The Importance of Local Self-Government and Citizen Participation in Modern Society

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Abstract: - The paper points out the great importance of citizen participation in local government and their right to local self-government that they guarantee the Constitutions of these States. It analyzes the basic solution contained in the Constitution and laws of the Republics that govern local government. The first part deals with the growing importance of citizens in decision-making levels of local government, as well as the scope and importance of action from the perspective of common citizens needs, and developing democratic awareness of belonging to a community. The central part of the work is based on the need for citizen participation in decision-making and participation in local elections and political life of the local community, as well as a more pronounced right of citizens to better quality of life in local government. In particular, it shows how the real power of the citizens to decide in local government and is it today preferred in local government to develop a direct or indirect democracy.

Key-words: local self-government, citizens, citizen participation, direct and indirect democracy, making decisions.

1 Introduction

In the process of comprehensive reform of society, country's economic, political and legal system toward more effective and efficient institutional structure, in particular the question arises as to the participation of citizens in government. The state has, over time, become a burden and "distant place" to make decisions that are directly related to the life of the individual in it. Local self-government today exists as a necessary phenomenon which may be considered if the development of democracy in general, and not only local, which we will in this paper deal with the most.

The paper is to show the willingness of the citizens to make the decision to become a citizen obligations in every community, as well as how great the role of citizens in the election of local authorities. [1] Because of that people need to know that your needs and requirements can be achieved only participation in decision-making at the local level. Citizens themselves should understand that they have the right to local self-government, have the right to make decisions, that they were all guaranteed by the Constitution and that it depends only on the further development of local self-government. [2] Analysis of citizen participation in decision-making at the local level enriches the picture of the progress of political life in Europe at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

The developed countries of the modern world in the last decades of the 20th century undergone major changes. Economy and motives for achieving a wide range of interests began the process of globalization, through the development of information technology and communications systems, as well as the application of scientific advances in other relevant areas, conditioned to run even faster. In this sense, the state is constantly evolving, changing its nature. From the liberalism and laissez - faire, through Keynesian or model of state intervention in the economy and neoliberalism, which was established in the early eighties of the last century.

Not inconsiderable difficulties in studying this matter is the fact that in these states, local governments and participation of citizens in decision-making for decades seen as a marginal topic political, legal and economic research. It is believed that this is so, because all of the participants and events in the local communities are often treated as only one aspect, namely as a central backup policy in no way affects the changes that
2 Problem of Civil Right to Decision in the Local Government

Today, none of political research can’t be efficient if it do not use the methodology of many related sciences, such as law, sociology, economics, history, geography, psychology, philosophy, statistics, mathematics and many other disciplines [5]. That's why today's science is not a single topic that one branch of science that can be independently studied, but there has to be constant cooperation of many related and unrelated science in order to efficiently study a particular phenomenon.

We can now, after a pronounced historical distance, identify a number of reasons why the authors who deal with the local government debate pessimistic about the current, very important topic. However, one of the most common reasons is that, according to many, everything that happens at the local level is not a very important and does not affect much on the development of decision making people at the national level, which is much more important to the citizens at the grassroots level, and it is perhaps one of the biggest problems that all of us, as citizens of this country have to solve.

It is believed that the current level of development of local government there is not enough of awareness of citizens of their right to local self-government and their right to make decisions about important issues related to the realization of full democracy and the welfare of citizens at the local level. What is encouraging is that citizens had a genuine desire for participation in decision-making in local government, as well as the growing concern of citizens to realize their right to local self-government. And the very citizens it is clear that the involvement of local government in the most efficient way to provide better conditions for a better life in a local unit.

The main result expected from our research is the knowledge that is necessary to find a constitutional and legal solutions for smooth decision-making in local government, for the common benefit of all those who live in the local community. The justification of this research is mostly reflected in the fact that the permanent participation of citizens in decision-making and increase efficiency in the work of democratic local governments. This shows that the democratic legitimacy and local authorities desirable characteristics of the political system in transition countries, which contribute to strengthening awareness about their primary role in the local community.

The fundamental problem of local governments is that the number of problems they can’t solve alone, but to a large extent necessary and important help from the state, primarily in the creation of a legal and economic environment. In the past 20 years have changed the four laws on local self-government, which indicates that the local government in certain periods of development was an important part of the political and legal system in transition countries, which is one way or the other constantly had its ups and downs [6].

In many countries, especially undemocratic, local governments have to date not yet reached a respectable level, it does kind of justify their existence in these countries. She's strong, and in such states, survives as an eternal companion of public administration, including its element, with which it overlaps in some way or stick. There is no
country in the world in which the central authorities themselves regulate all social relations on the whole territory.

In most modern systems of local government, local democracy is structured as a combination of direct, representative and semi-indirect, where the municipal assembly as the representative body is the most important organ that controls and decides on matters of local jurisdiction and choice of aldermen is the most important form of local democracy. Aldermen are elected on the basis of universal, equal and direct suffrage. A alderman can be elected every citizen the right to vote, which resides in the municipality.

