view from which one approaches the subject. One can explain its symbolic meaning or describe its impact on the status or deprivation of those excluded from social life owing to social inequality. Social inequality is also a mode of operation. In one of his diaries Edvard Kocbek (Kocbek 2001, 318) describes a real life event that took place at a railway station in Sarajevo in 1938. In this scene »a young woman without legs, with her body packed in a kind of basket, propelled herself with her arms only on which she wore wooden shoes. The poor woman shouted from far away and pleaded 'Please, wait, take me in, for God's sake, wait for me.' But the moment she reached the train and needed someone to lift her onto it, nobody made a move, in fact, right then the driver started the engine. And passengers burst out laughing.«

This observation is a telling example of the lack of social capital in this particular community. In order to eliminate deprivation, it would not be sufficient to do away with trains; much more effective would be to bring the groups waiting on the platform closer. Social and local politics constitute one tool that could be used to this end.

This book consists of two main parts, one theoretical and the other empirical. In the first, theoretical part, the authors draw attention to the three types of simplification that are inevitable because we use them to reduce the complexity of reality in order to make our understanding of it easier. Of those three types of simplification it is the last one, ideology, that is problematic and hence deserves most attention. In the chapter dealing with inequality the authors look into three ideological approaches to the notion of inequality i.e., those that are most frequently found in our environment. The chapter on social capital is intended to facilitate the understanding of the relation between social inequality and stratification. In modern soci-

eties it has taken on new forms different from those that character-ized the period from which dates the sociological repertoire used for describing these relations. Our action research, in which we studied ten Ljubljana neighborhoods, shows the effect of this phenomenon on day-to-day life. The loss of communal resources through denation-alization and privatization during the transition era has an ominous impact on the community life, and in consequence, also on the options available to individuals, their social participation and atti-tudes towards groups that are traditionally victims of prejudices and stereotypes.

It is not possible to shape macro-level policies aimed at reducing inequalities unless we understand the processes that give rise to these inequalities on the micro level. Inequality can be reduced only by making it possible for everybody, under equal terms, to move up the social ladder, while at the same time implementing special pol-icies to strengthen the traditionally deprived groups that are excluded or isolated owing to inequality. Various social programs can only be supplements contributing to such strengthening, but they cannot be the basic tool for the reduction of inequality, particularly not if they aim to change and adapt excluded groups rather than to change their living conditions and the views of the majority.

At this point we would like to express our thanks to the Peace Insti-tute and Aldo Milohnić in particular, who accepted this work for publication and who endeavored, unfortunately without success, to attract the Ministry of Labor, Family and Social Affairs as a co-sponsor. The said ministry rated this work lower than they did, for example, three papers on family by the Diocesan Administrative Office, or the report on the consultations of countryside tourist organizations. We nevertheless hope that you'll find it interesting and that some will find it useful.

VESNA LESKOŠEK AND SREČO DRAGOŠ
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IDEOLOGY

Reality is too complicated to be comprehended or wholly constituted without leaving something out. Accordingly, when thinking or speaking we cannot avoid simplification. Simplification is especially indispensable when referring to social reality, because it is an integral part of social reality as are the people who constitute it. What is important, however, is that we make a distinction between various types of simplification, and that we distinguish reality from these simplifications. In reality atoms are not such as presented by physicists or ancient Greek philosophers – all of these are just representations of atoms (which even resemble one another). The explanation of social functioning by the theory of exchange – one of the most penetrating sociological theories of modern times – is in fact identical to Democritus's explanation of 2400 years ago. Democritus maintained that we choose by escaping and feeling. According to him we use visible things to explain invisible ones; thinking is a means of exploration, while escape and feelings are used to choose things towards which we are inclined and to run away from things that are not to our taste. This is one of the earliest simplifications of social functioning, one which obviously has a certain cognitive value given the fact that it is still in use.[1]

Similarly the world of our everyday lives, into which we wake up in the morning to brush our teeth, as well as the worlds of science, art, religion and politics, are made up of simplifications. The types and methods differ, but all of these worlds rely on simplification. Since in this book we will be interested in just one type of simplification, we shall first resort to an additional simplification to divide all other simplifications, pertaining to any field, into three makeshift categories:

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[1] The definition of award and expenses in exchange theory is the same. Cf. Stark & Bainbridge 1996, 27.

I. true, unverifiable and harmless simplifications

II. untrue, verifiable and harmless simplifications

III. untrue, verifiable and dangerous simplifications.

In this book the criterion of »truth« is not understood in its onto-logical sense. Instead, it is closer to the sociological understanding of truth which focuses on the relationship between an attitude towards reality (to which simplification refers) and the purpose of simplification. Those simplifications that are reductionist with regard to the referenced object to such an extent that they have ceased to serve the purpose that led to their creation will be classified as untrue. They will be distinguished from true simplifications which, viewed from the perspective of the realization of purposes, need not be corrected. As regards verifiability, we will limit ourselves to the simple tautological definition that things that can be verified are verifiable. Accordingly, simplifications of the type »God exists/God doesn't exist«, as well as simplifications implying values, will be classified as unverifiable. The criterion of harmfulness/harmlessness implies the assessment of the effects these simplifications have on the social and physical environment. In this respect, category I. comprises simplifications pertaining to generally acknowledged ethical truths (»it is good to do good« – Kant's categorical imperative), then scientific axioms in natural scientific and social scientific theories (e.g. »no system can exist without limits«, the importance of consensus in classical functionalism), and also many simplifications from everyday life (e.g. »education is beneficial«). Category II. comprises simplifications like, for example, the greeting »good day« uttered on a rainy day, or the common conviction that the east is where the »sun rises«, then rituals and other behavioral patterns that today represent mere forms that have departed from their original content (Simmel 1993). All of these are verifiable untrue simplifications that are often used and are not harmful unless they slip into category III.

The third category, which is the subject of interest to our study, comprises untrue and dangerous simplifications. Since they are verifiable, the social sciences in particular should feel responsibility to deal with them. However, before we proceed we should point out that the dangerous aspect of simplifications in category III does not stem as much from the fact that they are untrue as it does from the circumstances *and* interests that give rise to dangerous effects. To illustrate

how important this is we shall use several examples of undesirable simplifications from everyday life that are still in use, for example »on average black people are less intelligent than white people«, »Gypsies are prone to idleness by nature«, »our culture is better than other cultures«, »women are less rational than men« and similar. These simplifications (prejudices) are not desirable in modern cultures because they are controversial and can lead to exclusion and violence. But not necessarily so. Prejudices become really dangerous only when they begin to govern our behavior. What makes them dangerous is not the relation of their content to reality (untruthfulness) but primarily the combination of interests and circumstances. Only this combination creates social facts from these erroneous mental constructs and turns them into a real, experiential attitude towards others with a harmful effect. If this condition is not fulfilled, prejudices remain in category II, meaning that the key factor that moves them to category III is social power. Only by means of social power can these simplified constructs of reality be forced upon others, and in order to do it one has to be motivated in one or another way. Racial, sexual, generational and religious prejudices in themselves are not racism, machoism, ageism, or fanaticism. They evolve towards these states only if concretized through the use of power; only by means of power do they become constituted. The same holds true of other psychological products. A thought is not dangerous – no matter how erroneous it may be. What is dangerous is an act. Yet we must not forget that every verbalized thought (either uttered or written) is a social act as soon as it reaches the ears of another person. Generally speaking, each idea and each truth, no matter how simplified it is, may serve the monopolistic purposes of specific interest groups that can afford to compete with other groups by means of historical, institutional, normative or other advantages. This points to the need to rehabilitate the notion of *ideology*, which is of paramount importance for the understanding of category III. Since ideology is frequently exploited to denote almost anything, we shall use Berger-Luckmann's definition of ideology, one in which this notion is cleansed from excessively generalized and useless connotations. But before we proceed, let us illustrate the confusion relating to the definition of ideology by taking a look at the ten most widespread definitions of this concept:

a) Enlightenment definition: the term ideology here denotes all-encompassing encyclopedic knowledge that is understood as the antithesis of superstition and prejudice.

b) Legitimizing definition: an ideology is any system of ideas that justifies relations of subordination among social groups.

c) Class biased: an ideology is a form of erroneous reasoning which reproduces the ideas of the ruling class (this is why, in the Marxist sense of the word, everything that issues from »superstructure' or non-proletarian »forms of social consciousness« has ideological effect).

d) Class unbiased: an ideology is any particular awareness of a specific group that opposes other groups (Mannheim, for example, speaks about the utopian ideologies of subordinated groups).

e) Post-Marxist: this group includes various revisionist variations of understanding that stem from Marxist philosophy (e.g. Gramsci's hegemony, Althusser's ISAs etc.).

f) Modernist (Frankfurt school): an ideology is a consumption mechanism for the transformation of polysemic cultural truths into monosemic empty phrases that are readily appropriated by the masses as their own convictions; ideology is thus used to transform the rational into the irrational, or rather, to falsify the rational, and to transform an opinion into a motto, ethics into moralizing, innovative approaches into a pose, and culture into decorative packaging.

g) Post-modernist: an ideology is whatever matches a certain definition that has been chosen depending on the problem dealt with.

h) Politically opposing: an ideology involves the mottos, programs and concepts of a ruling political party (parties) i.e. the entire ruling elite.

i) Exclusive: an ideology is all ideas that stand in opposition to one's own ideas.

j) All-inclusive: an ideology is any complex of ideas, assertions and related acts by anyone in any area.

The list above is far from being exhaustive. Nevertheless, it illustrates the predicament we face when trying to understand an ideology. They are so vast that they become paradoxical. Such is, for example, the first definition in relation to all others. A quick glance suffices to see that early on the term »ideology« denoted precisely

what the etymology of the word suggests (ideo-logos) i.e. science about ideas, while in later variants this meaning became increasingly blurred through a shift from the idea to the act (functioning of an actor). This means that an ideology – despite the origin of the name – no longer denotes ideas, but effects; it is not determined by thoughts but by acts. This paradox has been observed by Hanna Arendt who pointed out the hidden meaning of the term. According to Arendt, the term »ideology« apparently implies that an idea can become the subject of scientific research and that the suffix logoi accordingly denotes scientific assertions. Precisely this is misleading, says Arendt. The subject of ideology is not ideas, even though they are related to it. The true subject is history onto which an »idea« is applied subsequently. The result of subsequent application is not a corpus of things that *are*, but a revelation of the process that is in constant change. (Arendt 1998, 476–477). And what is that which constantly changes, or in other words, why does Arendt say that history is the true subject of ideology? Why does she think that the change is decisive? A sociological answer to this question is unequivocal: history changes because of the social acting of people on other people and things, with this acting always being motivated by interests. In short, Hannah Arendt says that in dealing with ideology one has to pay attention to interests rather than ideas.

The next paradox related to the definition of ideology is methodological in character. The last definition from the list above clearly illustrates this. The paradox lies in the assumption that the imperfection of definitions can be set right by resorting to the broadest of inclusions. A typical example of this class of definition (as in item *j*) is Stuart Hall's definition where ideology is »the mental frameworks – the languages, the concepts, categories, imagery of thought, and the systems of representation – which different classes and social groups deploy in order to make sense … .« (quoted in van Dijk 1998, 9). As if Hall's definition were not sufficiently broad, some have even made attempts to stretch it to include »every regulation of social practices« (ibid.). The paradoxical feature of such broad definitions is that nothing is left outside that could be considered *non*-ideological; this, of course, makes the very defining of ideology redundant. And if we suppose that something that eludes the attribute of »ideological« nevertheless exists, then it is precisely that exceptional and outstanding concept that deserves to be defined rather than ideology.

For the purpose of this study (and in connection with constructs of type III), these paradoxes should be avoided and the list of definitions shortened. One possible way of doing this is by excluding useless definitions which, by virtue of sheer scope, approach extremes and are either excessively inclusive or excessively exclusive. If we further omit aphoristic derivations, we end with two variants, *b* and *d* (i.e. the legitimizing and class neutral definitions). The former concentrates on the competitiveness of social groups, and the latter on the fact that no one group is a priori immune to ideology. What is implied here is that interests are the engine of history onto which ideas are »applied subsequently«, as Hanna Arendt says. Such a definition is found in *The Social Construction of Reality*, one of the most frequently quoted sociological works of the last decade. In this book the concept of ideology is explained as follows:

> »When a particular definition of reality comes to be attached to a concrete power interest, it may be called an ideology« (Berger and Luckmann 1967, 123).

Although this definition is clear, it may be expedient to stress what Berger and Luckmann see as the main characteristics of an ideology.

1. An ideology consists primarily of concrete interests which have priority over the content of reality (simplifying construct) propagated by the ideological actor; therefore, it is reality that is invariably adapted to interests and not the other way round.

2. The existence of this (construed) reality, which an actor uses to convince others, does not depend only on when and how that actor concocted it; the ideological reality is also affected by the context in which it appears – one aspect is its relation to other realities that exist besides it, and the other is the fact that at least one of these realities is different from that specific reality in a competitive manner (this means, for example, that a deep-rooted faith in an *xy* god in a society whose all members believe in that god is not an ideology, regardless of how firmly this faith is pressed upon all subjects by the clerical elite; such a god becomes an ideological notion only with the appearance of religious suspicions, i.e. with the appearance of another, competitive god *wx*).

3. Only social power enables an actor to communicate ideologically to others his/her own interests »attached to the definition of real-

ity«. Therefore, a fantasy as such is not an ideology, not even when it has a strong compensational psychological impact on the masses (e.g. in arts, religion, entertainment, consumption).

4. Ideological actions are frequently violent (for Hanna Arendt, ideological violence is a characteristic of the 20th century primarily), although not necessarily! What follows from the previous definition is that social power is the main element of an ideology, but in so saying we should not overlook the fact that the sources of power and ways of its realization vary. Therefore, ideological acting does not invariably imply enforcement in the sense of violent action. Ideology can be enforced in subtle ways and in entirely non-monopolistic circumstances where actors attain their ideological objectives by persuasion, exchange or trade.

The problem is hence even more serious because it is not easily identifiable. The examples of circumstances that are free of violence by definition, but not also of enforcement, are:

- The election struggle between political parties at free elections within the limits of democratic procedures.
- Competition on the modern religion markets in which the religious offer is free and separate from state structures.
- The area of commercial advertisements.
- Rivalry between informal cliques and fractions in various organizations.
- Educational programs including those with voluntary participation.
- Social, gender and other inequalities in circumstances of equal rights for all.

These accents can be integrated into a more precise definition: ideologies are interest-driven constructs of reality which are realized by means of social power at the expense of others and of different (competitive) constructs.

Yet, what is the role of the ideas that make reality sensible and form the content of a particular construct? The definition obviously presupposes the existence of various types of reality. One is the reality stated by the ideological construct. The other is the reality of competitive constructs, which are not (necessarily) ideological. And finally, there is the primary reality, which is the basis for all these constructs and simplifications. The relation between these realities is

denoted as ideological. But what, in fact, is characteristic of this relation? We have already mentioned that even the simplest constructs of reality are composed of ideas that are organized with the aim of simplifying the complexity of our surroundings. When I say that the east is »where the sun rises«, I simplify/reduce the planetary constellation to an egocentric construct with myself in its center and the sun revolving around me. Simplifications are construed using various mental procedures like reduction, abstraction, analogies, symbols, metaphors, overlooking, logical conclusion etc. Since constructs themselves are also realistic, albeit in a manner different from the primary reality to which they refer, they have the status of meta-reality. In principle there is nothing wrong with this, if, for example, such constructs serve as substitutes for easier orientation in a complex environment. At this point let us bring in Schutz's foreigner who is unable to find his bearings in an unknown place by relying on its hallmarks, for example the town hall, electricity plant, water reservoir, justice hall, or the university building, either because the locations of these buildings are either unknown to him or he cannot recognize the buildings themselves, or because he lacks the experience needed to relate the two. Therefore, the foreigner opts for another method of orientation – he takes as reference points those objects that have significance for him, ones he himself has made significant, even though they may be entirely unimportant objects, for example a roof, a conspicuous billboard, or some bizarre façade. The foreigner moves around the town using his own simplification of reality, that is to say, using a construct which, however, is not ideological, although it consciously deviates from the physical reality of the town. Yet the foreigner is still interested in the actual reality of the town. He takes notice of it when inventing constructs, but to his attentive eye it appears different than to the eye of a native, or of a scientist, or a tour guide. Precisely this »difference« is a dimension eliminated by the ideological effect in the name of something else. What a foreigner simplifies for the sake of importance, an ideologist eliminates as unimportant; therefore, Schutz's foreigner is not (yet) an ideologist:

»in so far as he is interested in knowledge of his social world, he organizes this knowledge not in terms of a scientific system but in terms of relevance to his actions.

He groups the world around himself (as the center) as a field of domination and is
therefore especially interested in that segment which is within his actual or potential
reach …, the world seems to him at any given moment as stratified in different layers
of relevance, each of them requiring a different degree of knowledge.« (Schutz
1976, 92–93).

A foreigner simplifies the social world around him in order to
retain it, while an ideologist eliminates it in order to exchange it for
something else. What the foreigner from the quotation above actu-
ally does and what distinguishes him from an ideologist is a pro-
cedure that can be likened to the drawing of a map (Schutz's
metaphor). Since any map is a mental (or graphic) simplification of
the existent configuration, it is a construct useful for a foreigner
because he uses it as a makeshift reality of the town. A foreigner
»charts« the map by placing himself in the center and creating
around himself circles by connecting points with the same altitude
or with the same temperature or pressure (contours, isotherms, iso-
bars). Therefore, a foreigner's construct indeed consists of imagined
lines and iso-lines, ones that are not perceptible in the primary real-
ity. Yet such drawings are not arbitrary, although, as a rule, they
vary from one author to another. Circles and lines – constructs – are
closely related to the primary reality which they simplify and with-
out which they would not make sense. Similar lines fill in social
spaces. For example, the closest circle immediately surrounding me
is separated from the next, more distant circle (with a different rele-
vance) by the line connecting people with whom I share the closest
emotional ties. This is a circle comprising the basic group to which I
belong, usually the family or the household. The next circle includes
people with whom I have contacts of a different nature, for example,
friendly, business, or scientific contacts. Next comes the area of sig-
nificant persons who belong to the past, people who lost their im-
portance or are no longer alive, and so on until we reach the circle
comprising passing acquaintances distinguished from the billions of
other people just through an occasional greeting on the street. Still
further from there one can find anonymous individuals towards
whom I am not completely indifferent because I can identify them
using categories such as »Slovenes«, »Europeans« etc.
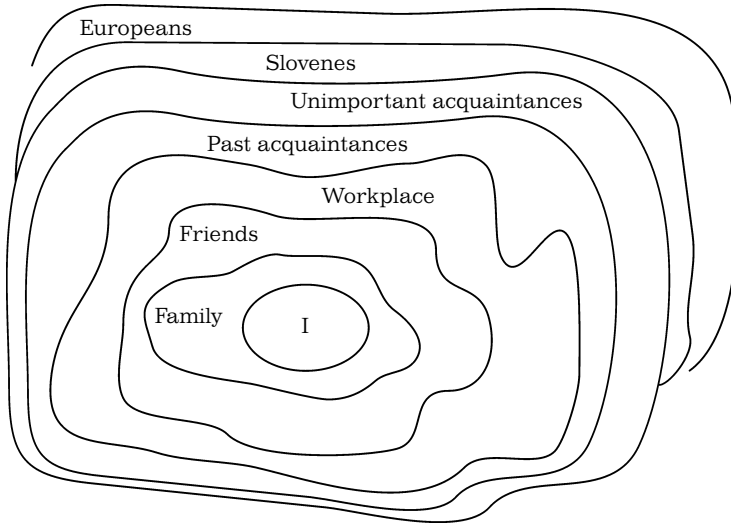
In short, the cross-section of my biographical »trunk« consists of a series of concentric circles bearing social relevance, with more distant areas having different meaning and being less significant than close ones. Of course, circles are just an analogy. Their number in a tree trunk grows with age, while in people's biographical trunk the case is usually the opposite. But the point of Schutz's foreigner is that it is possible to cope with the social world only through simplifications which nevertheless remain connected with the primary reality, for example, through the map-like contours »each requiring a different level of knowledge« in the sense of »knowing« (understood as a combination of skills, information, the depositories of past experience and senses we ascribe to them). The same, however, cannot be said of ideologies. They additionally simplify constructs by methodically adapting them to particular, governing interests rather than to the things to which they refer. To be more precise, ideological constructs are references to the primary reality which have been distorted for the sake of interests in an unclear way. The ideological character lies precisely in this duality described by Talcott Parsons – in 1942 when he analyzed Fascism – as follows:

»the ideological definition of the situation in terms of which the orientation of a social movement becomes structured is of great importance but it never stands alone. It is necessarily in the closet interdependence with the psychological states and the social situations of the people to whom it appeals.« (Parsons 1958, 135).

