INFORMAL NETWORKS AND INTERSTITIAL ARENAS OF POWER IN THE MAKING OF CIVIL SOCIETY LAW IN SERBIA

Neformalne mreže i odnosi moći u prostoru između države i civilnog društva: izrada zakonskog okvira za civilno društvo u Srbiji

ABSTRACT: This paper adopts an anthropological perspective on law to examine the social processes surrounding the making of a set of recent civil society laws in Serbia. In line with the dominant liberal assumptions about civil society involvement as a way of making policy- and law-making more representative and democratic, there has been significant civil society participation in these legal reforms. Their stated aim was to bring greater ‘efficiency’ and ‘transparency’ to the activities of civil society and its relationships with the state. They were a part of the greatly intensified law-making activity in Serbia that reflects an ideology of legalism linked to the global neoliberal turn to depoliticised ‘governance.’ My analysis reveals that these reforms contradicted their own objectives since they were consistently dominated by a small and relatively stable network of organisations and individuals connected by informal relationships. It also shows that, through their protracted domination over the making of civil society law, these actors created a new political arena in the interstices of the state and civil society in which they pursued their own political and ideological agendas. These findings challenge the assumptions about the relationship between civil society participation and democratisation as well as the ideology of legalism.

KEYWORDS: civil society; democracy; informality; law; Serbia; the state

APSTRAKT: U ovom tekstu primenjujem antropološku perspektivu na pravo da bih ispitao društvene procese koji su okruživali proces izrade zakona o gradanskom...
društvu u Srbiji. U kreiranju ovih zakona učestvovali su predstavnici građanskog društva, u skladu sa dominantnom liberalnom pretpostavkom o uključivanju civilnog društva kao načinu da se izrada javnih politika i zakona učini reprezentativnijom i demokratičnijom. Ove zakonske reforme imale su za cilj da unesu „efikasnost“ i „transparentnost“ u aktivnosti civilnog društva i njegove odnose sa državom. One su bile deo veoma intenzivne zakonodavne aktivnosti u Srbiji koja reflektuje ideologiju liberalizma i s njom povezani globalni neoliberalni zaokret ka depolitizovanoj „upravi“. Moja analiza ukazuje da su te reforme bile u suprotnosti sa sopstvenim ciljevima jer je njima stalno dominirala jedna mala i relativno stabilna mreža organizacija i pojedinaca povezanih neformalnim vezama. Takođe, kroz njihovu produženu dominaciju nad izradom zakona o civilnom društvu, ovi akteri su stvorili novu političku arenu koja se nalazila u međuprostoru između države i civilnog društva i u kojoj su ostvarivali svoje političke i ideološke ciljeve. Ovi nalazi dovode u pitanje pretpostavku o vezi građanske participacije i demokratizacije, kao i ideologiju legalizma.

KLJUČNE REČI: civilno društvo, demokratija, neformalnost, zakoni, Srbija, država

1. Introduction

In recent years, Serbia has experienced a period of highly increased law-making. Similar processes have been or are still under way in other countries in postsocialist Europe, driven by the interrelated exigencies of often-protracted transformation and European integration. An additional aim often heard in Serbia is to eliminate the post-Milošević legacies of corruption and weak institutions and, ultimately, achieve the ‘rule of law.’ In this paper, I show that the intensification of law-making was informed by an ideology of legal formalisation: a vision of re-forming society through law. To examine how this idea translates into practice, I offer a case study of recent legal reforms that were aimed at, among other things, introducing the norms of ‘transparency’ and ‘efficiency’ into the activities of civil society organisations (CSOs) and the relationships of these organisations with the state. A number of CSOs played a leading role in the making of these civil society laws, which was justified by dominant normative assumptions about civil society involvement as a way of democratising policy- and law-making. In this context, a simple means of assessing the ideologies of both legal formalisation and civil society participation is to ask whether the actors involved in these law-making processes followed the very norms they sought to enact. Hence, a substantial part of the article describes and interprets the actual relationships and practices of these actors.

This article stems from my anthropological fieldwork in Belgrade and other sites in Serbia over 16 consecutive months in 2010–11. My research has been mostly concerned with the shifting relationships between the ‘state’ and various kinds of ‘civil society,’ and with how these relationships reflected transformations of the government of society and individuals (‘reforms’) and, ultimately, the wider

---

2 Serbian law does not use the terms ‘civil society’ and ‘civil society organisations.’ I use them to refer to multiple kinds of organisations that Serbian law does recognise, such as associations of citizens (udruženja grada), endowments (zadužbine) and foundations (fondacije). I explain below how this differs from the dominant emic meaning of ‘civil society’ in Serbia.
hegemonic project of social transformation in postsocialist, post-conflict and post-authoritarian Serbia. The law-making processes here examined were not the primary or even an expected focus of my research; rather, they emerged as highly relevant during fieldwork. Taken together, they were the most comprehensive reform of the legal regulation of civil society since the beginning of Serbia's postsocialist transformation. In the post-Milošević period, a group of influential CSOs continued to call for a particular kind of regulation and propel what proved to be a protracted, repeatedly interrupted and restarted process. The new norms were marked by considerable expectations for improvements in the practices of CSOs and the legal and institutional frameworks in which they operated.

My fieldwork involved a combination of participant observation, interviewing, and discursive and content-oriented analysis of textual and audiovisual documents. Balkan Community Initiatives Fund (BCIF),3 a leading Serbian foundation in which I conducted participant observation in the role of a volunteer on average two days a week during the entire fieldwork, was one of the CSOs involved in the law-making processes. In the latter half of my research, I also conducted more sporadic participant observation in the then recently established Office for Co-operation with Civil Society of the Serbian government. I interviewed Tanja Bjelanović, BCIF Programme Director, and Ivana Ćirković, Director of the Office, both of whom were involved in these legal reforms. Participant observation in and beyond these two organisations4 and interviews with Bjelanović, Ćirković and others5 helped me navigate the complex personal and institutional relationships that shaped and were themselves shaped by the reforms, and the norms and ideologies evoked to justify the form and content of the new legislation. However, considering that most of these reforms had ended before I started my fieldwork and occurred as prolonged stop-and-go processes unlikely to be fully remembered by the actors, their detailed reconstruction offered below relies heavily on information published in various institutional documents (reports, analyses, recommendations) and the civil-society bulletin Mreža (‘Network’).

