Does Social Capital Matter:
from Civil Society to Social Capital in Uzbekistan

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Abstract

Considering the urge of the international developmental institutions, donors and scholars upon the necessity of civil society building in developing countries, this paper analyzes it from developing countries perspective. It examines evolution of civil society concept in the West and integration with neo-liberal values of 1980s. In the process of concept integration, this paper argues that civil concept has been polarized and affected its growth in Uzbekistan. Rather than being civil it has become uncivil society in the eyes of the government.

Importance of associational life and civic involvement was re-emerged in the works of Putnam in his *Social Capital* theory in the end of 1990s. In developing countries like Uzbekistan, social capital has been clamed as existing traditional associational life and it serves as unique 'communal civil society'. Besides, as an active civil society is considered the sphere of Public Associations and GONGOs which what general society believes to be. In this paper we argue that those scholars' attempts to define both neo-liberal civil society and social capital in Uzbekistan perspective do not serve for the productivity of research unless such research seeks for enabling state-society synergy.

Introduction

Social capital, civil society, voluntary organizations and social networks have been considered as 'missing link' in development. It implies that all other components of development such as economical, political and institutional reforms in developing countries should support and be supported by *civic* engagement of society in public and private spheres (Evans 1996a, p. 1119; Harriss 2001a, p. 14). Such approach emphasizes upon bringing society in front and it has two conceptual backgrounds, concept of civil society and social capital (Diamond 1997, pp. 6–30).

Civil society is the arena of non-state institutions and practices which enjoy a high degree of autonomy (Kumar 1993, p. 383) to express their interests, passions, preferences, and ideas, to exchange information, to achieve collective goals, to make demands on the state, to improve the structure and functioning of the state, and to hold state officials accountable (Diamond 1997, p. 6). Social capital is social networks established by associational engagement such as voluntary organizations, and generated reciprocal norms and trust between citizens by such engagement

(Putnam 1993a, p. 167).

These two concepts have a lot in common such as both rely on voluntary basis of social bonds; trust and reciprocity are core values of two and both spheres are autonomous from the state (Newton 2001, pp. 201-214; Harriss 2001b, pp. 1055-1071; Molenaers 2003, pp. 113-132). However, they are different concepts according to direction of social forces and the part of society these two concepts represent (Diamond 1997, p. 6; 1994, pp. 4-17; Harriss 2001a, pp. 12-13). Whereas civil society is a part of politically conscious society directing its energy toward public sphere to challenge existing (e.g.) ideology, political discourse etc., social capital is apolitical side of society where individuals join for self-education, exchange and share benefits of trust they gain in it which indirectly supposed to improve efficiency of public institutions work and implementation of developmental polities (Putnam 1993a; Harriss 2001a; Diamond 1997).

This paper tries to explore application problems of these concepts in developing countries in example of Uzbekistan. Research argument is that applicability of the concepts has become dependent up on the pre-existing political context of the society they are applied to.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. In Chapter 1 the author will examine "civil society" and "social capital" separately to explore how the value of associational life has been shifted in application to developing countries. Chapter 2 describes application of the two concepts to the development projects in Uzbekistan as a specific case. And in Conclusion the author attempts to emphasize "state-society synergy" as desirable direction in order to develop both civil society and social capital in developing countries.

1. "Civil Society" and "Social Capital" as analytical concepts

1.1 Civil Society: problems of application

Contemporary understanding of civil society owes much to the post-war decolonization which brought the 'Third World' and progressive Cold War from 1950s up to 1980s. There are three main points worth to raise here.

First, emerged new independent states in Asia, South-East Asian, Africa and transition countries of South America were facing problems of nation-state building, going through difficult choices to make over political modernization and developmental discourse.

Huntington (1965, pp. 386-430) described the process of political modernization and development of Third World countries in 1960s in comparison between political 'decay' and 'development'. According to him "...modernization means mass mobilization; mass mobilization means increased political participation; and increased participation is the key element of political development" (1965, p. 388). Moreover, participation also is the key to distinguish modern politics from traditional politics, hence " … traditional society is non-participant ― it deploys people by kinship into communities

isolated from each other and from a center", but modern society "...in contrast, is participant society" (1965, p. 388).

Nevertheless, Huntington argues that the process of 'modernization' in polity does not necessarily bring development of political systems. Although "...any thing that happens in the developing countries － coups, ethnic struggles, revolutionary wars － becomes part of the process of development, however contradictory or retrogressive this may appear on the surface" (1965, p. 390). According to him, if demand for political participation and social mobilization is high and correspondent institutionalization is low, such political systems are destined to decay. He strongly suggested for political institutionalization, assimilation of various interests in to political institutions. By this, he emphasized on priority of the political parties as a sphere of interest articulation and representation. Otherwise, excessive demand for participation would affect stability and consolidation of democracy (2006, p. 80).