To put it differently and by inverting the order of stress: although an ideologist must be convincing when acting upon others to enforce on them the specific interests, this alone is not sufficient; the content and the manner of speaking are equally important (and not solely what he/she actually thinks about a specific subject). The ideological constructs are not meta-reality in the sense of the word mentioned earlier in connection with usual constructs, as is the one used by a foreigner in order to find his bearings more easily. The ideological constructs both surpass usual simplifications and fall short of them. They surpass them because their status is more complex than that of meta-reality owing to the concrete interest on which their super-structure rests; they involve an additional, interest-based construct that actually turns them into constructs of constructs. But this takes them even further from the primary reality, so they also fall short of meta-reality, itself a reduction. What actually happens is that the already simplified meta-reality that undergoes still another level of simplification, no longer has realistic connections with the primary reality. These features place ideologies into category III simplifications. To sum up, the reasons why ideologies do not belong to category II simplifications are:
• they are unrealistic, because by adapting them to specific interests they become distant from the primary reality;
• they are verifiable, because by stating them one still refers to the primary reality;
• they are dangerous because they are misleading.
The background of the third reason deserves a separate explanation: »misleading« is a specific manner of social action, here defined as an intentional maintenance of the difference between the declared and the real. This difference is illustrated by chart 2.

CHART 2: IDEOLOGICAL MISLEADING

	Primary reality	First simplification (construct)	Second simplification (reconstruction of the construct)
Ideological statement	**A**	**a** = erroneous reference to **A**	**A'** = alternative reference to **A**
Ideological effect	**A**	**a** = competitive construct, that must be eliminated	**X** = interest-based construct, that must be promoted

The ideologist attempts to convince others that his/her construct (*A'*) is a more suitable simplification of the primary reality (*A*) because it is supposedly more credible than any other construct (*a*). The reason is that mistakes which in other constructs (*a*) cause erroneous references to A have been eliminated in that specific construct. On the level of the actual effect of this statement, the interest of the ideologist (*X*) is being enforced, one that can be realized only at the expense of other (different) constructs (*a*). Many examples would qualify for this table. One such example from our environment is the debate about the salaries of Slovenian judges, MPs, doctors, educators and others over the past decade. National quibbling about the level of their salaries began with the introduction of the market economy following independence. This fact, along with the empirical complexity of all salaries actually paid out, represents the primary reality *A* in our table. The system consisting of the methods, mechanisms and explanations of salary regulation – regardless of its integrity, coherence or efficiency – is construct *a*, because it is a simplification of the primary reality. Construct *a* would be present even if, for example, the system known as »salary policy« did not actually exist, because assumptions (at least implicit ones) about why such a system is not needed or has not been yet created, or whether it would be beneficial or not, would be present anyway. All these are first level constructs. Any modification to these constructs, any supplement, their elimination or substitution by other constructs is

nothing else but reconstructions (*A'*). In our example, the second-level simplification *A'* was as follows: »people with high salaries must have even higher salaries in order to work more and better.« It has been proven that this assertion had no connection with the primary reality (*A*), but rather with the interest-driven reality (*X*), which in this example involved two tendencies: the desire to increase material wealth and to make competitive comparisons between the social reputation of various professional groups. The reality of construct *X* has never been verbalized directly because in such a case the interests would have to be enforced in a different way. However, it is not the stating of *A'* nor the enforcement of *X* interests that is truly problematic here. What is problematic is the difference between the statement and its effect, which is intentional in the case of ideologies (conditioned by *X*) and perpetuated by means of power. Therefore, ideology should not be mixed with an error or a mistake, nor with the ignorance or »non-logical« moves in the sense put forward by Vilfredo Pareto (Pareto 1963, 76 ss). Another conclusion following from the table above is that an ideology should not be equated with a lie. An ideology is not necessarily a lie, even though every lie is an ideology, since a lie is precisely the feature that makes an ideology distinguishable from an error. A lie is a deliberate utterance of something untruthful with the aim of enforcing certain interests that one wants to keep concealed – in this sense every lie is an ideology. But the two concepts do not entirely overlap, even though they frequently coincide. Example: I am visited by an unknown man who presents to me the latest edition of the Dictionary of the Slovene Language explaining that it is the best edition so far and that »every home library should include such a book.« Since the salesman has not stated any lie, he had not acted falsely, but the act is nevertheless ideological: he knocked on my door with the aim of making profit rather than enlightening me about literary events. This example can be regarded as typical for two reasons: firstly, because it is so ordinary and frequent that we see it as self-explanatory, meaning that we ourselves give it legitimacy; secondly, because it is in no way harmless, as the resulting expenses are not in the interest of the participants that were misled into this interaction. The mixture of the two, legitimization and manipulation, is the most frequent combination found in an ideological operation.

Ideologies are simplifying category III constructs. The next chapter is dedicated to the three frequent simplifications in the area of social inequalities. All three simplifications are relevant to the present circumstances in Slovenia and all belong to category III.

SOCIAL INEQUALITY

Transition in Slovenia denotes the abolition of socialism and adoption of the European system. It is supposed that whatever has been characteristic of socialism is not compatible with Europe and the other way round. One of the important differences between the previous and present system is the understanding of social inequality. The difference may be briefly summed up as follows: socialism rejected inequality because it did not understand it, while the capitalism of today »thinks« that it controls inequality simply because it recognizes/accepts it. This aphorism may be broken down into three basic assertions which after one decade of transition already function as if they were self-explanatory, or something that does not need verification and with which we must come to terms. These ideological constructs are:

1. Socialism has failed because it did not succeed in eliminating social inequalities despite promises; viewed from the perspective of social differences, socialism is no more successful than the liberal market system.

2. Through the transition period we enter the era of the market economy, so an increase in social inequalities is inevitable, since in the previous system this inequality was not sufficiently big; regardless of how we evaluate this increase, positively (as a just expression of meriocratic principles) or negatively (as an undesirable price of transition), it is a fact that in introducing a market economy we cannot avoid an increase in inequality.

3. The type of social inequality present in today's Slovenia is acceptable and unproblematic. There are two reasons for this: inequality in market-competitive circumstances is necessary and useful as long as it is not too large; the level of inequality in Slovenia is not too high, since it is below the European average which is in turn lower than the average on other continents.

Construct 1 is an expression of the ideology of unification, construct 2 of the ideology of economization, and construct 3 of the ideology of minimization. We will now proceed to examine each in turn.

The unification ideology

The first construct, which is a variation of the popular joke which says that capitalism is exploitation of man by man while socialism is just the reverse, implies that socialism is to be blamed because it did not succeed in eliminating social differences. This view is quite widespread and can occasionally be found among representatives of the political left, but most frequently it is advocated by representatives of the right wing who converge with the circles around the Catholic church. This is not surprising since the top representatives of the Catholic church in Slovenia are the biggest and the most influential critics of the liberal-market model. After 1990 they also became the loudest critics of the previous, socialist system. Their construct is based on the following derivation: by denouncing God and the Church, modern rationalism introduced liberal thinking; social problems arise from the ensuing selfishness and materialistic orientation which prompted revolutions and totalitarian systems like fascism, Nazism and communism. Within this logic, communism was seen to be as inefficient in resolving social issues as was liberalism, since, according to one renowned Catholic author, the essential reason for the failure of socialism i.e. communism is that »communism indeed attempted to resist liberal economy but it also succumbed to the challenges of competition.« (Juhant 1995, 989–990). Therefore, for this author the problematic aspect of communism was not the fact that it endeavored to suppress capitalism and liberal principles, but just the opposite – that it failed to suppress them and because of this weakness it succumbed to liberal economy »and the challenges of competition.« One question that should be posed at this point is how it is possible that such a typically Stalinist understanding of communism should emerge at the end of the 20th century. It is a viewpoint that was rejected even by communists as long ago as the 1950s when they made the first attempts at reforming the central planning system in the direction of liberal market principles. One reason that could be pinpointed as leading to this bizarre view is the ideological

tradition of the Catholic Church. In Slovenia it has been struggling against two enemies, communism and liberalism, ever since the end of the 19th century, while idealizing the medieval class system in which the role of the Church was different. Another line of explanation starts from the ideological tradition of socialism, meaning that the logic of derivation in the example above is not only clerical but also wider. Construct 1 hence combines the following assumptions:

• social differences are the same as social inequality;
• socialist and liberal market systems have similar (or identical) attitudes towards social differences;
• their attitude towards social differences is inappropriate;
• socialism has not eliminated social differences although it should have done so.

All four hypotheses are erroneous. The term »social differences« should not be confused with the term »social inequality« because the former is more comprehensive than the latter. Social differences are used to denote our recognition, or rather the presence, of relevant differences among groups or categories of individuals. For example, the difference in the thickness of hair in two individuals cannot be classified as a social difference, in contrast to some other qualities of hair. Let us remind you that only a few decades ago the length of hair constituted so big a social difference in Slovenia that men who stood out by having hair longer than the average were subject to more rigorous police checks than others; certain other qualities of hair and physical attributes constitute similar social marks (for more on this see Synnott 1987, 1992). There are two kinds of social differences – those that are not related to natural characteristics, and natural differences to which value significance is attached. The most frequently occurring social differences are gender, age, language, and ethnic differences, differences between professional categories, differences in psychological and physical potentials or abilities, differences in geographical origin, family background, religion, clothing and consumption styles.

CHART 3: SOCIAL INEQUALITY AND DIFFERENCES
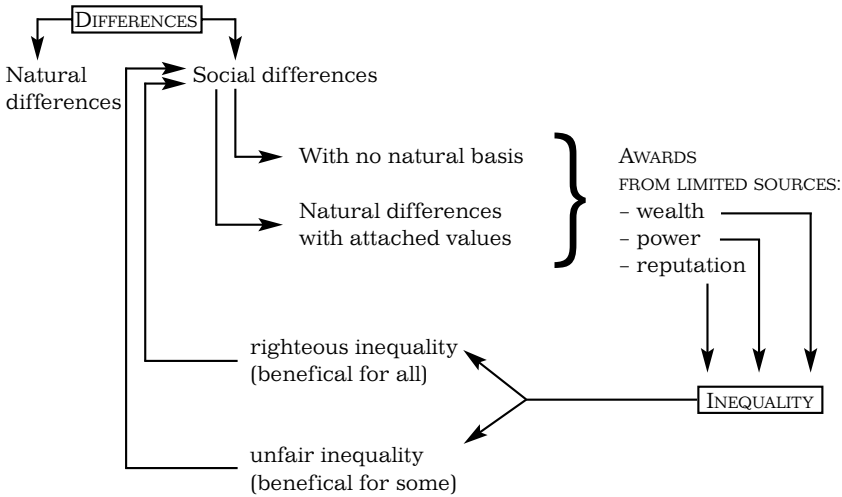
However, the individuals with various innate and acquired characteristics do not start their lives in neutral or unstructured (non-stratified) environments. People are flung, by education or even birth, into various social spaces which significantly determine the conditions and opportunities available to them, and consequently also their achievements later in life. Some differences are stimulated by the social environment through rewards and unequal distribution of the most important, albeit limited, social assets such as wealth, power and distinction. This enables some groups to rise above certain others. The resulting difference between them is called social inequality (see chart 3). There are several reasons why it is important to make distinction between inequality and difference:
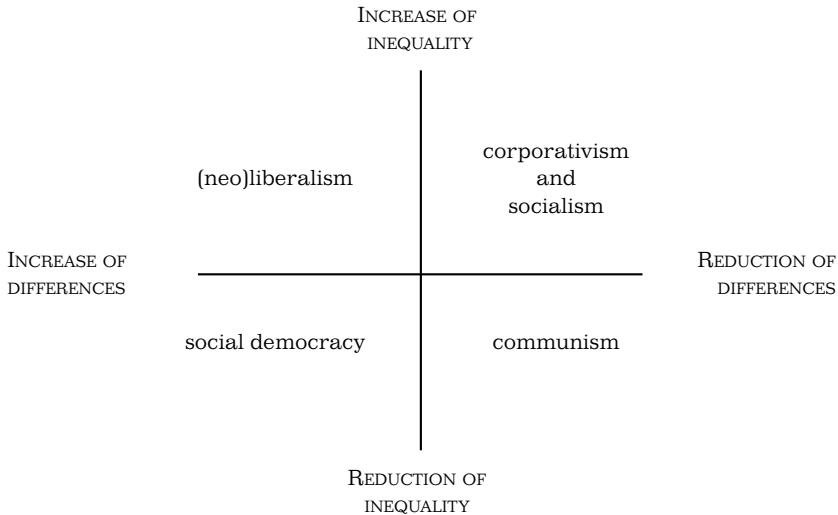
- in order not to mix those properties and circumstances that have decisive importance with all other properties and circumstances that are not (importantly) related to the distribution of assets and accordingly do not lead to vertical classification (positioning);
- because a specific property may have no social connotations during certain periods or in certain circumstances, but may acquire

them at other times and become a reason for social differentiation or social inequality (one such example is language; if a group uses the same language system i.e., speaks the same dialect or slang, language will not be socially evaluated or discriminated, while the same language in a linguistically diverse environment will be differentiated from other languages and evaluated as a cultural feature of the user of that language, or will be accorded a specific position on the hierarchy scale depending on the speaker's reputation, position, origin, material status etc.); failure to distinguish between the notions of social inequality and social difference renders us insensitive to the factors that lead to one and the same quality being considered positive or negative;

• because the quality of life on the basis of which we assess social (non)acceptability of specific societies does not depend on the quantity of natural resources, nor on the quantity of acquired wealth, nor on the stage of development of production forces, nor on the education of people, nor on the position on the domestic or the foreign market; (non)acceptability of a social system depends on which combination of inequalities and differences the main actors see as positive and which as negative; furthermore, it also depends on the extent to which they succeed in realizing the desired combination, and of course, on whether they make any distinction at all between both dimensions in the first place.

Since the differentiation between social inequality and difference means that the attributes of both concepts may be increased or reduced relatively independently, combining both concepts enables us to choose between four alternative directions of social development (see Chart 4).

Chart 4: The basic development alternatives of social systems

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                        INCREASE OF
                        INEQUALITY


                                    corporativism
          (neo)liberalism               and
                                      socialism

INCREASE OF                                          REDUCTION OF
DIFFERENCES  ──────────────┼──────────────           DIFFERENCES

          social democracy        communism



                        REDUCTION OF
                        INEQUALITY
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Marx defined socialism as the first, preparatory stage of communism in which the transition from capitalism into a genuine communist society takes place. This stage had twofold meaning. On the one hand, it involved the establishment and affirmation of political party power, the elimination of private property, and the building of new social awareness. On the other, it implied temporary toleration of the gradually disappearing »remnants« of capitalist society such as elements of the market economy, non-proletarian classes, religion, non-socialist types of art, repressive state bodies and so on. The transitory character of the socialist era was also clear from the varying importance it accorded to the two principles at various times i.e., its vacillation between firm party monopoly and tolerance towards the remnants of the former social order. Socialism in our regions was unique for its experience with both extremes, in theory and in practice. In spite of this, the entire era of socialism was characterized by the suppression of differences – which affected all fields ranging from politics and religion to economy and reasoning – while social

inequality, the legacy of the previous system, was continually on the increase. Such a development was not unplanned, because on account of the »disappearing of the state« the responsibility for the regulation of social inequality was transferred from the state to society (»self-management bodies«). It was an ideological constant that characterized both the initial, Stalinist period of socialism as well as later stages, just prior to its collapse.

> »With the development of the socialist democratic system the role of state administration in the field of the direct management of economy, in culture and education, health, social politics and the like begins to diminish. The management functions in these areas are increasingly transferred to various self-management bodies.« (The Program of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia 1977, 100).

In other words, the state should have withdrawn from all areas including social politics since with the help of appropriate ideological control – which continued to be the responsibility of the Party – society alone could resolve all problems including social ones. This was also the logical basis for »theoretical argumentation« by Berislav Šefer, then the official authority for social politics. As late as the 1980s he advocated the systematic elimination of the distinction between separate social and economic politics, because he held that the socialist economy and self-management could resolve all problems on their own – »the lower the level of self-management, the higher the separation of economic and social policies.« Such lack of distinction between the said areas of politics implies a rejection of the autonomy of both, while the embargo on such a distinction serves the function of establishing control over the two. Since, according to this logic, the development of a social policy is contrary to the socialist vision, the existence of the former is a threat to the latter. Therefore, in the same text the author points out that »distortions often occur in practice, so there is a threat that social policy will be charged with the responsibility to resolve social problems that are a result of the faults in the development policies, particularly economic policy. This, of course, is not the domain of the social policy.« (Šefer 1981, 15).

This was precisely the reason why socialism was no less indifferent towards social inequality than liberal capitalism (before the invention of the welfare state as well as in its neo-liberal variants of

Reaganism, Thatcherism, Bushism and the like). Despite differences in their ideological ignoring of inequality, both systems are equally dysfunctional socially. The reason is that socialism and (neo)liberalism share six features.

• A deliberate relinquishing of the systemic regulation of social inequality on the part of the state whose role is limited to sanitary and protective tasks implying minimal intervention in the area of certain life risks.

• The delegating of the state's socio-political function to civil society while assuming that the specific type of economy enforced by the state will regulate inequality in the long run maintaining it within acceptable (»legitimate«) limits.

• Absence of social politics as a separate, integral and autonomous field of state politics functioning independently from market criteria.

• The assumption on the part of the state that such a strategy bears interest because it can increase spending in other areas on account of social spending.

• In the long run such circumstances lead to bigger social inequalities, with this phenomenon not being dependent on the level of economic development.

• Such systems can be perpetuated only through outward expansion or by increasing inequality within them.