Theoretically, I adopt an anthropological perspective on law, which is based on ethnographic description of process rather than doctrine, a critical view of legal categories, and a concern with ‘legal culture’ and situating it in society (Mundy 2002: xix). My emphasis is especially on the fundamentally social nature of law, in which respect I depart from idealist approaches that privilege the concept of legal culture, understood as ‘ideas, values, attitudes and opinions people in some society hold with regard to law and the legal system’ (Friedman 1994: 118, quoted

3 Since 2013 Trag (‘Trace’): Foundation for Community Initiatives.
4 In addition to BCIF, I conducted participant observation in another Belgrade CSO, the Centre for Democracy Foundation (with a similar frequency but only during 10 months), and in a host of other institutional and non-institutional settings and public, semi-public and private situations, which tended to relate to organisational processes that I followed. The selection of cases was informed by my theoretical concerns and research questions as defined before fieldwork and continually revised during research.
5 I recorded and transcribed 93 semi-structured interviews. Interviewees were mostly Serbian NGO workers, but also nationalist leaders, members of associations of disabled people, government officials, politicians, academics, civil servants, public sector employees, and Czech and Slovak NGO workers. The average interview duration was about 70 minutes.
in Grødeland 2013: 537). Though these are clearly important aspects of any (legal) culture, I start by describing social relationships that structure particular legal processes from which I then attempt to deduce such ideas and attitudes, rather than the other way around. My approach is therefore sympathetic to the emerging literature on ‘policy networks’ in Serbia, with its focus on ‘sets of formal institutional and informal linkages between governmental and other actors, structured around shared, if endlessly negotiated, beliefs and interests in public policy making’ (Vuković & Babović 2014: 6; see also Babović & Vuković 2015; Vuković 2013). Such an approach allows for an empirical analysis of law-making as a set of social processes with social enabling conditions and outcomes.

Nevertheless, I believe that the critical thrust of such analyses could be further reinforced by also scrutinising the taken-for-granted ideas about what ‘law’ is and does. In the first part of the paper, I show that the making of civil society laws and the broader process of legal formalisation in Serbia stemmed from an assumption that modernising and harmonising law would lead to improved civil society practices and, more generally, an orderly society. Borrowing from recent anthropological scholarship, I suggest that the present case involves a mobilisation of a global ideology that objectifies the law and invests it with a powerful agency of its own; this idea is closely linked to the neoliberal turn to a destatised and depoliticised ‘governance.’ In the second section, I link the examined legal reforms also to the dominant liberal assumptions about the relationship between civil society and democratic governance. The third section offers a detailed account and analysis of the reforms and their social and institutional contexts. My key argument is that the involvement of the participating CSOs and other institutions and individuals in these processes was mostly based on informal, non-competitive and non-transparent relationships, which means that the actors did not conform to the very norms that they sought to make binding on the entire Serbian civil society. I further argue that their prolonged domination of the reform of civil society legislation has allowed them to create a new political arena in the interstices of civil society and the state, in which they were able to pursue their own political and ideological agendas. The fourth section unpacks various facets of these agendas, ranging from neoliberal rationality and normativity to the pragmatic politics surrounding competition for resources. I conclude by considering the implications of my findings for the assumptions about the transformative power of the law and the relationship between civil society participation and democratisation.

2. Legal formalisation and the new ‘governance’

A number of legal norms relevant for Serbian CSOs have been adopted in recent years. These include the 2009 Law on Associations, the 2010 Law on Endowments and Foundations, several tax law amendments, and a bylaw implementing some provisions of the Law on Associations.6 One of the explanations given for these reforms was that up-to-date and consistent legislation was needed. Before 2009, associations of citizens used to be regulated by two laws

---

6 See References, section Legal Norms for full details.
originally adopted in 1982 and 1990. The *Handbook for the Implementation of the Law on Associations*, written by the makers of the Law, described the former legal framework as ‘rather promiscuous (šarolik) and inconsistent’ (Benmansur et al. 2009: 6). The handbook also explained that it had been necessary to bring the regulation of associations in line with the Constitution, the ‘highest European standards,’ and international law (Benmansur et al. 2009: 6).

However, the makers of the Law saw its provisions on the state funding of associations as particularly important. Article 38 stipulates that associations may receive state grants only through a ‘public tender’ (javni konkurs) and on the condition of publishing regular financial reports. The Law on Endowments and Foundations contains similar provisions. At a 2007 public debate about the Law on Associations, Miljenko Dereta, a member of the working group for the drafting of the Law and then Executive Director of the CSO Civic Initiatives, said the Law was a ‘precondition for regulating the [state] budget funding of the sector.’ Živka Vasilevska, another member of the working group and then Director of the CSO Centre for the Development of the Non-Profit Sector, stated that the law would stipulate tendering as a requirement for such funding (Civic Initiatives 2007: 2). At the time of my fieldwork, another working group was drafting a bylaw that would implement Article 38 by specifying requirements for tendering procedures.7 My research participants believed that grants were presently distributed through unstandardised, obscure and non-competitive procedures, and on the basis of informal relationships rather than the quality of applications. Ivana Ćirković told me that ‘it is not clear what are the criteria for tenders for project funding, who reports on the implementation of approved projects, how, and to whom.’ Accordingly, a major task of the Office for Co-operation with Civil Society was to ‘enable mechanisms for transparent funding of CSOs’ and a system where all eligible CSOs ‘competitively compete (kompetitivno se takmiče)’ for grants.8 Tanja Bjelanošić similarly argued that the new Law on Endowments and Foundations had made the work of foundations more ‘transparent’ by introducing the obligation to publish regular financial reports.9 In sum, the actors expected the new norms to make public funding of CSOs more transparent, competitive and meritocratic, in addition to other motivations such as liberalisation of the founding and work of CSOs.

The focus on modernisation, harmonisation and transparency links these reforms to a broader process unfolding in Serbia: the production of new national law on an impressive, indeed unprecedented, scale. During its three and a half years in session, the 2008–12 parliament adopted 817 laws and 207 other norms, often in expedited procedures and without adequate discussion (Helsinki... 2013: 244). In contrast, the 2001–03 parliament, which was in session for three years, adopted 106 laws (National... n.d.). However, there is a paradox – just as hundreds of new laws are being adopted, Serbian and foreign institutions and public figures seem to agree that Serbia has a problem with ‘the rule of law.’10

---

7 Informal conversation with Ivana Ćirković, 5 October 2011.
8 Interview with Ivana Ćirković, 9 May 2011.
9 Interview with Tanja Bjelanošić, 1 December 2011.
10 The most direct Serbian equivalent is vladavina pravil/zakona, but a more common term seems to be pravna država, literally ‘legal state’ (analogous to the German Rechtsstaat).
For instance, the 2014 Progress Report of the European Commission, the most recent in a series keenly followed by the Serbian media, states bluntly that the ‘rule of law is not systematically observed’ (European Commission 2014: 17). Recent domestic scholarship (Pavlović 2010; Prokopijević 2010; Vuković 2011) and reports issued by CSOs (Helsinki... 2014; House... 2012) arrive at broadly similar conclusions.

