

## **Territorial information systems (TIS) as an instrument for developing social capital in local communities in Serbia**

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### **1 ABSTRACT**

The broad problem that will be elaborated in the research is efficiency and effectiveness of traditional approach in Urban planning, currently still present in Serbia. Urban planning in Serbia is challenged by transitional trends such as decentralization, participation, collaboration and building partnerships to tackle spatial problems in relation with new socio-economic space. The main problem elaborated in the paper lack of common understanding for the need of building partnerships among institutions and local communities to tackle spatial problems. Therefore, research questions arising from the problem framework are: How to build partnerships, collaboration and social capital in the closed spaces within local communities such as Local Authorities, Public Companies, Civil society? Can Territorial information system be an instrument for building social capital? If it is so, how it can break barriers and build trust and collaboration?

The hypothesis relevant to the problem is that level of social capital is in relation with data and information sharing among actors in local community. Level of social capital in local communities in Serbia vary, but it rarely goes beyond egocentric concept where different stakeholders (individuals, institutions, organizations) use data and information to gain their personal interests, having low level of awareness of added value information sharing can bring and broaden framework of action and gain common interests as well as personal. In line with this spatial organization and development is not managed properly, public interest is not fully recognized and physical space is dominated by individual interests, producing negative externalities to environmental and equity issues.

Therefore, the aim of the research is to identify forms of social capital that can be built through the implementation of Territorial information Systems in local communities. The forms of social capital, formal and informal such as institutional arrangements, building trust, networking and cooperation will be elaborated through analysis of TIS pilot projects case studies implemented in six municipalities in Serbia in the period of 2005-08. The results of the research should show what level of social capital is needed as a precondition for data and information sharing, and what kind of social capital with positive externalities can be developed through implementation of TIS.

### **2 INTRODUCTION**

Integrated planning and design for sustainable development where it integrates different planning sectors, different social arenas, horizontal and vertical levels of government is challenged in Serbia by transitional process. Integration of previously mentioned elements is strongly connected with level of existing social capital in the community, its cognitive and structural elements, such as trust, collaboration, reciprocity, and institutional framework, such as laws, organizations, protocols, etc. that provide the development of social networks. The paper will elaborate the possibilities for development different dimensions of social capital in the process of data and information sharing in the six communities in Serbia through implementing pilot Territorial Information Systems.

The first chapter will elaborate the relation between spatial dimensions and dimensions of social capital, emphasising their interconnectivity, following Lefebvre's idea that physical space represents its social dimensions. Therefore, integration of activities to tackle spatial problems in sustainable manner is connected with the level of social capital present in the community. The result of the chapter will be the Tool for measuring development of the socio-spatial dimensions towards integrative collective action.

The second chapter will describe the process of developing social capital in communities in Serbia through implementation of TIS pilot projects relevant for the specific issue in each community. It will discuss possibilities and preconditions for integrative collective action through information and data sharing. The preconditions will be on cognitive and on structural level of social capital and will be defined as the conclusions from the comparative method of observing the process of TIS and social capital development.

## spatial development AND social capital

### Space dimensions and dimensions of social capital

Talking about the space following Lefebvre's thought we are dealing with space integration (acc to: Lefebvre, 1991) in the discourse of the central and marginal spaces (see: Semprini, 2004), their boundaries and the process of the content flow between them. Therefore, sustainable spaces integrate its different dimensions and transform it to physical space through communicative action (see: Habermas, 1990). Planning traditions, through history of planning, deal with different socio-economic space form economic, physical, and environmental to sustainable concept of development (Baker, 2006). In line with this, physical space mirrors social, economic and mental spaces in the process of its production.

Each tradition forms and reflects the social capital it is built on or the capital that is built through the process of spatial development. Therefore, we are talking of the exclusive and inclusive attributes of spatial development. Each of them reflects social arenas in which they are conceptualized, developed and implemented. The concept of sustainable development integrates different dimensions of its production; we can say it builds up different dimensions of social capital and transform them into physical multidimensional, inclusive, integrated space (see: Elin, 2004). We can say that spatial development reflects dimensions of social capital built through the process of its creation.