Another prominent work (Almond & Verba 1989) had illustrated political development of post-war developing countries within cultural perspective. Through controversial discussion of political cultures such as parochial, subject and participant, Almond and Verba defines a *civic culture* (1989, pp. 10–35). By its definition, civic culture was combination of various political cultures in society which must be socialized in order to achieve stability.[1]

In other words, civic culture means that society should have new beliefs and behaviors such as political consciousness, political reflection and participatory values, but these new beliefs should not replace parochial, apolitical attitude which in time should distance individuals from intervening in to every aspect of politics. In between, there is subject political culture which requires citizens to obey the rules, respect the authority and support the political discourse it has chosen (Verba 1980; Almond & Verba 1989).

In my opinion, Huntington's work was a reflection of the ongoing expansion of statism, institutionalization and Keynesian welfare state in America. The honeymoon of Marxist 'bourgeoisie society' and liberty of propertied class ended in the mid of Great Depression. The post-war environment, decolonization and the need for new order in global polity required strong, effective and institutionalized political systems autonomous from capitalist class' interests but work for public interest (Chandhoke 1995, pp. 18–19). From other hand, Almond and Verba approached to this issue in more tolerant stand. They welcomed mass mobilization, social movements and growing participant culture in developing countries. Their suggestion is not top down restrictions, institutionalizations but instead, if let society to remain traditional parochial culture together with new political ambitions, it generates a mixture of both － *civic culture* (Baggetta 2009, pp. 175–199). So, I believe that the difference of mentioned two discussions is that one implies the important role of the government and the second implies on role of the society.

Second, America had become dominant power in global polity, therefore so called instability,

caused by civil wars, social movements coups in developing countries would undermine expansion of American democracy to these countries. On the other hand, social movements had started in America in 1960s were social challenges over state hegemony in decision what interest is of public and what is not in the country. Poulantzas criticized state centrism of 1960s in America on the ground that civil rights movements did and could go beyond the state apparatus, escape its control and even assign their limits on them (1978, p. 135).

Although Offe (1974, p. 251) asserted that relative autonomy from the capitalist class and social forces is necessary to enable state to respond those raising social demands, simultaneously to pursue capital accumulation, and provide public services, Poulantzas (1972) doubts it given the fact that the state itself is under struggle from both demands for freedom of capitalists and equality of all social forces, thus its cohesion is under challenge. However, I think that the state has to seek for legitimacy within the civil society and it needs approval for its functioning; therefore, it aims to satisfy those needs under majority rule. Whether such challenges are legitimate and can be assessed as civil, is turning point of civil society definition.

Third, the period which these debates were raised, the world has been divided in two ideological blocks such as liberal capitalism and socialist communism. From one hand stability and development of political system in developing countries gradually had become dependent on the choice with which 'block' they to be ally. From other hand, both ideologies were suffering from new aspirations and admirations of nations who lived in one system seek a change to another and those aspirations were in most cases oppressed. Social movements and riots from socialist admirers in the West and its allies were seen as un-*civic*-ness because they were eroding competition power of the West against the communist regimes.[2]

However, in 1980s, parallel movements were emerging in communist regimes in Eastern Europe to alert hegemonic communist ideology. These movements have been moved from one region to another and covered Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia. As a result of constant insurgencies, movements and riots, the sustainability of communist regime became vulnerable and at the end of 1980s, dictators of Kremlin authority cave in to demands from majority opposition. These movements which were able to resist and even overthrow communist regime were defined as *civil society* (Ignatieff 1995, pp. 128–136).

At the end of 1980s, both victory of civil rights movements in the capitalist block[3] and communist block (Solidarity movements in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia) gave a birth to the 'neo-liberal' values replacing old liberal and Keynesian welfare state (Leftwich 2000, pp. 1–16; Howell & Pearce 2001, pp. 39–63). I think that these values were reaction to the social power and its mobility which made the states cave in to the increasing demand for free market economies as a global trend. It was also celebrated as a victory of civil society over the state (in America, in Eastern Europe).