I would suggest that the intensive law-making effort is only superficially in conflict with the alleged deficiency of the rule of law; in actuality, it is a permanent prescription for the diagnosis. Weak rule of law in Serbia is typically understood as the legacy of institutional and legal breakdown, and the informalisation or outright criminalisation of politics and business under the Milošević regime (Andreas 2005; Begović 2005; Sörensen 2003). This conclusion has been accompanied for a long time by prescriptions of fresh legislation. For instance, the 2000 manifesto of the Democratic Opposition of Serbia pledged to adopt a new constitution and a number of laws to end the ‘constitutional chaos,’ ‘selective and discriminatory enforcement of law,’ and corruption (Program... 2000). Fast-forward to the present, and the 2014 European Commission report calls for new legislation on subjects ranging from the country’s political system to alcoholic spirits. These recommendations are driven by concerns with the rule of law as well as a push for the harmonisation of Serbia’s legal system with the acquis communautaire (European Commission 2014). The scale of the latter task is illustrated by the fact that the 2014 report, with its many demands for specific legislation, was issued two years after the Serbian European Integration Office had reported that more than 800 norms were adopted in 2010–12 to achieve convergence with the acquis (Serbian... 2012).

Many among the plethora of national strategies – 105 as of 2014 (European Commission 2014: 9) – also envisage legal reforms. These are often justified similarly to the new civil society laws: as ‘advancement of legislation, mutual harmonisation of regulations, and their harmonisation with EU regulations’ (Government... 2005: 10). Moreover, legal reform sometimes seems to be understood as the most basic precondition for policy implementation. For instance, the Strategy of Public Administration Reform starts by reviewing the achievements of the previous Strategy whose ‘primary goal’ is described as the ‘establishment of a legal framework for (...) the system of state administration and local self-government’ (Government...2014: 1, added emphasis). Accordingly, relevant legal changes are identified in nearly all of the subsections that review the progress made on the various objectives of the previous Strategy (Government... 2014: 1–7).

Law is obviously one of the foundations of the modernist nation-state: anthropologically speaking, it is one of the ‘symbolic languages of stateness’

---

11 If we were to believe the influential World Bank’s Worldwide Governance Indicators, the rule of law has improved since Milošević’s overthrow: Serbia’s score changed from -1.34 in 2000 to -0.34 in 2013. However, this is still one of the worst scores in Europe. Academic and popular consensus is that corruption was transformed and reduced rather than substantially suppressed in the post-Milošević era (Begović 2005; Pešić 2007).
through which the authority of the state is established and reproduced (Blom Hansen & Stepputat 2001). However, law appears to be expanding beyond its traditional association with state power as of late. John and Jean Comaroff suggest that it undergoes a kind of ‘fetishisation’: a process ‘whereby an abstraction – in this case, “the law” – is objectified, ascribed a life-force of its own, and attributed the mythic capacity to configure a world of relations in its own image’ (Comaroff & Comaroff 2009: 33). They argue that this fetishisation of law has gained momentum since the end of the Cold War and point to the increased law-making activity around the world, in parallel with a growing popular belief in the power of law and the penetration of legal discourse into all spheres of life. In their characteristically imaginative but not always empirically rigorous manner, the Comaroffs link these trends to the heterogeneity of contemporary societies, in which law assumes the role of an apparently neutral technology for the ‘negotiation of values and interests across otherwise intransitive lines of difference’ (Comaroff & Comaroff 2009: 37). A more firmly grounded point of their analysis, which I am particularly interested to develop, is the link they draw between the culture of legalism and the neoliberal shift ‘from government to governance’ – the outsourcing of much of the traditional regulatory authority and functions of the state to various non-state actors and self-organising networks (see also Rhodes 1996; Shore 2006; von Benda-Beckmann, von Benda-Beckmann & Eckert 2009). According to Jessop (2010: 207), this ‘destatization of politics’ is one of the contemporary transformations of statehood that occurs concomitantly with a ‘de-nationalization of the state’ and ‘internationalization of policy regimes.’ Over the recent decades, hegemonic technocratic paradigms of ‘new public management’ and ‘good governance,’ and the closely related neoliberal political and public rhetoric, justified what was essentially a hollowing out of the state by such seemingly apolitical and value-neutral ends as efficiency and flexibility of governing (and ultimately economic competitiveness and growth), but also in more political-theoretical terms as participative, representative and democratic (Rhodes 1996: 666–67; Shore 2006: 710, 719; Wedel 2009: 30–32). Law emerges as a key technology of regulation in this increasingly destatised and depoliticised (‘juridified’ or ‘constitutionalised’) model of government, whereas politics is increasingly seen as an undesirable threat to the supposedly rational and scientific rules embodied in law (Comaroff & Comaroff 2009; Jessop 2010; von Benda-Beckmann, von Benda-Beckmann & Eckert 2009).

I argue that it is the rise of legalist governance that propels much of the intensive law-making effort and the rule of law discourse in contemporary Serbia. True, many of my research participants, especially CSO workers, emphasised implementation and enforcement of law as more serious issues in Serbia than mere adoption of legislation. To illustrate the nature of this problem, Dušan Spasojević, a Belgrade-based political scientist, paraphrased a Serbian minister as ‘hoping that [a new] law will be put into practice.’\(^{12}\) But implementation can clearly only become an issue after the hundreds of ‘modern’ norms have been

\(^{12}\) Interview with Dušan Spasojević, 30 November 2010.
adopted, and the very concern with rule of law is pivoted on an ideology of legalism. CSO workers tended to see the EU-driven legal change as benign at the minimum and potentially useful. For instance, Miodrag Shrestha, BCIF Executive Director, argued: ‘Even the laws, some of which perhaps cannot be implemented immediately or only with great difficulties or are not implementable at all, make a step in that direction [of social progress – MM], little by little.’

The aforementioned emphasis on the ‘harmonisation’ of law betrays a further assumption that to produce an orderly society, one needs law that is itself orderly. Taken together, these ideas and norms constitute what could be described as visions of, and attempts to realise, a double kind of legal formalisation – an ongoing development of the legal technology itself, and an improved regulation of social life through law. The present case is one of an attempted formalisation of ‘civil society’ (in the sense of a set of legal entities that actors understand to comprise it), its organisational forms, operations and relationships with the state, all of which were considered to had been insufficiently formalised: non-transparent, non-competitive, and inefficient. At the same time, it is marked by a close involvement of ‘civil society’ actors in law- and policymaking, which has been promoted in recent decades as conducive to the democratisation of governance in Serbia and worldwide. The next section briefly examines these claims and contextualises them in Serbia before I turn to the actual processes of law-making.

3. ‘Civil society’ and democratisation of governance

The making of the new civil society laws is a prime example of the new governance. It involved a combination of state and non-state actors, especially CSOs, international organisations, and foreign official donors. The involvement of CSOs was in line with the long-standing preoccupation of an influential part of Serbian civil society with discussing, suggesting and participating in legal and institutional reforms of the post-Milošević state (e.g., Babović & Vuković 2015; Vuković 2013; Vuković & Babović 2014). The involved organisations and individuals were linked to ‘civil society’ in the dominant sense of that term in Serbia. In contrast to my analytical concept of civil society, this native concept is normative and exclusive in organisational and political terms. It typically refers to official (i.e., registered) and professional nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) established from the 1990s onwards, funded by Western donors, and pursuing liberal agendas such as human and minority rights advocacy, democratisation, or economic and social liberalisation.