We conclude that in addition to the citizens, the state should be the one who has to constantly contribute to the development of local government in many different ways. First thing in every country should be governed by the local government is to be raised to the level of constitutional principles. But that's not all, and I do not mean that, if so, that the local government is at the desired level of development. The most effective evidence of development of a local government is constantly improving the rights of citizens in local governance and participation in decision-making in the local community. This is what most contributes to strengthening the democratic character of a society.

To each local government to develop a true and democratic manner, it must be organized as a direct power of citizens, free from party and bureaucratic monopoly. These monopolies should be abolished, a political party in a democratic organization and operation of a fully equal footing with other forms of self-organization of citizens. However, this is not easy to achieve direct rule of the citizens, although by some states there are indications that this desire in his power to a particular form developed at the local level. [7] What brings us more and more to the conclusion that an independent citizen should be the main factor of development of a local community, not the political parties and other political organizations in all that they see some of their personal interest that at least the freedom and rights of citizens and also their participation in decision making bodies of local self-government.

Local government is created and works best in real communities where there is a high degree of cohesion, integration and intense social and individual communications. However, none of these factors is not easy to study, because each unit has a local system of these factors is different from other local units. There are no coincidences. Therefore it is considered that the study of local government is one of the most complex and difficult issues of constitutional theory and practice.

Since we are in the paper several times reminded of how the citizen and the most important basic subjects of local communities, we must also address the fact that they are citizens, according to the law, and responsible for the situation in the local unit. Although their participation in local government largely depends on the nature of state power and the decentralization of the governed, we can’t help but notice that the citizens should still have a major role in the management of a local community.

Citizens' awareness and knowledge about the original jurisdiction of the local authorities, the inalienable rights of citizens and local communities on these issues to the sovereign and to decide when this should only take into account the common good, the constitutional and legal framework, are an important basis for strengthening local democracy and democracy in general. In the previous sentence, we can see that all the actions of the citizens must be in accordance with the constitution and the law.

Today, without the constant participation of citizens in the management of local government, no state developed and neither the relevant government institutions. Citizens have a keen interest to take advantage of all the rights guaranteed by the Constitution and the law. It is that right that all democratic countries offer to their citizens. They are the ones who have to show the initiative for change and initiative in decision-making in local government.

Creating a modern state, the central government must greatly change its current policy, which they are not properly guided the development of democracy. A democracy is developed only when the country has a strong and local government, without the involvement of central government in local government affairs.

There is a condition where the interference of the central government is desirable, and that's when the local government to damage the constitutionality and legality. By the foregoing we can see how today in democratic countries local government has been developed and how great the role of citizens in decision-making and participation in the management of local life [8].

Citizens, due to poor experience in managing administrative policies of a local government unit in their work reach a large number of errors that leads to the local government does not really develop a rapid course, what is expected in these countries. It is the state which has to help the citizens to legally and legitimately exercising their right to local self-government and in decision-making and participation in local affairs. Because it is in the interest of the central government to the citizens exercise their role in the best possible way.
3 Models of Citizenship’s Participation as a Solution to the Problem in Countries in Transition

Since we have found that citizens are getting bigger and stronger attitudes towards participation in local government has set and then a very topical and important issue. How and to what extent the government boost the possibility of participation of citizens in government and public policy, compared to the previous legislation, analyzing specific forms of citizen participation in government, or in the preparation and adoption of strategic documents in certain areas crucial to the functioning of the local government (referendum, national initiative ...)?

The citizens of Serbia have always had less developed political culture when it comes to local governments in the developed countries of the world. The best evidence for that is the number of direct forms of citizen participation in decision-making that is in our history and local government decision-making is minimized. In some countries a year to maintain and fifty referendums, popular initiative and other forms of direct democracy. This institute is still foreign to us, and we should now leave tradition, and abstinence, but must be constantly introduced numerous innovations and useful for political decision-making, in particular to work on new laws and ratification of European treaties and charters that led to an increase in civil liberties and their right to local self-government.

But today there are many controversies about whether the acceptable direct or indirect democracy. So today, in many countries, a new form of citizen decision-making reached its zenith and it's direct democracy. Direct democracy is a combination of the two above-mentioned democracy, and it is a democracy where the people reserve to themselves making important decisions without the participation of the people. Throughout history, there was a large number of direct popular participation in government, and now they kept the four most important, namely: national initiative, referendum, plebiscite and people's veto.

However, the two most important forms are national initiative and referendum, since both institutions of direct popular legislation. A directs forms of decision-making and participation of citizens in local self governance and local government unit of the Republic of Serbia are: the citizens initiative, citizens referendum.