The dominancy of neo-liberal values of 1980s up to the end of 1990s has played essential role in expansion of Western policy around the world. Such policy constantly pressured states toward market liberalizations and decentralization of state power hence it must empower propertied class who would be able to mobilize society to demand equal access in decision making process. Therefore, transitional concept of civil society was enriched with the political dimension of society. Ability to associate and organize collective action was '*civic*'ness since it must challenge non-democratic regimes and such political consciousness should be able to demand, criticize and keep the state accountable. Moreover, it should be able to demand for equality, provision of public services, express their opinion on political discourse. Without vibrancy and constant check on the state, it is not possible to guarantee the transition (Howell & Pearce 2001; Chandhoke 1995; Bernhard 1993).

Nevertheless, neo[4]-liberal values have become paradox of its own policies in the Third World as liberal values were questioned once in the West of 1950s.[5] It was not possible to achieve equality without state intervention in to competitive market and it was not possible for the state to impose public order, improve quality of public services and guarantee for equal access to market without 'rolling back' the state in again (Leftwich 2000, pp. 40–71). But it poses a question such as how it is possible to bring the state back in if it endangers neo-liberal values which requires minimal state?

1.2 Social Capital as an applicable concept

The answer to above mentioned question was given by neo-Tocquevillian scholar Robert Putnam from his 20 years research on *Social Capital*. He explains that institutions and norms implemented to facilitate economic, social or even political development do not immediately do so if the social context; civic involvement, trust and reciprocity among members of civic community is not developed first. Such social context which is full of civic participation in associational life generates trust, reciprocity, sense of common interest and collective action. He puts the state as essential 'third party' in order to encourage trust, honesty, solidarity and mutual aid against free-riders and defectors. Therefore, he concludes that both institutions and civic community is mutually reinforcing factors (Putnam 1993c, pp. 163–175) and in this sense I think empowering the state does not endanger neoliberal values.

His case study on Italy from 1970s up to 1990s was focused on the fact that institutional reforms meaning decentralization of governance and policy making to regional governments did not change the difference between institutional performance of *civic*-North and un-civic Southern part of Italy. Therefore, he has analyzed the factors which divided Italy to North and South regardless of parallel institutional reforms in both (Tarrow 1996, pp. 389–397).

He distinguished the difference in reciprocity, trust, solidarity among community members in the Northern and Southern part of Italy. The historical analysis of community development by Putnam brought inspiring facts showing how society of Northern part was rich of mutual aid groups, various cooperatives, educational associations, choral groups and entertaining clubs. Correspondingly, the

readership of newspaper, discussions and informal information exchange was well developed in such *civic* communities. Although these were inward looking parochial associations, he asserts that they were associated with "...other manifestations of civic involvement and sociability, including electoral participation, cultural and recreational associations, and mass-based political parties" (Putnam 1993c, p. 148).

In brief, in my view point civic involvement in associational life and its vibrancy was not directly allocated within political society as in neo-liberal perspective; instead this sphere is 'apolitical'. Therefore, such definition literally negates the polarization between state and civic community as it existed since 1980s. Although it is apolitical, it generates political attitude, belief, and judgment of institutional performance. Political expression and participation is allocated within the political society which Putnam does not deal in detail, instead, he emphasizes on how apolitical side of the society 'civic community' can facilitate institutional performance which is political. It has become clear that neo-Tocquevillian view on development of associational life and its conjuncture with the institutional performance turned earlier polarized developmental discourse toward building social capital. Social capital concept has attracted not only scholars, but multinational developmental institutions, donors and Western politicians. Admitting the importance of the state in this process, suggested seeking for not good governments, charismatic leaders or elites but *good governance*.

The role of the civil society was also distanced from being political, antagonistic and opposed sphere and merged in to apolitical civic community, neighborhoods, choral and parochial associations, mutual aid, and self-help groups. Bonds of kinship and community here seen not as primitive and ritualistic constrain on development but rather the positive source of solidarities which could restrain the individualism and egoistic greed made rampant by capitalistic development (Howell & Pearce 2001, p. 32). These groups do not necessarily challenge the state policies but may function as "...source of discipline and information for public agencies, as well as on-the-ground assistance in the implementation of public projects" (Putnam 1993b, p. 42).

Therefore, from the early years of 21st century, scholars have begun to analyze social capital aspect in developing countries which means the density of voluntary associations, communities and parochial groups which represents informal network of society. Scholars gave attention to the traditional and cultural aspects of society exiting for long times to find roots of associations and trust among members of communities which can be facilitated.

Following section aims at case analysis of Uzbekistan which contributes to the theoretical discussions given above.