Chart 4 clearly illustrates the significant difference between socialism and (neo)liberalism, although both systems ideologically allow for an increase in inequality. Liberalism tolerates social differences and increases them (through market mechanisms), while socialism negates differences and systematically decreases them. Accordingly, in the previous chart socialism shares the quadrant with corporativism rather than with liberalism. The popularity of Catholic corporativism in Slovenia as well as Europe before WWII made it much easier for post-war socialism to gain ground in this region. In addition to the aggressiveness of the political party, the expectations of the masses played an equally important part. Catholic corporativism and Kardelj's socialism shared many key features: they had a common enemy (pluralism, liberalism, the market); ideology was based on a utopian vision of a harmonious society; both established their own avant-garde forces (Communist Party,

Catholic Action); both demonstrated a tendency towards one-sided regulation of the entire system from the top and ideological aversion towards each and every difference; both refused to recognize autonomy of the main social areas, and both entertained an insufficiently elaborate and moralistic attitude towards social inequality (for more on this see Dragoš 1998). The doctrine advocated by contemporary representatives of the Catholic church is identical to the one that characterized the period preceding WWII. This is the reason why they do not make distinction between social differences and inequality, which is an ideological dogmatism identical to that formerly perpetuated by socialism.

The above is the line of reasoning that gave its name to this construct – the ideology of unification. This failure to distinguish between the difference and inequality leads to the suppression of both, meaning that society undergoes unification with respect to both dimensions, vertically and horizontally. Therefore, the first construct should be rejected or inverted: the similarity of socialism and liberalism lies in their erroneous attitude towards social inequality, and not towards social differences.

The ideology of economizing

Construct 2, which maintains that the successful transition to a market economy inevitably entails social inequality, is based on three ideological premises:
• social inequality in socialism was (too) low;
• inequality in today's society is necessarily greater than in the past, because we are no longer a socialist but a capitalist society;
• without an increase in inequality (in comparison with the previous system), we would not be economically successful.

In what way are these premises ideological and of what does their ideological effect consist? Studies of enterprise in developed market economies over the past twenty years have shown that money is by no means a sufficient, let alone the sole motivator for achieving better work results. Once this was established, management theories began to place more stress on the human factor, as well as on other, non-material methods of stimulating better work results. Accordingly, enhancements to compensation plans that were aimed

at closely reflecting the contribution of the individual, proved unreasonable, because they had no effect on practical operation. Even decades ago a typical feature of American management was an almost inversely proportional relation between the income of the company's executives and the company's success. Recently the American economy has been witnessing bankruptcies of unprecedented numbers. The bankrupt companies which forged their balance sheets are precisely those with the biggest executives salaries (e.g. Enron, World.com, Xerox and so on). Similarly, in other working environments where employees have ostensibly expressed the highest dissatisfaction with salaries, research has shown that criticism was actually pointed at issues other than the level of salaries (Černetič 997, 75). When in 1940 Glass conducted a study on social mobility in Britain, the result was a »three-thirds structure«: one person out of three moved up on the job status ladder (compared to the status of the father), one out of three ended lower on the ladder, and one out of three retained the same status. Further comparisons showed that a similar structure is characteristic of all societies at a comparable stage of industrialization, including communist societies, meaning that social mobility is not related to private or social ownership (Goldthorpe 1985, 151). The fact that intergenerational comparison showed that only one third of people in developed societies succeeded in improving their social position was considered catastrophic for socialist societies. It was seen as proof that socialist systems did not differ from rival systems with regard to the humanization of production relations. This means that precisely within the ideologically most sensitive area in which socialism was expected to demonstrate its advantages over capitalism, i.e. elimination of exploitation leading to better motivation to work nothing has changed. Had it been otherwise, upward mobility would be higher and inequality among people lower. On the other hand, the same conclusion is a critique of the capitalist method of income distribution. The assertion that capitalism is more human owing to the market principles that enable every man to be the architect of his own fortune, in contrast to socialism where everything depends on the Party, does not hold water. In fact, precisely at this point the differences between socialist and capitalist economies are the least important; and that is quite contrary to what is implied by construct 2.

The World Bank statistics for the 1960s and the 1970s – a period that was quite favorable for both capitalist and socialist economies – show that the level of social inequality is not dependent on the capitalist or socialist orientation of national economies, but on the distribution of wealth which, in turn, is not related to the level of productivity. For example, in Sweden and Norway, the least non-egalitarian societies, the top tenth of households accounted for 21.3% and 22.2% of the total income respectively; in the US this percentage was 26%, while in other west European economies this proportion was considerably higher, particularly in France, West Germany and Italy where the richest one tenth of households accounted for more than 30% of the total income. The positions further down the list were occupied by less developed economies like India (35.2%), Turkey and Peru (around 40%), Brazil (more than 50%) etc. Even then it was already clear that extreme inequality was not an inevitable social phenomenon. For example, in countries which rose above the designation of underdevelopment through the accelerated promotion of a market economy, for example in Taiwan and South Korea, the wealthiest tenth of the population accounted for 24.7% and 27.5% of all income respectively (Goldthorpe 1985, 152).

Therefore, half way through the cycle of industrial development which, by the way, never attained the European standard, the level of inequality in socialist Yugoslavia was fully comparable to that in Scandinavian countries, which at that time were highly industrialized compared to socialist countries. At the same time, many highly industrialized countries had a considerably higher level of inequality than did socialist Yugoslavia. This means that inequality is not related to socialist or capitalist national economies; nor to their dynamics; nor to economic success in general (measured by income per capita); nor to industrial modernization; nor to post-socialist transition. Recent statistical figures for Slovenia also confirm this conclusion. The wealthiest households in Slovenia in the initial period of transition, i.e. until 1993 accounted for 21.4% of the total household income. Later on, from 1997 to 1999, this percentage dropped to 19.3% (MDDSZ 2001, 15). In other words, in the initial years of transition the percentage of income of the wealthiest tenth of Slovenian households was approximately the same as that of the top tenth of households in the former Yugoslavia of few decades before; towards

the end of the transition period, their share of total income dropped below 20%; this means that the income was re-distributed among other population categories. Despite the present market system – which is economically considerably more successful than the previous system – inequality is lower than under socialism, not greater. Therefore, construct 2. is wrong. However, the evaluation of this situation is an issue in its own right.

We have already shown that social inequality is not needed to enhance reward schemes or stimulate people to take on and carry out various social roles. Inequality does not correlate with the stage of development, productivity or similar, and this assertion holds true on national as well as local levels (inside companies). This, of course, does not mean that material stimulation is unimportant, but it does mean that it is not the most important factor. Many other issues are of vital importance including whether people are paid at all for their work and whether they are given the opportunity to work. However, the fact that inequality is not functional in resolving these issues does not automatically imply that it is dysfunctional. In other words, if we are accustomed to possess tableware because we use it for eating meals, it does not mean that by increasing the number of forks and spoons, global famine will be eliminated. Should we then come to terms with the present level of inequality, which is lower than in the era of socialism and even lower than the present level in Europe, Asia and the US? If it is not beneficial, is it at least harmless? According to the book *A Theory of Justice* by John Rawls, the answer is »yes«. Rawls offers theoretical justification for certain types, or rather extents, of inequality which still remain within the limits of justice, and rejects other inequalities as unjust. But which type of inequality is (still) just? According to Rawls, social and economic inequalities are just only if two criteria are satisfied:

> »Social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both (a) reasonably to be to everyone's advantage, and (b) attached to positions and offices open to all.« (Rawls 1992, 60).

This is an illustrative example of the acceptability of an ineffective criterion. Even though we can agree with it, we cannot operationalize it adequately. Let us suppose that the second (b) condition is not problematic. Let us further suppose that when checking the second

condition it is sufficient to check (in)accessibility of positions by establishing whether formal criteria for obtaining these positions are equal for all, and by establishing actual exclusion of individuals from accessing resources that could make them eligible to compete for those positions. In this way, using the criterion of justice (b), we exclude all positions and jobs in relation to which no inequality in any form may appear (such would be the position of, say, a royal family: every social or economic advantage of its members arising from the royals' positions – even when such a position is legal and legitimate – is unjust according to Rawls). Yet the first criterion (a) still remains problematic because it can be used to justify any degree of inequality. Example: any distance between the most and the least wealthy classes can still be categorized as just using Rawls' criterion, even in the most straitened of all social circumstances, for example ones in which the classes with the least wealth are the most numerous, in which the degree of inequality is extremely high, profit and property taxes are the lowest, and social aid is only symbolic. Even such circumstances can be vindicated by stating that the escalation of inequality brings benefits to the poorest as well, through the maximization of the wealth of the wealthiest population, because this increases their payments to the state budget which is in turn the source of minimal social aid; in even plainer terms, the greater the number of wealthy people, the more money will be collected at charity events. This is the ideology of the new right, which through economic liberalization, and at the expense of the lower classes, affirms the upper classes so that the augmentation of their wealth gradually brings benefit to the lower classes.

Although Rawls' definition of just inequality is obscure, it is still possible to establish what kind of inequality is to be regarded as unjust. Such social or economic inequality should not be tolerated by any society under any circumstances because it presupposes a breach of the first condition (a) (benefit for all) and quite often also of the second (b) (non-privilege in obtaining positions). This type of inequality which is unquestionably unjust is easy to define: it is called poverty. What we mean by this term is a conspicuously problematic combination of difficulties afflicting those groups and individuals who have been exposed for a long time to various forms of deprivation in important areas of life (employment, standard of living,

material condition, health, education, social networks, leisure time options, life patterns). Poverty is related to inequality in that inequality is a prerequisite for poverty, but not also vice versa. Three dimensions ought to be stressed in relation to this:

- inequality in accessing the most important material and symbolic assets *can* drive into poverty the most vulnerable population categories (those least equipped for market competition);
- not every inequality leads to poverty (e.g. inequality in material assets between the upper and the middle class and within these classes, or inequality within a company, or in the distribution of political power, reputation and the like);
- every type of poverty is a product of social inequality.

The conclusion is that poverty is not an unavoidable component of societies in which inequality exists or is increasing. Inequality without poverty is also possible (even though poverty cannot possibly exist without inequality). Therefore, poverty may be eliminated without eliminating inequality, for example, by means of revolutionary interventions in the social structure. Moreover, inequality is compatible with the elimination of poverty understood in its absolute sense (means of survival) as well as in the relative sense where its definition is tied to a higher or lower share of attained average on the national level (standard of living, income, median income etc.). As for absolute poverty, its ultimate elimination in developed countries is realizable and within the short term.

In brief, poverty is a type of inequality which does not satisfy condition a in Rawls' definition. If we are aware of this fact then we do not need to bother distinguishing between just and unjust inequality. Since the difference between the two cannot be satisfactorily identified or correctly operationalized, it easily deceives us into moralization. Instead, civilizing projects in developed societies should concentrate on the elimination of poverty – on what is actually realizable. And that would probably suffice, because in a society without poverty the border between just and unjust inequality would also become unimportant. Without poor groups inequality would become socially unproblematic for two reasons: firstly, because it would be more easy to tolerate if unrelated to existential risks, and secondly, because it would be freed from important political connotations since the assessment could be left to the market without caus-

ing harm. Therefore, the main problem is the attitude towards poverty and not the supposed impossibility of eliminating it, with the latter being justified by falling back on the interdependence of poverty and inequality, the ambiguity of the point at which it becomes unjust, and so on along the same lines. We should not forget that until the 1980s inequality in the distribution of wealth and income in most western countries was actually decreasing compared to the period preceding WWII. Of course, the US, the richest country in the world, was an exception and made a unique paradox (Giddens 1993, 224). The reversal occurred in the 1980s with the appearance of the new right (Reaganism, Tatcherism, Bushism). Rather than by any specific logic of capitalism, the reversal was brought about by voluntary reductions in social expenditures, higher taxes on low incomes and the lowering of taxes on higher incomes. This is the reason why in Great Britain in the mid 1980s the members of the top decile possessed more than a half of all the wealth (Giddens 1993, 233). To justify this by means of economic »objectivities« would be an ideology. What is at play here are interests and power.

The ideology of minimizing

Is the present level of inequality in Slovenia critical and impermissible? Can it be removed? Construct 3 states that it is not critical. However, today (at the present stage of development), Slovenia is sufficiently rich to be able to eliminate the absolute poverty that affects between 4% and 6% of the population. It could use existing resources and institutional mechanisms. The same could be said of relative poverty, only that in this case it is not possible to talk about its elimination, because the definition itself presupposes the existence of inequality; in other words, if someone's income is above the average, then someone else's income has to be below that average, meaning that a certain portion of the population can still be categorized as poor. Nevertheless, the number of the relatively poor can be reduced to a minimum for which it would even be possible to find economic justification. The means that would be used to ameliorate poverty would not reduce by even a fraction the wealth of the wealthy, while at the same time it would increase the buying power of those who previously did not have it, thus creating new opportunities for those already wealthy to increase their wealth even further.

According to official assessments, approximately 13% to 14% of Slovenia's population live in poverty – poverty is here understood in its relative sense (as 60% of the equivalent cash income median). The average figure for Europe as a whole is higher (18%), but it is lower for Austria, The Netherlands, Sweden, Luxembourg, Finland and Denmark. In these countries the percentage of the population living in poverty is the lowest and ranges from 8% to 13%. Because of the favorable comparison with European figures, no one deems the degree of poverty in Slovenia to be problematic. Not one political personality or expert has ever stated publicly that the number of poor people in Slovenia is too large. And that precisely is the main problem! In fact, poverty in Slovenia is problematic and at least five arguments can be found in support of this assertion.

- It is unjust (according to the earlier mentioned Rawls' criterion). This assertion holds true regardless of whether the proportion of the poor in the population is relatively small or large. Do not forget that the lower limit of poverty has never been established, that is to say, the limit below which poverty can be taken as just and acceptable, and above which it is unjust and unacceptable. Therefore, we should not behave as if this lower limit existed.

- It implies an unjust form of social inequality, which is even more scandalous if its level is relatively small. The reason is that a low level of inequality could be eliminated without much trouble and excuses are harder to find, while exactly the opposite holds true of societies with large, or even major, shares of their population living in poverty. Therefore, the responsibility of political actors is inversely proportional to the level of poverty: it is greater in more affluent economies than in less affluent ones, and similarly, it is greater in countries with smaller shares of poverty than in those with larger shares.

- An essential reduction of poverty would have a beneficial effect on people's adaptation to the market economy, because the reduction in existential risks would increase career flexibility (which continues to be low in Slovenia).

- Owing to the socialist past, Slovenian public opinion still conspicuously declines inequality. This could create a good political climate for the serious handling of poverty (but the ruling elite does precisely the opposite: it has been convincing the public that we can

be satisfied with the present extent of poverty because poverty in other countries in transition is even greater).

• In spite of the relatively low share of poverty, trends in Slovenia are not optimistic but just the opposite.

Throughout the transition period in Slovenia, active control over the social and economic sectors (The Ministry of Labor, Family and Social Affairs) has been in the hands of the social democratic left i.e. former Communists, or center-positioned liberals who, during the introduction of market reforms, invariably stressed the importance of social values. Despite this, the dimensions mentioned above have been stubbornly ignored. Even though Slovenia has never been ruled by any »new right-wing«, the existing proportion of poverty has repeatedly been excused as acceptable and unproblematic. In the long run, such benevolence will incur considerable and unnecessary social expenses. Example: in its most recent, and explicitly optimistic, report on poverty, the government boasts its success in this area stating that »social transfers are explicitly targeted at the groups that are most vulnerable in terms of income« (MDDZS 2002, 14). This is a typical tautological argument because we all know that the term »social transfers« denotes that part of the state's financial aid to the socially threatened groups that is based on social (and not market) criteria; this is the reason why, for example, stimulation of enter-prise or defense expenditures are not called social transfers. The trick involved here is the same as the one described earlier (in the explanation of Rawls' first criterion for just inequality), one that may be used to excuse any state of affairs. The assertion that social transfers are targeted at the groups that are most vulnerable in terms of income may be used as self-praise in any circumstances, whether those of low levels of poverty and generous social transfers, or those involving high poverty and extremely low and limited social transfers. Of course, the question here is not only whether social transfers are »targeted« at the socially most vulnerable groups, but also whether they reach those groups and what in fact a social trans-fer means in Slovenia, a »welfare country« by constitution. Do all social transfers reach the socially most vulnerable group? In the report quoted above the government stresses the importance of edu-cation which is expected to reduce poverty in the long run, while at the same time one can see that throughout the transition period the

scholarship policy conspicuously favored the richest sectors of the population and not the poorest. The sum total of scholarships received by the top decile with the highest income is higher than the total received by the bottom decile with the lowest income. Such a state of affairs characterized the entire period of transition and it is still in place (see MDDZS 2002, 15). Therefore, it is not by chance that selection among students is explicit and that it is primarily based on the level of education attained by parents; this feature was typical of socialism and it is no different now (compare the earliest research on this topic, Makarovič 1984 and the most recent one, Flere, Lavrič 2002). Furthermore, the government maintains that short-term improvements are also achieved through social transfers such as the »large family« bonus (MDDZS 2002, 87). This is blatant nonsense. A large family bonus, the latest invention of the government, is indeed a sizeable financial transfer but not of a social character. According to the law on parental protection and family income, all large families qualify for this bonus, independent on their material status or income. Within just one year of the introduction of this bonus, 700 million tolars have been set apart for this nonsense, and it will be distributed among all large families including the richest ones. What is the point? The policy involved here is obviously not social but one related to natality, and is based on the erroneous assumption that parents can be bribed into having more children. The measure is doubly erroneous. Firstly, it ignores the fact that in all periods and all regimes the state has proven most impotent precisely when it attempted to regulate issues of sexuality, which is good (people are not so corrupt as to procreate for the sake of minimal financial stimulation). Secondly, it overlooks the fact that a characteristic such as nationality is not innate but imparted by education.

To return to the transfers that supposedly resolve poverty, we should not forget to mention the biggest »social« transfer of all times: denationalization. Slovenia was the only country in the world that carried out 100% restitution of expropriated property including feudal property. This is a record that deserves its place in the Guinnes's book. Both the intention and the consequences of this measure deserve attention. The intention of denationalization was precisely »social« transfer, to use the term employed by the state administration. The return of the property expropriated after WWII, as well as

the feudal property that was taken away in the pre-socialist era i.e. by the bourgeois regime of old Yugoslavia, was introduced with the intention of repairing wrongs and establishing just circumstances. Or, in Rawls' jargon, the denationalization legislation was aimed at re-instituting the type of inequality that is defined as just because it rights the wrongs suffered by the people who were discriminated against in the past (they were denied their right to property) and who have been underprivileged all the while (viewed from the perspective of market competition). And what is the effect of this measure? Slovenian society became stratified anew and to a considerable extent, but stratification is based on pre-industrial criteria that are typical of feudal and caste-based societies that rest on inherited status. We have ended with an entirely new class of the rich who became rich by birth (or rather, by being born in a dispossessed family), and not through their own work. This is suggested by the data in the table below which shows the ratio of salaries and property income between the poorest tenth of the population and the richest tenth of the population, by periods: under socialism, at the beginning of denationalization, and at the end of the post-socialist transition.

TABLE 1. THE EFFECT OF DENATIONALIZATION ON THE INCREASE IN INCOME INEQUALITY IN THE TRANSITION PERIOD (IN %).