Development of the social capital concept goes from egocentric to sociocentric. From Bourdieu to Woolcock the concept was developed through its cognitive and structural dimensions, in relation with its positive and negative externalities, focusing either on the human development, either on social towards collective action. The contemporary concept is strongly related to poverty reduction, and both on cognitive elements, such as local and global values, trust, solidarity, and on structural, developing institutions, laws, policies, etc. As Castells says we have to add value to instrumental networks the global information society has formed. „When the world becomes too large to be controlled, social actors aim to shrink it back to their size and reach” (Castells, *The Power of Identity*, 2004)

The paper will follow the concept defined mostly by Fukuyama and Woolcock where it has developmental attribute on each level: building trust, collaboration, information flow, partnership, collective action with positive externalities and inclusive attribute. Woolcock talks of bounding, bridging and linking, as developmental characteristics (Woolcock Michael, 1999). On the other hand Fukuyama calls upon circles of trust, their enlargement and intersections (Fukuyama, 2000). However, the crucial question is on which issue to start developing social capital towards building partnerships, collaboration, and integration of different spaces?

Collective action's glue can be in the area of Castells urban aims that each community can have: „urban demands on living conditions and collective consumption; the affirmation of local cultural identity, the conquest of local political autonomy and citizen participation“ (Castells, *The Power of Identity*, 2004). Following his thought we can say that building up cognitive and structural elements of social capital can start on the common issue in the community, transforming the community's local practice and memory. Therefore, if we want developmental spaces the issue to start should have transformative power and should integrate different spaces, carrying partnership dimension. But, who to impose the issues with transformative power? Can it emerge from inside or should it be imposed from the outside?

Following social capital theory the transformative power comes from the membership of different areas of trust, through its enlargement, as well as from linking dimension where local communities develop their relations with meso and macro level. The assumption is that if we want to develop trust, collaboration and partnerships that have developmental dimension, not just reproducing existing social relations, it should be managed, facilitated and mediated by the 'agents' and 'agencies' on higher structural and cognitive level. Therefore, the assumption is that it can shift existing social capital by not controlling it; the transformative issue should come or be fully accepted in the community and mediated and facilitated by regional, national or international level. As Healey says it should develop both 'soft' and 'hard' institutional infrastructure (Healey, 1997).

In relation with space dimension the process should create inclusive spaces that integrate different values and builds platform for consensus building reflecting global and local values. Therefore, we are focusing on the process of its creation as well as on the process and on the process outcomes. Another assumption is that, as social capital development is iterative process, the first cycle of its initiating is crucial for its closure or

further development. In line with this the quality of the outcomes of the first cycle, both cognitive and structural, are the crucial point in the social capital development. The question is how to measure the quality of the social capital development process towards space integration?

## 2.1 Tool for measuring development of the socio-spatial dimensions

When we talk about urban planning practice we are dealing both with the quality of its process and product. The quality of the process and development of the future spatial dimensions, can be valued through the dimensions of social capital developed in it. The quality of the product such as strategic document, data base, policy, etc. can be valued through its sensitivity to initiate new developmental processes of social capital and the ways to measure it. Therefore, in this chapter we will formulate a tool for measuring the quality of the process dealing with common issues towards developing multidimensional social capital.

TOOL FOR MEASURING SOCIAL CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE PROCESS OF DEALING WITH THE PUBLIC ISSUE*									
Public issue?			Dealing with the spatial issue						Type of collective action
Social capital: Development process	Dimensions	Elements	Process			Product			
			Phases	Type of social arena	Tools /techniques	Structure	Content	Tools /techniques	
	Bounding/bridging/linking  Micro/meso/macro level	cognitive	Local-global values?	Closed/open; exclusive/inclusive?	SWOT/force field Stakeholder analysis?	Flexibility of the structure?	Prescriptive or instructive?	Graphs	Reactive/interactive/proactive
			Owning the issue?	Arena's actors?	List of problems, objectives, priorities	Does it mirror the process?	Thematic grouping?	Diagrams	
		structural	Consciousness of present and future image?	Facilitation and mediation of the process?	vision ICT		Facts or possibilities?	Matrix	
			Iterative process? Incremental process?	Institutionalisation of social arenas?	Web		Openness of the content?	Images	
			Inclusion into regional networks?	Rules of communication?				3D	
			Policies/ laws	Initiatives on regional/national level?			Interactive content?	Analog, Digital	
				Integral local/regional projects?					