2. Application of the concepts in Uzbekistan

2.1 Post Soviet country in transition

Almost to decades past since Uzbekistan became independent in 1991 from Soviet rule. Within these years it has been considered as transition country toward free market economy and democratic system of governance. Such anticipation was based on several factors; a) lessons from destructive and fragileness of previous authoritarian communist regime, b) pledge of the Uzbek government to engage in democratization process by joining United Nations and other International Organizations in 1990s, c) delivered structural adjustment aids conditioning institution building and liberalization toward free market and democracy during 1994–2005. In the minds of American politicians and scholars those factors should have motivated the transition from authoritarian regime toward liberalism, development of free market economy and civil society building (Luong 2002; 2004).

After Uzbekistan became independent and joined international community, it became part of transition process and indirectly linked to the process of developmental discourse as a developing country too. Neo-liberal values of market liberalizations and decentralization process of public authority to the local governments have been introduced by the World Bank and IMF adjustment projects. Uzbekistan became also a part of MDGs' target to emphasize on poverty reduction[6], social welfare and sustainable development. In brief, international donors' assistance was enforcing anticipated transition but it was overlapping, sometimes confronting each other and most importantly clashing with interests of Uzbek authority (Rumer 2005; Eshref Trushin & Eskender Trushin 2005; Dadabaev 2007). Why?

Since the beginning of nation state building process, almost all of the countries in Central Asia remained their old existing ruling institutions, as long as the collapse of Soviet Union did not mean collapse of existing regime in each country. Instead, like in case of Uzbekistan, chiefs of former communistic parties in each country were elected as the presidents of their countries, and recruitment to highest positions was chosen from the same generation taught by communism and socialism theories of state and state building. All the same institutions which were established and used by Moscow to control political, economical and social life of the country remained as necessary pillars of nation state building (Giffen et al. 2005, pp. 49–50). Besides, the time of crisis and priority for the peace and security in early 1990s, made it necessary to have strong state as well as to remain existing experienced cadres and institutions to perform reformations.[7] However, according to foreign experts, the same old institutions, style of governance and cadres made transition slow and dead end (Kandiyoti 2007, pp. 279–97; Adamson 2002, pp. 177–206).

Although, certain authors discuss the 'puzzling success' of Uzbek economy comparing to few neighboring countries (McKinley 2010, p. 2), overall assessment is dominance of state monopoly in all spheres of life. In brief, earlier mentioned developmental projects went through scrutiny of

conservative ruling elites and implemented by picking out only which do not expose or jeopardize nature of state building and decision making of the government (Collins 2002, pp. 137–152). Although there are legislative, executive and judicial authority enriched with multiple political parties for the balance of power, pre-existing state-society relations and ruling institutions are seen as window dressing by promising developmental policies which in reality did not bring visible reforms toward expected liberalizations (Collins 2002, pp. 137–152; Ilkhamov 2002, pp. 8–10; Kangas D 1994, pp. 178–182). Instead, as international watching institutions criticize that Uzbek government still pursues for concentration of public authority in the hands of central government ignoring evolved social unrest toward authoritarian rule, massive emigration and poverty, increasing number of asylum seekers in abroad and most importantly social distrust in government. However, the fear from conflict which liberalization can evoke (Smith 2007, pp. 80–85), fear from non-democratic revolution (Naumkin 2006, pp. 127–140) and fear from external influence (Naumkin 2006, pp. 135–140) of public majority[8] justifies the centralization of power and its coercive nature.

These circumstances resemble to the transition period of new emerged states after de-colonization in 1950s up to 1970s. Transition was slow and the process was affected by patrimonial relations in developing countries (Migdal 1988, pp. 65–80). However, the difference in Uzbekistan was that centralized authority could manage public order and security of the country while in neighboring countries like in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan[9] riots and conflicts took place destabilizing the political system.

2.2 Building civil society in Uzbekistan

In Uzbekistan, the concept of civil society interpretation varies in terms of political, social and cultural dimension in the country. Majority of intellectuals believed that "the conventional definition of civil society put forward by American political theorists in the early 1990s and adopted by Washington was the outgrowth of Western political thought" (Seiple 2005, p. 245). Indeed, the claim for civil society proposed to Uzbekistan was based on Western neo-liberal political thought, assuming that "civil society helps to generate a transition from authoritarian rule…deepens and consolidates democracy once it is established" (Diamond 1994, p. 14). Because, where authoritarian rule has tended to be highly "personalistic" and "neo-patrimonial" ― the real impetus for democratic change tends to originate outside the regime in the mobilization of civil society.[10] Such understanding was developed to undermine constant emphasize of literatures given to the primary role on elites in leading, crafting, or imposing transitions (Seiple 2005, pp. 245–259). It was important to stress how crucial has been the role of civil society in the end of 1980s in Eastern Europe.