Source: Čeh+MDDSZ	Income: 1983		Income: 1993		Income: 1997-1999	
Deciles	From employment	From property	From employment	From property	From employment	From property
10% the poorest	2.2	2.2	1.9	1.4	1.8	0.3
10% the richest	17.5	17.6	21.2	67.6	21.3	62.5

It is obvious from the table above that inequality within the existentially most sensitive areas (income from labor and income from property) increased perceptibly. The crucial reason is not the level of salaries even though the salaries of the richest increased throughout the transition period in contrast to the salaries of the poorest groups, which decreased during the same period. The main reason for such an increase in inequality is denationalization. Thanks to

denationalization, property income in the top decile increased from 17.5% of the total income to as much as 62.5%, while by the end of same period even the modest 2% of income from property, still possessed by the poorest in 1983, slipped from their grasp. When pointing out these facts we must be aware that we are talking about the initial impact of denationalization. So far only 60% of all property has been returned and even once denationalization is over several years will have to go by before the profit from the denationalized property will be entirely realized and statistically visible. Therefore, the main results of denationalization are still to come. In this light we should also evaluate the data about the relatively low level of poverty, below average if compared to Europe as a whole. The success of the liberal government does not lie in the fact that it has kept poverty below the European average by redirecting wealth from the richest to the poorest. Its actual success consists of the partial redirecting of wealth from the upper classes towards the middle classes (a reward to the electoral base). This is visible in Table 2 in which the income of the upper 30% of households is compared to the income of the poorest 30% of households (adapted on the basis of MDDSZ 2002, 16).

TABLE 2. THE INCOME OF HOUSEHOLDS AT THE BEGINNING AND END OF TRANSITION

Households	1993	1997-1999	Difference
The richest 30%	48.5	45.0	- 3.5
Medium rich	36.1	39.2	+ 3.1
Least well-off 30%	15.4	15.9	+ 0.5

The redistribution of income brought the least benefit (only 0.5% difference) to those who had the lowest income before that, i.e. the households that lived in the most precarious material conditions. Therefore, the liberals of today have succeeded in achieving precisely what the Catholic conservatives endeavored to achieve before WWII. Their objectives are best illustrated with the following passage from the pre-war newspaper Slovenec: »A primary concern of a genuine social policy should be the middle classes. Why? Because the middle class is both economically and socially the most solid

basis of a state« (quoted after Spectator 1935, 15). The conservative circles of the time placed their confidence in the middle class in an attempt to avoid industrialization and the emergence of the proletariat, while, through the strengthening of small merchants, craftsmen and farmers, they hoped to reinforce traditional middle class values like family, religion, obedience to traditional secular and religious authorities and the like. We should not forget that this preaching dates from the mid 1930s, the period of the most serious and massive poverty in Slovenia. It seems that contemporary liberals are flirting with the same recipe: strengthening of the middle class in the face of increasing poverty. Ten years ago 12.9% of the Slovene population were poor. In the period 1997 to 1999, this percentage rose to 13.9%. The increase is not big but it is perceptible and – as already pointed out – the main impacts of denationalization are not yet visible. Moreover, deterioration inside particular categories of population is also more dramatic than the general increase in the category of the poor. Over the same period, poverty among children under 18 increased from 13.2% to 16.7%, and among the category of the unemployed from 33.5% to as much as 48.3%. The most recent statistical data show that the development in Slovenia took on American traits, since poverty increases (by approx. 1%) in parallel with the increase in GDP, while all forms of regional inequalities also increase; the differences between the most and the least developed regions in Slovenia are approximately as large as those between the US and China (Radelj 2002).

In short, the hypothesis on which introductory assertions are based is false: social inequality is not acceptable. Even in a market economy it is neither just nor beneficial, and it is also too large by local (Slovenian) standards, because it causes poverty. For the time being, Slovenian society still has the potential needed to reduce inequalities and poverty. It has economic means, a suitable institutional structure, political stability and a prevailingly positive attitude among the population. Like British public opinion which, even during the time of economic crisis and during Thatcher's liberalization era, demonstrated willingness to give up financial benefits for the sake of higher social equality (Haralambos 1995, 179), the public in Slovenia reasons in a similar way. At the beginning of transition in 1992, 44% of respondents advocated greater equality of income, and

a slightly higher percentage expressed the opposite opinion. Three years later as many as 65.7% of respondents supported greater equality, while in 1998 the percentage of those who thought that inequality in incomes separates people amounted to 92.8% (Toš 1999). Such refusal of inequality has been erroneously interpreted by some as a remnant of the egalitarian mentality inherited from socialism. If this were true, support for equality would decline rather than increase the further away we move from socialism over time. In fact, owing to political propaganda, the public was most prone to approve of bigger inequality at the beginning of transition, but now, having seeing the results, it opposes inequality. The ideology of minimization is obviously no longer convincing.

SOCIAL CAPITAL

At the time when Max Weber rejected the Marxist approach to class divisions, the empirical process was already taking the direction predicted by Weber with the trends becoming even more pronounced later. The increase in polarization between the classes, the paramount significance of property, the inevitable homogenization and growth of the lower class at the expense of the middle class, the domination of economically induced power – all of this proved to be a misreading of the early industrialization era. In fact, the processes that were taking place were quite the opposite: within the main classes, old divisions deepened and new emerged; the social positions of the majority of individuals and groups became increasingly less connected with the possession of property and increasingly more dependent on their capacity to compete on the market and increase their rewards; political and professional sources of power and networking became more significant than material sources; for an understanding of actual living conditions, status became more important than class, since statuses correspond to real-life groups, in contrast to classes, which are categories that depend on the definition of the observer.[2] This gave rise to a major sociological predicament that has not yet been resolved. How does one relate the dynamics of the emerging social inequalities with the problems of social groups that are existentially dependent on that dynamics?

One possible approach to this issue is a Weberian insistence on the precedence of the market positions of individuals that determine stratification. The effective range of this approach can be illustrated using the class structure as developed by John Goldthorpe based on two criteria: one is the professional affiliation and the other the personal feeling for the grouping of professions of comparable status.

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[2] In Slovenia it was Andrej Gosar who argued this almost simultaneously with Max Weber (Weber 1935, 206–220; Dragoš 1998, 164–173).

Goldthorpe initially advocated as many as 36 professional cate-
gories (»social classes«) which he later reduced to a simplified 7-level
scale existing in two variants (for a critique of this approach see
Edgell 1995, 27ss). In the same way we can use other classifications
by profession, for example, those used in statistics. The paradox of
this approach is that by using Weber's logic, which was a critique of
Marxism, we fall into the same trap as did Marxism and end with
categories rather than realistic social groups consisting of people
occupying equal positions in life.

A different and more recent approach that points in the same
direction has been offered by Ulrich Beck. In a book with a charac-
teristic title, *The Risk Society*, he talks about the »individualization of
social inequality«. His point is that we must differentiate between the
two dimensions, which are no longer related in the way they used to
be in the past, although we still think they are. The first is social
inequality understood as the distance between major social groups.
This distance still exists in modern societies. It is not hard to estab-
lish and it is not significantly smaller than in the past. Moreover, in
some environments it is increasing. The second is the social struc-
ture understood as the hierarchy of classes and strata whose
dynamics and image are quite different now than they used to be.
According to Beck, virtually anything is possible in the relation of
the two dimensions. Inequality and structuring may change inde-
pendently of one another; there may be some link between them but
it is difficult to pinpoint; inequality may continue to be reproduced
in the same way with classes disintegrating owing to de-traditional-
ization; or just the opposite, the disappearance of classes may aggra-
vate social inequalities, for example through mass unemployment.
(Beck 2001, 130–131). In short, it is lifestyles, identities, material con-
ditions of people and the inequalities between them that change and
re-emerge, with all of these being in some way or other mutually con-
ditioned, or even not. Beck's point is that traditional sociological
tools are no longer expedient for identifying new social disintegra-
tions.

The approach described below resolves these problems by ignor-
ing them. If it is true that inequality is being individualized as Beck
maintains, then inequality will be easier to access by studying the
social networks through which individuals enter the social world,

than by analyzing global relations where, for the sake of super-categories, everything else is rendered abstract. The trend within traditional sociology that has been termed the micro-approach has been around for so long that it has theoretically sifted through all extremes and got rid of them, so recently it has been increasingly flirting with the explanation of macro-problems. The result of these efforts is the concept of social capital. This concept is quite widely used and accordingly is broadly defined (for more details on definitions and deficiencies of this concept see Dragoš 2002). Nevertheless it is sufficiently penetrating that it appears also to be usable for neo-Marxists for their macro-theoretical purposes. One of these is Pierre Bourdieu, for whom social capital is »the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network ... of mutual acquaintance...« (Quoted in Paxton 1999). The key idea here is that the source of social capital is social networks (rather than individuals or the wider society), while social capital itself is a qualitative expression of the combination of the three networks' characteristics:

- presence of important resources contained in a specific social network,
- accessibility of those resources to the members of this network,
- the usability of these resources for individual groups in terms of their potential for success and efficiency (with respect to objectives and costs).

Conceptually the advantage of this approach lies in its pointing out the fateful link between the individual's integration in micro-networks, his/her exclusion from existentially important areas (job market, housing, education, material assets etc.), and the general social inequality that is reproduced through these relations. At the same time the concept is also sensitive in the opposite direction, i.e. with respect to the dependence of relations within these networks, and of their potential for creating social capital, on the processes creating social inequality (cf. Lin 2001). This concept helps us avoid the one-sided reductions typical of past macro- and micro-approaches, while at the same time it facilitates an understanding of the dynamic and fluid links between social structure and inequality. Bourdieu in particular places stress on this, in an apparently Marxist style, maintaining that the basic split between classes con-

tinues to be along the line of capital, since the individual's or group's position in the social structure depends on the possession of capital. Yet precisely there lies the greatest difference between Bourdieu and traditional Marxists. Bourdieu does not reduce capital to one form only, but sees it as a trinity of actually applicable sources and power – economic capital, cultural capital, and social capital (Bourdieu 1984, 114). The quantitative combination of all three types of capital may be illustrated with a 3-D cube as shown in chart 5.

CHART 5: THE COMBINATION OF VARIOUS QUANTITIES OF CAPITAL AND ITS SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL FORMS.
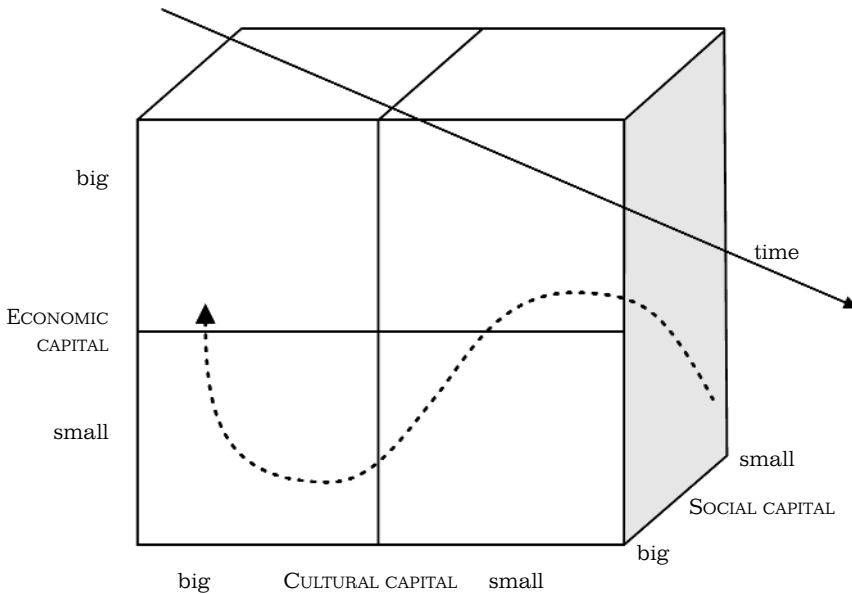
According to Bourdieu, cultural capital appears in three states. One is objectified cultural capital (e.g. material and virtual products defined as artistic works). The other is institutionalized cultural capital (e.g. formal certificates of education, number of galleries), and the third is embodied capital (e.g. skills for the evaluation, understanding and creation of cultural goods acquired through education). Economic capital consists of income and property. Social capital denotes the interactive characteristics of networks, which

aggravate or facilitate access to and exploitation of various capital resources. Chart 5 clearly shows that individuals and groups in different temporal cross-sections occupy various positions which enable them to access various quantities of particular types of capital and utilize them to various degrees. It is necessary to draw attention to three questions that should (again) become the focus of the social sciences. Firstly, at which positions inside this »power« cube can the lack of one kind of capital still be compensated through access to other types of capital, thus enabling one to maintain that specific position, or rather, »survive« at that position? Secondly, which groups remain for a longer time[3] at one and the same position? Thirdly, where and with how much success are the strategies of shutting down within one's status used by those who occupy the desired positions? The answer to the first question involves an evaluation of the existing inequalities in a specific social, organizational or interactional system. By answering the second question, we gain insight into the stratification of social spaces. The third answer is an assessment of social mobility. All of this shows the expediency of representing the social space in five dimensions as shown in chart 5. The first three dimensions are delineated using the cube of »power«[4] consisting of the three types of capital, while the fourth dimension consists of the mobility of individuals or groups (dotted line) which takes places in time as a fifth dimension. By taking into account these five dimensions, we show that we are aware of:

- specific positions equipped with different quantities of economic, cultural and social capital;
- the direction and speed of change of these positions;
- the handling of these positions that is »thrust« upon the individual when he/she is born into a family with a specific social status (in this chart this can be described as a starting point from which the individual enters the space of the cube and from which his/her career starts).

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[3] Periods longer than 30 years are especially important because it is the period long enough to speak about intergenerational relations.

[4] The three types of capital i.e. economic, cultural and social, can be understood as the sources of power. There are four reasons for this: 1) they are limited 2) they are valuable (valued higher than other assets or even defined as values) 3) they are the reason for competition among individuals or groups 4) they are quantities which may increase by themselves.

In Bourdieu's terms, the individual's starting point within this cube would be the »habitus«. It comprises the intellectual and spiritual (sometimes even physical) »disposition« of the individual that has been determined by the social context of his/her family, and to which that individual is exposed through primary socialization. If we imagine that the dotted line in the chart above represents social mobility or the trajectory completed by some specific person, then the beginning of the line represents the personal »habitus« of that person on which his/her future career (the direction in which the arrow points) significantly depends. In our example, this is a person from the social margins who originally possessed conspicuously low quantities of all three types of capital, but later managed to increase cultural capital – e.g. through the system of free education (!) – and can now compete for a bigger quantity of economic assets.

This cube will have its empirical continuation in the second part of this book containing the abridged description of our study. In this study the »cube« will be geographically restricted to the Ljubljana area. We attempted to establish the level of social capital in ten Ljubljana communities quite different among themselves. At first glance this is a hopeless attempt, since, as theory teaches us, knowledge about the interactional networks is a prerequisite for the assessment of social potential within those. Take, for example, just one of those communities, say, Nove Fužine with much more than 20,000 members. To get a good insight into this network, we would have to analyze more than 400 million relations, clearly an impossible task (cf. Katunarić 1988, 51). But it is always possible to approach the impossible through simplification and by focusing on the basic traits only. From these traits we can indirectly and cautiously, but relying on reliable grounds, draw conclusions about the probable extent of the social capital and through this about an individual's options in these environments. This is undoubtedly a task undertaken for socio-political purposes which may be summarized (based on the terminology of the chart shown above) as follows: predictions about and improvement of the mainstays and mobility trajectories of the members of ten social spaces in the Ljubljana area.

THE IMAGE OF SLOVENIA'S CAPITAL

In 2001 the Peace Institute carried out an action study of various Ljubljana communities in cooperation with Dr. Andreja Črnak Meglič, head of the Department for Social and Health Protection in Ljubljana. We sought to answer several questions, among them whether the activities of the public, non-governmental and private organizations reach the outskirts of the town; which are the differences between the public life of people living in the city center and those living at the outskirts of the Ljubljana area, and how this influences their personal attitudes towards the community.

In choosing the neighborhoods for this study we relied on the former administrative divisions[5] whose borders were precisely defined. We divided them into several areas and used random sampling to select three urban communities, three communities lying on the fringes of the Ljubljana area, and three communities located in the near countryside. All information and basic material for sampling were provided by a representative of the Municipality of Ljubljana (MOL) and a collaborator in this project, Tanja Skornšek Pleš. The project was carried out with the help of students from the High School for Social Workers, who were supervised by Pavla Rapoša Tajnšek, a lecturer, and Simona Žnidarec, a teaching assistant. The students were given detailed instructions for work (see appendix) and received training. During the project they had regular meetings and consultations with supervisors. They produced written reports containing their observations about the communities, conversations with contact persons, talks with the representatives of various organizations and informal groups, interviews with local people, and their assessments of the community. As regards the methodological basis for personal interviews, we drew on a similar study of social capital in Australia (Onyx and Bullen 2000, 23–42) but we adapted the questionnaire to our needs.

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[5] The project had been carried out before Ljubljana was divided into quarters.

One of the hypotheses behind our project was that only a few non-governmental organizations reach the countryside areas surrounding the town. The countryside communities that were included in our study are not clustered communities; they occupy the more or less hilly regions around Ljubljana, and therefore present a greater work challenge for these organizations. Even the public social-security services which should extend to this area, are virtually inaccessible for people living there. These services are usually centralized and situated in buildings that are not within their easy reach. On the other hand, while traditional rural communities usually display a considerable degree of solidarity and self-help, the traits of mixed urban-rural communities are different from those of purely rural environments, because many people work in areas other than rural economies. In addition, the communities in the wider Ljubljana area experienced major changes over the past ten years, but their effect has not yet been researched. The biggest change in the structure of the town was undoubtedly the abolition, in 2001, of former administrative units known as »krajevna skupnost« and of their local councils. The officials of these former units lost their titles and functions and became representatives of the branch offices of the MOL department for local self-management. The system became centralized, so former employees ceased to be the representatives of particular communities in the town and became the »voices of the town« within these communities. Their responsibility was reduced to providing information and handling community affairs. However, the majority of collaborators in the project concluded that MOL representatives within individual communities lacked information about how the community functioned, about the resources it possessed, the difficulties of its members or activities within the community. The impact of these changes on everyday lives is considerable as descriptions of individual communities (see appendix) clearly suggest.

Micropolitics

A common trait shared by all former local units is the *loss of community centers*. This has long-term negative consequences on the development of the community and the participation of people, which in turn has, or will begin to have, an impact on the develop-

ment of the town as a whole. While the lack of facilities has been pointed out by all communities, the need is smaller in urban areas than at the fringes or in the countryside. The common claim was that the loss of community centers meant the end of the community seen as a place of joint action. Links among people have become fewer as have options for joint actions. People no longer establish interpersonal links, while loneliness and personal dissatisfaction are increasing. The impact of community disintegration is manifested as a condition of being *poorly informed*, a consequence with a destructive effect primarily because in the majority of communities information is provided verbally – there are no community bulletin boards or local newspapers except in Hrušica. The lack of information is an obstacle to participation. It can cause individual isolation and deepen social inequalities. It also diminishes the possibility of influencing the development of the community and causes loss of control over events that have a significant effect on everyday life. Table 3 clearly indicates that accessibility determines to what extent community members are informed. The results of our inquiry into whether people knew where to obtain information related to key decisions (question 9) showed that in urban and fringe communities 90% of respondents knew where to get information, compared to only 44% in the countryside communities.