\*The tool is developed on the professional experience as well on the sources (UN-Habitat, 2003) (Fisher, Building Bridges Through Participatory Planning, 2005) (Fisher, Building Bridges Through Managing Conflict and Differences, 2006) (Cultural Planning Toolkit: A partnership between 2010 legacies now and Creative City Network of Canada, 2010). The conceptual framework for the tool is: The forms and dimensions of social capital (Grootaert Christian, Thierry van Bastelar 2002) (Fig. 1) and dimensions of social capital (Woolcock 2003) (Fig. 2)

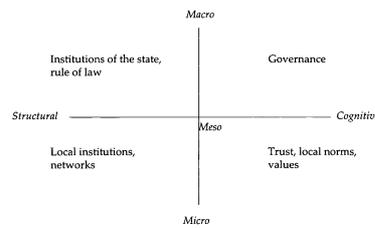


Fig.1: The forms and dimensions of social capital (Grootaert Christian, Thierry van Bastelar 2002)

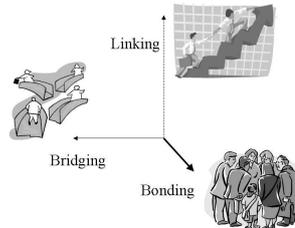


Fig. 2: The dimensions of social capital (Woolcock 2003)

### 3 USING TIS TO DEVELOP DIFFERENT DIMENSIONS OF SOCIAL CAPITAL

As it was said before the different dimensions of social capital in the local community can be developed if the issue has developmental and integrative characteristics. Therefore, we will elaborate the process of data and information integration among institutions and organizations in the local community as the issue to start developing cognitive and structural elements of social capital towards collective action. Territorial information system will be elaborated as an instrument in the process of cognitive and structural integration, as well as horizontal and vertical.

The attribute territorial gives to this info system the socio-spatial dimension, as the territory is seen as the space bounded by common interests. So, territory is the space that integrates different spatial dimensions that are relevant for the urban or spatial issue, and we can say it is a platform where the spaces of interest should be linked and integrated towards common interests. In line with this the territory is not something which is given by nature; it is a phenomenon that is created by people, their interests, networks, trust, and collaboration. We can say that richness of the territory is reflected by the richness of social capital developed in the process of dealing with the issue.

In line with this Territorial information system in contrast with GIS is the instrument that uses GIS to integrate data to produce new information that carries developmental arrow to social capital. Therefore, the cognitive and structural elements of TIS go beyond the boundaries of one institution or organization, and initiate integrative processes of building trust, partnerships, collaboration and collective action. The question is how to start, manage the process towards horizontal and vertical integration? The following text will elaborate the process of implementation of six TIS pilot projects in Serbia in the framework of UN-Habitat Settlement Integration Refugees Programme.

#### 3.1 Process of cognitive and structural development in the municipalities

The situation in Serbia when the process of TIS implementation has started was that selected local communities had awareness of using GIS and some of them has started implementation of it inside the boundaries of one institution, digital data and data bases existed in different public companies, departments, institutions. Therefore, the approach was to start with implementation of TIS pilot projects that should integrate minimum three institutions in local community. The period of implementation was one year.

The structural elements of TIS development during the period of implementation was in the constitution of two groups in local communities that was relevant for implementation of TIS. The first was coordination body, on the level of decision making which task was to bring political support to TIS development. The members of coordination body were managers of public companies, local representatives, directors of LA departments, etc. The second one was the working group, which had technical task to work on TIS

development. The members of working groups came from the different institutions relevant to the common issue. Both of the groups were appointed by the authority in the municipality.