Since 1990s' international aid for developmental projects, there were established near 3000 NGOs and sponsored by USAID, SOROS, UNDP and some donor countries. Besides, there were near 20 International NGOs actively networking with local NGOs through various trainings, seminars and

financial supports.   Local NGOs were mainly non-membership NGOs or with few paid staffs to accomplish developmental projects.   Initial target of local NGOs was an introduction of American politics, culture, liberal values and notion of civil society through educational projects.   Gradually NGOs began to invite public officials to their seminars involving intellectuals, professionals and ordinary citizens to create a certain public opinion on particular issues nurtured by Western values.[11]

In the end of 1990s, International NGOs supported local NGOs to push for independence from state intervention as being 'non-government' by initiating a new law on NGOs activities enacted in 1999 which stipulates 'non-interference' between GO-NGO relations.   The trauma caused by 9/11 terrorist attack in the U. S., brought additional attention to Uzbekistan as a geo-strategic alliance on war against terrorism in neighboring country Afghanistan.   Thus, between 2001 and 2003, there were wider opportunities for local NGOs and international NGOs to enlarge their influence and capacity to bring more transition and reforms to Uzbekistan through close connection with Western donors (Seiple 2005; Ilkhamov 2005; Stevens 2007).

In my view an assessment of International NGOs, donors' relationship with local NGOs was quite optimistic.   During those 11 years (1992–2003) of NGOs involvement in the country has brought sense of globalization, integration and slow but visible movement toward civil society building.

However, government of Uzbekistan combined with conservative elites and nationalistic intellectuals looked at these events with suspicion, dislike and sometimes with open criticism. Especially, influence of globalization, introduction of market economy, NGOs activities in the country were propagated as raising poisonous alien culture to Uzbek 'Eastern' traditions and values.   In the mid of such suspicion and dislike for NGOs activities (financed by Donors); there were colorful revolutions one after another.[12]

Although, some experts believe that those events have affected NGOs in Uzbekistan, there were already raised anxiety and suspicion over donors' overwhelming efforts on support for NGOs activities as well as dislike on 'invasion' of Western culture to the Eastern soil.   From 2003 government of Uzbekistan has managed to eradicate international NGOs from the country, and has banned their activities as intervention to domestic political affairs.   Local NGOs has faced to heavy burden of re-registration procedures, surveillance and financial control over donor funding to them.   Extension of control over NGOs was seen also in February 2004, hence the definition of crime of 'treason' stated in article 157 of the Criminal Code was extended to the dissemination of secret information to organizations, thus opening the door for repressive measures and criminalization of NGOs in contact with international NGOs.[13]

The term non-government was seen as anti-government, the tension between NGOs and government became very high so to ensure tight control, they were integrated in to umbrella association "National Association of NGOs" to comply their activities with government policies and tighten their movement within the country.   Under this umbrella association, NGOs are able to apply

for public grants or subsidy on social contracts which amount of given aid is decided by committee on NGOs activities under the Parliament. However, according to local NGOs' view, Association of NGOs does not initiate social development projects but functions merely as a government agency where all NGOs would report back on whatever activities they would plan to do. Moreover, NGOs have very narrow space to work, meaning that barriers to entry (costly fees, bureaucratic discretion power), to operational activities (burden of reports and monitor on public activities), to speech and advocacy (unpredictable regulations, surveillance and harassment), to international contact (requirements for government approval and criminalization of international contact) and finally to resources (burden of report on income and cost) (author's interview with local NGOs in 2008).

It is understood that civil society building in Uzbekistan of 1990s is not so different than other developing countries which faced to transition in 1970s and 1980s. If we remember that social movements, riots and boycotts were widely spread around the world, Almond, Verba, Huntington and Migdal as a representation of Western political thinkers were urging to increase state capacity and political institutions. But from 1980s and onward, neo-liberal values supported civil society to be free to speak and act for facilitation of democratic transition.

However, in my understanding government of Uzbekistan aimed at institutionalization of this sphere. The reason is simple; neo-liberal values enriched in the concept of civil society were obvious to see how demands, criticism and challenge for political participation have been growing. The sphere of civil society was generating a political conscious associational life among admirers of democracy and most importantly life in the West. Therefore, it did not gain support from majority first of all from those who prefer sustainability of traditional and cultural values in the country, and political elites who could not tolerate opposition to the chosen political discourse.

Donors' approach on civil society building in the country was based on neo-liberal dichotomist perspective where state and its institutions considered as interventionist.[14] Associational life and its interests have to be protected from such intervention. However, neo-liberal values in Uzbekistan did not survive due to the strong centralized government and lack of social basis in the country.