Crucially, the donors and their local beneficiaries, linked up by hierarchically organised flows of resources, concepts, norms and people, subscribed to the liberal discourse of civil society that rose to dominance both in Serbia and worldwide. In tune with the rhetoric surrounding the turn to destatised governance, the

13 Interview with Miodrag Shrestha, 27 September 2011.
liberal discourse presumes the participation of civil society to make processes of policymaking, law-making and governing more ‘democratic,’ especially in postsocialist, post-authoritarian or otherwise ‘democratising’ settings (Baker 1999; Mercer 2002). Influential political scientists like Diamond and Huntington effectively gave a more scientific cloak to older liberal ideas about civil society (seen as ‘autonomous’ and clearly separated from the state) as a check on the power of the state (seen as marked by inherent autocratic tendencies), and as an idealised pluralist mechanism of social interest representation vis-à-vis the state. During my fieldwork, I repeatedly heard these ideas being evoked in conferences, workshops and meetings attended by NGO workers, government officials and representatives of foreign institutions. They also abounded in NGO mission statements, publications such as *Mreža* (e.g. Civic Initiatives 2007: 2, 2009: 7), and the uncountable documents generated in the course of project design and implementation. They were clearly crucial for the legitimation of foreign support for the building and maintenance of ‘civil society’ in this particular sense and its inclusion in governance.

However, critics argued that this liberal perspective understands civil society not as the site of democratic politics itself but a mere ‘support structure for actually existing democracy at the state level’ (Baker 1999: 21–22). Defined as an exclusive property of liberal democracy, its existence is seen as impossible without private property, free markets, and the negative liberty of self-interested individuals. The instrumentalism of this line of thinking is further deepened by the emphasis, especially in international development discourse and practice, on the particular importance of formal, professionalised, and often foreign-funded NGOs within civil society thus understood (Mercer 2002). In Serbia, this means that the democratic virtues of civil society are associated only with the kind of NGOs described above – often in an unreflected and routinised manner. What follows is an analysis of the social processes of the making of civil society laws that is aimed at a critical assessment of precisely these ideas, in addition to the ideology of legal formalisation. How likely are legal technologies to reform social life according to the intentions of lawmakers, and is the participation of CSOs actually conducive to democratisation?

### 4. Informality in social processes of law-making

Serbian CSOs started to lobby for a new Law on Associations shortly after the regime change in 2000. Discussions on drafts of the Law were repeatedly interrupted by changes of the ruling coalition, after each of which they started anew with a fresh draft. There were three such cycles of activity: in 2000–04, 2004–07, and 2007–09 (see Fig. 1). My main finding was that while the ministries in charge, foreign donors who provided support, and working names of the Law were all constantly changing, certain organisations and individuals who got involved in the process early on stuck with it to the end.
After the Ministry of Justice attempted to impose its own draft in 2001, the NGO Civic Initiatives, with the backing of the Council of Europe, played a key role in getting the Ministry to accept the involvement of an ‘NGO working group’, whose composition at that stage is unclear (see Fig. 1). In 2003, the Federation of Nongovernmental Organisations of Serbia (FENS) was formed at an annual conference of Civic Initiatives, which became its de facto secretariat. The late Miljenko Dereta, one of the founders and long-time Executive Director of Civic Initiatives, served as Co-Chairman of the FENS from its founding until 2009. Since the FENS defined the Law as its priority, Civic Initiatives continued to be involved in its making both directly and through its leadership in the FENS.

After a new government was formed in 2004, the Ministry of State Administration and Local Self-Government took over the Law agenda, and the Serbian mission of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) funded a series of roundtables in 2004–07. At the first such roundtable

Fig. 1. Drafting and adopting the Law on Associations.
in late 2004, the Ministry presented a draft that the attendees rejected (Civic Initiatives 2004). The Ministry unveiled another draft in the spring of 2005 that the ‘NGO working group’ found much improved (Dereta 2005). Members of the working group were Živka Vasilevska, Dragan Golubović, Miljenko Dereta, and Dejan Milenković (Dereta 2005: 1). Vasilevska, Director of the NGO Centre for the Development of the Non-Profit Sector, had already had been a member of the very first ‘expert team’ formed in December 2000. Dragan Golubović, a legal expert and university professor, had been engaged as a ‘consultant’ by January 2002. Dereta, Vasilevska and Golubović were still being publicly presented as members of the working group in 2007 when the final draft was written (Civic Initiatives 2007; Fund... 2007). These people thus participated in the writing of the Law from its early stages through the end.

A number of meetings took place in 2005–07 (see Fig. 1), but only after early elections in 2007 did the new government adopt the draft and send it to the parliament for adoption. This was preceded by a crucial shift: the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) started to fund the drafting of the Law through its $27.5m Civil Society Advocacy Initiative. The programme was implemented in 2006–13 by the Serbian branch of the US Institute for Sustainable Communities (ISC) and four ‘implementing partners’, including BCIF, the Civic Initiatives, and the European Centre for Not-for-Profit Law (ECNL), a Budapest-based non-profit company where Dragan Golubović worked as a Senior Legal Adviser. The programme, framed by a discourse linking civil society participation to democratisation, supported the involvement of these organisations in the reforms of civil society legislation (Institute... n.d.). Tanja Bjelanović, BCIF Programme Director, told me that there were ‘three things which went in a pack.’ First, Civic Initiatives focused on the Law on Associations ‘because that somehow falls in the nature of their work.’ Second, BCIF, as a leading foundation, focused on the Law on Endowments and Foundations. And finally, the two organisations drafted some tax-law amendments together. According to Bjelanović, Golubović was the ‘expert who practically did all these things for us.’ Additional funding was provided by the British Embassy (Benmansur et al. 2009) and the Open Society Foundation (Civic Initiatives 2008). Bjelanović believed that the foreign funding mattered because ‘a group of experts and organisations came forward and offered to cover all expenses and do the job’ for the government.14

The process of adopting the Law on Associations stalled when the Koštunica government collapsed in 2008, necessitating early elections. After the new government was formed, it readopted the 2007 draft and sent it to the parliament, which finally adopted it in 2009. Among other novelties, the Law liberalised the founding of associations, allowed them to make profits, and introduced the requirements of public tendering and financial reporting to the system of state funding of associations (Benmansur et al. 2009).

As mentioned, Article 38 on the funding system could not be implemented without a specifying bylaw.15 The Ministry of State Administration and Local

14 Interview with Tanja Bjelanović, 1 December 2011.
15 Interview with Ivana Ćirković, 9 May 2011.
Self-Government therefore founded a working group in late 2010 (Velat 2012) to draft a document informally known as the Budget Funding of Associations Regulation, which the government adopted in early 2012. The following members of the working group then presented the bylaw to the public: Dragan Golubović, Dubravka Velat of Civic Initiatives, Ivana Ćirković, and the Assistant Minister Jasmina Benmansur (see video at Medija Centar 2012). Benmansur specified that the working group was composed of representatives of relevant ministries, the Office for Co-operation with Civil Society (Ćirković), and Civic Initiatives who also ‘involved other independent experts... I mean Professor Golubović’ (Medija Centar 2012). The relationships crystallised during the long work on the Law on Associations clearly prefigured the drafting of the bylaw as well.