Furthermore, the loss of community centers causes a reduction in community activities that connect people. An illustrative example concerns the Hrušica-Fužine community, which once boasted many societies and accordingly many group events. This had a positive influence on their connectedness and level of activity. Certain activities are still sustained in spite of the loss of facilities, but circumstances are difficult, so it is realistic to expect that they will be discontinued. Once the community networks, which were formed through various activities, disintegrated, consensus on joint actions also became increasingly difficult to reach (e.g. canceling of a contract with a fitness club). This primarily means that the social capital created through common actions has been diminishing. People use the surplus accumulated through their past work, but it will be exhausted sooner or later, while new generators of connectedness are missing.

By community centers or facilities we mean those spaces that do not belong to any one in particular but are accessible to all residents of a community under the same terms. For example, the parish church in Šentjakob offers space in the denationalized cultural center building to »non-believers« as well, but only for certain types of activities that are considered ideologically acceptable. However, they prefer people to join the activities organized by the Church. The aim of these activities is to disseminate or deepen the Catholic faith and worldview. Consequently, this space does not provide genuine opportunities for self-initiative and creativity.

Only two communities lost their facilities through denationalization, while in all other cases the point at issue was profit – municipal authorities rented rooms to various commercial tenants and the most popular ones are fitness clubs. The situation is slightly better in communities with firefighters' halls[6] which are sufficiently spacious to host other groups as well. Firefighters' halls form the sole community resource in Lipoglav, Kozarje and Besnica. In the last mentioned community the firefighters' hall was under construction at the time of our project, with local people volunteering as builders. How important these halls are for the countryside communities is best illustrated by the action taken by the residents of Šmartno, who prevented the town authorities from ceding the hall to commercial activities.

Physical and social spaces are interrelated. Space for socialization and for the formation of interpersonal links that increase personal satisfaction and options constitute the basis for social participation. In the Ljubljana area we came across just one example of self-organization in which social space was not tied to physical space. The case in point is the village of Češnjice (Zadvor). It is a unique example of the pooling of resources (in this example the money earned by selling produce at the local festival) dedicated to the overall improvement of the community. Such a decision presupposes very strong and positive community ties and a high level of trust and cooperation, one that makes the members of this specific community confi-

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[6] The Slovenia' fire-fighting system is organized on a voluntary and professional basis. Firefighters' have always had an important role in local communities, with their activities extending to many areas of public life. Firefighters' halls are thus often the venues of communal events.

dent that the money will be distributed justly and to the benefit of the entire community.

Various facilities are used as community centers. In four communities these are village taverns – Babnik in Hrušica-Fužine, Planinski dom Janče in Besnica, Pečar in Šentjakob-Podgorica and Klobasar in Kozarje. The Babnik tavern offers an extension for meetings and various community events which can also be used for lectures. One related difficulty is that people won't go to taverns unless they have enough money, so taverns cannot function as adequate substitutes for community centers. On the other hand, these village taverns cannot be equated with urban restaurants either, because the latter do not have any communal function. Some communities lack any type of communal facilities, so people gather in sports parks or in front of residential blocks. In three communities the central gathering place for one group of locals is a parish church building, for others it is a firefighters' hall. The need for communal facilities was established in Nove Fužine, Hrušica, Besnica, Zadvor, Šentjakob-Podgorica, Kozarje, Šmartno and Lipoglav.

The next common trait of the majority of fringe and countryside communities is related to *accessibility*. Accessibility here implies physical access to urban resources – public services, offices, culture, education and other public spaces, and the possibility of influencing town authorities' decisions that affect the community in question. Accessibility is better in urban communities where the majority of cultural and sports institutions and municipal services are located. The attitude of urban residents towards these resources is consumer-based rather than creative. They attend cultural events, participate in sports activities, enjoy themselves in numerous bars, or socialize in town parks. But we could not find any activity in the three urban communities studied here which evolved from a common initiative by local residents. The problems in these communities are resolved by organizations that come from elsewhere.

The term »spalno naselje« (dormitory) used by interviewees to denote certain neighborhoods, suggests the lack of communal activity, alienation, absence of community networks and communal production. Not only larger neighborhoods consisting of apartment blocks belong to this class. Neighborhoods consisting of individual houses like Kozarje also fall within the same category. However,

social networks in urban areas transcend community borders, in contrast to the networks formed by countryside community members. Urban residents socialize more with people outside their own community and visit each other more often. They are also more trustful and have a stronger feeling that they enjoy the respect of society. Accordingly, they dare to express their own opinions. Their everyday life is much easier, thanks to better accessibility. The majority of the residents of urban neighborhoods have telephones and electricity, and they enjoy the benefits of communal water supply and a sewage system, street lighting and regular bus connections. Thanks to a large number of shops, their life is comfortable even without a car. They can reach a medical center or other public services on foot or by bus, or can opt for home-services. They also have greater influence on urban policies. For example, roadblocks in Prule or Trnovo urban neighborhoods never failed to produce the desired effect, backyard-garden owners have been successful in preventing the building of a mosque, while people living in Kersnikova street managed to discipline unruly youths from the K4 youth club.

Contrary to widespread belief, isolation and loneliness in urban communities is of lesser consequence, owing to better accessibility. Fewer personal relations with neighbors mean less social control. In village communities this control is higher and often quite burdensome. On the other hand, solidarity and self-help in village communities are better developed and more needed, as these communities suffer a lack of adequate public services. Isolation and loneliness in village communities is therefore much more serious, since people are excluded not only from community networks but also from the benefits of public services. In addition, the lack of bus connections with the town may have disastrous effects on people because the organization of transport or supply of victuals can mean dependence on other members of the community. Dependence is easy to handle if people are integrated into community networks, but in the absence of those it may become a burden. Suicides thus reflect the closed-type structure of the community or the lack of alternatives to existing community networks.

Influence, seen here as one form of accessibility, is enjoyed primarily by urban residents. People from countryside communities have much less influence, especially those living in isolated and poor

communities neglected by urban policies. The community of Besnica is a good example of this. It is a neighborhood without a communal water supply; people are without telephones; the sewage system is not regulated; there is no even a grocery shop. People are preoccupied with their own everyday problems because the organization of everyday life is much more demanding than in urban environments. For the people of Besnica it is difficult to find time for various relaxing activities that could increase their satisfaction. Even if they had time for leisure, they lack the facilities where they could pursue various activities. Their influence on urban politics is almost nil and not one member of the community is in a position to provide connections with the town authorities. Self-organization within this community is only beginning to develop. For the time being they have been able to identify basic needs, but without suitable institutional support it will be hard to sustain the initial actions.

Communal space and accessibility point to the level of *infrastructure* or communal resources. This is the area in which the greatest differences between individual parts of the town come to light. While the inner city is in good order, the surroundings of the town lack even the basic things such as water supply. We have already mentioned Besnica as an example of a neighborhood without water supply and with roads which are unpaved and hardly passable. Similarly, the residents of the Trnovo fringes, mainly populated by immigrants from ex-Yugoslavia, have difficulties with the sewage system, and similar problems pester Hrušica-Fužine, Zadvor and Šentjakob-Podgorica. Sidewalks and street lights are inadequate in all fringe neighborhoods, and all have problems because of scarce bus connections with the town. These problems were pointed out in Hrušica-Fužine, Besnica, Šentjakob-Podgorica, Kozarje, Šmartno and Lipoglav. In Besnica and Kozarje it is particularly difficult for children to reach school, and similar difficulties are faced by people who have jobs outside the community and do not have cars. Both communities are also without grocery shops.

The differences between the urban center and its countryside are also evident when it comes to *interventions by public services*. People most often mentioned the lack of staff in home care service, so nurses rarely come to their communities. Other social services are no longer present in fringe and countryside communities. This is com-

parable to what happened to former local administrative councils – both types of services have become centralized. The centers for social work are now organized on the national and not the local level. Furthermore, the employees of former administrative offices are no longer locally based. Social service, just like local administrative offices, no longer belong to the community. Their employees are not familiar with individual communities which they visit only occasionally. In other words, they have been turned into bureaucratic services. One observation most often found in the notes of the field researchers in our study was that MOL representatives were not acquainted with the situation within the communities. They mainly understand their role as consisting of the handling of communal affairs and communicating of information, but even in this area they cannot boast success. Most of the criticism, however, was directed at the work of social services. Only those communities that are close to the centers for social work have links with them. But in the countryside and in most fringe communities, these services are not present. Criticism was mainly expressed by those who take care of sick or disabled people. They are often the most isolated members of the communities since they lack the necessary support. None of them had ever heard of or was offered a service called »help at home«, which was provided by the centers for social work until one year ago. People expect not just individual support from this service, but also assistance with self-organization and with the establishment of communal activities which could create opportunities for relaxation, entertainment and would increase satisfaction. Such a need was observed in Besnica, Kodeljevo, Zadvor, Šentjakob-Podgorica, and Kozarje. The people of Lipoglav would like to have their own local administration that would encourage action among members of the community.

Networks and effects

Communities can be divided into active, passive and those in conflict. There are several types of *active* communities and they differ. The most important criterion for categorization is self-initiative and participation of local people. A typical active community is Češnjice where people became self-organized on their own initiative. The members of this community accomplish all work on their own. They

organize an event called the »cherry and strawberry festival«, which combines various entertaining events with a sale of produce. The money earned in this way is used to the benefit of the entire community. So far they have built the water supply, installed street lights, put up signboards and arranged nature paths and the village environment. This community is known for good interpersonal relations and self-help. There are no isolated members, people visit one another often, and even inter-generational links are in place, as young people are also included in community activities in addition to middle-aged and older members. This is not an example of social activities but of the activation of the entire community to the benefit of all members. Their example is unique in the Ljubljana area and is not comparable to any other community.

The Hrušica-Fužine, Zadvor and Lipoglav communities can be placed in the same, active category. In Hrušica-Fužine and Zadvor the number of activities has been decreasing, since circumstances in which the societies operate are radically worse than those of one decade ago. This particularly holds true of Hrušica, which used to be a very active community with activities ranging from theater, puppet shows and sketches to sports and other group events. Both communities mentioned that the quality of life has been deteriorating, that people have begun to feel more lonely and that agreements about common matters have been increasingly more difficult to reach. Lipoglav is somewhat different in that it has began to introduce new activities within the framework of the program aimed at the integral development of the countryside. This is the only urban program that invests in the development of fringe communities.

Passive or non-active communities similarly differ among themselves. Typical passive communities are urban communities without a single common activity, for example Trnovo. The local cultural center KUD France Prešern is managed by people from other communities, and in addition, the program is international and not local. Kodeljevo is a quiet neighborhood in which people know each other well and are capable of self-organization, but societies, informal groups or activities do not exist there either. The Kodeljevo residents believe that their neighborhood is safe, that everybody knows everybody else and there is a good understanding among locals. However, the representatives of various organizations assert that there are many lonely and isolated residents excluded from these networks.

On the other hand, Nove Fužine is a community apparently characterized by lively activity. In fact, a number of organizations not based in the community carry out their activities in Nove Fužine while maintaining its image of a problematic neighborhood in a patronizing manner. There are no self-organized activities even though links between residents of particular apartment blocks are quite firm, especially between those who have been living there since the first days of the neighborhood. Kozarje is similar in this respect – it is a community without its own organizations. There are no conflicts in this community, but there are many isolated and lonely individuals. People find it difficult to self-organize and agree on joint action. Besnica could also be categorized as a passive community, even though some important processes have been started recently. One such example is the establishment of a new office for tourism. The people of Besnica also expressed the need for socializing, entertainment and relaxation. The new firefighters' center will provide a space for such activities. In contrast to Besnica, Šmartno has been experiencing the opposite trends. Activities are ever fewer in number and people describe their community as bleak, boring and lacking in events.

Communities in conflict are almost non-existent. Conflicts were mentioned only in Šentjakob-Podgorica, by the local priest, the representatives of Karitas and MOL. The MOL representative attributed conflicts between neighbors to the fact that, with the loss of communal facilities, community members became more inaccessible and people began to keep to themselves. Hence Šentjakob only appears to be active, while in reality people are distrustful of each other and more alienated than is obvious at first glance. Podgorica, which is believed to be the poorer and more passive of the two, demonstrated a higher degree of socializing and mutual assistance among neighbors. Yet in the opinion of the church representatives, Podgorica is a community ridden by conflict, with people complaining and quarreling. However, their assessment is based on the fact that one organization filed suit because of the denationalization of the building that housed the cultural hall which now belongs to the Church. They saw this move as needless since the Church carries out many programs and activities and the door is also open to non-believers. But their interpretation does not hold water, and the proof

is a high level of distrust among community members. Consumerist activities can indeed be a substitute for self-organization and creativity in environments offering a broad range of options, where participants have the possibility of influencing the developments, or in other words, in a free atmosphere that enables or even stimulates diversity. But the Church environment is the antithesis of a free environment. Activities are pre-determined; they are always headed by church representatives; all draw on strictly defined ideological premises and all are subordinate to Catholic tenets. For non-believers and those opposing the Catholic church as an institution, this space is either inaccessible or rejected by the locals themselves. If these individuals had an opportunity to realize their wishes elsewhere, as do people who live in urban environments offering various broadly accessible activities, conflicts would not be so frequentl. But in closed-type communities where retreat is not possible, the personal networks of their members do not extend beyond the community borders and are not dense, either inside or outside the community. Isolation or loneliness is hence greater. Distrust is increasing, and along with it also conflicts. In the light of this conclusion, the assessment of the MOL representative, that the community only appears to be active while in reality activities are strictly supervised and directed, is probably correct. This increases the feeling of social control while webs of relations turn into a burden. The representative of the retired people's club sees a solution in the acquisition of new facilities and in uniting all independent societies within the community. This proposal is quite suitable as it would create sufficient power and will for action. Conflicts were also mentioned in Kozarje and Lipoglav, but these are only temporary situations which do not affect the community as a whole.

Structures and activities

Retired people's clubs can be found in virtually every community. There is no such club in Trnovo, Nove Fužine, Šmartno and Bizovik, but residents expressed a wish to establish one. These clubs play the most important role in community life. Although they are generation-specific, the number of older people is increasing and along with it the level of social attention devoted to them. In addition to

social programs such as present-giving and home visits, the most important other activities are excursions and lectures. In their opinion these activities are beneficial for their health and general emotional state; they increase satisfaction, create the opportunity for relaxation and enhance interpersonal links, and increase openness towards others. They also enhance solidarity and mutual assistance and encourage the community towards greater activity. In certain countryside communities such activities help the establishment of connections between long time residents and newcomers, mainly weekend residents. An important conclusion of the researchers was that older people who are dependant on their relatives for daily care are isolated, lonely and without social life. Frequent visits to these people cannot be easily realized. This affects their health.

Firefighters associations are the next most influential associations in these communities. They are in most cases the only associations that have retained their facilities and now make them available to other groups for gatherings and socialization. Important firefighters organizations are found in Bizovik, Zadvor, Šentjakob-Podgorica, Šmartno and Lipoglav. In addition to regular activities they accomplish much humanitarian work; people turn to them for information and advice, so they are acquainted with the private lives of community members and help them with difficult domestic jobs. Their work is based on solidarity and self-help and they are often the only generators of social life in a community. It is true that the get-togethers organized by firefighters associations are commonly seen as epitomizing rural culture characterized by drinking and singing, but this is just a prejudice, while the reality is frequently quite different. These are virtually the only occasions for entertainment at which people have the opportunity to socialize, enjoy themselves and relax. They also represent an alternative to various religious and other traditional festivals that presuppose specific types of behavior and rituals. In the view of firefighters associations, people primarily need more relaxation, socialization and entertainment that could lead to a higher level of trust among them, and could provide more opportunities for action and joint undertakings.

Other important organizations are the *Red Cross* and *Karitas*. They perform similar activities and accordingly, their observations are also similar. Both organizations are seen as buffers reducing

social tensions. They are important particularly because the activities of other public services are lacking, but also because they are flexible. They are not excessively rigid when assessing whether someone qualifies for social assistance, and they are also quick to respond to the needs. They contributed several significant observations regarding poverty and exclusion. In fact they are the only associations which drew attention to the poverty of immigrants from ex-Yugoslav republics and to their exclusion from those communities. They also pointed out the rather high level of poverty among the retired people living in individual houses in urban areas.

We should not overlook the importance of offices for tourism and countryside associations that carry out various programs and unite people in joint production efforts, thus improving interpersonal links among community members. These programs increase the survival potential of many villages and introduce an important change into their lives.

Finally, we should mention the conclusion of one informal group which observed that in fringe and countryside communities it is primarily prosperous individuals who isolate themselves and refuse to have contacts with other villagers. Some of them come from families which have been living there for generations, but the majority are newcomers who buy large properties in the vicinity of Ljubljana and do not see themselves as members of the village community.

Inequalities

Differences between individual communities are big, especially between the countryside and inner city areas. Water supply, sewage system and public transportation for fringe and rural communities should be high on the priority list of urban policies. Facilitation of everyday life and accessibility are essential for better participation and activity. A cable car planned for the town hill[7] will be profitable, but the quality of life in the town's countryside area, which is at the moment quite low, is more important in the long run. The picture of the town itself changes if people from its countryside have no social

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[7] The main argument that the population is getting older and must be provided easier access to the castle is a bogus one. Access is already good – there is a road, a bus connection, several paths suitable for cycling or access on foot, and in addition, a tourist train.

power and cannot influence urban politics. Their accessibility to urban resources is virtually nil. For example, the fringes of Trnovo are inhabited by a large community of immigrants from ex-Yugoslavia who are isolated from the wider community. Their neighborhood lacks a sewage system, street lights and other urban features. These people live at the fringes of the community, or rather, on its margins. The entire neighborhood of Nove Fužine has been proclaimed a ghetto and associated with poverty and crime simply because the majority of residents come from ex-Yugoslavia. In fact the statistical data show that the crime rate in this neighborhood is lower than in other urban neighborhoods. There are 20,000 registered residents in Nove Fužine, but according to police sources, this number is higher by several thousand owing to unregistered inhabitants. In 2001 there were 769 criminal offenses altogether in Nove Fužine; approximately 400 were property related offenses like damage to cars (theft of car parts), with the offenders coming from other neighborhoods or towns. There were only 6 burglaries, compared to more than 150 in the inner city. In the Trnovo neighborhood with just one third of Nove Fužine's population, there were 443 criminal offenses including 3 burglaries. The Kodeljevo neighborhood had 201 criminal offenses, with a conspicuously lower share of property related offenses – just 162. The neighborhoods with the greatest number of criminal offenses are Dušan Kveder Tomaž (1760), Gradišče (870), Kolodvor (805), and Stari Vodmat (720). According to the police, Nove Fužine is comparable to the town of Nova Gorica in terms of population size, but the number of criminal offenses in the latter is twice as great. As regards poverty, the story is similar. Poverty is greater in Trnovo than in Nove Fužine, an assertion is indirectly supported by Red Cross data about the number of food rations distributed. In Nove Fužine approximately 200 rations per month are handed out, compared to 100 in Trnovo, even though Trnovo's population is three times smaller. The association of Nove Fužine with crime and poverty is obviously not related to the official records on criminal offenses or poverty, but to the prejudice that says people from the south commit crimes. In other words, according to popular belief there are more criminal offenders in Nove Fužine than actual criminal offenses. This prejudice has nothing to do with facts. The neighborhood has very good infrastructure. It has a health center,

several schools, a bank, a post office, a library, a number of stores, bars and craftsmen's shops, and neat common areas and paths along the banks of the Ljubljanica river; apartments are solidly built and relatively new. This tells us that the quality of life by no means lags behind that in other similar neighborhoods in Ljubljana, since accessibility to basic common resources is rather high. The conviction that Nove Fužine is a dangerous and poor neighborhood is hence a result of the rumor. The fact that these were initially council apartments (subsequently privatized), media stigmatization and the once dominant share of non-Slovene residents gave rise to such a conviction. Its actual state is quite different, even better than in other Ljubljana neighborhoods, but definitely far from being critical.