International donors had no choice but to look for alternative agents for aid projects. There emerged a greater awareness among donors of the need to engage with social systems already present, because it may provide more appropriate structures for citizens to have some influence on developments than structures imported from the West (Giffen et al. 2005, pp. 70–75). Besides, different types of association that were established during the Soviet period still exist although they have transformed themselves in some way. They had a significant impact on the way in which individuals interacted with each other and continue to have resonance and a measure of legitimacy in the eyes of the population (2005, pp. 75–80).

2.3 Using Social Capital in Uzbekistan

An early attempt on searching for social capital in Uzbekistan started from 2002 by Sievers work on community level associational life Mahalla. He made valuable research arguing that traditional basis of society is allocated in this sphere which existed for more than three centuries. Therefore, Mahalla could be stock of social capital. Pre-soviet social structures; community based and linked through bonds of kinship, geography, and mutual patronage had been strong enough to survive in Soviet rule. The argument is that whether to support or not such 'traditional' or 'communal' civil society components when those are linked with religious values, and community bonded by kinship and clan relations (Ilkhamov 2005; Suda 2005).

Gelner (1994, p. 170) assumes that a civil society based on kinship can promote one group at the expense of another, which is negative, whilst, Freizer (2004, pp. 130–140) argues that 'in Uzbekistan kinship served as an important mobilizing factor' as mahalla institutions do. From religious view point, there are also important Muslim traditions of philanthropy and charitable donations. However, Kramer (2002, pp. 72–75) believes that the hierarchical structure of Islamic societies, particularly in non-secular states and prevailing authoritarian tendencies, precludes the development of any true civil society. Suda (2005, p. 338) also points out that before praising for 'traditional civil society' in Uzbekistan, study must examine case of 'mahalla' within the structure of these institutions as long as it gives good image but in reality it is another instrument of social control.

Mahalla may comprise up to several hundred households, with the total number of residents usually no more than 5,000. Councils of elders, or *aksakals*, consisting of six to eight people were formed within these communities, through which the government channels public services to the whole community members. It represents a native neighborhood, as some scholars mentioned, a civil society which built on "collective identities and the reciprocal relationships necessary to get things done.[15]" This is 'Uzbek civil society' they say. However, Noori (2006, pp. 533–549) found out that mahalla committees are, in reality, "Communist Party street committees, retooled and repackaged as 'traditional' to bolster their local appeal and legitimacy." He compares pre- and post-independence mahalla legislation and confirms that the "post-Soviet incarnation of the mahalla was designed using early Soviet legislation as a blueprint". Both legal frameworks describe mahalla as an institution that works as an extension of the state, ensuring that the community's residents comply with existing state law. These legal documents create a precedent for the mahalla's twin functions: social control and state service delivery in Uzbekistan.[16]

Uzbek government repeatedly announced that this country has it own 'traditional civil society' which bonded with Eastern values, collective harmony and social consensus rather than individual liberty, demanding authorities or western type society full of conflict spirit (Suda 2005, pp. 335 – 365). However, mahalla being traditional, social groupings based on regional division is not allowed to involve voluntarily, it does not let community members to discuss debate or represent members'

interests. Besides it does not include pluralism and participatory principles. But it does distribute social welfare services through appointed Mahalla leaders and staffs following exactly provisions of Law on "Self-Government Organizations" on how to do their jobs (Sievers 2002, pp. 91–158; Noori 2006, pp. 533–549). So it seems that it replicates function of local government. Post-independence reforms toward Mahalla in Uzbekistan compromised autonomy and self-governance of this sphere, thus it is weakly connected to social capital theory which facilitates democracy and pluralistic civil society (Sievers 2002, p. 149). Mahalla attracted later many other scholars[17] too, but their conclusion resemble with Sievers' remarks (2002, pp. 151–155).

Another aspect of pre-existing associational life before neo-liberal civil society was introduced is *Public Associations*. Soviet forms of social organization or Public Associations (PAs-GONGOs) were established and guided by the Communist Party[18] in pre-independence period. Therefore, main feature is political integration of social organizations under same ideology as a channel to provide for a link between state and society. Some of the most influential PAs were Pioneers' League, Komsomol, Women Committee and Professional, Scientific and Technical associations. Trade Unions, Foundations and Co-operatives were also important part of such PAs, but they have been transformed to various structures after independence. Pioneers' League and Komsomol has been combined in to 'Kamolot' (Growth) (GONGO) organization of youth, while Women Committee and professional associations still remains as it was (Giffen et al. 2005, pp. 91–109).