Some of these individuals and organisations further participated in the development of the Law on Endowments and Foundations. The lobbying for this law was first initiated by the NGO Centre for the Advancement of Legal Studies (CUPS) but then it stalled. When BCIF got involved in 2007, it built on the work of CUPS and included its representative in the working group.16 The other members were Golubović, Vasilevska, and representatives of BCIF, two other NGOs, the Ministry of Culture, and the Municipality of Palilula. There was also a larger committee, composed of the working group members and representatives of several additional state institutions and CSOs, including Civic Initiatives. However, while the working group met 16 times, the committee only met twice. The final draft was based on a document that the committee accepted in 2008 and incorporated comments collected in six public debates in 2008–09. The parliament adopted the law in 2010 (Čulić, Trifunović & Golubović 2011: 5). Apart from allegedly making the work of foundations more ‘transparent’ (see above), the Law also shifted the competency of registering foundations from the Ministry of Culture to the Business Registers Agency. This was believed to liberalise the registration process, on the assumption that the Ministry of Culture might have been employing political or ideological criteria when deciding on requests for registration.17

Thus, a small and fairly stable network of NGOs and individuals with strong links to NGOs exerted a decisive influence on this set of legal reforms. Furthermore, they also enjoyed particularly close links to public institutions and institutional mechanisms for the co-operation of the state and civil society. Before I explain these links, I will provide some background on the history of these institutions and on key individuals in them. In April 2010, the government created the Office for Co-operation with Civil Society (hereafter ‘the Office’), but the body only became operational in January 2011 when Ivana Ćirković was appointed as its Director. Before this appointment, Ćirković had worked for another government body called the Poverty Reduction Strategy Implementation Focal Point (the ‘Focal Point’ hereinafter), which was reorganised and remained as the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit in 2009. The Focal Point was

16 Interview with Tanja Bjelanović, 1 December 2011.
17 Interview with Tanja Bjelanović, 1 December 2011.
established in 2004 to implement the government’s Poverty Reduction Strategy. In 2007, it launched the Civil Society Focal Points (CSFP) – a programme meant to involve civil society in the implementation of the Strategy. Seven CSOs were chosen in a public tender process to represent the Strategy-targeted ‘vulnerable groups,’ such as women, youth or Roma. One of Ćirković’s responsibilities was communicating with the CSFP organisations. These organisations started to lobby the government to create an institution for general state–civil society co-operation, which eventually led to the establishment of the Office.18

In its first year of existence, the Office organised or co-organised four events: the Conference on Partnerships in May, a consultative meeting with a group of CSOs in September, a meeting at the parliament entitled ‘Creating the Stimmulative Framework for the Development of Civil Society’ in September, and the Conference on Volunteering in December. As I went from one event to another, I could not help but notice that inviting certain NGOs was a matter of course.19 Among others, BCIF, Civic Initiatives, and the CRNPS were nearly always represented. BCIF and the Office even organised the Conference on Partnerships together, and Ćirković has been sitting on one of BCIF’s ‘Donation Boards’ since 2008 (Balkan... 2009: 34, 2010: 31, 2011: 33). In 2008–2009, BCIF acted as a ‘consultant’ on a project with the Focal Point, the purpose of which was to develop a database of CSOs that had co-operated with the private sector (Poverty... 2008, 2009). Civic Initiatives, for its part, was selected by the Focal Point as the Civil Society Focal Point for Youth. In 2011, it was obvious that Civic Initiatives was much appreciated by the Office, which invited it to all its events, chose it as a partner for organising the Conference on Volunteering, invited Dereta to give a keynote speech at the meeting in the parliament and the Conference on Partnerships, and supported the organisation’s large quantitative survey of the Serbian civil sector.20 In turn, a worker of the Civic Initiatives told me, the NGO pushed for Ćirković to become the head of the Office.21

As for Dragan Golubović, he and Ivana Ćirković must have known each other at least since 2008 when the Focal Point hired him to prepare a report on a suitable model of state–civil society co-operation in Serbia (Golubović & Andelković 2009). He presented the report in two public debates in December 2008, where Ćirković spoke about the Civil Society Focal Points. The debates were part of a British Embassy-funded project implemented by Civic Initiatives; Dereta was also in attendance. The same project provided the additional funding for the working groups drafting the Law on Associations and the Law on Endowments. Its title – Creating a Stimmulative Environment for the Development of Civil Society – was identical to the name of the event that the Office co-organised in the parliament (Civic Initiatives 2009). In October 2011, Golubović was recruited by the government’s Human Resource Management Unit to give a
one-day training course on *The Mechanisms of CSO Participation in the Process of Public Policy Development and Implementation* to a group of civil servants, including some employees of the Office.\(^{22}\) The Human Resource Management Unit, ‘in co-operation’ with the Office, engaged Golubović to give two similar training courses in 2012 (Office... n.d.).

It is important to note that the organisations and individuals in question took turns in deciding on who would participate in the described processes: the Focal Point, and later the Office, chose the NGOs and experts they would co-operate with; the NGOs, for their part, decided whom they would involve in the development of the laws that they had themselves initiated and for which they have acquired foreign funding. While the Civil Society Focal Points organisations were selected in a public tender, this does not seem to have been the case for the remaining aforementioned activities and projects. There was also no formal process of delegation in which other Serbian CSOs would authorise these individuals and organisations to act as their representatives. Recruitment thus occurred on the basis of personal acquaintances in an essentially informal, private manner. In one case, even kin relations appeared to have influenced access: Dubravka Velat, the only CSO representative in the working group that wrote the Bylaw, was the wife of Miljenko Dereta.\(^{23}\) The continued use of such modes of recruitment has led to the maintenance of a stable informal network across a range of interconnected institutional and pragmatic contexts.

Anthropologist Janine Wedel (2009: 15–19) has coined the terms ‘flexians’ for such individuals operating at and across the boundaries of nominally distinct institutional domains, and ‘flex nets’ for longstanding groups in which they co-operate. Flex nets personalise bureaucracy by ‘operat[ing] through personalized relations within and across official structures’ (Wedel 2009: 15). They privatise information by limiting access to insider knowledge while ‘selling’ their own solutions as the best ones. This is because their goals may be not only (or even necessarily) economic but also ideological – an issue to which I will return shortly. In the case at hand, participation in the drafting of the laws did not result from public calls to participate, and public information on the processes was scarce. Furthermore, flexians juggle roles and representations, and this makes a flex net a resource pool for its members. We have seen that the same people and organisations changed their roles according to the relevant context: e.g., from an NGO manager or public servant to a lawmaker; from an NGO that represents youth to one that writes laws. And finally, through their very form of operation, flexians relax rules at the interstice of official and private institutions. In the present case, a general conclusion might be that the protracted operation of the described flex net blurred institutional boundaries so much as to open up a new, interstitial arena of power. In the next section, I describe the ideologies and political agendas pursued in this arena.