Immigrants from ex-Yugoslavia are the only residents that many communities identify as isolated. Such is the case in Trnovo, Kozarje, Šmartno and Lipoglav. Owing to the lack of personal and community networks, they frequently live in poverty, but the level of solidarity and self-help among them is higher. They are more closely linked, and this has been observed by the representatives of all the communities mentioned above. This type of linkage is also a survival strategy, because the majority population in the community exclude immigrants and push them to the margins. Their refusal to accept multi-culturality suggests this. Only 31% of respondents thought that multi-culturality improves community life, while 49% opposed this assertion. The greatest opposition to such a view was observed in fringe communities, those with almost no immigrants. On the other hand, the most open are countryside communities where the number of immigrants is the highest (question 25 in tables 1 and 2). People are more outgoing as regards lifestyle, although fringe communities again showed most resistance – 41% of respondents opposes different lifestyles compared to 15% in urban communities and 17% in countryside communities (question 26 in table 1).

The differences are greater between people performing different roles than between communities. So, for example, data in Table 3 show that all respondents volunteering for community activities think that they enjoy the respect of society, compared to just one half of respondents involved in some conflict. Similarly, 5 volunteers asserted that they enjoy living amongst people with differing lifestyles, compared to 3 such replies by people involved in a conflict.

Volunteers also socialize more with other people outside their community on weekends (ratio 5:1). Five volunteers answered that they would leave their children with a neighbor, compared to 1 person involved in conflict. A similar conclusion may be drawn with regard to trust – people involved in conflicts feel less safe and find it more difficult to trust other people. They do not participate in community events and less frequently join in activities organized by the community.

A certain deviation from this picture has been observed in people taking care of the sick. They never participate in common activities; they are not willing to negotiate through a mediator and they less frequently visit their neighbors. The table also shows that the least number of »I don't know« answers was recorded among the volunteers (5). This answer was more often heard from those taking care of the sick (7), and among individuals involved in conflict (16).

Outlook

Nan Lin (2001, 3–31) defines social capital as a relational value which comes to life and is sustained through interactional networks. For Lin, social capital consists of resources invested in the social structure which is accessible, or mobilized, through targeted actions. Consequently, social capital cannot be formed if resources are inaccessible to individuals! The town authorities in the Ljubljana area do not invest in the social structure of any community (facilities, bus connections, infrastructure, support in activating the community etc.). They support only profitable activities.

For Lin (2001, 3–31), information accessibility is one of the main reasons to invest in the social structure, because realization of interests depends on it. By forming connections people disseminate information. By means of these connections they can increase influence on the individuals who perform highly valued roles and take decisions that are essential for the community members. In this way the power of the individuals performing these roles becomes limited, while horizontal structures in the community, where mandates to represent the community are given by consensus, are facilitated. Such mandates are primarily the sign of people's trust in specific individuals. It increases their social capital and their commitment to the community, an effect which yields, in return, advantages for the

entire community. This type of social tie between people is not only a generator of emotional support, but also a facilitator of public articulation of demands. Social contacts strengthen the identity and distinctiveness of the individual, and such strengthening is essential for spiritual health and access to resources. The ever-diminishing possibilities for participation at the community level have produced reverse trends in Ljubljana: exchange of information has been deteriorating and consensus is increasingly more difficult to reach. As a result, strengthening processes occur only rarely, while all of the trends mentioned have a dramatic influence on the emotional state and the expression of collective needs. People living in the communities studied in this research arrived at the same conclusion themselves. They have noticed that the lack of activities, socialization, entertainment and action has left them more lonely and isolated, has created difficulties in reaching consensus, and has made them more distrustful and passive. Dissatisfaction has also increased, entailing a general feeling of distrust that manifests itself as a refusal of or intolerance towards people who are the victims of stereotypes and prejudices, in our example immigrants from the former Yugoslav republics.

Social capital is primarily a collective asset. It is most valuable when it is beneficial for the entire community and not for certain individuals only. The indicator of its beneficial value is the realization of collective objectives and higher accessibility to social resources, both symbolic and physical (e.g. facilities, bus connections etc.). Symbolic resources are used to build and brace identities, and physical resources to satisfy material needs and plan social activities. All of this enhances inner human potential and enables the protagonists to influence public affairs. Education, self-help, self-organization, solidarity, political activity and skills, along with anything else that transforms the individual from a passive receptor into a creator of events, are important. What is important on the microlevel – within a specific community – is interaction and the formation of networks that activate their members by providing information, securing influence, giving mandates and strengthening identities. In this respect social capital is a typical relational asset and it represents an aggregation of the mutual expectations of individuals in the network.

The lack of social networks as a result of ill-conceived urban politics (e.g. the lack of investment in the social structure or its destruction as a result of renting communal facilities to commercial tenants or similar) increases social inequalities. The segmentation of internal links and isolation from the outer world by internally unconnected communities render their members heavily dependent on their own resources, while accessibility to collective assets and secondary resources[8] diminishes. In such circumstances only people who have more valued social statuses or roles have access to these assets. According to Bourdieu (1984), these are people belonging to the dominant class who exploit social capital only to sustain their own positions. A fascination with social positions and titles is also noticeable in Slovenia. It is a symbolic sign of unequal access to important resources that are, owing to the lack of community networks, in the possession of narrow, indefinite and closed-type groups. It is not in their interest to share these resources with others, because such exclusivity is how they sustain their power. These circles prefer to be closed and to keep their internal links firm. The greater the distance from important networks and, as a result, from socially valuable roles and positions, the greater the marginality and the harder daily life becomes. This, in Lin's opinion, affects the physical and psychological health of people, while increasing their passivity and distrust, that is to say, those properties that in critical circumstances push them closer to the bottom. Matjaž Hanžek, the human rights ombudsman in Slovenia, has on several occasions drawn attention to this problem by pointing out the relation between physical and psychological health and the feeling of happiness, and between happiness on the one hand and freedom (political, media freedom and the like), equality, accessibility of education and social and economic safety on the other. People are more happy in environments with greater freedom, greater tolerance towards those who are different, greater social equality and choice; conversely, they are less happy in circumstances of competitive relations and small gains. Happiness prolongs life, maintains the psychological fitness of people and creates more vigorous social networks (for research on this topic see Dragoš 2000; 2000a).

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[8] The secondary resources are information, links and acquaintances by means of which one can access primary resources (money, influence, reputation).

The grand concepts of social inclusion and reduction of social inequalities therefore begin in the community. It is not possible to talk about social inclusion if people do not have access to basic resources and are excluded from relations that actually enable social participation. In our example, access to resources means the availability of a bus connection to a school or a place of work; communal water supply and sewage system; encouragement towards self-organization and self-help whereby people start to see themselves as parts of the community or a collective; and last but not least, the availability of common facilities which are a prerequisite for the existence of social spaces that emerge through social links. Links are invariably – regardless of how successful they are – a test of other's people trust, which is a precondition for further trust and cooperation.

Our analysis of ten communities showed that the period of transition has increased social inequality on the local level as well. Therefore, investing in relationship networks on the micro-level is of strategic importance for the strengthening of the community, since that is where people live their day-to-day lives. The renting of formerly communal facilities to commercial customers brings a short-term profit, indeed a minor blip in the municipal budget, but incurs losses on the level of social life. As a consequence, collective projects are vanishing from social life, while indifference is on the rise. Indifference kills collectivity. The paradox of social links is that without them people become insensitive, but the same happens when such links are too strong. To be extremely closely linked with others means to be totally controlled by others, dependent on them, and trapped. A typical »Slovene« solution is a retreat into the inner world (leading to alcoholism and suicide). On the other hand, the alternative, weak links, can be adequate only if they are sufficiently numerous. Since in social networks based on weak relations we obtain only one type of benefit from a specific link and obtain other types through other links, we must be sufficiently mobile to remain free. Partial links mean only partial entrapment, but also partial supply. Therefore, freedom inside social networks is proportional to the supply only in dense networks with weak links. A low density of weak links leads to the fragmentation of the community, which then no longer functions as a community but becomes an extreme environ-

ment that is the converse of a segmented one in which everybody is tied to everybody else and isolated with regard to the outside world.

The recent wars in our region have shown us how thin is the wall separating indifference from brutality. Both begin on the micro levels and are only guided and inflated from the top (Katunarić was the first to illustrate this using the example of the wars in the Balkans, Katunarić 1991). In our environment we have also witnessed a number of occurrences of the sudden resurgence of inert social aggregates when people organize themselves to oppose, say, the establishment of a drug abuse rehabilitation center, or a kindergarten for children with special needs, or a center for foreigners, or social services for young people and so on. These are examples of collective mobilization drawing on emotional indifference. These are examples of dormant social potentials that may be released in a matter of seconds and may take any direction. Social capital represents a theoretical attempt to understand how and why these things happen. The tool that can be used to direct this collective energy is local politics – indeed the directing of collective energy is its primary domain and responsibility.

CONCLUSION

1. The term social capital is used to denote the properties of social networks. The source of social inequalities within social networks is the differences that arise from the combination of the three characteristics of these networks: the presence of resources (with respect to their type and quantity), access to these resources, and opportunities for their exploitation that are measured by the level of success and efficiency (success is determined by the degree to which a certain objective has been realized, and efficiency by the ratio of costs to profits). Since social networks are equipped with various combinations of the said properties, the social capital available to the members of those networks gives rise to social inequality among them. Other important reasons for social inequality are economic and cultural capital and the individual's psycho-physical and behavioral characteristics (habitus). The relation of various dimensions of inequality is obvious from the »power« cube (Chart 5) which illustrates which positions have a favorable combination of quantities and various types of capital, and which have unfavorable combinations. The social distance between the two types of positions is denoted by the term »inequality«. This also relates to the main conclusion arising from our study. The results of our study show that communities differ among themselves primarily with regard to properties that are related to social capital rather than to economic wealth. This means that variations in the quality of life in ten communities are determined more by social than by economic factors. Difficulties in accessing information, problems related to the size of networks, links with other communities, influence, access to public services, self-initiative, activity, attitude towards immigrants, evaluation of multi-culturality – none of these problems can be solved by increasing the income of the individual or by preventing the expropriation of the material wealth of the community, because these problems are not related to economy. Social capital is one determinant of com-

munity life that is relatively autonomous compared to other factors that influence inequality. If this fact is ignored, municipal politics will very likely waver between two wrong solutions: the attempt to solve non-financial problems through a financial aid, and pulling out on account of the lack of money.

2. By stressing that social capital should be understood as a collective asset with an autonomous logic of development, we become aware of the circumstances from which it originated. In some communities reliance on tradition could be an excellent method of reinforcing social capital (revival of peasant customs and festivals, religious rituals), while in others the same effect could be achieved through innovations. In some examples social capital may be a catalyst, as Frane Adam maintains (Adam 2001, 41), meaning that it is the type of capital that »activates other types of capital« and makes them efficient. The difference between bustling environments, with several active organizations, and communities without any such active organization can probably be attributed precisely to the already mentioned fact that one kind of capital may be created with the help of another type of capital. At the same time, this should not be generalized to a rule. In our research we could identify cases in which capital of one type prevented the development of another type of capital (immigrants, prosperous owners of weekend retreats who are not interested in joint action with locals). A responsible collective policy accounting for these differences can provide adequate answers.

3. Social capital can be a product of the combination of horizontal and vertical links. Horizontal links include informal links between individuals and groups (links with relatives, neighbors, friends, acquaintances, local people) and those formal relations in which the social power of the partners in the relationship is approximately the same. Vertical links, on the other hand, are formalized hierarchical relations (e.g. between local and state authorities, between employees and their superiors, a teacher and a student, a priest and a believer, a policeman and a citizen). Two important aspects affecting social capital arise from this; one is related to synergy and the other to compensation. The coincidence of favorable horizontal and vertical links creates social capital through synergy, while at the same time it reinforces the basis that made it possible (by experiencing trust we enhance trust). Even in circumstances that do not allow for such a synergy, social capital may be formed in such a way that the weaknesses of one dimension are mitigated through the advantages

of another. An example of the first type of social capital is »the cherry and strawberry festival« mentioned earlier. It issues from explicitly horizontal links, and through its reinforcement, the economic capital of the entire community is strengthened: in this example, the synergy consists in the combination of solidarity and social effects, on the one hand, and financial gains on the other, which are then invested in the village infrastructure. A telling counter-example of the suppression of social capital caused by unfavorable vertical relations – which in this example were created consciously, intentionally and in a planned manner – is denationalization, which in Slovenia follows a unique model of 100% restitution. In this example, the Church regained the facilities that were previously socially owned and used for communal activities. This has led to a decrease in community activity and to a legal suit against the privatization of the formerly socially owned facilities; it has also marred the reputation of Church representatives and caused a split between believers and non-believers in the local community which consequently intensified conflicts and heightened dissatisfaction. A similar example of diminishing social capital related to vertical interventions is the story about the former local officials. In contrast to their previous position of local representatives in urban environments, they now embody urban authorities. An example of the compensatory strengthening of social capital would be a measure by the makers of urban policies or other institutional actors aimed at neutralizing the damage. For example, compensation for a (foreseen) consequence of an instance of denationalization, e.g. the return of certain facilities to the Church, could take three forms: the urban or state authorities could offer the Church another property instead of the one causing controversy; the authorities could provide substitute facilities for the locals; the Church could relinquish its right to denationalized property in order to prevent conflicts in the community and to increase its own reputation[9]. For this to be possible, vertical structures would have to be able to respond to the interests of locals, predict the impact on the community of a specific move (planned interventions), and evaluate social capital understood as a valuable collective asset. Such a type of vertical structure could be most easily created and sustained by including local people in the decision process.

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[9] After all, judging by the Vatican documents, it is the duty of the Church: »She [The Church] will even give up the exercise of certain rights which have been legitimately acquired, if it becomes clear that their use will cast doubt on the sincerity of her witness« (Paul VI *Gudium et spes* 1965, paragraph 76).

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APPENDICES

The descriptions of individual communities

This appendix includes the descriptions of individual communities in the following order: three urban communities (Trnovo, Kodeljevo, Nove Fužine), followed by three fringe communities (Hrušica-Fužine, Besnica, Zadvor) and four countryside communities (Šentjakob-Podgorica, Kozarje, Šmartno and Lipoglav). Only mutually comparable data were included in the analysis. The descriptions include the type of the community, communal resources, profit-oriented activities, communal facilities, information, characteristics, important events, social programs, social lives by generations, solidarity/self-help, needs and activities of public services. Individual descriptions are followed by summaries of the interviews with MOL representatives, various organizations and informal groups.

TRNOVO

This community consists of clustered residential blocks and individual houses. The roads have asphalt surfaces; the water supply and sewage system are in good condition, and bus connections with the town are good. The community includes an athletic organization, Partizan, a MOL representative office, a firefighters' hall, the KUD France Prešeren cultural center, a center for senior citizens, a church and a swimming pool. There are no big industrial facilities in the area, only small craft workshops and other small stores. There are many pubs and restaurants that are also popular with people from other parts of the town. Such are, for example, the pubs situated along the bank of the Gradaščica river and KUD France Prešeren. There is no central gathering place for the locals. Similarly, there are no apparent information points, bulletin boards or other types of material containing information on important community events. Socialization is apparent only among young people, who usually gather on the banks of the Gradaščica river, in front of the residential blocks and in front of the school. An important event is the summer festival Trnfest organized by KUD France Prešeren. The only social programs in the community are those carried out by the Red Cross and Karitas. Self-help and solidarity are not typical features of this community, but a somewhat higher level of neighbor-to-neighbor help could be observed in the quarters consisting of individual houses. It mainly implies help provided to senior and sick citizens. Poverty is not immediately visible and is actually confined to the fringes of the community consisting mainly of individual houses that were built without construction permits, so water supply and the sewage system are not regulated there. This part is inhabited

mainly by immigrants from the former Yugoslavia. The community needs a youth center, a park, and common facilities. Public social security services are not present in the community. We could not obtain data on the number of suicides.

The MOL representative explained that the links among community members had been more numerous in the past when residential blocks were still under construction and joint action was needed to secure better connections with the town and communal infrastructure. These links were later severed, but they are also promptly re-established when a common problem appears (e.g. a roadblock at Gerbičeva street). The area of residential blocks is seen as a dormitory. The number of senior citizens occupying individual houses is increasing. The neighborhood is associated with quite high social status rather than poverty, which indeed is not conspicuous. It is usually described as a future diplomatic quarter. The activities began to subside with the loss of the common facilities that once accommodated various associations which have since disintegrated. These facilities were expropriated in the 1990s when former local administrative units (krajevne skupnosti) were abolished. Today people turn directly to the MOL office. The community needs more public services since the population is getting older; there is a lot of crime and no organized activities for young people.

Karitas carries out programs designed to help needy people; they also provide help for refugees and homeless people, and pay home visits. The organization is accepted by the community but its employees are mainly non-residents. The programs are funded by various umbrella organizations (foreign sources, MOL), but there is a problem with salaries. They have not experienced any difficulties with the local people; however, they have noticed that people prefer to receive money rather than a service. The advantage of Karitas is that they are more flexible than public services. They are not excessively rigid in assessing who needs financial help, so people appreciate them and have no objections. They think that they ease social tensions. In their view, the community is unconnected and alienated. More connections can be found among immigrants from the former Yugoslavia. People need more socializing and information.

The Red Cross carries out programs for senior citizens and individuals in crisis. They hold lectures about health topics and organize blood pressure clinics. The volunteers working for the Red Cross are long-time community members. Their activities are financed from membership fees, the organization's own budget and through fund raising on the national level. The Red Cross contact person pointed out that the loss of offices and storage space presented a problem; furthermore, they cannot obtain information about people in crisis. Their advantages are flexibility and quick response. The Red Cross functions as a connective agent promoting inclusion. In their opinion, the community is unconnected and alienated. Many people are isolated. Their observation is that poverty among older people is on the rise.

KUD France Prešeren hosts theater shows, concerts, the Trnfest summer festival, puppet shows, exhibitions, debates and a competition in stage improvisation. It also includes a bar and accommodates other organizations. Local resi-

dents are visitors at the shows, but they do not participate much in the work of the center. KUD France Prešeren was established in 1919 and it offers programs for all generations. Half of their activities is financed from their own sources, while the other half is funded by various organizations and foreign sponsors. The difficulties they encounter are related to the character of the area (a dormitory), so there are many complaints about noise. However, many people support their activities. In their opinion, people in the community are still connected and they helped them in emergency cases. In their opinion, they enhance the quality of life in the community through their cultural program that includes foreign performers. According to their assessment, the community is passive.