In terms of structure and process, these associations borrowed its concept from the Soviet Law on Public Organizations and Unions which became Uzbek law on Public Associations in 1991. Such law in Soviet time was developed when the purpose was to control the activities of PAs and it still applies in case of Uzbekistan. Although Law on NGOs was enacted in 1999 in Uzbekistan, still main regulating norm is the law on Public Associations which also integrated in to Civil Code of the country.[19] It creates an image of people about social organizations, NGOs and other associations as if they are a part of public associations which are subject of state control and guidance like it was done by Communist Party. Foundations such as 'Veterans' foundation — 'Nuroniy' (elders), 'Soglom avlod uchun' (for a healthy generation) and others are government organized funds which propagate government policies on these issues. The predominance of this organizational form colors people's and groups' idea of what a public association or organization should look like (J. Giffen, L. Earle and Ch. Buxton 2005, p. 96). Therefore, there is no general notion among population that associational life should be created from below and separated from state's control.

International donors' attitude has changed toward these PAs after NGOs were criticized. They began to find ways to involve such PAs in to grant projects. For instance, Women Committee has been the most powerful PA in gender issues and it has direct link with Women Business Associations with regional offices[20] in each provinces. Kamolot is also one of the biggest pro-government associations of youth combining over five million members at their 14–30 ages. Donors began to work with these

associations and public founds on developmental projects such as promotion healthy and productive life among younger generation, empowerment of female and gender issues (Giffen et al. 2005; Ilkhamov 2005).

But, in my opinion, it raises doubt about aims from those aids, though projects have good intentions. Support for civil society building in early 1990s was to empower associational life, to encourage social awareness and involvement in their issues, create a demand within society for effective provision of public goods, transparency and accountability from government. But what can explain foreign aid to the GONGOs if overall government institutions' credibility and their values are not grounded by social trust or satisfaction. International donors' support for government organized social institutions is appreciated if the government has willingness to provide equal access to the benefit from the aid delivery, which is not the case in Uzbekistan.

Conclusion: towards possibility of Synergy

Social capital theory emphasizes on civic communities and informal networks, and these networks are precondition for political consciousness and political socialization which are backbones of political community (Newton 2001; Evans 1996a). It encourages reciprocity, mutuality of dense association as a source of information and capacity for the public institutions － the state, in joint projects (Evans 1996a, pp. 1119–1132). While it is supportive for both political community and the state; social capital and civil society are reinforcing spheres to each other (Harriss 2001b). In this sense, I assume that this theory promises to each sector striving to involve in public sphere meaning civil society, political society and the state a source of information, trust and collective share of interests.

Moreover, social capital theory initiated for synergy. Prominent supporters of social capital Ostrom and Evans, delivered their case studies to bring this issue in front while acquiring their theoretical basis from Putnam (Ostrom 1996, pp. 5–12; Evans 1996b, p. 1120). They criticize a long period domination of state-society dichotomy and zero-sum approach since 1960s (Migdal 1988). In the context of developing countries, we can see such dichotomy and zero-sum game continue in terms of state and civil society relations, thus, synergy is a gate to open productive win-win state-society relations. Evans and Ostrom asserted that regional development projects and small scale infrastructure building in local governance of Brazil, Thailand, India and Nigeria were relied on social capital, apolitical indigenous communities and their informal reciprocity and solidarity (Evans 1996b, pp. 1119–1132; Ostrom 1996, pp. 1073–87).

It is not possible to assume that neo-liberal civil society can enter such interaction with the state without relinquishing or adapting their interests and political virtue like Huntington suggested three decades ago. However, Diamond (1997, pp. 5–6) still objects to incorporate civil society into social capital on the ground that civil society is a public sphere of political conscious people and their

objective is of 'civic ends'. Kenneth Roth (2010) in his speech on latest HRW report also praises civil society organizations (especially NGOs) and leaders of such organizations because of their criticism of regime and system performance in developing countries.

Also, the difference between the social capital and civil society can be clearly seen if we look at how both conceptions are understood in developing countries. Central Asian developing countries like Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan, community and village level of self-governing associational life has become 'traditional' civil society (Suda 2005; Giffen et al. 2005; Seiple 2005). Their argument is based on the reference to Eastern values and state controlled Asian style neighborhoods and communities evolved in Japan, Singapore and Malaysia from 1940s. Moreover, Hann and Dunn based on case studies from Albania, Syria, Indonesia and Japan called for greater openness to the particular ways in which human communities create their own versions of civil society (Howell & Pearce 2001, p. 5).