---

\(^{22}\) Field notes from 5 October 2011.

\(^{23}\) Velat or Dereta were also most likely to represent the Civic Initiatives in various public events.
5. Politics of ‘efficiency’

As we have seen, the analysed reforms were presented as being in the general interest of the entire Serbian civil society; official justifications adopted a neutralising emphasis on a need for ‘modern’ and ‘harmonised’ legislation. However, these reforms actually reflected a set of clearly discernible ideological and political agendas. One of the key ideological aspects corresponds to the distinctly neoliberal character of the underlying reasoning. This is particularly indebted to the neoliberal (Chicago School) tradition of the economics of regulation that shapes much of the contemporary thought and practice of government procurement – which was a model that this reform agenda consciously followed. Contemporary procurement theories devote a lot of attention to the cost-efficiency of procurement and assume that this is often lowered by ‘information asymmetries’ and ‘moral hazard’ (Bajari & Tadelis 2001; Laffont & Tirole 1993). These are situations when, for instance, the procurement agency knows less about the cost and quality of a firm’s products than the firm itself, or when taxpayers know less about the procurement process than the procurement officials who should act in their interest. This may lead to a firm being selected that does not provide the best quality and/or best cost. The procurement literature generally finds the solution in tendering in which all competent firms are free to participate, thus maximising competition, and whose criteria, participants and outcomes are public, thus maximizing transparency – both of which should lead to improved efficiency. Apart from the economics of regulation, this literature draws heavily on game theory and principal-agent theory, two interrelated bodies of work that presume rational, utility-maximising actors. In the present case, building on this conceptual model has led to the critique of the existing funding system as one that allows individuals to behave as rational actors maximising their own utility at the expense of the taxpayer. For instance, an NGO manager exempt from reporting may spend grants in the manner that is best for him and/or his organisation. An unsupervised official may approve grants based on bribes or other favours. Hence there is a need for ‘formal,’ ‘clear’ and ‘transparent’ procedures that would variously force or incentivise actors to behave efficiently. If the manager must provide financial reports, the reasoning goes, he will spend the grant as agreed in order to keep access to future funding, and if the official must organise open and transparent public tendering, she will choose the best and most cost-efficient projects to avoid sanctions.

If the actors controlling the reforms subscribed to an alternative ideological framework, they might set and pursue different agendas, entailing different definitions of priorities, problems and solutions. This may be illustrated by another group of CSOs with which I worked in Serbia: associations of disabled people that were either founded in socialist Yugoslavia or were founded later but still followed the Yugoslav model of a membership-based association of disabled people. While I cannot discuss their specific characteristics in detail, the
important point for present purposes is that people from NGOs self-identifying with the dominant Serbian model of ‘civil society’ did not consider these organisations as belonging to civil society thus understood. They would often refer to them as ‘traditional associations of disabled people’ and criticised their practices as outdated, often corrupt and useless to those they were supposed to benefit: disabled people. These critics claimed that state institutions, out of habit, continued to fund these ‘traditional’ organisations in the old (non-transparent, non-competitive) manner. The solution was to subject them to the new funding allocation system based on project proposals, competitive tendering and reporting. Those capable and willing to transform would become efficient, while the rest would perish and stop wasting public resources. Since ‘traditional’ and ‘modern’ CSOs often competed for the same bundles of state funding, this would allegedly also put them on an equal footing.\(^\text{24}\)

This account of things aspires to the status of an impartial diagnosis but is actually deeply perspectival and political. As I learned, the obligation to submit project proposals and financial reports was introduced into the state funding of the ‘traditional’ associations as early as 2002. Unsurprisingly, then, some leading members of the ‘traditional’ associations whom I talked with believed that they were already being funded according to the ‘project system’.\(^\text{25}\) Rather than a supposed lack of cost-efficiency and transparency, the fundamental problem for them was that civil servants exercised complete discretion in approving grants (which meant that these were unpredictable and based on somebody else’s ideas about what disabled people needed) and that grants were generally far too small to allow the associations to provide the desirable scope and level of services to their members.\(^\text{26}\) These people, if they were in the position to decide for themselves, might prioritise completely different reforms of civil society laws or, more radically, issues and solutions that were not even law-focused, such as institutional frameworks supporting a long-term sustainability and autonomy of the associations. This is all the more the case since the new system of funding allocation based the competition for state funding on competencies such as writing project proposals and financial reports, which favoured the ‘modern’ CSOs over ‘traditional’ associations. By creating and occupying the interstitial political arena, the flex net succeeded in imposing apparently technical and neutral standards that actually favoured its own resources, strategies and values while marginalising alternatives. This shows that the political nature of the reforms goes beyond an allegiance to neoliberal ideology to the classical problematic of competition over scarce resources and the ability to impose criteria of legitimate access and exclusion.

\(^\text{24}\) Interviews with: Alisa Halak, 16 March 2011; Ivana Ćirković, 9 May 2011; Milena Banović, 2 June 2011; Lepojka Ćarević-Mitanovski, 20 September 2011.

\(^\text{25}\) Interview with Branka Šobot Jelićić, 15 December 2011.

\(^\text{26}\) Interviews with: Katica Randelović, 3 August 2011; Aneta Ilić, 4 August 2011; Goran Perlić, 2 November 2011.
6. Conclusions

The data and analysis presented above indicate that the actors dominating the examined legal reforms were recruited in an informal, personalised, and therefore (to take their own discourse seriously) ‘non-transparent’ and ‘non-competitive’ manner. This reinforced their relationships with one another and put them in a more privileged position than other CSOs to participate and influence the activities of the Office in its first year of existence. In this manner, they were able to open up and populate new spaces of power and pursue their own political and hybrid (private/public) agendas. As for the supposed relationship between civil society involvement and representative and democratic law-making, there is also little evidence that this occurred in the present case. It might well be the case that an informal, implicit idea of representation was at stake here that at least partly legitimated the dominant role of the aforementioned group of NGOs, which were among the largest, richest and most influential. My data does not allow me to either accept or reject this interpretation. On the one hand, it is true that I have not heard CSO workers denounce the manner in which these particular legal reforms took place. On the other hand, my research participants repeatedly criticised their actors for what appear to be related offences; for instance, a worker of an unnamed Belgrade NGO confessed she didn’t ‘like Dereta too much because he monopolises things,’ while a director of a South Serbian NGO argued that Civic Initiatives and CRNPS acted increasingly as ‘interest groups.’ More importantly, I rush to add that even if such an informal but basically legitimate mechanism of representation was at work here, it would only extend to ‘civil society’ in the particular sense dominant in Serbia, given that ‘traditional’ associations of disabled people and many other kinds of CSOs are not considered and do not consider themselves a part of ‘civil society’ so defined. Finally, the present case also challenges the liberal assumption about the clear separation and functional complementarity of the state and civil society that enables the claims about civil society participation and representativeness. As we have seen here, the flex net works in a manner that systematically blurs the boundaries of the state and civil society.