Before the constitution of any structural elements the first cycle of raising awareness of TIS was implemented in the municipalities in the form of interactive trainings delivered to beneficiaries of interest. The aim of the trainings was to establish common understanding of data and information sharing can bring to the win-win solutions in the local community as well as on the raising knowledge on TIS concept, structure and implementation. The mission of the trainings was to promote benefits TIS can bring to the community.

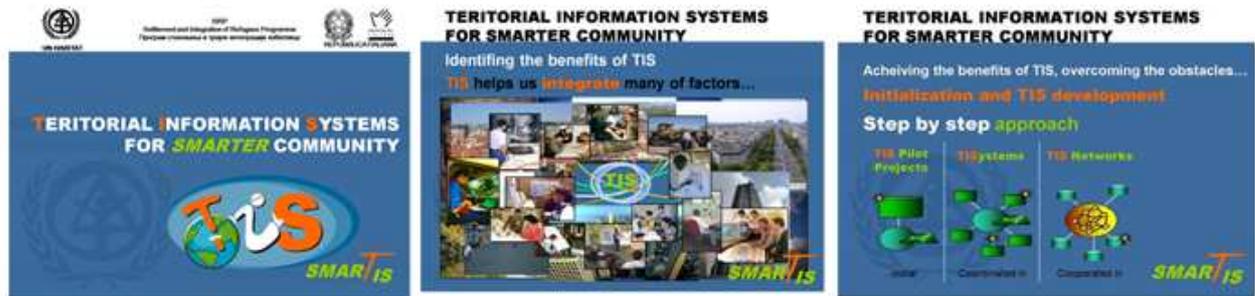


Fig. 3, 4, 5: TIS basic training: SMARTIS – TIS for Smarter communities (iterative, step by step approach)

This structural element on local level was the frame for cognitive development of social capital, as well as future structural development in the form of institutionalizing TIS after the pilot project is finished. The first element of cognitive development was the TIS Pilot Project document which was done by the members of working groups in consultation with coordination body. The Project document was consisted around the selected issue that will be dealt with in the process.

The issue was elaborated on the workshops were the members of both structural elements from each municipality was present. The workshop was aimed to develop acceptance of the issue among the people in the TIS team. Methods and techniques used in the workshop were brainstorming, nominal group technique, problem tree, active listening. As an outcome from the workshop each municipality selected a common issue to be dealt, defined objectives and results that will be achieved during the implementation of TIS. The issues were: Tourism development, Rural Development, Land management, Development of industrial zone.

After the acceptance of the TIS Pilot Project the series of trainings on how to use TIS software was organized for the members of the working groups when they gain knowledge and skills how to model data base, fill it with data, create and traduce maps, reports, diagrams. The trainings delivered technical knowledge to the people, members of the working groups in each municipality.

The first cycle of TIS implementation was aimed to data integration and resulted in the integrated geo-database model - conceptual and physical. The integrated data was from different sources and on cognitive level it established cooperation between institutions, departments and public companies, managed by coordination body. On structural level it resulted in metadata as well as in model diagram and personal geo-data base. The results of each municipality was presented, discussed and evaluated on the workshop. The techniques for evaluation in order to improve quality of geo-data base model were a form of group questionnaire when each team should answer and give suggestions in the group discussion. After the group elaboration the proposals for improvement were presented and discussed between WG from each municipality.

The second cycle of implementation was aimed to develop thematic maps that will emphasize benefits of data integration through its visualization. Besides factographic maps showing territorial resources, the thematic maps had developmental attribute, providing integrated 'new' information that will enable smarter decisions in managing the territory. On cognitive level it promotes partnerships to tackle common territorial problems that go beyond boundaries. The thematic maps was created in the process of on the job training in each municipality were members of TIS working groups using technique of brainstorming, nominal group technique, elaborated themes that will be relevant to the issue as well as additional data needed for their creation, together with alpha-numeric reports, charts and diagrams. Two neighboring municipalities with the same issue started to collaborate and exchange experiences in the process of developing territorial data base.