The informal group interviewed for this study was a group of squatters (homeless people). Some of them are regular inhabitants of the squat, others live there only occasionally. They do not have running water or sanitation facilities. The police know about the squat but have not attempted to drive them away. However, they have difficulties with the local residents. They once entertained the idea of establishing an association of homeless people and launching a newsletter, but did not realize these goals. They would like to improve their opportunities and live in better conditions.

<div align="center">Kodeljevo</div>

This community mainly consists of individual houses with up to three generations sharing a household. There are also some older residential blocks at the outskirts of the community. There is a center for social work, a music school, an elementary school, a faculty of sports, a church, and a sports park with a swimming pool. The association for retired people and the MOL representative office are the only active organizations in the community. There is no industry in the area. There are smaller shops, a hairdresser, a bakery, a commercial company employing disabled people, a driving school and three bars. The central place is the sports park. There are no bulletin boards or other information points in the community. The community is clustered; people know each other well, they cooperate extensively and exchange information verbally. The only community events are sports events. Social programs are carried out by the Red Cross, the retired people's organization and a youth group operating under the auspices of the Church. Solidarity and self-help is extensive, particularly among neighbors, in the streets and between generations. In the opinion of local residents, there are no unsolved social problems in their community except among the residents of singles' apartments who are less well-off and isolated. They don't have any express need apart from firmer intergenerational links. Public services are not active in this community. There has not been a suicide in the community for quite a long time now, but there were some in the past.

The MOL representative explained that his only responsibility is communal infrastructure and information provision. The community consists mainly of older and relatively well-off people. There is a service offering assistance at home headed by a local member, so it is well integrated with the community. A somewhat higher level of poverty can be observed among the apartment block

residents. All community activities have come to a halt; the community lost all of its common facilities. The neighborhood is peaceful and without any peculiarities. The only joint action in the recent past was the erecting of a fence around the children's playground.

The Center for Social Work (CSD) offers programs for all generations and its activities are mainly subject to approval by public authorities. This is a public institution and local people are not the executors of projects or the volunteers in this organization. The work of the center is financed from the budget, but funds for certain projects are also obtained through public tenders and from sponsors. They do not have any difficulties in their work. Local residents are only rarely their customers. In their opinion, they do not have any influence on the community which is characterized by self-organization. According to their assessment, a certain number of people are isolated.

The retired people's club offers social help to senior citizens. They also organize excursions and expeditions, and offer health-related services such as blood pressure clinics and cholesterol measurements. All members are local volunteers. Their activities are funded from municipal sources and membership fees. They don't have any difficulties. They see the interconnectedness of people as an important advantage which enables fast flow of information. They contribute to the community life by enhancing connectedness, and through this also the emotional state of community members.

The Red Cross carries out good-neighbor projects and offers assistance to senior citizens, young families, sick people and alcoholics. Its activists are local community members. Approximately 30 people receive aid. Their activities are funded from membership fees, fund raising events and the fees charged for qualifying exams in First Aid. Their main problem is the lack of young members, so the majority of activists are older people. One advantage of their operation is that they provide help to people who do not qualify for state aid (e.g. people without Slovenian citizenship). They are rather informal. They contribute to community life by alleviating problems and by helping people establish stronger interpersonal links. In their opinion the community is interconnected and displays good cooperation, while isolation is a matter of personal choice.

The informal group interviewed for this study was a self-help group consisting of women who have been victims of violence. The activities of the group include informal socializing and exchange of experience. The group does not have any source of financing, but neither does it have problems with finding a place for gatherings. The members do not pay any membership fee. In their opinion, there are many lonely people because the community is a closed-type one.

NOVE FUŽINE

This is a neighborhood of clustered residential blocks with the odd individual house. It includes two elementary schools, one secondary school, a kindergarten, Fužine castle, a health center, a local residents' center including a library, a consulting office, and a MOL representative office; several commercial companies are situated in the neighborhood and there are also a sports

club and a church. There are no big industrial facilities but there are many smaller groceries, craft workshops, hairdressers, a bank, a post office, three larger grocery stores, a petrol station, and a number of pubs. There is no central gathering place. Young people mainly gather in front of apartment blocks and in the green areas, while older youths gather at the sports grounds or in the pubs. Each apartment block has a bulletin board with information. This is a multicultural community that includes all social classes and statuses. Some assess the community as poor, while its public image is that of a »ghetto«. Sports events are the most important ones. Social programs are carried out by the Fužine Consulting Office, while Skala association handles the streets. Skala maintains an info point, carries out the drug abuse program KORAK, provides material aid to poor people, organizes summer programs for children, provides home assistance and care, and carries out senior citizens programs. The majority of the programs are intended for children and young people. Intergenerational links are non-existent. Self-organization was widespread during the early stages of the neighborhood's development, but is now restricted to individual apartment blocks. These links are weakening as new residents move in. The community needs more cultural activities and common facilities. Public services are very active as are several other organizations, although none of these has been established by the locals – the main reason why they moved in was the ghetto image of the community. There are no data on suicides.

The MOL representative office has primarily a welfare function. They keep records of people in need, cooperate with schools and the representatives of apartment blocks, the kindergarten and the home care service. They distribute Red Cross aid packages and supervise financial aid distribution. They also provide information. In their opinion the neighborhood is poor and dominated by the gray economy. The population is young; there are many young families. There are also many »poor apartment owners« who purchased their apartments under favorable housing law terms but do not have enough money to pay the installments. Self-help is most pronounced in apartment blocks inhabited by older people. The Center for Social Work (CSD) is very active, and to a lesser extent also other organizations and the library. There are no joint actions. At the moment people are preoccupied with administrative tasks related to the entry of their property into the land register. The issues that need more attention are drug abuse, activities for senior citizens, and evening activities. The existent social programs should be reinforced and extended in the future. The MOL representative also mentioned that she had broad authority, meaning that she could handle a wide range of tasks.

The Fužine Consulting Office offers consulting services to everyone including people from other communities. They also maintain an INFO point for young people and carry out a drug abuse program. The number of their collaborators amounts to several thousand a year. The executors of these programs are not local community members. The programs are funded primarily by the Moste Center for Social Work, MOL and other sponsors and donors. Their main problem is that their office is located in an apartment block whose residents oppose

it and want them to move out. In their opinion, their ability to respond to the specific needs of the community is their main advantage. They have a lot of influence and local people are acquainted with their work. They attract for cooperation those who are excluded from other activities and programs (people without education or employment). In their opinion, interpersonal links are mainly formed on the basis of nationality. They think that Slovenians are the least interconnected.

The informal group that was interviewed for this study was a therapeutic self-help group for addictions of non-chemical nature. They organize cross-country races, walks, socializing events and supervision. All members are locals. They do not rely on any funds for financing. They do not pay for the room in which they hold meetings. All members are volunteers. They are not widely known in the community. They had problems with certain individuals who were either ill-intentioned or were intolerant towards them. They alleviate anxieties and respond to needs that are not filled by other organizations. They do not have any influence on the community, but they think that residents of Nove Fužine are lonely.

HRUŠICA-FUŽINE

This community is divided by a traffic artery into two parts, Hrušica and Fužine. The two parts are not connected. Both consist mainly of individual houses and farms. The community has an elementary school, a MOL representative office, the cultural organization Proga 13, the retired people's association, the youth association, a kindergarten, a Red Cross office and the Association of the Friends of Youth. There are no bigger industrial facilities in the neighborhood. There are several craft workshops, a night club, the Babnik tavern, two fitness clubs, a grocery and a hockey ground (not in use because the neighbors complain). After the community lost its common facilities, Babnik tavern has become the central gathering place. It offers a room for meetings and celebrations. Young people gather in other bars. Information is provided through a local newsletter that is still regularly published, although not as often as it used to be in the past when the administrative organization of communities was different. The newsletter is published by a local woman, a volunteer, on her own initiative. In the past the community used to be very active and interconnected. It sustained many different activities ranging from theater and puppet shows to sports events, but after it lost its common facilities many activities folded. As mentioned earlier, some of them do continue but working conditions are increasingly difficult. The local residents requested the cancellation of a contract with the fitness club that now occupies the former community center, but their request was turned down. In addition to the Babnik tavern, the center of the village, or rather the cross-roads in its center serves as a gathering place and a venue for various events. Among important activities are excursions, picnics, expeditions, a Father Christmas procession, a carnival, various holidays. Social programs are rare and these are carried out by the Red Cross or the retired people's club. The local residents are much less connected than they

used to be, in spite of the rather high number of activities. However, the number of isolated and inactive people has also increased . The local residents stated that a community center and good bus connections are the two things that they needed most (at the moment there is only one, infrequent bus connection). Public services are not active in this community and the same can be said of the MOL representative office which is of little significance to the community. There are no suicides in the community.

A MOL representative visits the community for 4 hours once a week. In her opinion the community functions well. The fitness club is obliged to provide space for communal events four times a year. The representative is not a local resident and does not have other knowledge about the community. She does not have contacts with public services. Her only responsibilities involve infrastructure and information provision. In her opinion, the problem is the dangerous road that divides the community into two parts, and an inadequate sewage system.

The Proga 13 group performs theater shows and sketches, and organizes other cultural activities. All members are local volunteers. Their activities are funded from admission fees. The biggest problem hindering them is the lack of facilities, but luckily they have a lot of enthusiasm accumulated from the time when the community was bustling with activity. People are willing to work and assist at these events. The group no longer has any influence on the community, and connections are weaker than they used to be.

The retired people's club organizes excursions and socializing events and connects people. All members are local volunteers. Their activities are funded from the membership fees and partly from the municipal budget. Since they do not have facilities, they gather in a local tavern, but not all of them attend these gatherings as they need to have money to visit a tavern. They think that their main advantage is enthusiasm for work. They are good activists and supporters and they know each other well. Thanks to their activity, the understanding among people and connectedness are better, and there is less loneliness.

The Hrušica Cultural Association and *Youth Association* share a secretary who is also the initiator of the activities. The formerly extensive activities have now been reduced to sports events. All members of both associations are local volunteers. Activities are funded from admission fees and donations. People are less connected now than they used to be. Accordingly, the negotiations with municipal authorities are more difficult, as was obvious when they failed to negotiate the cancellation of the contract with a commercial tenant of the community hall. Several people are still willing to work. They organize open air events that take place at the crossroads in the village center. With the termination of former activities, the number of people who feel lonely and isolated or keep to themselves has increased. Their relations are also less relaxed.

The Association of the Friends of Youth deals with pre-school children. They carry out the programs organized by their umbrella organization. The agents of these projects and their consumers are local people. The association copes with the lack of facilities as do many others. All associations hold meetings in

the small offices occupied by Proga 13. If there is a need, they help with the execution of a program. Young people are not sufficiently active and do not join in the activities. They think that the main advantage of the community is the long history of lively activity even though these activities have been subsiding. The association does not have any significant influence on the community. They have been active for a few years now and do not have many members. However, socialization helps in overcoming personal crises and it improves connectedness, which is also seen as a type of influence.

<div align="center">BESNICA</div>

This is a dispersed community composed of 13 villages that are poorly interconnected. It is situated in a long, narrow valley with the villages scattered across the surrounding hills. It mainly consists of farms, several larger ones and many abandoned. The community includes a firefighters' hall, five churches, three local branches of the elementary school, a MOL representative office, and a firefighters' and tourism association. There are several small craftsmen. There is no central gathering place for the local people so they most often socialize in a local mountaineers' cottage. There are no bulletin boards or other information points; only tourism information is widely disseminated. The basic infrastructure is lacking: roads are in poor condition and unpaved; there is no communal water supply and no grocery store. Tourism is the sole area that is at a somewhat higher stage of development. The most important bigger events are religious celebrations, the Strawberry Holiday and the Chestnut Sunday. Social programs are carried out by the Red Cross and Karitas. Not many young people live in the community and those who do attend schools or look for entertainment outside the community. Similarly, senior citizens are not connected and mainly stay at home. An important factor in community life is the firefighters' organization which offers assistance in various emergencies and stimulates neighbor-to-neighbor help. The community needs playgrounds, facilities for activities for all generations, a water supply system, paved roads, entertainment for senior adults, a grocery store, and assistance in self-organization. It also needs bus connections with the town and telephone lines. Public services are not active in this community. The residents do not have contacts with the Center for Social Work or other similar organizations. The entire community appears to be isolated. Approximately one suicide in three years.

The MOL representative is mainly concerned with the infrastructure. The majority of locals work in Ljubljana, while afternoons are reserved for farm work. The number of community activities has been decreasing. One activity that brings people together is the project called the »Orchard Route« that is aimed at attracting tourists from other regions. Those participating in this project socialize more and display greater solidarity. Only three or four people in this community stand out for their level of activity. There are also some original characters in the community who are not »disturbing« and join in the activities according to their abilities. Public services are not active there.

The tourism association organizes environmental clean-up actions, and the events called the Strawberry Holiday and the Chestnut Sunday. They connect

individual farms through a project called the »Orchard Route;« they also publish brochures and organize expert excursions. Local people are both executors of the project and its consumers. The projects are funded by MOL's department for economic activities. Additional funds are secured through organized events, or obtained from sponsors and donors. Since people are not well connected, there is some envy and certain community members cause trouble. The association representatives think that more socialization and less loneliness are their main achievements. The association has significant influence on the community because its projects heighten the standard of living. These projects are also seen as a good method to connect individual villages which are otherwise free-standing units. The community needs more connecting activities.

The Firefighters' organization fulfills, in addition to its basic task, other social tasks. Among these is the provision of drinking water for remote farms. They also enhance socializing among local residents. The construction of a new hall is currently underway and it will host many activities. Community members assist in the construction as volunteers. The firefighters' organization is financed from locals' contributions. The only obstacle is related to the fact that all members are employed so the organization of meetings is quite difficult. They think that they have an influence on the community since they establish links among people and provide opportunities for socializing. The community needs better roads and a communal water supply. This would reduce differences between people. At the moment people keep to themselves and are isolated.

ZADVOR

This community consists of individual houses and farms. In addition, there are several new or renovated villas. The central part of the community is a clustered village with scattered surroundings. Bus connections with the town are not good. Many organizations are active in this community; there is a forestry institute, a retired people's club, an association of peasant women, a sports society, a savings-bank, a radio club, a horse-riding club, a society of pet animal breeders, an agricultural co-operative, an agricultural institute, a tourism office, and a MOL representative office. The community has a firefighters' hall, a kindergarten, a church, and an athletic track. There is no industry in the area; there are craft workshops, grocery stores, taverns and a plant nursery. Local events are held in the meeting hall of the former local administration office. There are several bulletin boards with information; information suppliers are various organizations, but information is also passed by word of mouth. Among the important events are the strawberry and cherry festival, an exhibition organized by the agricultural co-operative, excursions organized by the retired people's club, various other celebrations and religious holidays. Social programs are not carried out in the community; only the retired people's organization is active. The middle and older generation is more active than the young one. Young people look for entertainment outside the community. Neighbor-to-neighbor help is widespread but self-help is also present (see the summary of the interview with an informal group). The community needs more activities for

young people, as well as a space for socializing, dance parties and cultural events. Activities have been subsiding recently – there were many more of them in the past. A home care service is active, but there are no other social services in the area. Two suicides annually on average.

The MOL representative's responsibilities are related to communal infrastructure (the sewage system is still to be regulated). In his opinion, the associations in this community are no longer as active as they used to be and they are also fewer. This is attributed to the lack of initiative among the younger generation. The links among people are weak but people know each other well. There are many events in the community. Its senior citizens are well provided for. They can order food from the elementary school canteen, which is delivered to their homes by relatives or volunteers. Public social services are not active in this community save for the home care service.

The retired people's club organizes excursions, gatherings, home visits, holiday celebrations and an exhibitions of crafts. All members and consumers are local people; they occasionally host visitors from other communities. They finance their activities from the membership fee. They do not have any special problems except for the lack of facilities. The local residents are satisfied with their work because they respond to the developments in the community. In their view, their contribution to the community lies in the promotion of solidarity and self-help and in enhancing links among people. In their opinion the community is interconnected, but some of its members are lonely nevertheless.

The home care service offers assistance at home for all generations, from babies to senior citizens. This service is a part of the medical system and funded by public sources. The nurses are not local residents. Their main problem is the difficulty of access to certain remote locations. They expressed their distress at seeing how difficult is the life of the people living on remote farms. In many cases the home service nurses are their only visitors so these people are always glad to see them. They cannot say that they have influence on the community. In their view, connectedness among the members of this community is not good.

The informal group that was interviewed for this study is a group that gathers once a year to organize the Strawberry and Cherry Festival. Money from the sale of produce is dedicated to overall improvements in the community. This is a good example of self-organization that has proved to be a successful formula over the past 15 years. So far they have installed street lights, built the water supply system and achieved some other goals. They erected sign posts at the entrance to the village and in other spots. The festival activities usually extend into a party that lasts until the next day. Participation in these activities helps them establish links among themselves. The event is a success and it attracts many visitors. They have never had serious difficulties, and their work enhances relations among people. The older and middle generations are most active, although young people are also mobilized during the preparations for the festival. This event has a connective function as it brings together the residents of surrounding villages at least once a year. There are no lonely people in the community, everybody knows everybody else and they frequently visit one another.

ŠENTJAKOB-PODGORICA

This is a clustered community divided into two parts by a traffic artery. It is composed of individual houses and just one apartment block. Many people grow and sell vegetables. The community has a firefighters' hall, an elementary school, a kindergarten, a local residents' center which was denationalized and now belongs to the parish, a church and a parochial administrative center, a monastery, a sports association, a tennis court, a football pitch and a mobile library; there is a horticultural association, a cultural association, the retired people's club, and the Karitas office. There are three taverns, three groceries, several smaller and bigger craft shops and one factory (Belinka). The central gathering places are the parish hall and the Pečar tavern. The community also has an Internet home page. Information is provided on the community television channel, by the local church or on the bulletin board in the parish hall. Podgorica is the less well-off part of the community and has more senior citizens, while the majority of common resources are located in Šentjakob. Community events are mainly organized by the parish church. These include a football tournament with a picnic, a charity lottery and socializing events for sick and senior citizens. Other activities include excursions organized by the retired people's club, firefighters' parties, and cultural events organized by young people, but their activities are ever fewer because of the lack of space. Intergenerational links are non-existent; older people live at home and are cared for by their relatives. They do not socialize often and are rather lonely. Young people gather in pubs. The self-help network is more active in Podgorica where neighbors' relations are better. One of the self-help groups (Stikalo Shen Qui) is stigmatized and unwanted. The community needs more activities for women, more socializing and more relaxation. The sewage system and bus connections should be better. They also need a place for gatherings and for various activities. In the past a field worker from the Center for Social Work used to come to the community but this service was terminated. This had a negative impact on the community because access to various services became more difficult after that. There was one suicide in 2001.

The MOL representative's main responsibility is communal infrastructure and information provision. He cannot influence the development of the community. There is a certain level of unemployment and consequently some moonlighting in the community. There are not many events to connect people. People keep to themselves and do not socialize enough. Cooperation among the residents of Šentjakob is only apparent, while in reality they are distrustful and alienated. There are conflicts between neighbors. The residents of Podgorica socialize more. They still cooperate with the center for Social Work even though it is not as easily accessible as it used to be. In the opinion of MOL's representative, the community needs better bus connections and a gathering place unconnected with the parish church organization.