My analysis seems to confirm the assumption of a majority of Serbian CSO workers that the use of informal ‘contacts’ is a common practice in the civil sector (Grødeland & Aasland 2011: 136). At the same time, most claimed to use such contacts for work-related purposes rarely or never, and claimed to feel negatively about using contacts (Grødeland & Aasland 2011: 149–51). This set of attitudes may help us understand the paradox of seeking formalisation through informal practices. A viable interpretation might be that these individuals and organisations were truly uncomfortable with the prevalence of informality in the sector but considered their own practices as exempt from such critique, especially if these were in the service of rooting out informality. The

---

27 I thank my discussant Dušan Spasojević for raising this point.
28 Field notes from 11 April 2011.
29 Interview with N. S., 12 February 2011.
talk given by Dubravka Velat at the public presentation of the Budget Funding of Associations Regulation offers an interesting perspective on this issue. Velat noted that USAID/ISC supported Civic Initiatives’s participation in the working group as the only CSO and continued:

I couldn’t say I represent[ed] the whole civil society because it would be wrong. I haven't been chosen or delegated or appointed in that manner, but I thought that the results of debates gave me enough legitimacy to represent the interests that were for the benefit of the sector.

Velat further noted that there were no public debates about the bylaw because that is not a legal requirement for bylaws. These somewhat defensive comments suggest that Velat doubted that the drafting of the bylaw was ideal in terms of representation, but still found a way of justifying the process by referring to unspecified ‘debates’. Other participants talked or wrote about these processes without any apparent need to justify their limited representativeness and publicness.

Two tentative general conclusions might be drawn. First, civil society participation does not necessarily or automatically make law- or policymaking more representative, participative or democratic. If civil society failed to make the very legal reforms that were directly relevant to it truly representative and participative, it is not clear why we should assume that it would do so more generally if it had decisive influence over the making of other laws or policies. (However, since my analysis was only concerned with the law-making processes as such and not their results, I cannot exclude the opposite outcome either). Other conditions rather than civil society participation tout court seem to be necessary to achieve those outcomes. In the case at hand, it is obviously open to debate whether the participation of a small number of NGOs is preferable to no participation; one of the possible counterarguments is that such a situation might lead to the adoption of laws and policies tailored to suit the particular interests or worldviews of the select few at the expense of others. Second, the examined case casts doubt on the ideology according to which the law can produce social order, and the ensuing tendency to prioritise legal solutions to complex social and political problems. Simply put, it seems that society has transformed law rather than vice versa.

References

Academic works

Andreas, Peter. 2005. Criminalizing Consequences of Sanctions: Embargo Busting and Its Legacy. International Studies Quarterly 49(2): 335–360.

Babović, Marija, and Danilo Vuković. 2015. Shaping Social Policies in the Western Balkans: Legal and Institutional Changes in the Context of Globalisation and Post-Socialist Transformation. In Thomas, Margo, and Vesna Bojicic-Dzelilovic (eds.), Public Policy Making in the Western Balkans: Case Studies of Selected Economic and Social Policy Reforms, 17–44. Dordrecht: Springer.
Bajari, Patrick, and Steven Tadelis. 2001. Incentives vs Transaction Costs: A Theory of Procurement Contracts. *RAND Journal of Economics* 32(3): 387–407.

Baker, Gideon. 1999. The Taming of the Idea of Civil Society. *Democratization* 6(3): 1–29.

Begović, Boris. 2005. Corruption in Serbia: Causes and Remedies. Policy Brief #27. The William Davidson Institute.

Blom Hansen, Thomas, and Fin Stepputat. 2001. Introduction: States of Imagination. In Blom Hansen, Thomas, and Fin Stepputat (eds.), *States of Imagination: Ethnographic Explorations of the Postcolonial State*, 1–38. Durham: Duke University Press.

Comaroff, John L., and Jean Comaroff. 2009. Reflections on the Anthropology of Law, Governance and Sovereignty. In von Benda-Beckmann, Franz, von-Benda Beckmann, Keebet, and Julia Eckert (eds.), *Rules of Law and Laws of Ruling: On the Governance of Law*, 31–59. Farnham: Ashgate.

Friedman, Lawrence M. 1994. Is There a Modern Legal Culture? *Ratio Juris* 7(2): 117–131.

Grødeland, Åse B. 2013. Public Perceptions of Corruption and Anti-Corruption Reforms in the Western Balkans. *The Slavonic and East European Review* 91(3): 535–598.

Grødeland, Åse B., and Aadne Aasland. 2011. Civil Society in Post-Communist Europe: Perceptions and Use of Contacts. *Journal of Civil Society* 7(2): 129–156.

Jessop, Bob. 2007. *State Power: A Strategic-Relational Approach*. Cambridge: Polity.

Laffont, Jean-Jacques, and Jean Tirole. 1993. A Theory of Incentives in Procurement and Regulation. Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Mercer, Claire. 2002. NGOs, Civil Society and Democratization: A Critical Review of the Literature. *Progress in Development Studies* 2(1): 5–22.

Mundy, Martha. 2002. Introduction. In Mundy, Martha (ed.), *Law and Anthropology*, xv–xxvi. Aldershot: Ashgate.

Pavlović, Dejan. 2010. Reforma pravosuđa u Srbiji nakon 5. oktobra. In Pavlović, Dušan (ed.), *Razvoj demokratskih ustanova u Srbiji – deset godina posle*, 83–94. Belgrade: Heinrich Böll Foundation.

Pešić, Vesna. 2007. State Capture and Widespread Corruption in Serbia. CEPS Working Document no. 262. Centre for European Policy Studies.

Prokopijević, Miroslav. 2010. Propuštena prilika: deset godina ekonomske tranzicije u Srbiji. In Pavlović, Dušan (ed.), *Razvoj demokratskih ustanova u Srbiji – deset godina posle*, 73–82. Belgrade: Heinrich Böll Foundation.

Rhodes, R. A. W. 1996. The New Governance: Governing without Government. *Political Studies* 44: 652–667.

Shore, Cris. 2006. ‘Government Without Statehood? Anthropological Perspectives on Governance and Sovereignty in the European Union. *European Law Journal* 12(6): 709–724.

Sörensen, Jens S. 2003. War as Social Transformation: Wealth, Class, Power and an Illiberal Economy in Serbia. *Civil Wars* 6(4): 55–82.
Von Benda-Beckmann, Franz, von Benda-Beckmann, Keebet, and Julia Eckert. 2009. Rules of Law and Laws of Ruling: Law and Governance Between Past and Future. In von Benda-Beckmann, Franz, von Benda-Beckmann, Keebet, and Julia Eckert (eds.), Rules of Law and Laws of Ruling: On the Governance of Law, 1–30. Farnham: Ashgate.