Direct forms of democracy were held to this day. Large role that these forms have in ancient Greece and today reaches its greatest significance in Switzerland and many Scandinavian countries. However, although in practice these forms are called direct, to the best of them can be said to belong semi-direct democracy.

The participation of citizens in decision-making is very important because it strengthens democratization and legitimacy of decisions. That is why a lot of work in Serbia at all these factors, in particular the strengthening of civil society and non-governmental organizations, with the objective to fight for a strong position of citizens in decision-making at the local level. It is impossible today, under such circumstances, to gather all the citizens of a country in one place in order to directly decide on many things that are crucial for capital and individuals. That's why there are these semi-direct forms of civic.

In every country in the world, it was a one-party or multiparty not allowed to ease the citizens to organize themselves in to a unified movement for the expansion of local government, as well as for its efficient development. In these systems both parties generally harder and work to win and maintain the political monopoly which largely destroyed the local government and its effective development slows.

By the foregoing we find that inter-party struggle for power is a huge obstacle for the development of true democracy and local government. And the only way to overcome this partyracy is development of true democracy. The most important requirement for a true democracy is the abolition of political monopolism, which leads to free political organization and activities of citizens with equal participation in the political agreements and social decisions. So we can say that the political and social equality of those qualities that are the essence and core of any democracy and also the local government.

To each local government to develop a true and democratic manner, it must be organized as a direct power of citizens, free from party and bureaucratic monopoly. These monopolies should be abolished, a political party in a democratic organization and operation of a fully equal footing with other forms of self-organization of citizens. However, this is not easy to achieve direct rule of the citizens, although by some states there are indications that this desire in his power to a particular form developed at the local level. What brings us more and more to the conclusion that an independent citizen should be the main factor of development of a local community, not the political parties and other political organizations in all that they see some of their personal interest that at least the freedom and rights of citizens and also their participation in decision making bodies of local self-government.

Citizen participation in decision-making would have to become one of the necessary things that
would need to be regulated in all these countries. One of the most significant international agreements shows how the need for the local government and the participation of citizens must be governed by the constitution. Each state seeks and has such a system of local self-respect, and in particular those states which have ratified the European Charter of Local Self-Government.

The most important for the citizens have institutes which are used for the direct participation of citizens in government. The most common forms of direct democracy, the people's initiative, referendum, the popular veto and the citizens' assembly. Each of these forms has a major role in the political systems of modern states, especially large impact on the system of local government [9].

This way people can show their true willingness to participate in government and in particular in the management and decision-making at the local level. The citizens are the ones who can bring prosperity community so that it will seek to change some incorrect legal documents or to shift some authorities who believe that they do things right.

Although in theory a lot about all these forms of decision-making, we can't tell about it but to regret not mentioning the influence of citizens in decision making through public initiatives, referendums and citizens meetings is underdeveloped because they are little used in practice. For this situation largely blame the local authorities for there is no developed strategy for increasing and improving the quality of civic decision-making, as well as the assumption of better work and management.

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There is no writer on this subject and not trying to find the ideal model for the participation of citizens in decision-making. But there is no ideal model. In many states still have the interference of the central government in many tasks of local authorities, especially in the original and fiduciary services [10].

Percent in countries in transition, yet awareness of participation is not well developed, it is difficult to speak of an ideal model of citizen participation, mainly due to the absence of democracy, the absence of a public-private partnership, the possibilities do not create jobs, as well as low to encourage economic development. Citizens must have complete freedom to decide that they can make the best decisions to meet the basic needs of citizens. Therefore, we should insist on the development needs of democratic principles as well as a vibrant and free political system of a country in particular should pay attention to the system of local self-government and all its features.

4 Conclusion

In particular on the development of direct democracy, because only then can we say that the effective development of local self-government possible. Thus, the subject of our studies in the future should be the local government as a form of essential expression of direct democracy, which is therefore the best indicator of the development and implementation of effective local government.

An important issue of local self-government is that the people have not been able to clearly separate the behavior of the local and national level. So many times the behavior of citizens at the local level in some of the political process is only a reflection of the behavior of citizens at the central level. It is believed that the local citizens through elections tend to express support or confidence in the national government, which in most cases this is true.

An important conclusion which we obtained in this work is that there must be an obligation to the citizens of each state to facilitate the realization of their interests in the easiest way possible. And the most effective way to do that should be public participation in decision-making in local government of the Republic of Serbia. That's what the citizens themselves should enable the realization of their fundamental interests.

The main result expected from our research is the knowledge that is necessary to find a constitutional and legal solutions for smooth decision-making in local government, for the common benefit of all those who live in the local community. The justification of this research is mostly reflected in the fact that the permanent participation of citizens in decision-making, increase efficiency and democracy in the work of local governments. This shows that the democratic legitimacy and local authorities desirable characteristics of the political system in Serbia, which contribute to strengthening awareness about their primary role in the local community.
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