The firefighters' association organizes many events in addition to performing their basic task, among them sports competitions and parties. Many volunteers from the community join in these activities. These activities are financed from

the firefighters' organization central funds, and partly from contributions. They do not have difficulties. They are well integrated with the community so people are interconnected and have opportunities to meet one another. There has been no fire emergency for a long time now. Their influence on the community is significant. By creating opportunities for socialization they contribute to the development of the entire community. In their opinion, interpersonal connections between local residents are good.

The retired people's club organizes excursions and bowling tournaments, and carries out social programs for senior citizens. The club has several hundred members, but not all of these are active participants. The activities are financed from the membership fee and sponsored by the Belinka factory. There were more activities in the past, but once the community lost its facilities people lost interest. The majority of the activities were taken over by the Church. The representatives of the club do not see any special advantage arising from their work; in their opinion the most important is the fact that people socialize and establish links. The retired people's club is the only active association in the community; it stimulates the collective spirit and voluntary work. In their opinion, all associations should become networked.

The parochial office organizes charity lotteries, lectures, religious education, Santa Claus processions and gatherings of senior citizens and married couples. They also run a choir and assist students with learning difficulties. Karitas also operates under its auspices. Relatively few people participate in planning tasks and project realization, but the number of consumers is much greater. The activities are financed from voluntary contributions, by Belinka and MOL. Their problem was the long-lasting denationalization process and the anger of people which ensued because of the loss of community facilities. One association lodged suit in connection with this and that divided people. But the community is a rural region where the Church is a significant institution. Local residents have a positive attitude towards the parish office; they bring presents in kind and contribute money. In their opinion, people are not connected and united; there are many lawsuits and conflicts. They have much influence, although not on all groups in the community.

The first informal group interviewed for this study is a group that organizes football competitions, other forms of socialization and recreation. All members are local residents and all are volunteers. They are supported by the parish office and the local priest. They have not encountered any difficulties so far; the football pitch is situated on a lot belonging to the parish. They are not hampered by anybody; once a year they organize a tournament for the entire community. They do not have much influence on the community, although the football tournament is an important local event. In their opinion many people are lonely, senior citizens in particular. They think that the same holds true for children whose parents are preoccupied with daily work.

The second informal group operates under the auspices of the parish office and provides various types of help. The members are all like-minded people. They gather once a month and discuss the needs of the local people trying to

find a way to satisfy those needs and raise funds for the realization. They organize a charity lottery, a Santa Claus procession, social gatherings for sick and senior citizens, as well as various activities for young people. They try to help the older part of the population and those who are sick; however, these people often reject their help – they do not trust them and do not let them »near'. The group is supported and stimulated by the church organization. In their social gatherings they draw on religious tenets to find encouragement for their work. The community both accepts and criticizes them, but the critics are mainly those who do not participate in their activities and do not contribute to them in any way. The community needs more activities that would be attractive for all generations, for example, a cultural society, a space for young people's socialization, opportunities to pursue various hobbies. In their opinion, this would drive young people away from drug abuse and crime. Such activities would connect people and alleviate their personal crises. They have a lot of influence on the community, and they connect people. In their opinion, the greatest number of lonely people is found in the group of senior citizens and sick people living with relatives who cannot devote sufficient time to them. Another lonely group comprises children, and the reason is that their parents are preoccupied with business and do not devote enough time to them.

Kozarje

This is a clustered neighborhood composed of newer individual houses and several older farms. Some describe it as a dormitory, because there is a lack of strong links. There is a sports association, a hunters' association, and the Association of the Friends of Youth. The neighborhood has a kindergarten, a library, a firefighters' hall, a MOL representative office and a basketball ground. There are many craftsmen in the neighborhood as well as small and medium size enterprises. There is no central gathering space. People gather and socialize in pubs and taverns. There is one bulletin board, but information is also exchanged by word of mouth. The denationalization process left them without common facilities that accommodated various activities. The neighborhood has been quite passive since. The community needs bus connections with the town and a local grocery store. Among the organized events, they mentioned excursions for retired people, an annual meeting of senior citizens and sick members of the community that is organized by the Red Cross, and parties organized by the firefighters' association. There are no social programs save for the Red Cross packages and the organization of summer vacation for children from needy families. Links between generations are non-existent; programs designed for the older generation are more numerous than those for young people. A certain degree of neighbor-to-neighbor help does exist, but self-help is mainly confined to families. The community members expressed a wish for more links with the Center for Social Work which is currently not active in the community. There have been several suicides in the past.

The MOL representative's office is responsible for satisfying the community's needs, among those social and common needs in particular. The absence of bus

connections and of a local grocery store is the main deficiency in their opinion. Several generations share one household and ties among them are strong – families take care of their senior or sick members. People keep to themselves; they do not express a need for unification, but they do help each other. The greatest number of difficulties is experienced by the families from ex-Yugoslav republics. One aggravating problem is the loss of the community center which accommodated the local choir group and a puppet theater. At the moment, there is no one in the community to inspire action. The community needs its own health center, a post office and a bank.

The firefighters' organization performs humanitarian work, organizes socializing and sports events and dance parties. All members are locals and all are volunteers. The wider community participates in the organization of bigger events. These activities are financed from municipal sources and voluntary contributions. They do not have serious problems, but some individuals do oppose their activities while others attempt to take advantage of the benefits enjoyed by the association. In their opinion, the readiness of young people to join in their activities is the biggest advantage. The majority of people are supportive of their actions. In their opinion, connections within the community are not good and people keep to themselves. The firefighters' association connects people.

The retired people's club organizes excursions, general meetings and home visits to senior citizens during the festive season. They do not have any major difficulties, but occasionally certain individuals try to hamper their work. They think that their most important achievement is an increase in the activity of older people which has a re-vitalizing function. They influence the community through the mobilization of local residents, particularly through excursions. In their opinion the community is not connected and its senior members are lonely. It is difficult to carry out home visits because the relatives caring for senior citizens do not like regular visitors.

The informal group interviewed for this study was a group of young people who meet once a week in front of the firefighters' hall. They socialize, play basketball and help one another. Their gatherings are supported by the firefighters' organization which offers facilities and gives them camping equipment. In return they sell calendars for the organization and help them organize various events. They do not have problems and are not hindered by anybody. Some members of the community regard them as »drug addicts« and hooligans, but not many. They need a place for gatherings. They had such a place, but it is now occupied by a fitness club. They do not have influence on the community as a whole. They need a bus connection with the town. At the moment there is no bus connection, so they go to school on foot or on bicycles.

LIPOGLAV

The community consists of six villages located in the hilly region as well as a neighborhood of weekend resorts. One of these villages is poorer than others. The community has a church, an elementary school, a firefighters' center, a tourism office, a retired peoples' club, a youth club and a countryside associ-

ation. There is also a MOL representative's office. There are several taverns and a grocery store, but no commercial enterprises of craftsmen. The central gathering places are the firefighters' hall and the church. Information is not provided by any public body, people exchange information by word of mouth. The community is not connected. Each village is on its own; bus connections between villages and with the town are poor. The main events are parties organized by the firefighters' association, an exhibition of crafts, occasional lectures, competitions, wedding parties and excursions organized by the retired people's club. Social programs are mainly carried out by the retired people's club. There are no intergenerational links. Solidarity is mainly restricted to individual families or neighbors. The majority of residents work in the town, so they do not spend much time in the community. People are capable of self-organization when needed. They would like to have their own local administration which could stimulate action. They would also like to socialize more and relax. Immigrants from ex-Yugoslavia are mainly isolated. Public services in the community are not active. The last instance of suicide was in 2000.

The MOL representative stated that he no longer had any influence on the community. His only task is to provide information and take care of the infrastructure. He has official hours once or twice a week. In his opinion people are better connected within particular villages, while connections between villages are not as good. People work in the city and on their farms in the afternoon. There are many examples of several generations sharing one household. The community has become attractive for cycling tours and excursions. The most isolated group is that composed of immigrants from ex-Yugoslavia, while owners of weekend resorts do join in but only to a limited extent. Public services are not active and there are no links with the Center for Social Work or medical services.

The firefighters' association takes care of fire protection and organizes social events. Many people participate, among them those who are not very successful in everyday life but can assert themselves through such activities. All participants are local residents and all are volunteers. The activities are financed from the municipal budget and voluntary contributions, and by sponsors. They have not encountered difficulties in their work; in their opinion, the most important thing is that people know and thrust each other. The association rents space to all associations in the community free of charge. Their activities are the only ones enabling the establishment of links among individual villages.

The countryside association organizes socializing events, takes care of the distinctive image of the community and organizes a craft exhibition. They are funded from the budget of the municipal project for integrated development of the countryside, and from money earned through sales at various events. The association encountered difficulties immediately following its establishment when certain individuals opposed their activities, but it has since become accepted. They introduced a fresh breeze into the community and they are creating new traditions (the said exhibition is one of them). In their opinion, their influence on the community is not yet visible. They also think that in the past people were better connected than they are now.

The retired people's club organizes excursions and social gatherings; it also includes a social committee; it distributes New Year presents to senior citizens and holds lectures. All members are local residents and volunteers. They are financed from the membership fee and partly from the municipal budget. They have experienced some minor inconveniences caused by certain individuals, but nothing serious. Since there are many senior citizens in the community, there is much interest in their activities. People express praise for their work, so they feel useful. Weekend residents join in as well, so their club represents the only link between long-time residents and newcomers. In their opinion people are much less connected than they used to be.

A youth club organizes excursions and takes care of the playground and their facilities. All members are local residents. They attempted to establish links with the older generation, however unsuccessfully. They are financed by MOL and through membership fees. They do not have difficulties; they have had only one conflict but it was resolved satisfactorily. Young people are connected; they socialize and are active, so they are better able to resolve conflicts. They do not have any influence on the community, but they participate in joint action.

Individual interviews

Some answers from the structured questionnaire were not suitable for analysis.[10] Among these were answers related to the possession of a telephone, an issue which was not always applicable because several communities do not have telephone lines. Furthermore, questions relating to membership in various associations were applicable to those communities in which such associations were active, so this question was also omitted. Similarly, joint actions were not carried out in many communities over the past three years, so these questions were also omitted. Since many respondents were retired, the question about assistance to workmates was also inapplicable. The question relating to local stores also belongs in this group, because some communities do not have a local shop. To summarize, the tables below do not include questions 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 12, 15, 21, 22 and 23. The number of interviews was 41.

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[10]The questionnaire is supplied as an appendix under the heading "The methodological instructions received by student interviewers; no. 5: Interviews with individuals" (see p. 100). The number of a question corresponds to the numbers in the following tables.

Table 3. Individual answers by the type of the community (in %)

Quest.	Urban			Fringe			Countryside		
	Yes	No	Don't know	Yes	No	Don't know	Yes	No	Don't know
2	38	62		67	33		44	56	
6	38	62		33	67		56	44	
8	62	38		50	50		50	50	
9	90,2	0,8		90,2	0,8		44	44	2
10	92		8	75	17	8	75	19	6
11	54	46		34	50	16	31	56	13
13	54	46		83	17		74	13	13
14	46	46	8	67	33		44	50	6
16	46	46	8	92		8	88		12
17	62	38		84	8	8	82	6	12
18	100			100			81	13	6
19	69	23	8	75	17	8	75	19	6
20	54	46		42	50	8	56	44	
24	62	38		33	67		38	62	
25	30	62	8	8	58	34	50	32	18
26	77	15	8	41	25	34	75	17	8
27	62	22	16	84	8	8	66	17	17

Table 4. All answers (in %)

Quest.	Yes	No	Don't know
2	49	51	
6	39	61	
8	54	46	
9	73	20	7
10	80	13	7
11	39	51	10
13	71	24	5
14	51	44	5
16	76	14	10
17	76	17	7
18	92	5	3
19	73	20	7
20	51	46	3
24	44	56	
25	31	49	20
26	65	19	16
27	70	16	14

TABLE 5. ANSWERS BY SOCIAL POSITION OF RESPONDENTS

Quest.	Volunteer			Cares for sick members			Involved in a conflict		
	Yes	No	Don't know	Yes	No	Don't know	Yes	No	Don't know
2	7	1		3	5		1	7	
6	5	3			8		3	5	
8	7	1		6	2		5	3	
9	7	1		7	1		6	1	1
10	5	1	2	7	1		6	1	1
11	4	4		2	5	1	3	3	2
13	6	2		6	2	4	3	1	
14	5	2	1	5	3	3	5		
16	6	1	1	6	1	1	6	1	1
17	5	2	1	5	1	2	5	3	
18	8			8			6	1	1
19	8			7	1		3	3	2
20	6	2		4	4		4	4	
24	5	3		4	4		1	7	
25	4	4		3	3	2	1	4	3
26	5	3		5	3		3	3	2
27	8			6	1	1	4	2	2

*Eight individuals from each group were included, those comparable by their social position. The other 17 respondents occupy different positions so they could not be included in this uniform category.

Srečo Dragoš and Vesna Leskošek

The methodological instructions received by student interviewers

1. OBSERVATIONS
- Is the community scattered or clustered? Is it poor? Does it consist mainly of apartment blocks or individual houses? Does it include larger, renovated estates?
- Which institutions and organizations have their offices in the community (e.g. a firefighters' hall, a cultural center, a school, a senior citizens' hall etc.)?
- Are there any commercial companies in the community?
- Where do local residents gather (a tavern, facilities belonging to the local parish, some other place or building)? Are these gatherings regular or occasional and on which occasions do they gather?
- How are people informed about their rights? Who informs them? Are there any bulletin boards or other means of providing information?
- Which is the central gathering place in the community (e.g. a tavern, premises belonging to the local parish, a cultural hall)?

2. INTERVIEWS WITH CONTACT PERSONS
- What is the function of the local administrative office? To which issues does it devote major attention?
- Which social traits are typical of the community? (Is the material state of the community satisfactory? Is it rather poor? The life of senior citizens? The life of young people? How many are employed? How do they make their living?)
- Are there many families caring for older or sick members? Are there senior citizens who do not receive any special help?
- Are there any special events in the community that connect people?
- Are there any special activities in which people regularly participate, for example, choirs, crafts etc.?
- Do people on the whole help each other or do they predominantly keep to themselves?
- Are there any organizations active in the community and what are their advantages for local residents? (provide the addresses and schedules of these organizations and establish personal contacts).
- Is there any individual in the community outstanding for his/her activity and positive effect on the community?
- Is there any individual excluded by the community?
- Does the Center for Social Work carry out any special activities? Is it regularly present in the community?
- What are the needs of the community in the opinion of local residents? Which services do they need? Which programs would be advantageous for local residents?
- What is the outlook of the community?
- Have there been any suicides in the community?
- How much influence do these organizations have on the community?

3. Interviews with the representatives of various organizations

- Who gave the initiative for the activity of that organization?
- Which programs do they carry out?
- Why did they launch these programs?
- Are they active solely in that particular community or elsewhere as well?
- How many local residents are included in these programs?
- How many local residents participate in planning tasks and implementation?
- For whom are these programs intended?
- Do they have financial sources for the implementation of the programs?
- Where did they obtain these funds and from whom?
- Which difficulties do these organizations encounter in that particular community?
- Have they had any negative experiences?
- What are the advantages of their activities for the community?
- What are their positive experiences?
- Does their work contribute to the development of the community and in what way?
- Do they think that the community is connected, or are people isolated? What is the reason?
- How do they assess the needs of the community?

4. Interviews with a selected informal group (a self-help group, or a group composed of young people, women, or senior citizens who meet more or less regularly and pursue some common objectives).

- What is their objective?
- How often do they meet?
- Do they pursue any special activity that connects them?
- Are they supported by others?
- Who supports them?
- Do they have difficulties in organizing meetings?
- Who inhibits their work?
- Do they think that the community is supportive, or is it characterized by envy and interference?
- What should be changed in order to improve the situation?
- Do they think that the organizations present in the community are needed? Do they carry out relevant programs?
- What is their own influence on community life? Do they play an important role?
- Is their group open for anybody to join in?
- What do they need to enhance their work?
- Do they find that socializing is very important? Does it help in surmounting personal crisis? Does it reduce loneliness?
- Do they think that people in that particular community are lonely?

5. Interviews with individuals (a person who occupies some specific position in the community; e.g. someone who receives public aid in the form of money or home service, or someone who is retired because of a disability or psychological problems; someone who takes care of a disabled or senior family member; or is an active volunteer and a local resident; or frequently has conflicts or is isolated in some other way; ask the contact person for assistance in conducting these interviews.)

- (1.) Have you assisted some local group as a volunteer?
- (2.) Have you attended any community event in the past six months (e.g. a church fete, a school concert, or craft exhibition?)
- (3.) Are you an active member of a local organization or a club (e.g. a sports club, a craft association, a social group)?
- (4.) Are you a member of the managing or organizing board of some local group or organization?
- (5.) Have you joined in any action of the local organization in an emergency over the past three years?
- (6.) Have you ever participated in a project aimed at organizing some new activity in your local community? (e.g. a youth club, a scouts' club, child care, recreation for the disabled etc.)
- (7.) Have you ever collected litter that other people have left behind at some public place?
- (8.) Do you visit your family living outside the local community?
- (9.) Do you know where to obtain information to help with important decisions in life?
- (10.) Do you dare express your opinion out loud if you do not agree with something on which other people agree?
- (11.) Would you be willing to accept a mediator in a conflict with a neighbor (e.g. over a fence or a dog)?
- (12.) Have you offered help to some of your workmates in the course of the past week (even though such help is not part of your responsibilities at the work place). This question is posed to employed respondents only.
- (13.) Do you feel safe in the street at night?
- (14.) Would you say that you mainly trust people?
- (15.) If an unknown person had a problem with hus/her car in front of your house, would you offer him/her the use of your telephone?
- (16.) Is your neighborhood regarded as safe?
- (17.) Does your local community feels like home?
- (18.) Can you count on help from a friend when you need it?
- (19.) If you had a child in your care and needed to go out for a short time, would you leave your child with a neighbor?
- (20.) Have you visited a neighbor in the past week?
- (21.) Do you often come across friends or acquaintances when shopping in a local shop?
- (22.) Have you done a favor to a sick neighbor in the past six months?
- (23.) How many times have you talked to a friend on the phone in the past week?

- (24.) Do you have lunch/dinner outside your household at weekends?
- (25.) Do you think that multiculturalsim enhances the quality of life in your neighbrohood?
- (26.) Do you like living amongst people with different lifestyles?
- (27.) Do you think that you enjoy the respect of society?

6. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE COMMUNITY (YOUR ASSESSMENT)

- Where do local residents gather – regularly or occasionally – for special events (in a tavern, in a parochial center, some other building)?
- Which important events take place in the community and who organizes them?
- Which individuals are important to the community? Why are they important? Which advantages do they bring to the community?
- Which organizations, groups or institutions are active in the community?
- Which social programs are carried out in the community?
- How do different generations live? Can they obtain what they need? Are young people bored? Do senior citizens spend their time at home?
- How extensive is solidarity and self-help? Does the community take care of people with special needs, or is care is provided by their families?
- How many local residents are poor and how do they live? Does the community as a whole help them?
- What programs are needed? On what should they concentrate in order to ameliorate their everyday lives? What are the needs of local residents?