Vuković, Danilo. 2011. Društvene osnove pravne države: primer Srbije. Sociološki pregled 45(3): 421–451.

Vuković, Danilo. 2013. Interesi, mreže i institucije – sociološko-pravna analiza novog socijalnog zakonodavstva u Srbiji. Sociologija 55(1): 25–46.

Wedel, Janine R. 2009. Shadow Elite: How the World's New Power Brokers Undermine Democracy, Government, and the Free Market. New York: Basic Books.

Government and NGO documents

Balkan Community Initiatives Fund. 2009. Godišnji izveštaj 2008. Belgrade: Balkan Community Initiatives Fund.

Balkan Community Initiatives Fund. 2010. Godišnji izveštaj 2009. Belgrade: Balkan Community Initiatives Fund.

Balkan Community Initiatives Fund. 2011. Godišnji izveštaj 2010. Belgrade: Balkan Community Initiatives Fund.

Benmansur, Jasmina, Rajić, Dragana, Golubović, Dragan, Vasilevska, Živka, Milenković, Dejan, Velat, Dubravka, and Nives Čulić. 2009. Vodič za primenu Zakona o udruženjima. Belgrade: Civic Initiatives.

Civic Initiatives. 2004. Zakon o udruženjima gradana. Mreža 38–39: 7.

Civic Initiatives. 2007. Javna rasprava o Nacrtu zakona o udruženjima. Mreža 67: 1–2.

Civic Initiatives. 2008. Završen rad na Prednacrtu zakona o zadužbinama i fondacijama. Mreža 80–81: 2.

Civic Initiatives. 2009. Predstavljamo: ‘Stvaranje podsticajnog okruženja za razvoj OCD u Srbiji’. Mreža 82–83: 7–8.

Čulić, Nives, Trifunović, Jasna, and Dragan Golubović. 2011. Vodič za primenu Zakona o zadužbinama i fondacijama. Belgrade: Balkan Community Initiatives Fund.

Dereta, Miljenko. 2005. Zakon o NVO pre leta? Mreža 44: 1.

European Commission. 2014. Serbia Progress Report. Brussels: European Commission.

Fund for the Non-Profit Sector Development of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina. 2007. Informator o radu Fonda za razvoj neprofitnog sektora Autonomne pokrajine Vojvodine (available on-line: http://www.fondrnps.org.rs/?page_id=319, accessed 10 August 2012).

Golubović, Dragan, and Branka Andelković. 2009. Institucionalni mehanizam saradnje vlade i civilnog društva: uporedna iskustva i preporuke za Srbiju (nacrt). Belgrade: Poverty Reduction Strategy Implementation Focal Point.
Government of the Republic of Serbia. 2005. *Strategija razvoja socijalne zaštite*. Belgrade: Government of the Republic of Serbia.

Government of the Republic of Serbia. 2014. *Strategija reforme javne uprave u Republici Srbiji*. Belgrade: Government of the Republic of Serbia.

Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia. 2013. *Ljudska prava u Srbiji 2012. Populizam: urušavanje demokratskih vrednosti*. Belgrade: Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia.

Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia. 2014. *Ljudska prava u Srbiji 2013. Iskonski otpor liberalnim vrednostima*. Belgrade: Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia.

House for Human Rights and Democracy. 2012. *Izveštaj Kuće ljudskih prava i demokratije o radu novih vlasti u oblasti ljudskih prava*. (available on-line: http://kuca-ljudskih-prava-rs/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/Izvestaj-Kuce-ljudskih-prava-i-demokratije-o-radu-novih-vlasti-u-oblasti-ljudskih-prava.pdf, accessed 22 February 2015).

Institute for Sustainable Communities. n.d. Grants and Assistance (available on-line: http://csai.iscserbia.org/what_we_do/grants_and_assistance/, accessed 3 August 2013).

National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia. n.d. Doneti zakoni (available on-line: http://www.parlament.gov.rs/akti/doneti-zakoni/u-sazivu-od-22-januara-2001.1036.html, accessed 10 November 2014).

Office for Co-operation with Civil Society. n.d. Obuka za državne službenike (available on-line: http://civilnodrustvo.gov.rs/sr/inicijative/seminari-i-obuke/obuka-za-drzavne-sluzbene/, accessed 28 September 2012).

Poverty Reduction Strategy Implementation Focal Point. 2008. Počela izrađa baze projekata NVO – saradnja sa poslovnim sektorom. *Bilten o primeni Strategije za smanjenje siromaštva u Srbiji* 14: 5.

Poverty Reduction Strategy Implementation Focal Point. 2009. Baza projekata OCD: Praćenje rezultata i predstavljanje poslovnom sektoru. *Bilten o primeni Strategije za smanjenje siromaštva u Srbiji* 17: 2.

Serbian European Integration Office. 2012. Nacionalni program za integraciju do sada u celini ispunjen 81 odsto (available on-line: http://www.seio.gov.rs/vesti.145.html?newsid=1289, accessed 2 May 2013).

Velat, Dubravka. 2012. Predstavljanje Uredbe o sredstvima za podsticanje programa ili nedostajućeg dela sredstava za finansiranje programa od javnog interesa koja realizuju udruženja (available on-line: http://www.bcif.org/Vesti/2012-01-27-Predstavljanje_Uredbe_o_sredstvima.htm, accessed 16 October 2012).

**Media and online contents**

Medija Centar. 2012. Predstavljanje Uredbe kojom će biti regulisano finansiranje udruženja iz budžeta Republike Srbije (video file) (available on-line: http://www.webtv.rs/media/mc/goplay.asp?oid=37738, accessed 16 October 2012).
Program Demokratske opozicije Srbije. Program za demokratsku Srbiju (available online: http://www.vreme.com/arhiva_html/502/10.html, accessed 6 November 2014).

Legal norms

Budget Funding for Associations Regulation. Uredba o sredstvima za podsticanje programa ili nedostajućeg dela sredstava za finansiranje programa od javnog interesa koja realizuju udruženja. Službeni glasnik RS, no. 8/2012.

Law on Associations. Zakon o udruženjima. Službeni glasnik RS, no. 51/2009, 99/2011.

Law on Corporate Income Tax. Zakon o porezu na dobit pravnih lica. Službeni glasnik RS, no. 25/2001, 80/2002, 80/2002, 43/2003, 84/2004, 18/2010, 101/2011, 119/2012 and 47/2013.

Law on Endowments and Foundations. Zakon o zadužbinama i fondacijama. Službeni glasnik RS, no. 88/2010 and 99/2011.

Law on Social Organisations and Associations of Citizens. Zakon o društvenim organizacijama i udruženjima građana. Službeni glasnik SRS, no. 24/1982, 39/1983, 17/1984, 50/1984, 45/1985 and 12/1989, and Službeni glasnik RS, no. 53/1993, 67/1993, 48/1994 and 101/2005.

The norms are listed by their English names used in the text, followed by an official Serbian (Latin) equivalent and, if applicable, the issue(s) of the official gazette in which they, and their subsequent amendments, were published.