Fig. 6, 7, 8: TIS on the job training: Developing thematic maps through participatory process

The results of the second cycle of implementation were presented on the conference where besides the members of coordination body, working group from each municipality the representatives of relevant ministries, regional associations and other municipalities that started working on data integration was present. The conference was aimed to open dialogue on the achieved results so far and to initiate systematic work on TIS development in Serbia. The conference initiated linking dimension of social capital development, in the form of dialogue, workshops on topic of institutional and technical arrangements that should be developed in the form of norms, rules, procedures, policies and laws.



Fig. 9 - 14: Cities in Dialogue - Cities developing integrated territorial information systems TIS

The third cycle of implementation was to finalize the projects and to publish thematic maps and territorial data base in interactive manner on DVD, web and in the form of the brochure. In each form of publishing the results emphasized the benefits TIS and integration of data, visualization, and reports can bring to the community. Also, through publishing the dissemination of the concept of TIS to the public has been done. Furthermore, some of the municipalities have presented their results in the form of workshop inside the community, emphasizing benefits of TIS.



Fig. 15, 16, 17: Presenting results in open arenas, awarded with first prize on International salon of urbanism



Fig. 18 - 23: Publishing results, process and outcomes CDs and brochures

### 3.2 Mediating and facilitating the process, cognitive and structural elements

The developmental dimension of social capital in the process of developing TIS was in the space dimension of its mediation and facilitation. The period of this process lasted much longer than its implementation, actually two years before the start of implementation and one year along of its process. The mediating and facilitating space was managed under the umbrella of UN-Habitat and in partnership with consultant team from the Faculty of Architecture University of Belgrade. The whole process of designing the approach for the implementation and developing different dimensions of social capital was prepared and tailored to the conditions in Serbia both on cognitive and structural level.



Fig. 24, 25, 26: TIS study tour in Prato and Modena, Italy

Each workshop, conference and training was fully prepared and tailored to the specific conditions in each municipality. On cognitive level the process was mediated and facilitated through communicative action using methods and techniques most appropriate to the existing level of social capital in each municipality. Each form of dialogue was designed towards its outcomes and inputs for the second phase of developing TIS. The facilitating and mediating team was constantly trained by UN-Habitat on the subject during the whole process. So the team was educated on cognitive techniques such as improved communication, conflict management, participatory planning, good governance.

On structural level the process was designed in the form that it was supported along the development of TIS. The development was constantly followed and guided in the communication process by consultants. Therefore, it was possible to monitor the development towards expected results. Further more, the break points in the form of workshops, conferences, trainings were designed and positioned in time to reinforce developmental dimensions of social capital in form of better collaboration, integration, communication and partnerships. Trainings were on the different level from basic to advanced and on the job. They had developmental characteristics in building human capital as well as social through interaction, bounding the team.

Beside the structural elements for each break point and social arena, the structural elements were developed to follow in line process of TIS development in the municipalities. Structural elements along the process were rules of communication, tools designed by consultants, intranet and forum. Each structural element reflected cognitive values to be achieved, such as transparency, information flow, accessibility, inclusiveness.



Fig. 27, 28, 29: TIS intranet - instructions for use

The tools were designed as a support to the step-by-step elaboration of results and to follow the incremental cycles of implementation of the TIS development process. Each tool carries its cognitive elements such as purpose of the tool, how to use it, which steps to follow and related techniques to be applied, which equipment/materials are necessary, how to document achieved results. The set of TIS tools included: conceptual database model table; matrix of data sources, users and typology of data; data sharing protocol; database model diagram; rules of acquisition, digitalization, and storing of data; rules for the elaboration of maps and layouts; metadata structure. The tools focus on roles each member of the team had and support interaction, participation, team-work throughout the process of implementation.