Interest on search for social capital in the country, as I believe, has become essential to comply with global change on developmental discourse which required institutional approach and role of the state in economic development. In addition to the theory of social capital of Putnam, theory of developmental state by Chalmers Johnson (1982) became important in developmental thinking, because these two approaches did not oppose to government role but insisted on building capacity. Such capacity as Putnam suggested relies on reciprocity between public and private or in other words in state-society synergy. In order to enable productive interaction between state and its social base, he asserts that social capital must be cultivated (Evans 1996a, pp. 1119–1132).

This paper suggests that there must be reciprocity, collective action for synergy. Such perspective will help to analyze the possibility of civic involvement in public sphere and for common interest in developing countries like Uzbekistan.

Notes

1　The reason for the lack of democracy was seen in primordial and parochial political culture of developing countries regardless of newly imported democratic participant institutions from the West. Institutions did not just work as were expected and political culture of society to support and enable those institutions by participation had to be nurtured by the states.

2　Author's opinion based on the review of literatures written by (Chandhoke 1995; Howell & Pearce 2001; Pye & Verba 1965; Huntington 2006).

3　See in detail on web page (2009): Sit-Ins and Freedom Rides, the Albany Movement, the Birmingham Campaign, the March on Washington, Race riots.

4　Prefix 'neo' means *resumed*, *recent* or *contemporary* which is supposed to give a modern value to the ideologies used to dominate in the ancient West to enable its export to the developing countries. Neo-liberal values were actually values of liberalism in the ancient England and America. Same as Tocquevillian ideologies of 18th century were resumed as neo-Tocquevillian theories to apply in developing countries of 21st century.

5　Beginning from 1950s to 1980s, after the war, and Great Depression, it was seen how reliance on market and its

liberalization in the West could do more harm than good. Therefore, state intervention was necessary to 'correct' market failures. Therefore, state could not become mere instrument of market neither to be excluded.

6   Uzbek government did not accept the term 'poverty reduction', instead used 'improvement of the Living Standards'.

7   There is a famous motto repeatedly and proudly said by president of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov "Do not ruin old house unless you have built a new one". It represents the idea that old house, old institutions old methods are all important and necessary until certain and benign replacements occurs.

8   Such fear is debatable, it can be instrument to legitimize authoritarianism, to increase social dependence on strong leader or such fear is rational.

9   In Kyrgyzstan in 2005 revolution took place and overthrow president Akaev Askar (1991–2005), but again in April 2010 replaced president Bakiev Kurbanbek (2005–2010) who actually initiated previous revolution and came in to power was overthrown by opponents. In the same year in June, there was ethnic conflict between indigenous Kyrgyz and ethnic Uzbeks which took more than hundreds of lives.

10   *Ibid* p. 26

11   E. g.: freedom of speech and association was increasing due to such activities where public officials and citizens put together in seminars to come to the consensus that those principles are important in society as well in public (Ilkhamov 2005, pp. 297–317).

12   In 2003 (Rose-Georgia), 2004 (Orange-Ukraine) and 2005 (Tulip-Kyrgyzstan) which ended with change of regime) in those post-Soviet countries (Ilkhamov 2005, pp. 297–317).

13   Open letter in view of the 6th EU-Uzbekistan co-operation council 1st of February 2005 http://www.omct.org/pdf/OMCT_Europe/2005/EU-UZB-pressrelease_28_01_05.pdf

14   Especially if non-democratic

15   David M. Abramson, "Identity Counts: The Soviet Legacy and the Census in Uzbekistan" in David Kertzer and Dominque Arel, eds., (2001) *Census and Identity: The Politics of Race, Ethnicity, and Language in National Censuses.* Cambridge University Press, pp. 186–99

16   Noori, Neema 2006 "Expanding state authority, cutting back local services: decentralization and its contradictions in Uzbekistan". *Central Asian Survey.* 25(4): 533–549

17   Freizer (2004), Suda (2005), Stevens (2005), Kamp (2005) and Noori (2006)

18   Communist party was the ruling institution, not government or executive, therefore it has established and organized activities of all of public associations.

19   Author's observation of domestic laws and regulations — **Law on Public Associations** (1991: 2004(2)—1: 2): Political parties, movements, trade unions, organizations of women, youth and children, veterans and disabled peoples organizations, technological, scientific, cultural, educational, sport clubs, and other civic unions are public associations. **Law on Non-Government Organizations** (1999: 10: 1): Non Governmental Organizations are established in the form of public associations, public funds, and public agencies

20   Another feature of PAs is having branches or offices in each province with paid staffs also based on the law on PAs (1991).

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