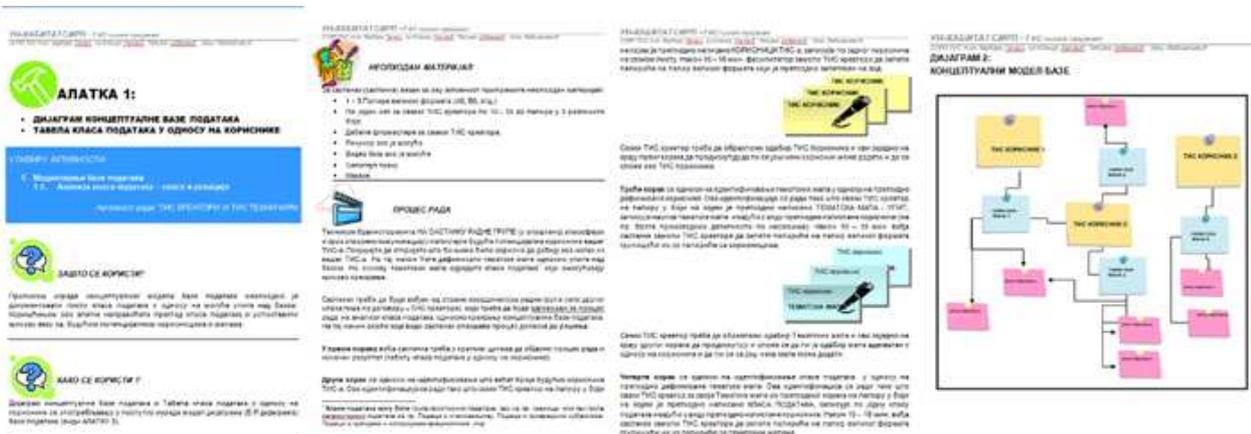


Fig. 30, 31, 32: TIS tools – encouraging participatory approach in developing TIS elements

Intranet provided accessibility to the relevant documents and materials during the process of implementation. Each member of the working team had its own accessibility with different permissions. The intranet provided structural platform for sharing support materials provided by consultants, documents produced by municipality working groups, etc. On the other hand forum was designed to share experiences between TIS municipality working groups on different topics during the implementation period. As a support in using the platforms TIS consultants developed guidelines how to use it.

#### 4 CONCLUSION

According to the presented cases and using the designed tool for measuring social capital development we can say that structural dimension was constant in all municipalities designed by mediating team and accepted by the municipality. The structural elements, according to the tool, covered all social capital dimensions: bounding, partnerships and linking, providing 'soft' infrastructure for the development of cognitive elements. Therefore, we can say that all municipalities had the same preconditions to develop cognitive glue in the process of data and information sharing through building trust, collaboration and collective action.

However, the process outcomes say different story. In the situations when cognitive holes showed up (such as lack of trust and collaboration) they were 'glued' by the authority figures on national and international level (UN – Habitat, Faculty, Ministries). Therefore, each municipality in the process which was mediated has achieved expected results, defined in the Project document. However, not all of them continued to work on TIS activities in municipality. The cases where this process continued showed high level of cognitive glue in the process which was mediated. The first was strong acceptance of the 'issue' for data and information sharing; the second was strong bonding dimension among the team during the previous process. The third was strong leadership from authority figure inside the municipality and the fourth high level of promotion of TIS activities in the municipality, on international fairs, etc. We can conclude that in this municipality the collective action developed from reactive to proactive and social capital was developed in all dimensions in different percentage.

Therefore, we can say that data and information sharing can be the platform for developing social capital if there is strong cognitive glue for this process. If we consider discussion in the previous chapters, Territorial information systems carries the cognitive element in its concept of the territory and if the process of its development is mediated from the top and strongly accepted on the bottom level it can be an instrument for developing social capital in municipality. The first precondition is that structural elements of social capital on all dimensions must be provided by the mediating authority. The second is that cognitive elements must be developed during the process inside the municipality such as building trust, collaboration and partnership also by mediating team through workshops, trainings, and support material.

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